ABSTRACT

The paper argues that many recent theorisations and critiques of discourses of identity in the interpretation of the past have not gone far enough. This has resulted in the reproduction of dominant identities, both within and beyond the boundaries of the discipline. I focus on these boundaries and the way in which they are constructed through networks of power relations, in order to make visible their foundations as masculist and racialised ideals. I suggest that rather than a reference back to an assumed authority, archaeologists might consider placing a greater emphasis on the politics and ethics of their own work as a basis for responses to conflicts over the contested past. As a contribution towards this, some feminist perspectives on the theorising of the multiplicity of difference are considered at the end.

Introduction

Archaeology, as a discourse of modernity, has been concerned both implicitly and explicitly with narratives of identity. This is not the first time that particular assertion has been made (see Shanks and Tilley 1990 [1987]; Thomas 1996) and it has been made explicit in a recent plethora of publications on culture history, ethnicity, nationalism, supra-nationalism and indigenous claims to cultural property (1). It is worrying however that many, though not all, of these discussions on identity seem to reproduce the normative notions which they wish to critique. They re-create the rigid boundaries between archaeology and other discourses because once certain assumptions about the discipline are accepted as given, the only way in which to avoid entering the tangled web of identity politics is to say that it is something that others 'have'. In other words, it is to reproduce the apparent authority and neutrality of the discipline, its own 'core' of identity. This leads to just as dead an end as those archaeo-narratives of positivism and empiricism which carry implicit political stances/constructions of identity such as culture history or systems theory.

Working on this literature is one of the things which has led me to worry about the certainty with which we accept the foundations on which our discipline is based. But this has also occurred through my own attempts to write interpretative archaeologies of material culture in Ireland, my desire to do that from my perspective as a feminist, my own move from Ireland to live in England, and the constant disparities between all of these things.

In that sense this is also inevitably a personal narrative; it is not a piece about solutions. It takes a different path to much archaeological argument in that it asserts that the closure effected in archaeology, by the concern with problem solving and with paradigm change as solution, is part of the unconscious extension of the contradictory discourses of modernity rather than a questioning of them (2). In this way, the paper is a contribution towards the re-
thinking of what is implied, politically and ethically, by the representation and non-representation of sexed, national, and racialised identities through archaeological discourse.

Colonialist, National and Nationalist Archaeologies

Writing and doing fieldwork on Neolithic Ireland is a more hazardous business than some might imagine. I am thinking of the day I went to look at a [court tomb] in south Armagh in Northern Ireland, as a British army helicopter circled me...or the way in which 'neolithic' had been crossed out on some of the sign-posts for tombs so that they now read 'IRA court tomb'. Both signifiers, Neolithic and Ireland, are problematic, not only in the multiplicity of their meanings to different interest groups, but also because they have been combined in particularly potent, political ways. In Northern Ireland, the constructions of unionist prehistory have tied early medieval stories of the mythical warrior Cu Cholainn to megalithic tomb distributions (Adamson 1974; for comment see Woodman 1995: 294 and Ronayne, in preparation). In the Irish Republic, various governments have frequently deployed megalithic signifiers such as Newgrange in their constructions of national heritage. It has become obvious that in many situations, the discipline of archaeology is being asked to respond politically to such uses of the past. In some cases it is required to arbitrate between them. It has also become obvious that in its current forms it is unwilling or unable to do so, which is, as Rowlands (1994: 134) argues, a dilemma for many archaeologists. It is the dimensions and shape of this dilemma which I wish to discuss.

This issue is part of a broader concern with ethics and for some, with the uncertainty that comes with the loss of firm foundations for any identifications or authority (Bauman 1993). For me, this means that it is also about the boundaries that archaeologists draw around themselves, the divides they assert between 'public' and 'expert' and the fissures they allow between themselves. For while it is frequently acknowledged that archaeologists are also positioned within the social world, there is an incredible reluctance to admit that this sociality, the identifications through which they are persons, not only permeates what they do when they come to practice archaeology, but also how they say and think they're going to do it. This reluctance appears to afflict all kinds, from empiricists to positivists to post-processualists.

For example, archaeology and nationalism have had a long history of association in quite complex ways. Both discourses developed particular forms in the context of the Enlightenment and have drawn heavily from one another (Trigger 1984, 1989; Diaz-Andreu and Champion 1996). This is now being recognised within certain areas of the discipline, although in quite different ways. In Ireland, some archaeologists have begun to recognise that their work is being used in constructions of identity (Woodman 1995; Cooney 1995, 1996; Mallory and McNeill 1991), although they do not appear to realise that their own representations are equally constitutive of identities both within the profession and across its self-defined boundaries (3). Yet the way in which the issue has been raised and discussed seems to have precluded a critical stance on the very discourses structuring our work. In large measure, this is because the profession is set up as a separate interest group, a collective identity, and it displaces 'blame' onto misuse of archaeological narratives by other groups. In other accounts, more critical of the discipline itself, the 'blame' is said to lie with previous, less theoretically sophisticated archaeologists rather than current critical/professional practitioners (for example, Diaz-Andreu and Champion 1996: 11 and 19-21). The critique of
nationalism has thus become part of 'malestream' archaeology, critiquing nationalism demonstrates the professional, mature status of archaeology. It fixes nation-ness as an abstract entity, which can be edited out of our narratives quite easily, instead of engaging with it as something which shapes us more subtly, through which we know the world (see, for example, Parker, Russo, Sommer and Yaeger 1992; Gilroy 1987).

The creation of hierarchies of interest groups with archaeology as the producer of truth/knowledge is a feature of the discipline in general. It occurs in the British profession in relation to issues surrounding Stonehenge (Bender 1993; see also Chippindale 1983) or fringe archaeologies (Denning 1996). This is the case despite the fact that the culture histories, chronologies and typologies still depended upon, have been shown to serve the interests of nationalisms, bounded ethnicities and dominant identities (Jones 1996). They have also been used in constructions of a common European identity (see Graves-Brown, Jones and Gamble 1996). Further complications involve relationships between the archaeological professions of different nations, nation-states and other group identities. Many British archaeologists have used the term 'British Isles' to include all of the island of Ireland and it is not uncommon to hear evidence from Ireland being used as a 'filler' when material from that period is lacking in Britain. There have also been critiques of this use of evidence within British archaeology, where regions with plentiful material and a concentration of work have been used to explain 'marginal' areas and those intellectual peripheries have been drawn in to complete the picture in 'central' regions (see Thomas 1991 for discussion). It may be that similarities can be drawn between such places but it cannot be assumed. At different levels, archaeologists in Britain become caught in regionalist and colonialist political nets. Without at least a discussion of the implications of this use, such work unknowingly serves such interests. Irish archaeology becomes involved in a nationalist politics when annoyance at 'British' oversights turns into a refusal to allow discourses from the 'outside,' particularly from Britain, onto its disciplinary territory. It seems that choosing between alternative paradigms, based on science or philosophy or social theory, is not enough to create different pasts when we remain unaware of the effects our words produce.

Space, Time, Materiality and Disciplinary Identity

The recognition or the will to do anything about these points is very difficult for many archaeologists. Many do not consider the material effects of the language we use to be important, how it might produce certain kinds of person or exclude certain identities. This is a broader issue concerning feminist work, for example, on the ways in which language is weighted towards the masculine even when it appears neutral (4). It can also cause anger and frustration when apparently solid disciplinary foundations are shown to be shakier, more temporary dwellings than some had imagined: those who believed in them, understood themselves through them or benefited from them. The issues around which these problems revolve are seen as defining the particularity of the discipline. Some of these nodes are implicit (e.g. certain ideas about space) and others are more explicitly identified (e.g. time, 'material culture'). These ideas (amongst others) produce a unitary disciplinary identity, a 'core' which is portrayed as immutable. However, it is the multiple, varied and shifting connections between these issues and other discourses, especially those of the national and the feminine, which I would rather underline (5). I am not suggesting that they all be collapsed into each other or should be substituted for each other, since this is what already happens all too often. It is only in examining the connections between them and the identities produced through them that the operation of power relations can be made visible. This is because such discourses exist through the relations (networks of power) between them rather
than as unitary entities (6). What follows is an attempt to follow some of these relations in their visibility and invisibility in archaeology.

The techno-scientific systems and electronic transactions of late modernity have reworked what used to be the global and the local, the long and short term, into many more temporalities (Morley and Robbins 1995; but see also Giddens 1991). Yet the meta-narrative of what archaeology is said to be about does not, for the most part, engage with these critically but remains locked within the time of the nation. Archaeologists, it is usually said, deal with particularly large tracts of time, which is time past. They write pasts which extend back through a homogenous, linear time. In effect they produce that time through writing and talking and excavating it in certain ways...they make it make sense (see Fowler, forthcoming). Nations have also always needed pasts to justify their existence. The link between nationalism and a particular modern, 'common sense' conception of measured time is quite strong, as Benedict Anderson (1991: 26) demonstrates:

"The idea of a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogenous, empty time is a precise analogue of the idea of the nation, which is also conceived as a solid community, moving steadily down or up history."

Yet, the nation is as ambiguous as archaeological discourse in respect of being caught between this time of origins and late modern narratives of 'techno-scientific' progress, as Homi Bhabha points out (1990: 1-2).

These linearities are not continuous for archaeologists, who punctuate their chronologies with static spaces, in which they place artefacts, societies, social systems, cultures. These spaces can be geographically bounded, or static conceptions of temporality such as periodisation or that peculiar time-space/container of 'the transition' between periods of time. Anne McClintock (1995: 39) makes the point that the national and colonial communities and their conceptions of linear time are also split because they are gendered. Benedict Anderson (1991: 15-16) describes the national sense of imagined community as fraternal. So the fraternal community may march up and down history, while the feminine in national and racialised discourses (for the anthropological Other see Fabian 1983) is consistently represented as traditional, part of an unchanging time. This renders non-linear time as homogenous and static, it becomes spatialised into a bounded place. By a slippage between these constructions and an incredible weight of 'western' historical association coalescing in the Cartesian mind/body division (Gatens 1991), the spatial, the fleshly, the feminine, the racial become associated in modernity as they are devalued as Other, 'outside' the rational norm. This norm is defined through their multiply-constituted devaluations. As Rajchman (1995: x) points out,

"...there is no racism that does not include some form of sexism."

Thus archaeologists manage to neutralise these Others in their work and to represent them as passive objects of a modern gaze (a gaze which is not neutral although it represents itself as such). In Ireland and Britain they render place as a sexed (feminine) container of (national) cultures, yet archaeologists are paradoxically bound up with these nationalisms and other identity politics in essentialised notions of landscape and the natural (7).

The archaeological representation of landscape in Ireland is a part of this modern, colonising gaze in one way and results in a series of site reports, interpretations and presentations which are about fossilised, mapped and dissected landscapes. At the same time, it is more than a
scientism of place but also refers to essentialised notions of those places. It is connected to a sense of belonging which is associated with a kind of post-colonial search for a displaced identity. In other words, these archaeological landscapes are often like narratives of lost authenticity, that which is inherent in Irishness. For example, there is a tendency to make analogies between prehistoric social relations and recent Irish folklore, which results in a conflation of the two. Peter Harbison, in an epilogue to his general work on Irish prehistory, unwittingly feminises and racialises the whole of Ireland as a traditional, passive, therefore inferior place. In *Pre-Christian Ireland* he writes:

"In many respects, the basic style of life in prehistoric Ireland was not too far different from the folklife we know to have survived down to the last century and even into this. For Ireland, on the geographic periphery of the Eurasian landmass, is a country which moves at a slightly slower pace than others and thereby preserves some old and neglected traditions which have sadly died out elsewhere" (1988: 195).

Not only does he give this as a reason for studying prehistory, his book is the one most often sold as a popular guide to tourist communities, precisely because it is one of the best examples of its genre in drawing together the contradictory metaphors of the national, the traditional, the modern, the post-colonial and the archaeological.

What does it mean for a feminist archaeology or an archaeology of difference – how can we write of women when our very way of working as archaeologists means that the feminine in discourse is already characterised as the spatial, the passive or as traditional? What can it mean when the racial is fixed as the folkloric, the natural or the feminine, and the past is feminised and racialised into something to be tamed? What *can* it mean when all of these are represented or inferred as negatives?

These connections work in another way through the creation of the object of knowledge in these discourses. Richard Handler (1988: 27) argues that national discourses are attempts to construct bounded cultural objects. So too are archaeological discourses, since we objectify the material world when we begin to work with it in ways which seek to delimit and fix it. Foucault (1972: 19) has pointed this out when he says that discourses are "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak". The use of Foucault's work has helped in the understanding that knowledge in archaeology is a continual and changing production through an object/subject division involving relations of power (see Shanks and Tilley 1990 [1987]; Tilley 1990, 1989). Julian Thomas (1996) has described the way in which archaeologists deal with the material world within this division as the "archaeological imagination". We do not engage in a ceaseless flow of interpretation, rather we render static the evidence so that we may write about it or record it. In effect we distance ourselves, as subjects, from this evidence by performing operations on it as though it were external to us. As we render it static we take it out of a more complex flow and spatialise it in our cuttings, plans, maps, narratives (thereby feminising and racialising it). We attempt to reduce it from inferior, alien Other to a familiar Same. Alternatively, we claim that we cannot know it because it is alien and so exoticise or vilify its difference as strange or socially subordinate. Through all of the discourses which construct ourselves and our work, we engage in a subject-object, Same/Other power relation which allows us to transform the materials before us into a passive past which can be appropriated or rejected.

This subject-object relation, the Cartesian legacy (see Shanks and Tilley 1992 [1987]; Thomas 1996) at the heart of archaeological discourse, is not a problem that can be glossed
over easily since its centrality to our means of representation and its implications appear to have been laid aside in most recent work. The archaeologist as knowing subject and the objectifying of materials as Other are culturally constructed and represented through binary oppositions. Binary oppositions work through the valorisation of one term in the pair above another, neither term being independent of or existing without the other. For example, in the cultural representations of colonialism in the later nineteenth century, England was defined as Anglo-Saxon, civilised, white, middle-class, Anglican, home counties and male. Ireland was, by contrast, Celtic, Catholic, backward, rural, peasant and female (Cairns and Richards 1988: chapter 3). Everything fearful, lacking and absent is projected onto the devalued term/identity. Thus archaeologists still work within nature/culture, space/time, mental/material, female/male, wild/domesticated, everyday/ritual, individual/group, fieldwork/academia, rescue/research, scientists/philosophers (8). This has political consequences in the discipline, especially since different interest groups will over-value or devalue different terms in order to negate what they see as the unfair terms of the binary. It is also obvious though that there are repercussions beyond that, when identities in Northern Ireland are represented through a series of binaries which homogenises them as 'two communities' with two opposed religions, two nationalities and two pasts, ignoring more complicated lived experiences.

It is difficult to understand then, how Rowlands (1994: 134) can refer to archaeologists who work within national or ethnic frameworks as if this were the extent of our problem or a specific situation rather than generally the case.

**Masculist Archaeologies, Subjectivity and the Other**

"The one who I presume has knowledge is the one I love." (Jacques Lacan, quoted in Irigaray 1985, 86)

"Women don't know what they are saying, that's the whole difference between them and me." (ibid.)

It is interesting then, to see what kinds of persons and power relations are constructed and become visible through the binaries of these shifting discourses. In order to do this, I would like to turn to recent feminist engagements with philosophy and psychoanalysis as they show that the 'human' subject must be thought through a multiplicity of psychical and social locations. In particular, they suggest that it must be understood through the multiplicity of sexual difference. In psychoanalytic understandings of these cultural representations, the formation of subjectivity is structured by a fundamental split operating between the masculine and the feminine. In Lacan's reworking of the Freudian Oedipus complex, the entry of the subject into the discursive realm of representation (what Lacan terms the Symbolic) is very different for males and females. It produces a feminine which may only be understood as a fundamental lack or absence of the phallus (Lacan 1977; Irigaray 1985). The phallus operates as a kind of transcendental signifier, that is, as a kind of centre or logos which orders the rest of discourse and against which everything else must be measured/judged. In other words Lacan posits it as a kind of neutral a priori truth. Luce Irigaray's work has deconstructed these phallo-logocentric understandings of the 'human' subject and identification, suggesting that Lacan's phallic theories are a product of his own situatedness in the masculist framework which is the history of Western thought. She suggests that the phallus has an implicit association with the penis so that within discourse as it is conceptualised through dichotomies, the masculine is the norm and the feminine is an excess, something inexpressible which is silenced (Irigaray 1985: 30). It is vilified as Other,
yet its difference is appropriated and reduced to the Same. This familiar Same is the homogenising masculine unity of the One in western understandings – the individual knowing subject of the discourses of modernity. She draws explicit metaphorical parallels with the morphology of the female body as Lacan implicitly did with the male body, to show the potential multiplicity of the feminine which has not been allowed. In doing this, she draws attention to the situatedness of the singularity of the present discourse (Irigaray 1985: chapter 2). It is a singularity which is expressed, for example, in the tropes of uniqueness and individuated being which are the hallmarks of the ideal national community (Handler 1988).

Unfortunately, the unity of the One, this singular Cartesian subject, is transcendental. That is to say, he (and it can only be he) is represented as a disembodied consciousness and transcends his material basis. Women's bodies, in this division, are vile matter, the source and the result of hysteria and, since the eighteenth century, have been conceptually fixed through sex and reproduction (Foucault 1981: 151). Theories of embodied feminine subjectivities and the writings 'through the body' of third wave feminists like Luce Irigaray and Helene Cixous are attempts to disrupt the binary masculist relationship between the mental and the material, since none of us are either one or the other. These are also writings which are open to difference in other senses than the feminine i.e. those of race, class, sexualities, other genders. As Rosi Braidotti (1991: 255) says, "The male embodied subject is the great non-said of Western philosophy."

If archaeology is a discourse of modernity which constructs its own object (Tilley 1990: 335), it will take more than a reconstruction of our object of knowledge to write different pasts, since the means of defining objects in the first place – as Other – is masculist and does violence to several sorts of persons and identities. Even when we suggest that this object-as-Other is different to a normative present, whether it be the past, the spatial, the feminine, the ethnic, all we appear to be doing is exoticising it. This places it into a neat category where it can be normalised into the language of the Same. Alarmingly, this exoticisation of the Other is an idea which discourses of the New Right draw upon a great deal (see Donald and Rattansi 1992). Furthermore, the recognition of all of these kinds of difference (especially in post-structuralist discourse), if still bounded in convenient categories, can lead to certain uses. It can suggest that if they are not rated vertically in importance, we need not consider some of them in depth e.g. sex or gender, because they will be covered by a particular interest group or specialisation e.g. women in archaeology. Failing to understand the relations between discourses, these positions result in the normalisation of issues like gender into a framework which maintains a masculist status quo. What politics are we serving when we use 'difference' without examining Otherness and its role in Western discourse?

This understanding of knowledge production has particular power effects in the discipline as it is presently defined. Although post-structuralism and feminism have both emphasised the positioned and subjective nature of persons, the subject/author of archaeological discourse is implicitly assumed to be unpositioned in an identity politics. Just as the phallus is purported to be unpositioned, but defines the feminine in negativity, so the archaeologist orders the past from a position claimed to be set apart and neutral. What does that mean when feminists have been documenting the obviously gendered divisions of labour which occur in the profession (e.g. Nelson, Nelson and Wylie 1994; Gero 1985; Dominas and Johansen Kleppe 1988)? Just as women are not fully citizens of the nation-state (see Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1994), neither are they fully archaeologists because archaeological discourse implicitly constructs identity as masculist, something which belongs to the heterosexual, white, middle class male of academia. Such identities within the nation and produced through archaeology are founded
and dependent upon the feminine as a negative. It is not simply a case of equality within the nation state or the archaeological profession, seen as two completely separate spheres (as liberal feminists might argue – see Pateman 1989). For equality always means the neutralisation of passing as that 'unpositioned' knowing subject which is actually sexed male, or being defined in relation to it. This reduces a multiplicity of differences to a reflection of that unitary identity. As Irigaray (1989) says, "equal to whom?" Yet even to say this within archaeological discourse at present risks reduction to a simplistic binary opposition – equality/oppression – when in fact, these were never necessarily opposite nor are they the only options.

Specifically in Ireland, a strict policing of the feminine occurs in national and religious discourses which remains unconnected to the clear gender divisions in the archaeological profession and in the narratives it produces. Here, the constitution of the Republic still points to the special place of the mother in the home and her duties to the state while equating her life with that of the unborn. As reproducers then, reduced to the biology of their bodies, women are also the bounded, unified objects which national and archaeological discourses seek to construct. Hélène Cixous has words for it,

"...her own house, her body itself, she has not been able to inhabit...she has not dared take pleasure in her body which has been colonised." (Cixous 1981: 250).

There is something both ridiculous and painful in attempting to work through a discourse or a discipline which recognises you only as an object or a homogenous masculist subject. Any effort at writing or digging differently will always be re-interpreted into the same framework unless that framework itself can be reworked simultaneously.

**Theorising Difference Through A Discipline**

If archaeologists uncritically objectify materials as representing the Other, then they do implicitly serve the interests of nationalist tradition, exclusion, phallo-logocentrism, racism. A feminist critique has shown that these means of representation are fundamentally flawed because they do violence to the Other and therefore, cannot provide an ethical basis for a response to political uses of the past by different groups. This is not to say that archaeology will never be a basis for this, nor is it an abandonment of archaeological ways of seeing things. It is more of a call for a reworking of issues such as space, time and materiality which are seen as defining disciplinary identity into a more plural series of positions based on ethical responsibilities (9). I would like to suggest that this reworking be done through an explicit recognition of the effects of the objectification we practice (since it is unavoidable in present archaeological work) and a more complex engagement with the fluid and shifting nature of the discourses we work through. Bond and Gilliam (1994: 1) have pointed out in another context,

"Dominant versions of the past are usually vague and general with a capacity to absorb diverging interests and interpretations."

Yet it is this apparent transparency of meaning which we seem to be constantly aiming at so that we can get on with writing the past, forgetting that we always write to serve some political interest or other. Before and during that production of the past, we might also begin to use the material world we deal with to theorise relations to difference other than objectifying ones. For if difference is not inherent in us as essence – in our blood or our skin
colour or our biological sex – but is constructed in a complex flow of discourses through the material world then it is possible to create spaces in Western discourse to allow for less restricted understandings of that difference. Attempting to work into archaeology the complexities of subjectivity and identification is therefore a political and ethical action, since it would be making an effort to allow the other to be, to recognise that difference without appropriating it. In this, archaeology can learn a series of object lessons from the writing of difference and identity in post-colonial and feminist cultural politics, by those who have been the objects of the Western, masculist gaze for a long time. For example, for Irigaray, the kind of multiplicity of (sexual) difference which might replace masculist understandings is something that we should work towards rather than anything we have readily available to us, but there is an ethics in that working-towards (Irigaray 1993a). For her, it is about an engagement with masculist discourses such as philosophy through recognising their limits as claims to truth, rather than taking a set of ideas to use elsewhere as an unexamined foundation, as the Truth. As we begin to move into different kinds of representation in order to do this (such as a feminist poetics, for example), we must actively create the spaces for it ourselves. Without this active involvement it automatically becomes representation for its own sake – a collage which excites, titillates and depoliticises the potential of such work. These would be spaces across the profession and beyond it which would disrupt current power relations within the discipline, between archaeology and other disciplines, archaeology and other political discourses, allowing the already existing hybridities of discourse to become visible. After all, it is not really a question of whether or not we wish to engage with an identity politics – an area usually seen to be for women and other 'minorities' (!). I have been suggesting that we are all already located within a politics of identity whether we recognise it or not. The real choice is between being complicit in the exclusion of other voices or attempting to find an ethics of response and responsibility.

Notes

1. See, as varied and often contradictory examples, Jones 1996; Graves-Brown, Jones and Gamble 1996; Diaz-Andreu and Champion 1996; Kohl and Fawcett 1995; Ucko 1995; Shennan 1989; Gathercole and Lowenthal 1990; Layton 1989a, 1989b; Murray 1993. These vary in aim and perspective from a concern to re-assert the authority of the archaeological discipline in the face of 'outside influences', to post-structuralist, interdisciplinary perspectives, to prioritising the relation to the non-western Other.

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2. Bauman (1993) discusses modernity in terms of its emphasis on problem-resolution, its refusal to ask questions unless there is a concrete means of resolving them in the short term; Latour (1993) has suggested that the attempts to eliminate problems have actually resulted in the creation of more. Instead of the desired pure entities, there is a proliferation of hybrids.

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3. These constructions are founded upon the heterogeneous, interleaved and shifting connections between archaeology and discourses of the past, the land, the nation-state, capital, religion, science, race, temporality, spatiality, colonialism, class, sexuality and gender amongst others. There is no detailed discussion in existence on the relationship between the national and the feminine in archaeology in Ireland but see Ronayne, in preparation. On these
discourses and Ireland in general, see Balzano (1996); Longley (1990); Meaney (1991); papers in Feminist Review 50.

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4. For varied examples, see Irigaray (1993a, 1993b) and Spender (1980).

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5. 'The feminine' does not refer to biological sex but to various (usually unconscious) cultural representations of 'woman', grounded in the constructed morphology of the female body (see Gatens (1991) for an explanation of this in non-essential terms). Masculist understandings of this feminine are expressed in terms of lack. Feminists, however, wish to redefine it in terms that are whole, multiple, in difference. I discuss this below.

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6. In this I follow a Foucauldian understanding of discourse, mediated through a reading of Judith Butler's work on sex and gender (Butler 1990, 1993, 1995). Unravelling the networks of power which speak through us is the starting point of a feminist politics and ethics of agency in late modernity (contra Meskell's (1996) understanding of Butler).

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8. One referee suggested that the influence of structuralism on archaeological work was a factor here. While 'things in twos' were opposed explicitly in pure structuralism which, after all had its basis in the study of language, I would argue that it is a more fundamental part of modern discourse to carry implicit hierarchical binaries. Any structural representation of entities in pairs in western discourse, even in referring to the past and not necessarily meant to be valued in opposition, has to deal with the history of associations of those terms – the implicit values they carry in the present. For example, flesh/bone, soft/hard, below/above, terms often used in interpretation of Neolithic contexts, are sexed terms and carry the European female/male dichotomy where the first term is devalued as a negative.

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9. For discussions of these ethics from various perspectives, see Bauman (1993); Cornell (1995); Levinas (1995); Irigaray (1993a). My own perspective, although I have not presented it in detail here, is based on Irigaray's reworking of the philosophy of Levinas.

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