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Review of Thomas K. Hubbard, *The Pipes of Pan: Intertextuality and Literary Filiation from Theocritus to Milton.*

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Thomas K. Hubbard, *The Pipes of Pan: Intertextuality and Literary Filiation from Theocritus to Milton*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998. x + 390 pp. ISBN 0472108557.

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Thomas Hubbard's book is the second major book on literary pastoral in this decade; the other, Paul Alper's *What is Pastoral?* (University of Chicago, 1996). Both start from the argument that pastoral, when considered over its long literary history, must be narrowed down, and should not be considered as something whose primary role is the setting of some idealized world. The "questions of genre definition and social function have their own interest," says Hubbard, but "the present study . . . assumes pastoral as 'convention' rather than as 'theme,' as a tradition more than as a definable genre" (4-5). Compare Alpers, invoking Kenneth Burke: "we will have a far truer idea of pastoral if we take its representative anecdote to be herdsmen and their lives, rather than landscape and idealized nature" (22). While Alpers takes the tradition all the way from Theocritus to Frost and other twentieth-century writers, he skips almost straight from Vergil to Spenser. Hubbard reads fewer figures, but reads them much more closely, and pays some attention to the most neglected part of the tradition—what happened after Theocritus and Vergil (Hubbard's chapters 1 and 2, respectively) but before the Renaissance (chapter 5): the pastoral of late antiquity (chapter 3) and medieval pastoral (chapter 4). However, Vergil and the Renaissance are Hubbard's largest concerns, because here the strands of literary filiation are at their most tangled and thus most interesting. The larger argument, however, is that the strands are always there, even in the "weaker" examples of the pastoral tradition. This distinctive classicism drives Hubbard's successes, and shortcomings.

The introduction reviews the literature of theory behind the subtitle. All the usual theoretical suspects of intertextuality are cited—Mikhail Bakhtin, Julia Kristeva, Jacques Derrida, Gérard Genette, Laurent Jenny. Though swift, the review is nonetheless historically correct, and characteristically lucid. "Filiation" refers to a subset of intertextuality, the poetic revisionism of Harold Bloom: the Oedipal *agon* of the "anxiety of influence" where one poet/ephebe/*filius* battles with an elder poet/father. Hubbard prefers the latter model of intertextuality, the writer as an especially expert *reader* who is responding to one particular, carefully-read predecessor: "[a]uthorial intent is certainly not irrelevant. . . . What is needed for a fuller understanding of allusion in poetry is thus a symbiotic union of intertextual theory with reader-response criticism" (15). Taken to the pastoral tradition, this focus on the author helps to explain why pastoral has so frequently been taken up as a way to begin a career, namely by referring it to careers of authors past, when they too began with pastoral: "[t]he history of the pastoral intertext thus forms a narrative of successive appropriations and modulations in which poets not only demonstrate virtuosity by recombining traditional topoi and dramatic situations into a new format but also position themselves relative to the past and/or the future of poetry" (349).

However, all this is really "intertextuality lite." As often seems to be the case when the field of classics enlists contemporary literary and critical concepts, the theory appears as another "authority" without any attempt to challenge or otherwise stretch the theoretical frame, or to gauge the relative resistances of the ancient text versus the modern theory. Consequently,

Hubbard is very far from an application that is in any way “strict” regarding either Kristevan intertextuality or Bloomian influence. Kristeva argues that subjects are completely swallowed up by intertextuality, and in fact there is practically nothing “out there” *except* intertextuality, or “wall-to-wall” textuality. Bloom has stated (being very true to Freud) that misreading can be entirely unconscious—that there is no need for the ephebe to have actually *read* the predecessor!—and that “influence” may in fact work entirely against the grain of any linear literary history. Bloom even discusses the uncanny appearance of the ephebe’s voice within the *predecessor’s* text. For Hubbard, however, these are mainly theoretical niceties; there is no systematic attempt, for example, to apply Bloom’s six “revisionary ratios,” and Bloom is hardly mentioned once the criticism proper begins. Bloom’s anxiety of influence, Hubbard suggests, may only really occur *after* Milton, the study’s endpoint, and up to him there is a more generalized “anxiety of originality” (the revision of Thomas M. Greene, *The Light in Troy*).

Nevertheless, Hubbard’s idea of intertextuality as applied, even if “soft” and “intentional,” results in an entirely convincing and enlightening explication of something still interesting: the systematic nature of an author’s allusions, with all the complexity and seriousness of any kind of play. The theory of intertextuality is really window-dressing, but the window that Hubbard opens has a view rarely seen: Hubbard’s best misprision is not of twentieth-century literary theory, but of the nineteenth-century commentary tradition—Hubbard is not content, as commentaries in the classical field still operate, with noting the most obvious allusion. Instead, Hubbard notes how allusions are often multiple, and calculated, and involve strings of prior texts, and thus must not only be noted but analyzed in depth, and not in the context of just one work by one author (as commentaries typically limit themselves) but in the full intertextual field of all those works. When *The Pipes of Pan* comes up short, it is in failing to maintain this daunting project for all the authors Hubbard considers.

In chapter 1, Hubbard compares Vergil and Theocritus, the anecdote that has opened so many studies of pastoral, and which is perfect for a Bloomian approach: Theocritus invented pastoral, the story goes, and Vergil perfected it. Though Theocritus certainly did not invent his *Idylls* from scratch, there is only thin evidence from those specific Alexandrian predecessors that he might himself be revising. Nevertheless, if there is a basic defect with the revisionary model, it is revealed here in Hubbard’s reading of Theocritus—the predecessor never comes off very well, and Theocritus moreover has to bear, from the Bloomian perspective, the gigantic weight of all the pastoral that would come later. As in Alper’s *What is Pastoral?*, Vergil triumphs decisively over his pastoral father: this “strong” preference for Vergil over Theocritus thus plays out from the beginning of both the literary and critical traditions of pastoral (already, Julius Scaliger devotes a chapter of his *Poetics* to suffering Theocritus by comparison to Vergil). Of course, Hubbard himself confesses that his book may be governed by a “revision” against his teacher Thomas J. Rosenmeyer, whose well-known *Green Cabinet* is one of the only attempts to exalt Theocritus to the disqualification of everyone who came after (the other most useful critics who argue that Theocritus is indeed unique are David Halperin in *Before Theocritus* and Kathryn J. Gutzwiller in *Theocritus’s Pastoral Analogies*). On the other hand, Hubbard’s reading of Vergil’s reading of Theocritus manages to uncover a wide range of insights in this otherwise well-traversed topic. While Theocritus positions himself as doing something clever with the old epic material, Vergil turns things completely around by using pastoral to direct his own career towards the epic achievement that Theocritus never attained, or even contemplated, since he seems to have been

on Callimachus's side against the post-epic project of Apollonius. Hubbard also considers the intermediary step of the anonymous *Lament for Bion* as a second, "weaker" and less Vergilian way: in this poem there is an expression of inadequacy, rather than triumph, in the face of tradition, in part a function, Hubbard has found, of temporal and linguistic proximity. It's easier to revise from a distance.

Chapter 2 examines Vergil's *Eclogues* as the Eclogue Book, an entire intertext unto itself. This chapter is a tour de force, and is the best of *The Pipes of Pan*, since in it Hubbard performs what he finds in Vergil: a masterful overcoming and outstripping of a tangled tradition—namely, the huge body of existing criticism on the *Eclogues*. Hubbard's reading proceeds straight through the Eclogue Book, avoiding for the present the more "obvious" pairings of *Eclogues* that have already been discussed *ad nauseam* (1 and 9; 2 and 8; 3 and 7; 4 and 6; 5 and 10). Instead, Hubbard links the *Eclogues* as three successive triads with a coda: *Eclogues* 1-3 follow Theocritus most closely and humbly; *Eclogues* 4-6 explore more ambitious models, such as the elegy and the epyllion; *Eclogues* 7-9 begin to demonstrate full mastery, to the point of modeling for other poets; and *Eclogue* 10 encapsulates all three movements, with a farewell and a final twinge of doubt. Hubbard's revolution is in reading Vergil's collection as a recapitulation of a cycle of development, shaped as the poet would have it. Consequently, Hubbard dispenses with what would really interest a Freudian like Bloom: the actual order of composition of the *Eclogues*, a progress which might reveal a subconscious and less controlled dynamic at work. Hubbard's Iserian endeavor is much more defensible, since the order as received is indeed the way Vergil intended, and it is certainly different from the order of composition, whatever that order might have been, for (as in so many bibliographical questions of authorship in the classical period) there is little agreement on the compositional sequence. Hubbard is aware of pastoral's importance for Iser, who begins in *The Act of Reading* with Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*, but is apparently not aware of Iser's more recent, radical claim in *The Fictive and the Imaginary* that pastoral, at least in the Renaissance, is primarily about the reception process, which is what Hubbard is suggesting for the classical era. Thus one of Hubbard's more important points is how Vergil's revisions aim not just at the Greek tradition, but also at nearer Roman contemporaries, most famously Gallus, but also importantly Catullus as well as the other Roman love elegists, whose influence on the *Eclogues*—precisely because of the antagonistic relation—has been underestimated.

One of Hubbard's tactics, however, which is borrowed backwards from the Renaissance, does give some pause: there is a heavy reliance on the standard suite of pastoral names to demonstrate the dynamics of Vergil's revisionary progress (e.g., from the Corydon in *Eclogue* 2 as a frustrated poet to the Corydon in *Eclogue* 7 as a successful one). This amounts to an overreading for two reasons. First, the allegorical, cross-collection identification of "one shepherd = one persona" is not a reliable equation until after the Middle Ages, even though it may already occur within earlier individual poems, as in the seventh *Idyll*, where Theocritus does seem to appear in the guise of one of his shepherds. Second, not all pastoral names are repeated. And not only are there a good number of singleton proper names in the Eclogue Book, but repeated names may be intended not as intertexts but "antitexts" referring to very different personas: has Corydon really changed by *Eclogue* 7, or is he just a different Corydon? Either way there are few salient details of characterization. In this context, the possibilities of Judith Haber's *Pastoral and the Poetics of Self-Contradiction: Theocritus to Marvell* (Cambridge, 1994; not cited by Hubbard) comes to

mind. Hubbard's larger point is well-taken indeed—Vergil has certainly shaped, with all artistry, his collection into a paradigm of artistic development—but making the pastoral names take such a burden of mapping this development seems precisely to diminish this artistry. The famous Tityrus and Meliboeus of *Eclogue* 1 are a case in point. Commentators from Servius on down have always taken Tityrus to represent the poet: “Tityrus” is the first word of the poem, and picture of this shepherd, singing at his restored ease, remains one of the great anecdotes of poetic inspiration. However, the point of *Eclogue* 1 is not to argue for poetry as a home in contrast to the exile of Meliboeus, but to keep both perspectives in near-perfect opposition. Vergil, then, inhabits the voices of both Tityrus and Meliboeus—just as any author must inhabit all that author's characters. If anything, Meliboeus comes out the “winner” in the reader's sympathies, and this name, in appropriately revisionary fashion, is not found, as Tityrus is, in the Theocritean canon of shepherd names. Thus when Vergil closes the *Georgics* by repeating *Eclogue* 1.1 with the change “*I sang you, Tityrus,*” this seems best read not as “I sang as you, Tityrus” but “I sang *of you* (as Meliboeus).” If *Eclogue* 9 develops a cynical contrast to the general optimism of *Eclogue* 1, and both belong to the same Vergil, certainly Vergil can inhabit both of *Eclogue* 1's shepherds, both the younger Meliboeus and the older Tityrus. Hubbard certainly agrees with all of the above, but is not willing to take the further step that the next Tityrus and Meliboeus to appear in the *Eclogues* can be yet other personas again, which is the more credible explanation for some of the extreme disjunctures in the characterization of Vergil's shepherds, when there is any characterization at all.

After the excellent long exposition of Vergil, the remaining chapters (like so much of pastoral poetry itself after Vergil) gradually become more and more disappointing. In Chapter 3, Hubbard explores the often neglected pastorals of Late Antiquity: the *Einsiedeln Eclogues*, the *Eclogues* of Calpurnius Siculus, and the *Eclogues* of Nemesianus. Hubbard considers the sequence intertextually both regarding Vergil and other predecessors in the sequence. Over their literary history, Hubbard finds, the collections slowly move out of Vergil's debilitating shadow: the fragmentary *Neronian Einsiedeln Eclogues* cannot get past Vergil at all; Calpurnius (dated later than traditionally, to the third century) is more ambitious but still cannot fully overcome the Vergilian model; but Nemesianus defuses Vergil by diffusing him, playing him off against Theocritus, Calpurnius, and others, though the result has the flavor of Bloomian “weakness.” Hubbard has here supplied a contrast to the grimmer, backward-looking “strong poetry”: some poets focus less on the one strong predecessor and concentrate on an optimistic eclecticism in their misprisions, as a forward-looking model for future poets.

Chapter 4, which is relatively brief, examines a few medieval examples of pastoral. Since Hubbard is primarily interested in collections of poems that are authored in conscious relation to the whole of the pastoral tradition, he jumps quickly (after a short consideration of the ninth-century *Eclogues* of Modoin of Autun) to the late medieval period, where the author, along with the appropriate awareness of classical texts, reappears with a vengeance. By the time pastoral reaches Dante, who wittily uses it in his verse letter to Giovanni del Virgilio as a Vergilian *recusatio* (the artful “refusal” to write a longer poem), pastoral has been fully overlaid with the enamels of allegory and satire, whether Christian, political, or just plain literary. Hubbard could make much more here of Dante's use of *Latin* to refuse to write a *Latin* epic when he prefers an *Italian* one; two of the most strategic battles of the Ancients and the Moderns are over language, and over pastoral. Still in Latin, Petrarch and Boccaccio (considered as medieval) each write a

collection of poems entitled *Carmen Bucolicum*, and reenact the sequence of Late Antiquity: Petrarch (like Calpurnius) is more Ancient, Boccaccio (like Nemesianus) more Modern, but both just as strong and eager for themselves to be subjects of interpretation and models for later poets.

Chapter 5, on the Renaissance, continues the consideration of the early Italian reappropriations of pastoral, moving to the fifteenth century. The four *Eclogues* of Giovanni Pontano, sent to the printer soon before this writer and statesman's death, provide an excellent example of Hubbard's pastoral-as-curriculum -vita, in this case retrospective rather than predictive. At last, Pontano's younger contemporary Sannazaro begins writing pastoral in the vernacular: the *Arcadia* directly approaches a full-scale native epic (or romance). The *Adulescentia* of Mantuan (Baptista Spagnuoli) are back to Latin, and this, along with Mantuan's theme of coming of age, made *Adulescentia* a standard school text (known for example to Shakespeare).

At this point Hubbard jumps to the English pastoral tradition as represented by Spenser and Milton. Here, where the texts in question have been exhaustively criticized, there is little that is new, and much that is missing. Certainly, as Hubbard finds, *The Shepheardes Calender* is just as overdetermined yet just as original as Vergil's Eclogue Book, and there is indeed the Vergilian, progressive reflection of the career in the twelve monthly "Aeglogues," and indeed the enclosed commentary of "S.K." (probably, as Hubbard takes it, Spenser himself) reflects all of an author's anxiety over the blind alleys of reception. Hubbard has little time to discuss the deep vernacular legacy of Chaucer, or (as Iser indicates) the overriding importance of the contemporary political situation. Although Hubbard spends nearly fifty pages on Spenser, about one hundred are needed, or the same amount of space Hubbard devotes to Vergil. The greatest lack of all, here, is the tremendous intertext of all of the rest of Spenser's literary production: the Spenserian corpus, all the way to the end, is shot through and through with resonances and recapitulations of pastoral. Thus Hubbard does not note, as he usefully could, that Spenser, though he had already finished a number of his other shorter works and had already begun on *The Faerie Queene*, deliberately had *The Shepheardes Calender* published first.

This gap does not appear when Hubbard next turns to Milton: *Lycidas*, along with the *Epitaphium Damonis* of two years later, is considered as a part of Milton's 1645 collection of *Poems*. But again Hubbard is defeated, since the larger point of *Lycidas* is that it recapitulates in a *single* poem all earlier pastoral *collections*, whose various stepped progressions have proven so useful for Hubbard. Certainly *Lycidas* may perform the same sort of progression, but Hubbard is not equal to the profound wealth of intertextuality of Milton's poem. In discussing for example the famous opening lines ("Yet once more, O ye Laurels, and once more / Ye Myrtles brown, with Ivy never sere"), Hubbard prefers a far-fetched parallel with *Eclogue* 7.61-64 to the much more obvious allusion to *Eclogue* 2.54. Focusing on the "Yet once more," Hubbard cites the well-noted allusion to Hebrews 12:25, but misses that Milton can be just as well referring to himself: two of his other prior poems have mentioned the laurel, and one to the myrtle, so this is the third, second, and first times around, respectively, for the three plants. Such self-allusion is certainly appropriate for Milton. Hubbard would have profited from J. Martin Evan's developmentally-oriented monograph *The Road from Horton* (*English Literary Studies*, 1983) which carefully explicates both the intertextuality and the internal structuring of *Lycidas*.

Hubbard's larger point about Milton certainly does stand: Milton, coming at a time when pastoral was nearly moribund, revived it so stunningly that he effectively killed it for all later comers, and thus he may be personally responsible for the anxiety of influence. To reiterate, then, Hubbard has really revised Harold Bloom's revisionism, in particular the Freudian "family romance" at its core. If anything, Hubbard has found that influence in the pastoral tradition from the classical to early modern periods is really like an extended, not a nuclear, family. Given that so much of the intertextuality that Hubbard discusses involves multiple allusions, there is much room for what more recent psychologists have called "family systems theory," where personal interactions are rarely dyadic, but tend inevitably to triangulate. "Filiation" might replace "filiation" here, since Hubbard has demonstrated that pastoral interactions are as often intragenerational as intergenerational.

"Filiation" also contains a Bloomian legacy that, like Alper's "herdsmen and their lives," needs another kind of revision. The sexist incarnation of Bloom's poet, and most of all the critic, leads to a significant misprision of the pastoral tradition. Certainly classical and later pastoral has been dominated by male poets, but it is easy to underestimate the contribution of, say, the Arcadian Anyte, whose highly original epigrams precede and may have influenced Theocritus, and in any case she certainly has the same project of rereading Homer "down to size." And besides the need to revise pastoral "fatherhood" to "parenthood," there is also the entirely "anti-family" way of transmission: foundlings, runaways, mutations, miscegenation. There is, for example, no room in a Bloomian literary history of pastoral for the rapes of the medieval *pastourelle*. In emphasizing the points of transmission (such as male shepherd names) that appear highly conscious and deliberate, Hubbard misses the tiny ova of the Vergilian heritage that grow out of all proportion to Vergil's intentions, of which the unexpected popularity of the "Messianic" *Eclogue* 4 is only the most obvious example. Another is the forward naiad Aegle in *Eclogue* 6, whose brief cameo is the sole female appearance in the *Eclogue* Book and the only Vergilian model for all later shepherdesses and nymphs of pastoral drama and romance, traditions that remain excluded by Hubbard's genealogy—the phallic pipes of Pan are passed down only from man to man. (Hubbard does, however, note the homoerotic dimension of this translation, though still far from anything like a queer pastoral, which is another possibility.) This is to say that traditions, and the pastoral tradition is one of the better examples, have a way of meandering, looping back, and subverting themselves which Hubbard's linear archeology—that enduring anecdote of classical studies—does not comprehend.

It might be better to say "geology," since even archeologists must occasionally confront deliberate gaps and omissions in the strata of cultural sedimentation. A significant consequence of the geological method is the exaltation of time at the cost of place: here on a mountaintop appear fossils from a seabed; here on the desert floor once stood a lush rain forest. In another recent book on pastoral entitled *Pastoral Process: Spenser, Marvell, Milton* (Stanford, 1998), a far slenderer but far more theoretically groundbreaking book than Hubbard's, Susan Snyder has argued that there are really two kinds of pastoral, following the phenomenological division of place and time: there is the pastoral of place, as of Arcadia or the "pastoral retreat," and the pastoral of time, or the "(lost) Golden Age." Like Hubbard, Snyder is interested in the latter, specifically in the way in which poets utilize the pastoral of time in charting their own temporal development. But by indicating an alternative to temporocentrism, a, if not the, dominant mode

of modern Western thought, Snyder opens the possibility for a renewed attention to place in pastoral, and place in literature more broadly.

In fact, the environmental perspective on literature, also known as ecocriticism, has arisen with the claim that it is ultimately inspired by Greco-Roman pastoral, though its formal analyses have admittedly been limited thus far to English Romanticism and American nature writers. This classical linkage is stated for example in Don Scheese, *Nature Writing: The Pastoral Impulse in America* (New York, 1996; see also the special forum in the October 1999 issue of PMLA, as well as in Terry Gifford's *Pastoral*, recently published in Routledge's New Critical Idiom Series). What Hubbard, and even more so Alpers, has thus excluded is the importance in pastoral of landscape and nature, which may be pastoral's most common denominator. Consequently in Hubbard's readings, there is little emphasis laid on the decided (re)localization of many allusions: even when Vergil is citing Theocritus, the plants are Italian varieties, not Greek ones. It may finally be time to correct Bruno Snell's excessive thesis that Arcadia was "discovered," as a strictly imaginary place, by Vergil in *Eclogue* 10. Even leaving out Anyte in this geography, Arcadia already must be the site of Theocritus's first *Idyll* (since Pan is said to be resting nearby). Moreover, Vergil's invocation of Arethusa at the beginning of *Eclogue* 10 is an anecdote of the literary liquidity of places as a "real," not imaginary phenomenon: Arethusa of Arcadia was pursued by Alpheus, transformed into a river, and emerged as a spring near Sicily's Syracuse. Vergil specifies that the Arethusan spring was still fresh: it was unsalted in its journey under the sea. Thus pastoral's places can travel, untouched by intervening time, and this invariability of place helps to explain the persistent appeal of pastoral to both authors and readers across the periods of literature. It is crucial to return by circling back to pastoral place, now that the linearity of pastoral time has been so clearly ruled by Hubbard.