

serve. I would suggest that these are the years [1602-5] when Donne had leisure to read widely and unprofessionally in . . . the Italian Cabbalists and Neoplatonists. . . . It is in these years that I would place the majority of the later *Songs and Sonets* (p. lviii-lix). This is an absolute pyramid of speculation, partly dependent, as we note from the last phrase, on the assumption that something has already been established about the Songs and Sonnets—that some were indeed 'later'. The argument assumes what it is trying to prove and then proceeds to ask rhetorical questions about how Donne occupied himself. But why did he have to occupy himself? May he not have been so utterly depressed that he did nothing? Perhaps; perhaps not. Conjecture about human probabilities, however fascinating in itself, is also not evidence.

Dr. Gardner asserts that the poems which contain references to 'the King' must have been written after James I's accession; 'the *contemptus mundi* that rings through these poems is surely connected with Donne's situation from 1602 to 1605. Exiled from affairs he consoles himself by scorning the world' (p. lx). But what has happened to the poems of which Dr. Gardner earlier said: 'their strength is a strength of the imagination, which abandons itself wholly for the space of a poem to an imagined situation or mood' (p. xix)? The imaginative strength has once again been pensioned off in favour of the biographical speculation in which she said she was not going to indulge.

Dr. Gardner's attempt to date the Songs and Sonnets is, therefore, entirely unconvincing. I do not believe they can be dated; in any case, the evidence is certainly not substantial enough to justify their being re-arranged, and printed, in two separate groups—one alleged to date from 'before 1600' and the other from 'after 1602' (see p. xxv).

La Trobe University, Melbourne

A. L. FRENCH

NOTE

'When Dr. Gardner says 'A great many of these can be dated with absolute certainty' (p. lvii) it is not in fact clear whether 'these' means 'the *Songs and Sonets*' or 'Donne's works'. But the point affects neither my argument nor hers.

ART AND NATURE: HERRICK AND HISTORY

Richard Ross's analysis (*E. in C.*, XV, 1965, 171-180) of Herrick's use of the concepts Art and Nature in 'Upon Julia's Clothes' and 'To the Virgins, to make much of Time' is perceptive, but a larger view of the topic Art and Nature is needed. The brief summary of the background and his evaluation of Herrick's place in the history of the use of the concepts (pp. 172-73) need qualification, especially in the light of E. W. Tayler's thorough study, *Nature and Art in Renaissance Literature* (New York, 1964), to which my remarks are indebted. According to Ross, the earlier Renaissance, exemplified by the pastoral poets Sidney, Spenser, and Breton, tended to see Nature as a norm, Art as a corruption. 'But after Donne and Bacon', Nature was no longer seen as a norm, but simply as 'raw external reality'. Thus, in his poetry Herrick 'has reversed the terms' as Ross believes them used in the 'earlier English Renaissance' (making art the norm, nature a corruption) and tries 'to achieve in a new synthesis the harmony of Nature and Art'. The questions raised by Ross's summary evaluation are various: did the earlier Renaissance in any systematic way view nature as a norm and art as a perversion? What roles do Donne and Bacon play, the last of the old, the first of the new, or a transitional stage? Was the seventeenth-century writer generally disturbed in his view of Art and Nature by a new concept of 'raw external reality' (Hobbesian nature)? Did Herrick in any consistent way see Nature as a corruption, and is his synthesis of Art and Nature a totally new concept?

After studying the Renaissance uses of Nature and Art in some depth, Tayler concludes that during the period 'both Nature and Art were necessary to any accurate, complete view of the world. . . . [However], the balance of the correspondence, hence the values assigned to each term, lay open to varying interpretation and vigorous controversy'. He warns us that 'the relationship posited between Nature and Art could vary according to a writer's assessment of a particular situation in the light of his assumptions about the efficacy of human reason, so that it is therefore risky