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Charles-François Mathis. *In Nature We Trust: Les paysages anglais à l'ère industrielle.* Paris: Presses de l'université Paris-Sorbonne, 2010. 685 pp. EUR 28.00, ISBN 978-2-84050-577-8.

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In this voluminous work, derived from his PhD dissertation at Paris-Sorbonne in 2006, Charles-François Mathis explores the way through which an environmental consciousness emerged in England, in the context of an increasing gap between a rural England and cities smothered under dark smoke clouds. Indeed, despite its title, this book is a lot more than a history of "English landscapes." Although the first part of its title is English, this book is written in French. Nevertheless it can be helpful to a larger audience as it provides many original documents from the English nineteenth century, including numerous poems, translated into French.

The book is divided into three main parts: "The First Environmental Struggles," which deals primarily with the second third of the nineteenth century; the expansion of the environmental movement in the period from the 1870s up to the First World War; and a discussion of various environmental organizations–from the "reformists" to the "sentimentalists" and "utopians." Mathis builds his study on printed documents, from literature (novels, poetry, essays) to magazines like *Punch* (and its beautiful cartoons, such as those featuring "Father Thames") to publications issued by the associations he studies. Parliamentary reports are included as well. A chronology, an array of short biographies, and an index usefully complete the work.

In Nature We Trust starts with a preamble through which the author argues that the development of the glorification of the countryside cannot be disassociated from the rise of an industrial England. From the late eighteenth century, England's rural environment acquired a status of "landscape" through fine arts, tourism, and natural history. Mathis focuses then on the second third of the nineteenth century. He wants to re-evaluate the contribution of this period to the rise and development of environmentalism. Several clues can be found. Firstly, he examines the thought and the writings of William Wordsworth, one of the central figures of this part. The poet did much to draw attention to the beauty of the Lake District and to denounce some embodiments of the industrial era (such as the railway). Secondly, the struggle against the enclosures played a role in combining the emerging sanitary preoccupations and the will to leave the urban popular classes access to nature. Thirdly, it was the time of several official initiatives to assess pollution and to propose solutions to this problem that was mainly seen as coming from the industrial development–but remained problematic to administer in a liberal society. In London, the minister Lord Palmerston managed to obtain the passage of a Smoke Nuisance Abatement (Metropolis) Act in 1853. Nevertheless the impact of the law on the air quality was rather limited. In the case of water pollution, rivers were victims of the sanitary improvements proposed by Chadwick, consisting in the disposal far from the urban environment, of human waste.

The 1830-60 period was marked by the emergence of two distinct movements, the "sentimental" branch of environmentalism, aiming at preserving green spaces and aesthetic landscapes, and the anti-pollution movement. They would start to merge later in the second half of the 1870s. What Mathis call the "professionalization" of the environmental movement started in the 1860s and 1870s. The most notable fact was the creation of the Commons Preservation Society (1865-66), considered by the author as the "first association for the preservation of the environment" (p. 146). Moreover this "professionalization" also concerned the fight against pollution: the official approach of the governmental committees became more scientific, more efficient. In 1861, the Local Government Act Amendment Act required local authorities to treat their sewage before discharging it in the rivers. Two years later, in 1863, the Alkali Works Regulation Act was taken: it was the first time that inspectors were given the power to enter industrial facilities to enforce a norm (regarding hydrochloric acid emissions). The state of mind of the first general inspector, Robert Angus Smith, was to convince his interlocutors to change their practices

rather than to record offences.

The second part of the book narrates the "boom" of the environmental movement. The turning point is situated in the second half of the 1870s, when the connection between its two "faces" occurred. A sense of history, embedded in the thought of John Ruskin and William Morris, was characteristic of the "sentimentalist" side. Whereas the struggle against pollution seemed to stagnate, the integration of animals and plants into concerns regarding the damage caused by air pollution provides an indication of the rising value henceforth attributed to nature. The network of voluntary associations became better structured, as illustrated by the attempt to unify the causes in the Kyrle Society and the action of Octavia Hill, an important figure of this world. A back-to-the-land movement appeared, aiming to arouse the love of nature in the lower classes through walks and riding events. The diversification of the goals was also exemplified by the Metropolitan Public Garden Associations, the Selborne Society, and the famous National Trust (founded in 1894-95). Mathis concludes this part with the story of the rise of ecology at the turn of the twentieth century and with the first push towards the creation of natural reserves.

It is obvious that this book deals with a broader topic than the history of landscapes–the reader will learn about how the transformations of the English landscape in the nineteenth century following phenomena such as enclosures, pollution, urbanization, can be connected to what Mathis calls the "environmental movement." The coherence of the movement and its challenges are at the core of the third part. Focusing on the last quarter of the nineteenth century, this part begins with a presentation of two currents that can be identified: the "reformists" and the "utopians," foreshadowing the "shallow ecology" and the "deep ecology" that developed from the 1960s onwards. It is possible to underline that Mathis's conceptual work might profitably have been more receptive to political science and sociological approaches recently developed. In the generation following Wordsworth, Octavia Hill, Robert Hunter, and H. Rawnsley, the founders of the National Trust seem to occupy a prominent role. Of course, some distinctive features can be found in examining the lists of trustees of the main associations. Some societies were rivals, competing or ignoring each other in their periodicals. On the "utopian" side, Mathis studies different attitudes adopted by the "prophets" of a sentimentalist and socialist environmentalism. All these groups and societies had to face a thorny question addressed in chapter 7: Should open spaces and natural landscapes be preserved *for* or *from* the people? Most environmentalists insisted on the importance of educating the public. The duality between the urban environment and the countryside was resolved in the notion of the Garden City theorized and put in practice by Ebenezer Howard.

In Nature We Trust is an ambitious work that will fill an important gap in francophone environmental history. Quite ironically, this opus about England allows French readers–perhaps for one of the first times (along with Geneviève Massard-Guilbaud's *Histoire de la pollution industrielle* [2010] for the case of France)–to learn from the story of the fight against pollution as well as giving them historical information on the birth and development of a strong network of British "green" associations. Last but not least–though one would have liked to see them better related to the main text–the illustrations are numerous and of high quality.

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