

The Cambridge Companion to the Fin de Siècle edited by Gail Marshall. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007. xvii, 266 pp. + 9 b/w illus. ISBN 978-0-521-85063-6. \$94.99; £48.00 (cloth). ISBN 978-0-521-61561-7. \$30.99; £18.99 (paper).

Fin-de-siècle business is booming, as attested by recent offerings from academic publishers, with topics ranging from the New Woman and criminality to French book culture during the period. Within this context, *The Cambridge Companion to the Fin de Siècle* will come as a welcome guide both to those stepping newly into the field and to experts looking for fresh perspectives on familiar themes. In her introduction, Gail Marshall takes pains to challenge comfortable views of the period as an insular layover between Victorianism and the Modernist revolution, one marked by finality. Marshall presents us instead with a fin de siècle that encompasses vitality and continuity, contradiction and complexity. The essays that follow are organized around fairly standard lines: the first group considers broad discourses of politics, science, and aesthetics; the second group focuses on specific artistic and literary genres. The strength of the collection comes not only from its accessible yet comprehensive subject overviews, but also from the tensions and conversations running between the entries. In its form, the volume speaks to the very vibrancy and debate that Marshall identifies within the fin de siècle.

Jenny Bourne Taylor's densely researched "Psychology at the fin de siècle" introduces some of the compilation's central points of discussion, particularly the influence of evolutionary science and the attendant anxieties surrounding degeneration. Taylor traces the ways in which different lines of psychological thought variously engaged with the ascending star of scientific empiricism, often while reflecting on questions of selfhood previously left to philosophers. She outlines the evolutionary strand of psychology that associated mental pathology with devolutionary tendencies, and the chilling way in which such ostensibly objective inquiry could work to naturalize social inequities. In contrast with the empirical materialism of figures like Henry Maudsley, other varieties of "mental science" extended their modes of inquiry to include forays into the mystical and the occult, as witnessed in the work of Frederic Myers, co-founder of the Spiritualist group the Society for Psychical Research. Taylor concludes with a reading of Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) that finds a plurality of contemporary theories of mind at work within the novella.

Dennis Denisoff further pursues the theme of degeneration in his essay "Decadence and aestheticism," in which he revises mid-twentieth-century understandings of decadence as a negative reaction to progress. Instead,