

form, and at the same time identifies it, is a new purpose or a new ideal, which acts from without in a horizontal direction upon what is traditional. Literature itself can influence literature only through the medium of human thought. Once it has entered into that medium, which is the mind of the prospective writer, its values are mingled with those of many other intellectual and spiritual forces, and it is these in their aggregate that determine the nature of what will be written - not the mere substance of what has been written before. The latter is of minor consequence in the question of origins. What the old form supplies is not motivation or causation, or inspiration, but only a loose structural pattern and building materials of one kind or another which may be used at will to a greater or less extent in the construction of the new thing. A Christian church may be made of stones taken from a pagan temple, ~~but~~ the temple does not explain the church, nor do the separate stones. The first Greek tragedy was, I should say, invented for the purpose of giving expression to some aspects of the new and "tragic" outlook on life (however one may define it) that had been created and fostered by the historical experience of the Greek world in the sixth century B.C. It had nothing to do with Dionysus by its intention; but the old Dionysiac chorus, itself already transformed to some extent by the impingement of Dorian and Apolline lyric, was used as the clay, so to speak, out of which the new vessel was molded, and from which it received its necessary but purely conventional sanction as an institution. The moulding process in itself was nothing wonderful or difficult to manage, so long as there was a dynamic purpose and ideal back of it; although the means by which this new idea was implemented might be improved and developed in the course of practice, provided the artistic aim itself remained unchanged, or seemingly so.

Such, in general, is the way in which, according to my own hard-earned view, the rise of any literary form should be explained; and many today will probably agree with me in principle.² But this is not ^{at} all the method followed by the great majority of those who have written on the origins of tragedy, or of the romance.