

PRINCIPLES OF ART HISTORY. By Heinrich Wölfflin. (Dover Publications Inc. \$4.5. Bell; 30s.)

Heinrich Wölfflin was one of the greatest art historians of his generation, and much contemporary criticism depends from the views expressed in the present volume and his *Classic Art*. Allied to a lucid and scholarly intellect he was endowed with a rare understanding of works of art. However, the detailed examination of individual works does not detain him here; rather we are confronted by a number of conclusions resulting from a lifetime of devoted study. Nevertheless each facet of the argument is substantiated by perceptive references to a masterpiece of painting, sculpture or architecture.

This is a study of the 'problem of the development of style in later art', and deals with the transition from cinquecento classic art to the seventeenth-century baroque. He reduces this complex achievement to five pairs of concepts. They are, from linear to painterly: plane to recession: closed to open form: multiplicity to unity: the absolute to the relative clarity of the object. Thus, for instance, the quality of movement which we can see in a Rubens or Tintoretto is shown to us amongst the seemingly static delights of a Terborch interior, a Velazquez portrait, or the noble quietude of the late Rembrandt where rhetoric plays no part. Even the reactionary Poussin is brought into line with his period.

Professor Wölfflin is concerned entirely with aesthetic questions, and changes of patronage, philosophic thought, social and political structure, or the effects of the Reformation and counter-Reformation, are not touched upon. But within these self-imposed limits this is a classic of art history which remains stimulating and valid today. It is a pity that this welcome re-issue should be marred by the inadequate methods of reproduction—the small illustrations are little more than reminders to those already familiar with the examples.

MARIA SHIRLEY

MY SERVANT CATHERINE. By Arrigo Levasti. (Blackfriars Publications; 21s.)

This long, learned, ardent, admirably documented study, written without much detachment, is less a biography than a panegyric. As such it should not be recommended to the non-Catholic who, stifled by its swooning heat, will become nostalgic either for the hygienic (if not always accurate) coolness of the psychiatric interpretation, or for the golden autumnal colour of the Age of Reason and *surtout point de zèle*. Even the Catholic guinea-pig, such as the reviewer, may experience some ambivalence of feeling. Does nothing more than an unpleasant spiritual prudery prompt distress that St Catherine should

have attempted to convey in terms of human nuptials, with even a ring, that glorious knowledge of God which overwhelmed her? or is there not some truth in the consideration that though humans can and must become aware of the Divine through the idiom of their own faculties, their own potentially holy instincts and energies, yet to attempt to express that awareness of means by sexual imagery is too often to obscure what is symbolized by the very power of the symbol to evoke its normal legitimate associations? Is it again only an aesthetic queasiness, or is it a wholesome dread of a pathological state of mind, that is sickened by a constant preoccupation with 'drowning in Blood'? Whether or no these considerations are matters of personal and temporal feeling, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the radiant sanctity which shone through St Catherine of Siena, drawing the careless, the sensual, and even the proud towards God, healing the plague-stricken, comforting the lepers, inspiring those condemned to death, did not imbue all her political utterances. It looks as if holiness had consumed her personal self, her will, all that she had individually and consciously to give; but had stopped short at that part of her being rooted in collective life. How else can it be explained that a woman invaded, possessed, transformed by God could speak in the same voice of 'Love and the sweet primal Truth' and of 'infidel dogs', urging Christians to fight against them in a Crusade making the name of Christ hateful and hideous to the whole Arab world? Time, place and circumstance do not account for this; St Francis, of the same culture and background, wished to convert, not to conquer the Saracens. Nor does sex; St Teresa was 'all for the Moors and martyrdom'—but of herself, not them. This is not to question the blessedness of St Catherine; it is to plead that the next student of her extraordinary life should face and discuss openly the problems it presents and the difficulties it involves. She should emerge from such treatment as a much more attractive and comprehensible figure.

RENÉE HAYNES

DILEMMAS. By Gilbert Ryle. (Cambridge University Press; 10s. 6d.)

Professor Ryle in his Tarner lectures exhibits admirably that important characteristic of philosophers, an especial sensitiveness to the uneasiness we sometimes feel about accepting an apparently irrefutable argument. While scientists (and theologians too) can sometimes ride roughshod over our poor prejudices, the philosopher must always respect them; and often when some new and paradoxical discovery divides the world into rational revolutionaries and prejudiced reactionaries it is his unpopular task to show its opponents that it is not so false and its adherents that it is not so interesting as they think.