






# About Speculation Based On Caries






by Lucie Sahner

I have a hole in my tooth. This is frustrating. **I have to eat to stay alive.**  Which is difficult anyway; consumption itself is problematic; I must research with a heavy heart to see if Nestle is producing my beloved Kinder Bueno. Well, I eat Kinder Bueno, but mainly other things, to stay alive, an intuitive, sensual activity, **shove food into the mouth, crush it, chew it with saliva, swallow it, digest it, excrete it, and so on. In this process, however, something is attacking my body, or more precisely, my back molar.**  Microorganisms create caries that eat my tooth like I ate the Kinder Bueno. Or any other food. Anyway, a black spot appears on my tooth, and it gets bigger and bigger, eating into me and my sweet tooth until, at some point, it starts hurting. My tooth, and any other tooth too, I assume, is made with a solid substance that appears bone-like. I won't give an accurate description here; please restrain yourselves, you passionate dental assistants and doctors - this is more about a metaphor than dental expertise. So, in this outside bone thing lies a nerve that, as soon as the decay reaches it, the nerve wriggles, twitches and reacts, shouting "ouch" to my brain. **Ouch.** 

In this case, you go to the dentist, which is a weird experience. The interior alone conveys the feeling of being at the mercy of the dentist. You can imagine being strapped in against your will, so much so that you give weird torture-enterer names to the dentist's chair like Pfommelschneider or Krankheizer. Probably in the Middle Ages, people actually had to be tied down because of the lack of sedation. Anyway, you go to the dentist and sit there and have to open your mouth so that, at best, several hands and droning instruments fit inside. But the dentist only wants good things!

So first, they give you a shot. My favourite thing is when they give the injection wrong, and then your upper lip swells up so much that you think you've had plastic surgery. So after someone puts a syringe in your gums, where you normally prefer to leave sharp things out, the feeling in your mouth dies. Being numb, not feeling anything, is nice sometimes; many people know that! Then to work, dear dentist, put some things into my mouth. The resonating mouth amplifies the drilling noise itself. Then there it is, an even bigger hole in the tooth. **My connection to my nerves in the mouth is opened like the stargate into another reality.** 

The sharp-bright caries colour turned to brown-black dust, probably inhaled by me or this sucker the assistant keeps on holing. With the tongue, you can feel it and palpate how deep it goes now - this neatly drilled crater. Unfortunately, since you don't lick everything since the oral phase in early childhood is over, it's hard to speculate how deep the hole is now. Is it a millimetre or a centimetre deep? There are no empirical values. As a matter of principle, I touch my tooth with my tongue, even if it hurts. Where there was something before, there is nothing now. A part of my body is gone, even if it is only a small part. What does it mean when there is a gap, a hole, a crater, and you feel the size, the circumference, the width, and the meaning of something that no longer exists? You need an existence for a not-existence. **How deep is the crater? Can I never eat again, or can I store supplies in it like a hamster? My vision is limited as I lay there on the chair, although I can look into my mouth with a hand mirror, but I can't really see. But: the hole is there, for sure, I feel it.** 

Speculation is born at this very moment; by the fact that something is non-existent. **This sense of nothingness creates a whirlpool for thematic or material depth, something you can explore.**  So you start scanning the whole hole and its environment. **And then, if you enjoy this sort of thing, the thinking begins, the imagining, about whether and when and what could fill this hole.**  Of course, at first, there is also the possibility of leaving the hole open. A good one, though. That could be the learning effect. With the tooth example - If it always hurts when you eat, then you remember that maybe you shouldn't eat so much sweet stuff, and maybe you eat more slowly. Maybe in pain, you eat more consciously; you are certain about the body's fragility. But this theory of pain reminds me too much of Leibniz, who said that knowledge comes with suffering, and I don't like that, but I don't know if that's even correct; his theories were somewhat more connected to Christianity. **So, because I don't like pain, and I like to imagine, I rather fill in the blank.**  I looked it up, and there are some excellent classics for teeth: amalgam, composite, cement, gold, ceramic, and plastic. I'm sure many other fillings are available from the dentist you trust. But you could also insert something unique, like a little radio (like the grandma in a well-known German children's song), or something with a good taste like peppermint or chocolate flavour. **Particularly fitting for me personally would be my own tooth salt reservoir, pressed sea salt or a tiny natural salt-stone, which always, in every meal, releases a little salt and thus - in my opinion - always makes the food taste a little better. Before the pepper front complains, you could take pepper if you're silly.**  You could install a small, retractable electric toothbrush in the tooth hole that always brushes the other teeth, so you would save yourself the hassle of brushing your teeth. **You could clean your teeth practically on the bus without anyone noticing. The more significant the gap, the more you can put in: tools, pipes, a little spice cabinet, a book shelf, nail scissors, a photo camera or passport photo machine, ect.** 

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