

Perry, Ben Edwin, The Ancient Romances A Literary-Historical Account of Their Origins. (University of California Press: Berkeley & Los Angeles) 1967

p.9 I was unable to formulate for myself any theory concerning the origins of Greek romance that seemed adequate, or even plausible, and what others had conjectured on the subject likewise failed to convince me. At last, however, I came to realize that this perplexity of mine was due in very large measure to the fact that I could not free myself from the pervasive tyranny of those fashions of thinking about literary history which prevailed in the nineteenth century, and which I now believe to be as false in principle as they are misleading and frustrating to those who follow them. Like many others, I was asking the wrong questions, looking for the wrong kind of data, making false assumptions, and failing to understand what the real forces are that create new literary forms. Such forms, I am convinced, never come into being as the result of an evolutionary process taking place on the purely literary plane, but only as the willful creations of men made in accordance with a conscious purpose. That purpose, in the case of the more important and well established genres, is to satisfy the new spiritual or intellectual needs and tastes that have arisen in a large part / <sup>p.10</sup> of society in a given period of cultural history. Without such needs no new literary form or any importance will arise; and when those needs are present and have come to be felt, a new and suitable vehicle for their expression will be easily devised, ad hoc, and inevitably. This new thing will not be the end-product of a series of accidents, or of successive imitations, or of rhetorical experiments, or even of a gradual shifting of emphasis on the part of those who write in a traditional and already established form. One form does not give birth to another, but is separated from it by a logically unbridgeable gap. In terms of literary ~~form~~ <sup>forms</sup> as generally understood, historiography, for example, cannot become romance without passing through zero, that is, through the negation of its own raison d' être, the thing which defines it as historiography. That which generates the new