

# THE ORIGIN AND MEANING OF YOUNG'S NIGHT THOUGHTS

BY

**H. MUTSCHMANN**

M. A., PH. D.

PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH

TARTU 1939

Printed by C. Mattiesen Incorp., Tartu, 1939.

In the following article is presented an enlarged account of prolonged researches into the problem of the origin and significance of a famous poem, which in its time had an enormous vogue, not only in the country of its origin but even more so in France, Germany, and the Scandinavian countries. See *Beiblatt zur Anglia* XXXIII, pp. 12 ff. (*Zur Psychologie des Verfassers der Nachtgedanken*), and *Festschrift für Max Deutschbein*, pp. 101 ff. (*Der Schlüssel zu Youngs Nachtgedanken*).

Young's celebrated *Night Thoughts* were published in instalments between the years 1742 and 1745. Edward Young was born in 1683, the son of the rector of Upham, in Hampshire; he died in 1765 at the ripe old age of 82. He was fifty-nine when the first part of his long drawn-out blank verse poem was published. It is a purely reflective and lyrical composition, an astounding piece of self-revelation, and therefore a human document of the very first rank. At the age of forty-four, Young had entered the Church, i. e., he had taken holy orders and become a clergyman of the Church of England. His ambition of ultimately becoming a bishop was not realized, however. As he was the author of a famous poem dealing with religious problems, it was considered desirable by the official writers on the history of English Literature to represent him as an intensely pious and orthodox person. This legend has to be completely abandoned if a correct interpretation of the *Night Thoughts* is to be obtained. Just as for a full appreciation of Milton one has to go back to the views expressed by Samuel Johnson (1709—1784), one has to take George Eliot for one's guide in the interpretation of the character of Edward Young. Mary Ann Evans (1819—1880), who wrote under the pen-name of "George Eliot", was a psychologist of exceptional penetration. And, moreover, she was thoroughly honest and fearless in the expression of her convictions. It is true that the *Dictionary of National Biography*, e. g., reproaches her for her outspokenness; but in the very same article it is admitted that the conception of Young as a perfect moralist arose only after the publication of the *Night Thoughts*. "The *Night Thoughts*", one

reads there, "achieved immediate popularity, and Young was now regarded as an ornament to religion and literature". George Eliot, however, defends her position of destroyer of illusions as follows: "The outline of Young's character is too distinctly traceable in the well-attested facts of his life, and yet more in the self-betrayal that runs through all his works, for us to fear that our general estimate of him may be false. For, while no poet seems less easy and spontaneous than Young, no poet discloses himself more completely. Men's minds have no hiding-place out of themselves — their affectations do but betray another phase of their nature. And if, in the present view of Young, we seem to be more intent on laying bare unfavourable facts than on shrouding them in charitable speeches, it is not because we have any irreverential pleasure in turning men's characters the seamy side without, but we see no great advantage in considering a man as he was not. Young's biographers and critics have usually set out from the position that he was a great religious teacher, and that his poetry is morally sublime; and they have toned down his failings into harmony with their conception of the divine and the poet." And she winds up this passage by stating that in her opinion, Young's was "a mind in which the higher human sympathies were inactive". (From the essay significantly entitled: *Worldliness and Other-worldliness: the Poet Young*, Tauchnitz, vol. 2229, pp. 36 f.).

George Eliot's conclusions can be justified by a reference to Young's first and unbiassed biographer, Herbert Croft, who applies to him the words that had been used by Samuel Johnson of Addison: "It is proper rather to say [of him] nothing that is false, than all that is true." (See Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*.)

George Eliot is, no doubt, right in what she states concerning Young's moral qualities. But her's cannot be regarded as the last word on this important problem. It is the duty of the literary historian to probe deeper into the complicated psychology of this unquestioned poetic genius, in whose mind a tragic conflict arose out of his grappling with certain moral problems of his time and of his nation.

In one of his books on English life and letters, Hippolyte Taine, the great French critic, remarks that England is particu-

larly rich in personalities exhibiting what he calls "hypertrophie du moi", hypertrophy of the ego, a form of excessive individualism. Taine, it is true, omits to point out that England seems equally rich in eminently social-minded individuals. If, in English literature, the self-centred type is represented by Marlowe, Milton, Byron, Oscar Wilde, and others, the opposite group includes such illustrious names as Shakespeare, Walter Scott, and Charles Dickens. Young undoubtedly belongs to the former set. The reader of his *Night Thoughts* cannot long remain in ignorance on this point. Young, too, is obviously interested in his own self only. He finds reality exclusively in his own soul: "Man! know thyself!" he exclaims, "all wisdom centres there!" (*N T h.* IV, 486). And again: "Who think it solitude to be alone?" (III, 8). Milton "descended into himself" (*P a r a d i s e R e g a i n e d* II, 111); Young "dived to the bottom of his soul", and he found "knowledge" there (VII, 253). Therefore he feels fully at ease in the night only:

By them (i. e., the stars) best lighted are the paths of  
 Nights are their days, their most illumined hours. [thought;  
 By day, the soul o'erborne by life's career,  
 Stunned by the din, and giddy with the glare,  
 Reels far from reason, jostled by the throng.  
 By day the soul is passive, all her thoughts  
 Imposed, precarious, broken ere mature.  
 By night, from objects free, from passion cool,  
 Thoughts uncontrolled, and unimpressed, the births  
 Of pure election, arbitrary range,  
 Not to the limits of one world confined . . . (V, 113 ff.)

This is why he was justified in naming his poem, that specimen of passionate self-revelation, the "Night Thoughts". To him, the Night is more divine than the Sun:

Let Indians, and the gay, like Indians, fond  
 Of feathered fopperies, the Sun adore:  
 Darkness has more divinity for me;  
 It strikes thought inward; it drives back the soul  
 To settle on herself, our point supreme!  
 There lies our theatre; there sits our judge. (V, 126 ff.)

Young retires into complete solitude to escape from the

polluting contact with mankind, like Milton, who exclaims, in the beginning of *Paradise Lost*:

The mind is its own place, and in itself  
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.

(*Par. Lost* I, 254 f.)

The true value of a man is to be found in his own self:

Where thy true treasure? . . . Seek it in thyself;  
Seek in thy naked self, and find it there.

(*N. Th.* VI, 413 ff.)

Young seems to have accepted the philosophy of Bishop Berkeley (1685—1753), to whom the external world, the world of the senses, appeared a mere reflex of his own mind, of "reason", having no real existence; Young gives poetic expression to the learned bishop's theory in the following passage:

Objects are but th'occasion; ours th'exploit:  
Ours is the cloth, the pencil, and the paint,  
Which nature's admirable picture draws,  
And beautifies creation's ample dome. (VI, 431 ff.)

The soul is the only reality that will endure:

Let earth dissolve, yon pond'rous orbs descend,  
And grind us into dust: the soul is safe;  
The man emerges; mounts above the wreck,  
As towering flame, from nature's funeral pyre.

(VI, 745 ff.)

This attitude naturally implies that Young's works are but one uninterrupted stream of self-revelation. To enter into the feelings of others was not given him. "Young could never describe a real complex human being", and — "no poet discloses himself more completely", George Eliot says of him in her essay (pp. 42 and 36). In the last years of his exceptionally long life, Young described and defended his own method of intensive self-study in that strange but highly significant treatise entitled: *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1759). It is not acquired knowledge, or skilful imitation, as recommended by Alexander Pope (1688—1744) and his school, that are able to procure the highest fame for an author. "Know thyself", thus

runs his own precept; "therefore dive deep into thy bosom. Learn the depth, extent, bias and full force of thy mind; contract full intimacy with the stranger within thee." (Reprinted in *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* XXXIX, pp. 52 f.) "Let not great examples, or authorities browbeat thy reason into too great diffidence of thyself: Thyself so reverence as to prefer the native growth of thy own mind to the richest import from abroad; such borrowed riches make us poor. The man who thus reverences himself will soon find the world's reverence to follow his own. His works will stand distinguished; his the sole property of them; which property alone can confer the noble title of an author; that is, of one who (to speak accurately) thinks and composes; while other invaders of the press, how voluminous and learned soever . . . only read and write" (pp. 53 f.). The true, i. e., the completely independent, original, and self-reliant genius opens a "vista through the gloom of ordinary writers into the bright walks of rare imagination and singular design"; he "crosses all public roads into fresh untrodden ground" (p. 55). The "original genius" is alone capable of achieving everlasting fame. Thus Young is here speaking in his own interest: he was bent on demonstrating that his name, as that of an explorer of his own soul, deserved to live.

The treatise on "Original Composition" received very little attention in England; but it exerted an enormous influence on the development of German literature. Its revolutionary teaching was eagerly seized upon and enthusiastically applied by that group of youthful writers who appropriately called themselves "Original Geniuses", and of which the young Goethe was at one time a member.

\*        \*  
\*

What was it, then, that Young discovered in the lowest depths of his soul? What was it that he incessantly displayed in his numerous works? It was a metaphysical problem that disturbed him, that allowed him no respite; on which he spent his powers. It was the awful question of survival after death to which he found no satisfactory answer. As a result of this state of affairs he suffered from a fear of death that at times drove him to the brink of madness. His self-centredness made him desire

survival with the full force of his emotion: "Religion's all!" we hear him exclaim —

Religion! Providence! an after-state!  
 Here is firm footing; here is solid rock;  
 This can support us; all is sea besides;  
 Sinks under us; bestorms, and then devours! (IV, 553 ff.)

And again:

Immortal! Were but one immortal...  
Eternity!  
 A glorious, and a needful refuge that,  
 From vile imprisonment in abject views.  
 'Tis immortality, 'tis that alone,  
 Amid life's pains, abasements, emptiness,  
 The soul can comfort, elevate, and fill. (VI, 566 ff.)

The fear of death finds striking expression in the following tortured outcry:

Annihilation! how it yawns before me!  
 Next moment I may drop from thought, from sense,  
 The privilege of angels, and of worms,  
 An outcast from existence! and this spirit,  
 This all-pervading, this all-conscious soul,  
 This particle of energy divine,  
 Which travels nature, flies from star to star,  
 And visits gods, and emulates their powers,  
 For ever is extinguished. Horror! Death! (VII, 820 ff.)

The same idea is repeated over and over again:

A world, so far from great (and yet how great  
 It shines to thee!); there's nothing real in it;  
 Being, a shadow! Consciousness, a dream!  
 A dream, how dreadful! Universal blank  
 Before it, and behind!... (VII, 960 ff.)

For "Eternal life is nature's ardent wish" (VII, 1312). Every being seeks above all its own happiness. "O happiness! our being's end and aim!" — it is thus that Alexander Pope begins the Fourth Epistle of his *Essay on Man* (1733), under the sub-title: "Of the Nature and State of Man with Respect to Happiness". But, as Young says:

When an immortal being aims at bliss,  
Duration is essential to the name. (VIII, 1340 f.)

This is why he attacks Pope and the other deists, because they did not sufficiently emphasize the immortality of man:

Man too he (i. e., Pope) sang, immortal man I sing;  
Oft bursts my song beyond the bounds of life;  
What now, but immortality can please? (I, 453 ff.)

Schlosser, Goethe's brother-in-law, was certainly deeply influenced by this passage. He enlarged upon it in his curious poem, written in English, and entitled: *Anti-Pope, or Essay on Natural Man* (1776). This fact may serve to demonstrate how strong Young's influence was on continental currents of thought. Schlosser wrote on man as he, Schlosser, saw him, namely as governed not by cold reason only, as the rationalists assumed, but by his feelings and spiritual aspirations.

Young did not succeed in attaining to that quiet and assured hopefulness of the soul of which Schlosser speaks. To the very last he suffered from the fact that he was —

Born in an age more curious than devout;  
More fond to fix the place of heaven, or hell,  
Than studious this to shun, or that secure. (IX, 1950 ff.)

His reason, too, made him doubt the immortal nature of the human soul; he, too, was addicted to the tempting pleasures of this world. And thus there arose in him that tragic conflict, that uncertainty concerning the future, that fear of death bordering on insanity, that swayed his intellectual existence. To him, death at times appeared —

a plunge opaque  
Beyond conjecture! feeble nature's dread!  
Strong reason's shudder at the dark unknown!  
(II, 675 ff.)

Shakespeare had given forcible expression to the same idea through the mouth of Hamlet who speaks of "That undiscovered country from whose bourn No traveller returns" (III, 1), in a passage well known to Young. With forced insistence, Young tries to persuade himself that Death is to be valued even higher than

Life in the Body, being a liberation and the beginning of real Life; he asks:

Is not the mighty mind, that son of heaven,  
By tyrant life dethroned, imprisoned, pained?  
By death enlarged, ennobled, deified?  
Death but entombs the body, Life the soul. (III, 461 ff.)

On this our earth we live as in a desert; we only begin our existence here:

This is the bud of being, the dim dawn,  
The twilight of our day, the vestibule:  
Life's theatre as yet is shut; and Death,  
Strong Death, alone can heave the massy bar,  
This gross impediment of clay remove,  
And make us, embryos of existence, free. (I, 122 ff.)

It was thus that he tried to console himself — but in vain: at times he must have felt driven to the contemplation of suicide by the terrible fear of “the dark avenue, and all-awful confines of an eternity”, as he expresses himself in his treatise on *Original Composition* (p. 103). For did not Lucretius, the Roman poet, in his *De Rerum Natura*, write that the fear of death was apt to poison all joy in life, that it was the beginning of numerous vices, and that it was capable of rendering life itself unbearable?

In this respect, Young was but an outstanding representative of a powerful and more general trend among his contemporaries. In the minds of a large section of the latter, the religious element in the human soul, by clashing with the prevailing rationalism, called forth similar reactions. This observation explains the tremendous success of his poem. In one of his younger contemporaries, e. g., agitation over the same problem led to like results. Boswell reports of Dr. Samuel Johnson — the latter was fifty-six when Young died — that he was dominated throughout life by an exceptionally violent fear of death. When Boswell asked Johnson: “But is not the fear of death natural to man?”, the latter replied: “So much so, sir, that the whole of life is but keeping away the thoughts of it” (*Life of Johnson*, under October 10, 1769). And eight months before his death, Johnson writes in a letter: “Oh! my friend, the approach of death is very

dreadful. I am afraid to think of that which I know I cannot avoid" (ib., to Dr. Taylor, April 4, 1784).

This fear embittered Johnson's life; and it oppressed Young without intermission. Being of a highly emotional nature, Young felt himself confronted with an inescapable dilemma. If there was a life after death, as he so ardently hoped, it would be the best plan to accept the truth of the Christian religion, and to secure salvation by a virtuous life:

How deep implanted in the breast of man

The dread of death! I sing its sovereign cure (IV, 4 f.) —

by which he means the teaching of Christ and his Apostles. Yet the insatiable craving within him for the things of this world proved stronger than his pious resolutions. "Ambition, Pleasure, and the Love of gain" (VII, 332), or, worded differently, "The Lust of Pleasure, Grandeur, Gold" (VIII, 54), these are the passions which again and again prevent a final and irrevocable conversion. The facts of his biography confirm this view of his situation. His political ambitions, his notorious angling for benefices, are only too well known. Pope is reported to have said of him that "he passed a foolish youth", on which George Eliot remarks that the statement should have run: "He passed a foolish youth and middle age" (p. 12). Thus it comes about that to the discerning psychologist the figure of Young offers the unmistakable picture of a distinctly dual personality. One cannot but agree in this respect with George Eliot who describes him, in rather harsh though thoroughly justifiable words, as "a sort of cross between a sycophant and a psalmist" (p. 9), and who ends her sketch of his personality by remarking that he was "a pious and moralizing rake" (p. 13). This dualism — "Worldliness" mixed with "Other-worldliness" — and the internal strife resulting from it, constitute that tragic conflict, alluded to before, which darkened the whole of Young's life. The problem of death and of a future life agitated him with an insistence that resulted from his habit of introspection. To give literary expression to these disturbing thoughts became an urgent necessity. He was unable to deal with any other subject successfully. In the pursuit of his studies he was unusually slow, and he achieved no distinction. In his thirtieth year he published a poem on *The Last Day*, i. e., the day of judgement. But even this significant sub-

ject failed to bring out his originality. A subsidiary hampering factor was the conventional rhyming scheme employed by him, to which he felt compelled to cling. For he was a bad artist. In the opinion of George Saintsbury Young is, of almost all poets, "the most singularly lacking in art" (*Cambridge History of English Literature* X, p. 140). He had reached the age of fifty-nine when the lava of his pent-up feelings, pressing for release, at last broke down the floodgates to pour forth with elementary force. In this respect, as in many others, Young may be compared to Milton: both, after prolonged experimentation, at last encounter the subject and the form which have it in them to relieve their souls filled to overflowing. They break the shackles of poetic convention to give vent to their passion in unfettered blank verse — the one in *Paradise Lost*, the other in the *Night Thoughts*.

Young must have been himself surprised by this sudden release, this manifestation of his "originality". In his seventy-sixth year, seventeen years after the event, and doubtless referring to this tremendous experience of the unburdening of his soul, he wrote in his *Conjectures on Original Composition*: "Nor are we only ignorant of the dimensions of the human mind in general, but even of our own. That a man may be scarce less ignorant of his own powers, than an oyster of its pearl, or a rock of its diamond; that he may possess dormant, unsuspected abilities, till awakened by loud calls, or stung up by striking emergencies; is evident from the sudden eruption of some men, out of perfect obscurity, into public admiration, on the strong impulse of some animating occasion; not more to the world's great surprise than their own. Few authors of distinction but have experienced something of this nature, at the first beamings of their yet unsuspected Genius on their hitherto dark compositions: The writer starts at it, as at a lucid meteor in the night; is much surprised; can scarce believe it true. During his happy confusion, it may be said to him, as to Eve at the lake:

What there thou seest, fair creature! is thyself" (pp. 50 f.).

By means of a careful psychological analysis it is possible to discover the hitherto hidden processes which resulted in the writing of the *Night Thoughts* — to point to that striking emergency, and those loud calls that awakened the poet's dormant

powers. Young's contemporaries suspected some secret to lie hidden behind the dark pictures of the *Night Thoughts*. They realized, quite justly, as will be shown presently, that the key to a full understanding of the poem was to be looked for in the correct identification of the characters named in it. They went wrong, however, in taking too superficial a view of this problem, namely by taking into consideration only such actual personages as belonged, or had belonged, to the circle of Young's relatives and friends. In this they were followed by almost all his later commentators and critics. The poet had himself supplied the grounds for such an erroneous assumption. The starting-point of all these speculations may be easily discovered in the following lines which speak of three deaths as the cause of the writing of the *Night Thoughts*:

Insatiate archer! Could not one suffice?  
Thy shaft flew thrice; and thrice my peace was slain;  
And thrice, e'er thrice yon moon had filled her horn. (I, 211.)

Questioned about the identity of these three dead, Young made evasive answers, departing from the truth of dates, as George Eliot puts it, and even suggesting the name of one person, namely that of Henry Temple, his son-in-law, who survived the publication of the above-quoted passage by several years. In short, Young was unable to name three persons who had died shortly before 1742 within the specified space of three moons. Reliance on the truth of these lines on the part of the critics and biographers has, therefore, resulted in nothing but a general confusion, and nothing else.

There has been preserved, however, by a chain of happy circumstances, a document which, as we now shall see, provides the real and definitive key to the strange mystery of the famous poem. This is the original report on a visit paid to the aging poet by a young Swiss, B. V. Tschärner, which is contained in a letter, written in French, addressed to Tschärner's famous relative, Albert von Haller, whose name is well-known to students of German literature. The document now lies in the City Library of Berne. Tschärner had evidently been commissioned by ardent admirers of the *Night Thoughts* to obtain a final and authentic explanation of the identity of the three lamented dead. Not finding Young in London, he tracked him to his lair,

journeying into the country where the poet was staying at his rectory of Welwyn, in Hertfordshire. Unable to escape the insistent questioner, Young makes the obviously false statement about Henry Temple who, he says, is represented in the poem by Philander. The other two personages that he names do not fit into the chronology either. The first part of the *Night Thoughts* which contains the crucial passage was published in 1742. The three deaths are reported to have occurred within the space of three months. The persons involved, according to Tschärner's report, are the following:

- (1) Lucia, the poet's wife, who died in January, 1740.
- (2) Narcissa, his step-daughter, who died on October 8, 1736.
- (3) Philander, representing Henry Temple, Narcissa's husband, who died in January, 1745.

The identification of Lucia and that of Narcissa may be accepted as corresponding to the actual facts, and the contraction of dates involved excused as a poetic licence, though a somewhat strained one. But as to Philander, one has to look for a totally different interpretation.

Significantly enough, Young studiously avoided saying anything about the most discussed name in the *Night Thoughts*, namely that of Lorenzo, the atheist and libertine, on whom the attention of his readers was chiefly concentrated, and who aroused their curiosity to quite a singular degree. It is through the identification of these two mysterious characters, Philander and Lorenzo, that the secret of the *Night Thoughts* will be unveiled. Young himself puts us on the scent. For he added a most important statement to his reply to Tschärner. This statement has a hidden meaning which was not apprehended either by Tschärner or by the later investigators of the Young documents. The importunities of his eager interlocutor had stirred up in the poet's mind the memories of those terrible emotional convulsions out of which the original poetic impulse that resulted in the *Night Thoughts* was born. It was not grief caused by the death of dear ones that had moved him — George Eliot suggests that he was incapable of such feelings. No, the elementary outburst of the *Night Thoughts* was occasioned by a much more personal experience: a serious illness had threatened

his own life. Young told Tschärner that the three deaths took place in France where he was travelling with his relatives. Crossing the channel on his way back to England by the Calais-Dover route, a dangerous fever attacked him and "brought him to the brink of his grave" (*une fièvre le mit au bord du tombeau*) (W. Thomas, *Le Poète Edward Young*, Paris 1901, p. 165). This is, no doubt, the illness to which the poet alludes in the second part of the *Night Thoughts*:

How late I shuddered on the brink! how late  
 Life called for her last refuge in despair!  
 That life is mine, O Meade! to thee I owe. (II, 43 ff.)

If Dr. Meade had not saved him on that occasion he would have died unprepared, "grossly" — as Hamlet says of his murdered father (III, 3) — "full of bread; With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May". To Meade he owes the respite granted him to mend his way of life, so that he may die in a state of grace. He had indeed been "awakened by loud calls", and "stung up by striking emergencies". To be placed face to face with death was the "animating occasion" from which he had received his "strong impulse" to write — with a measure of success surprising both to himself and the world at large.

Having thus expressed his gratitude to his physician, even mentioning him by name, he at once proceeds to address the hitherto mysterious Lorenzo, stating that Lorenzo stands in need not of medical but of spiritual help:

For what calls thy disease, Lorenzo? not  
 For Aesculapian, but for moral aid. (II, 50 f.)

Now who could this Lorenzo be but the poet himself? This identification marks the first step in the unravelling of the secret of the *Night Thoughts*. In view of the dual nature of Young's personality, the following solution is proposed:

Lorenzo, the worldling and sinner, is Young's real self.  
 Philander (literally "lover of man"), a model of piety, is  
 Young's ideal self.

Lorenzo is a prey to the vices "ambition, pleasure, and the love of gain", Philander, having lived the life of the righteous, has died the death of the just.

The situation, thus, is as follows: The poet feels that there are two souls inhabiting his bosom — to use expressions taken from Goethe's *Faust* — one of which tends upwards, whereas the other clings to the things of this world. These two souls, or tendencies, are, so to speak, personified in the characters of Philander and Lorenzo respectively. Having thus externalized the internal conflict, Young preaches, in his long drawn-out poem, to his real self, i. e., Lorenzo, to become like the dead Philander, his ideal self. This is the scanty plot of the *Night Thoughts*: all the rest is lyricism, philosophizing, and moral exhortation. Philander had to die to make his preaching more effective: he died a vicarious death when, after the crossing of the Channel, the fever brought the poet to "the brink of the grave". Philander's, therefore, rightly appears as the third name in the "insatiate archer" passage, whereas this name cannot stand for Henry Temple, as suggested by the author, when embarrassed by the overcurious questioner. By this piece of poetic invention, i. e., by describing at great length the pious departure of the ideal Philander, Young contrived to supply himself with that subject of which he knew that it was his most powerful source of inspiration — the contemplation of death!

In the *Night Thoughts* one has, therefore, to do with the very ancient and universal problem of dual personality: the war between Soul and Body, Spirit and Matter. Young himself fully and clearly realized the nature of this internal conflict. This is what he says concerning this matter:

Hence our unnatural quarrel with ourselves;  
 Our thoughts at enmity; our bosom-broil;  
 We push time from us, and we wish him back,  
 Lavish of lustrums, and yet fond of life;  
 Life we think long, and short; death seek, and shun;  
 Body and soul, like peevish man and wife,  
 United jar, and yet are loth to part. (II, 179 ff.)

The literature of many nations yields numerous examples of the emergence of this strife. One of the best-known is that provided by St. Paul, the Apostle, in the *Epistle to the Romans*: "For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform



And cooled our passions by the breezy stream!  
 How often thawed and shortened winter's eve,  
 By conflicts kind, that struck out latent truth! (II, 461 ff.)

The reference to Philander as "preacher" is highly significant. It should be added that the biography of Young knows of no real person in his life to whom the above-quoted lines could possibly be made to apply.

(2) As to Lorenzo, it is said of him in the poem that he had a son, Florello. If Lorenzo is to be identified with Young himself, Florello must stand for the poet's only son, Frederick. Frederick was born in 1732, and thus he was ten years old when the *N igh t T h o u g h t s* began to appear. Frederick Young must have been a boy very difficult to educate, and in later life he did not agree with his father at all. In his early manhood, a serious and lasting estrangement arose between father and son: they separated, never to meet again. Which of the two is more to blame in this deplorable matter it is impossible to decide. Young's own words about the boy Florello are full of pertinent suggestions:

Florello, lately cast on this rude coast,  
 A helpless infant; now a heedless child: [succeeds;  
 To poor Clarissa's throes, thy (i. e., Lorenzo's) care  
 Care full of love, and yet severe as hate!  
 O'er thy soul's joy how oft thy fondness frowns!  
 Needful austerities his will restrain;  
 As thorns fence in the tender plant from harm.  
 As yet, his reason cannot go alone;  
 But asks a sterner nurse to lead it on.  
 His little heart is often terrified;  
 The blush of morning, in his cheek, turns pale. (VIII, 245 ff.)

The following lines contain a dark allusion to a period of ten years:

Suppose him disciplined aright, (if not,  
 'Twill sink our poor account to poorer still)  
 Ripe from the tutor, proud of liberty,  
 He leaps enclosure, bounds into the world;  
 The world is taken after ten years toil. (VIII, 266 ff.)



### Remarks on Johann Georg Schlosser's *Anti-Pope*.

All that is known of this strange composition is contained in the anonymous publication entitled: *Anti-Pope oder Versuch über den natürlichen Menschen — Nebst einer neuen profaischen Übersetzung von Pope's Versuch über den Menschen — Bern, bey Beat Ludwig Walthard, 1776* \*.

In the Preface it is stated that only the first four Epistles (I. General Principles of Human Happiness — II. Self-Love and Reason — III. Society — IV. Happiness in General) were originally composed in English. Their full contents are given in a German prose version, made by the author himself, who is also responsible for the translation of Pope's *Essay*. By way of foot-notes, copious extracts from the English original are provided, which latter are intended "to help the reader to a better understanding of the German version".

More than ten years after the completion of the English text of Epistles I—IV, the German prose sketch of Epistle V (On Religion) was written down, the stimulus to compose in English having, by that time, worked itself off (see Preface).

Below are reprinted, together with the German rendering, two extracts from the English original which may serve to illustrate the peculiar "style" of this curious literary venture.

(1) From Epistle I:

Each mortal Man — amazing Injustice! —  
 On his own part, most partially lies!  
 Or, blame the Swain, who in yon gloomy Bow's  
 Eternal Tears on Sylvia's cinders pours.  
 In yon fresh Grove, with her and Love alone,  
 A Thunder struck the blooming Sylvia down. —  
 All to his Good! — Material Fool! why weep?  
 When pity'ng Moss about her Grave does creep,  
 When the soft Dove, the plaintive Nightingale  
 In melancholy Notes the fair bewail,  
 When Nymphs and Dryads with a nightly Tear  
 In solemn songs her Monument revere;

\* This edition seems to be identical with the one referred to in Goedeke's *Grundriß zur Geschichte der deutschen Dichtung* IV. 1, p. 516, bearing the imprint: „Leipzig 1776 in der Weygandschen Buchhandlung“.

Then, wiser Thou, in gaudy Apparel,  
 Go, smile, and cry upon her Grave, All's well!  
 A barbr'ous Lye! and the dull Lye is plain!  
 All's well, thou criest? All's well: not well thy Brain!  
 Close to my Home, I keep my watchful Eyes.  
 Grieve when 'tis troubled, and when save (= safe), rejoice!  
 (pp. 12 f.)

Ein jeder Mensch ist — erstaunliche Parteylichkeit! — immer parteyisch gegen sich. Soll er nicht, so geh, strafe den Jüngling, der dort in der Einöde Thränen auf Sylvia's Asche weint. Sie giengen im Wald allein mit der Liebe, da schlug der Donner die blühende Sylvia hin. — Alles zu seinem Besten! was sollen die Thränen, sinnlicher Thor? Wenn mitleidiges Moos zu ihrem Grabe kriecht, wenn die sanfte Taube, die klagende Nachtigall das Mädchen mit melancholischen Gesängen beweinen, wenn Nymphen und Dryaden mit nächtlicher Thräne und feyerlichen Trauerliedern ihr Grabmal verehren. — So geh du, weiser, wirf dein festlich Gewand um, und lach und ruf auf ihrem Grab, es ist alles wohl! — Barbarische Lüge! Alles wohl, sagst du? Alles! Gewiß nicht dein Kopf! Eingeschlossen in meinen engen Kreis, wacht nur für ihn mein schlafloses Aug, hat Freude, wenn der heil ist, und trübt ihn Flend, Thränen!

(p. 12.)

## (2) From Epistle IV:

Shut ev'ry pleasing Scene, let to my Eyes  
 No Fairy-Lands of happy Prospects rise.  
 Those cheating Songs of flatt'ring Bards I hate:  
 My song be dark and dismal like my Fate.  
 My Sorrow hunts me thro' thy spicy Groves,  
 Wakes me from slumbers and stings in my Loves:  
 It taints my very strains, and long ago  
 From my pall'd lyre but mournful Accords flow.  
 And so they shall! Ev'n now I trembling write,  
 Wrapt in the ghastly shades of hov'ring Night  
 Upon a Grave, from whence a hollow sigh  
 Chills my slow Blood and tells, my Grave is nigh.  
 A frightful Scene! no friendly Star appears  
 Thro' the thick Clouds which drop me nightly Tears.  
 A moul'dring Damp infects the heavy Air,  
 And the knell thro' the Tomb still beats my Ear...

(pp. 70 f.)

Deckt jede Scene der Freude zu, laßt vor mir kein Feen-Land glücklicher Ausichten sehn! Ich hasse die betrügerischen Lieder schmeichelnder Barden; schwarz und finster, wie mein Schicksal, sey mein Gesang.

Meine Qual heßt mich durch die aromatische Wälder, weckt mich aus meinem Schlummer, und nagt in meiner Liebe; sie vergiftet meine Leyer, und lange, lange flossen von meinen Saiten nichts als traurige Töne. — Ach das mußten sie! Eben igt schreib' ich zitternd, gebüllt in schauernde Schatten, auf einem Grabe, woraus hohle Seufzer mein Blut gefrieren machen, und auch mir mein nabes Grab weisen. Fürchterliche Scene! Kein freundlicher Stern schimmert durch die dicke Wolken, die mir nächtliche Thränen tropfen. Ein modernder Dunst verdickt die schwere Luft, und das Todtengeläute schallt durch die Gräber in mein Ohr...

(pp. 70 f.)