

Comparative Literature, Vol XV, 1963. Book Review section, pp. 374-5
Piers Plowman As a Fourteenth-Century Apocalypse. By Morton W. Bloomfield, New Brunswick, New Jersey. Rutgers University Press, 1962, xi, 259 p.

The once hotly disputed question of single or multiple authorship of the three versions of Piers Plowman has, by scholarly acquiescence, been laid aside - though David Fowler's recent book, Piers the Plowman: Literary Relations of the A and B Texts, indicates that there is still no universal assent to the proposition that one man named Langland authored all three. Most recent studies have been concerned more with the nature of the spiritual experience at the poem's core, e.g. Robert Frank's Piers Plowman and the Scheme of Salvation, perhaps the most illuminating study of the poem to date.

Chambers, R. W., Man's Unconquerable Mind (Jonathan Cape: London) 1939

p. 109 The second point made by Jusserand nearly thirty years ago has also remained unanswered. The alleged differences between the three texts, in these few cases where they can be maintained, are no more than we find between the different parts of the work of any great poet. The critics are, in fact, demanding from every portion of Piers Plowman a machine-made, standardized similarity, such as no great poet ever shows. And Langland was a great poet.

p. 169 The controversy as to the authorship of the different versions of Piers Plowman was opened by Prof. Manly in Modern Philology (Jan. 1906)