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Publication Date

2012-04-12

Supplemental Material

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7wn513j0#supplemental>

Undergraduate

The Paradoxical Persistence of James Earle Fraser's *End of the Trail*:

Nostalgia, Souvenirs, and the Politics of Pictorial Representation

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HIST ART 195

Professor Lovell

4/12/12

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Introduction

On June 13, 2004, a resident of Elyria, Ohio described a family heirloom in her local newspaper's antiques advice column. Hoping to uncover her vintage collectable's history and, of course, cash value, she wrote, "I have a pair of bronze-finished bookends. They are in the shape of an American Indian on horseback. The man is holding a long spear, but his head and the horse's head are both bending forward. Have you ever seen bookends like this?"¹ The question posed by the curious bookends' owner was answered by the regular columnists and regionally well-known fellow Ohio residents, Ralph and Terry Kovel, hosts of the Home and Garden Television series, "Flea Market Finds with the Kovels."² The dynamic antique-specialist duo responded that not only did they know the derivation of the image, but that they owned a pair of the same bookends! The couple wrote, "they are copied from a famous sculpture called *End of the Trail* by James Earle Fraser (1876-1953). The sculpture was designed for the 1915 Panama Pacific Exhibition in San Francisco, and it is now on display at the National Cowboy Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City. The image became famous and has been used for posters, bookends, sculptures, bookmarks and other souvenirs."³ The Kovels were not overstating the popularity of Fraser's image. Should our Elyria resident choose to conduct an "end of the trail" keyword search on eBay, she would discover a plethora of kitschy belt buckles, door mats, necklaces and other novelty items which all depict the familiar figure of the slumped Native American with drooping spear astride his equally weary horse (Figure 1). While the many different styles of bookends are accompanied by a range of values, the original 1920s bronze *End of the Trail*

1 Ralph and Terry Kovel, "Futuristic Designs Abounded in 1950s," *Chronicle Telegram*, June 13, 2004, 5, accessed April 2, 2012, <http://newspaperarchive.com/chronicle-telegram/2004-06-13/page-49>.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

bookends are typically sold today for about two hundred dollars. These bookends were mentioned in letters written by members of the San Francisco Historical Society to the artist, James Earle Fraser, urging him to obtain a copyright for his work before its sale in miniature replicas got out of hand.⁴ Writing to Fraser in 1916, these historical society members had no idea just how right they were; the image of the fatigued rider and horse has been steadily reproduced for nearly one hundred years.

Despite *End of the Trail*'s popularity, many people (like our resident of Elyria) are unaware of the image's history.⁵ Even antique experts like the Kovels make remarkable blunders about the object's derivation. The *End of the Trail* was not originally created for the Panama Pacific Exhibition (although it was famously shown there) but was sculpted nearly two decades before the event. As a teenager, Fraser worked for sculptor Richard Bock and attended the Art Institute of Chicago.⁶ In 1894, at the age of seventeen, Fraser created an eighteen inch model of *End of the Trail*, and brought the statue with him when he left for Paris to study at the École des Beaux-Arts.⁷ Four years later, Fraser's eighteen inch model won the Wanamaker Prize at the American Art Association's exhibition in Paris.⁸ At the time, Fraser surely had no idea that this, a student work, would become his most famous achievement.

The Panama Pacific Exhibition of 1915 was one of the most ambitious exhibitions of sculpture ever held.⁹ Oddly, unlike all of the other sculptural works displayed at the Panama Pacific Exhibition, Fraser's statue was the only one not produced specifically for the eagerly

4 Aline B. Louchheim, "Most Famous Unknown Sculptor," *New York Times Magazine*, 100 (May 13, 1951): 24.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 Wayne Bonnett, *City of Dreams: Panama-Pacific International Exposition 1915* (Salt Lake City: Windgate Press, 1995): 3.

anticipated ten-month-long event (Fig. 2).¹⁰ Instead, Karl Bitter, one of the heads of the exposition's sculpture department, personally solicited *End of the Trail* for the fair, requesting that the artist oversee the production of a larger than life size plaster copy.¹¹ The work won the sculpture department's gold prize, and almost immediately became available on postcards and mini figurines.¹² With the conclusion of the fair, the future of the statue became a point of contention. A site in the city's Presidio district was briefly proposed and then abandoned when Fraser requested the hefty sum of \$50,000 as his compensation.¹³ After remaining in storage for a few years, the sculpture finally began a southward journey from San Francisco into California's Central Valley upon its purchase by Tulare County whose Forestry Board hoped the plaster cast would beautify Mooney Grove Park.¹⁴

Over the next few decades, other monumental versions of the sculpture would crop up in remote American landscapes while the printed *End of the Trail* image gained more widespread attention, inciting further production of novelty items bearing the iconic horse and rider image and even inspiring a popular nineteen-fifties rodeo show to mimic the statue's pose in a memorable stunt.¹⁵ At mid-century Fraser's work was becoming the subject matter for new art as

10 Alexander Stirling Calder created contracts with his sculptors stipulating the design of each sculpture, its price, and a projected timeline detailing the artist's predicted progress. Fraser's contract is comparatively brief, simply stating that Karl Bitter is in communication with the artist and denoting the amount of money paid to the artist. Panama Pacific International Exposition's Department of Sculpture Contracts. Box 71: January, 1913- October, 1914. Files 36, 38, 39, and 40. Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.

11 Ibid.

12 Louchheim, "Most Famous Unknown Sculptor," 24.

13 Letter from Fraser to San Francisco Historical Society dated December 10, 1915, Fraser Papers, National Cowboy Hall of Fame Collection, as quoted in Dean Krakel's *End of the Trail: the Odyssey of a Statue* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973): 8.

14 Tulare County Historical Society Collections, Visalia California, as quoted in Dean Krakel's *End of the Trail: the Odyssey of a Statue* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973): 8.

15 Gene Autry famously performed the *End of the Trail* pose in rodeo shows as mentioned in Don Cusik's *Gene Autry: His Life and Career* (Jefferson, N.C. : McFarland and Co., 2007): 41.

Roy Lichtenstein picked up his paints and easel to create his own versions of the *End of the Trail*.¹⁶ If the hippie generation missed the image's appearance in rodeos and pop art, the work was nevertheless flung into their consciousness in 1971, when the Beach Boys further popularized the *End of the Trail* by making it the cover art for their *Surf's Up* album. Over a century in age, Fraser's work continues to be a potent one, as attested to by its role in a recent exhibition. In 2008, a major retrospective of Native American artist Fritz Scholder's work was held concurrently at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C. and at the George Gustav Heye Center in New York City.¹⁷ The show included a series of paintings by the artist which are based upon Fraser's iconic image and interrogate the *End of the Trail* as a site of racial stereotypes and clichés. Despite Scholder's criticism of Fraser's work, the persistence of the *End of the Trail* in miniature form—as both an early twentieth-century antique and as a mass produced novelty item routinely bought and sold in Western themed home magazines, antique fairs, and most recently on eBay—attests to the powerful resonance of the image itself and its ability to speak eloquently to multiple generations over the past century.

It would seem that Fraser's sculpture has had a significant *Nachleben*, what Aby Warburg deems the “afterlife” of an image and the new meanings it expresses as it moves through time and space. The numerous eBay *End of the Trail* products exaggerate to the point of caricature the theatrical nature of the defeated noble savage, whose tragedy is simultaneously trivialized by the image's placement on coffee cups, lamps, and clocks. How can something so theatrical be read as so meaningful to so many? And to what can we attribute the *End of the Trail's* cultural stamina?

16 Grace Glueck, “A Pop Artist’s Fascination with the First Americans,” *New York Times*, December 23, 2005, accessed March 20, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/12/23/arts/design/23lich.html?pagewanted=all>.

17 Joshua Brockman, “Indian or Not? Fritz Scholder’s Art and Identity,” National Public Radio, December 26, 2008, accessed April 2, 2012, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=98694678>.

Through discussing the history of the image, I would like to investigate the way its meanings change, remain remarkably fixed, and are occasionally occluded by its passage through time and space and its representation in different media. Art historian Michael Camille writes that the process of charting an image as it is utilized in different contexts and viewed by changing audiences challenges the idea that the artist is solely responsible for imbuing her work with meaning, instead locating meaning in the various audiences of the image.¹⁸ Like Camille, I believe that there is value not only in investigating the initial reception of an image, but in continuing to chart the various changes the image undergoes as well as the new audiences it attracts. As Americans, we tell ourselves stories about ourselves. The *End of the Trail* is an image full of ideological freight; through unpacking its meanings I hope to better understand the work's place amongst our conceptions of both American and Native American identities, and prod my reader to ponder whether or not the work will continue to inform our national conceptions of history for the next one hundred years.

The Columbian Exposition: The Loss of the Frontier and the Native American Way of Life

In response to questions pertaining to the inspiration for his *End of the Trail* sculpture, James Earle Fraser stated that it was the impressive sculptural works that he saw at the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago which emboldened him to create a work of his own.¹⁹ By the following year, the teenage Fraser completed a model of his now iconic figure.²⁰ It should come as no surprise that the Columbian Exposition kindled Fraser's interest not only in monumental sculpture, but also in his choice of Native American subject. The Chicago World's Fair hosted a

18 Michael Camille, "The Abject Gaze and the Homosexual Body: Flandrin's *Figure d' Etude*," *Gay and Lesbian Studies in Art History*, ed. Whitney Davis (Philadelphia: Haworth Press, 1994): 161–188.

19 Louchheim, "Most Famous Unknown Sculptor," 24.

20 Ibid.

number of young sculptors creating works with indigenous themes.²¹ One of the most prominent of these was an equestrian group entitled *Signal of Peace* by Cyrus E. Dallin (Fig. 3).²² The bronze sculpture is comprised of a Sioux Chief sitting upon his pony and raising a spear into the air, a gesture which the work's title informs us is peaceful. Dallin's monumental, heroic, and self-proclaimed peaceful sculpture must have seemed strangely juxtaposed with the staged violence performed by Native American members of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show performed nearby.²³ Buffalo Bill's show had begun in 1883 and successfully toured across the country and internationally, making an important stop at the Chicago World's Fair.²⁴ The shows were 3-4 hours long and included rodeos, historical re-enactments (most notably the battle of Little Bighorn) and inevitably concluded with the grand finale, "Attack on the Burning Cabin."²⁵ In these final moments of the show, Native Americans would attack a cabin only to be warded off and eventually killed by Buffalo Bill and his accompanying cowboys.²⁶ Hence, audience's fears were ignited by the savage killing of General Custer by bloodthirsty savages only to be assuaged by the concluding scene, in which natives are defeated by the heroic Buffalo Bill. While the dire fate of the Native American warriors was irreverently transformed into spectacle in the Wild West Show, Dallin's sculpture grants its Native American subject the quiet dignity of the Noble Savage.²⁷ Nevertheless, fair-goers found a united message in the show and sculpture as both

21 Jeremy Cooper, *Nineteenth Century Romantic Bronzes* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1975): 122.

22 Ibid.

23 For more on Native Americans portrayed as stereotypically violent by the dominant culture, see Philip Joseph Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2006).

24 Drew VandeCreek, "1893 Chicago World's Fair," Illinois During the Gilded Age, accessed February 23, 2012, <http://dig.lib.niu.edu/gildedage/narr7.html>.

25 L.G. Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996): 22.

26 Ibid.

27 For more on the evolution and perpetuation of the Noble Savage as a term and concept see Terry Jay Ellingson, *The Myth of the Noble Savage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

seemed to suggest the end of the Native American as warrior. Dallin's sculpture signals peace to an absent victor (who we assume to be a white settler) and the Native American actors of Buffalo Bill's Show perpetually dramatize their battle losses. Upon the conclusion of the fair, Dallin's bronze equestrian group was bought by Judge Lambert Tree, who donated the work to Chicago's Lincoln Park.²⁸ Writing to Lincoln Park commissioners, Tree revealed that he wanted a public memorial for the Indians because, "It is evident there is no future for them, except that they may exist as memory in a sculptor's bronze or stone or a painter's canvas."²⁹ It would seem that Tree's sentiment was similarly felt by James Earle Fraser as he traversed the World's Columbian Exposition grounds. Fraser wrote that the Chicago sculptures evoked a childhood memory, in which an old Dakota trapper said to the young artist, "The Indians will someday be pushed into the Pacific Ocean."³⁰ Dually inspired by the works at the Chicago fair and this childhood incident, Fraser completed his first model of *The End of the Trail* the following year.

Fraser's work cleverly inverts the popularized image of the equestrian cowboy in action. This type of western action sculpture was inaugurated by Alexander Phimister Proctor at the Columbian Exposition, who created a life-size plaster cast titled *Cowboy* in which the rider attempts to reign in his lively horse (Fig. 4).³¹ The widespread popularization of the cowboy image would occur two years later with Frederick Remington's bronze statuette, *The Bronco Buster* (1895), which exaggerates the action of Proctor's earlier work; the horse bucks as if a combustion engine were backfiring inside him and the cowboy responds with his raised whip and

28 Ira J. Bach and Mary Lackritz Gray, *A Guide to Chicago's Public Sculpture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983): 45.

29 Ibid.

30 Louchheim, "Most Famous Unknown Sculptor," 24.

31 The novelty of the western action sculptures of Proctor and their influence on Remington's work are discussed in Peter H. Hassrick, "Frederick Remington," in *Shaping the West: American Sculptors of the Nineteenth Century* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011): 68.

tense muscles (Fig. 5).³² Conversely, Fraser's horse and rider are equally fatigued; the horse lowers his weary head and his tail blows between his legs while his rider's limp spear, fallen shoulders and downcast gaze indicate defeat. Perhaps Fraser deliberately responded to both Proctor and Dallin's sculptural narratives about the West and about national history. Surely, the artist must have noted the sad contrast between Dallin's heroic *Signal of Peace* and the Native American recruits paid to act "savage" in Buffalo Bill's show. Fraser's sculpture seems to repudiate Dallin's work—the question of peace is irrelevant for the battle has long ago concluded with the indigenous people's defeat—the Wild West Show's Native American members donned their ancestral dress as costumes and in doing so, daily testified to the end of the Native American warrior.

However, it wasn't just the indigenous warrior that was being eulogized, but rather the disappearing Native American way of life. By the time of the Chicago Exposition, the artistic call to capture the disappearing Native American traditions and customs was anything but new. George Catlin and John Mix Stanley had toured the West a half century earlier and documented their encounters with Native Americans in paintings that were later displayed in "Indian Galleries" which toured the eastern US and Europe throughout the mid nineteenth century.³³ Catlin wrote that his goal was to become the disappearing Native Americans' "historian."³⁴ He meticulously recorded his contact with indigenous peoples in "Letters and Notes on the Manners,

32 For more on the immediate success and popularity of Remington's *Bronco Buster*, see Michael Edward Shapiro, *Bronze Casting and American Sculpture: 1850-1900* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1985): 136.

33 Joni L. Kinsey, "Viewing the West: the Popular Culture of American Western Painting" in *Wanted Dead or Alive: The American West in Popular Culture* ed. Richard Aquila (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996): 249-250.

34 Ibid, 250.

Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians” (1841).³⁵ In 1906, American financier, banker and art collector, J.P. Morgan offered the photographer Edward S. Curtis \$3,000 to create a series on the North American Indian.³⁶ Curtis produced over 40,000 photographic images of over 80 tribes. In addition, he meticulously documented tribal lore, traditional food, housing, clothing, and ceremonies. He created over 10,000 wax cylinder recordings of Native American language and music, compiling all of his research into a series of volumes entitled, “The Vanishing Race,” the first volume published in 1907.³⁷ Within a handful of decades, Americans acknowledged that the indigenous way of life was not just disappearing, but had disappeared.

American nostalgia for the lost indigenous way of life was coupled with their mourning for the frontier, a space that once symbolized opportunity and national progress. Reading before the American Historical Association at the Chicago World's Fair, Frederick Jackson Turner presented his seminal paper, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” in which he interpreted the findings of the 1890 census in which Americans responded that the frontier no longer existed.³⁸ Turner wrote that the nation had been shaped by the pull of the frontier; the availability of untouched, cultivatable land created an equality among men, a foundation for democracy.³⁹ With the closing of the frontier came the crisis of newly defining American identity. What were Americans if they were no longer courageous explorers and settlers of new lands? The Native American themes present in the Chicago Exposition's Wild West Show and sculptures gave form and narrative to an idealized American past. The indigenous people who

35 Ibid.

36 Mick Gidley, “Edward S. Curtis,” Edward S. Curtis’ the North American Indian, accessed February 23, 2012, <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/award98/ienhtml/essay1.html>.

37 Ibid.

38 Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” accessed February 23, 2012, <http://www.h-net.org/~hst203/documents/turner.html>.

39 Ibid.

were routinely defeated in Buffalo Bill's Wild West show were not simply regarded as casualties of Manifest Destiny and proofs of Social Darwinism by their audiences. Rather, viewers had a propensity to romanticize the lives of the first inhabitants of the continent, and American citizens' anxiety concerning the future of their nation was in part transformed into the nostalgic idealization of a shared history in which the frontier, not the fair, served as the point of contact between the two groups.

By the 1910s, Native Americans were such a non-threat, sequestered as they were on reservations or assimilated into mainstream life, that even the U.S. government could nostalgically commemorate their past. In 1913, James Earle Fraser was commissioned by the U.S. Mint to create an Indian and buffalo on a nickel coin.⁴⁰ The buffalo and Indian seemed to be the perfect pairing as both had nearly vanished due to the pressure and prerogatives of white settlers. Fraser modeled his bison from "Old Diamond," a member of the bison community at the Bronx Zoo.⁴¹ The bison community had been founded as a conservationist effort earlier in the century by Frederick Remington, Andrew Carnegie and Theodore Roosevelt.⁴² The contemporary artist's imperative to dually preserve and commemorate national history is typified by Remington's involvement in the establishment of the American Bison Community and Fraser's use of the buffalo's image on the reverse of his coin. Like his travels through the Bronx Zoo, Fraser again searched a space of public entertainment for the Indian model that would inspire the coin's obverse. Touring New York City's Wild West Shows, Fraser found three Native American performers—Chief Iron Tail, Chief Big Tree and Chief Two Moons—who became the

40 Louchheim, "Most Famous Unknown Sculptor," 24.

41 Kinsey, "Viewing the West," 258.

42 Steven Rinella, *American Buffalo*. (New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2009): 14.

models for the profile relief head on his coin.⁴³ Chief Big Tree would later live upon the grounds of the Panama-Pacific Exhibition's Wild West Show.⁴⁴ His tepee was only a short distance from a second art work for which he had modeled during his stay at Fraser's studio in New York.⁴⁵ The eighteen-foot tall *End of the Trail* incited short-lived notoriety and disturbance for Chief Big Tree (whose tepee was frequented by sculpture fans hoping to catch a glimpse of the model) and life-long fame and commissions for James Earle Fraser.⁴⁶

***The End of the Trail* at the Panama Pacific International Exposition: Nostalgia Breeds A New American Sculpture**

The San Francisco World's Fair of 1915 dually celebrated the opening of the Panama Canal as well as the rebirth of San Francisco, which had been rebuilt after the devastating earthquake and accompanying fires of 1906.⁴⁷ The San Francisco Fair was quickly touted as the most art-filled of all the world's fairs, hosting breathtaking gardens, architecture, murals, painting galleries, and of course, sculptures.⁴⁸ The sculptures of the Panama Pacific Exhibition could be roughly divided into two categories: Greco-Roman allegorical figures celebrating the virtues of civilization on the one hand, and characters of the American frontier: cowboys, prairie women and Native Americans on the other.⁴⁹ Sculptures of muscular cowboys and strong-bodied prairie

43 "American Buffalo Commemorative Coin Fact Sheet," The U.S. Mint, accessed March 9, 2012, http://www.usmint.gov/mint_programs/commemoratives/index.cfm?action=Buffalo.com.

44 "Original of *End of the Trail* Statue Found At Exposition," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 13, 1915, accessed February 18, 2012, Proquest Historical Newspapers The San Francisco Chronicle (1865-1922).

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.

47 Wayne Bonnett, *City of Dreams: Panama-Pacific International Exposition 1915* (Salt Lake City: Windgate Press, 1995): 3.

48 Ibid, 3-4.

49 Through examining photos of the sculptures at the Panama Pacific Exhibition, the Greco-Roman and American frontier categories become apparent. For a complete photographic account of the sculptures at the fair, see Juliet James, *Sculpture of the Exposition Palaces and Courts* (San Francisco: H.S. Crocker Co,

women suggested the primitive space of the frontier as one that demanded physical fortitude and strength. Conversely, the slight bodies and meditative expressions of the allegorical figures of culture and progress emphasized the mental faculties of civilized men and women, upholding Western society as a product of advanced learning. When juxtaposed, these two sculptural categories of the civilized and the frontier seemed to embody Turner's thesis, in which the author claims that society and man are rejuvenated at exactly the point where civilization comes into contact with the wilderness.⁵⁰ While this contact could no longer be made in the real space of the disappearing frontier, it was given form and narrative in the themed space of the fair. Moreover, the opening of the Panama Canal in 1914 demonstrated that America now had stakes in a global frontier as the nation continued to expand its interests offshore.⁵¹

The largest sculptural groups of the San Francisco World's Fair promoted the theme of cultural unity—an appropriate message as the opening of the Panama Canal made it easier for geographically disparate cultures to travel and trade. The Court of the Universe included *Nations of the Occident*, a group of larger-than-life size cowboys, Native Americans, and prairie women all charging forward in a united front.⁵² The corresponding *Nations of the Orient* depicted various peoples and animals of Asia similarly parading forth in concord. Harmony was the catch word for the fair not only in terms of thematics, but also aesthetics. The fair was the first to merge in its plan architecture, sculpture and painting, with every department head required to approve the works submitted by artists in other departments.⁵³ With every sculptural element of

1915).

50 Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," accessed February 23, 2012, <http://www.h-net.org/~hst203/documents/turner.html>.

51 For more on the history of the Panama Canal, see Noel Maurer and Carlos Yu, *The Big Ditch: How America Took, Built, Ran and Ultimately Gave Away the Panama Canal* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

52 James, *Sculpture of the Exposition Palaces and Courts*, 8.

53 With the exception of Fraser's brief contract, all of the exhibition's sculpture contracts state that a

the fair carefully crafted to compliment the exhibition's other artistic works, it seems strange that Karl Bitter, Co-director of the Sculptural Department, decided to contract an extant work, James Earle Fraser's *End of the Trail*, for the exhibition.⁵⁴ While it is uncertain when Bitter first set eyes upon Fraser's sculpture, it must have been shortly after the work won critical acclaim and notoriety in the 1898 American Art Association Exhibition in Paris.⁵⁵ Considering the strong emphasis upon architectural and sculptural harmony at the fair, it is perhaps most perplexing that Bitter would risk purchasing a sculpture which could potentially clash with the other works. Why did he consider the *End of the Trail* so crucial to the exhibition?

While Karl Bitter never wrote a public statement addressing the sculptures of the San Francisco Fair, his fellow Sculpture Department head, Alexander Stirling Calder wrote a lengthy one. In it, Calder distinguishes between two types of sculptors, the imitators and the innovators.⁵⁶ He admonished the first category and sought praise for the second, stating that American sculptors must create unique works which reflect the spirit of the nation.⁵⁷ The Panama Pacific Exhibition was already filled to the brim with the former emulative group; indeed Winckelmann devotees created the majority of the works displayed at the fair.⁵⁸ Nude Greco-Roman young men and women portrayed allegories with the aid of their hackneyed accoutrements: laurel

sculptor's work must be approved by the Departments of Architecture and Color. Panama Pacific International Exposition's Department of Sculpture Contracts. Box 71: January, 1913- October, 1914. Files 36, 38, 39, and 40. Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.

54 Fraser's Sculpture Contract with Karl Bitter. Panama Pacific Exposition's Sculpture Department. Box 71: File 38. Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.

55 While Bitter's contract with Fraser does not relate the sculpture department head's first encounter with *End of the Trail*, in an interview Fraser stated that Bitter was aware of *End of the Trail's* display in Europe, see Louchheim, "*Most Famous Unknown Sculptor*," 24.

56 Alexander Calder, "Art is Praise and All Things in Life are its Subjects," in *Art in California*. (Irvine: Westphal Pub. 1988, c. 1916): 52.

57 Ibid.

58 A review of the sculptures of the exhibition illustrated in Juliet James' *Sculpture of the Exposition Palaces and Courts* demonstrates that many of the sculptures were neoclassical in subject and style.

wreaths, bows, torches, Pan pipes, and even the occasional Pegasus. While these sculptures were not representative of uniquely American themes, those depicting indigenous peoples and white settlers of the frontier certainly were. Calder and Bitter must have realized that none of their sculptors had created any Native American figures to rival those of the Chicago Exposition. Seeking to remedy this, they commissioned Fraser to create a larger plaster cast of his *End of the Trail* model, an astute decision as the sculpture would go on to win the fair's gold prize. Purposefully placed at the entrance to the Court of Palms, the statue's ability to signify loss was particularly potent to those fair-goers who recognized palm fronds as a traditional Christian symbol of martyrs.⁵⁹ Like the "Indian Gallery" paintings by Catlin and Stanley, the *End of the Trail* served as a nostalgic reminder of the lost frontier and the disappearing customs and traditions of indigenous Americans. In the wake of that loss, a new American sculpture was emerging which appropriated the image of the Native American to grant legitimacy to the nation's artists as they sought to separate themselves from the European artistic tradition.

Three New Monuments: Symbols of American Progress and Native American Mourning

In the years following the close of the Panama Pacific Exhibition, the *End of the Trail* was reproduced as various novelty items throughout the country; however, the actual location of the enormous plaster cast exhibited at the fair was unknown, even to the artist himself.⁶⁰ It was not until Thomas Jacob, a resident of California's Central Valley, began inquiring about the statue

59 Kinsey, "Viewing the West," 259.

60 A letter from Fraser to the San Francisco Historical Society indicates that the artist was searching for his prize-winning work's whereabouts, see Tulare County Historical Society Collections, Visalia California, as quoted in Dean Krakel's *End of the Trail: the Odyssey of a Statue* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973): 9.

in 1918 that its location was finally found amidst a “graveyard of statues in Marina Mud.”⁶¹ Jacob appealed to Tulare County's Forestry Board to buy the statue from San Francisco, and they did, reassembling it in their own Mooney Grove Park in 1919.⁶² At twenty-five years old, the *End of the Trail* sculptural concept was moving into its next life phase as a public monument. Over the next few decades, it would be reproduced twice, as a bronze equestrian statue for Waupun, Wisconsin and as a roadside attraction carved from a giant redwood's trunk on the Redwood Highway.⁶³ While the three sites appear to be rather random locations, similar only in their rurality and of course, their community's artistic sensibilities—I was surprised to find a commonality in the manner in which each site displayed *End of the Trail* as the sculpture is never found without its neighbor, the pioneer, close by.

The popularity of American public monuments began in the decades following the Civil War. The modern war memorial was a radically new public monument; dedicated to the ordinary soldier, it demonstrated that public monuments could serve as testimonials of the people's memory.⁶⁴ This was opposed to the previous centuries' monuments of rulers which were intended to strengthen dedication to established leadership. In order to be legitimately recognized as truly speaking for the people, the new monument had to arise spontaneously, sponsored by groups of

61 Tulare County Forestry Board Records. Tulare County Historical Society Collections, Visalia California, as cited in Dean Krakel's *End of the Trail: the Odyssey of a Statue* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973): 9.

62 Ibid.

63 For an account of Waupun's sculptural history, see Susan Detering, “Statue Lies at End of Trail: Philanthropist Shaler's Gifts Enrich Waupun,” *Wisconsin State Journal*, May 7, 1973, accessed April 12, 2012, <http://newspaperarchive.com/wisconsin-state-journal/1973-05-07/page-41>. A brief account of the redwood statue can be found at “Trees of Mystery,” Kamp Klamath, accessed April 2, 2012, http://www.kampklamath.com/trees_of_mystery_css.html.

64 Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997): 6.

citizens and made possible by their funding.⁶⁵ Tulare County Forestry Board's purchase of *End of the Trail* typifies this notion of the monument as the object of popular demand, a monument gifted by members of the community for the community. Mooney Grove's new monument would not be alone; three years earlier, Tulare County had acquired Solon Borglum's *The American Pioneer* at the closing of the Panama Pacific Exhibition (Fig. 6).⁶⁶ The plaster cast was the antithesis of Fraser's work: a stately Pioneer proudly raises his gun and ax astride his noble horse. In an official catalogue of the fair's statuary distributed during the Panama Pacific Exhibition, Borglum's *Pioneer* is described as bravely "blazing the trail" westward so that others may follow.⁶⁷ Seemingly paradoxically, Tulare's Forestry Board yearned to pair the trail blazer with the *End of the Trail*.

While the establishment of a monument is perhaps most romantic when prompted by the collective desires of a community (like Tulare County), monuments are just as often sponsored by illustrious residents who intend to leave a personal legacy to their hometown. Clarence Shaler, the first and only millionaire resident of Waupun, Wisconsin, made his fortune by inventing and selling the "Shaler 5 Minute Vulcanizer" which repaired punctured tires by welding rubber patches to rubber wheels.⁶⁸ Born in 1861, Shaler was already an elderly man by the 1920s when he decided to beautify his town by erecting public monuments.⁶⁹ He commissioned James Earle Fraser to create a 12-foot bronze cast of his *End of the Trail* which

65 Ibid.

66 Tulare County Historical Society Collections, Visalia California, as cited in Dean Krakel's *End of the Trail: the Odyssey of a Statue* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973): 9.

67 To accompany her photographs of the exhibition's sculptures, Juliet James also wrote brief commentaries about the works, for her description of Borglum's *Pioneer* see James, *Sculpture of the Exposition Palaces and Courts*, 31.

68 "Motorists Vulcanized First to Make it Last!" *Popular Science* (August 1927), Vol 111, No. 2: 91.

69 Frieda M. Lease, "End of the Trail is Waupun's Trademark," *Capital Times*, September 24, 1969, accessed April 2, 2012, <http://newspaperarchive.com/capital-times/1969-09-24/page-41>.

was completed in June of 1929 (Fig. 7).⁷⁰ Inspired to create sculptures himself, Shaler began sculpting in the final years of his life.⁷¹ Among these works was the depiction of a young family entitled *The Pioneers*; a mother and child sit beside the standing father who fully extends his right arm and points his index finger as if to indicate the direction of their family's new settlement, the land of the frontier (Fig. 8).⁷² Unlike Mooney Grove Park, which hosts its pioneer and Indian in the same site, Waupun's sculptures are in two neighboring parks sandwiching the Waupun Correctional Institute. Established in 1860, the WCI was yet another reason for Shaler to focus his efforts upon beautifying Waupun, as he likely hoped to obscure its identity as a prison town through reinvoking its past as a home to Native Americans and pioneers.⁷³ One of Shaler's final sculptures depicts an idealized Indian woman and is entitled *Dawn of Day*, the title refers to the English translation of the Native American word "Waubun" from which the town's name was derived.⁷⁴

By far the strangest of the three *End of the Trail* monumental versions is the life-size redwood carving located among the "Trees of Mystery," a roadside attraction along California's Redwood Highway.⁷⁵ The modern tourist-oriented highway attraction began as a U.S. and Western Canadian phenomenon in the 1940s to 1960s. The Trees of Mystery is a nearly mile long path through giant redwood trees with part of the trail devoted to the myth of Paul

70 Ibid.

71 Gary Peterson, "Waupun Benefits from Shaler Sculptures," *Madison Capital Times*, September 24, 1981: 61, accessed April 2, 2012, <http://newspaperarchive.com/madison-capital-times/1981-09-24/page-61>.

72 Ibid.

73 Mark Hopkins, "Prison Has Big Role in Waupun City Life," *The Milwaukee Journal*, July 11, 1962: 12, accessed April 2, 2012, http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1499&dat=19620711&id=BTsaAAAIAIAJ&sjid=_iYEAIAIAIAJ&pg=7219,124648.

74 "City of Sculpture," Waupun, Wisconsin, accessed April 2, 2012, http://www.cityofwaupun.org/sysfiles/member/custom_public/custom.cfm?memberid=361&customid=3054.

75 "Trees of Mystery," Kamp Klamath, accessed April 2, 2012, http://www.kampklamath.com/trees_of_mystery.css.html.

Bunyan.⁷⁶ Hosting a gift shop selling site-specific novelty items like Paul and Babe salt and pepper shakers and redwood bark jewelry, a Native American Museum, and the “Sky Trail” lift which transports passengers through the tall redwood trees, the Trees of Mystery is an exemplary tourist trap.⁷⁷ The *End of the Trail* was carved fully in the round at the base of a giant redwood tree at the park's entrance in the mid 1940s by a chain-saw sculptor whose name has not been preserved (Fig. 9).⁷⁸ As compared to its sisters in plaster and bronze, the redwood monument looks less detailed and more schematic, ultimately appearing rather cartoon-like. Appropriately, the sculpture was joined by two actual cartoon figures, Babe the Blue Ox in 1950 and Paul Bunyan in 1961, the latter date just three years after Disney's release of their *Paul Bunyan* animated film (Fig. 10).⁷⁹ Paul Bunyan and his trusty ox dwarf the life-size *End of the Trail*; Bunyan stands 49 feet tall and Babe is 35 feet.⁸⁰ Originally, Babe's head nodded and his nostrils blew smoke, a feature that was later discontinued as it tended to scare children.⁸¹ Today, visitors to the attraction are greeted by the giant mechanized lumberjack who says, “Hi there, friend! Welcome to the Trees of Mystery!” Occasionally referred to as “fakelore,” the story of Paul Bunyan either originated as nineteenth-century folklore told by loggers in the Northeastern U.S. and Eastern Canada, or it began in the print medium as a story written by Northern Michigan

76 Trees of Mystery, accessed April 2, 2012, <http://www.treesofmystery.net/tofm.htm>.

77 Ibid.

78 “End of the Trail” Carved from a Giant Redwood Tree Postcard, before May 4, 1946, BANC PIC 1999.011:079. Bancroft Library at University of California, Berkeley, accessed April 2, 2012, <http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/28722/bk000113g2q/?layout=metadata&brand=calisphere>.

79 For a brief history of the gigantic sculptures, see “Your Hosts, Paul and Babe,” Trees of Mystery, accessed April 2, 2012, <http://www.treesofmystery.net/entertain.htm>.

For production details and award nominations concerning the 1958 Disney animated short, see “Paul Bunyan,” Big Cartoon Database, accessed April 12, 2012, http://www.bcdb.com/cartoon/4178-Paul_Bunyan.html.

80 Ibid.

81 Ibid.

journalist James MacGillivray in 1906 and falsely advertised as folklore.⁸² Regardless, Bunyan's story is that of the quintessential pioneer, the expert lumberjack whose unusual physical prowess allows him to live off the rugged land. His placement next to the *End of the Trail* enacts a new narrative that is not part of Bunyan's tale. As tourists park their cars in the lot outside the Trees of Mystery, they are greeted by two symbols of a bygone era; the giant pioneer is successor to the Indian's territory, and the modern freeway traveler now inhabits and governs the world that once belonged to the pioneer.

Whether in Mooney Grove, Waupun, or along the Redwood Highway, Fraser's mournful Native American appears to be a response to the proud, courageous pioneer. The coupling of the active pioneer and the grief-stricken Native American was not new to the monumental versions of *End of the Trail*. As art historian Nicolai Cikovsky has pointed out, images of American progress are often paired with those of Native American mourning.⁸³ Cikovsky cites Thomas Crawford's pediment of the U.S. Senate, which depicts a pioneer axing a tree while a Native American sadly watches. Reproduced as an immensely popular commercial color print, John Gast's painting, *American Progress* (1872) similarly depicts Native Americans' response to colonization: a flying maiden in classical drapery serves as the personification of the United States, leading cowboys westward while Native Americans flee in fear.⁸⁴ Relegated to the periphery and included for their responsive role to the actions of white male subjects, the Native

82 The term “fakelore” was first coined by American folklorist Richard Mercer Dorson in his writings concerning Paul Bunyan and the fictional cowboy Pecos Bill, see Dorson, *Folklore and Fakelore: Essays Toward Essays Toward a Discipline of Folk Studies* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976). For the brief account presented here concerning Bunyan's contested origins, see Laurence Rogers, *Paul Bunyan: How a Terrible Timber Feller Became a Legend* (Historical Press, 1993): 153.

83 Nikolai Cikovsky, “The Ravages of the Ax: The Meaning of the Tree Stump in 19th Century American Art,” *The Art Bulletin* 61: 4 (Dec., 1979): 614–615.

84 The popularity of Gast's painting in reproduction is maintained by Martha Sandweiss, “John Gast, American Progress,” *Picturing U.S. History*, accessed April 3, 2012, http://picturinghistory.gc.cuny.edu/item.php?item_id=180.

American reminds us that civilization comes at a cost; nostalgically, we look backwards to the primitive civilization as society advances. While Gast's painting and Crawford's pediment present Native Americans and pioneers as potentially antagonistic, the monumental pairings of *End of the Trail* with pioneers do not. Rather, they seem to incite paternalistic sentiment from viewers, as we recognize ourselves as the latest members of a lineage which begins with the nation's indigenous people, is replaced by pioneer settlers, and finally culminates in us, the inheritors of contemporary America. Even in the case of Paul Bunyan, who wields his ax dangerously close to our redwood *End of the Trail*, we are not provoked to imagine that the figures exist in tension; rather they together speak of American history through folklore and art. The *End of the Trail* satisfies our cultural need to connect our young nation with the distant past through commemorating our country's indigenous people.⁸⁵ However, as a compromised expression of model masculinity, the *End of the Trail* necessitates a new masculine model that can counter its defeated pose. Hence, the *Pioneer* fulfills a different role than that of Fraser's image (which connects our country to time immemorial), instead offering us a visual expression of our desire for self-recognition in our nation's monuments. Unlike its world weary neighbor, the *Pioneer*—a model of bravery and fortitude with a healthy appetite for adventure—does not ask for our sympathy but rather seeks our identification.

Of course, such a tidy rendering of history is not without its problems. The unchangingness of the public monument makes it the most conservative of commemorative forms; intended to transfix, forever, the collective memory, such sculptures promise historical

85 Susan Scheckel compellingly claims that American artists, historians, and fiction writers of the nineteenth century created images, historical accounts, and fictional characters that depicted the American Indian as a vital connection to the distant past. Scheckel, *The Insistence of the Indian* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

closure.⁸⁶ Hence, the public monument is valued for the very quality that renders it an unreliable historical record, for it has a tendency to shape history into a series of heroic accomplishments, dutifully disposing of the residue and messiness of unresolved outcomes.⁸⁷ The *End of the Trail* monuments do not indicate the problematic assimilation of Native Americans into mainstream life, nor do they gesture at the difficult preservation of indigenous traditions and customs upon the reservation. Rather, like sequential chapters in an American elementary school history textbook, the *End of the Trail* and *Pioneer* abruptly and arbitrarily identify the end of one civilization with the rise of another.

The rural locations of the three *End of the Trail* monuments do not account for the image's widespread recognizability across the nation during the course of the last century. This proliferation of the image was due to its transmission through print media resulting in its popularity as necklaces, mini-bronze collectibles, and mass produced prints. By the 1940s, Fraser's image was so widely recognized that the famous movie star, singer, and rodeo champ, Gene Autry incorporated it into the finale of his rodeo shows (Fig. 11).⁸⁸ Autry trained his horse Trigger to lower his head and draw his hooves close together while balancing on a small box intended to look like a sculpture's base. The celebrated rodeo performer did not bother to costume himself as a Native American, instead wearing his customary cowboy apparel and trusting that the audience would draw the necessary visual connection between his stunt and Fraser's art solely through the horse's pose.⁸⁹ During the performance, Autry would yell to the

86 Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*, 4.

87 Ibid, 4.

88 Louchheim, "Most Famous Unknown Sculptor," 24. See also Cusik's *Gene Autry: His Life and Career*, 41.

89 For more photos of Autry and Trigger's performances, see "Gene Autry and His Many Champions," B Westerns, accessed March 10, 2012 at <http://www.b-westerns.com/hoss-ga.htm>.

crowd that he was imitating Fraser's painting.⁹⁰ Of course, Fraser's original work was a sculpture, and Autry's comment testifies to the many *End of the Trail* images in print.

The popularity of *End of the Trail* largely accounts for a new museum's interest in the original plaster sculpture in the late nineteen-sixties. Although Fraser's statue was heartily welcomed by the Tulare community when it was initially erected, the statue's importance became much greater when residents heard news that Oklahoma City's National Cowboy Heritage Museum wanted the plaster sculpture for themselves.⁹¹ The long-standing monument has a peculiar ability to become meaningful to its community. While a public monument may be initially unable to enact its lofty purpose and embody the heart of the community, its continued presence inscribes the work with meaning.⁹² The community views the monument “as if it was always meant to be” and thus fights against any changes to the sculpture or its removal.⁹³ Surely, this is well demonstrated by the residents of Tulare County, who adamantly protested against the removal of the *End of the Trail*.⁹⁴ The writings of Tulare County residents offer a precious look into the meanings that the sculpture had been given by the community. Primary among these was the notion that Fraser's plaster cast was an “original” art work and should not be replaced by a bronze “copy.” Dean Krakel, curator of the National Cowboy Heritage Museum, had offered to buy the weather-beaten plaster cast from the city and replace it with a bronze copy that would fare better in the outdoor setting.⁹⁵ Residents' battle cry against the loss of the statue was

90 Louchheim, “Most Famous Unknown Sculptor,” 24.

91 Visalia County's great interest in keeping the plaster cast is evidenced in the local article, “Speakers Oppose Trail Trade,” *Visalia Times-Delta*, March 6, 1968, as cited in Dean Krakel's *End of the Trail: The Odyssey of a Statue*, 63-64.

92 Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slave*, 7.

93 Ibid.

94 “Speakers Oppose Trail Trade,” *Visalia Times-Delta*, March 6, 1968, as quoted in Dean Krakel's *End of the Trail: The Odyssey of a Statue*, 63-65.

95 Ibid.

documented in an article in the *Times-Delta* on March 6, 1968 titled “Speakers Oppose 'Trail' Trade.”⁹⁶ One resident wrote that giving up the statue would be akin to “losing an original Rembrandt, a Renoir, a Van Gogh or a Michelangelo and replacing it with a printed copy.”⁹⁷ Utilizing children as a means to appeal to the Tulare officials, the county schools office protested the removal of the plaster cast on the grounds that the county owned so few art objects for school children to visit. Reinforcing this claim, another citizen added that the *End of the Trail* constituted a valuable inheritance to their children.⁹⁸ As a monument in Mooney Grove Park, the *End of the Trail* had come to signify historical closure, the tidy packaging of the nation's historical past into an image replete with the nostalgia for the indigenous way of life. In the decades following its exhibition in San Francisco, the sculpture's residence in Mooney Grove had also attached it to the daily lives of the citizens of Tulare County. The *End of the Trail* was the strange equestrian figure in the background of their picnic photos, conceptually connecting their county with the beginnings of national history, and forming a part of their own individual histories, including their first exposure to art.

The National Cowboy Heritage Museum and the Aesthetics of the Collection

Eventually, residents of Tulare County were persuaded by Dean Krakel and his advocates, who stated that if the plaster cast was not soon replaced by a bronze copy, the original would be forever destroyed by the elements.⁹⁹ On May 30, 1968, Krakel unveiled *End of the Trail* in the National Cowboy Heritage Museum.¹⁰⁰ The dedication ceremony was attended not only by

96 Ibid, 62.

97 Ibid.

98 Ibid, 64.

99 Krakel, *End of the Trail*, 57.

100 Krakel, *End of the Trail*, 69.

museum lovers, but also by Native American administrators and representatives.¹⁰¹ Among these were Commissioner of Indian Affairs Robert L. Bennett as well as the principle chiefs and officials of sixteen Indian tribes.¹⁰² A strange contradiction arises in Krakel's relation of the ceremony's speeches. He states that the speakers “talked of the present-day role of the American Indian as contrasted with the symbolism of defeat embodied in the statue.”¹⁰³ I find it of interest that the day's speeches concerned the limitations of the statue, what the *End of the Trail* was unable to say, and in fact, formally denied. The sculpture does not allude to the important roles of Native Americans in contemporary mainstream American life, as well as their efforts to preserve their indigenous culture.¹⁰⁴ Of course, if the sculpture was such an inadequate depiction of modern Native Americans, why was it that they assembled to honor it?

Art historian Michael Camille writes of a similar occurrence in his study of a “gay icon,” Flandrin's *Figure d' Etude*.¹⁰⁵ Camille believed that the homosexual community's adoption of the image in erotica, fine art, and eventually in the public space of a 1992 Paris Aids poster signified that the community was unaware that the image represented a stereotype of the “inactive, abject and inward turned” homosexual body.¹⁰⁶ While minority groups do sometimes adopt negative stereotypes as imagery, there seems to be a key difference between the adoption of Flandrin's painting and Fraser's sculpture. Camille characterizes his community's adoption of the *Figure d' Etude* as a thoughtless act, an ignorant appropriation of a symbol which speaks negatively of the group that it represents.¹⁰⁷ Conversely, the speeches at the National Cowboy Heritage Museum

101 Ibid.

102 Ibid.

103 Ibid.

104 Ibid.

105 Camille, “The Abject Gaze and the Homosexual Body,” 161.

106 Ibid.

107 Ibid.

demonstrate that the Native American participants were fully aware of the *End of the Trail's* negative reading, its symbolism of defeat. Nevertheless, the statue's role as an object of American history and its status as fine art seemed to obscure the fact that it embodied a negative Native American stereotype, even to the indigenous people attending the event. In addition, its new function as part of a museum collection infused the statue with a totally new meaning.

The *End of the Trail* would grace a new exhibition space within the National Cowboy Heritage Museum comprised of the art works of James Earle Fraser and his wife, Laura Gardin Fraser. John E. Kirkpatrick, an Oklahoma native, made public his plans to fund the Fraser Exhibition during his speech at the *End of the Trail's* dedication ceremony.¹⁰⁸ The placement of the statue within the Fraser collection meant that the work acquired new meanings, and perhaps most importantly, lost old ones. American poet and literary critic Susan Stewart writes that the goal of the collection is to make its viewers forget the individual histories of its objects.¹⁰⁹ The collection itself creates a new context for the works, emphasizing the relationships between objects as opposed to their own particular origins.¹¹⁰ While our study of the *End of the Trail* as a monument demonstrates that the statue is never evaluated individually (one thinks of its neighboring *Pioneer* figures and the varying stories of its patrons), the statue's themes are certainly obscured by the object's placement in the collection as the viewer is particularly attuned to the statue's formal qualities as we compare the art work to other works in Fraser's career. Viewers may ask for example, “Is the *End of the Trail* rendered more realistically than his *Abraham Lincoln*? Which is the greater achievement?” Theorists of collecting, discussing the

108 Krakel, *End of the Trail*, 69.

109 Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1984): 151–152.

110 Stewart, *On Longing*, 165.

importance of the collection often consider it a mode of knowledge, particularly in the case of museums.¹¹¹ The idea that collections erase the individual social histories of its objects and promise a new closed knowledge in the space of the museum is perhaps helpful in understanding Native Americans' decision to honor the sculpture at its dedication ceremony despite their admittance that the work does not provide a model for group identification. The poignant narrative of the Noble Savage was one that contemporary Native American communities wished to relegate to the past, emphasizing in their speeches that present day Native Americans are active members of modern society. The *End of the Trail's* new role in a museum context meant that the work's problematic social history—its connection to world's fairs, Wild West Shows and rodeo performances—was being exchanged for a new role as fine art object, prime example of the work of James Earle Fraser. In addition, the *End of the Trail's* history was being merged with that of its curator, Dean Krakel. The sculpture now had a new origin, the history of its acquisition.¹¹² Upon the completion of the Fraser Exhibition, Krakel installed a looping video detailing his efforts to transport the statue from Mooney Grove Park and restore it in Oklahoma City.¹¹³ In the museum's gift shop, a book by Krakel titled *The End of the Trail*, not only relates the curator's trip to California, but also his close friendship with the artist's widow Laura Gardin Fraser and his promise to create an exhibition in honor of her and her husband. While the objects in the collection were intended to honor the Frasers, they also spoke loudly of the diligent curator who assembled the works, and like a brave pioneer, traveled vast distances and risked his personal reputation to gain a treasure from the Far West.

111 Stewart, *On Longing*, 161.

112 Stewart, *On Longing*, 165.

113 Krakel, *End of the Trail*, 70.

The Beach Boys' *Surfs Up* Album Cover: Protests, Politics and New Age Spirituality

On August 30, 1971, the Beach Boys released a new album intended to demonstrate their burgeoning political consciousness as artists.¹¹⁴ With a song like “Student Demonstration Time,” the Boys pronouncedly steered clear of the light hearted themes which had earned their original success; replacing lyrics about beaches, girls, and good times with those concerning contemporary crises, including the Berkeley Free Speech Movement and the Kent State Shootings. Along with their new political themes came a new style for their album cover; unlike their previous covers this image was neither of psychedelic art nor photos of the band (Fig. 12). Ed Thrasher, head Art Director of Warner Records, recalled his first inspiration for the Beach Boys' *Surfs Up*, “When I was growing up, my dad had the painting, *The End of the Trail* in the room where he and his pals played poker. I found a copy of it in the Warner Bros. Prop Department all those years later and reproduced it for the 'Surf's Up' album cover. Maybe you can figure out why I put the two together....I can't!”¹¹⁵ Thrasher's intuitive decision to use an image of a Native American for an album that concerned student protests and leftist politics was likely due to the contemporary mass media attention surrounding the American Indian Movement. On November 20, 1969, seventy-eight Native American students from a handful of California colleges began a nineteen-month occupation of Alcatraz Island, the infamous abandoned prison in the San Francisco Bay.¹¹⁶ The students demanded ethnic studies programs,

114 Not only their new music, but the Beach Boys' public appearances in 1971 evidence their political commitments. This includes a performance on May 1, 1971 at the Washington Monument, Washington, D.C. during the war rally concert, “The Peace Treaty Celebration Rock Show” and their participation in a benefit concert held on May 11th, 1971 at Syracuse University to support the anti-war movement leaders, Daniel and Philip Berrigan. Keith Badman, *The Beach Boys: The Definitive Diary of America's Greatest Band* (San Francisco: Backbeat Books, 2004): 290.

115 Malcolm C. Searles, “Edward Thrasher Interview,” Beach Boys Back Through the Opera Glass, accessed April 2, 2012, <http://www.pipeline-operaglass.moonfruit.com/#/ed-thrasher/4518015914>.

116 Paul Chaat Smith and Robert Alie, *Like a Hurricane: The Indian Movement from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee*

American Indian faculty slots, and courses that included the contributions of American Indians throughout the nation's history.¹¹⁷ Calling themselves, “Indians of All Tribes,” the students advocated a pan-Indian identity, a concept that had already been taking shape due to the establishment of the American Indian Movement in Minneapolis just a couple years prior and fueled by the popularity of Dee Brown's book, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (1970), which promoted a shared anti-colonial commitment through detailing indigenous people's displacement through forced relocations. The national news attention garnered by the occupation was unprecedented, and constituted a symbolic victory for the group despite the fact that their demands were not met.¹¹⁸ Just a few months prior to the Beach Boys' release of *Surf's Up*, the nearly two year long student protest ended as government officials evicted and arrested the last fifteen occupiers.¹¹⁹

In 1971, the image of the Native American was becoming one of political activism, but more than that, as hippies and young Native American protesters alike donned indigenous apparel, being American Indian was hip, and in Jimi Hendrix's words (who was himself half American Indian), “beautiful.”¹²⁰ Hendrix's words indicate the contemporary redefinition of beauty, and especially, masculinity. Masculine and racial models are always relational, deriving meaning from that which is deemed their opposite. The man of the frontier had been a steady masculine model from the nineteenth century into the nineteen-sixties, sourcing its power from

(New York: New Press, 1996): 2-3.

117 Ibid.

118 Ibid, 127.

119 Ibid.

120 Jimi Hendrix's statement that Native American is “beautiful” is recored in an often repeated quotation by Redbone bandmate Pat Vegas who said that Hendrix encouraged the Native American musicians to form a band. The comment is recounted in James Sullivan's “Twisted Tales: Redbone Brings Native American Pride (and Controversy) to Radio,” *Spinner Magazine*, November 20, 2009, accessed on April 2, 2012, <http://www.spinner.com/2009/11/20/twisted-tales-redbone-bring-native-american-pride-and-controve/>.

the defeated Native American warrior (one thinks of the monumental *Pioneer* paired with *End of the Trail*).¹²¹ The Civil Rights Movement of the nineteen-sixties prompted a greater sensitivity among the dominant culture regarding the nation's abuse of minority groups at home and abroad in Vietnam. The result was a new interest in the anti-hero, the marginalized figure whose identity was not predicated upon the subordination of others.¹²² The Native American was just such a figure, and we can imagine that Fraser's image of the indigenous warrior felt appropriate to Ed Thrasher as he considered cover art for a band wishing to demonstrate their new political identity and aspire to a new hipper masculinity.

The success of the album and popularity of its cover art may account for band manager Jack Rieley's claim that *he* discovered *End of the Trail*, not Ed Thrasher. Similar to Thrasher's account, Rieley stated that he too came upon the image by chance; "I was in a car on Sunset and I noticed an antique shop with that print in the window. I thought it would make such a moving cover, and it tied in with their Brother Records logo."¹²³ Rieley's assertion that the *End of the Trail* would "tie in" with the Beach Boys' record label logo (established in 1966) was more appropriate than the band manager could have known. The Brother Records logo depicts Cyrus Dallin's *Appeal to the Great Spirit* (1909), another print based on an early twentieth-century sculpture (Fig. 13). Dallin's sculpture was part of a four part series, called *The Epic of the Indian*. As the reader may recall, the first of Dallin's series, *Signal of Peace* (1893) was displayed at the Chicago World's Fair, and was one of the Native American themed sculptures which inspired

121 For a discussion of the man of the frontier as masculine model, see R.W. Connell, "The History of Masculinity," *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995): 185-187.

122 This concept of the sixties anti-hero model masculinity is maintained by Tim Hodgdon, *Manhood in the Age of Aquarius: Masculinity in Two Counter-cultural Communities 1965-83* (Phoenix: Arizona State University, 2002).

123 Malcolm C. Searles, "Surf's Up," Beach Boys Back Through the Opera Glass, accessed April 2, 2012, <http://www.pipeline-operaglass.moonfruit.com/#/surfs-up/4517968224>.

Fraser to create his own work. Hence, nearly eighty years later, Dallin's sculptures were again precipitating the *End of the Trail*, this time through the agency of a Beach Boys manager. While Rieley's interest in Fraser's image is partly explained by his wishing to pair it with the band's similarly themed record logo, Rieley does not elaborate on what exactly he finds “meaningful” about either Fraser or Dallin's work. For the answer to that question, we must ask the Beach Boys themselves.

The Beach Boys' initial decision to adopt Native American imagery in the form of their Brother Records logo may be traced to an oft repeated comment by band member, Carl Wilson. Carl thought the Native American image to be appropriate because his grandfather believed there was a spiritual Indian “guide” who watched over brothers Carl, Brian, and Dennis from “the other side.”¹²⁴ The Wilson family's belief in Indian ghosts as spiritual guides seems typical of nineteen-sixties New Age spirituality. The term New Age has been appropriately deemed not so much a religion as a buzzword that gained popularity in Europe and America in the nineteen-eighties, and has its most immediate roots in the counterculture of the nineteen-sixties.¹²⁵ New Age adherents do not follow any one specific religious doctrine, but instead sample from many different religious traditions, choosing ethics, gurus, and writings which appear the most beneficial and fitting to the individual.¹²⁶ If the New Agers do abide by one common belief it is that spiritual property should be available to all, particularly in the case of indigenous traditions,

124 While the author was unable to discover the original interview in which Carl Wilson discussed the Brother Records logo, either the truth of his quotation or its equally relevant widespread perpetuation in pop culture myth is evidenced by its inclusion in numerous Beach Boys websites, see “Part 1,” Beach Boys: I Know There’s an Answer, accessed April 2, 2012, <http://www.mountvernonandfairway.de/answer3.htm>.

125 Wouter J. Hanegraaff, “New Age Religion,” in Linda Woodhead, ed., *Religions in the Modern World: Traditions and Transformations* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002): 249.

126 Michael York, *Historical Dictionary of New Age Movements* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2004): 3.

which are frequently appropriated by New Age spiritualists.¹²⁷ Not surprisingly, indigenous communities do not often feel the same way. There are four main arguments that Native Americans have against New Age appropriations; spiritual practices are sold to anybody who can pay; a practitioner becomes a fast “expert” after a single workshop or course; practices are mixed with other religions; indigenous traditions are practiced out of context.¹²⁸ Like the Beatles, the Beach Boys' New Age roots are two-pronged. First, they were surely aware of the indigenous traditions which lay claim to the origin of psychedelic rock itself. The famous Native American peyote ceremonies held by the first psychedelic rockers at the rural Red Dog Saloon in Virginia City, Nevada, were influential for later psychedelic rock albums, particularly the Beach Boys' *Pet Sounds* (1966).¹²⁹ Secondly, the Beach boys placed their faith in the teachings of a guru turned pop-icon, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi.¹³⁰ A spiritual guide to super stars, the teachings of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi were lambasted in a 1967 *New York Times* article which ridiculed the Indian guru's proposal that transcendental meditation and its accompanying “self realization” could be achieved in a half hour, quite perfect for a busy rock band's schedule.¹³¹ In addition, the *Times* article criticized the Indian guru's teachings for failing to include asceticism and penance, Hindu teachings that are integral to the spiritual “self realization” that Maharishi Mahesh Yogi was

127 Ibid, 5–6.

128 Suzanne Owen, *The Appropriation of Native American Spirituality* (London; New York: Continuum, 2008): 90.

129 The Red Dog rockers contextualized within the counter-culture movement is discussed in Barry Miles' *Hippie* (New York: Stirling, 2004): 28.

For more on *Pet Sounds*' connection to earlier psychedelic rock albums, see Jim DeRogatis, *Turn on Your Mind: Four Decades of Psychedelic Rock* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corp, 2003): 9.

130 Eugene V. Gallagher and W. Michael Ashcraft, *Introduction to New and Alternative Religions in America* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2006): 137.

131 “Mystics, Soothsayer for Everyman,” *New York Times*, Oct 20, 1967, accessed April 2, 2012, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,902143,00.html>.

advocating.¹³² The Beach Boys' guru selected religious teachings as if ordering from a spiritual menu, and the band did the same.¹³³ It would seem that the Beach Boys' disinterest in spiritual context extended to artistic context, as their stories concerning the appropriation of Dallin's and Fraser's images have nothing to do with an interest in the art works' histories, but rather revolve around the young men's sense of personal connection to the images. Carl Wilson found meaning in *Appeal to the Great Spirit* because it recalled his grandfather's belief in an American Indian “guardian angel” and Ed Thrasher selected the *End of the Trail* because it was an art work that he remembered from his childhood home. Yet these weren't album covers and record labels to be solely exhibited in the privacy of the band's homes. They were potent images, purposely selected for their ability to communicate the band's identity to a national and international audience. Through adopting the *End of the Trail* as their album cover, the Beach Boys could connect themselves to the politically conscious Native American community and demonstrate that songs like “Student Demonstration Time” were not just intended for Euro-American listeners. Fraser's Native American image meant everything that the Beach Boys wanted it to mean precisely because they fused it with their own lyrics, branding, and sound. Transformed into a painted image and paired with a bronze plaque that read, *Surf's Up*, the art work turned album cover took on new meanings, alluding to the origins of psychedelic rock, political activism, new age spirituality, and of course, the Beach Boys themselves. The ability of the new album's iconic image to signify the Beach Boys was best evidenced just one year later with the release of the group America's “Homecoming” album and accompanying cover art (1972). Behind the

132 Ibid.

133 The Beach Boys hoped to help spread the teachings of Maharishi through a seventeen day tour with the guru in May of 1968, opening their concerts with a lecture lead by the spiritual leader. Gaines, Steve. *Heroes and Villains: The True Story of the Beach Boys* (New York: Da Capo Press, Inc, 1995): 197.

prominent photo of the three America band mates is a sunlit mountain peak and the small silhouetted image of *End of the Trail*, an indication of the band's indebtedness to the musical influence of the Beach Boys and the *Surf's Up* album in particular.

Roy Lichtenstein, Fritz Scholder and The End of the Trail as Postmodern Art

In an interview concerning his own *End of the Trail* paintings (Figs. 14-15), Roy Lichtenstein made a rather ambiguous statement that has been variously interpreted, stating that the work was the “first conscious cliché.”¹³⁴ Did the artist mean that Fraser's original *End of the Trail* inaugurated the image of the defeated American Indian as an artistic cliché? Or, was the artist referring to his own painting as the first of many works which ironically embrace clichés as a theme? Both interpretations of Lichtenstein's statement are easy to evidence. Fraser's sculpture *did* popularize the image of the defeated and vanished American Indian and Lichtenstein's pop art revision of Fraser's work was the first of a series of paintings by the artist with cliché Native American costuming, props, and poses. The exhibition “Roy Lichtenstein: American Indian Encounters” premiered at the Montclair Art Museum of New Jersey on October 16, 2005, the first of a five city tour that would end in April of 2007.¹³⁵ The works in the Lichtenstein show may be traced to two separate periods in the artist's career in which he explored Native American themes, the first occurring in the fifties and the second nearly two decades later.¹³⁶

134 In her article, Grace Glueck interprets Lichtenstein's statement as the artist's own “conscious cliché.” See Glueck, “A Pop Artist's Fascination with the First Americans,” *New York Times*, December 23, 2005, accessed April 1, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/12/23/arts/design/23lich.html?pagewanted=all>. Gail Stavitsky maintains in her essay that Lichtenstein recognized Fraser's original work as the “first conscious cliché.” See Stavitsky, *American Indian Encounters* (Rutgers Univ. Press, 2005): 15.

135 Glueck, “A Pop Artist's Fascination.”

136 Stavitsky, *American Indian Encounters*, 10.

The *End of the Trail* (1952) stems from Lichtenstein's first artistic fascination with Native American subjects.¹³⁷ Inspired by his readings about George Catlin and his *Vanishing Race* publication, Lichtenstein decided to create paintings based on famous American Indian themed art works of the nineteenth century, including photographs taken by Catlin, paintings by Albert Bierstadt, and the sculptures of Frederick Remington and James Earle Fraser.¹³⁸ Lichtenstein's second wave of Native American paintings were created in the seventies when the artist lived in Southampton, NY, nearby a Shinnecock Indian reservation where he and his wife Dorothy attended Indian pow wows.¹³⁹ Symptomatic of New Age spiritualism, the Lichtensteins' appropriation of "exotic" Native American traditions should sound familiar by now. The artist's two different periods of American Indian themed works are demarcated by a difference in style; while the fifties paintings are Cubist abstractions with traces of pop art, the later paintings are more securely in the artist's signature pop art style.¹⁴⁰ Works from both periods testify to Lichtenstein's investigation of Indian clichés as imagery. While the fifties paintings utilize famous images from paintings, photographs and sculptures to emphasize the origination of such clichés, the seventies works haphazardly mix clothing, traditions and symbols from various tribes in an effort to create the quintessential cliché image of the generic Native American devoid of specific tribal affiliation. Lichtenstein stated that his later images are comprised of "a mixture of every kind of Indian design from Northwest Indians to Plains Indians to Pueblo. They are no particular tribe of Indians....anything that I could think of that was 'Indian' got into them....the cliché of the Indian got into them."¹⁴¹ Despite Lichtenstein's admission that his work

137 Ibid.

138 Ibid.

139 Ibid.

140 Glueck, "A Pop Artist's Fascination,"

141 Stavitsky, *American Indian Encounters*, 15.

purposefully incorporates clichés, the artist also paradoxically stated that his paintings depicted the “real” Native American as if for the “first time.”¹⁴² Just how is it that the stereotypical image, the cliché, can also purport to be real and true?

Lichtenstein's paradoxical statement was echoed by the Native American artist, Fritz Scholder, whose major retrospective exhibition of Native American themed art premiered just three years after Lichtenstein's “American Indian Encounters” show. Titled “Fritz Scholder: Indian/Not Indian” the exhibition was held concurrently at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington D.C. and the George Gustav Heye Center in New York City from November 2008 to August 2009. Like Lichtenstein, Scholder's interviews record the artist stating that his art captures Native American stereotypes (perhaps none as controversially as 1969's *Indian with a Beer Can*) while simultaneously depicting his people truthfully. Scholder famously stated that his paintings show Native Americans as “real not red.”¹⁴³ Despite the similar statements spoken by Lichtenstein and Scholder concerning their pursuit of truth and acknowledgement of cliché, the artists' works seem to say very different things. To my mind, the best way to investigate these differences is by examining a subject that both artists have in common: the *End of the Trail*.

Roy Lichtenstein painted two works entitled *End of the Trail* in 1952—one in oil paint and the other a mixed media work of guache, watercolor and crayon—both of which bear little resemblance to Fraser's original image. The iconic weary drooping head of horse and rider are disregarded, as well as the tightly drawn in hooves of the horse. Both riders are a conglomeration

142 Stavitsky, *American Indian Encounters*, 10.

143 For more on Fritz Scholder's often repeated quotation and his own comments on his paintings' subject matter and style, see Werner Gunderscheimer, “Real Not Red: The Indian in the Art of Fritz Scholder,” *Fritz Scholder: Paintings* (Tucson, AZ: Nazraeli Press, 2001).

of abstracted geometric forms, solid blocks of color comprise their bodies and are intermittently outlined by rows of triangles which recall the feathered silhouette of the Plains Indian headdress. In true Cubist fashion, the mixed media work depicts a horse seen from multiple angles at once; his head and rear are in frontal view while his flank remains in profile. The rider appears to be falling from atop the horse, his legs splayed in the air and his long spear comically bent and broken at the tip. By comparison, the oil painting seems truer to Fraser's original as the rider remains atop his horse and holds his spear intact. It would seem that Lichtenstein's multiple-angled images prompt the viewer to contrast his work with the tradition of strict profile views of Fraser's image in printed media. While Lichtenstein's work strays far from Fraser's original source material, its multiple angles allow for a viewing experience that partially simulates the experience of seeing a sculpture in the round, thus deviating from the long tradition of printed media depicting a strictly two-dimensional silhouetted *End of the Trail*.

Unlike Lichtenstein's work, Fritz Scholder's *End of the Trail* paintings retain the signature pose of Fraser's horse and rider (Figs. 16-17). Scholder's *End of the Trail* (1970) depicts the unmistakable equestrian pair in a nearly profile view that allows the viewer to see more of the frontal aspects of the horse and rider than the typical strictly profile image in print. While the bright hues and blocks of matte color recall Lichtenstein's paintings, the streaks of viscous paint create an impression of spontaneity akin to abstract expressionist works. While Lichtenstein's rider looks harmlessly cartoon-like, Scholder's seems monstrous and terrifying; the bulbous nose, large jaw, and disproportionately elongated limbs make the figure appear grotesque and disturbing. Returning to Fraser's image one year later, Scholder created a new series of paintings that overtly copy the popular print. Scholder's schematic silhouette of the horse and rider against a fiery sky he humorously titled *Indian Cliché* (1971).

The principle difference between Scholder's *End of the Trail* images and Lichtenstein's is that the former artist retains a clear visual trace of Fraser's original work while the latter artist does not. Lichtenstein's decision to move away from the defeated cliché pose of the equestrian pair meant that his work relied on its title to make the necessary historical connection between Fraser's work and his own. Contextualized within Lichtenstein's series of American Indian themed paintings, the *End of the Trail* was one of many nineteenth-century American art works that Lichtenstein transformed into post-modern art. As demonstrated by the Native American themed art works of the Chicago and San Francisco World's Fairs, the sculptures and paintings of the nineteenth and early twentieth century were truly American in subject matter, but were distinctly European in style. When Lichtenstein stated that he was painting the Indian as if “for the first time” he was surely demonstrating his awareness that he was doing something new; uniting uniquely American themes with a new American artistic style, Lichtenstein's Native American series was über American art.

Scholder's preservation of the sculpture's signature horse and rider pose incites a formal connection between the original work and the contemporary one which in turn prompts the viewer to compare their different meanings. This is particularly the case with Scholder's *Indian Cliché*, a painting that is clearly informed by several of Sol Lewitt's famous “Sentences on Conceptual Art.”¹⁴⁴ Sol Lewitt writes that “All ideas are art if they are concerned with art and fall within the conventions of art. Successful art changes our understanding of the conventions by altering our perceptions.”¹⁴⁵ By very nearly copying typical printed imagery of Fraser's *End of the Trail*, Scholder's *Indian Cliché* is a rather mundane painting and is clearly not supposed to

144 Sol Lewitt, “Sentences on Conceptual Art,” first published in *O-9*, New York (1969) and *Art-Language*, Coventry (May 1969): 11.

145 Ibid.

astound audiences by its beauty. *Indian Cliché* is not just about an idea, it *is* an idea which plays out when the viewer recognizes the popular image and then notices its new title. By creating a banal painting that fails to formally astound its viewers, and by successfully causing its viewers to understand Fraser's *End of the Trail* as indeed cliché, Scholder's art conforms to Sol Lewitt's conceptual art standards.

Like Lichtenstein, Scholder wrote that his works depicted Native Americans in a novel, truthful way while nevertheless incorporating clichés.¹⁴⁶ While Lichtenstein self-consciously utilized general Native American stereotypes to depict schematized Indians replete with faces adorned in war paint and costuming reminiscent of feathered Plains Indian garb, his decision not to duplicate the pose of Fraser's horse and rider demonstrates that he did not interrogate Fraser's image itself as a cliché. Scholder's labeling of his *End of the Trail* image as “Indian Cliché” demonstrates the artist's understanding that Fraser's work perpetuates American Indian stereotypes, yet how does his work also depict American Indians truthfully? One could argue that prompting the viewer to acknowledge a cliché is a form of truth telling. Beyond this, Scholder's own mixed Native American and European ancestry allows for the recognition that his art work itself testifies against the stereotypical image of the defeated Native American.¹⁴⁷ It is useful to note that Lichtenstein's and Scholder's uncannily similar remarks regarding their shared interest in dually depicting “truth” and “cliché” are never spoken as if the two terms are at odds. Clichés are defined by their very inability to acknowledge change, to incorporate new meanings into themselves, instead reiterating the same hackneyed information to changing audiences. Conversely, a “truthful” or realistic depiction resists clichés by acknowledging particularity and

146 Gunderscheimer, “Real Not Red,” 5.

147 Ibid.

difference. The very perseverance of clichés within visual culture demonstrates that our seeing is informed by clichés. Hence, when Lichtenstein and Scholder aspired to paradoxically embrace truthfulness and clichés, they were perhaps acknowledging that our own visual understanding of the world operates not as if the two terms are polarized, but rather in a constant feedback loop in which clichés operate as truth until they are acknowledged as stereotype and even the most particularized “truthful” depictions, if popularized, are subject to reproductions which will inevitably result in cliché. Hence, the cliché is chiefly born through the passing of time, and the new ideologies which define each successive generation. In another note concerning the rules of conceptual art, Sol Lewitt writes that “One usually understands the art of the past by applying the convention of the present, thus misunderstanding the art of the past. The conventions of art are altered by works of art.”¹⁴⁸ While the *End of the Trail* surely was not the first image of an idealized defeated Native American, and could easily be deemed cliché at its inception, the collective notion of “truthfulness” and sincerity that attenuated its display in the first half of the twentieth century was fading in the last half as audiences were far more sensitive to its invocation of a racial stereotype than its nostalgic commemoration of the American frontier and romanticized longing for a pre-industrial way of life.

Conclusion:

In a recent conversation with a colleague, I clumsily mimed the *End of the Trail* with my own body in an unsuccessful effort to communicate my thesis topic which culminated in a far simpler Google image search. Upon seeing the *End of the Trail*, my colleague responded, “Yes! I’ve seen that before! It’s that ridiculous picture that’s always on door mats and key chains

¹⁴⁸ Lewitt, “Sentences on Conceptual Art,” 11.

advertised in those Western home magazines.” An avid horse rider, my friend is often bombarded with Wild West themed junk mail. After my briefly explaining to her the derivation of the image, and its connection to world's fairs, public monuments, and the nostalgic commemoration of the frontier, my friend's reaction surprised me. She said, “Oh! I didn't know that it was originally art work, or that it was meant to be taken *seriously*. Wow, I'll never think of it as silly again.” I quickly responded that I had not meant to so resolutely change her opinion, and that couldn't the *End of the Trail* be both ridiculous and meaningful at the same time? She promptly responded in the negative, stating that the image really had to be one way or the other.

My friend's statement reminds me of the argument so often attenuating attacks against kitsch art. The nature of kitsch and the manner in which it is defined seems important to the *End of the Trail* as it has been arguably the primary vehicle in which the image has circulated throughout the last century. Kitsch art is derided for several reasons, all of which having to do with the way that it allegedly cheapens meaning. It is commonly labeled as manipulative and unabashedly simplistic, seeking to stir up sentimental feelings amongst its audiences through presenting visual information in the most formulaic manner.¹⁴⁹ Kitsch appeals to our sense of common experiences, and does not seek to challenge the status quo. While kitsch is typically thought to be cheap, miniature, and mass-produced, it can also be expensive, large, art works (one thinks of the paintings of Thomas Kinkade or Jeff Koons' porcelain animals). Bearing this in mind, the *End of the Trail* as an eighteen-foot plaster cast may have been kitsch from quite nearly the beginning. The horse and rider's weary, defeated pose is obviously calculated to inspire our sympathy. While one need only briefly survey the work of photographer Richard

149 Robert Solomon, “On Kitsch and Sentimentality,” *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 49 (Winter 1991): 1-14.

Misrach to realize that post-modern taste appreciates the shock-value of decay and destruction in telling a tragic story, the late nineteenth-century visual understanding of tragedy is bound up in aesthetic beauty. The problem with *End of the Trail's* expertly sculpted musculature and carefully crafted pose is the implication that we need a beautiful image in order to mourn the lost indigenous traditions and customs of a real group of people. Moreover, the defensibility of our nostalgic mourning for the Noble Savage is open to debate, as it is complicated by the dominant culture's plethora of Plains Indian warrior imagery and lack of images depicting contemporary American Indians.¹⁵⁰ Must our nostalgic meditation upon the lost traditions of indigenous societies be accompanied by an unwillingness to recognize assimilated Native Americans?

The difficulty of answering such a question lies at the heart of the primary distinction between the *End of the Trail's* miniature and gigantic forms, its popularity in the former and its rarity in the latter. In attempting to explain the importance of gigantic versus miniature objects, Susan Stewart interrogates the different social meanings that each seems naturally capable of expressing.¹⁵¹ She writes, "We find the miniature at the origin of private, individual history, but we find the gigantic at the origin of public and natural history."¹⁵² It would seem that the *End of the Trail's* role as a gigantic monument, capable of attracting the attention of mass audiences, never surpassed its early exhibition at the Panama Pacific Exhibition of 1915. The public monuments that followed in the next several decades were erected in the most rural, out of the way places. Waupun Wisconsin's town website ironically boasts that their *End of the Trail* bronze

150 For more on the proliferation of Plains Indian warrior imagery in America, see Fritz Scholder's essay and book of photographs titled *Indian Kitsch: The Use and Misuse of Indian Images* (Flagstaff, AZ: Northland Press, 1979).

151 Stewart, *On Longing*, 71.

152 Ibid.

monument attracts hundreds of visitors each year.¹⁵³ Even when Fraser's original plaster cast was brought to Oklahoma City, it was not erected in a popular park or civic center, but instead was sequestered within the museum. In contrast, the *End of the Trail's* existence in printed media and as small curio items has garnered widespread attention. Following Stewart's logic, it would seem that Fraser's monumental sculpture was once well adapted to communicate public history, but could not keep pace with the changing ideologies of the twentieth century, inhibiting its ability to communicate public history on the same grand scale. In discussing the *End of the Trail* with others, I have found that people either like it or hate it. Or in the case of my colleague, demonstrate both feelings in quick succession, but never at the same time. The issue seems to be not with the sculpture itself as much as with our inability to appreciate its nostalgic nineteenth-century sentiment and to admit its propensity for cliché and its kitsch sensibility. The problem of resolving the tension between the work's hackneyed message of Native American defeat with its ability to evoke sympathy for its subject and appreciation for its form was well demonstrated by the speeches uttered by American Indian leaders whose honorable recognition of Fraser's statue into the National Cowboy Hall of Fame was not without its hurdles. It would seem that the difficulty of reconciling the work's meanings makes for a messy, unclear message which is further complicated by its alleged racial stereotyping and thus deemed inappropriate for placement in densely populated urban spaces with higher subjection to public scrutiny (we do well to remember that the monument was never erected in San Francisco's Presidio). This conceptual work is more easily accomplished by the individual consumer, who purchases the *End of the Trail* print and either appreciates the tension between its sincerity and sentimentality,

153 This quote can be found on the town website, "City of Sculptures," Waupun, WI, accessed April 2, 2012, <http://www.waupun-wisconsin.com/waupun-sculptures-end-of-trail.htm>.

or only recognizes the former.

The power of the Native American figure in art is often found in its ability to connect the young nation to an immemorial past. Paradoxically, the indigenous people whose literal rights as citizens are often attenuated, provide conceptual legitimacy to the nation as a whole. Fraser's image of the defeated American Indian warrior binds us to time immemorial only to assert that this chapter in the country's history is closed. While we can never return to the past, the image as a potent and mobile symbol promises to transfer the indigenous people's cherished values to new contexts. In this manner, the *End of the Trail* at the Panama Pacific Exposition could provide a site for meditation upon the simple, indigenous way of life of our country's first inhabitants just as our nation was emerging as a global power, facilitating the feat of the Panama Canal and considering participation in the First World War. As a monument, the statue promised to connect its rural sites to a distant past that palimpsest-like, could visually obscure the ugly manifestations of the post-industrial world. While the *End of the Trail* monuments are dwarfed by the Waupun Correctional Facility, the Redwood Highway, and the large scale corporate agricultural industry of California's Central Valley, they nevertheless provide a welcome oasis for park visitors seeking momentary escape from the present and reflection upon an admittedly idealized past. Despite our culture's obvious need for prisons, highways, and corporate agriculture, these are not the things that the culture tells itself that it values. The *End of the Trail* monuments' prominence on city government websites and local tourist blogs broadcast the shared cultural notion that the town of Waupun, and the counties of Del Norte and Tulare value local and national history, and above all, art.

The nineteen-sixties appropriation of Native American religious traditions by New Agers and psychedelic rockers alike meant that the *End of the Trail's* 1971 manifestation as a Beach

Boys album cover could not be accomplished without new meanings becoming attached to the art work itself. With the placement of the bronze “Surf’s Up” title above *End of the Trail*, Fraser’s image became synonymous with the band and the contemporary political climate. The powerful political voice of the American Indian Movement in the media meant that Native American costuming, imagery, and traditions were being widely popularized at the very moment that indigenous American political activists were intensely criticizing its appropriation.¹⁵⁴ The scrutiny of Native American themes in the nation’s visual culture is well evidenced by the work of Fritz Scholder, whose *End of the Trail* paintings contest the cliché American nostalgia for the pure Native American. As compared to Roy Lichtenstein’s *End of the Trail* paintings, which strive for their own purity of uniquely American theme and style, Scholder’s paintings expose the late nineteenth-century image’s inability to picture assimilation. Our unwillingness to compromise our national myth of the untouched frontier and the purity of the Noble Savage is a persistent phenomenon, daily evidenced by the *End of the Trail* figures dangling from earrings, engraved within belt buckles and in the most distastefully sentimental or successfully poignant manifestation, marking the passage of time through its popular adornment on clocks.

154 For an historical account of the American Indian Movements’ legal attempts to curtail the appropriation of specific tribes’ customs and traditions, see Owen, *The Appropriation of Native American Spirituality*.



Fig. 1. *End of the Trail* bookends.



Fig. 2. James Earle Fraser, *End of the Trail*, 1915, plaster sculpture. National Cowboy Heritage Museum, Oklahoma City.



Fig. 3. Cyrus E Dallin, Signal of Peace, 1893, bronze sculpture. Lincoln Park, Chicago.



Fig. 4. Alexander Phimister Proctor. Cowboy, 1893, plaster sculpture. Columbian Exposition, Chicago, Illinois.



Fig. 5. Frederick Remington, Bronco Buster, 1895, bronze statuette. Lyndon B. Johnson Library and Museum, Austin, Texas.



"THE AMERICAN PIONEER"—BY SOLON BORGLUM

Fig. 6. Solon Borglum, *The American Pioneer*, 1915, plaster sculpture. Mooney Grove Park, Visalia, California.



Fig. 7. James Earle Fraser. *End of the Trail*, 1929, bronze sculpture. Waupun, Wisconsin.



Fig. 8. Clarence Shaler. *The Pioneers*, late 1930s, bronze sculpture. Waupun, Wisconsin.



Fig. 9. *End of the Trail Postcard*, 1940s. Trees of Mystery, Redwood Highway.



Fig. 10. Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox. Trees of Mystery, Redwood Highway.



Fig. 11. Gene Autry Performing End of the Trail.



Fig. 12. *Beach Boys' Surf's Up* album cover (1971).



Fig. 13. The Beach Boys' Brother Records Logo.



Fig. 14. Roy Lichtenstein, *End of the Trail*, 1952, oil painting on canvas. Private collection estate of Roy Lichtenstein.



Fig. 15. Roy Lichtenstein, *End of the Trail*, 1952, gouache, watercolor, crayon on paper. Private collection estate of Roy Lichtenstein.



Fig. 16. Fritz Scholder, *End of the Trail*, 1970, oil painting on canvas.



Fig. 17. Fritz Scholder, *Indian Cliché*, lithograph. Rockwell Museum of Art, Corning, New York.