

One can say that the entity that is conscious is the mental entity, the self. But, clearly, one cannot reduce the self to little sub-selves. The self, the ego, the “I,” is an indivisible whole. Awareness is an organic unity; it has aspects, but no component parts. (In this regard, the relation of the aspects of a state of awareness to the whole awareness is similar to the relation of the attributes of an entity to the whole entity; an entity *is* its attributes and a state of awareness *is* its aspects.)

On a deeper level, one can say that the entity that is conscious is the man, as a total organism. And the man has parts, physical parts. But the physical parts are not the components of his state of awareness. We may assume that when a man is engaged in conscious activity, the physical organ that acts is his brain.¹⁶ However, the parts of the brain and their individual actions are not parts of his *awareness*. If you want to describe the aspects of an action of consciousness as “parts,” it remains true that the “parts” of an action of consciousness are mental parts, not physical parts — where “mental” means: pertaining to consciousness.

Again, parts of a brain process add up to a whole brain process, not to consciousness.

Brain actions are a necessary condition of consciousness. Brain actions underlie and are involved in the operation of consciousness. But brain actions are still something different from what they underlie: awareness. Peikoff writes:

Even if, someday, consciousness were to be explained scientifically as a product of physical conditions, this would not alter any observed fact. It would not alter the fact that, given those conditions, the attributes and functions of consciousness are what they are. [OPAR, 35]

To discover that matter in certain combinations gives rise to the existence of consciousness would not permit us to *equate* consciousness with those combinations of matter or their physical actions. Mental actions are manifestly different from brain actions.

(The nearest analogy to the mind-brain relation in this respect might be the magnetic field produced by an electric current moving in a wire.

16 The tendency to over-isolate the brain from the total organism is plausibly challenged in Alva Noë’s *Action in Perception* [Noë, 2004]; I am not committing myself to the position that the brain alone, rather than the total organism, is sufficient for consciousness; I am only saying that even on the view that it is, consciousness remains irreducible.