same fashion, taking up a hint from Charles Renouvier, we might speak of *Uchronia* or *Euchronia* to signify either never or the good time. (Levin, *The Myth of the Golden Age* 8)

Interestingly, nostalgia has the means to meld the ‘uchronian’ glance of the utopian with the ‘euchronistic’ glance of the golden-age pastoralist. For nostalgia is not simply a feeling that urges one to look back at a void, an absence of something or someone, an elsewhere or an-other. Nostalgia is more than a feeling, it is an impulse, a thrust that involves an act, and what nostalgia acts out, or causes to be enacted, is the *nostos*, the act of return. The desire to return home, moreover, is brought about by *algos*, or extreme pain, grief, and distress.

A protagonist in desire of *nostos* is not where they want to be, does not have what they want, and is not at home with the self. It is no coincidence that the opening lines of Book One of *The Odyssey* speak of *algea* and *noston*, the many pains Odysseus “suffered [...] by sea while trying to save his own life and bring his men safely home” (Homer, *The Odyssey* 1.4–5). There is also another sense in which *The Odyssey* exemplifies the meaning of nostalgia – its principles and roots in the pastoral mode in particular. For the pastoral poetic is perhaps further removed from Ulysses’ epic struggles than any other mode imaginable. Yet, with regard to the discourse of return so quintessential to pastoral, it shares with Homer not only the return home, but through this nostalgia also that device of retreat which betokens both with the ability to glance at matters greater than a voyage by sea or a poetic counterfeit of the idyllic country life.

Nostalgia, then, as a device and a discourse saturated in the pain of longing and the attendant (re-)enactment of *nostos*, is driven towards a point of origin, situated both in a space and a time where the protagonist used to ‘be.’ Pastoral also always points to something that is elsewhere, at a condition of absence that comes into being in its narrative forms, fictions, and the linguistic landscapes that construct the artifice of Arcadia. Nostalgia thus conditions pastoral with a subtext of crisis, a crisis of identity, authenticity and memory best encapsulated by the mode’s own epitaph: *Et in Arcadia Ego*.

*Et in Arcadia Ego: Pastoral Death, Elegy, and Memory*

*Et in Arcadia Ego*: no other phrase is more readily associated with the pastoral mode, nor more easily misinterpreted. It permeates the literature of the pastoral mode in many forms: in numerous quotations and misquotations and in just as various translations and mistranslations. Ambiguity is immanent in the Latin wording; where William Faulkner rearranges the inscription to read “Et ego in Arcadia” (*The Sound and the Fury* 41), Lady Croom of Tom Stoppard’s *Arcadia*...
famously (mis)translates the Latin into: “Now I am in Arcadia!” (12). Who or what exactly, then, is the “I” in ‘And I too am / was in Arcadia?’

Tracing the etymology of the phrase is best done through art, for *Et in Arcadia Ego* first appears in Giovanni Francesco Guercino’s *The Arcadian Shepherds* (see Appendix, Fig. 2). Here, the phrase is spoken by a lugubriously Christian death’s-head, asserting, with a detectable degree of Counter-Reformational piety, the omnipresence of death. The skull serves as a *memento mori* for two young, shocked shepherds, spellbound by this symbolic yet certain presence of death, even in the ideal, pastoral world of Arcadia. Additionally, Guercino adorned his skull with a fly and a mouse: the former is an age-old symbol of death and decay, and the latter, voraciously gnawing at the skull, is a “very well-known symbol for all-devouring time” (Panofsky, “*Et* in *Arcadia Ego*” 297).

As Panofsky argues, “According to the rules of Latin grammar the ‘et’ in this epigrammatic and elliptical sentence can refer only to ‘in Arcadia’ so that the sentence must be supposed to be pronounced by Death in person: ‘Even in Arcady,’ says he, ‘there am I’” (Panofksy “The *Tomb in Arcady* at the ‘Fin-de-Siècle’” 298).

If Guercino pictures *Et in Arcadia Ego* through glasses darkly, two paintings by Nicolas Poussin show the Latin phrase in an altered light. The first *Et in Arcadia Ego* (See Appendix, Fig. 3) by the French master still leans heavily on Guercino: the two young shepherds, here accompanied by Alpheius, Arcadia’s river god and a shepherdess, approach the scene from the left (much like the original) and are once again arrested by a skull placed upon a curvilinear sarcophagus inscribed with *Et in Arcadia Ego*. The skull, however, is much smaller here (and thus less distinguishable). Nevertheless, “the picture still conveys, though far less obtrusively than Guercino’s, a moral or admonitory message” (Panofsky, “The *Tomb in Arcady*” 312).

Any traces of Guercino’s influence or of the death-head as moralistic *memento mori* have all but disappeared from Poussin’s second *Et in Arcadia Ego* (see Appendix, Fig. 4). Its three young men and one young woman, easily recognisable as Arcadian shepherds, “are no longer surprised and arrested in their movement but symmetrically poised in calm, reflective attitudes, pointing at or pondering over the enigmatical inscription” (Panofsky, “The *Tomb in Arcady*” 6). The death’s head has been omitted completely. The contemplative absorption with which Poussin replaces the shepherds’ dramatic encounter with Death and the absence of the skull made it increasingly difficult for contemporary interpreters to stay linguistically true to *Et in Arcadia Ego*’s Latin grammar. André Félibien, Poussin’s biographer and well acquainted with him, took the first step towards “bad Latinity and good artistic analysis” by attributing it not to Death, but to
the tomb’s occupant: “Par cette inscription on a voulu marquer que celui qui est dans cette sépolture a vécu en Arcadie et que la Mort se rencontre parmi les plus grandes félicités” (1740, qtd. in Panofsky, “The Tomb in Arcady” 301). From then on, the process of *Et in Arcadia Ego*’s re-interpretation reached its artistically logical conclusion with surprising speed: Félibien had not bothered with the *Et*, he simply left it out, as did Richard Wilson in his *Ego Fui in Arcadia* (1755), and thus the phrase slipped into its ubiquitously proverbial usage on the Continent. In his *Pervonte* (1778), Chr. M. Wieland translates it variously into “Auch ich lebt’ in Arcadia’” or “‘Du arme Vastola. Auch du warst in Arcadia’” (211); Goethe famously used it as a motto for his *Italienische Reise* (1786): “Auch ich in Arkadian,” and Schiller even paraphrased it into “Auch ich war in Arkadien geboren” (*Resignation*, 1835, qtd. in Panofsky, “The Tomb in Arcady” 303).

As this brief overview of its etymology shows, it is not what *Et in Arcadia Ego* translates to that should matter to us, but how it has been variously interpreted and represented in artistic and literary texts. Notably, although the original notions of Death and *memento mori* have had to give way to a wistfully elegiac and nostalgic epitaph for a pastoral idyll once enjoyed and then lost, *Et in Arcadia Ego* can simultaneously embody all or none of these ‘original’ associations. What *Et in Arcadia Ego* shows, however, is that, love and death have been closely intertwined in myth and literature since antiquity. The psychoanalyst Rollo May, in a chapter of his *Love and Will* entitled “Love and Death,” explains that mythology is the gauge of the extent to which love and death are related in the human psyche, and thus to the process of identification:

> [D]eath is always in the shadow of the delight of love. [...] When we love, we give up the centre of ourselves. We are thrown from our previous state of existence into a void; and though we hope to attain a new world, a new existence, we can never be sure. [...] The World is annihilated; how can we know whether it is ever built up again. We give, and give up, our own centre; how shall we know that we will get it back?”  

(May, *Love and Will* 101, italics my own)

Love and death are essential ingredients to the pastoral, whether expressed through the existential psychology at the heart of every myth, or as the elegiac nostalgia that characterises many a pastoral’s retreat and return. As the struggle for love is a struggle against death, so the pastoral mode’s retreat is a struggle against the *memento mori* that *Et in Arcadia Ego* represents. This interrelation of love and death makes the pastoral mode and the elegy frequent

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cohabitants of one and the same literary landscape. Karen Weisman’s introduction to The Oxford Handbook of the Elegy (2010) uncannily echoes many of the tropes of pastoral’s Et in Arcada Ego:

When taken in the more contemporary sense as the framing of loss, elegy can be pulled between the worlds of the living and the dead, between the present life of sorrow and the vanished past of putative greater joy. Between the extremes of life and death, joy and sorrow, the receding past and the swiftly moving present, falls the elegy as we know it today. (Weisman, “Introduction” 1)

Where elegy is “the framing of loss,” the pastoral mode expresses a yearning for what is always already elsewhere; both elegy and pastoral test “the limits of our expressive resources precisely at the very moment in which we confront our mortality,” thus throwing into sharp relief “the inefficacy of language precisely when we need it most.” Much like pastoral, elegy “inhabits a world of contradiction” for which “an implicit self-reflexivity is inevitable” (Weisman, “Introduction” 1).

Not surprisingly, then, the pastoral elegy covers a large scope of literature. Traditionally, “the subject matter of elegy ranged from funeral lamentation to political satire to chagrin d’amour” (Watterson, “Nation and History” 138); modern iterations include not only texts that lament a human loss, but also those that mourn an ever-endangered environment. In “The Dark Ecology of Elegy,” Timothy Morton argues in dialectical tautologies such as, “If ecology is often elegiac, elegy is also ecological,” or “Elegy works as much against ecology as for it, despite the overwhelmingly environmental quality of elegiac tropes” (Morton, “The Dark Ecology of Elegy” 251, 256). Iain Twiddy’s study of Pastoral Elegy in Contemporary British and Irish Poetry even postulates that “pastoral elegy” exists in “three main forms.” In the first – “artificial pastoral elegy” – nature mourns human death, and the dead are “transformed” into a permanent existence or landscape. In “non-pastoral” or “natural” elegy, the role of nature is such that it is neither benevolent nor cruel, and neither is there a “pre-eminent place in nature for humanity. Consolation in a “natural elegy” may instead be derived simply from “the dispassionate changes endemic in natural processes.” The third form, “anti-pastoral” elegy, “differs from non-pastoral elegy, since […] the former suggests a poetics of undermining in which pastoral conventions are deployed or alluded to, in order to suggest or declare the limitations of those conventions, or their downright falsity” (Twiddy, Pastoral Elegy 4).

To delve deeper into such and other vague definitions of the ‘pastoral elegy’ is to come to a critical cul-de-sac, however. While it cannot be denied that the pastoral and the elegy exhibit a multitude of parallels, it would be misguided to
give this interrelation its own explicit category in modern literature. “For all intents and purposes,” William C. Waterson notes, “‘pastoral elegy’ is an academic category invented by scholars seeking to establish a link between Theocritus’ first ‘Idyll’ (Thyrsis’ lament for Daphnis) and all subsequent mourning poems set in the locus amoenus or green world” (Watterson, “Nation and History” 139). Examples of pastoral elegy abound, nevertheless, especially in the early seventeenth century. In 1614, Drummond of Hawthornden published his collection Poems: Amorous, Funeral, Divine, Pastoral in Sonnets, Songs, Sextains, Madrigals. In Song One, a shepherd mourns the death of a nymph at the site of her tomb. And William Alexander’s ‘A Pastoral Elegy on the Death of Sir Anthony Alexander’ bears more than a passing resemblance to Milton’s ‘Lycidas,’ often taken as the prototypical pastoral elegy of its time.

Despite the proliferation of the pastoral elegy in seventeenth-century English literature, studies that focus on the pastoral elegy appear to neglect a crucial difference between the two modes: while elegy sets out to explicitly mourn a loss, pastoral does not, even if Et in Arcadia Ego can function as a memento for an idyll once enjoyed and then lost, and even if the mourning for a loss may be lived out in a pastoral sojourn. Where pastoral is about the past and foregrounds a reality in which all art is about the past, elegy is about the past, but foregrounds that past so as to create a reality in which the mourner(s) may accept their future. Rather, pastoral is often elegiac because, as the dialectical nature of the mode has shown us, it is characterized not by absolute contrasts, but by heterotopia that are governed relativistically by a multitude of contrasts.

The nature of pastoral’s relativism is particularly well expressed in the elegiac iteration of the mode because the elegy, as a poetics of loss, relies on the relative distance between the space-time of that loss and the Arcadian space-time in which its life is relived or re-imagined. “As the presentation and representation of the mourning process,” moreover, “elegy must record change, must demonstrate a progression away from the dead.” Elegy thus “requires a space for communion, a space for memory, and in the production of the memorial image, a space to create consolation” (Twiddy, Pastoral Elegy 31), and it is in pastoral’s Arcadia that writers often find both such a space and such a time. Et in Arcadia Ego thereby becomes a space-time wherein the author or the mourner may contemplate and learn to accept the nature and inevitability of death. Pastoral is so well suited to this task, moreover, because the mourner can create a heterotopia of memory and time according to their own “memorial image” and as a mirror of their own, personalized Arcadia.