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***We English* by Simon Roberts, “Banal Nationalism” in Landscape?**

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Abstract

This paper studies the case of a landscape photography project by British photographer Simon Roberts: *We English* – the project comprising the book published by Chris Boot in 2009, exhibitions of the large format prints of the photographs, and the artist’s dedicated website with a blog and forum for the public to propose subjects. We address the question of English national identity in Simon Roberts’s photos through the concept of “banal nationalism” coined in 1995 by Michel Billig. The first part draws on Billig’s thesis that the nation is “flagged” in the most banal everyday environment and activities, and discusses whether Simon Roberts’s documentary photographs evidence such subliminal national “flagging”. The second part shows the limits of the concept of “banal nationalism” when studying *We English* because of the complex, collaborative and reflexive nature of the project. By revealing how personal and intertextual references inform both the photographer’s and the viewer’s perception, the artist documents the dialectical process and negotiations at work in national identification. The third part contends that this dynamic approach of Englishness allows Roberts to propose his own re-imagining of the homeland.

Résumé

Cet article étudie le projet de photographies de paysage intitulé *We English* réalisé par le photographe anglais Simon Roberts. Ce projet est envisagé comme un ensemble qui comprend le livre publié chez Chris Boot en 2009, des expositions des tirages en grand format et le site internet que lui consacre l’artiste avec un blog et un forum qui a permis au public de suggérer des lieux à photographier. La question de l’identité nationale anglaise dans les photos de Simon Roberts est abordée à l’aune du concept de « nationalisme ordinaire » formulé par Michael Billig en 1995. La première partie de l’étude s’empare de la notion développée par Billig d’un « balisage » de la nation dans l’environnement quotidien ainsi que les activités les plus banales des citoyens, et se demande dans quelle mesure les images de Simon Roberts mettent en évidence un tel « balisage » national subliminal. La deuxième partie montre les limites du concept de « nationalisme ordinaire » concernant l’étude de *We English* en vertu de la nature complexe, réflexive et collaborative du projet. En révélant comment les références personnelles et l’intertexte influencent à la fois sa perception et celle des spectateurs, le photographe souligne que tout processus d’identification nationale est le produit de négociations et d’une dialectique complexes. La troisième partie conclut qu’une telle approche dynamique de l’identité permet à Simon Roberts de réinventer la nation anglaise.

Mots-Clés : Simon Roberts, *We English*, anglicité, identité nationale, nationalisme ordinaire, photographie de paysage, paysage anglais, documentaire collaboratif

Keywords : Simon Roberts, *We English*, Englishness, national identity, “banal nationalism”, landscape photography, English landscape, collaborative documentary

Plan

Introduction

Documenting everyday signs of Englishness

“Banal nationalism” as defined by Billig

“Metonymic stereotypes” or the check-list approach in *We English*

Typically English features?

Identification processes as negotiation

Re-imagining the homeland

Introduction

Can elements of English national identity be found in landscape and people's outdoor activities? Can this be rendered through photographs? British photographer Simon Roberts tackles these questions in his project *We English* – comprising the artist's website, with a blog and forum for the public to propose subjects¹, the book published by Chris Boot in 2009, and exhibitions of large format prints. The fifty-six photographs result from months of research work and from a five months' road trip around England that the photographer took in a motorhome. Over the whole year, Simon Roberts stopped in selected places to capture a sense of Englishness both in landscape and in people's outdoor activities. The subject matter, plus the travelling mode chosen by the artist, and perhaps the fact that took his two-year-old daughter and pregnant wife along with him on this trip, explain that 54 of the pictures are countryside landscapes: beaches, fields, caravan parks, campsites, villages, hills, rivers and lakes, or castles. These sites are settings for a range of leisure activities which include hiking, paragliding, angling, hunting, bird watching, horseracing, tobogganing, one baffling case of mud-racing, some picnicking, and quite a lot of strolling or relaxing. How can they be related to identification with the national community?

Claims of English national identity have been familiar since the late 1990s in Great Britain. There has been a period of unprecedented soul-searching for the English nation under the combined circumstances of globalization, European integration (1992), Scottish and Welsh devolution of powers (1998), the debate on multiculturalism between 2000 and 2010², and the prospect of the referendum on Scottish independence (2014). Such renewed interest in the English nation was epitomized not only by a resurgence of the English flag during the 1998 World Cup, but also by new political and scholarly attention to the question of English identity, culminating in 2003 with the publication of Krishan Kumar's study *The Making of English Identity* (Kumar, 2003). More recently, emergent English nationalism has also been described as a sort of backlash: a report published by the Institute for Public Policy Research in 2012 was entitled "The Dog that Finally Barked" (Lodge, 2012).

Simon Roberts's *We English* is a photographic contribution to this debate. The topic of English nationalism is broached in a very blunt manner by the cover of *We English*. It was designed by FUEL, a graphic design company that had also worked on Simon Roberts's previous book on Russia *Motherland* (2007). It shows a green silhouette of England floating on a greyish background, the colour of the Northern Sea. England is thus quite provocatively represented as a free-standing island. It feels like a truncated version of Britain as Scotland and Wales have been left out of the picture, let alone other British Isles. The green silhouette is overlaid by St George's flag, the national emblem of England. The flag reads WE ENGLISH in black capital letters, which caps the decidedly nationalistic tone of the cover. What we have so far is no "banal nationalism", but overt, explicit nationalism. This imagery, however, was subsequently dropped for the exhibitions of *We English* in the National Media

¹ Long after the end of the road trip and the publication of the book, the blog is still accessible online. It is used to publish information on exhibitions of *We English*. <<http://www.we-english.co.uk/>>, last accessed 23 March 2014.

² As pointed in *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain* (2000), better known as the Parekh report, it was England, really, which was at the heart of the debate on multiculturalism: with 98 % of all black and South Asian people living in England, the question was about the future of multi-ethnic England rather than the *Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain*: "the key issue is not fundamentally one of British identity. It is one of English identity and how previous conceptions of English identity have excluded so many people who live and richly contribute to English society." (Runnymede Trust, 2000, 8)

Museum in Bradford and the Midlands Arts Centre in Birmingham³. Besides, on opening the book, one cannot but be struck by the discrepancy between the cover and the general aspect of all fifty-six photographs: quiet luminous large-scale landscapes, which leave the viewer wondering where that nationalism has gone, and scrutinizing banal scenes for answers.

We shall discuss whether Simon Roberts's selection of sites and outdoor activities is a case of "banal nationalism" or perhaps, some other kind of political proposal. The first part of this paper will look at Simon Roberts's project as an attempt to find symbols of nationhood in banal – or not so banal – leisure activities. A reading of Michael Billig's *Banal Nationalism* (1995) will inform this first analysis. Billig's concept of "banal nationalism", however, appears limited and maybe contradictory with the complex, collaborative and reflexive nature of *We English*. The second part will show how personal and intertextual references are exposed by Simon Roberts to define national identification as a dialectical process. The third part contends that this rather unique approach for a photographic project allows the artist to propose his own re-imagining of the homeland.

Documenting everyday signs of Englishness

"Banal nationalism" as defined by Michael Billig

On the 7th of January 2009, Simon Roberts posted a note on Michael Billig's book, *Banal Nationalism*, which he read when editing his project. The book is indeed relevant to the topic, as it is a cornerstone for scholarly literature on everyday nationalism. The phrase "banal nationalism" refers to the ways in which a sense of national belonging is sustained through the unnoticed, daily waving of "flags", or "flagging" of discreet symbols of a country. "To enable the established nations of the West to be reproduced [...] a whole complex of beliefs, assumptions, habits, representations and practices must also be reproduced." (Billig, 1995, 6)

Michael Billig elaborates on the famous concept of "imagined community" coined by Benedict Anderson. He agrees that nationalism implies an everyday identification of the individual with the group. National media and institutions, in particular, allow individuals to imagine a broader community beyond their personal acquaintances. However, Billig departs from Anderson's view when he insists that this routine identification process is mostly unconscious. According to Billig, the term "imagined communities" may be misleading because it implies that identification requires "an act of imagination" while it is "rather a matter of forgetting that we're being constantly reminded of the nation". "The remembering, not being experienced as remembering, is in effect, forgotten", quips Billig. Instead of a process of imagination, banal nationalism involves "a dialectics of forgotten remembrance" (7). From this point of view, national identities are neither a kind of essence nor psychological states: they belong with ideology (24).

A few examples of the nation being explicitly "flagged" are found in *We English*. In Rushley Hill Caravan Park (Peacehaven, East Sussex), St George's flag is standing right in the middle

³ As confirmed by the artist in an interview with the author (Brighton, July 2012), it was feared that the English flag and the racist overtones it had acquired in the wake of football hooliganism may not be welcome in two towns where ethnic minorities comprise about 40 % of the population (respectively 36.1 % and 46.9 % of the population. Sources: 2011 Census results, City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, <<http://www.bradford.gov.uk>>, and 'Population and Census', Birmingham City Council, <<http://www.birmingham.gov.uk>>).

of the frame. A boy's Manchester United shirt can also be considered as a discreet assertion of Englishness. The same goes with the crowd of Sunderland supporters on their way down to the Stadium of Light wearing their team's white and red striped shirts. In the picture of Westward Ho! Karting park, however, it is the Union Jack that is floating rather decoratively along with the chequered black and white flag of car races. Other signs visible in the frame may act as reminders of a national context. By the entrance gate to Lindisfarne Castle, two signs read "National Trust". One of them, though, bears the flag of the European Union which probably funded part of the conservation work. On the picture of Derby Day at Epsom Racecourse (Surrey) people are picnicking by a skip which bears the red, blue and white logo of a company called "Britanniacrest". On the whole, details send mixed messages, pointing in turn to English, British nationality, European membership, or more local forms of belonging. Yet, people are subliminally reminded where they are, and to a certain extent who they are. That is what Michael Billig termed the "homeland deixis"⁴.

There may also be some degree of *temporal homeland deixis*, especially as we are looking at photos of leisure activities mostly performed on weekends and summer holidays. Indeed, periods for vacation are regulated on a national scale, at least for families with children. There is a sense in many pictures that groups of people happen to meet because they share a common temporal organisation. This is more obvious in pictures dedicated to special events like the St George's Day Pageant in Scarborough Castle (North Yorkshire) or The Haxey Hood (Haxey, North Lincolnshire)⁵. What may bind people in a common sense of belonging is their being there on the same day as much as the historical dimension of those events. Thus "homeland deixis", whether visual or temporal, tends to naturalise the nation.

Besides those rather discreet signs, "banal nationalism" operates more obviously through the national features collected by the photographer in *We English* and re-represented for the public.

"Metonymic stereotypes" and the checklist approach in *We English*

Simon Roberts's pictures were not taken randomly across England. His trip was carefully planned and well researched as testified by his blog. Indeed, documenting typically English sites and habits means choosing isolated places or moments as representative of a broader ensemble. It implies a double process of selection and exclusion and a form of generalisation and simplification. The nature of the project, consequently, requires some of the "metonymic stereotyp[ing]" (Billig, 102) involved in "flagging the homeland daily".

This approach is tantamount to creating a checklist of some sites and habits which encapsulate Englishness. The creation of such a list is a very English occupation in itself. Checklists have been elaborated by many writers and politicians over the years: Stanley Baldwin played the game in the 1920s, then J.B. Priestley and George Orwell, John

⁴ It is worth noticing by the way that many signs in the pictures actually refer to American identity and culture: the bright yellow ice-cream van in Blackgang Chine Viewpoint reads "Uncle Sam's" while other vans in Epsom Downs Racecourse sell "Hot Dogs and Burgers". Thus "banal" English nationalism can hardly be found in such details.

⁵ "Every year, villagers in Westwoodside and Haxey compete for possession of 'the Hood'. The custom began after a certain Lady de Mowbray was out riding her horse one day, and a sudden gust of wind blew her hat off. The local farm labourers chased after it, and Lady de Mowbray was so pleased to get her hat back that she named the person who returned it to her 'The Lord of the Hood.' The event takes place on the Twelfth Night of Christmas in a field in Haxey, Lincolnshire, and it is believed to be England's oldest traditional tussle." (Simon Roberts, 2009, "Commentary", unpaginated.)

Betjeman, T.S. Eliot, John Major (partially quoting Orwell), Jeremy Paxman and Kate Fox (Morrisson, 2000, 19).

To use yet another English *cliché*, we might say that collecting and listing are also an old English habit, of which Martin Parr is a good representative in the world of photography. As he often puts it, England is a nation of train-spotters, bird-spotters (featured in *We English*), and peak-baggers (as we are reminded by the picture of Scafell Pike Summit). Simon Roberts in turn started his collection of places and moments. It is indeed a collection rather than a proper survey, complete with its rarities and sentimental items. Nevertheless, the consistent style adopted by the photographer – that of the “distant observer” with large-scale views shot from an elevated viewpoint – is typical of the rigorous, systematic approach of collectors.

Typically English features?

The kind of places and practices photographed by Simon Roberts are not icons of England that a tourist would recognize. For example, Simon Roberts stopped short of including Stonehenge in his tour. He picked the Avebury Stone Circle instead, where he photographed members of the “Human Nature Ritual Art” workshop performing intriguing movements. Yet, all places display supposedly English features, two of which are prominent in the book. First, thirteen pictures out of the fifty-six in *We English* are seaside pictures. The fact that they are dotted throughout the book is a reminder of the insular nature of England. Wherever you go through the book, or in England, you end up coming across a stretch of coastline. Second, there is a variety of fields, hills and rivers, which all bear the traditional mark of the English landscape, namely the domestication of nature. Hedges, fences, dry stone walls divide space into managed land. Almost every picture in the book contains some form of man-made physical limit, to which the viewer’s attention is directed by a picture of Grantchester Meadows where the tiny figure of a jogger is seen climbing over a cattle gate. Similarly, the picture of Bolton Abbey shows stone steps on which visitors cross the river. Even Lingell Fell, in the Wasdale Valley (Cumbria) which appears in the most “sublime” looking picture of the book, is criss-crossed by footpaths.

British land is managed –there is no wilderness; even the coastal littoral is overseen. It follows that landscapes and vistas are human constructs, which means that aesthetic principles, as well as social mores, were and are in play within the actual shaping of land. Pictorial renderings of countryside as pastoral depict Britain as undisturbed and undisturbing, thus contributing to constructing a simplified and benign rural imaginary, to picturing countryside as *safe* (Wells, 2011, 164).

On the other hand, as far as outdoor activities are concerned, few are specifically English. Except for glimpses of cricket and polo players, or pigeon races, what we see is a lot of picnicking and strolling. Only one picture points to the supposedly English taste for eccentric activities: Mad Maldon Mud Race (River Blackwater, Maldon, Essex). As Simon Roberts insists, “*We English* is resolutely not a catalogue of quirky pastimes undertaken by eccentrics.” (Roberts, 2009, “Commentary”, unpaginated) The book focuses on rather routine activities, like walking and sitting outside. It is interesting on that matter to compare *We English* photographs with some taken in other countries. Massimo Vitali’s images of Italian beaches or Alexander Gronsky’s pictures of Russian landscapes testify to the universal banality of such pastimes and perhaps to the increasing uniformity of lifestyles across the Western world.

So far, Simon Roberts's photographs have been studied for their documentary quality and as empirical material to test Billig's concept of "banal nationalism". The notion has proven helpful in understanding how subliminal signals can be found in the landscapes and outdoor activities and how they frame a sense of national belonging that is both entrenched and mindless. It might be argued, however, that Billig's concept of "banal nationalism" fails to provide clues to how people actually *respond* to signals. The re-production of the nation seems to proceed from an ongoing scheme of a sort with the institutions and the media sending subliminal messages to the population. The notion of "forgotten remembrance" allows little enquiry into the ways such messages are appropriated by individuals. What is more, it is questionable whether "forgotten remembrance" is a satisfactory notion to study any photographic project, as photography is by nature an act of remembrance. Indeed, by the means of photography, cases of "flagging the nation" can be exposed, and thus become remembered. We will now argue that there is more to Simon Roberts's project than a mere catalogue of explicit or implicit signs of Englishness. *We English* also reflects on *how* the nation is both re-presented to people and received by them. We will show that the reflexive quality of the project allows the photographer to shift ground beyond traditional documentary.

National identification as a negotiation process

The collaborative dimension of Simon Roberts's project evidences that choosing typically English places and outdoor activities requires negotiation. The photographer decided to ask the public to participate in the selection process by posting suggestions on his website for places and events to photograph. "It struck me as a suitably democratic way of working" comments Simon Roberts, "positioning me as it did alongside my fellow countrymen – a citizen, not just an onlooker – and attempting to involve people, to a certain degree in their own representation." The project thus acquired a participative dimension. It earned even more publicity as *The Times Week-end Supplement* had arranged with Simon Roberts to publish his whereabouts and one picture every week. In the end, more than 800 posts were collected through the photographer's blog, some of them containing whole lists of potential subjects. Simon Roberts then had to negotiate between his own ideas and those of the public.

What contributors to the website suggested were a number of places significant to them in many different ways: either because they evoked personal childhood memories, or because they were historical places, or because they were associated with previous pictorial representations, like Constable picturesque or Turner-like seascape or pastoral scenes. Some suggestions were reminiscent of the 1940s English checklists. As contributors sometimes tried to justify their choices, places and events were consciously recalled as personal or cultural references.

Parallel to this, Simon Roberts had to deal with his own personal complex network of cultural references, personal memories and desires. He used his blog to share those with the public and to provide some intertexts for his photographs. For example, the picture of children tobogganing on the 17th hole of Tandridge Golf Club nods to the days when the photographer went tobogganing in the exact same place as a child. The invisible intertext here is a family photograph. In another instance, Simon Roberts actually posted one of his own family pictures from the eighties on the blog.

Paintings, of course, are also crucial references. The photographer comments that the picture of Derby Day is “[his] own recreation of Frith’s scene”. Similarly, he finds in his picture of ‘The Hood’ that “the landscape is Constable-esque with the church spire, flat horizon and rolling skies.” (Roberts, 2009, “Commentary”, unpaginated) Studying landscape painting was central to the photographer’s preparatory work, with special attention to Constable’s landscapes. Once more, all this is revealed via the blog, with Simon Roberts posting shots of his notebook with personal thoughts on Constable’s paintings.

Finally, intertextual references are photographic: Simon Roberts is aware that many British photographers have tackled similar topics or have even shot the same places. Typically, the photo of the kids playing among litter on Blackpool beach echoes Martin Parr’s series *The Last Resort* (1983). Perhaps the picture of the gate to Lindisfarne Castle with the black lady standing in the middle of the frame will appear to some viewers as a sort of sequel to Ingrid Pollard’s series *Pastoral Interlude* (1988). The list could be extended back to the early days of British photography, with *The English at Home* (1936) by Bill Brandt as a landmark. Interestingly, Simon Roberts has engaged in producing a “Photographic Timeline” of “works which have explored notions of the English landscape and Englishness” on his *We English* website. Here again, in line with the artist’s collaborative approach, the public is invited to add names and works to the list. Nowadays, several years after the book was published, the list is still being continued. Therefore, *We English* as a project lives long after the pictures were taken. It points to the fact that viewing pictures involves a constant flux of intertextual references and that defining Englishness through observing the landscape in nature or in pictures is an ongoing process.

Thus, a vast framework of references is the backbone of the whole project, and it is made visible through various devices. Simon Roberts opts for transparency on the genealogy of his pictures and on his authorial choices. He questions himself and his audience on the cultural filters and the modes of perception that inform their understanding of landscape. Therefore it is crucial to take into account the whole project, that is, to include both the blog and the pictures in our analysis to appreciate the full scope and impact of *We English*. Beyond merely documenting the English outdoors, Simon Roberts reveals the different ways in which people connect with the landscape both in nature and in pictures. He offers an insight into the mechanisms through which the national community is constantly re-created in landscape, showing that everything is negotiated individually and collectively. This emphasis on dynamics and dialectics is a departure from Billig’s “banal nationalism” which tends to consider the re-presentation and repetition of nationalism as a mainly ideological, top-down process. Contrary to this, *We English* points to the more complex and “embedded” aspects of national recognition (Hearn, 2007).

This dialectical and dynamic definition of nationhood suggests that it is not merely imposed from out there – or up there, for that matter – and that it can also be imagined from below. From this, *We English* can also be considered as Simon Roberts’s own proposal for re-imagining the homeland.

Re-imagining the homeland

Let us go back to Billig’s criticism of Anderson’s concept of “imagined community”:

Benedict Anderson's idea of the nation as an "imagined community" is a useful starting-point for examining these themes – at least, so long as it is realized that the imagined community does not depend upon continual acts of imagination for its existence.

Once nations are established, and nationalism becomes banal, the poets are typically replaced by prosaic politicians and the epic ballads by government reports. The imagined community ceases to be reproduced by acts of the imagination. In established nations, the imagination becomes *enhabited*, and, thereby, inhibited. In this sense, the term "imagined community" may be misleading. The community and its place are not so much imagined, but their absence becomes unimaginable (Billig, 1995, 70).

Billig suggests that "banal nationalism" inhibits imagination because of its ideological nature. I will now suggest that the reflexive nature of Simon Roberts's project as a whole – that is, including the blog, the research, the collaborative dimension and the commentary in the book – tends on the contrary to release or re-activate imagination. Far from retreating into a form of Little Englandism, Simon Roberts proposes his own re-writing of the national frame. Our contention is that the "Englishness" that is sketched throughout the book comes out as a social project, offering new models of cohesion. Therefore, after asking "what and where is the nation", then "how is the nation produced and sustained?" One last question is: "what is the nation for?"

As shown by Jonathan Hearn, "the language of national identity is engaged by persons seeking more control over their social environment." Such symbolic resources are mobilized and questioned because they seem to "illuminate struggles for control over one's more immediate social environment" (Hearn, 2007, 670). Our reading of Simon Roberts's images is that they are perhaps more political than they seem to be at first.

The photographer brings about the question of national identity to develop a narrative of social cohesion, openness, and conviviality. Indeed, most of the pictures in *We English* were taken in public places. Most of the activities that are represented are collective. People stroll and stop for a chat, as in the photograph taken near Dunstanburgh Castle in Embleton, Northumberland. The general atmosphere in the pictures is relaxed. As a whole, the project seems to articulate a new mode of collective identification based on a shared experience of place.

This is the last but not least case of "national *deixis*" in *We English*. After all, there is a good chance that quite a few people in the pictures may not be English at all. Perhaps daring foreign tourists? Or visiting Scots? By an unnoticed *deixis*, both the photographer and viewers take it for granted that the people out there are English. In fact it does not matter because they are just there, sharing the experience of leisure and place. Thus, new emphasis is placed on territory and on the ways people interact both with the landscape and with one another. Although cultural references have been shown to play a central part in Simon Roberts's exploration of English national identity, they seem to recede somehow in the photographs to foreground a new vision of England as a convivial, open society.

Such a vision of the homeland breaks with the traditional view of England, and particularly of rural England, as a closed, stratified, ethnocentric society. Indeed, it has often been argued that a postmodern, multicultural, open nation could only be modelled on urban communities like London. It has even been suggested that the national idea should be abandoned altogether and replaced by an urban cosmopolitan model. For instance, Kevin Robins once noted that "London has generally been left out of discussions of the national culture and identity – as if London were not properly, or purely enough, or manageably enough, British (or English, at that)." Robins proposed "a shift of focus, and to move from the national frame to an urban

frame”, arguing that cosmopolitan London, as “a plane of singularities, and of open sets of interactions and relations”, offers new models of social cohesion and belonging (Robins, 2001, 473-93.) This postmodern vision forgoes the nation and tends to favour placeless, interacting communities instead. Similarly, Paul Gilroy calls for “conviviality”, which he defines as “the processes of cohabitation and interaction that have made multicultural an ordinary feature of social life in Britain’s urban areas and in postcolonial cities elsewhere” (Gilroy, 2005, xv).

Simon Roberts somewhat reverses that proposal by choosing to focus mostly on rural areas and by insisting on a sense of place, on a new kind of anchorage, or a form of re-territorialisation. Some critics objected to his project by saying that it delivered a romantic, outdated vision of rural England and that it failed to acknowledge the overbearing weight of London in terms of demographics and economic activity⁶. I would suggest that, on the contrary, *We English* offers a renewed vision of England. New forms of cohesion and belonging are evidenced, but they are not exclusively found in urban areas. Simon Roberts does not reject the national frame, but reinvents it, by revealing the interactions and relations involved in national identification. The photographs of *We English* and the whole project actually display the openness of conviviality, which “makes a nonsense of closed, fixed and reified identity and turns attention toward the always unpredictable mechanisms of identification” (Gilroy, 2005, xvi). The nation is re-imagined through a new, dynamic, open vision of England.

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⁶ See the discussion on *We English* on the Flickr forum dedicated to documentary photography. *Discussing Simon Roberts - « We English » slideshow in HCSP (Hardcore Street Photography)*, Flickr [Web] <<http://www.flickr.com/groups/onthestreet/discuss/72157621992737841/#comment72157622002862193>> (last accessed 16 June 2011).

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Notice biographique

Karine Chambefort-Kay est Docteur en Civilisation britannique et auteur d'une thèse intitulée « Écritures photographiques des identités collectives : classe, nation, ethnicité dans la photographie en Grande-Bretagne entre 1990 et 2010. » Professeur agrégé, elle enseigne à l'Université Paris Est Créteil et fait partie du groupe de recherche CIMMA (Constructions Identitaires et Mobilisations dans le Monde Anglophone) au sein laboratoire IMAGER. Ses recherches s'inscrivent dans le champ des études culturelles et visuelles, et portent en particulier sur les usages des images dans la société britannique contemporaine et sur les questions d'identité et de mémoire collective.

Biographical information

Karine Chambefort-Kay is the author of a PhD thesis entitled "Photographic Narratives of Collective Identities: Class, Ethnicity and Nation in British photography, 1990-2010" She teaches at Université Paris Est Créteil and is a member of the research group CIMMA/IMAGER. Her research interests include the various social uses of images in British contemporary culture, and the issues of collective identity and memory.