Alberto Cavaglion. *Otto Weininger in Italia*. Roma: Carucci editore, 1982. Pp. 240.

Alberto Cavaglion's monograph, a revised doctoral dissertation, surveys the critical reception of Otto Weininger (1880–1903) in Italy, giving the reader an overview of the antisexual fanatic philosopher's two books, *Geschlecht und Character: Eine prinzipielle-Untersuchung* (Vienna, 1093), an expanded version of a dissertation entitled *Eros und Psyche*, which he wrote for Friedrich Jodl, and *Über die letzten Dinge* (Vienna, 1094), a collection of aphorisms that appeared posthumously and that he penned while travelling through Germany and Norway in 1902 and during his tour of Italy in 1903.

The publication of Mr. Cavaglion's book is a welcome event; it is the first study in Italian letters that presents a straightforward, sympathetic but balanced account of the intellectual and literary impact in Italy of the theories of a thinker who more poignantly than perhaps any other individual embodied the promise and the peril of European intellectuality at the turn of the nineteenth century. Weininger, using mathematical formulas, believed he could demonstrate how varying proportions of male and female protoplasm could explain prostitution, anti-semitism, racial superiority and even genius.

No doubt, Cavaglion's ambitious study—accurately characterized in the *Introduzione*—is a significant addition to Italian critical literature and deserves wide readership for its many strengths. A noteworthy feature of this monograph is its arrangement into eight short sections. The first four, "La Voce," "Sesso e carattere" (1913), "André Spire," "Intorno alle cose supreme" (1914), are roughly chronological. Each section is a succinct, knowledgeable account of the articles and critical commentaries on Weninger that appeared in the most authoritative Italian literary journals of the *primo novencento*, from *Leonardo* to *Lacerba*, from *La Voce* to *La Ronda*. The remaining four "Individuo assoluto ed estetica metafisica," "Maschilità del fascismo," "Le Juif antisemite," "Trieste," address interrelated questions of cultural, social, political, historical events: the philosophy (politics, aesthetics, ethics) of Benedetto Croce, the Catholic Church's opposition to Freud's pansexualism and the antifeminism of fascism. On reading Cavaglion, one receives the impression, first, that an important aspect of Weininger's work was totally misunderstood by the Italian intelligentsia and, secondly, that the remainder shifted kaleidoscopically to blend with a certain wishful preconception. No doubt Weininger was welcomed warmly, almost emotionally by his Italian readers. This warmth is reflected in what seems to be a general tendency, on the one hand,

to impose an Italian spiritual paternity upon his *Geschlecht und Character* and, on the other hand, to redeem the young Jewish prodigy by stressing his antisemitism (or is it anti-germanism?) in *Über die letzten Dinge*. The outstanding feature of this book is the comprehensive and cohesive coverage of a somewhat neglected field in Italian thought and letters. Mr. Cavaglione has demonstrated his scholarly ability, his wide-ranging familiarity with Italian intellectual life before and after World War I. In short, *Otto Weininger in Italia* is an excellent guidebook on a much debated period in Italian letters. I can recommend it for research libraries without reservations.

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Paolo Simoncelli. *La lingua di Adamo: Guillaume Postel tra accademici e fuorusciti fiorentini*. Firenze: Olschki, 1984. Pp. 185.

The book focuses on a few passages from Dante (especially *Paradiso*, XVI. 124–26 dealing with the language spoken by Adam) and on the theories that several sixteenth-century Florentines expounded in relation to Dante's statements on matters of language. The major figure dealt with is Guillaume Postel (1510–81), the French humanist, linguist, religious thinker and prophet, who is much less well known as a critic of Dante. Not only does Professor Simoncelli's study provide new information in this area but it also challenges many of the interpretations offered by historians of the *questione della lingua* for this period. The author rejects facile labels and chooses instead to examine internal and external data thoroughly and objectively. Through a careful reading of the documents (both manuscript and printed) and judicious weighing of the impact of political and religious factors, in a manner which one might term interdisciplinary and which he used with much profit in a previous work entitled *Evangelismo italiano del Cinquecento*, Professor Simoncelli is able to pinpoint convincingly the subtle differences which characterize the individual theories of the various protagonists in this episode of the language controversy.

What emerges is a clear and well-documented exposition of the intricate interplay and evolution of the views each critic advanced and modified in the light of changing personal historical circumstances. The Florentine academician Giovambattista Gelli developed his early ideas on the Aramaean origin of Florentine probably after reading Postel's work on the origin of the Hebrew language (1538), the author argues. This theory, as advanced by Pierfrancesco Giambullari, was a defence of Tuscan in the face of *bembismo*, but it also had political implications, Simoncelli shows. It indicates the far-reaching geographical boundary of the Medici state and