

TOK lesson: Reason, Emotion – Faith

Dirk Solies

ISF Frankfurt

Sherlock Holmes

All emotions were abhorrent to his cold, precise but admirably balanced mind.“

(Sir Arthur Conan Doyle about S. H.)



World War II Propaganda film:

“Reason & Emotion”

Take notes – describe:

- How is the relation between reason and emotion described?
- Which examples are used?
- What’s the political effect?

Discuss:

- Do you know other examples of political agitation?
- Can you think of any *positive* effects of emotions in politics?

Discuss the following thought experiment:

Peter has decided that he wants to marry Heloise. He came to his decision by weighing up all of Heloise's good points and bad points and comparing them with those of all other life-partners. Heloise came out as the most rational choice. What can be said for and against this way of deciding whom you would like to marry? How would you feel if you were Heloise?

(Lagemaat 2005: 155)

A different concept of Intelligence: „Emotional Intelligence“?!¹

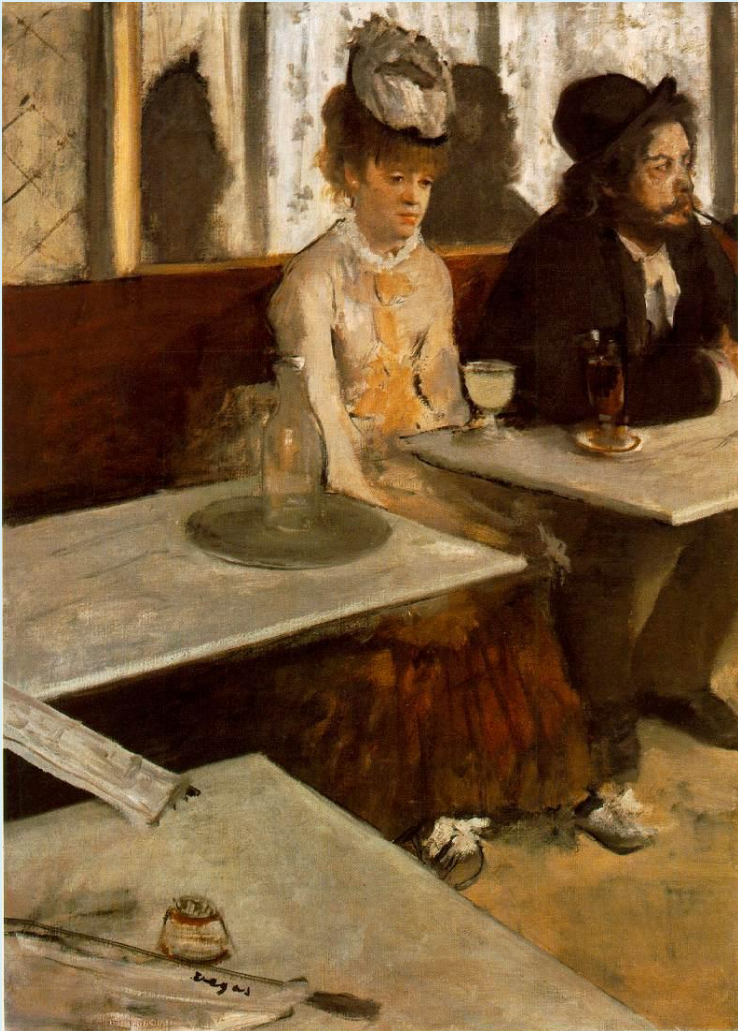
Discuss:

- meaning of picture???
- What is / what *could be* „Emotional Intelligence“?
- Could it be described / measured? How?
- Do you know a person you would describe as particularly „skilled“ in E.I.?



¹ Mayer, J.D., Salovey, P. & Caruso, D.R., 2004. Emotional Intelligence: Theory, Findings and Implications, *Psychological Inquiry*, 15, 197-215
PD Dr. Dirk Solies, TOK course 2010/2011, solies@uni-mainz.de

Edgar Degas: Absinthe (1875-76)



- What do you “read” the woman’s body language to be?
- How does the structural composition of the painting heighten the emotional impact?
- How does the title of the painting affect the interpretation?

Emotion in Language – Read the following text:

“It’s been a long time”, she said.

“Yes. A long time.”

“I saw her leave. Your wife.”

“Yes, my wife. My wife.”

Her dark eyes held his and neither spoke. A waiter approaching with a menu hesitated, and then retreated to leave them alone.

“I didn’t think,” he faltered, “that I would ever see you again.”

- **Which *information* do you get?**
- **What do you *understand*? How do you understand?**

Imagine the following case:

You come to a foreign country in which all the political and economic power is held by women. Men have no right to vote, they are not allowed to drive cars, and they have to stay at home all day to do the housework. Eventually, one of them gets killed as he attempts to change the situation. Being asked, they tell you they feel perfectly happy in their situation. How would you react in this situation?

Would you intervene? Why (not)?

➤ **Discuss, write down the Pros and Cons!**

Now ask yourself:

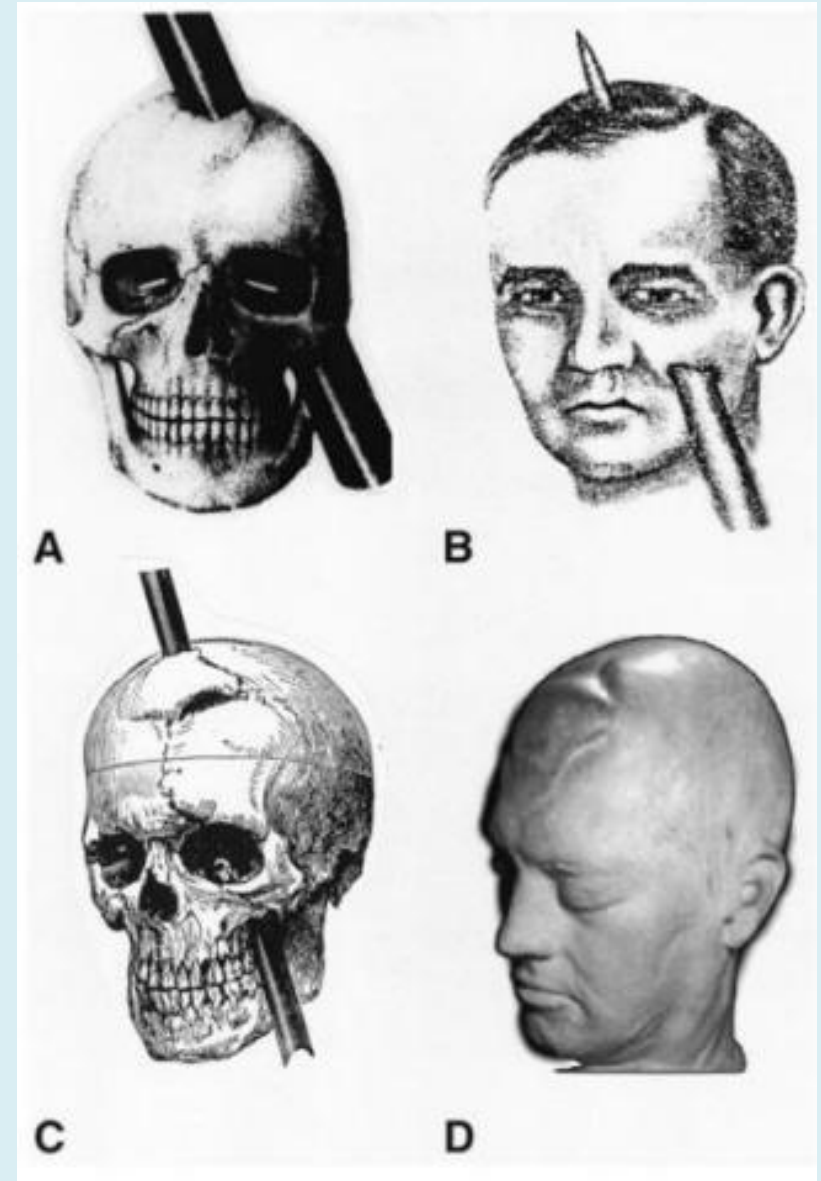
Was your decision more influenced by reason or by emotion??

The strange case of Phineas Gage

[\[Video\]](#)

Take notes!

- Can smaller or bigger changes in the brain influence a person's personality?
- Can you think of any examples?



Discuss:

- **Have you ever been in a situation where you had to choose between two equally attractive options? How did you come to a decision?**
- **Is emotion a way-of-knowing independent from culture? Is there anything in it universal to all human cultures?**

Belief – conviction – faith

Plato's Dialogue Gorgias

(Woolman 2006: 89)

Woolman, Michael (2006), Ways of knowing. An introduction to Theory of Knowledge, Victoria