

R. W. Chambers, MAN'S UNCONQUERABLE MIND  
 Studies of English Writers, from Bede to A. E. Housman and W. P. Ker  
 Jonathan Cape London 1939

Page 63-64 (BEOWULF)

The men who made short lays made them for their own pleasure: they were ~~not~~ thinking of providing material convenient for the purpose of some epic poet who was to come after them. Therefore it should not be assumed, without evidence, that these lost lays of heathen times were of such a character that an epic could easily be made by fitting them together. Half a dozen motor-bikes cannot be combined to make a Rolls-Royce car.

Page 109 (PIERS PLOWMAN, I 3. WILLIAM LANGLAND)

The second point made by Jusserand nearly thirty years ago has also remained unanswered. The alleged differences between the three texts, in those 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.

Page 169 (PIERS PLOWMAN, II)

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

Page 216 (SHAKESPEARE AND THE PLAY OF MORE)

It is necessary to repeat again and again that it is not in the single phrase or idea that individuality shows itself, but in the combination of ideas, till we get a complex so marked that its reproduction can hardly be the result of mere accident.