

the meaning of those dualities and contrasts which we find around and in us, the difference of self and not self, of mind and matter, of subject and object, of appearance and reality, of truth and semblance. Fichte's endeavour is to bring, in many ways, this truth home to his hearers and readers: nor is there any doubt that he found as much in them an expectant and appreciative audience as they, on the other side, found in him an expositor of these sublime reflections; for he had understood the signs of the times, the want of the age, and also the way to satisfy it. The very fact that he appeared to his listeners as continually seeking, and never quite finding, the right expression for his central idea, kept them alive and intent upon following and assisting him in this arduous enterprise; for he only gave expression to conceptions which others around him had likewise, though vaguely, formed for themselves, and to express which was the untiring endeavour of that age.

But it was not in the spirit of Fichte's philosophy to remain content with an intuitive knowledge of the existence of this underlying unity of the Absolute. His was not a contemplative nature like that of Spinoza, who, before him, had given expression to the same idea, whose writings were at that time much studied in the circle to which Fichte belonged, and who had a growing influence upon the successors of Kant. Fichte's was an eminently active and practical nature, not practical indeed in the lower and everyday meaning of the word, but practical in that elevated region in which the great minds which surrounded him were living and into which

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Fichte's
practical
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