bound to be coloured by his experience and by his nostalgia” (Marinelli, Pastoral 78).

Pastoral and Nostalgia

Nostalgia, indeed, is that aspect of pastoral, in which the mode’s collusion with a space-time of desire for a re-instated, balanced identity becomes most apparent. Essentially a looking back, a longing for what one no longer has, nostalgia is neither simply a symptom of pastoral nor does it make pastoral into something exclusively escapist. It is difficult, if not futile, to argue against pastoral as a discourse of retreat; the idealised countryside of the pastoral text is, after all, an Arcadia that uses language to construct a world different from what is perceived to be real. This retreat, however, may function simply as an escape from the complexities of urban life, society, and even the reality of the present, or it may be used as a means to explore possible futures (Gifford, Pastoral 46). Harry Levin, more eloquently than any other critic to date, has formulated nostalgia’s force of influence on the poetic voice’s perception of itself within the space-time of Arcadia as follows:

Nostalgia for a happier day would be a sterile emotion, if it merely sighed for what was not; encouraged by the rotation of the seasons, it is transfigured into a hope for recurrence, [...] and hence [moves] from retrospection to prophecy. [...] If our longing to escape – or more positively, to better our condition – has any goal, however dimly envisioned, it must be located elsewhere or otherwhile. Standing here and wishing to be there, we are given a choice, at least by imagination; we may opt for some distant part of the world, a terrestrial paradise, or for an otherworld, a celestial paradise. (Levin, The Myth of the Golden Age 9)

There is a psychological difference, therefore, between what W.H. Auden terms “the backward-looking Arcadian” and “the Utopian dreamer.” For the Arcadian is fully aware of the wishful thinking that has constructed their Golden World as a past idyll, in which the contradictions of the present either have been negated or have not yet arisen. The future-oriented “Utopian,” on the other hand, believes that theirs is a paradise which remains to be realised, and which requires actions that are necessary elements of that dream (Auden, “Arcadia and Utopia” 90). It is with a clear awareness of this fundamental psychological difference that Thomas More defined his own ‘Utopia’:

*Utopia*, our name for the best-known model of all model commonwealths, means nowhere. Its namers, Sir Thomas More, intended a pun in Greek on *Eutopia*, the good place, that happy realm which never existed on land or sea or in the air. In much the