

# Put garbage in, get garbage out!

by Andrew Festa  
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In psychology, we're taught that conscience is a stream of thought and that mind is like a blank slate waiting to be written upon.

The latter thought is much like saying we are what impinges

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upon our receptor sites or, we are what we mentally eat.

This allusion is widely accepted when it comes to our physical being, that we are what we eat, so, it seems logical and wise to assume our mental being is like that of our physical being, no?

I'm trying to open something up to debate that needs to be seriously discussed by the professions (Psychology and Sociology to start) and by the general public. Something is

seriously wrong if we can accept the sights, sounds, and other sources of stimulation we receive every day of our all too short lives and not question what's being done to us.

I understand how what I'm saying might sound like a judgement call, but not to question the validity of that which touches us and is written onto (or into) our blank slates from birth is to make a judgement call as well.

It is a judgement which, by silence or ignorance, implies it's ok; that it's good for us; even though it might be destroying, corrupting, or limiting who we are as human beings if not as parts of a social whole.

Perhaps it's time to examine the issue and search for answers or, at the very least, look at the effects and try to circumvent damage before it's too late.

I must say, before I continue, that I am only speculating, but I would hope someone, somewhere will read these words and decide to investigate.

In the meantime, these images are continually written onto our slates through the various medium: television (movies and other shows, advertisements, and video music,) Radio (shows, songs, advertisements, and talk shows,)

the written media (newspapers, journals, magazines, comic books, how-to books, texts, and other written material,) and through the invasion into our minds of the ever present billboards and other signs all over our world (and recently included



in some computer programs and games.)

Through all of these various outlets, we are reshaped, our minds shaped like play-doh in the hands of those who present to us their interpretation of what is right, good, best, entertaining and moral.

Is it any wonder that those who present these values to us are changing what they present all the time? Perhaps they can not come to a final and real conclusion as to what is good,

right, moral, entertaining and best?

Perhaps they, being recipients also, can not decide because they are victims of their own material, of their own illusions? Maybe, just maybe there's a reason behind the growing violence and moral decadence shipped to us and our slates via the various medium, and which are reflected in the morals and attitudes of today's society.

If so, and I'd like to believe it's not true, then perhaps that's our cue to act? In any respect, it should be a warning flag to be investigated.

Whatever the reason, or even if there isn't a reason, we should start cleaning out some of the trash (a subjective statement I stand strongly behind in regards to the modern audio and video medium) and start working toward the betterment of our mental world before it's too late. Or is it too late already?

If we can be concerned about our physical well being, why not extend that idea to cover our mental (and/or emotional) well being?

We speak as a world united against the evils of pollution within our physical world, but remain dangerously silent about the pollution within our mental worlds.

An old IBM saying comes to mind: "Put garbage in; get garbage out!"

What happens when you take ground water from a well, spray it on a pile of polluted garbage, let it all soak into the well water supply, and repeat the process? How long will it be before you stop getting clean or clear water out of the well?

A final note: I have to wonder about the medium (such as television or radio) that can put on the commercial about the young child imitating his father who's smoking a cigarette -- "Like father; like son" -- but who can, or won't see the damage caused by the TRASH put on television for mental ingestion by the masses (many of whom are highly impressionable young children.) Are the people behind the controls of these mediums ignorant, or are they just devious?

Whatta Country.

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## FORGET BUSH, CLINTON, EVEN PEROT: HAVE YOU CHECKED YOUR TOILET LATELY?

by Dave Barry  
Syndicated Columnist

I hate to bring this up so close to the presidential election, but it turns out that the problem of snakes in toilets is even worse than we thought.

You may recall that several months ago I wrote about a chilling but true incident in Oklahoma wherein a courageous man fought a lengthy multi-commode battle to evict a lengthy snake from the plumbing system of a sportsmen's club. The man would flush the snake down one toilet, thinking he had got rid of it, but then, bam, it would pop up in another toilet. It had to be a nightmare, similar to a situation wherein you're watching TV, and no matter which channel you change to, bam, there's the Captain and Tennille.

After that column appeared, I received dozens of letters from readers claiming that they, too, have had encounters with toilet snakes. Even if we allow for the fact that a certain percentage (94) of the people who read this column are, to use psychological terminology, a few croutons short of a salad, we see that this snake problem is not confined to the United States. I base this

statement on an amazing incident in Canada (a nation located near Buffalo, N.Y.) wherein a toilet snake appeared as evidence in a COURT OF LAW.

This was brought to my attention by alert Canadian John Hale, who was the defense lawyer in the case. He sent in a news account from Lawyers' Weekly, written by Elizabeth Payne and headlined--I am not making this up--LAWYERS ATTEMPT TO GET SNAKE DOWN TOILET FOR COURTROOM DEMONSTRATION.

To understand why this demonstration was legally necessary, you need to know what lawyers call the facts of the case (or, in Latin, "ipso factos"):

On the morning of July 21, 1991, a 9-year-old girl went into the bathroom of her Ottawa apartment and discovered, in the toilet bowl, a four-foot-long (or, in Latin, 1.25-meter) python named "Even," hereinafter referred to as "Even." The girl told her mom, who called the authorities, who managed to capture Even somehow. ("We have this toilet surrounded! Come out with your hands up!")

It was determined that Even belonged to a man who lived in the apartment upstairs; prosecutors

then charged this man with cruelty to animals, alleging that he wanted to get rid of Even, so he (the owner) flushed him (Even) down the toilet, causing Even to



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suffer abrasions and what the article describes as "a bad case of snake pneumonia."

But defense lawyer Hale claimed that the defendant had

merely left Even soaking in a bathtub, and that Even crawled into the toilet of his own free will. According to the article, Hale argued that "because Even is a ball python and rolls into a ball when frightened... it would be impossible to flush him down the toilet." (Legal scholars will recognize this as the famous "Ball Python defense.")

At this point, you probably have several questions:

1. Why was he soaking the snake in the bathtub?
2. Did it have snake B.O.?
3. Despite the lack of armpits?
4. Does the Canadian legal system have a lot of spare time, or what?

The answer to No. 4 is clearly "yes," because when the case went to trial, defense lawyer Hale had an actual toilet brought into the courtroom and filled with water for a demonstration intended to prove that Even would, on his own, go commode-diving. I am still not making this up. The prosecutor strongly objected to this demonstration, arguing that "the very reason we are in court is because of an allegation that someone tried to force a snake down the toilet."

But the judge decided to allow the demonstration. And so, as the

various legal parties looked on intently, a state-appointed snake guardian removed Even from a sack and placed him into the toilet bowl. A hushed and dramatic silence fell over the courtroom, and then, suddenly, Professor Prendergast leaped to his feet and shouted: "I DID IT! I MURDERED CLARISSA WITH THE WEED WHACKER AND I'M GLAD!!"

No, unfortunately nothing that conclusive occurred. Even stayed in the toilet for a moment, then slithered back out toward his sack. The experiment was repeated twice, with the same results. The article does not state whether Even was under oath. ("Please raise your, um, your...")

But apparently the demonstration was effective, because the judge found the defendant not guilty. This is yet another example of bleeding-heart-liberal judges freeing hardened criminals armed with 1.25-meter snakes to assault the plumbing of law-abiding society, knowing full well that the police in most cities are legally restricted to a snake caliber of no greater than .75. Is there something you can do? You bet there is. You can stay out of the bathroom.