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Author d'Hauteserre, Anne-Marie

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Explaining Antagonism to the Owners of Foxwoods Casino Resort

ANNE-MARIE D'HAUTESERRE

INTRODUCTION

Conflictual relations between the owners of Foxwoods Casino and Resort, who are American Indians, and the white residents of Ledyard and nearby Preston and North Stonington townships in southeastern Connecticut (see fig. 1) are long-standing. They have flared up on numerous occasions and especially since 1982 when the Mashantucket Pequots considered building a gambling venue on their reservation. Many white residents from these small, rural communities in southeastern Connecticut also rushed, in the late 1990s, to testify against any form of Indian gambling in the nearby states of Massachusetts and Rhode Island. They cited the negative impacts due to what they believed was poor management of the Foxwoods Casino and of the total disregard for the consequences of such dismal conduct on the pristine bucolic environment surrounding it.¹ Residents, for example, continue to complain about traffic congestion and trash.

These residents have expressed their resentments in various surveys carried out by academics as well as by local newspapers and in continued litigation against any form of annexation of land by the Mashantucket Pequots.² Yet their accusations of wrongdoing by the Mashantucket Pequots have little validity.³ In July 2003 neighboring towns started another attack on the tribe because of state support for a Mashantucket Pequot water district.⁴ The owner of the Web site www.tribalnation.com harasses the tribe by publishing private phone numbers and addresses of tribal members. The purpose of this article is to explain, from a critical social science perspective, the continued antagonistic relations between the Mashantucket Pequots and the white residents of surrounding townships. This conflict continues even though "we live in an era of the proliferation of the use of apology and attempts at formal reconciliation."⁵ This has yet to happen in southeastern Connecticut.

Anne-Marie d'Hauteserre is the tourism program coordinator in the School of Social Sciences at the University of Waikato. Her research interests are in critical social issues linked to tourism development.

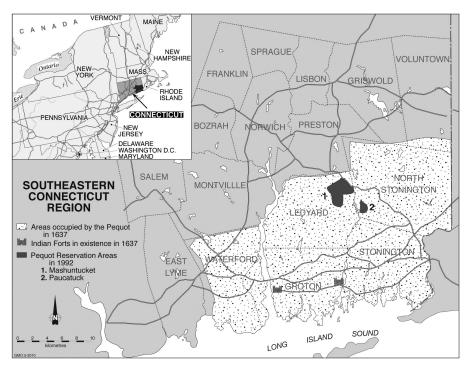


FIGURE 1. Locations of the Foxwoods Casino Resort and the reservation, the land occupied by the Pequots, and the original Pequot forts.

Two conceptual frameworks will be used for this analysis: Michel Foucault's assertions of how statements or discourses determine the representations these groups create of each other, together with Jean-Francois Lyotard's discussion of incompossible (because of an incalculable, unrepresentable difference) translation of languages/discourses used by different social groups. These frameworks should lead us to a better understanding of the conflict through an analysis of texts and of representations from the white and Native American perspectives. There can be hope of reconciliation only if the Mashantucket Pequot difference (their right to exist, their own history, and their right to practice a culture different from mainstream America) is accepted. The article concludes with a discussion of insights gained into the new power relations between the whites and the Native Americans of south-eastern Connecticut.

ORIGINS OF THE CONFLICT

The antagonism between the Mashantucket Pequot tribe and the surrounding white US residents springs from the original conflict in the seventeenth century between the two groups then wanting to occupy and exploit the same space. It is not manifested by all members of either group, but it has certainly colored their rapport. Contentions over land usage and ownership have served to define US-Indian relationships in general, not just in Connecticut, from the first encounter to the present day.⁶ This is now visible in the continued litigation over the Pequots' right to annex more land to their reservation, which makes white residents fear a loss of control over land-use decisions as well as reduced tax revenue.⁷ Residents' hostility also encompasses the petitions for federal recognition of the Eastern Pequots and Schaghticokes drafted more than twenty years ago but now stalled in court appeals.⁸

Colonial histories were constructed to legitimize colonial conquests and to obfuscate Native representations, and they continue to obstruct the claims and civil rights of indigenous New England people.⁹ American Indians have remained in New England despite the drastic reduction of their numbers through exposure to diseases and in the face of conflicts and massacres (for example, the Pequot War of 1637). Resistance—by fighting against assimilation and even annihilation, by holding onto what had become their land (the original reservations), and by seeking a just recognition of their rights-enabled Native communities to retain their identities and affirm their continued existence alongside the new white society that was emerging in seventeenth-century Connecticut. They were not just reacting against the oppression of colonization, but also incorporated culturally productive efforts so they could go on "living cultural lives of their own."¹⁰ Two themes run through Pequot history, which Elizabeth Plouffe and Martha Ellal (the last residents on the reservation in the late 1960s) clung to: a tenacious persistence to maintain tribal identity and an unswerving struggle to hold on to tribal land.¹¹ The tribe sees its present-day success as the culmination of holding actions and centuries-long survival strategies.¹²

John De Forest states that "according to the treaty following the Pequot War, the Connecticut colonists claimed the country in which the Pequots had chiefly lived as their own by right of conquest."¹³ This conflict still colors the relationship between the two groups because they have been translated into space: the Mashantucket Pequots were assigned to reservations with strict rules governing their movements in and out of the reservations and within. These rules were set by the state of Connecticut because the reservations were organized prior to the existence of the federal government. In all cases, the reservations were, since their creation, a statement normalizing, naturalizing, and neutralizing the relations between European settlers and the Natives, relegating these last to the margins of the new society: they were out of sight on the reservations and out of mind.

Historically, the state of Connecticut circumscribed the actions of the Pequots and refused to grant them more power in running their reservation, even though it is one of the oldest, continuously occupied Indian reservations in North America. The Pequots were not, for example, allowed to develop revenue-generating activities on the reservations, but they were forbidden to return if they left to get a job. Because the men left to find paid work and the numbers of resident Pequots slowly decreased over time, the size of the reservation was reduced several times. The Indians who lived in Connecticut further tarnished their image in the minds of early Americans when they chose to fight on the British side in the War of 1812.

In the 1960s, the state of Connecticut was awaiting the death of the last two occupants of the Mashantucket Reservation (Plouffe and Ellal) in order to transform that land into a state park. That is why it was vital to Plouffe that her grandson, Richard Hayward, should return to Mashantucket and continue to provide a presence on the reservation after the sisters-in-law's death. Plouffe died in 1973. In 1975, Hayward was voted chairman of the tribe by the members of his family who had returned to the reservation. That return was possible only because of changing attitudes toward American Indians, which prevented the state of Connecticut from enforcing some of its own laws. For example, the upsurge in Indian activism since the 1950s led to the Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968 and the revision of Public Law 280 (the tribe's consent was now required before states could assume legal jurisdiction over their lands). Furthermore, President Richard Nixon's 1970 policy statement recognized Indian rights to self-determination (Public Law 89-635). The Connecticut Indian Affairs Council was created in 1973 on the basis of these new developments, but only after much struggle by the four tribes in Connecticut. This council forced the lifting of state restrictions on the use of reservations by the Indians. The Pequots were then able to occupy the reservation and develop activities to gain economic selfsufficiency.¹⁴ However, in spite of much effort, none were successful.

Much recent miscommunication between the Pequots and the white residents also derives from the litigation initiated by white residents against the recognition of the tribe by the federal government in the late 1970s (President Reagan signed federal recognition of the tribe in 1983) and then the attempt to deny the tribe the right to create a gaming facility when the state supported several gambling activities. That was until the federal Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) in 1988 opened the door for the negotiation with states to enable recognized tribes on reservation land to operate gaming establishments at a level similar to those already allowed by the surrounding state. Because the state of Connecticut allowed Las Vegas Nights with Class 3 gaming for fund-raising by churches, the Mashantucket Pequots, despite much opposition, were eventually granted permission to operate a casino.¹⁵ The venture started as a successful bingo hall but led to the opening of a casino (Foxwoods Casino Resort) in 1992 (see fig. 2). Subsequently, this casino has grown to be one of the largest and most successful in the Western hemisphere.¹⁶



FIGURE 2. Gamers enjoying their time at the Foxwoods Casino Resort. Photo taken by author in 2008.

THEORETICAL APPROACH

The analysis in this article is based on the study of historical texts and other documents, including surveys, newspaper articles, and academic publications, from a postcolonial perspective. Historical texts reveal representations held by white residents and their Native American neighbors. Several surveys reveal more recent attitudes of local white residents. A number of white residents responded favorably to the Pequots' newfound fortunes, describing it as a deserved break from the poor treatment they suffered in the past. Such positive attitudes do not necessarily invalidate Lyotard's assertion of incompossibility between American Indians and white Americans, but it does signal that some people are more willing to tolerate difference and to accept and even applaud the fact that groups that do not share culture and/or ethnicity can be successful.¹⁷

Some of the white people surveyed indicated that they were interested in learning more about the Mashantucket Pequots. Despite the turbulent history of the relationships between white residents and the Pequot Nation in this region, many Connecticut residents were unaware of the existence of this tribe until controversy and conflict with the state erupted when the tribe sought federal recognition (with the financial aid provided by the Native American Rights Fund [NARF]) and then, in the late 1980s, over the creation of a casino. The success of the new museum located on the Mashantucket Reservation, built with profits from the casino and opened in 1998, has enabled the tribe to educate the general public about the long occupation, before European irruption, of this region by American Indians. Pequot perspectives were culled mostly from their monthly tribal publication (Pequot Times) and press releases.¹⁸ The study also relies on personal observation and interviews of key respondents at the Pequot tribal headquarters and at the Southeastern Connecticut Regional Planning Agency over a couple of decades.

Power Relations According to Foucault

The social sciences have long recognized that we apprehend reality through representations and discourses. Each group socially constructs its own representation(s) with its particular codes in its own language. What this article questions is how a social system uses discourse to guarantee its order, that is, how power relations have been naturalized for the European settlers as well in order to ensure that they all comply with the established social norms and representations of their society. The continued strained relations between the Mashantucket Pequots and the white communities that surround the reservation are exemplified by the use of tropes and images. One source of the conflict may be traced to the two groups' differing conceptual representations of the world.

Foucault is a contemporary French thinker (1925–84) who has exerted great influence on social theory, philosophy, and history. He has argued that ideas that present themselves as necessary truths are developed in a specific historical and social context and cannot be considered universal truths or answers. He sought to problematize essentialism and other forms of totalizing thought that threaten individual freedom. One is not forced to agree with Foucault's analysis, but it is one of the more powerful and plausible diagnoses of contemporary realities.¹⁹ He questioned how discourses become the truth. He has thus focused attention on the statements that make up narratives or discourses by individuals or groups. All reality is supposed to be present in statements pronounced by society (or its representatives) even if (or because) so few things are said. Statements also refer to the position of their author(s) in the social hierarchy. Statements always refer back to an institutional milieu that confers power of persuasion on their author(s).

Statements are not necessarily words and phrases or propositions; they include practices and the function(s) they fulfill in specific situations. Gilles Deleuze comments that "the statement is not immediately perceptible but is always covered over by phrases and propositions."²⁰ That is why authors like Jacques Derrida introduced the concept of deconstruction in order to make statements and representations visible, to reveal the process of their normalization into preferred attitudes. That is, these authors showed how these statements become the norms that society accepts as the proper practices to be enforced for all.²¹ Deconstruction questions the meaning, origin, goals, and limits of statements and representations in order to displace and resist them. The question here is to determine how statements and discourses create social subjects (their status or their position) who can act (in Western societies, the white) and individuals and/or groups who can only be "objects" (minorities) to be governed or manipulated by those who have power.

Communities use statements, discourses, and representations to express and transmit their culture, but Foucault reminds us that these narratives elide many aspects of reality, especially those that would represent difference or diversity. All texts are constructed within a "habitus of social practices" (all of the elements that constitute social life and that are accepted as evident by most of the members of that social group).²² The meaning of a statement is defined by its place in a sequence of statements. Such articulation sets the limits for what is acceptable as truth, what is unacceptable, who can speak, and who is to be silenced. Discourses are coherent meaning systems and involve power because they delimit what is true. Both communities (Mashantucket Pequots and European settlers) constructed discourses in the course of past centuries (since the 1600s) in order to express the reality they lived and the environment in which they struggled, or at least their representations of those worlds. Deconstruction of such texts reveals how representations and statements manipulate public understanding and attitudes, as illustrated below.

Representations

White Americans were aware of American Indians, but "a strange impassable barrier [grew] that enabled the dominant peoples to believe that others within their nation-states were justly subordinated . . . [and should] discard their outworn ways."²³ Such transformation would then conveniently erase

all differences because these "others" would have had to adapt and conform to white society. Robert Berkhofer confirms that Indians were created in the image that white Americans wanted to see.24 Indians were seen as obstacles in the path of progress that had to be removed; they were seen as savages to be civilized.²⁵ Any reduction of the numbers of Indians or their defeat in wars or even skirmishes reflected the wishes of benevolent providence. Such representations, especially when combined with the belief that uncultivated lands were "empty lands," were crucial to colonial dispossession of Native lands and have also hindered twentieth-century land claims.²⁶ Such representations also facilitated the reduction of the size of reservations since their creation: the Mashantucket Pequots were given two thousand acres in 1667, along the west bank of Long Pond, where the casino is located, but could only claim 213 by 1855. At the turn of the century, Indian efforts in Connecticut to maintain what little real property was left to them or to receive compensation for lands that were still being arbitrarily seized by the government were ridiculed and largely dismissed out of hand.

Pequots never considered themselves vanquished.²⁷ Their history of resistance to annihilation in war and through land withdrawal is one of the longest in the United States. They continued to maintain a measure of indigenous culture despite extreme pressure, as recorded, for example, in Experience Mayhew's journal (of visits in 1713 and 1714).²⁸ The Pequots challenged the actions of their overseers when they felt it in their best interest. The tribe paid the overseers and logically felt that the overseers should be accountable to the tribe. The Pequots did not see themselves as passive recipients of a service from the state.²⁹ The Connecticut colonial administration continually had to claim to the British Crown that it actually did control Indian tribes even though it was enmeshed in numerous land disputes with Native communities like the Pequots throughout the eighteenth century. In resisting (fighting against these efforts at stripping them of their land and restricting their cultural expression), the Pequots were positively affirming their faith in their own values and identity despite "their having been picked clean of most of their usable resources."³⁰

Symbols are part of the discursive system (a kind of nonwritten statement) that maintains identity through cultural coherence and cultural separation from other groups; they "are used as a means of communicating with others ... a means of communicating with ourselves."31 To this day there continues to be, and not just in New England, a trend toward an idealized notion (representation) of what American Indian (Native, indigenous) cultures have been and what they are expected to be.³² A white belief that "Indianness" can only symbolize closeness to nature because American Indians have not acquired "modern" ways exists (see fig. 3).³³ Such naturalizing and feminizing (in white society only women are close to nature; men are rational, modern thinkers) lead to critical, even though often untenable, positions regarding American Indian (indigenous) culture today: for example, the belief that American Indians are not truly able to handle "modern" attribute(s) and cannot thus manage a successful casino on their own. When they do participate in "modernity," it means that American Indians have abandoned their culture, which the Pequots have been accused of since opening the casino.



FIGURE 3. One of the rare symbols of Indianness displayed at the Foxwoods Casino Resort (Indian statue). Photo taken by author in 2008.

The trope of disappearance of indigenous peoples (which still appeals today and is used extensively in tourism marketing) exists only in Western minds. Indigenous people have been represented as a vanishing race for several centuries and not just in the Anglophone imperial domain.³⁴ Melville helped spread the belief of the disappearance of Connecticut tribes when he mused: "*Pequod*, you will no doubt remember, was the name of a celebrated tribe of Massachusetts Indians, now extinct as the ancient Medes."³⁵ Colonial authorities in Connecticut even forbade the use of their tribal name (Pequot), in the words of their conqueror, Captain John Mason, "to cut off the Remembrance of them from the Earth."³⁶ Their discursive hegemony sought to hide the active resistance of the Pequots to their omission from the colonial history of Connecticut.³⁷ Such statements sought to perpetuate and legitimize conquest. To many non-Indians of the Northeast, American Indians may have once occupied New England but are today merely some long-lost race.

Lyotard and Incompossibility

Lyotard agrees with Foucault that communities use narratives to explain their present circumstances, past, and ambitions for their futures: "the social is always presupposed because it is presented or copresented with the slightest phrase."³⁸ Different narratives or discourses make up a society's knowledge, but each belongs to a specific "language game." Both are concerned by games (Foucault refers to "truth games") as a metaphor, in order to examine the rules established within each society, rules that can apply only to each specific game, each specific space of communication. Lyotard asserts that there are no universal principles or explanations (language games or phrases, as he later called them) that might be applicable to all of them because no experience can happen beyond the limits of specific cultural groups.³⁹ Incompossible was a term coined by Ludwig Wittgenstein that Lyotard took up in order to express the inability for différends to be comprehended or rendered comprehensible.⁴⁰ Wittgenstein also influenced Lyotard's thinking because he had introduced the notion that words are used to have effects on people and objects that surround us.⁴¹ Language determines actions, which in turn explain the importance of statements.

Lyotard's emphasis, which has been adopted in this study, is on "the fundamental importance of difference in the face of totalization."⁴² We must focus on the "little narratives" and their differences from each other, in opposition to colonial or Enlightenment "metanarratives" or grand universal explanations. Lyotard underlines the incommensurability of discourses and their component statements used by different social groups (even within the same cultural and linguistic community) and the impossibility to create an intellectual (conceptual, cultural) bridge between their different representations. Because events cannot be fully represented, no justification can claim to have a complete understanding of the event.

Foucault confirms that "the thought that there could be a state of communication which would be such that the games of truth could circulate freely, without obstacles, without constraint and without coercive effect seems to me to be Utopia."⁴³ When the state claims to embody the universal (or even just the national), it erases the existence of local practices and thus victimizes minorities. For Lyotard, there is no metanarrative that can provide overarching rules between sets of statements (language games or phrases) as expressed by different communities, even within the national framework. Lyotard does not describe a simplistic opposition or adversarial positioning but rather the need to be aware of truly and radically divergent understanding(s) of the world.

Communities and their discourses are thus necessarily at odds with each other when they try to apprehend the same reality or share the same space (southeastern Connecticut in the case of the Pequots and their relations with surrounding white residents). The fact that statements are incompossible, that is, "nontranslatable," is not just a difficulty caused by the very act of translation: the Pequots speak English. It is mostly the result of barriers raised by self-identification (of groups or individuals), which depend on the sharing of meanings (expressed as, or through, words or statements or as rituals and symbols) among members of a given group. External communication is thus all the more reduced when one group believes in its superior mastery. American Indians were bounded within their reservations and by their inferior status. Spicer confirms that "the valuation of existing Indian culture was totally negative and . . . it was only just and right that Indians be provided with the culture of the dominant people."⁴⁴

Relations of/in Difference

If we return to Foucault, his focus on power reveals how one perspective can transform into the dominant discourse whose assumed universality becomes the only acceptable narrative. Politics and power structure the process of discourse construction and representation that is used politically in order to institutionalize the power of dominant groups. Such discourses are transmitted, and become dominant ideologies, through the global media that are mostly controlled by the West. Repetition over time guarantees their supremacy, especially because one set of discourses hides all other possibilities of expression. It has led European settlers to insist rigidly on the universality of their laws. Such dominance was based on statements that, for example, affirmed that the new society was "the citadel of freedom and religious tolerance freed from monarchical oppression" to be understood as a guarantee of universal inclusion.⁴⁵ All these statements are weapons that have been used in Western society's exercise of power. Roland Barthes confirms that discourse effectively depopulates the landscape of real flesh-and-blood people, putting in their place only representations of ideal types.⁴⁶

Western modernity seeks to embody a universal understanding of humanity in order to realize a unitary nation-state, but it must eliminate "otherness" in order to accomplish such homogeneity. Hence, as Vincent Descombes describes it, we need to absorb differences and explain away what does not readily fit in; in short, we need to translate the other into the language of the same.⁴⁷ Such a narrative is imperialistic because it assumes we must all be white, and yet the West has needed to maintain difference in order to assert white superiority. The power of dominant narratives is that they govern relations between people and shape the ways in which we experience them (relations as well as people). The concept of internal homogeneity led to standardizations in most domains, in particular in law and legal procedures to provide equal justice, but it also meant that dominant groups did not have to adjust. Only others had to adapt to the system established by the dominant or colonial group.

Lyotard always questioned how to determine a just event and what rules would govern such just outcomes. He was a political thinker who believed that injustice occurred when other forms of thought or action were or are repressed or ignored. He was profoundly shocked by acts he believed reprehensible as illustrated by Auschwitz. When the French government assigned him to teach in Algeria during the early 1950s he sided with the Algerians against the French colonial powers. Lyotard also rejects the idea of a "winning" strategy in confrontations because neither side is wrong, but he adds, "there is no just society." Disputes cannot be resolved within one system: one must admit a plurality of opposite conceptions, *différends*, cases "of

conflict between at least two parties that cannot be equitably resolved for lack of a rule of judgment applicable to both arguments."⁴⁸ *Différends* exist on the margins not because they are rare, but because they are marginal to Western modes of thinking and disruptive to their narratives of national consensus.

ANALYSIS

Throughout four centuries of shared history, the Mashantucket Pequots experienced (since the early 1600s) that their *differends* were "points at which the framework of political representation" that existed in Connecticut continually victimized them because it caused "a damage accompanied by loss of the means to prove the damage."⁴⁹ The main complaint was about use of their land by surrounding settlers and actual damage to their crops or their livelihoods, but the encroachers were often those charged to defend the Pequots. They found themselves structurally disadvantaged in relation to the new settlers. They were judged by laws that could not accept that their mode of living was legitimate, even if it was different from the settlers', as illustrated below. The extensive court records reveal the active role of American Indians in fighting for recognition of their rights. Colonial processes had not ended with military conquest.

As early as 1655 and onward, the Pequots complained to the Connecticut government of continued encroachment on their reservation lands by white settlers: agreements resulted in repeated reduction of the size of the reservation. In 1761 the General Assembly gave the Pequots clear title to the remaining 989 acres. In 1785 the surveyors drew the lines around the reservation. As a final irony, the tribe, now in possession of their land, was forced to petition the General Assembly for permission to sell some land in order to pay for the survey.⁵⁰ A dispute arose in 1800 over the land the tribe had been forced to sell in 1793 but for which they had not been paid.⁵¹ In 1855 the legislature provided for the sale of all that remained but 212.9 acres, despite protests by the Pequots. Every request for a hearing, compensation for damage to crops, or a return of land appropriated by neighboring whites could not be resolved equitably even if there had been a will to do so "for lack of a rule applicable to the two modes of argumentation."52 As James Williams states, "The just act involves recognition of radical differences between individuals, cultures and systems"; it requires that the other party be recognized.53

Petitioning was a right, and petitions required a response from the colonial government. Paugussetts, Niantics, Schaghticokes, Mohegans, as well as Pequots, all petitioned the Connecticut government to protest encroachment of their reservations. The colonial government did appoint committees to look into Native communities' complaints about such encroachment, but, in many instances, the Anglo-Americans who had been appointed by the General Assembly as "guardians" were the encroachers.⁵⁴ One group (the white colonizers) presented itself as "husbanders" of "improved" land who considered that the Indians who were not "ambitious settlers and good tenants" (they were not good "husbanders" of the land entrusted to them) did not deserve to keep the land. The good colonizing "husbanders" were thus justly encroaching upon the poorly kept land held by the American Indians.⁵⁵ Such *differend* between the two groups illustrates the attempt by European settlers to impose their hegemony on the other, to enforce judgment on American Indians only in terms of the Western world representation. They were "unsuccessful in the context of the white man's justice system; where is fairness and justice in all of this," echoed David McNab in his discussion of Native claims in Canada.⁵⁶

Whenever New England Natives presented claims in courts, their difference (cultural, ethnic, or social) was never recognized except to justify the need for their assimilation through Western civilizing. The Native communities were made to believe in the neutrality of American justice and continued their quest for a just outcome through the courts that, according to Lyotard, could not be: one side's legitimacy does not erase the other side's legitimacy except when, for example, in court judgments, a single rule must prevail (as in the rapport between the Pequots and the new settlers). Foucault confirms that the court implies that there are categories common to the parties present and that the parties to the dispute agree to submit to them. He thus adds that the judicial system as a state apparatus has historically been of absolutely fundamental importance as a system of repression. The extensive court records reveal active resistance on the part of the Pequots against the erasure of their territorial rights, political autonomy, and very existence. They had not vanished, but colonial hegemony had to create and recreate itself against any other form of American Indian representation in order to sustain its legitimacy in the face of Pequot resistance.

Anne Barron explains that "on its way to the 'right answer,' law inevitably excludes and marginalises statements which cannot be accommodated within its own tightly drawn parameters."⁵⁷ William Connolly confirms that "any authoritative set of norms and standards is at best an ambiguous achievement: it excludes and denigrates that which does not fit into its confines."⁵⁸ The challenge is to "activate the differences."⁵⁹ Such "activation" does not force one to identify with the other or to appropriate that difference. The just act requires the recognition of radical differences. Lyotard, however, stopped short of advocating a utopian end to conflict. Tension cannot be eliminated, or it may aggravate *differends.*⁶⁰

Although the state of Connecticut applied its sovereign power through the laws it imposed on the reservation and later through the courts, American Indians could resist because, as Foucault has insisted, a close connection between power and resistance exists.⁶¹ Resistance cannot be external to power because power is not a system of domination with an inside or an outside. Power is exercised through an agent's actions only to the extent that other agents' actions remain appropriately aligned with them. Its constitution as a power relation depends upon its reenactment or reproduction over time as a sustained power relationship. The Pequots thus could continually challenge the state and its decisions. For Lyotard the only way "others" (Mashantucket Pequots, for example) could resist assimilation was by continuing to make their existence known, for example, by asserting the continued existence of their subjectivities through court challenges.⁶²

POSTMODERN INCOMPOSSIBILITY

Having traced incompossibility since the conquest of the Americas, the study now turns to relations between the Pequots and the surrounding white residents in the present time. *The Guardian Weekly* asserted, in 2007, that "all Indians still face the hostility of much of America."⁶³ White residents of southeastern Connecticut have opposed annexation of any more land to the reservation because they believe they will lose control of land-use management and tax revenue from the annexed acreage.⁶⁴ They assert that it would extend the separateness of the Pequots and their special treatment (no taxes on reservation land): these were the rules that governed the lives of the Pequots on the reservation for centuries, rules never questioned by the whites when the Indians remained confined to their reservations, marginalized by their poverty and ethnicity. These rules are now unacceptable because they are seen to advantage the Pequots.

The Pequots own a successful casino and a reservation of more than 1,600 acres as a result of lobbying, conscious public-relations initiatives, the efforts of sympathetic non-Indian politicians, the participation of the NARF, and the energetic leadership of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Council.⁶⁵ Southern New England may have seemed to be the location where Native Americans had the least chance to survive, or even to reemerge as wealth-accumulating capitalists. Today's white residents of Ledyard, however, have had to consider the new wealth and power of the Mashantucket Pequots: As the editor of the *Pequot Times* stated, "Something had happened in Connecticut that changed the lives of those who lived there."⁶⁶ Robert Bee had concluded a few years before that "new American Indian assertiveness changed Hartford-Indian relations forever."⁶⁷

Such success by a (small) American Indian tribe is considered a transgression (as Jeff Benedict seeks to prove) because, for white southeastern Connecticut residents, it represents actions that threaten the social order as originally established by the white settlers.⁶⁸ According to Dick Hebdige, a transgressive activity can either be commodified, as in transforming indigenous presence into tourist attractions, or it can be labeled as deviant and hence not tolerable. Because the casino has become a tourist destination, it preempts the first solution for reintegration of the old social order. American Indian transgression in southeastern Connecticut (especially through their attempts to annex land into the reservation) has rendered visible such discriminatory bounding (the reservation and the special status of those lands) as well as the hierarchies of spaces and cultures established after the Pequot Treaty of 1638 and the King Philip War of 1676, which had "virtually eliminated the Native American culture in Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island."⁶⁹

Pequots drawn back to the reservation as members of Richard Hayward's family or descendants of those families present on the reservation in the 1900 and 1910 reservation rolls now number approximately eight hundred. They enjoy the benefits of economic success, which appears to be resented by white residents with comments like, "I think there are a number of people

with little Indian blood getting all the money" that "they don't deserve" and "spend frivolously" (various surveys). Their difference is still "incompossible." Intermarriage, especially with African Americans (marriage with whites was forbidden), means that many tribal members do not fit the stereotype of what an Indian should look like or be. There are no feathers and little poverty.

They were perceived by some to serve only as a front for Malaysian interests. All the American banks approached by the Pequots had refused to invest in the venture, mostly because no one believed that a casino in New England would ever make a profit, despite the success of the bingo hall. Reservation land could not be used as collateral either. Lim Goh Tong, a Malaysian billionaire, was willing to take the risk. He loaned the original \$60 million and then even larger sums for expansion. When Hayward was forced to retire in 1998, Tong demanded immediate reimbursement of his loans less \$20 million. Tong did not cancel the continued payments (of 10% of the net profits of the casino) that the tribe had agreed to when he offered the capital required to build the casino.⁷⁰ When the Pequots broke ground to build the casino they offered the township of Ledvard 1 percent of the revenues that the casino would make. The leadership of the township laughed but have since complained that they receive no compensation (see fig. 4). Others have suggested that the tribe should not have separate identity and privileges, which come with living on an Indian reservation. Such separateness was quite acceptable when the tribe was poor.



FIGURE 4. One view of the Foxwoods Casino Resort. Photo taken by author in 2008.

Coercion (to reestablish the original social order) by visible violence is practiced less in Western societies today. Power has become a strategic game, "guiding the possibility of conduct and putting in order the possible outcome."⁷¹ However, in southeastern Connecticut, power seems to be in the hands of the American Indians instead of its white residents as economic development and political influence are clearly interrelated and reciprocal. The Pequots can afford to lobby and fund election campaigns of politicians. Relations between the two groups are tense as many white residents resort to age-old tropes to describe the behaviors of the American Indians of whom they disapprove: one of the whites' accusations is that the Indians' wealth has caused them to lose their soul.

Large revenues from gambling have embittered debates over the intersection of federal, state, and tribal rights and over the distribution of benefits from these new Indian resources. Yet the Mashantucket Pequots "believe strongly in sharing their success with the community at large."⁷² They have invested in numerous community causes locally and farther afield. They have distributed some of their profits to surrounding causes in the hope of reaping more approval, just as they contributed financial support to political figures. For example, they bought the building that a regional multicultural magnet school in New London needed and leased it back for one dollar a year until state funds could be provided. Yet the new discourse is "Indians are on a free ride!" When the last residents of the reservation (two elderly women) requested some help in the late 1960s, the state did not respond, and they were left to live in crumbling housing under the rules of the reservation system: poor, separate, and marginalized.⁷³

"We've made every effort to mitigate Foxwoods' impact," assert the Pequots, who have spent \$15 million on road improvement along portions of the state highway within the reservation in order to minimize traffic congestion and hazards.⁷⁴ They have established a transit system that shuttles employees as far as ten miles from home to work and those who use its parking lots, which are several miles from the casino. They also transport visitors from the Amtrak and ferry stations on the shore. The Mashantucket Pequots contribute \$200,000 a year to private nonprofit efforts to educate people about and prevent compulsive gambling.⁷⁵ Their efforts are ignored because they do not fit the Western discursive system.⁷⁶ Hayward was relatively ready to accommodate surrounding residents. Kenneth Reels, who succeeded Hayward, was much less willing to compromise with anybody, including politicians.

According to Lyotard, indigenous peoples' identities are radically inaccessible; they are not just an inchoate opposite.⁷⁷ American Indians have thus been silenced and repressed as their "little narratives" had no place in a Western world of rational evidence. The "special privileges" residents complain about are the consequences of displacing them to reservations. The treaties that conceded American Indians sovereignty over their reservations served as the legal basis for Western appropriation of all Indian land that lay beyond the reservations. American Indians could only remain "as that otherness which Western narrative needed to annihilate to realize its dream of universality."⁷⁸

Conflicts arose between the Natives and the European settlers from the fact that each narrative was untranslatable into the narrative of the other. The Native communities retained their difference (by resisting assimilation and practicing their culture whenever possible) while European imperialism asserted that all cultures are fundamentally the same, so all people can be assimilated. Lyotard calls for a notion of community that embodies difference without its appropriation by any particular segment: "what is at stake . . . is to bear witness to *différends* by finding idioms for them."⁷⁹ Richard Rorty, an American philosopher, endorses Lyotard's view to resist the nostalgia for unity, totality, and communal foundations and to accept differences.⁸⁰

CONCLUSION

Using a sociocritical analysis of historical, newspaper, and other discourses, this article has examined the complexity of the social and political rapport between the Mashantucket Pequots and the white residents of southeastern Connecticut. The resurgence of the Pequots when they sought federal recognition reignited conflictual relations between them and the surrounding residents. Historical discourses reveal that resentments between the two groups are deep-seated and not simply caused by the sudden reappearance of a "vanished" tribe or the continually growing megaresort attraction, although this last development did aggravate them.

Although the Indian community had been silenced within the new American society that was developing from the 1600s in Connecticut, it could create its own discourses and resist disappearance within the reservations. Foucault argues that every relationship of power implies a potential strategy of resistance because there is no privileged site of struggle.⁸¹ He has stated that where there is power there will be resistance. These have been expressed in the Mashantucket Pequots' continued struggle, initiated in the seventeenth century, to hold onto those areas that had become their land (the original reservations) and their quest for a just recognition of their rights.⁸² Territories are not just real, in the form of assigned reservations—some of which have a tortuous history of reduction of their territory (as exemplified by the Mashantucket Pequot Reservation)—but simultaneously imaginary and symbolic, through attachment to the place they are located in or have come to represent.⁸³

This article has shown that, within the southeastern Connecticut context, the changing power relationships between white Americans and Native Americans reveal how spaces are being contested and different groups with different social representations struggle to dominate the region. The recent economic prosperity of the Mashantucket Pequot tribe has upset the balance, causing a variety of reactions from some local white residents who feel threatened by the Pequots' growth in power. The presence of American Indians in southeastern Connecticut is contested by its white residents, whose identity had been built on certain power relations that necessarily excluded American Indians who were believed vanquished and vanished.

Both groups claim a natural right to that space, but the white narratives had effectively overcome and marginalized other narratives and thus closed off communication with the American Indians. To the white residents, American Indians have transgressed their rights. The recognition of sovereign nations and the politics of difference (as encouraged by the IGRA), rather than assimilation, opened the path to economic prosperity for Native Americans through an often despised activity, casino gaming. The discussion has revealed the changing power relations that resulted from this process in southeastern Connecticut, as well as the struggle, resistance, and coping strategies of the traditional center (of power) as it gives way to the influence of the periphery. It has also revealed the continued misunderstanding between the two groups whose narratives remain incompossible.

NOTES

1. Anne-Marie d'Hauteserre, "Representations of Rurality: Is Foxwoods Casino Resort Threatening the Quality of Life in South Eastern Connecticut?" *Tourism Geographies* 3, no. 4 (2001): 405–29.

2. Donald M. Peppard Jr., "In the Shadow of Foxwoods: Some Effects of Casino Development in Southeastern Connecticut," *Economic Development Review* 13, no. 4 (1995): 44–46; Barbara Carmichael, Donald Peppard, and Frances Boudreau, "Megaresort on My Doorstep: Local Resident Attitudes toward Foxwoods Casino and Casino Gambling on Nearby Indian Reservation Land," *Journal of Travel Research* (Winter 1996): 9–16; *The Day* (1991–99), the Norwich daily newspaper; the *Hartford Courant* (1990–2000), the Connecticut capitol daily paper.

3. d'Hauteserre, "Representations of Rurality."

4. Jim Adams, "Connecticut Towns Fight State Support of Mashantucket Pequot Water District," *Indian Country Today*, 15 July 2003.

5. Bruce Granville Miller, "Bringing Culture In: Community Responses to Apology, Reconciliation, and Reparations," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 30, no. 4 (2006): 1–17.

6. See Ward Churchill, Struggle for the Land (Monroe, MA: Common Courage Press, 1992), 139; Michael Garritty, "The US Colonial Empire Is as Near as the Nearest Reservation," in Trilateralism: The Trilateral Commission and Elite Planning for World Management, ed. Holly Sklar (Boston: South End Press, 1980), 238–68; Charles C. Royce, Indian Land Cessions in the US: 18th Annual Report, 1896–7 (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1899), 1500–1643.

7. On reservations or tribal land held in federal trust, tribes are exempt from local taxes and local regulations, such as zoning, building, and environmental codes, but not federal ones. When tribes buy land beyond their reservations it can be put into federal trust, removing it from local control. However, not all land owned by Indian tribes can be put into federal trust. It must be proven to have been reservation land or land that replaces, under specific conditions, lost reservation acres. Otherwise, such land remains on the state's tax and law rolls. Fears that too much land will be annexed and off tax rolls and government control are thus not justified.

8. Personal communication from the Pequot Times editor, 2005.

9. Amy Den Ouden demonstrates the ways colonial histories were constructed in the aftermath of the Pequot War in order to erode Native American rights and their ability to resist land appropriation as well as to produce the legitimacy of English colonization actively. *Beyond Conquest: Native Peoples and the Struggle for History in New England* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005).

10. Edward Spicer, "The Nation State," in American Indian Persistence and Resurgence, vol. 29, ed. K. Kroeber (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), 27–49.

11. Jack Campisi, "The Emergence of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe, 1637– 1975," in *The Pequots in Southern New England*, ed. Lawrence Hauptman and James Wherry (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 117–40. Research shows that the two women, Elizabeth Plouffe and Martha Ellal, were either sisters-in-law or half-sisters.

12. See the *Pequot Times*. The tribe's public-relations office, established after 1996, monitors and controls all media contact pertaining to the tribe in order to protect its members from personal harassment for what are tribal matters. Personal communication from the *Pequot Times* editor, 1999 and 2005.

13. John W. De Forest, History of the Indians of Connecticut from the Earliest Known Period to 1850 (Hartford, CT: W. J. Hamersley 1851, 1853; 1964 facsimile ed.), 162. On 26 May 1637, the Pequots were massacred in a predawn attack. The confrontation had been couched into a "holy war" of the Puritans against the forces of darkness. Historians have shown that the crimes attributed to the Pequots had been either exaggerated or invented. Many other Pequots not inside the fort were captured, killed in skirmishes, or executed in the months that followed. In September 1638, by signing the Treaty of Hartford, the Pequot Nation was officially declared to be dissolved and its land preempted. Not all the Pequots had disappeared, because a treaty had to be signed very soon in order to appropriate their land, and they had to be given back some of it so they could survive (1655). For a more complete narrative of the period, see Francis Jennings, The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism and the Cant of Conquest (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978); Neil Salisbury, Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans, and the Making of New England (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982); Alden Vaughan, New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians, 1620-1675 (Boston: Little and Brown); Alfred Cave, The Pequot War (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996).

14. Mary Soulsby, *American Indians in Connecticut: Past to Present* (report prepared for the Connecticut Indian Affairs Council, 1979), provides a thorough historical account of the American Indian presence in Connecticut. For a history of the Mashantucket and Pautucket Pequots, see Lawrence Hauptman and James Wherry, eds., *The Pequots in Southern New England* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990).

15. For a more detailed description of the efforts of the Mashantucket Pequots to reduce hostility in the state of Connecticut, see Anne-Marie d'Hauteserre, "Destination Branding in a Hostile Environment," *Journal of Travel Research* 39 (2001): 300–7.

16. For a critical analysis of its successful growth, see Anne-Marie d'Hauteserre, "Foxwoods Casino Resort: An Unusual Experiment in Economic Development," *Economic Geography* (March Special Issue, 1998): 112–21 and "Lesson in Managed Destination Competitiveness: The Case of Foxwoods Casino Resort," *Tourism Management* 21, no. 1 (2000): 23–32.

17. For Lyotard (1984), encounters between groups (like whites and American Indians) do take place, but no language is available to phrase them because our powers of representation are limited by the fact that human thoughts fall short of our senses and feelings. Indigenous peoples' identities then are radically inaccessible; they are not just an inchoate opposite. They are different, irrepresentable. Another obstacle in communicating is that interpreters inevitably bring with themselves the perspectives and concerns of their own cultures and are rarely cognizant of those of the other.

18. See n. 13.

19. Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, eds., *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 125.

20. Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Sean Hand (London: The Athlone Press, 1988), 16.

21. Jacques Derrida was the originator of the idea of deconstruction in *L'écriture et la difference* (Paris: Aux Editions du Seuil, 1967) and in *Of Grammatology*, trans. G. Spivak (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 1976). His ideas were also used to support critical postcolonial theory. Foucault, Lyotard, Bourdieu, Deleuze, and Derrida were all contemporaries at various higher tertiary education institutions in Paris. Lefebvre and Barthes were one generation older.

22. Henri Lefebvre, La production de l'espace (Paris: Editions Anthropos, 1974).

23. Den Ouden, Beyond Conquest. See also Spicer, "The Nation State," 30.

24. Robert F. Berkhofer Jr., "The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present" (New York: Vintage Books, 1978).

25. Alfred L. Kroeber, *Cultural and Natural Areas of Native North America* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1939).

26. R. Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981).

27. Melissa Fawcett Sayet, "The Lasting of the Mohegans," *Essence* (March 1993): 23–55. See also the *Pequot Times*.

28. Experience Mayhew, "A Brief Journal of My Visitation of the Pequot and Mohegan Indians," in *Some Correspondence Between the Governors and Treasurers of the New England Company in London and the Commissioners of the United Colonies in America* (London, 1896).

29. See Campisi, "The Emergence of the Mashantucket." See also Soulsby, American Indians in Connecticut.

30. Sol Tax and Sam Stanley, *Indian Identity and Economic Development* (Washington, DC: Joint Economic Committee, 1970), 75–96; G. P. Castile, "Indian Sign: Hegemony and Symbolism in Federal Indian Policy," in *State and Reservation: New Perspectives on Federal Indian Policy*, vol. 167, ed. G. P. Castile and R. Bee (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1992), 165–86.

31. I. Burkitt, Bodies of Thought: Embodiment, Identity and Modernity (London: Sage, 1999).

32. Ward Churchill, Indians Are Us? Culture and Genocide in Native North America (Monroe, MA: Common Courage Press, 1994); W. K. Powers, Beyond the Vision, Essays on American Indian Culture (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987).

33. See, e.g., Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian* (Vancouver, BC: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992); Ned Blackhawk, "Julian Steward and the Politics of Representation: A Critique of Anthropologist Julian Steward's Ethnographic Portrayals of the American Indians of the Great Basin," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 21, no. 2 (1997): 61–81.

34. Christie MacLeod, *The American Indian Frontier* (New York: Dawsons, 1928); B. W. Dippie, *The Vanishing American* (Kansas City: The University Press of Kansas, 1982). Among French possessions, it is in New Caledonia that this trope has been most accepted: "What is more, their extinction occurs only if they are truly savage," wrote Bernard (1894: 297), quoted in Alban Bensa, *Nouvelle Calédonie, un paradis dans la tourmente* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990). The disappearance of their "primitive" culture or the threat of global warming to atolls are major tropes used to lure tourists to "new" peripheries believed to be not yet spoilt by modernity or other tourists. Colonization and missionaries, however, had already rendered these places familiar and safe enough for Western visitors. Hence, whites can nostalgically reflect that "the red man, like the wilderness, is inevitably being extinguished by the inexorable advance of Western civilisation" (Kroeber, *American Indian Persistence*, 4).

35. Herman Melville, Moby-Dick (New York: Norton, 1967), 67.

36. Charles M. Segal and Daniel Stineback, *Puritans, Indians, and Manifest Destiny* (New York: Putnam, 1977), 78.

37. Den Ouden, Beyond Conquest.

38. Jean François Lyotard, *The Différend: Phrases in Dispute*, trans. Georges Van Den Abeele (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1988), 139.

39. Jean-François Lyotard, *Just Gaming* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1985).

40. L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958); Lyotard, *The Différend*; Lyotard, *Just Gaming*.

41. Lyotard, Just Gaming.

42. James Williams, Lyotard: Towards a Postmodern Philosophy (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), 8.

43. Michel Foucault, "The Ethic of Care for the Self as a Practice of Freedom," trans. J. Gauthier, *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 12 (1984): 118.

44. Spicer, "The Nation State," 49.

45. Bill Readings, "Pagans, Perverts or Primitives? Experimental Justice in the Empire of Capital," in *Judging Lyotard*, ed. Andrew Benjamin (London: Routledge, 1992), 168–89; quotation on p. 170.

46. Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. A. Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1986).

47. Vincent Descombes, *Modern French Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

48. Lyotard, The Différend, xi.

49. Readings, "Pagans, Perverts or Primitives? 170; Lyotard, The Différend, 5.

50. De Forest, History of the Indians, 421-40.

51. Ibid., 441.

52. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1984), xi.

53. Williams, Lyotard, 4.

54. See, e.g., Connecticut Archives, Indians, 2nd series, docs. 147b and 149d.

55. Ibid., doc. 149d.

56. David T. McNab, *Circles of Time: Aboriginal Land Rights and Resistance in Ontario*, vols. 47 and 74 (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1999).

57. Anne Barron, "Lyotard and the Problem of Justice," in *Judging Lyotard*, ed. Andrew Benjamin (London: Routledge, 1992), 26–42; quotation on p. 34.

58. William Connolly, *Politics and Ambiguity* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 138.

59. Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition, 79.

60. Lyotard, The Différend, 178.

61. Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power: After Word," in Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault*.

62. Lyotard, Just Gaming.

63. "Fortune Favours the Braves," The Guardian Weekly, 14 September 2007, 25.

64. Kim Eisler, Revenge of the Pequots.

65. Ibid., 21.

66. See n. 8.

67. Robert L. Bee, "Connecticut's Indian Policy: From Testy Arrogance to Benign Bemusement," in *The Pequots in Southern New England*, ed. Lawrence Hauptman and James Wherry (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 194–212; quotation on p. vii.

68. Jeff Benedict, *Without Reservation* (New York: Harper Collins, 2000). Benedict points out how today's Pequots are not totally innocent victims of opposition from the surrounding townships. Reels was quite abrasive when he first became chairman of the tribe.

69. Kim Eisler, Revenge of the Pequots, 45.

70. Ibid., 149, 241-42.

71. Dreyfus and Rabinow, Michel Foucault, 221.

72. Mashantucket Pequot press release, July 1997.

73. Hauptman and Wherry, The Pequots in Southern New England.

74. David Collins, "DOT Sees Tribe's Expansion Plans," *The Day*, 18 February 1995.

75. Ann Baldelli, "Compulsive Gambling Growing Problem in Region, Study Shows," *The Day*, 24 February 1995.

76. See d'Hauteserre, "Representations of Rurality," 514-18.

77. Lyotard, Just Gaming.

78. Readings, "Pagans, Perverts or Primitives?" 183.

79. Lyotard, The Différend, 13.

80. Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979).

81. Foucault, "The Subject and Power."

82. See the Pequot Times.

83. Michael Keith and Stephen Pile, *Geographies of Resistance* (London: Routledge, 1997).