

CONSCIOUSNESS

is the strong citadel of all mystic and dualistic errors, before whose ramparts the best-equipped efforts of reason threaten to miscarry. This fact would suffice of itself to induce us to make a special critical study of consciousness from our monistic point of view. We shall see that consciousness is simply a natural phenomenon like any other psychic quality, and that it is subject to the law of substance like all other natural phenomena.

Even as to the elementary idea of consciousness, its contents and extension, the views of the most distinguished philosophers and scientists are widely divergent. Perhaps the meaning of consciousness is best conceived as an *internal perception*, and compared with the action of a *mirror*. As its two chief departments we distinguish objective and subjective consciousness—consciousness of the world, the non-ego, and of the ego. By far the greater part of our conscious activity, as Schopenhauer justly remarked, belongs to the consciousness of the outer world, or the non-ego: this *world-consciousness* embraces all possible phenomena of the outer world which are in any sense accessible to our minds. Much more contracted is the sphere of *self-consciousness*, the internal mirror of all our own psychic activity, all our presentations, sensations, and volitions.

Many distinguished thinkers, especially on the physiological side (Wundt and Ziehen, for instance) take the ideas of consciousness and psychic function to be identical—"all psychic action is conscious"; the province of psychic life, they say, is coextensive with that of consciousness. In our opinion, such a definition gives an undue extension to the meaning of consciousness, and occasions many errors and misunder-