

## TEXT MESSAGE: Smart: 'Sensations and Brain Processes'

J.J.C. Smart (1920-2012) published this article which defends Mind-Brain Type Identity in 1959. Work through the extracts below to help you gain understanding of the theory. Copies of the original article are readily available online. Use the original article to address the bonus questions

1. **'The suggestion I wish if possible to avoid...** namely that 'I am in pain' is a genuine report and **that what it reports is an irreducibly psychical something.** And similarly **the suggestion I wish to resist** is also that to say 'I have a yellowish orange after-image' **is to report something irreducibly psychical.'** (p142)

**Q: What does Smart suggest he does NOT want to say?**

2. 'Why do I wish to resist this suggestion? Mainly because of **Occam's razor.** It seems to me that science is increasingly giving us a viewpoint whereby organisms are able to be seen as physico-chemical mechanisms: **it seems that even the behaviour of man himself will one day be explicable in mechanistic terms.'**

**Q: Why does he wish to avoid that answer (2 linked reasons)**

3. BONUS: Look at the remainder of p142 - What does Smart say about Correlation and Identity?

4. 'If any philosophical arguments seemed to compel us to believe in such things, (nomological danglers) I would suspect a catch in the argument. In any case it is the object of this paper to show that there are **no philosophical arguments which compel us to be dualists.'**

What does the phrase 'nomological dangler' mean?

**Q: What does Smart think about dualist arguments? What is the objective of writing this article?**

5. 'Let me first try to state more accurately the thesis that sensations are brain processes. It is not the thesis that, for example, 'after-image' or 'ache' means the same as 'brain processes of sort X' It is that, in so far as 'after image' or 'ache' is a report of a process, it is a report of a process that happens to be a brain process. It follows that the thesis **does not claim that sensation statements can be translated into statements about brain processes**. Nor does it claim that the logic of a statement is the same as that of a brain-process statement. All it claims is that in so far as a sensation statement is a report of something, that something is in fact a brain process. Sensations are nothing over and above brain processes.'

Q: What is Smart saying? How do his remarks about nations (p145) help to clarify his point?

6. BONUS : On p146 - Smart offers an objection to his own idea. What is the objection and how does he counter it?