

# MINDGUT

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There are many common locutions suggesting a deep metaphorical relationship between mind and digestion:

- I've had my fill
- I've had it up to here
- You've stuffed my mind
- I've heard enough to vomit
- You make me puke
- Cramming for exams
- Putting words in my mouth
- Regurgitating facts
- Brainfart

& etc.

Learning is often accompanied by metaphors of digestion. "Cramming" is often thought to be like the cultivation of *fois gras*, in which grain is forced down the throat of the goose.

Then there is the willingness (usually bullshit):

- I have a hunger for wisdom.
- I have a thirst for knowledge.
- My need for knowledge can never be sated.

The great Renaissance figure Gargantuan is as extreme in his learning as he is in his endless appetite for food and his endless swilling of wine. Inebriation opens the channels of craving. Both the learning and the noble menus of this period are leading historically to a new condition.

The metaphors of satiety are countless and universal and almost always mental.

We stop to ask if mind is like gut. In the gut are microorganisms that actually do the job of digestion. Fecal matter is made up factually of dead *E. coli* pasted together by cholesterol (the rest is waste, water (75%) and dead red blood cells that give it characteristic color). There are some 50,000 species of bacteria and microbes on and in the body that manage the breakdown, consumption and disposal of nutrients and cellular matter. All this is only 50% efficient in the extraction of nutritious matter. The process must continue flawlessly to keep us going. There are even genes that exist to command these guests sending them messages to arise at their summon and do something, just as hormonal proteins ride the bloodstream to summon distant cells to important campaigns. Should they give the wrong commands, the microbes may be at a loss for what to do, languish and die. Given the variety of what our species eats, there are ample opportunities for something to go wrong, in which case the body complains in both obvious and surreptitious ways.

It must be taken as a pleasant truth that these organisms are self-motivated and obedient, "hitting the road running" when called upon to deal with the normal and extraordinary maneuvers our lack of satisfaction with the status quo calls upon them to perform.

Now this may be the juncture at which we must ask ourselves about the stress that the pure evasion of boredom must bring their way. We arise each day and perform our daily functions, mostly in a mechanical fashion and without verve (notwithstanding the attitudes we outwardly manifest) but then, trying desperately to live just a little differently, we lunge at opportunity. We change dwelling, partner, job and then move on to a round of musical chairs before again changing all the pointers from our base of attachment and then grabbing the rings as we swing semi-freely through life. We buy this; we buy that. We try this and that. We return to an earlier point and retry some subsequence to see if perhaps we did it all wrong in earlier times. Frustrated, we grab at the next opportunity for suspension and get ready to sense a lift, a

satisfaction we have been promised or that we have simply imagined. We get a taste of this and a taste of that. The medicament is sometimes at hand: don't do something. Help is sometimes there: psychotherapy can help us adjust to disappointment (unfortunately no amount of psychotherapy can change the outside world that drives us). We experience indigestion each time there is a failure in expectation until alas we believe our taste buds are beginning to fail us or that we have lived a life as dismal dupes.

If the mind is like the gut and memories are chewed up by microthoughts of futility and we sense that new inputs will only mix with the clogging, sickening paste of the past, should we not feel full as if we have been half-starved gluttons at a great meal and want a nap from which we might not awaken? Is the mind at the end of life not like a full stomach that may comfort us one day only with its emptiness?

After we have spent our entire time trying to fill it up with good works, bad and the most varied disappointments? Have we just found delusion or have we just stumbled across the true biopsychic hiding place of Thanatos?