Content apart, the pretentiousness of the presentation is a major flaw. The book is the outgrowth of a thesis, its chapters are launched with epigraphs in three languages, and the style is that variety of North-American-doctoral-program which goes by the name 'high-powered.' Thus, Tasso effects a 'sophisticated *récul platonicien*' at one point, and a '*récul mythologique*' at another. By virtue of the 'pseudo-Orphic unction' of Shakespeare's style, a 'pastoral theocracy' of various gods 'invisibly impends' – over the trembling fabric of A.M.N.D. no doubt. The laborious introductory chapter, which attempts to set up the theoretical framework for the whole book, is an exercise in hefting imponderables. The book is clearly only for specialists, but surely critical writing need not sound so fashionably mannered, so pointlessly recondite, as if it were shielding sacred formulas from the uninitiated. After all, writing about allegory does not entail the writing of allegory.

One or two extended sections are quite fine: the one on the function of the puzzling *intermedi* in the *Aminta* (pp. 63-71) is a place where the reader feels the ground turning solid under his feet. Again, it is salutary to see Shakespeare treated as at least as intelligent and knowledgeable an artist as Spenser, and to find that he too knows about such things as *serio ludere*, *discordia concors*, and the relative merits of activity and contemplation. Lastly, one of the merits of the book is that it represents an attempt to see Renaissance literature as a whole and not merely as a series of national fragments. For the real beginnings of that notion, all thanks to the art historians.

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Joan Gadol. *Leon Battista Alberti: Universal Man of the Early Renaissance*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969. Pp. xv, 266. \$14.50

This is a beautifully designed volume, set on wide sheets with generous margins and including sixty-four illustrations and plates. Mrs. Gadol has examined Alberti as a 'universal man' of the Renaissance, touching the entire scope of Alberti's work in order to define the nuclear continuities of his thought through the development of his varied interests.

It is a generally convincing study which ought to appeal to the specialist and non-specialist alike. The discussions of rationality and order in art and nature, deriving from Alberti's 'mathematical' approach to reality, and the nature of genius as the rational and creative spirit of man are among the most interesting in this study, and include fascinating descriptions of how Alberti used mathematical proportions in art and architecture. While emphasizing Alberti's debt to the neo-Platonic and Pythagorean-Ptolemaic ideas which were brought to new studies in the Renaissance, Mrs. Gadol suggests many areas of originality on the part of Alberti, which may show that later developments in Renaissance thought are more indebted to him than generally acknowledged.

Although readers may disagree with some of Mrs. Gadol's conclusions and parts of the more general discussions of her study, the book provides us with a comprehensive and intelligently presented view of a most complex and interesting figure, and leaves us with a wish to pursue more deeply the many suggestive arguments which she has outlined in her work.

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