The belief that fashion alone should dominate opinion has great advantages. It makes thought unnecessary and puts the highest intelligence within the reach of everyone. It is not difficult to learn the correct use of such words as 'complex,' 'sadism,' 'Oedipus,' 'bourgeois,' 'deviation,' 'left'; and nothing more is needed to make a brilliant writer or talker. Some, at least, of such words represented much thought on the part of their inventors; like paper money they were originally convertible into gold. But they have become for most people inconvertible, and in depreciating have increased nominal wealth in ideas. And so we are enabled to despise the paltry intellectual fortunes of former times.

The modern-minded man, although he believes profoundly in the wisdom of his period,' must be presumed to be very modest about his personal powers. His highest hope is to think first what is about to be thought, to say what is about to be said, and to feel what is about to be felt; he has no wish to think better thoughts than his neighbours, to say things showing more insight, or to have emotions which are not those of some fashionable group, but only to be slightly ahead of others in point of time.

Quite deliberately he suppresses what is individual in himself for the sake of the admiration of the herd. A mentally solitary life, such as that of Copernicus, or Spinoza, or Milton after the Restoration, seems pointless according to modem standards .

Copernicus should have delayed his advocacy of the Copernican system until it could be made fashionable; Spinoza should have been either a good Jew or a good Christian; Milton should have moved with the times, like Cromwell's widow, who asked Charles II for a pension on the ground that she did not agree with her husband's politics. Why should an individual set himself up as an independent judge? Is it not clear that wisdom resides in the blood of the nordic race or , alternatively , in the proletariat? and in any case what is the use of an eccentric opinion which never can hope to conquer the great agencies of publicity?

The money rewards and widespread though ephemeral fame which those agencies have made possible places temptations in the way o f able men which are difficult to resist.

To be pointed out, admired, mentioned constantly in the press, and offered easy ways of earning much money is highly agreeable; and when all this is open to a man, he finds it difficult to go on doing the work that he himself thinks best and is inclined to subordinate his judgement to the general opinion.

(438 words)