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The order of things malcolm gladwell pdf

In a typical day, an average human being grapples with several complex decisions, which call for difficult choices. The choices often depend on comparisons. As such, comparative data becomes handy in the process of seeking the most suitable option. Malcolm Gladwell observes, in his article, "The Order of Things," that although people readily use existing comparative data to inform their choices, the systems and structures used to compile the data are flawed. He encourages people to consider comparative data questioningly because the approach used by the compilers of such data is not necessarily the best. Gladwell employs argumentative reasoning and rhetoric to outline the lapses that are inherent in the structures that are used in popular rankings in a bid to underscore the fact that world's most esteemed rankings are not necessarily accurate. Of interest to this essay is how the author employs his literary paraphernalia to persuade readers to embrace his perspective. Gladwell sets a foundation for his argument by examining Car and Driver's ranking system. He examines the ranking of the Lotus Evora, the Chevrolet Corvette Grand Sport, and the Porsche Cayman S. The main point he seeks to make from these rankings is that the three cars are so different that evaluating them using the same methodology ignores some critical factors that ought to guide the process of ranking. He sees no plausibility in using the same methodology to rank all cars. He expresses his reservations using simple and concise language. He makes a great effort not to complicate his arguments so that every reader can grasp his points. Additionally, the information he uses in his argument is pertinent to the subject of discussion. Gladwell's approach is down to earth. When he writes that "the range of these three cars' driving personalities is as various as the pajama sizes of Papa Bear, Mama Bear, and Baby Bear, but a clear winner emerged nonetheless" (1), he makes a point about the diversity of the differences exhibited by the three cars. What is interesting is how he achieves his goal. He uses the simplest and most practical analogy that anyone can understand with ease. Gladwell employs deliberative oratory both to dissuade readers from blindly accepting popular rankings and to exhort them to embrace his perspective on the issue. Using this example, Gladwell makes a strong and convincing case against Car and Driver's ranking system. He breaks the critical analysis down into a systematic process in which he considers one issue at a time. Gladwell's approach is quite effective because he is quite convincing. With this convincing background firmly in place, he proceeds to the central argument. The central argument revolves around U.S. News & World Report's annual "Best Colleges" guide. According to Gladwell, the ranking system used by this magazine fails to capture the critical factors that make rankings authentic. The reason behind its failure is that, like Car and Driver's rankings, it subscribes to the concept of heterogeneity and seeks to be comprehensive. Consequently, it ends up comparing institutions that are not objectively comparable. Thus, the comparison wrongly places Harvard and Yale ahead of Penn State University. Alternative rankings that pay attention to pertinent issues such as The Wall Street Journal's rankings place Penn State University ahead of both Harvard and Yale. U.S. News' rankings purport to measure variables that are extremely difficult to measure even if the "variable seems perfectly objective" (4). The difficulty is caused by the many factors that are at play in some of the variables. These factors make it practically impossible to objectively evaluate even the most objective variable. As such, according to Gladwell, the annual rankings released by U.S. News are subject to distortions and ambiguities that result from assigning numbers to particular variables under unclear circumstances. Like in the Car and Driver rankings, Gladwell uses an objective approach to criticize the college rankings. He breaks the ranking process into several components and then subjects each of them to objective criticism after which he proposes a better alternative. Gladwell's writing is not concerned with discrediting the rankings. Rather, it persuades the reader to become open-minded to consider other possible approaches. To make his writing more persuasive, he poses several rhetorical questions amid strong logical arguments. He maintains a simple language and makes highly sensible arguments all through. The use of examples such as suicide rates and the ranking of hospitals are his way of making his argument clearer. Gladwell proceeds to make a critical point using the global suicide rate data. He notes that there are numerous factors that play into the issue of suicides. For instance, a policeman's perception of suicide is quite different from a physician's perception, yet in many places across the world, it is the police rather than the physicians who have the final word on the issue. And during the compilation of suicide data, such factors are ignored because the number of reported suicides is what matters. The point Gladwell makes through this example is that although the world uses suicide data as reported, it does not depict the true state of affairs concerning suicide rates. To answer the many questions that may emerge, he notes that "the simple answer is nobody knows whether suicide rankings are real" (5). Making such a conclusion in an example that was aimed at helping readers to understand the ambiguity that surrounds college rankings, Gladwell seems to be suggesting that the rankings may not mean much after all. He extends this treatment to the ranking of law schools across the U.S. The point he seeks to underscore through this example is that reputation scores, which carry more weight than all other variables in the U.S. News' rankings are based on trivial elements such as "history, prominence in the media, or the architectural elegance" (7) of an institution. Thus, the weight contributed by the reputation score has no relevance to an institution's quality. As before, Gladwell makes a strong argument against the mechanism used to obtain reputation scores. His persuasion is based on factual evidence and is quite effective. He makes sense all through the article. Gladwell's clear-headedness also manifests in the influential ranking regions. With this example, the point he seeks to make is that rankings are also influenced by the individuals who do them. He notes that "who comes out on top, in any ranking system, is really about who is doing the ranking" (12). In simple terms, it is not possible to eliminate bias from a ranking system. In this final part of his article, Gladwell maintains his straightforward approach to issues. He looks for a real example and relates it to the issue of college rankings to bring his point home. Thus, he maintains his down to earth approach throughout the article. Using factual evidence, which fits in perfectly with the point he is trying to put across is one of the strengths of Gladwell's style of writing. Thus, it helps him to achieve his goal because after reading the article, one's opinion about college rankings cannot remain the same. Works Cited Gladwell, Malcolm. "The Order Of Things: What College Rankings Really Tell Us." The New Yorker. 2011: 1-12. Web. Need a custom Essay sample written from scratch by professional specifically for you? certified writers online country with such strict government control. Park was just 13 years old when she fled the country with her mother, and she currently resides in New York. Now 21 years old, she has begun talking about her tragic past, mostly through her book, called In Order to Live. In the book, Park states that in 1990, the Soviet Union disbanded and Moscow stopped offering deals on exports to North Korea, which ultimately led to the country's demise. After 1990, the country's economy suffered, so much so that Park.... The author lists events like 9/11, McCarthyism, and alien abduction as common conspiracies that many believed or still believe. The writer attempts to convince the reader that conspiracies aren't powerful, but the idea of conspiracies are by using persuasive appeals, scholarly diction, an analytic and sometimes scrutinizing tone, use of rhetorical questions to show absurdity of certain conspiracies, and anecdotes. Aaronovitch utilizes persuasive appeals to attract people to his argument. He establishes ethos by showing he is very educated on the topic. He offers several other works of merit in his piece as evidence for his argument, and in many cases deeply analyzes and critiques these such works.... In light of the annual U.S. News & World Report college rankings released today, read Malcolm Gladwell's piece exploring what college rankings really tell us: by Seymour Chwast.(Source: newyorker.com)

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