

This attitude of historicism finds an early expression in the ideas of the brothers Grimm with their great collections of folk tales, legends, and folk songs from early Teutonic life. The Grimms said that a story would grow out of the consciousness of the people, and thus would gradually assume shape. In 1901 Professor F. B. Gummere elaborated this theory as regards ballads, saying that they were developed in the course of dances in which people rather naturally began to sing, and songs developed as one person and another would add a line, and thus the ballads of various nations came into existence.

In 1921 Professor Louise Pound, a sister of the noted legal expert, Professor Roscoe Pound, Dean of the Harvard Law School, wrote a book on the origin of ballads in which she strongly opposed this view. Professor Pound's ideas have been rather generally accepted, and her book was reprinted in 1949. She maintains that a ballad has an author; that ballads do not spring up spontaneously. People with literary ability may naturally be influenced by the ideas of those around them. The ideas of the people of an area may affect their willingness to accept or reject the work of an author; nevertheless, a literary production requires literary ability. Most present scholars agree with Professor Pound at this point. Thus Albert Guerard, Professor of General and Comparative Literature at Stanford University, in 1940 said, "It is not denied that literature uses the same stuff as folklore; but it is claimed that folklore is turned into literature only through an individual act of conscious organization. A book is a piece of work, not an accident."

Similarly, Professor R. W. Chambers of the University of London wrote in 1939: "Fortunately, twenty years ago, that great teacher of English, Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, gave his answer to the problem: