

Mental events are physical events

The doctrine of anomalous monism:

- 1) An event is a mental event when it has one or more intentional properties, which is to say, when it can be described as coming to believe that ..., or to desire that ..., or to think that ..., and so on.
- 2) One and the same event can be both a physical event, in virtue of having physical properties, and a mental event, in virtue of having mental properties.
- 3) Any mental event that is either a cause or an effect of some other event (whether that other event is a mental or a physical event) is (is identical to) a physical event.
- 4) There are no strict laws on the basis of which events, when described using an intentionalistic vocabulary, can be predicted or explained.
- 5) No physical property of an event is a mental property of that event.

The argument (A):

1. Mental events interact causally with physical events and other mental events; a mental event can be either a cause or an effect of either a physical event or another mental event. (The principle of causal interaction.)
2. Where there is causality, there must be a strict law; events related as cause and effect fall under strict laws. (The principle of the nomological character of causality.)
3. There are no strict laws on the basis of which events when described as mental can be predicted or explained. (The principle of the anomalousness of the mental.)

Therefore: 4. Any mental event that interacts causally with any other event is a physical event, but none of its mental properties is one of its physical properties.

The argument (B):

1. Suppose that b, a mental event in virtue of its having the property of being a coming to believe that an interesting hockey game will be on television tonight, caused a physical event, c, a cooling of some beers in the fridge, to occur.
2. If b caused c, then, according to the principle of the nomological character of causality, b belongs to some class of events (call it the class of events of type beta) and c belongs to some class of events (call it the class of events of type gamma) such that whenever a beta event occurs, a gamma event will occur.

3. Events b and c, then, are related under a strict law, for b is a beta event, c is a gamma event, and the occurrence of a beta event always produces a gamma event.
4. Neither being a beta nor being a gamma is a mental property of an event, since, according to the principle of the anomalousness of the mental, no strict law can mention mental properties.
5. If neither being a beta nor being a gamma is a mental property, each must be a physical property.
6. Event b has both the mental property of being a coming to believe that an interesting hockey game will be on television tonight and the physical property of being a beta event.
7. Any event with one or more physical properties is a physical event.

Therefore: 8. Event b is a physical event.

Therefore: 9. Any mental event that is either the cause or effect of another event is a physical event.

Arguments for the principle of the anomalousness of the mental:

(A)

1. For a generalization to be a strict law, we must have reason for thinking that it not only covers past observed regularities, but also that it is projectible to unobserved and future situations.
2. We cannot have reason for thinking that a generalization is projectible when the application of some of the concepts on which it draws is governed by constitutive principles very different from those the application of some other of the concepts on which it draws is governed. (Heteronomic generalizations are not strongly projectible while homonomic generalizations can be strongly projectible.)
3. Psychophysical generalizations (those that relate types of mental event to types of physical event) are heteronomic generalizations.

Therefore: 4. No psychophysical generalization can be a strict law.

Therefore: 5. There are no strict laws on the basis of which events, when described in an intentionalistic vocabulary (one that mentions their intentionalistic mental properties), can be predicted or explained.

(B)

1. Mental properties are dispositional properties, not structural properties.
2. Dispositional properties are unfit for inclusion in strict laws.

Therefore: 3. There are no strict laws on the basis of which events, when described in an intentionalistic vocabulary, can be predicted or explained.