

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910966194103321
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Titolo	What is pastoral? / / Paul Alpers
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Chicago, : University of Chicago Press, c1996
ISBN	9786613066114 9781283066112 1283066114 9780226015231 0226015238
Edizione	[1st ed.]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (444 p.)
Disciplina	809/.93321734
Soggetti	Pastoral literature - History and criticism
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- Contents -- Preface -- Acknowledgments -- Frequently Cited Works -- Prologue -- 1. Representative Anecdotes and Ideas of Pastoral -- 2. Mode and Genre -- 3. Pastoral Convention -- 4. Representative Shepherds -- 5. Pastoral Speakers -- 6. Pastoral Lyrics and Their Speakers -- 7. Modern Pastoral Lyricism -- 8. Pastoral Narration -- 9. Pastoral Novels -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	One of the enduring traditions of Western literary history, pastoral is often mischaracterized as a catchall for literature about rural themes and nature in general. In <i>What Is Pastoral?</i> , distinguished literary historian Paul Alpers argues that pastoral is based upon a fundamental fiction—that the lives of shepherds or other socially humble figures represent the lives of human beings in general. Ranging from Virgil's <i>Eclogues</i> to Sarah Orne Jewett's <i>The Country of the Pointed Firs</i> , from Shakespeare and Cervantes to Hardy and Frost, this work brings the story of the pastoral tradition, previously limited to classical and Renaissance literature, into the twentieth century. Pastoral reemerges in this account not as a vehicle of nostalgia for some Golden Age, nor of escape to idyllic landscapes, but as a mode bearing witness to the possibilities and problems of human community and shared experience in the real world. A rich and engrossing book, <i>What Is Pastoral?</i> will

soon take its place as the definitive study of pastoral literature. "Alpers succeeds brilliantly. . . . [He] offers . . . a wealth of new insight into the origins, development, and flowering of the pastoral."-Ann-Maria Contarino, *Renaissance Quarterly*
