

How then did such a theory come into existence?

The rise of the theory is easy to explain. What is difficult to explain is the fact that it is still taught with great dogmatism in many colleges and seminaries, and referred to as established fact in many popular books several decades after all excuse for its existence has disappeared. The theory needs to be demythologized.

How did such a theory come into existence? It was part of the atmosphere of literary studies a century ago--an atmosphere ~~wihch~~ which has now almost entirely vanished.

A century ago it was customary to attempt to divide up every ancient or mediaeval work into alleged documents which were said to have been combined by various redactors. This ~~approach~~ approach to literary studies was in the air. It was done with almost everything. The attempt was made even to apply it to the writings of Goethe.

Today the climate of literary studies has almost completely changed. Many new documents from ancient times have come to light in this century. There is hardly an instance where scholars have attempted in any ancient Babylonian or Egyptian writing--and we have a great many of them--to divide it(up) into alleged documents, as was attempted with practically all ancient documents a century ago. ~~But~~ It is recognized by nearly all literary scholars today that such a method of study is impractical, even in cases where there is far more ~~evidence~~ evidence on which such an attempt could ~~have~~ be made. ~~XXXXX~~ It is almost never attempted. Only in the case of the Bible are the theories of eighty years ago still presented as established fact.