

Ongoing Discussion of Jack Gedney's "Untroubled" Substack Blog

Post by "Pacatus" of May 30, 2026 at 1:19 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Query: Does it make sense for a normal person to "empty the contents first" if there are only two feelings, pleasure and pain? Is emptying even possible or desirable?

Here is the passage from Ferguson-Smith:

"Then he realized that the cause of the flaw was the vessel itself, which by its own flaw corrupted within it all things, even good things, that entered it from without. He became convinced of this, partly because [20] he saw that the vessel was leaky and riddled, so that it could never possibly be filled, and partly because he observed that it contaminated with a foul flavor everything it had taken in."

In footnotes, MFS says that the vessel is a metaphor for the mind, and that the leaky vessel is a metaphor for the mind that cannot be satisfied.

In an old thread on this ([The Vessel Analogy At The Opening of Lucretius Book Six](#)), [Don](#) said: "So it all comes back around to our recent thread on ataraxia and the work of removing fear, anxiety, the darkness and torments of the mind, and instead freeing our minds from the "gloomy sea of troubles" so we can float on the calm ocean of ataraxia and surf the waves of delightful kinetic pleasures!"

So (it seems to me), "emptying" would be limited to those "torments" (e.g. fear of the gods) via application of Epicurean philosophy – and not some Buddhistic "empty mind."

As [Don](#) says later in the thread: "The image of cleaning and repairing the vessel as a metaphor for learning and internalizing the teachings of Epicurus with the resulting clean pot filled with clean liquid symbolizing the calm waters of ataraxia shows that ataraxia is not a sudden epiphany. It takes work to achieve and maybe even maintain."