

Gentlemen, I would I could persuade you to remember that you are English, and go always for the thing, casting out of your vocabulary all such words as 'tendencies', 'influences', 'revivals', 'revolts'. 'Tendencies' did not write The Canterbury Tales; Geoffrey Chaucer wrote them. 'Influences' did not make The Faerie Queene; Edmund Spenser made it: . . .

". . . I hope to satisfy the reader that Tendencies did not write Piers Plowman: that a man called William Langland wrote it. "

While effects of this movement of historicism still remain among literary students, there has been a very strong reaction against it. Its part in the development of the multi-documentary theory of the Pentateuch needs to be recognized.

A third tendency which became very pronounced during the past century, and continued to be rather strong during the entire period from around 1795 until around 1930, is often designated by the German term "Quellenforschung." This was the theory that the greater part of what a man wrote was apt to be simply taken over from some other writer or from various writers, so that many books were simply mosaics, composed of material from other books, and that one of the principal purposes of literary research was to determine these sources.