

# The Definitive "Chrysippus' Hand Argument" Thread

Post by "Cassius" of April 19, 2023 at 9:34 AM

## [Quote from Don](#)

Your hand doesn't "feel" anything. You may sense something with your hand, on your hand, in your hand, and so on; but your hand, in its present condition, is merely a part of your sensory apparatus. If you feel that your hand doesn't lack anything, it's in homeostasis. It is in balance.

While I think this angle of approach is true, I don't think it meets directly what Chrysippus was saying so I wouldn't start with this one. I don't see any reason why he could not have picked out any other part of the body, or even a total person, and made the same point, just so long as that person was sitting quietly and not being stimulated from the outside.

## [Quote from Godfrey](#)

Very well said. So another mistake by Chryssipus is that according to his argument, virtue can't be the supreme good. For that matter, nothing can be. But I may be missing something: it's been a long day.

That's the feeling I have - that we are missing something that from Chrysippus' point of view is vital.

Referring to Joshua's list:

## [Quote from Joshua](#)

1. The hand either feels pleasure, or it feels pain, or it feels neither pleasure nor pain.
2. If pleasure is the highest good, then the absence of pleasure would feel like a lack of pleasure.
3. This lack of pleasure would be felt in every member of the body.
4. My hand does not feel pleasure or pain.
5. My hand does not feel a lack of pleasure.

1 - Don's comment goes to 1, but I think that to be fair to Chrysippus that 1 is a reasonable premise that most people would accept under normal discussion. Now Epicurus would not

accept the last phrase "or it feels neither pleasure nor pain" but that's the subject in question that we're trying to prove, so I don't know we can object to it here at this point in the argument.

2- I am thinking that 2 is the missing link in our comprehension. WHY would this be the case? As Don asks why would the highest good necessarily be present at all times? What gives Chrysippus the right to presume that? At the moment the main thing that occurs to me is that rather than highest good the operative perspective is more "guide" than "highest good" and we would want our "guide" to be always present in order for it to truly be our ultimate guide. But that may not be the point or it may be only a part of the point. But SOMEHOW there is a reason behind this presumption that Chrysippus thought that we would accept, and quite possibly that we would accept it even as Cyreniacs or Epicureans devoted to the central role of pleasure.

3 - I am not sure about that one, but yes I can see that being presumed, in order to pick out the hand.

4 - Yes he's presuming a state of inactivity does not involve pleasure or pain.

5 - Yes he's presuming that too, and that is something that we would probably accept.