

## Eating and Drinking as Sources of Metaphor in English

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### ABSTRACT

*Eating and drinking are basic acts in ordinary human experience and concepts relating to these acts are sources for metaphorical ways of describing a great variety of events in English and other languages. This paper provides an account of the components of the basic digestive acts and the various metaphorical mappings which each of these components gives rise to in English. Following the orientation of Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and most discussion of metaphor since then within the cognitive linguistics movement, metaphor is understood as essentially a relationship between concepts, relating the concepts associated with a source domain to the concepts associated with the target domain.*

KEY WORDS: eating and drinking, metaphorical mappings, source domain, target domain

### RESUMEN

*Comer y beber son actos básicos de la experiencia humana normal y los conceptos relacionados con esos actos son fuentes de donde surgen modos metafóricos para describir una gran variedad de sucesos tanto en inglés como en varios otros idiomas. Esta comunicación da cuenta de los elementos componentes de los actos digestivos básicos y de las diversas transposiciones metafóricas que cada uno de esos actos engendra en inglés. Siguiendo la orientación establecida por Lakoff y Johnson (1980) y la mayor parte de las discusiones sobre la metáfora que siguen desde entonces dentro del movimiento de la lingüística cognitiva, se entiende aquí la metáfora como esencialmente una relación entre conceptos, donde se relacionan los conceptos asociados con un campo de origen (source domain) con los asociados con el campo de meta (target domain).*

PALABRAS CLAVE: comer y beber, transposiciones metafóricas, campo de origen, campo de meta

## I. INTRODUCTION

A strong theme evident in much of the Cognitive Linguistics movement is the interest in, and respect for, a human perspective, or more broadly, experiential reality (cf. Lakoff 1987:266), in motivating and explicating linguistic phenomena. A natural way to develop this interest is to focus attention on the human body and the way in which it functions as a basic domain, functioning as a source for metaphorical understanding of other, less basic domains. The unique place of the human body in our daily lives makes the human body, and its associated parts and processes, conceptually basic. Hence, body parts, and the processes the body is involved in, serve as natural source domains for many kinds of metaphors. Considerable attention has already been given to body parts and the way in which they are metaphorically extended to various domains, including extensions to quite abstract, grammatical functions (see, for example, Heine et al. 1991a:124-131, Heine et al. 1991b:151-153, Rubba 1994). Equally worthy of attention, as sources of metaphorical extension, are basic acts or events involving our bodies. This interest is already evident in the Cognitive Linguistics literature — cf. the discussion of sense-perception verbs in Sweetser (1990:32-48); “come”/“go” verbs in Radden (1995) and Shen (1995); “stand”/“lie” in Serra Bometo (1995); “give”/“take” in Newman (1996). The present study develops this interest further by examining the concepts of “eating” and “drinking” (surely among the most basic concepts, from the human perspective) as source domains for metaphorical extension in English.

In what follows, I document a representative range of metaphorical extensions of mainly verbal (as opposed to nominal) concepts relating to “eating” and “drinking”. The examples of such extensions do include conventionalized usage in ordinary language, but most of the examples have been taken from British and North American literature (novels and poetry), written within the last 150 years or so. The examples were noted by me as I read through a diverse selection of material drawn from many different authors and writing styles. This way of proceeding enabled me to collect a substantial number of examples, together with the contexts in which they occur — an important consideration in appreciating the full effect of figurative usage of language. The study focuses on the broad category of verbal concepts relating to eating and drinking, rather than the specific verbs *eat* and *drink*. This approach thus follows Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Lakoff (1987:276), and Lakoff and Turner (1989:63) in construing metaphor as a relationship between conceptual domains. Throughout this study, the domain of eating/drinking will be the source domain; the target domains, as will be seen, are various, but include the emotional domain, the intellectual domain, and the psychological domain.

## II. LITERAL “eat” AND “drink”

Before we enter into a discussion of the metaphorical extensions of “eat” and “drink” words, it is necessary to say something about the processes involved in the eating and

drinking acts. The various extensions of "eat" and "drink" verbs are motivated by facets of these acts and it is **only** by properly identifying these facets that we can properly understand the metaphorical extensions. In **turning** our attention to these basic acts, we must consider the folk theory of these acts, rather than any expert **medical knowledge** of the processes involved. This is consistent with a cognitive linguistic approach which takes experiential reality. in this case how ordinary people understand the acts of eating and drinking, as the relevant kind of reality in helping to explicate linguistic phenomena. If we were considering specifically **medical terminology**, devised by **medical experts**, then of course it would be appropriate to consider the specialized **medical knowledge** which motivates the extension. Dealing as we are, however, with the lay person's use of language, rooted in a folk understanding of the processes involved, it is entirely appropriate that we proceed in this way.

The act of eating is multifaceted. As a convenient way of detailing the act. one may recognize the following components, based on my own conception of what is the most typical kind of eating. It is appropriate to acknowledge an aspect of the larger frame of eating which precedes and is causally connected to the act. namely **some** degree of *hunger*. It is the experience of hunger which encourages one, even compels one, to eat. This is not to deny that one may **have** to eat even when one lacks an appetite. But the overwhelming majority of eating acts coincide with and **result** from an hunger which demands food in satisfaction. Eating is something **desired** and initiated by the eater, not something that happens to the eater. As for the act proper, one may note, first of all, there is an *intake* of some solid-like substance into the mouth, usually achieved by the eater using their own **hand(s)**. This is followed by *mastication* of the food in the mouth, involving **primarily** the teeth, tongue, and the roof of the mouth. The food particles are then passed down the **throat** into the intestines and stomach through a process of *swallowing*. Inside the intestines/stomach is where I understand the food to undergo quite drastic transformations through processes one may refer to as *digestion*. Of course, remaining solids are eventually excreted, though in my own naive conception of eating, the act of eating terminates in the stomach, rather than the excrement. Alongside these components which make up the actual act of eating, one needs to recognize the most important function of eating, namely the *nourishment* it **provides** for the body. Accompanying these purely physical aspects of eating is the **impression** of taste which we may refer to as *gustation*. **Normally**, we eat food which produces pleasant, agreeable taste and normally we avoid food which is not pleasant to taste. Thus, there is an experiential bias towards *enjoyable gustation*.

Drinking may be described in a similar way. There is, typically, a *thirst* which includes a **desire** for liquid, an *intake* of liquid. followed by *swallowing*, and finally *digestion* of the liquid in the stomach. While there is great variety in the kinds of liquids one may drink, *water* is especially salient as a liquid which **all** humans must drink on a regular, indeed daily, **basis**. There **does** not seem to be any comparable food which is universally recognized as essential. There are staple foods (e.g. bread, rice, **sago**, etc.) within individual cultures, but these may be shunned or even completely **unknown** in other cultures. *Nourishment* is a significant function of drinking water and other liquids. *Enjoyable*

*gustation*, too, is the norm for drinking as it is for eating. In many cultures, including Anglo-Saxon-Celtic cultures, the drinking of alcoholic beverages needs to be given special recognition. Alcoholic beverages give rise to various degrees of *intoxication*, indeed it is most common (and legal) means of becoming intoxicated in these cultures. It is possible to enter "altered" states by eating certain foods (varieties of mushroom, betel nut, "opium fruit" etc.), but within Anglo-Saxon-Celtic cultures it is the drinking of alcohol which is by far the most preferred way of achieving a psychological high through intake of some drug-like substance.

The similarities between eating and drinking, then, involve the intake, swallowing, and digestion of substance, which nourish the body and have an accompanying sensory effect of (normally) enjoyable *gustation*. The two acts are not only similar in **structure** — they often occur together. Not surprisingly, then, languages have words which refer to both acts (cf. *dine* and *feast* which normally involve both eating and drinking, and *consume* which can refer to either eating or drinking). They differ, however, in important ways. In particular, liquid is not masticated in the way that food is and the **form** of the liquid remains much the **same** from the time of intake to the time it enters the stomach. Also, there is a close association between drinking and intoxication which is absent in the case of eating. These differences are crucial in understanding the different ways in which the concepts of eating and drinking are metaphorically extended, as explained below.

### III. AGENT-ORIENTED EXTENSIONS

Some metaphorical extensions of eating and drinking words are motivated by properties of the agent, i.e. the consumer, in the process. The agent in eating and drinking **serves** as a strong image of "internalization", i.e. incorporating something into one's personal or private sphere. Firstly, there is the intake of food and drink from **outside** the body into the mouth. This stage involves a clear transition from being visible and **outside** the body to being no longer visible and inside the body. Secondly, there is the swallowing aspect which moves food and drink from being in the mouth, where it can be moved and controlled by the tongue (and still easily spat out of the body), to being in the intestines and eventually the stomach, where it is controlled by involuntary reflexes and processes beyond our conscious control, and requiring a more difficult and sometimes painful act to bring the food out of the mouth again. Note, also, that these two aspects are common to both eating and drinking. These two aspects are the basis for conceptualizing various kinds of events which one might classify as "internalization". Other aspects of eating and drinking relating to the agent's role are: the hunger/thirst element; the work done in masticating, swallowing, digestion; the **nourishment**; and the enjoyable *gustation* accompanying the basic acts. In the set of extensions to be discussed in Section III, it is the role of the eater/drinker which **motivates** the extension, rather than the effect on the thing eaten.

## III.1. INHALING

Verbs of eating and drinking may be extended to the intake of something physical, but not food or drink, into the body. *Air* is a common object to such verbs, as in (1).

- (1) a. *He came to this country like a torch on fire and he swallowed air as he walked forward and he gave out light.* (Ondaatje 1987:149)  
 b. *I pace the earth, and drink the air, and feel the sun.* (Housman 1896/1939:72, Poem XLVIII)

In (1a), *swallow air* is used in a context describing the optimistic and enthusiastic response of a newly arrived immigrant in the New World. It describes the vigorous breathing in of air through the mouth as the protagonist strides forward. *Swallow* emphasises the wholehearted, direct taking in of air, consistent with the wholehearted embracing of the new country. (1b) is similar in its depiction of the enjoyment of breathing in air. Drinking liquid involves a more or less continuous flow of liquid into the body and in (1b) *drink* has the nuance of taking in air in a plentiful, uninterrupted (and enjoyable) way. In Table 1, I list the essentials of the mapping between the eating/drinking domain and the breathing domain implied in (1a). Here, as in the descriptions of other metaphorical mappings, the source domain and its sub-components are listed on the left and the target domain and its sub-components on the right. The sub-components of the eating/drinking domain in these descriptions will normally include the various facets of eating/drinking as described in Section II. Where appropriate, each sub-component of the source domain is assigned a corresponding sub-component of the target domain, though this is not always possible. In the case of (1a) there are, in fact, three domains involved in a full understanding of this use: the domain of eating and drinking, the respiratory domain of the human organism, and the domain relating to the experience of life in general terms. The passage cited is, within the context of the whole novel, really about embracing life in the New World, which is conceptualized in terms of taking in air, which in turn is conceptualized in terms of the eating/drinking domain.

EATING/DRINKING DOMAIN	RESPIRATORY DOMAIN
hunger/thirst	need for air
intake of food/drink through mouth	intake of air through mouth (metaphorically also taking in of sensation of a new country)
mastication	—
swallowing	wholehearted intake of air (metaphorically also wholehearted embrace of a new country)
digestion	—
nourishment	air is necessary to live
enjoyable gustation	enjoyable experience of being (also enjoyment of new sensations)

Table 1. *Eating/drinking extended to breathing, as in (1a).*

III.2. EMOTIONAL NOURISHMENT

A less concrete type of internalization involves taking in external stimuli which add to and support one's emotional state, as in (2).

- (2) a. . . .*waiting to see what she would say to feed my heart with hope.* (Cooper 1982:82)
- b. *Go slow, my soul, to feed thyself*  
          *Upon his rare approach* (Dickinson 1890/1960:565, Poem 1297)
- c. *She was uncritically idolised by an army of fans, male and female. She ate up the adoration . . .* (*Marie Claire* magazine, Feb. 1996:176, on the actress Lana Turner)

In (2a), it is some verbal message which is taken in and translated into hope within the person, with *my heart* functioning metonymically for the emotional side of the person. In (2b), it is the sight of another person which is taken in and adds to the emotional satisfaction of the beholder. Here, *my soul* functions as the locus of the emotions. In (2c), it is the adoration from the public which is taken in by Lana Turner and enjoyed. The mapping between the eating/drinking domain and the emotional domain is extensive, as shown in Table 2. A particular use of an "eat" or "drink" word may profile one of these components more than others, though multiple mappings may be present, adding to the richness of the metaphorical usage. (2b) above, for example, easily invites all these sub-mappings.

EATING/DRINKING DOMAIN	EMOTIONAL DOMAIN
hunger/thirst	desire/need for emotional stimulation
intake of food/drink, which should not be done too fast	taking in the sight of a loved one, which may need to be restrained
mastication	—
	deep part of the beholder
digestion	the image of the loved one is converted into emotional effects
nourishment	love is good for human wellbeing
enjoyable gustation	enjoyable sensation of love

Table 2. *Eating/drinking extended to the emotional domain, as in (2b).*

Closely related to the extension to the emotional domain is the extension to the sexual domain. We see this in (3), which is naturally understood as meaning that the man wanted to engage in sex with the woman.

- (3) *He gave me a look - all the men did, but this was different - a look like he wanted to eat me up. A hungry look.* (De Ferrar 1990:222, talking about a man who had fallen in love with the woman)

The metaphorical sub-mappings implied in (3) are similar to those in Table 2, but with a more specifically sexual emphasis. There is sexual hunger and sexual satisfaction, parallel to the hunger and satisfaction in the eating/drinking domain. There is nothing obvious in the (3), however, which corresponds to food **taken** in. One might consider, say, the drawing or pulling of a woman to one's body as the counterpart of the intake of food, though this is not a particularly compelling correspondence. Probably, it is more the role of eating as an exemplary bodily/sensual act which allows it to be used for conceptualizing other bodily acts. Notice how the use of the *up* panicle in *eat me up* is effective in emphasizing the completeness and fullness of the sexual interaction, making it akin to the sense of *devour* which, of course, has a conventionalized sexual usage.

### III.3. INTELLECTUAL NOURISHMENT

The eating/drinking domain may be mapped onto the intellectual domain. In (4a) the metaphorical extension is based on the verb *fatten oneself*. Though lacking an explicit verb relating to eating and drinking, the examples in (4b) and (4c) also set up strong correspondences between the eating/drinking domain and the intellectual domain.

- (4) a. So she built *up* the plaintive, self-deprecating image while privately she fattened *herself* on the 'big books . . .' (Gordon 1984:83-84)
- b. Greek . . . *is* my daily bread, and a keen *delight* to me. (From Virginia Woolf's *Letters* 1900, quoted in Gordon 1984:93)
- c. *Intellectual appetite* must round out the woman's point of *view*, she *said*, thinking of George Eliot. 'She must reach beyond *the sanctuary* and pluck for herself the *strange* bnght *fruits* of *art* and knowledge.' (George Eliot, quoted in Gordon 1984:93)

Each of these examples has its own special comotations, evoked by the particular words used to carry the metaphor. So, in (4a), fatten *herself* suggests a greediness and lack of restraint in the person's approach to reading books; in (4b), the learning of Greek is portrayed as like a religious ritual through the use of the biblical phrase daily bread; in (4c), the use of pluck for herself profiles the need for *some* initiative on the part of the woman in expanding her intellectual horizon. Table 3 summarizes the main correspondences at work in the Greek is my daily bread example of (4b). There is very robust and complete mapping between these domains, as reflected in the many conventionalized uses of eating/drinking vocabulary, such as food for *thought*, digest ideas, *swallow an* idea etc. (4b), as noted above, has religious comotations, too, though I have not tried to express that in Table 3.

EATING/DRINKING DOMAIN	INTELLECTUAL DOMAIN
hunger/thirst	the mind needs stimulation
intake of food/drink	studying Greek; reading books on Greek and in Greek
mastication	coming to grips with the Greek language; understanding Greek ideas, literature, and philosophy
swallowing	memorizing Greek language and ideas
digestion	working on Greek language and ideas to fully comprehend them
nourishment	knowledge of Greek language and ideas enhances human life
enjoyable gustation	studying Greek language and ideas is a pleasure

Table 3. *Eating/drinking* extended to the *intellectual* domain, as in (4b).

## III.4. ACCEPTING IDEAS

There is a conventionalized usage of *swallow*, illustrated in (5a). In this usage, *swallow* collocates with words relating to ideas, suggestions, etc. to mean that one accepts these ideas etc. **unreservedly**, even naively. So, in (5a), the writer is making the point that many people were not **critical** enough of the **government's** plan and accepted it too easily. Note, however, that the connotation of blameworthy, uncritical acceptance need not always attach to *swallow* in these collocations. In (5b), *swallowing her words*, in the context of the story, is not taken to mean something reprehensible on the part of the listener. Instead, it simply means that the **listener** was enraptured by the speaker and hung on every word that she said.

- (5) a. *He contends that **many** people **have** 'swallowed' the official **line** (that government had to cut its spending and the resulting gains **have been** worth the pain). He argues the pain is too **severe**.* (Palmerston North Guardian, April 10 1996:6)
- b. *He listens to her, swallowing her words like water.* (Ondaatje 1992:5)

The examples in (5) are similar to the expressions relating to the intellectual domain, involving ideas etc. entering into one's sphere of consciousness or one's **knowledge**, as discussed in the preceding section. However, the metaphors are different enough to warrant being treated separately. The use of *swallow* gives **salience** to that part of eating/drinking where **food/drink** changes from being visible, or at least **in** the mouth, to being invisible and inaccessible. Verbs like *eat*, *chew*, *digest* etc., which focus on the work we do with food in the mouth or in the intestines, would be less appropriate in (5), since they would suggest more mental processing of, or reflection on, the ideas. Table 4 summarizes the uncritical acceptance of ideas, as implied by (5a). It seems appropriate in this case to omit correspondences for a number of the sub-components of eating/drinking — in particular, the notions of mastication, digestion, nourishment, and enjoyable gustation **all** seem irrelevant to this metaphorical extension.

EATING/DRINKING DOMAIN	INTELLECTUAL DOMAIN
<b>hunger/thirst</b>	humans <b>like</b> to <b>have</b> explanations
<b>intake of food/drink</b>	humans do receive explanations
mastication	—
swallowing	one accepts what one is told
digestion	—
nourishment	—
enjoyable gustation	—

Table 4. *Eating/drinking extended to acceptance of ideas, as in (5a).*

## III.5. EXPERIENCING LIFE

The experience of life itself can be conceptualized as something to be consumed. A clever example of this mode of conceptualization is (6). Here, the use of *swallow* to suggest a wholehearted engagement with life is contrasted with *nibble* suggesting a timid and limited engagement.

- (6) *'Perhaps I've grown up' . . . this summer she had learned to swallow life whole rather than merely nibble at it edges.* (De Ferrar 1990:157)

Nibbling and swallowing both have correspondences, then, into the mapping onto life's experiences, as shown in Table 5. The intake of food/drink corresponds to an abstract kind of taking in of life's experiences, whereby events in the outside world become part of one's experience and reside, as it were, inside one's self.

EATING/DRINKING DOMAIN	DOMAIN OF LIFE'S EXPERIENCES
hunger/thirst	humans need experiences to grow
intake of food/drink, which can be done in a small way by nibbling/sipping	humans can "take in" life cautiously by limiting their experiences
mastication	—
swallowing, which can be done without breaking up food	humans can react to life's experiences more fully by taking in all of life's experiences
digestion	life's experiences are converted into personal growth
nourishment	life's experiences enable humans to grow as individuals
enjoyable gustation	most experiences are enjoyable

Table 5. *Eating/drinking extended to experiencing life, as in (6).*

In (4c) above, we have an image of fruits on a tree representing different repositories of knowledge, with the plucking and eating of the fruits corresponding to intellectual nourishment. A similar image is also found as a way of construing life's opportunities. One of the most vivid and sustained examples of this metaphor is in (7), which deserves to be quoted in full.

- (7) *I saw my life branching out before me like the green fig-tree in the story. From the tip of every branch, like a fat purple fig, a wonderful future beckoned and winked. One fig was a husband and a happy home and children, and another fig was a famous poet and another fig was a brilliant professor, and another fig was Ee Gee, the amazing editor, and another fig was Europe and Africa and South America, and*

*another fig was Constantine and Socrates and Attila and a pack of other lovers with queer names and off-beat professions, and another fig was an Olympic lady-crew champion, and beyond and above these figs were many more figs I couldn't quite make out.*

*I saw myself sitting in the crotch of this fig-tree, starving to death, just because I couldn't make up my mind which of the figs I would choose. I wanted each and every one of them, but choosing one meant losing all the rest, and, as I sat there, unable to decide, the figs began to wrinkle and go black, and, one by one, they plopped to the ground at my feet. (Plath 1963:80)*

Here, the fig-tree corresponds to life, and the individual figs correspond to alternative career choices and role models, choosing (and eating) one of the figs corresponds to making a career choice, and being unable to choose a fig corresponds to an inability to do anything with one's life. The eating of the figs is clearly implied, as part of wanting the figs, though, interestingly, there is no explicit eating/drinking verb used in the passage. Note also the expressions relating to drinking of wine (*my cup overfloweth, getting drunk on life* etc.) to describe the full experience of life.

### III.6. ACQUIRING POSSESSIONS

Apart from conceptualizing the taking in of quite abstract entities, such as ideas and thoughts etc., the eating/drinking domain may also be used to visualize the acquisition of material objects, making them part of one's possession. Consider (8) from this point of view.

(8) . . . *Mr Rowland's face, unacceptable as it may have been to liberal Conservatism, has grown plumper with the **ingestion** of more and more enterprises.* (Barnes 1995:29)

(8) refers to how Mr. Rowland has acquired a large number of business enterprises. The basic correspondence, therefore, is between the intake of food/drink and acquisition of possessions (businesses). Table 6 summarizes the range of correspondences which one can establish in an example such as (8).

EATING/DRINKING DOMAIN	DOMAIN OF BUSINESS AFFAIRS
hunger/thirst	business people like their business to grow
intake of food/drink	business people can absorb other businesses
mastication	—
swallowing	businesses can completely absorb other businesses
digestion	some adjustment is necessary after a business is absorbed by another
nourishment	taking over other businesses helps to keep one's business strong
enjoyable gustation	taking over businesses is satisfying

Table 6. *Eating/drinking extended to acquiring businesses, as in (8).*

(8) is a little more complex than is suggested by the metaphorical mapping in Table 6. The eating/drinking domain extends to a **reference** to the businessman's face having grown plumper, as a result of the new business acquisitions. There is a **chain** of understanding **here** along the lines: acquiring wealth leads to more spending on food/drink; too much food/drink leads to plumpness **in** the body (and face). The notion of eating/drinking is therefore the bridge between understanding (figuratively) the acquisition of wealth and the plumpness. The role of eating/drinking is both metaphorical ("business acquisition is food that is eaten") and literal ("business acquisitions are accompanied by eating too much food/drink") at one and the same time.

#### IV. PATIENT-ORIENTED EXTENSIONS

We now **turn** our attention to extensions which are motivated by the effect of eating/drinking on the food/drink consumed, i.e. the thematic patient in the eating/drinking process. The role of food/drink in eating/drinking gives rise to quite a different set of extensions, compared with the agent-oriented extensions discussed in Section III. The most striking **feature concerning** food/drink is that it disappears from sight and is taken into an **inaccessible** part of the body. This is true of both food and drink. In the case of food, there is the **further** important fact, noted in Section II, that the food is **subject** to mastication, involving chewing and biting, whereas with drink, this is not the case. Hence, verbs relating to eating (rather than drinking) are especially appropriate as sources for images of destruction. This is quite different from the "intemalization" extensions of Section III. The **eater/drinker's** role is to take something into the body; the effect on the food is the rather violent processing and **transformation** of food into digestible particles. This difference underlies the separation of meanings into those of Section III and Section IV.

IV.1. PHYSICAL DESTRUCTION

The example in (9) show eating/drinking verbs extended to a physical form of destruction. In this case, a gorge is conceptualized agentively, destroying mountainside and thereby creating more gorge.

- (9) . . . *she found herself in the high little town called Adeje, from which the long Barranco del Infierno, the gorge called Hell's Valley, ate into the mountainside.* (Cherkawska 1990:166)

The sub-parts of eating which have relevance in understanding this use of *eat (into)* seem limited to the parts affecting the food, in particular mastication, swallowing, and digestion. These parts can be put into correspondence with aspects of physical destruction, as shown in Table 7.

EATING/DRINKING DOMAIN	GEOLOGICAL DOMAIN
hunger	—
intake of food	—
mastication	physical deformation of an object
swallowing	object is made to disappear
digestion	object is transformed into something different
nourishment	—
enjoyable gustation	—

Table 7. *Eating extended to the geological domain, as in (9).*

Earlier, in Section III.5, we remarked upon how the experience of life may be conceptualized in terms of the eating/drinking domain, building upon the "internalization" kind of extension. In that use of the eating/drinking domain, life's experiences corresponded to the **food/drink** which is consumed in the **eating/drinking** process. It is interesting to compare those **examples** with (10), which also describes **experiencing** life, but this time from the point of view of life destroying **the** experiencer. Probably the intended **meaning** is broader than **just** that of physical destruction or ageing, and includes **some** psychological effect on the experiencer, but it is convenient to include it **in** this section.

- (10) *So at last we come to the writer's  
Middle years, the hardest yet to bear,  
All will agree: for it is now  
He condenses, prunes and tries to order  
The experiences which gorged upon his youth.* (Durrell 1980:230)

We can "take in" life, like we take in food; but life can also destroy us, our youth etc., just as we destroy food in the act of eating. The **eating/drinking** domain suppons both kinds of **images**, depending on whether one focuses on the agent-oriented aspect of eating (the idea of **internalizing** something which nourishes us) or the patient-oriented aspect (the idea of destruction).

#### IV.2. PYSCHOLOGICAL TORMENT

Psychological torment, distress, stress etc. may also be conceptualized in terms of eating, again reflecting the destmctive effect that eating has on food consumed. The examples in (11) illustrate this extension. The idea of torment, stress etc. is **typically** a continuous process or state, rather than instantaneous, and the continuous effect is achieved by the use of lexical items, verb particles, modifiers etc. Thus, the use of *away at...* in *eat away at*, in (11a), adds the sense of a continuous, progressive aspect; *gnaw* in (11b) is inherently continuous in aspect; and, in (11c), the modifying phrase *like a persistent toothache* etc. explicitly makes the process a long, continuous one.

- (11) a. *I've seen love do that to a woman, eat away at the heart of her until she's no more than skin and bone.* (De Ferrar 1990:157)  
 b. *Trepidation gnawed at her . . .* (De Ferrar 1990:314)  
 c. *The pain of it ate into her like a persistent toorhache that no dentist could cure.* (Cherkawska 1990:8)

Table 8 summarizes the correspondences at work in (11a)

EATING/DRINKING DOMAIN	EMOTIONAL DOMAIN
hunger/thirst	—
intake of food/drink	—
mastication	emotions can keep troubling a person
swallowing	one can be psychologically destroyed by some emotions
digestion	one can be transformed by emotional forces
nourishment	—
enjoyable gustation	—

Table 8. *Eating extended to the emotional domain, as in (11a).*

IV.3. ELIMINATION

The "destruction" and "torment" senses which are evident in the above examples in Sections IV.1 and IV.2 achieve their effect, in part, through the image of food being masticated. It is the biting and chewing in the eating/drinking act which seems to correspond most to the "destruction" and "torment" ideas in the target domains. But the act of swallowing, without any reference to mastication, can also serve as a source image for concepts relating to the elimination of entities, as in (12). As noted in Section II, swallowing makes food relatively inaccessible and swallowing is therefore appropriate as a way of conceptualizing the complete elimination or removal of an entity, without implying the continuous, bit by bit destruction found with the metaphorical extensions of mastication verbs.

- (12) a. *X swallowed Y.* (Said by a broadcaster, describer player X who smothered player Y and the ball in a game of rugby)
- b. *He had changed, and latterly all those good memories had been swallowed up by indifference and uncertainty.* (Cherkawska 1990:8)

In (12a), the image one conjures up is of a sudden and complete enclosure of Y by X. In (12b), the intended meaning is that the memories have been completely erased, with the verb particle *up* adding to the completive, perfective sense. Table 9 summarizes the correspondence suggested by (12b). Although the mapping between the source and target domains is very limited here, I have still shown all the sub-components of the eating/drinking domain to be consistent with the other tables.

EATING/DRINKING DOMAIN	PSYCHOLOGICAL DOMAIN
hunger/thirst	--
intake of food/drink	--
mastication	--
swallowing	memories can be lost by <u>certain</u> psychological events
digestion	--
nourishment	--
enjoyable gustation	=

Table 9. *Swallowing extended to the psychological domain, as in (12b).*

V. EXTENSIONS WITH BOTH AGENT AND PATIENT ORIENTATION

Sometimes, we find metaphorical uses of eating/drinking verbs which build upon both agent-oriented and patient-oriented aspects of eating/drinking. To illustrate this, consider the idiomatic expressions *to eat one's words* "to retract what one has said" and *to eat one's heart out* "to suffer a particular kind of emotional pain as when one is denied a pleasure and must witness someone else enjoying that kind of pleasure".

*To eat one's words* clearly involves the "destruction" sense discussed above in Section IV.1, building upon the effect of eating on the thematic patient. It is not that any concrete object is literally destroyed, of course, but rather it is the claims, allegations etc. which have previously been made which are cancelled out. *Words* in this expression is metonymic for the larger linguistic entities which are being withdrawn. At the same time, there is the image of an eater having to eat what has previously come out his/her mouth. The act of withdrawing one's claims is thus conceptualized through an unpleasant image of an eater eating something vile, akin to eating one's vomit. Clearly, from the agent's perspective, something very unpleasant is being experienced. Thus the one expression combines the sense of destruction of the thing affected and the sense of a person having to consume something unpalatable. The full effect of the expression is achieved through the combination of both these aspects.

We see a similar intermingling of semantic effects in *to eat one's heart out*. Semantically, this is a very complex expression in the way the parts contribute to the overall meaning. For the present purposes, it is enough just to note how both agent-oriented and patient-oriented extensions of *eat* are present. The agent orientation in the metaphorical extension of *eat* relates to how the person suffers through having to eat something unpleasant. The patient orientation relates to the image of the destruction of the heart, which is here metonymic for one's feelings, passion etc. Again, the overall meaning builds upon the effect on the agent eating something unpleasant and the effect of the locus of emotions being destroyed.

## VI. CONCLUSION

In the preceding sections, the discussion of eating/drinking has **been** couched in terms of the concepts of eating **and** drinking and how those concepts **have been** mapped onto concepts in other domains. That is to say, the discussion has **been in** terms of the concepts "eat" and "drink" rather than **just** the verbs *eat* and *drink*. The preceding discussion has **served**, in other words, to document and emphasize the **richness** of the conceptual mappings between the eating/drinking domain and other domains, rather than document the metaphorical use of the specific verbs *eat* and *drink*. There is, in fact, a great variety of lexical items which are actually employed **in** such conceptual mappings and we **have seen some** of these variety above **in** the use of verbs such as *gnaw*, *swallow*, *ingestion*, *nibble* etc.

As a way of organizing the discussion of metaphorical extensions of the **eat- ing/drinking** domain, it is **useful** to distinguish agent-oriented and patient-oriented extensions. The former describe "**internalization**" images, usually agreeable **ones**, consistent with **the** role of the **eater/drinker in the source** domain. The latter describe types of "destruction", consistent with the effects on **food/drink in the source** domain. **The** eating/drinking domain thus **provides** strong images of two quite different **sorts**, depending on whether one focuses on the agent or the patient **in the eating/drinking** process.

The preceding discussion has given an overview of the main tendencies in the metaphorical mappings which rely upon eating/drinking as the **source** domain. It should be clear that it is a productive and **significant source** domain **in** English, **worthy** of more detailed study. Equally worthy of study, of course, is how other languages utilize eating/drinking as a **source** domain for metaphors and it is to be hoped that such studies will be undertaken with a view towards documenting **fully** the metaphorical potential of the eating/drinking domain.

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