



Controlling Celtic Pasts: The Production of Nationalism in Popular British Archaeology of Celtic Peoples

Nicholas Healey
University of Victoria

A textual analysis of four popular archaeology books addressing Celtic peoples was conducted to examine how these materials enable the imagination of nations into the past. A prominent British archaeologist has authored each subject of analysis, which they have intended for a general audience. I argue that the analyzed texts variously enable and inhibit differing forms of British Unionist, Celtic and European integrationist nationalisms by projecting Celtic identities into a primordial past or erasing Celtic histories. This research calls attention to the need for archaeologists to engage with the political ramifications of their work and provides a basis for future research examining the contexts of archaeological knowledge production and consumption in their relationship to nationalism. Having found that these narratives may serve to further British colonialism, I suggest an alternative approach to understanding and representing Celtic identities. I understand contemporary Celtic identities as both recent and historical, recognizing that their identities cannot be projected into a primordial past.

Introduction

Archaeology has been integral to the elaboration of many forms of nationalism. The discipline is concerned with creating origin stories, such as the Soviet history of the Slavs (Shnirel'man, 1996), and with linking peoples to land, such as the Jewish people in the state of Israel (Abu El-Haj, 1998, 2001). This relationship between archaeology and nationalism has been subject to significant anthropological analysis, particularly since awareness has increased of the Nazi party's use of archaeology to understand the so-called Aryan race (Wiwjorra, 1996).

Following the Second World War, archaeologists have recognized the Celts as similarly prominent in nationalist ideologies (Collis, 1996; Dietler, 1994). Given nationalism's association with violent ethnic conflict, archaeologies of the Celts have changed greatly, with some authors

renouncing use of the term 'Celt' (Collis, 1996; Karl, 2010, pp. 42-44). Since the introduction of these disciplinary innovations in the 1990s, however, little analysis has examined the ongoing relationship between nationalism and archaeology on the Celts.

British archaeologists, though, have continued to build a body of literature debating the nature of Celtic identities, including books intended as popular science marketed to a general audience. These particular books, imbued with both archaeological authority and popular appeal, have the power to influence greatly how nations are imagined and constructed within various communities. This phenomenon of interaction between archaeology, popular media, and nationalism presents a significant site for critical anthropological engagement.

Author correspondence should be directed to ncchealey@outlook.com (Peter A. Allard School of Law, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada)

My research addresses how representations of Celts in recent popular British archaeological literature have inhibited or enabled competing nationalist projects. I have analyzed four books written by prominent British archaeologists: Simon James, Barry Cunliffe, and Stephen Oppenheimer. The study employed a qualitative form of textual analysis to examine the ways in which these materials enable the imagination of nations (Anderson, 1991).

In the sources analyzed, archaeological representations of Celts enable Unionist British nationalism or Celtic nationalisms by attaching Celtic cultural identity to the ancient past. Barry Cunliffe's (2001, 2008) works further enable European integration. I argue, however, that each representation, in some capacity, inhibits certain Celtic nationalist projects and furthers British colonialist discourses.

I therefore put forward an alternative approach to understanding and representing Celtic identities in the final section of this article. This approach bridges the works I have analyzed and incorporates the lived experiences of contemporary Celts. To this end, the purpose and significance of this research is in the development of a critical understanding of and approach to this body of knowledge that seeks to undermine the role of archaeology as a tool of imperialism.

These results have the potential to inform more holistic research addressing the contexts of archaeological knowledge production and consumption in their relationship to politics and nationalism. Such research could further anthropological understandings of the identities and politics of actors such as the British state and nationalist groups such as Plaid Cymru and Sinn Féin that advocate for the political autonomy of Celtic nations whose ancestors are the analytical subjects of archaeology. This research also has implications for the practices of knowledge production and dissemination in the field of archaeology.

Theory and Method

Sample

Four books were analyzed as the subjects of this research: *The Atlantic Celts: Ancient people or modern invention* by Simon James (1999), *Facing the ocean: The Atlantic and its peoples* and *Europe between the oceans: 9000 BC-1000 AD* by Barry Cunliffe (2001, 2008), and *The origins of the British* by Stephen Oppenheimer (2006a). This is a small, purposive sample of popular writing produced by prominent British archaeologists since the introduction of theoretical changes in Celtic archaeology in the 1990s.

The specific books chosen for analysis are popular works. The term popular is used here to indicate that the documents analyzed are not solely academic sources and are in wide distribution. These books have been selected because they are directed towards an audience that is not necessarily scholarly and not necessarily familiar with the field of interest. The wide distribution and influence of these texts is evidenced, for example, by discussion of the authors' work in media of the British press such as *Prospect Magazine* (Oppenheimer, 2006b), *The Guardian* (Jenkins, 2015), and the BBC (Cunliffe et al., 2002; James, 2011). These books are therefore involved in the processes of print capitalism, the mass production and distribution of common languages, and systems of representation through the commodification of writing as theorized by Anderson (1991, pp. 37-46) (see below).

I also based the selection of this sample on the continuing use of these works as teaching resources at the undergraduate level, and their continued use as sources in academic writing, such as by Donnelly (2015). Three of the four subjects of my analysis were included in Donnelly's (2015) bibliography, Cunliffe's (2001) earlier work, *Facing the ocean*, being the only exception. There is thus a complex and intimate relationship between the constitution of academic and non-academic knowledge on this

subject. I discuss the limitations of this research below by elaborating that I will not explore this phenomenon in full.

Theoretical Bases

I work with Anderson's (1991) definition of nations as "imagined political communit[ies]" (p. 6). Anderson's (1991) work continues to be influential in diverse branches of scholarship from Cooper's (2015) historical analysis of Chinese nationalism to Dimeo's (2015) study of Egyptian-Nubian literature. Maxwell (2005, p. 403) articulates that definitions of nationalism can vary drastically between and among uses by recent and historical authors. He argues that Anderson's (1991) theorization can nonetheless be usefully applied to various forms of nationalism that Anderson himself did not discuss directly (Maxwell, 2005, pp. 406-407). Nationalism, as discussed in this research, should be understood similarly to Anderson's (1991, p. 6) original conception of nationalism as a belief within a self-identified group of their legitimacy or justification, and possibly need, in seeking political independence.

Anderson's (1991, p. 6) theory views nations as inherently social constructions made by disconnected individuals' relational imagination of one another as mutually linked within an identifiable and discrete community. This entails a process by which the nation is both delimited as a subsection of humanity and understood as a strongly interconnected kinship justified in seeking and attaining sovereignty (Anderson, 1991, p. 7). In some cases, maps and museums have been important tools in this process. This derives from their ability to "[shape] the way in which...the human beings [within a nation], the geography of its domain, and the legitimacy of its ancestry" are imagined (Anderson, 1991, p. 164).

Archaeology is involved in producing the knowledge contained in these devices. By associating populations with distributions of

material culture across space, archaeology produces historic cartographic data emblematic of national territories (Anderson, 1991, pp. 170-178) and, by excavating and interpreting material remains, archaeology produces both the material culture and explanatory information of museums (Anderson, 1991, pp. 178-185). Popular archaeological literature, as analyzed here, represents a means of producing such knowledge and reproducing it through dissemination to the public. Anderson (1991, p. 26) brought attention to the novel's role in creating the concept of unified national entities that persist and move through time. Popular archaeological literature plays a similar role by contributing to the mass reproduction of cartographic and museological forms of knowledge. Anderson (1991, p. 184) describes artistic representations of monuments as fomenting nationalism by leading to greater recognition and naturalization of these national symbols. Popular literature, by proliferating images and knowledge of the past, similarly renders archaeology "all the more powerful as a sign for national identity because of everyone's awareness" (Anderson, 1991, p. 184).

The significance of the sample used in this research lies in the ability of popular scientific literature to render certain representations of archaeology recognizable and accepted within this theorization. Halliday and Martin (1993, p. xi) provide a substantive discussion of science as a powerful discourse with a particular ability to legitimate political and economic actions. In short, sciences such as archaeology are able to tell people how the world works and can tell people how to behave accordingly. Popular literature is one of the tools by which science does this. I have therefore chosen these texts because popular archaeology is able to tell people whether nations exist and how they are composed, which is fundamental to the legitimation and action of nations as political entities.

I build further on the work of Abu El-Haj, (2001) in which archaeology is described as determining

“the very parameters of what [is] imaginable and plausible” (p. 10) for national identities. This is to say that archaeology sets out the possibilities for how a nation can be imagined. Abu El-Haj’s (1998, p. 167) work in Jerusalem addressed the ability of archaeological practice to reshape the nature of national communities through the production of novel material culture. This analysis seeks to examine the construction of national realities through the print culture produced by archaeologists.

Dietler’s (1994) research is integral to understanding how these archaeological representations relate to nationalism. In the context of France, he identified three representational roles played by Celtic archaeology in nationalism:

1. the creation of unity throughout the European community (Europeanism in Gramsch’s (2000) terminology) promoting France’s inclusion within that community,
2. the creation of French nationalism in association with France as a nation-state, and
3. the creation of regional nationalisms such as Breton nationalism that are resistant to the nationalist hegemony of French identity (Dietler, 1994, p. 584).

Direct application of these models to British archaeology is not possible due to the contextual specificity of the latter two roles. In the context of the United Kingdom, ethnic nationalism must be understood in terms of competing projects that, although internally heterogeneous, can largely be separated into two categories.

The first is efforts to support greater devolution of power and independence for the countries of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the crown dependency of the Isle of Man, and the county of Cornwall (Tanner, 2004). These regions are regarded as Celtic nations, and their nationalist movements are similarly termed Celtic nationalism in many sources (Hepburn &

McLoughlin, 2011; Sharpe, 1985). At various times, efforts have been made to co-ordinate political action among these five nations through institutions such as the Celtic League (Berresford Ellis, 1993). Nationalist movements within each region, however, have generally commanded their own agendas and opportunistically chosen to ally or distance themselves from other Celtic nations under varying circumstances (Tanner, 2004, pp. 178-179).

Lloyd (2003) has argued that the past and histories have played a significant role in fomenting nationalist sentiment in these Celtic contexts. This is because, unlike in countries such as Italy or Germany where a unique national language is dominant, the majority language within the Celtic areas of Ireland and Britain has become English. Despite the existence of national languages, their deployment as markers of national identity has suffered from inaccessibility. In the Irish context, Lloyd (2003) describes “the struggle to revive a sense of the continuity of Irish cultural history... [as helping] to produce...political integration” (p. 160). An example of the understandings of Celtic nationality produced by such histories may be taken from Brittany and Galicia, two Celtic identified nations outside the UK. Breton musician Alan Stivell once wrote an encouragement of the work of Galician musician Emilio Cao that was included in the sleeve of Cao’s album *Fonte do Araño*. In this passage, Stivell invokes the idea of a unique history shared among Celtic nations:

we the Celts of Brittany, Ireland and other lands, after having been suffocated to death by the great oppressive States (France, England...) are pleased to see Galicians revalorize their part of common Celtic heritage in order to better defend their national character in front of Spain. I believe that the Celtic element is the essential factor giving both the Galician people and its nation their distinctive nature (as quoted in Colmeiro, 2014, p. 100, emphases added).

The other form of nationalism in the UK has been the opposing effort to maintain the integrity of the Union, securing power in Westminster and obstructing independence of constituent territories from the UK (Nairn, 2003). Anderson (1991, p. 2) has argued that this movement does not represent a form of nationalism, as the UK does not necessarily subsume a single nation. However, Unionist patriotism involves a similar form of politics and national identity building as other nationalist movements. This identity building relies on a concept of 'Britishness', variously described in terms of identity, citizenship, values and, significantly, the ethnically Germanic heritage of the dominant English cultural group, that must be imagined similarly to other national identities (Jeffery, 2009).

According to Dietler's (1994) framework, archaeology permits nationalistic interpretation by depicting the past as heroic or glorious and by demarcating groups of people as objectively distinctive relative to other groups. Archaeological interpretations of the Celts are thus capable of supporting or resisting nationalisms within the UK by alternately presenting segments of the peoples of Ireland and Britain as distinctive or indistinguishable relative to one another and others. In the political context described here, Dietler's (1994) theory might be altered to consider archaeology as enabling or inhibiting three main forms of nationalism: Europeanist nationalism, Unionist British nationalism, and Celtic nationalisms resistant to British hegemony.

Methods

To identify these modes of enabling nationalism, this research draws from McKee's (2003) description of textual analysis. This is a technique for identifying what McKee (2003) terms the "sense-making practices" (pp. 1-9) in a text. In my research, this indicates the principles authors create and employ for application of the terms "Celt" and "Celtic." This includes analysing

historic definitions identified by the authors, meaning how the analyzed texts argue that other writers have used the terms, and normative definitions employed by the authors, meaning definitions that are explicitly put forward as how the authors believe the terms ought to be defined.

Uses of the terms "Celt" and "Celtic" are currently heavily contested (Karl, 2010, pp. 42-48; Renfrew, 2013, p. 208) and different authors' uses of the term can therefore vary considerably (Oppenheimer, 2010; Renfrew, 2013). Donnelly (2015, pp. 273-274) provides a succinct description of the history of Celtic archaeology, which changed drastically in 1966 when the work of Grahame Clark first put into question the "invasion model" of the Celtic presence in Britain (which is described further relative to Simon James' work below). As Donnelly (2015, p. 273) describes, since then it has not been possible to assume that there is a single "people" or any "people" at all that can be described as "the Celts." Definitions for what is meant by "Celtic" have variously employed archaeological, genetic, literary, and/or linguistic criteria that are not always clearly indicated (Donnelly, 2015, p. 274). By identifying how the analyzed texts construct or make sense of the concept of Celts, it can be understood how these texts delimit the ways in which Celts, the Celtic past, and ethnically Celtic nations can be understood.

In Fairclough's (2003, pp. 122-133) discussion, the production and reproduction of such classificatory schemes is described as contributing to the formation of a discourse. At a basic level, a discourse consists of a manner of representing and understanding part of the world. In Weedon's (1987) interpretation of Michel Foucault's work, however, discourse is understood not solely as "ways of thinking and producing meaning," (p. 108) but rather as "ways of constituting knowledge, together with social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledge and relations between...[that] constitute the 'nature' of the body, unconscious

and conscious mind and emotional life of the subject they seek to govern” (p. 108).

Discourses can be conceptualized as the kind of “parameter” that Abu El-Haj (2001, p. 10) says archaeology places on national identity, in that archaeological discourses determine the nature of nations and their members. The method of this research seeks to understand the systems of thought inherent in the analyzed texts’ representations of archaeology as illustrative of specific discourses within the context of the production of nationalism. This essay’s use of the expression enabling nationalism can therefore be understood as making nationalism ideologically or symbolically possible by reproducing systems of thought.

The analysis does not engage in a positivist critique of its subjects. Positivist analyses of archaeological material, such as those by Collis (2003) or Karl (2010), seek to develop a single body of accepted knowledge according to scientific standards of proof. I do not employ or advocate a single evidentiary or analytical standard in the analysis by which to judge the subject materials for a concept of accuracy or correctness. This allows me to move beyond the tendency to dismiss nationalist discourses within archaeology as “bad science”, as noted by Abu El-Haj (2001, p. 18), and to analyze the inherent ability of archaeology to alter national imaginations regardless or in spite of its empirical basis.

This project examines a limited aspect of the relationship between archaeological knowledge and nationalist politics in the UK with provisional implications for further study of the phenomenon’s full extent. Future research can look to these findings to inform analyses within particular cultural contexts of the processes of critique, rejection, appropriation, and propagation of archaeological discourses in interaction with political and national discourses inherent in and external to archaeological

knowledge. Scientific and academic institutional communities are one cultural context that might be involved in such research. Other potential participants include political and artistic communities and, significantly, Celtic language speaking and otherwise Celtic identified communities.

Analysis

Simon James

Simon James is a specialist in the Iron Age archaeology of Europe. His book on the *Atlantic Celts* was published in 1999 and was influenced by time he spent working for the British Museum as an educator (James, 1999, p. 9). While employed at that institution, he came to view visitors’ understandings of peoples called Celtic as out of touch with recent archaeological theorization. Authors such as Jones (1996, 1997) and Collis (1996) had been vocal in the 1990s about changing the ways in which ethnicity and “the Celts” were understood in archaeology. The public’s knowledge, however, relied on a traditional understanding of the Celts as a single ethnic group that migrated outwards from Central Europe in the Iron Age (Karl, 2010, pp. 39-41). This was a problem that James sought to address in *The Atlantic Celts* (1999, p. 10).

James’ (1999) approach is heavily based on the theoretical work of Jones (1997), which sought to integrate Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice within the archaeology of ethnicity. On this theoretical basis, James (1999, pp. 76-77) characterizes ethnicity as a self-conscious collective identity. Ethnic groups are identifiable based on a group’s shared sense of difference from others, the presence of self-selected symbols of that difference, and claims of connection to a shared past (James, 1999, pp. 76-77). Using these criteria for an analysis of Iron Age archaeology leads James (1999, p. 78) to the conclusion that the presence of a Celtic identity in Ireland and Britain’s past cannot be substantiated.

James (1999, pp. 26-33) presents the established 20th century history of the Celts in Ireland and Britain based on the arrival of a large influx of migrants from the continent in the latter half of the first millennium BCE. He goes on to argue instead that there is no evidence that Ireland or Britain was invaded or otherwise massively resettled at this time (James, 1999, pp. 34-37). This would mean that the ancient peoples of Ireland and Britain could not have had a substantial hereditary link to the peoples of the continent. Similarities between the material culture of Ireland, Britain and continental Europe, such as the appearance of *La Tène* artwork in Ireland and Britain, are therefore taken solely as the result of contacts and exchange between the mainland and islands (James, 1999, pp. 37-40). Interpreted in this way, the archaeological record does not provide evidence that the populations of Britain and Ireland in the Iron Age, or other periods of the ancient past, recognized a common identity with groups on the continent. Nor does it provide evidence that these populations recognized a common identity with one another.

The concept that the peoples in the islands were Celts, or 'Atlantic Celts' as James calls them, is therefore presented as a myth. James attributes the belief in a singular Celtic past in Ireland and Britain to the scholarship of Edward Lhuyd (James, 1999, pp. 44-59). Lhuyd was a philologist interested in the linguistics of historical sources. He was the first to connect languages including Irish, Welsh, and Breton with extinct languages such as Gaulish, which he considered members of a single language family that he termed Celtic (James, 1999, p. 46). James' (1999, pp. 46-47) analysis positions Lhuyd's work as the basis for what would become a massive misrepresentation of history (James, 1999, pp. 46-47). In James' (1999) view, the identities of living Celts are created by Lhuyd's writings, unattached to any real historical basis. As James (1999) states, this means that "the notion of insular Celts and Celticness finds its genesis as late as the first years of the eighteenth century" (p. 44). The

existence of a Celtic identity or past that distinguishes the peoples of highland Scotland, for example, from the lowland Scots or from the English, could then only be traced back a few centuries.

This leads to James' (1999) reconsideration of the archaeology of ancient Ireland and Britain. Regarding how the archaeological record should be considered in lieu of traditional models, he makes the assertion that "the general patterns which archaeology is revealing...are irreconcilable with the idea of one unified ethnic identity we can call 'Celtic'" (James, 1999, p. 78). This statement illustrates James' (1999) argument against representations of living and past peoples of Ireland and Britain as members of a collective Celtic people that has shared a characteristic culture and identity since antiquity. This depiction of the past inhibits two forms of nationalistic representation of archaeology.

The first form of nationalistic representation inhibited by James' (1999) book is use of the Celts to promote European integration. Broad definitions of the Celts portray Celtic culture as an essentially pan-European phenomenon (Karl, 2010, pp. 60-61). The Celts have thus been portrayed as an archaeological precedent to the European Union, creating a common history of cultural unity for the European community (Dietler, 1994, pp. 595-596). By removing Ireland and Britain from the territory of the ancient Celts, however, James (1999) excludes the islands from that common history, setting British and Irish heritage apart from other parts of Europe. This enables the politics of British exceptionalism that have been opposed to the incorporation of the UK within a centralized EU (Corbett, 2007).

The other form of representation inhibited by James (1999), using Dietler's (1994) framework, is nationalistic representation resistant to British hegemony. This history of contemporary Celts does not provide a distinct past for Celtic peoples with which they can legitimate their exception

from the British state. To use Alan Stivell's language, by denying the existence of "overarching 'Celticness'" (James, 1999, p. 78) in Ireland and Britain, he is denying the existence of a "Celtic element" (Colmeiro, 2014, p. 100) before the early modern period. This inhibits Celtic nationalisms resistant to British hegemony by taking away what Stivell calls the "common Celtic heritage" and "distinctive nature" (in Colmeiro, 2014, p. 100) of living Celts to which nationalistic sentiments, identities, and politics have been attached.

Contrary to how *The Atlantic Celts* inhibits Celtic nationalisms in this way, James (1999) puts forward that his findings do not "invalidate modern Celtic identity...[because] to some degree all modern ethnic and national identities create essentially propagandist histories...not least the English, and the British state" (p. 38). Following the same criteria established by Jones (1997) for identifying an ethnic group used in his analysis of the archaeological record, James (1999) puts forward that "the modern Celts constitute a perfectly real and legitimate 'ethnic group'" based on four characteristics common to such groups:

1. a collective experience of shared uniqueness
2. conscious symbolic attachment of their identity to distinctive cultural practices
3. the creation of a self-descriptive ethnonym, and
4. the creation of "an agreed common history through the selective use and reframing of traditions of pre-existing groups, or the simple invention from scratch, of 'ancient' roots" (p. 138).

The purpose of James' (1999) book has been to demonstrate how the history of living Celts in this fourth criterion is false. He goes so far as to argue that this history was consciously falsified by Edward Lhuyd who James (1999) says "knew what he was doing, and had a political agenda clearly in mind" (p. 49). James (1999, p. 138) states that his intention is not solely to deconstruct

Celtic nationalisms. He claims that the goal of *The Atlantic Celts* is to raise awareness "that we need to be very wary of all resurgent nationalisms in the islands" (James, 1999, p. 143). This book, however, does not make cases against all forms of nationalism. In effect, it enables Unionist British nationalism.

The discourse in James' (1999, p. 137) text positions living Celts as a legitimate ethnic group. As such, they are an ethnic group of which readers must be aware. In other words, an ethnic group that readers must remember. The text positions their history (beyond the 18th century) as false and non-existent. That history can thus be forgotten or, indeed, must be forgotten in order for readers to be "wary of...resurgent nationalisms" (James, 1999, p. 143). Although in less explicit terms, James (1999, p. 131) makes similar insinuations regarding the nature of English identity.

This form of selective and simultaneous remembering and forgetting is theorized by Anderson (1991, pp. 199-203). This concept is derived in part from Ernest Renan's 1882 lecture on *What is a Nation?* in which he describes, with reference to the French Republic, that "the essence of a nation is that all the individuals have many things in common and also that all have forgotten many things...Every French citizen must have [already] forgotten St. Bartholomew's Day, the massacres of the Midi in the 13th century" (as quoted in Anderson, 1991, p. 199 [my translation]). The statement in Renan's second sentence is a form of paradox because, for a French citizen to read and understand it, they must be familiar with the historical reference. Renan gives no supplementary explanation, and the reader must therefore already know what the events in question are. Simultaneously, and in contradiction, the reader must have already forgotten those events in order to fulfill the truth of the statement.

Anderson (1991) considers this contradiction significant to nationalism because it allows historical conflicts to be understood in terms of a single group. James (1999, pp. 121-123) demonstrates this phenomenon particularly in his analysis of the late medieval period. Discussing the military campaigns of what is now understood as the English crown, James (1991) posits that “the Welsh and Scots created their sense of identity in opposition to Anglo-Norman power” (p. 121). In this representation, these identities, English, Welsh and Scottish, and Irish, are understood to exist only following these conflicts. They are therefore conflicts between groups that had not been divided in this manner previously. This forms a single “British” past prior to the conflicts that enforces British identity and nationality.

This history, created by the selective remembering/forgetting of ethnic identities within Ireland and Britain, allows James (1999) to say that “to the question ‘what, then, should we call the peoples of early Britain and Ireland?’, the answer must be, exactly that: ‘the peoples of Britain and Ireland’” (p. 137). By giving the populations inhabiting ancient Ireland and Britain this collective name, James (1999, p. 137) allows “Britain and Ireland” to be understood as a natural entity and its “peoples” to be understood as an identifiable group. The existence of a unified, although heterogeneous, Britain and Ireland, now represented by the British state, is thereby projected into the past within popular culture. This provides a discursive and symbolic resource available to the audience in creating a historical basis for British identities and legitimating the existence of the British state.

Barry Cunliffe

Within the span of Barry Cunliffe’s career, his more recent writing has reacted to authors like James (1999) and Collis (1996) who have denounced uses of the term “Celt.” For example, in the conclusion of *The ancient Celts* (1997), one

of the latest textbooks to offer a typical 20th century culture-historical narrative of the Celts, Cunliffe (1997) stated that “it is entirely proper that we should spend time attempting to understand [the ‘Celt’]” (p. 274). He has sought to prove this by adopting a cultural geographic perspective that understands the peoples of Europe as fundamentally shaped by their environment (Cunliffe, 2008, pp. 31-61). I have analyzed two of his books, *Facing the ocean* (2001) and *Europe between the oceans* (2008). My findings are consistent between the two books and I will consider them jointly here.

The later book, *Europe between the oceans* (2008), exemplifies what Gramsch (2000) has referred to as Europeanism. This is a depiction of Europe as a distinct historical entity in such a way that has been used to promote and naturalize the EU. In this quote, the central premise of Cunliffe’s (2008) writing stands out as Europeanist in orientation:

how these brief episodes fit together in the *longue durée* of European history is seldom considered. This book is an attempt to present such a perspective – the long march of Europe from its recolonization following the Last Glacial Maximum around 10,000 BC to the end of the first millennium AD [sic], when the states of Europe familiar to us now had begun to emerge (p. viii).

The discourse in Cunliffe’s (2008, p. viii) writing presents Europe as a reified entity capable of undertaking a long march through time. This is a very explicit illustration of what Anderson (1991) has called “a sociological organism moving calendrically through... time” (p. 26). Understanding Europe as such an organism allows the contemporary European community to be understood as the latest form of an isolated society that has existed for as long as Europe has been inhabited. This enables European unification, portraying the EU as a political manifestation of a natural phenomenon.

It can be argued that the language Cunliffe (2008) uses to present this discourse further enables European federalism by evoking the principles of economic development that have been instrumental to the EU's formation. This is demonstrated in Cunliffe's (2008) characterization of coastal Europeans as "entrepreneurs...driven on by an innate restless energy" (p. viii). Specifically, by representing Europe as a thing that always has and will continue to undertake a "long march," Cunliffe (2008, p. viii) associates the continent with military productivity. This is significant given that the EU developed from the European Coal and Steel Community, an earlier international organization specifically mandated with integrating and securing war-making industries (European Coal and Steel Community High Authority, 1956).

Cunliffe (2008) demonstrates his Europeanist thinking explicitly in how he represents the Celts. Contrary to James (1999), he accepts a broad usage of the term. He elects to "use the word [Celt] here in the same way as the historians Livy and Polybius, as a general term to refer to the tribes of west central Europe" (Cunliffe, 2008, p. 354). Notably, this designation accepts that the Celts can be defined by an outsider's ascribed categorization rather than solely by self-conscious identification as James (1999, pp. 76-77) specifies. This etic definition, similar to the traditional model of Celtic history (Karl, 2010, pp. 39-41), allows groups from Iberia to Asia Minor and Italy to Britain to be subsumed under the label.

Understandings of the Celts as a pan-European group are thus enabled by the discourse in Cunliffe's (2008) work. He specifically enforces this perception by stating that the reach of Celtic migrants was "continent-wide" (Cunliffe, 2008, p. 360). This is the form of representation that Dietler (1994) says legitimates European unification. By depicting Europe as once culturally unified by the Celts, Cunliffe (2001, 2008) portrays the European community as

descended from a common heritage. This archaeology of the Celts thus also enables European unification by providing a symbolic resource that can be used to represent the abstract concept of a primordial¹ Europe evoked by Cunliffe (2008, p. viii).

This representation of the Celts further enables Celtic nationalisms resistant to British hegemony. The English, different from the Celts in Ireland and Britain, are taken as descended from more recent continental migrants to Britain (Cunliffe, 2008, pp. 418-419). This history provides a past that legitimates the contemporary Celtic nations as possessing a distinct cultural origin and thereby as exceptional to the British state. This is similar to the interpretation of Celtic history Dietler (1994, p. 596) describes as fundamental to Breton nationalism in France. Cunliffe's (2001, 2008) portrayal of the Celts further enables ethnic Celtic nationalisms in ways that are more sophisticated.

Cunliffe (2001, 2008) recognizes heterogeneity within the population he classifies as Celtic. Similar to James (1999), he places an importance on regional identities and cultural groups. In particular, Cunliffe (2008, pp. 38-61) describes Europe as divided into a number of geographically determined spheres of interaction. Cunliffe (2001) says that his earlier book, *Facing the ocean*, was concerned with "a unique habitat on the edge of the [European] continent facing the ocean" (p. vii). This habitat extends along the coastal areas of Western Europe from southern Portugal through Ireland and Britain to the Northern Isles of Scotland. The human populations occupying this area are described as significantly connected through maritime transport and marine-oriented economies (Cunliffe, 2008, pp. 47-48) to the point that "the peoples of the long Atlantic façade of Europe have shared common beliefs and values over thousands of years" (Cunliffe, 2001, p. vii).

The understanding that the Atlantic coasts are a deeply interconnected cultural milieu is supported

by Cunliffe's (2001, pp. 293-296; 2008, pp. 257-258) contention that the Celtic language family originated among these communities. In principle, this would mean that, sometime following the introduction of Indo-European language to Europe, a distinct proto-Celtic dialect emerged in the Atlantic zone. These maritime groups would therefore have been sufficiently isolated from other groups to diverge linguistically, but interconnected enough to maintain a single language group among themselves.

Cunliffe (2001) states that, within this culturally and linguistically linked community along the Atlantic littorals, "there was not one identity but a number of identities" (p. 364). Thus, Cunliffe's (2001) conception of the peoples of the Atlantic does not qualify them as an ethnic group, according to James' (1999, pp. 76-77) terms, any more than Cunliffe's (2008, p. 354) conception otherwise qualifies the Celts. However, although the very early peoples of the Atlantic are not considered to share a collective identity, Cunliffe (2001) says these communities would have recognized a relationship with one another. As Cunliffe's discussion of the iron age demonstrates, he understands these communities as self-aware of their cultural similarity in that "adjacent communities along the Atlantic façade would have found neighbours across the sea more akin in their values, and safer to deal with, than neighbours adjacent on land" (2001, p. 364).

This self-awareness is understood as persistent, and as the mechanism that eventually led to the formation of a collective identity. Cunliffe (2001) attributes the development of a pan-Celtic identity among the peoples of the Atlantic to the medieval period:

When, following the folk movements of the fifth and sixth centuries AD, new peoples speaking different languages settled the inland regions, the indigenous languages of the maritime communities became important manifestations of their 'otherness'. It was in this way that

the 'Celtic brotherhoods'...came into being (p. 567).

In Dietler's (1994) work, archaeology is described as connecting nationalist groups resisting state hegemony to a Celtic past distinct from that of the ethnic majority. Cunliffe's (2001) writing goes beyond this in that it does not simply provide a homogeneous Celtic past to which nationalist groups can be linked. He describes the Atlantic zone as distinctive, but heterogeneous, recognizing the existence of multiple groups within the cultural sphere of interaction. This is similar to the multiple contemporary Celtic nations, allowing the complex confraternity of Celtic nations now in existence to be imagined into the past.

As a popular discursive resource, Cunliffe's (2001, 2008) representation of the Celts thus enables the simultaneous construction of multiple Celtic nationalist agendas resistant to British hegemony in different ways. This impact upon popular audiences is powerful considering the difficulties that have existed historically in defining the nature of Celtic nationalism and the conflicts that have arisen between different groups (Tanner, 2004, pp. 178-179).

Stephen Oppenheimer

Stephen Oppenheimer differs from the other researchers considered here in that his original research is principally in archaeogenetics, a relatively recently developed field of research that involves the use of molecular genetic techniques to recreate genealogical or hereditary histories of ancient populations (Renfrew, 2001). Oppenheimer (2006a, pp. xix, 488-497) employs a phylogeographic method in which a dataset of contemporary genomes is analyzed to trace the approximate place and time of genetic changes indicative of events such as migration and isolation. Despite the difference between these and traditional archaeological approaches, Abu El-Haj (2012) has described genetic history as

operating similarly to, and in conjunction with, the rest of the discipline in its relationship to nationalism. Oppenheimer's (2006a) genetic work thus shares a similar goal with other forms of archaeology, and his interpretations make specific reference to and inform the archaeological record in its relationship to nationalism.

Oppenheimer's (2006a) book, *The origins of the British*, argues against James' (1999) stance. He explicitly denies that "Celtic" is a useless category, putting forward that the name and identity of "Celt" can be attributed to peoples in the centre and west of what is now France (Oppenheimer 2006a, p. 59). This is particularly supported by his acceptance of classical sources like the writings of Julius Caesar, which state that people called themselves Celts in an area bounded by the rivers Garonne, Marne and Seine (Oppenheimer, 2006a, p. 48). He further proposes that this was not the only area associated with Celts in these sources.

Notably, Oppenheimer (2006a) discusses the writings of Avenius, which detail the journeys of a Carthaginian general named Himilco and mention the presence of Celts in Scotland; this reference is acknowledged as anomalous because "it would be the only classical reference that directly links Celts with the British Isles" (Oppenheimer, 2006a, p. 37). Despite being the only classical writer to make such a statement, and the possibility that the information is incorrect, Oppenheimer (2006a, pp. 35-40) does not dismiss Avenius' account. He rather concludes that "the best approach is to accept the most parsimonious text analysis, which is that Himilco thought there were Celts and some other people in Scotland...[and] so we are left with this mysterious suggestion of migrational links [of Celts] up and down the Atlantic coast" (Oppenheimer, 2006a, p. 40).

Similar to Cunliffe's (2001) *Facing the ocean*, these connections along the Atlantic seaboard become one of the major themes of

Oppenheimer's (2006a) book. Based on his genetic research, Oppenheimer (2006a, p. 301) describes the communities of coastal western Europe, Ireland, and Britain, resembling Cunliffe's (2001) Atlantic façade, as a distinctive population. The hereditary connection among these groups is argued to be extremely ancient, with the genetic characteristics of this population being "perhaps of Neolithic or earlier antiquity" (Oppenheimer, 2006a, p. 301). The cultural and linguistic characteristics and the identities that characterize these peoples as Celts are not considered to have existed for as long, but Oppenheimer (2006a) states that "we can see that the presence of Celts and Celtic languages in south-west Europe, and maybe even the western parts of the British Isles, stretches back to before the middle of the first millennium BC" (p. 66). The term "Celt" is thus used to refer specifically to Iron Age and later peoples of France as well as Iberian, Irish, and western and northern British groups.

A significant aspect of this definition of the term "Celt" is that it excludes a large number of groups traditionally recognized as Celtic. The principal community Oppenheimer (2006a) excludes is peoples in Central Europe. In the traditional archaeological history of Celtic peoples, they are considered to originate with what are called the Hallstatt and La Tène chiefdoms that formed in areas of Austria, Switzerland and southern Germany in the Iron Age (Karl, 2010, pp. 39-41). Oppenheimer (2006a) argues that this is wrong and describes the association of the Celts with Central Europe as a myth created by archaeologists' recent misunderstandings and misattributions of classical sources (Oppenheimer, 2006a, pp. 24-31). Oppenheimer (2006a, pp. 31-35) considers this myth to be derived from the histories of Herodotus, who once associated the Celts with the lands near the source of the River Danube. Regarding this piece of Herodotus' writing, though, Oppenheimer's (2006a) view is that "Herodotus is clearly talking about Iberia in

southwest Europe, but mistakenly thinks that it held the source of the Danube” (pp. 31-32).

In this case, the attribution of a Celtic presence to Central Europe is likely based on a geographical error in the work of an ancient Greek historian. The implication of this is that migrant groups who moved eastward from Central Europe, reaching the Balkans and Asia Minor, in the last few centuries BC, were not Celts either (Oppenheimer, 2006a, pp. 59-67). As I will discuss below, Oppenheimer (2006a) also considers much of ancient England to have never been Celtic.

The discourse of *The origins of the British* (Oppenheimer, 2006a) thus has two significant consequences for the production of nationalism. Although much changed from the traditional model of Celtic origins, Oppenheimer’s (2006a) work provides a Celtic past that, in Dietler’s (1994) framework, enables nationalism resistant to British hegemony. Oppenheimer’s (2006a) conclusions are that “Celts were a real, defined Continental nation” and that there were “Celts in the British Isles [that had] real cultural and linguistic connections to former continental Celts” (p. 472). This provides a history of the Celts in Ireland and Britain in which contemporary Celts are positioned as the living continuation of an ethnic group and nation that has existed since antiquity, which can be used to legitimate resistance to governance by the British state.

His description of the Celts also hinders Celtic archaeology’s ability to reinforce the existence of the unified European community. Oppenheimer (2006a) excludes large parts of Central and Eastern Europe from the territory of ancient Celts, restricting the group to the west of the continent. In this representation, the Celts are not understood as having once inhabited all or most of Europe. This understanding of Celtic peoples cannot be deployed as an illustration of pan-European unity in the way Dietler (1994) argues is used to promote the EU, meaning Oppenheimer’s (2006a) work inhibits this form of Europeanist

nationalism. This finding is significant in that it demonstrates that Europeanist nationalism and Celtic nationalisms are not discursively linked, but rather can be enabled or detracted from alternately.

Oppenheimer (2006b), however, also provides an alternative interpretation of his work that does not necessarily have the same implications for Celtic nationalisms. His genetic analysis identifies a division between the English and the Celtic peoples of Ireland and Britain, but also argues that the ancestors of the English have lived in Britain for much longer than previously thought (Oppenheimer, 2006a, pp. 441-443). He corroborates his position with reference to analyses that have attributed a greater antiquity to the English language than previously recognized (Oppenheimer 2006a, pp. 310-356; Dyen et al., 1992; Forster et al., 2006; Gray & Atkinson, 2003; McMahon & McMahon 2003). Celts or Celtic language speakers would therefore never have predominantly occupied the majority of Britain that is now England. Oppenheimer’s (2006a, pp. 305-309) argument counters the typical position that the English population of Britain, its language, and its culture are principally derived from an influx of Anglo-Saxon invaders in the early medieval period.

This would mean that, for as long as the island of Britain has been settled, it supported the existence of multiple culturally distinct peoples. Oppenheimer (2006a, pp. xx-xxii; 2006b) states that these findings should not be taken to mean that ancient and irrevocable divisions exist within Ireland and Britain. Britain is also described as, over time, taking in proportionally small numbers of immigrants who would, like the Vikings, be assimilated but make certain cultural contributions (Oppenheimer, 2006a, pp. 446-469). Most peoples of Ireland and Britain are presented as ultimately descended from “unnamed pioneers” (Oppenheimer, 2006a, p. 487). Oppenheimer (2006a) attributes various cultural changes leading to characteristics recognized today to migrant

groups that came to the islands at different later points in history. Celts and their languages, for example, are attributed to the movements of Neolithic groups (Oppenheimer, 2006a, p. 473).

In doing so, Oppenheimer's (2006a) representation of the Celts, their ancestors, and the world of antiquity in which they lived allows the UK, as an immigrant nation, to be imagined into the past. In principle, this would enable multicultural politics and support of immigration. Oppenheimer (2006a, p. 487) demonstrates this in the epilogue of *The Origins of the British*, where he denounces Enoch Powell's Birmingham Speech, more commonly referred to as the Rivers of Blood Speech, that is often taken to epitomize British opposition to immigration (Whipple, 2009). Whether multiculturalism or support for immigration constitutes a nationalist project, however, is debatable.

Superficially, this representation of Britain as possessing an ancient inclination to immigration and multiculturalism may seem to support British Unionism. Combined with Oppenheimer's (2006a) personal statements that "ethnic identity [should be]... a self-chosen smorgasbord" that leaves those who partake feeling "enriched" (p. 487), this discourse appears to exemplify the principles of strength in diversity suggestive of enduring Unionism. However, multiculturalism is not always interpreted in this manner in the UK.

Hussain and Miller (2006) studied the effects of increased devolution and the formation of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 on the experiences of Pakistani and English immigrant minorities to Scotland. They recognized that, in principle, integrating multiculturalism and Scottish nationalism should be difficult because the ethnic dimension of Scottish nationalism makes it a political project designed to privilege and empower a certain group, which may occur without consideration for or at the expense of minorities within the country (Hussain & Miller, 2006, pp. 10-11).

In practice, this was not the outcome. Scottish nationalism led to increased Anglophobia, but not to increased Islamophobia. Pakistani immigrants, in fact, found that support for nationalism helped them integrate themselves within Scottish society, and Muslim Pakistanis have become strong supporters of complete independence (Hussain & Miller, 2006, pp. 198-199). The effects of increased acceptance of multiculturalism and immigration may thus vary in complex ways according to specific contexts.

Within popular literature, this work may therefore operate as a more ambiguous symbolic or discursive resource. In defining the natures of Europe, the UK, and Celtic nations, popular audiences may look to Oppenheimer's (2006a) writing to construct multiple distinct understandings of these entities. Given this and the implicated relationship between archaeological imaginations and multiculturalism, which Dietler (1994) did not theorize, Oppenheimer's (2006a) work in particular warrants consideration for future research.

Politics of Representation and Celtic Archaeology

Under Dietler's (1994) framework, Cunliffe (2001, 2008) and Oppenheimer's (2006a) works enable Celtic nationalisms resistant to British hegemony. However, they do not enable all forms of these nationalisms. In perpetuating historical narratives of Celtic identity as originating from and identifiable within a remote archaeological past, the systems of representation in these sources enable certain nationalisms by understanding living Celtic identities to be the result of cultural continuity with antiquity. Similar to Fabian's (1983) description, Celtic cultural authenticity is thereby attached to stasis.

Cunliffe (2001, p. 567) demonstrates this explicitly in the conclusion of *Facing the ocean*. He makes reference to a novel by Breton author

Pierre Loti, *Pêcheurs d'Islande*, and describes it in this manner:

In the religious ceremonies which initiated the sailing season, and the sailors singing the hymn to the Virgin '*Salut, Étoile-de-la-Mer*' as their vessels departed, in the long period of agonized waiting – the wives and mothers watching anxiously for the ships to return in the autumn – and in the death of the hero, Yann, Loti exposes the timeless emotions of those who, through the millennia, have faced the ocean (Cunliffe, 2001, p. 567).

In this description of Loti's work as "timeless," Cunliffe (2001) defines Bretons and other Celts according to an essentialized and unchanging nature characterized by the images and values presented in Loti's portrayal of the Breton woman holding vigil for her husband.

An Irish archaeologist, Tierney (1998), has argued that this form of representation acts to reproduce colonial structures in Ireland. In that context, he puts forward that "archaeologists have been active in the construction of a national identity which is reactionary, conservative, and serving the interests of a particular social class" (Tierney, 1998, p. 195). The class to which he refers is the comprador bourgeoisie, an affluent group whose livelihood depends on managing and encouraging British trade interests exploitative of other segments of Irish society, which Tierney (1998:184) argues came to power following the 1916 Easter Rising and the Irish War of Independence.

Archaeologists' role in constructing the national identity to which Tierney (1998:195) refers has been to elaborate the "Golden Age Myth" of a Celtic Irish past described by O'Sullivan (1998). As O'Sullivan, McCormick, Kerr and Harney (2014) comment in relation to Tierney's (1998) writing, archaeology contributed to an understanding of the Irish nation as essentially "traditional, conservative, Christian (Catholic),

Gaelic and landed" (O'Sullivan et al., 2014) in the early years of the Irish Free State. Fabian (1983) has written that "the posited authenticity of a past...serves to denounce an inauthentic present" (p. 11). The attachment of Irish national identity to the ancient past therefore held the nation to the conservative, patriarchal image depicted by archaeology, an image similar to the patriarchal, heteronormative vision of Breton economic and family life depicted by Cunliffe (2001). When Ireland gained independence, this came to undermine specifically the political-economic reforms advocated by Sinn Féin nationalists, and instead allowed the dominant bourgeois class to stabilize the country in order to resume trade with the UK (Tierney, 1998, p. 194).

In the complex network of political relationships within Ireland and Britain, the politics of representation are therefore not straightforward. Cunliffe (2001, 2008) and Oppenheimer's (2006a) work, for example, may enable the conservative nationalism of Ireland's populist party, Fianna Fáil (Fianna Fáil, 2015), while inhibiting the socialist nationalism of Sinn Féin (Sinn Féin, 2015). Each of the books analyzed here could then serve to inhibit particular forms of Celtic nationalism. James (1999) inhibits Celtic nationalisms generally while Cunliffe (2001, 2008) and Oppenheimer (2006a) inhibit Celtic nationalisms attached to leftist political agendas. This is significant considering Tierney's (1998) work calls attention to the fact that not all forms of Celtic nationalism, at least in Ireland, entail full decolonization from the UK.

A Proposed Alternative Approach to Celtic Identities and Archaeology

The nature and limitations of this research may appear to disclose an academic exercise of limited usefulness for some. Throughout the analysis, I have refused to engage in positivist critique of the archaeological evidence in order to fulfill a scholarly goal of separating the analyzed discourses from their empirical bases. This kind of

study leads many to the inevitable question of “which one is right?” My contention that each of the texts analyzed here inhibits certain forms of Celtic nationalism also leads to the question of whether archaeological knowledge will inevitably do so. I cannot undertake a full critical engagement with the archaeological record here because this would constitute the subject of another study entirely. In order to elucidate the significance of this research, however, I will address these questions by offering my own brief assessment of archaeological knowledge based on these sources and proposing an alternative approach to understanding and representing Celtic identities in archaeology.

A notable aspect of the subjects of this analysis is that none of the authors identify as Celts, each identifies as English (James, 1999, pp. 70-71; Oppenheimer, 2006a, pp. xiii-xv; Plomley, 1972). Nor do any of the authors incorporate, in their discussion of Celtic identities, ethnographic data or other testimony from living Celts regarding their identities. I therefore situate my approach to the archaeology of ancient Europe within my position as a person who identifies as a Celt. I am of Irish, Scottish, and Southern English descent, and a member of the diaspora born and living in Canada. The theorization of Celtic identities I present is informed specifically by my experience of coming to understand and define my own ethnic identity.

This approach does not seek to discredit the work of the authors whose books I have examined. To this effect, I would not argue that any of Cunliffe, James or Oppenheimer’s scholarship is “wrong” per se. Their scholarship appears to be, and in some cases claims to be, contradictory. However, their works are reconcilable. Each describes certain aspects of Ancient European archaeology and describes them using distinct discursive tools as I have demonstrated. By bridging and recontextualizing their work within my own experience, I develop a de-colonial understanding and discourse of Celtic archaeology.

I begin by accepting James’ (1999) premise that contemporary Celtic identities have a recent origin. No self-conscious articulation of such an identity occurred prior to recent centuries. I acknowledge, however, that Oppenheimer (2006a) demonstrates that the ancient peoples of Atlantic Europe are hereditary ancestors of those who now call themselves Celts. Further, Cunliffe (2001) demonstrates that those genetically related groups have been engaged in extensive cultural exchange and have shared many cultural characteristics such as language since antiquity.

I use the Gaelic concept of dual, within this context, to understand Celtic identities as recent, but not without history. I further understand that their identities cannot be projected into a primordial past. Dual is a Scottish Gaelic and Irish word that both signifies a birthright or inheritance and is a verb meaning to intertwine. I borrow these meanings of the word from a group of Irish and Scottish traditional musicians who used it to describe their experience of sharing and making music together (Dexter, 2008).

The past of the ancestral peoples of Atlantic Europe consists of a dual for contemporary Celts in the sense of an inheritance, a form of heritage or history. Thus, when James (1999) describes Celtic identities as recently formed, it must be recognized that they were not based on an entirely false pretense, but on an act of identification with the ancestral dual. As a person partially of Irish and Scottish ancestry, I recognize my identity as a Celt as an active association with aspects of the ancestral cultures of Atlantic Europe such as language, kinship, and art. This does not mean that contemporary Celtic cultures or identities are simply continuous with the past, nor does it mean that their formation was inevitable.

Rather, the second sense of dual, to intertwine, expresses this active and selective connection of contemporary Celts with the ancestral past. To use Anderson’s (1991) language, this may be understood as contemporary Celts imagining

themselves as part of this heritage. I would posit that the choice of different Celtic nations and communities to identify as a connected ethnic group in this way is related to shared experiences of language loss and resistance to imperialism by the British, French, Spanish and other states (Tanner 2004). I use the term dual then to describe living Celts as intertwined with the past, although not bound to it, and as intertwined with one another, individuals who may otherwise identify as Irish, Galician, English, Canadian, or any other of many possibilities.

This is an understanding of Celtic archaeologies and pasts that allows nationalism and identity to be engaged with as active and meaningful phenomena rather than as artifacts of primordial time. Archaeology can thus be understood as a body of knowledge that Celtic peoples have the power and ability to engage with through their own agency as vital contemporary communities.

Conclusion

This research has found that James' (1999) work inhibits Celtic nationalisms while it enables Unionist British nationalism. Cunliffe (2001, 2008) and Oppenheimer's (2006a) attribution of Celtic cultural origins to the ancient past enable Celtic nationalisms, enabling the imagination of Celtic nations and identities into primordial time. They also, however, may serve to suppress certain nationalist projects, particularly those aligned with the political left, by attaching Celtic cultural authenticity to that ancient past. Cunliffe's (2001, 2008) work further enables European Unionist nationalism, which is inhibited by James (1999) and Oppenheimer (2006a) and which is not discursively connected to Celtic nationalisms. I also suggest that Oppenheimer's (2006a) work enables multicultural, pro-immigration politics, but the relationship of such a stance to nationalism remains debatable.

This research highlights the need for attentiveness to the political implications of archaeological work. Dietler (1994) framed the conclusion of his research on nationalism and Celtic archaeology in

terms of the dangers of "manipulation of the past" (p. 599). The approach of this research, however, accepts the political nature of archaeological knowledge as inherent to archaeology rather than as solely a result of its manipulation. My research calls attention to the need for examination of the political, economic and intellectual contexts of archaeological practice in order to address the nature of archaeological knowledge as necessarily political regardless of its empirical bases (Abu El-Haj, 2001; Trigger, 1984).

Moreover, this analysis highlights the need for archaeologists to engage with their role in politics, recognizing the discipline as a necessarily political practice (McGuire, 2008). My analysis of James (1999), for example, demonstrates the need for works that analyze nationalist archaeological narratives to consider their own political implications. To resist nationalist understandings of archaeology is an act that is equally political to supporting those understandings, particularly in a context such as the UK where to resist Celtic nationalisms generally means to support the British state. How archaeologists should go about this is not, and likely cannot be, well established. Engaging debates regarding archaeology's role in public life and politics requires consideration of factors including immediate concerns of conflict and violence (Jerjes Sayej, 2013). The complex political implications found in my research, however, demonstrate that engaging these debates is essential for the discipline to be conducted critically and responsibly.

This study does not address the full extent of the complex phenomena Abu El-Haj's (2001) work has called attention to in archaeological practice and its political manifestation. As she describes in an Israeli context, archaeology must be understood in terms of the production, practice and consumption of archaeological knowledge and its context in addition to archaeological knowledge itself (Abu El-Haj, 2001). Questions of how popular archaeological literature has affected representations of Celts in other media, how readers interact with the texts in question, and what forms of political action have resulted from the production of archaeological literature, for example, cannot be answered by this study.

The findings of this research therefore remain provisional. They provide a potential basis for future research into the interactions between archaeological knowledge and nationalism. As Abu El-Haj (2001) has described, this should not solely entail examination of archaeological knowledge. Full understanding of these phenomena must address the material practice of archaeology, the epistemological, political-economic and colonial circumstances of archaeological knowledge production, and the contexts of interactions with archaeological knowledge among archaeologists and the general public. The alternative approach I propose to understanding Celtic identities and history will provide a basis for future research; it stands to be corroborated, revised or dismissed by ethnographic and archaeological approaches. This study is therefore not an end in itself, but a point of departure for anthropological study of the cultural contexts of archaeology and the politics of identity, representation and nationalism in Ireland, Britain and elsewhere.

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¹ 'Primordial' is a specific word I include at certain points in this paper. It is used in the literature on nationalism to discuss 'primordialist' conceptions of nations that understand nations as existing for essentially as long as humans have existed (Fong, 2009; Hassan, 2013; Smith, 1998, pp. 145-153). I use the term 'primordial' to connote the deliberately vague concept of a time prior to history and memory which allows national identities to be understood as innate and perhaps immutable through their attachment to that time.

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