

These people unwisely think they can "own" time also. In the past, a period which now seems to them "gifted with possession" (stanza 4), they "will"-ed time to become different, just as, in reverse, they do now. Having betrayed their former ideals, held when they no longer wished to belong to their time (now the past), they think, in their romantic nostalgia, that they were wrong in what they wanted yesterday. But, of course, they were *right*; as Auden says, they act *as if* they were not.

So Auden does partly seem to contradict himself. However, the contradiction is not that which Mr. Fuller sees: at no stage is Auden advocating an appreciation of any time other than that of the poem's composition.

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