

James Earl Fraser's *The End of the Trail*:
Affect and the Persistence of an Iconic Indian Image

Wendy L. Butler

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ABSTRACT

James Earl Fraser's *The End of the Trail*: Affect and the Persistence of an Iconic Indian Image

Wendy L. Butler

This thesis considers why James Earl Fraser's equestrian sculpture, *The End of the Trail*, has endured and become iconic within North American popular culture. It argues that the persistence of Fraser's image of the vanishing race has primarily resulted from its affective resonance, for the image has the capacity to evoke emotion in especially strong ways. The thesis explores the original sculpture and its afterimage within three distinct historical contexts in order to demonstrate the work's affective power at different moments in time. These historical contexts including the work's exhibition at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in 1915, the period of endless appropriation and reuse by souvenir industries, which extends to the current day, and the contemporary context of Native American artistic re-appropriation and critique. The emotional concepts of sympathy and pity inform the first section's historical discussion of James Earl Fraser and the work's exhibition at the world fair in 1915; the notions of sentimentality and historical distance are used to analyze the kitsch aesthetic in relation to "End of the Trail" souvenir objects in the second section. The final section examines how the contemporary Aboriginal artists James Luna, Terrance Houle, and Kent Monkman have all critiqued and re-conceptualized Fraser's *The End of the Trail* within their own artistic re-interpretations. This section considers how strategies of postmodern parody, re-enactment, and historical revisionism have enabled these contemporary Aboriginal artists to re-appropriate this iconic Indian image for their own intents and purposes.

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In 1915, James Earl Fraser's monumental equestrian sculpture, *The End of the Trail*, was exhibited at the renowned Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco (Fig. 1). The work's exposure at this world fair led to its attainment of iconic status as a tremendous outpouring of "End of the Trail" souvenir objects were produced during the event and have continued to be produced to the current day. The production and dissemination of "End of the Trail" souvenir objects have been uniquely persistent and unimpeded since the early twentieth-century; yet recently, contemporary Aboriginal artists have begun to critique, re-interpret, and re-appropriate this iconic sculpted work and its afterimage for their own purposes.

Why has the image of Fraser's vanquished Indian warrior persisted and become omnipresent within North American visual culture? Why has this *particular image*, epitomized by Native American defeat and despondency, acquired such widespread popularity and become subject to an "endless trail" of reproductions and appropriations?¹ This thesis argues that the persistence of Fraser's image of the vanishing race has primarily resulted from its affective intensity, for the image has the capacity to evoke emotion in especially strong ways. The goal of this thesis is to analyze *how* this symbolic

¹ Although there are many different terms used to refer to the Aboriginal population of North America, this thesis employs the term "Native American" to identify the historical Aboriginal population referenced by Fraser's work, because the sculpture and its exhibition history were confined to the territory now known as the United States. According to Dr. Sherry Farrell Racette, an expert in Native studies, the terms "Native American" and "American Indian" are the two terms preferred by the Aboriginal people who occupy territory in the current United States; I have chosen to adopt the term "Native American" (in preference to "American Indian") in order to establish a clear distinction between the actual Aboriginal people of the U.S. and the "Indian images," produced by Euro-American colonial powers. The final section of the thesis employs the term "Aboriginal" to refer collectively to the three contemporary artists discussed as Terrance Houle and Kent Monkman identify themselves as "First Nations" individuals based within Canada and James Luna refers to himself as a "Luiseño Indian" and is based within the United States.

Indian image has elicited different kinds of affective responses at different historical moments.

Although the notion of “affect” is an ambiguous and ultimately “abstract” term that has produced its own body of critical writing and analysis known as “affect studies,” dominated by the work of Deleuze, this thesis adopts the definition of the term “affect” proposed by Eric Shouse in his 2005 article “Feeling, Emotion, Affect.” According to Shouse, affect can be understood as “a non-conscious experience of intensity” and “a moment of unformed and unstructured potential.”² Shouse indicates that affect is epitomized by this element of intensity or “intensities” which operate at an unconscious level and “because affect is transmittable [...] it is potentially [...] a powerful social force.”³ In the context of this study, this element of affect is identified as being located within James Earl Fraser’s sculpture; it is the work of art itself that this thesis argues has the capacity to produce and elicit powerful emotional responses.

While Fraser’s work is interpreted as the artistic object within which affect is situated, “emotions” and “emotional responses” are instead viewed as the products of *The End of the Trail*’s affective power and intensity. In contrast to affect, “emotion” and “emotional responses” are understood as being socially-produced and conditioned by the experiences that certain groups of people have collectively undergone and mutually shared.⁴ Thus, when this thesis refers to “Native American,” “Aboriginal,” or “colonial” emotions and affective responses, it is not attempting to categorize or stereotype the emotions discussed, but rather to suggest that the socially-conditioned emotional

² Eric Shouse, “Feeling, Emotion, Affect,” *M/C Journal* 8.6 (2005), <http://journal.media-culture.org.au/0512/03-shouse.php>: 1.

³ *Ibid.*: 3.

⁴ *Ibid.*: 1.

responses of colonized Aboriginal people and Euro-American colonizers to Fraser's work have adhered to recognizably distinct patterns on account of the different social and political realities encountered of each group.

This thesis traces the circulation of Fraser's iconic Native American image in three distinct historical contexts, which include the work's exhibition at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in 1915, the period of endless appropriation and reuse by souvenir industries, which extends to the current day, and the contemporary context of Aboriginal artistic re-appropriation and critique. The first section examines how historical accounts of the artist, his memoirs, and the work's exhibition at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition collectively aspired to provoke colonial emotional responses of sympathy for the plight of Native American people as a "vanishing race." This section also argues that the extent of this "sympathy" for Native American people was inevitably limited as Fraser's work legitimized the vanishing race discourse and substantiated the propositions of Manifest Destiny. The second section is focused upon kitschy souvenir objects and argues that such images represent a shift from the ambiguous concept of sympathy to the even more abstract and removed emotional terrain of sentimentality which facilitates the creation of historical distance and emotional detachment. The final section of this thesis considers how the contemporary Aboriginal artists Terrance Houle, James Luna, and Kent Monkman are not only reclaiming and re-appropriating this image of the vanishing race but also critiquing and re-configuring the presumed associations of sympathy and sentimentality attributed to the work. As opposed to being replicated as an iconic emblem of Native American weakness and defeat, Fraser's sculpture is used as the object of critique that enables contemporary Aboriginal

artists to extend beyond stereotypes and to suggest new and alternative ways of seeing Native American and/or First Nations people.

Fraser's work has been interpreted as a visual manifestation and incarnation of the discourse of the vanishing race since its inception. Many Euro-American artists, like Fraser, responded directly to this ethnographic discourse and consequently legitimized its predictions of Native American disappearance by creating emotionally-laden, nostalgic and romantic Indian images that strategically confined Aboriginal people to the realm of the past. As Steven Conn asserts, in countless colonial representations devoted to the vanishing race theme:

we can watch Native Americans move from the realm of history, to natural history and ethnography, and finally to extinction and elegy... Viewing images like these, and countless others, nineteenth-century Americans could almost literally watch Native Americans disappear from the realm of history and enter the more inchoate world of the past.⁵

Rather than coming to the aid of the displaced Native American population when evictions and land removals reached their peak in the nineteenth-century, Euro-American colonial powers simply began to assume that Native Americans were destined to vanish while colonial artists consequently began to cast them as a symbolically doomed group of people within Indian images.

Such colonial Indian images, which have visually manifested a reductive and stereotypical conception of Aboriginal people for centuries, have a long history of being used to appeal to colonial desires, emotions, and expectations. In exploring that appeal, I will use the term "Indian image" because I intend to emphasize that like the concept of the Indian itself, Fraser's Indian image of the vanishing race is essentially an imaginary

⁵ Steven Conn, *History's Shadow: Native Americans and Historical Consciousness in the Nineteenth-Century* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 35.

and fabricated colonial representation that does not accurately reflect or encompass the realities of colonial history or contemporary Aboriginal existence.

According to many Aboriginal thinkers, the reduction and confinement of Native American people to a “vanishing race,” destined to expire as a result of colonization, has essentially amounted to an act of theft. Just as Euro-American colonists systematically usurped land and territory from Aboriginal people, so too have they effectively stolen Aboriginal identity. As “Randy Fred, a member of the Tseshaht First Nation in British Columbia concluded in his foreword to the *Imaginary Indian*, ‘Native people live within a world of imagery that isn’t their own.’”⁶ This thesis adopts the contemporary Aboriginal perspective that the Indian image is a colonial appropriation carried out by those who ultimately monopolized the right to represent Native American and First Nations people for centuries.

The concepts of “appropriation” and its variant “re-appropriation” are integral to this thesis, where appropriation is understood as the act of borrowing and re-using a recognizable Indian image without the express consent of the work’s subject(s) or artistic creator(s), and re-appropriation is considered to be the act of reclaiming that which has thus been alienated. Each of the text’s three sections examines a different context or instance of these processes, as James Earl Fraser’s iconic image of *The End of the Trail*—itself an appropriation of Aboriginal identity—has become subject to endless appropriation by popular culture in the twentieth-century and subsequent re-appropriation by contemporary Aboriginal artists in the twenty-first century.

⁶ Ute Lischke and David T. McNab, “Introduction,” *Walking a Tightrope: Aboriginal People and their Representations*. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2005, 1.

Colonial gestures of appropriation have been thoroughly studied by scholars, such as Daniel Francis and Robert F. Berkhofer, who have effectively demonstrated that the colonial dominance of the Indian image constituted an act of theft of identity. These studies have not fully explored how such appropriations have functioned in relation to affect, however.⁷ As an iconic Indian image that primarily derives its strength from its emotive appeal, *The End of the Trail* employs the Native American as primary subject, yet clearly obfuscates the emotions and experiences of Native American people during the early twentieth-century. In other words, it is crucial to recognize that *The End of the Trail* was produced by a non-Native artist and intended for non-Native consumption from its inception. This thesis also draws a pivotal distinction between Fraser's sculpture as the original colonial "Indian image" and the subsequent appropriations or "afterimages" that have been produced in its wake. While the original work and its afterimage are mutually characterized by affective intensity, it is the drastically-simplified, two-dimensional "afterimage" that has truly become iconic within North American visual culture.

It is my hope that this thesis will not only lead its readers to re-examine the emotionally-laden content of Fraser's iconic Indian image of the vanishing race but also encourage non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal people alike to become more critical of its popularity and omnipresence within North American visual culture. By examining the emotional responses that the image of Fraser's work has elicited from contemporary Aboriginal artists during the past two decades, my thesis also aspires to extend the work of studies such as *The Imaginary Indian* and *The White Man's Indian*, for while these

⁷ Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (Vancouver, B.C.: Arsenal Pulp Press.), 1993; Robert F. Berkhofer Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present*. New York: Vintage Books, 1978.

works admirably examine the colonial construction of the Indian and Indian images, they fail to incorporate Aboriginal perspectives into their analyses. My inclusion of contemporary Aboriginal artistic re-appropriations and critiques in the final section is essential to a discussion of *The End of the Trail*; these contemporary re-interpretations of the original work demonstrate the complexity of Aboriginal experience while aspiring to transcend beyond the sculptor's stereotypical image of the vanishing Indian.

Colonial Sympathy, Pity and the Discourse of the Vanishing Race

The historical literature and narratives surrounding the creation of *The End of the Trail* and its exhibition at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in 1915 are unmistakably intertwined with the concept of sympathy as well as emotionally-laden linguistic terminology. These sympathetic connotations have largely resulted from Fraser's memoirs and historical accounts that insist that the artist responded directly to the colonial discourse of the vanishing race and that his work encapsulated his own compassion for the plight of Native American people. An investigation of archival sources indicates that the element of sympathy was significantly limited, however, and that the emotional responses provoked by *The End of the Trail* at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition are more aptly described as pity and condescension.

The equation of Fraser's *The End of the Trail* with the nineteenth and early twentieth-century ethnographic discourse of the vanishing race has been widely accepted and acknowledged by scholars for some time. For instance, Susan Bernardin recently

suggested that *The End of the Trail* may be viewed as “a sculptural analogue to Edward Curtis’ photographs” of First Nations and Native American people produced in the late nineteenth-century – photographs which are now widely regarded as perpetuating the Western assumption that Aboriginal people would eventually become extinct.⁸ In a similar vein, historian Brian W. Dippie, has proposed that few other sculptors have made such a distinctive contribution “to the vanishing race theme.”⁹

The colonial discourse of the vanishing race, to which Fraser’s sculpture is symbolically and conceptually bound, emerged concomitantly with the nineteenth and early twentieth-century historical context of Euro-American colonial expansion. The fact that Native Americans were “being removed from their land and, quite literally, running out of space in which to live,” was seen as incontrovertible proof that they would inevitably, cease to exist.¹⁰

This context of unimpeded colonial progress and expansion had disastrous consequences upon the Native American population. From the mid-seventeenth century onward, Native American people were being forced off their land with treaties, negotiations, and land-allotment programs so that the land could be settled by colonists. Between 1887 and 1900 the federal government of South Dakota forced the Sioux people to abandon or sell “approximately 28,500,000 acres of ‘surplus land’ from tribes that were in the process of being allotted.”¹¹ Requiring Native Americans to settle on

⁸ Susan Bernardin, “As Long as the Hair Shall Grow: Survivance in Eric Gansworth’s Reservation Fictions,” in *Survivance: Narratives of Native Presence* edited by Gerald Robert Vizenor (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 127.

⁹ Brian W. Dippie, *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1982), 218.

¹⁰ Sarah E. Quay, *Westward Expansion* (Westport; Connecticut; London: Greenwood Press, 2002), 241.

¹¹ Lawrence C. Kelly, “United States Indian Policies, 1900-1980,” *Handbook of North American Indians 4* (“History of Indian White Relations), edited by William C. Sturtevant and Wilcomb E. Washburn (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1988), 66.

allotments meant that the residual land from their reservations could be allocated to colonial settlement.¹² The passing of the Dawes General Allotment Act in 1887 further disadvantaged the Native American population and reduced its land base by “allow[ing] the president to allot Indian lands without Native consent.”¹³ In addition, from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth-century onwards legislators and bureaucrats frequently “devis[ed]...flawed policies that jeopardized Indian landholdings and often disregarded Indian rights.”¹⁴ The brutal displacement of Native American people through the enactment of such oppressive colonial policies and measures not only substantiated and helped produce the vanishing race discourse but also led to the widespread emergence of colonial sympathy within North American culture. The discourses of the vanishing race and Manifest Destiny can essentially be regarded as two opposing sides of the same coin,¹⁵ and although these discourses are mutually-reinforcing, it is also apparent that the optimistic and celebratory implications of Manifest Destiny are less evocative of the tragic and ostensibly sympathetic responses elicited by the sculpture in relation to the vanishing race. The intention here is not to suggest that sympathy was not a viable emotion to be exhibited by colonists within the context of Native American land usurpation, it is rather to question the *extent* of this sympathy in Fraser’s work and at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition.

The historical narratives surrounding James Earl Fraser trace his interest in the vanishing race theme to his experience of growing up on the Western frontier, further

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Claudia B. Haake, *The State, Removal and Indigenous Peoples in the United States and Mexico, 1620-2000* (New York & London: Routledge, 2008), 20.

¹⁴ Janet A. McDonnell, *The Dispossession of the American Indian: 1887-1934* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 5.

¹⁵ Observation articulated by Dr. Alice Ming Wai Jim in her comments to the thesis as second reader.

suggesting that these experiences profoundly affected the sculptor as a young man by arousing his own feelings of compassion for Native American people.¹⁶ James Earl Fraser was born in Winona, Minnesota in 1876 and as a child, he is said to have personally witnessed the displacement of Native Americans as the result of his father's employment by the Chicago-Milwaukee Railroad.¹⁷ Loring Homes Dodd, for example, comments that the artist "had seen [Whites] herding the Indians into reservations, pushing them ever farther and farther westward" and that he remembered these incidents "most of all." Dodd asserts that it was "out of this injustice of the Whites to the Indians" that "Fraser fashioned his *End of the Trail*."¹⁸ These narratives of sympathy, intertwined with accounts of Fraser's intimate and personal contact with Native American people as a child are echoed within the publications of numerous other historians.¹⁹

Such accounts indicate that when Fraser was four years of age, the Chicago-Milwaukee Railroad had reached Mitchell, South Dakota where his father purchased a ranch and the family settled for ten years.²⁰ Here the young Fraser reportedly had extensive personal encounters with many Native American people and "children of the Sioux Indians were his playmates."²¹ According to these narratives, it was during this ten-year stay in South Dakota that he was exposed to the effects of Native American

¹⁶ Based on the research I have conducted for this thesis, I can assert that the majority of the publications dealing with the biographical history of James Earl Fraser seem to have been written by non-Aboriginal authors several decades ago.

¹⁷ Loring Homes Dodd, *Golden Moments in American Sculpture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Dresser, Chapman & Grimes, 1967), 38; Dean Krakel, *End of the Trail: Odyssey of a Statue* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973), 14.

¹⁸ Loring Homes Dodd, 39.

¹⁹ Other published examples that reiterate this narrative include: Brian W. Dippie, *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1982), Sarah E. Quay, *Westward Expansion* (Westport; Connecticut; London: Greenwood Press, 2002), Wayne Craven, *Sculpture in America* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1984), Loring Homes Dodd, *Golden Moments in American Sculpture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Dresser, Chapman & Grimes, 1967).

²⁰ Loring Homes Dodd, 39.

²¹ *Ibid.*

removal and displacement first-hand as it was between 1887 and 1900 that South Dakota had the majority of its land seized by colonial hands.²² This personal experience of growing up on the frontier and interacting directly with Native American people has frequently been the rationale used by historians to attribute feelings of genuine sympathy to the sculptor and his work.

Such narratives draw heavily and uncritically on Fraser's own memoirs, which highlight his feelings of compassion for the Native Americans systematically dispossessed of their land by colonial settlers. Fraser recounts that an encounter with an old Dakota trapper prompted him to create *The End of the Trail* with a sense of dire urgency. The trapper's assertion that "the Indians [would] someday be pushed into the Pacific Ocean" apparently had an exceptionally strong impact upon the artist and he "began making the model shortly afterwards and finished it as fast as [he] could."²³ Additional inspiration for the work was found in a poem by Marion Manville Pope:

The trail is lost, the path is hid and winds that blow from out the ages
sweep me on to that chill borderland where
Time's spent sands engulf lost peoples and lost trails.²⁴

These words subsequently became the inscription that the artist attached to his work. Like the Dakota trapper's prediction that Native Americans would eventually be forced into the Pacific Ocean, these poetic words from Marion Manville Pope lamented the territorial dislocation and displacement of Native American people and portrayed them as belonging to a dying race.

²² Lawrence C. Kelly, 66.

²³ Dean Krakel, *End of the Trail: Odyssey of a Statue* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press) 1973, 3.

²⁴ This observation is made by Wayne Craven in *Sculpture in America* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1984), 493.

It is imperative, however, to question and shed doubt upon historical assumptions that the sculpture encapsulates James Earl Fraser's own feelings of genuine sympathy for the "dying race" as his work also reinforced colonial beliefs in Manifest Destiny. According to the artist, the figure of the exhausted and dejected Native American warrior on horseback was intended to epitomize the defeat of "a weaker race...steadily pushed to the wall by a stronger one...driven at last to the edge of the continent" consequently reaching "the End of the Trail."²⁵ The artist's crucial gesture of referring to Native American people as "a weaker race" implies that his own feelings of sympathy must have been limited as he clearly accepted and reinforced the colonial dichotomy established between Native American defeat and Euro-American colonial progress.

The basic formal and aesthetic qualities of Fraser's infamous *The End of the Trail* also undermine these associations of genuine sympathy as they serve to confine the Native American figure to a state of total exhaustion and defeat (Fig. 1). As Sarah E. Boehme has observed, the fact that the sculptor chose to invert the traditionally "heroic formula of the equestrian statue" results in a representation of ultimate weakness and despondency.²⁶ In *The End of the Trail*, the recognizable traits of power, strength, and resoluteness generally associated with the heroic figure on horseback have explicitly been stripped from the Native American warrior as the defeatist stance of his weary body reveals that he has lost all hope and that he can no longer resist the force of Euro-American colonial progress and expansion.

Though the representation of such weakness has been taken as indicative of feelings of genuine sympathy, this interpretation loses its force when one recognizes that

²⁵ Robert L. McGrath, "The Endless Trail of the End of the Trail" *Journal of the West* 40:4 (Fall 2001): 9.

²⁶ Sarah E. Boehme, "Frozen in Time: Euro-American Portrayals of Indians" *Powerful Images: Portrayals of Native America* (Seattle & London: Museums Press and University of Washington Press, 1998), 48.

the concept of sympathy itself is ultimately ambiguous and impossible to define. As Robert C. Solomon has indicated, “there is considerable confusion about the meaning of ‘sympathy,’ both in the writings of the moral sentiment theorists and in our own conversations” while the emotional concept of sympathy has frequently been used interchangeably with a series of “natural emotions” such as benevolence, compassion, and pity.²⁷ The emotional concept of pity, with its implications of condescension, is probably a more suitable term to describe Fraser’s attitude toward Native American people.

Significantly, the title Fraser chose for his sculpture is emblematic of such pity and condescension even if the artist *did have* more sympathetic intentions or connotations in mind. By calling his work *The End of the Trail*, the artist blatantly supported the discourses of Manifest Destiny and the vanishing race while perpetuating their assumptions regarding the eventual demise of Native American people. The word “trail” alluded to the concept of territorial ownership or acquaintance with the physical landscape. A trail or commonly used path is intrinsically linked to the concept of territorial familiarity and by suggesting that Native Americans had reached the “end of the trail,” Fraser’s title invariably substantiated the colonial expectation that Native Americans would eventually have no land or territory to call their own. Sarah Quay has further observed that the territorial implications of Fraser’s work can also be inferred from the sculpture’s formal composition and the horse’s “hind legs [which] are flexed as if halting at the edge of a cliff.”²⁸ The symbolic implications of situating the figure of the Native American at the territorial boundary of a cliff, on the literal verge of extinction,

²⁷ Robert C. Solomon, *In Defense of Sentimentality* (New York: Oxford University press, 2004), 50.

²⁸ Sarah E. Quay, 241.

encouraged Euro-American viewers to regard the presumed demise of Native American people in derogatory and pitiable terms.

The emotional concepts of pity and condescension also pervaded the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco in 1915, where Fraser's work acquired its acclaimed reputation. The presumably sympathetic connotations of James Earl Fraser's *The End of the Trail* became increasingly suspect when the work was displayed at this world fair, an event which clearly situated the Native American on the losing side of the battle between Indians and American settlers. This exhibition context not only perpetuated and strengthened the mythology of the vanishing race, it also definitively embedded the artist's work within the blatant celebratory context of American expansion and Manifest Destiny. The celebratory theme of colonial progress predominated at the fair as exposition-goers were encouraged to share pride in the success of their emerging nation in lieu of recognizing how this progress accounted directly for the oppression and dislocation of Native American people.

International Expositions were symbolically equated with the concept of nationhood and by the time the Panama-Pacific International Exposition was held in 1915, the tradition of world's fairs had become a hallmark of American culture, an established means by which to "celebrate[] the rise of America as a phenomenon."²⁹ As Paul Greenhalgh indicates, "Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth-centuries, [world's fairs and expositions] were the only events capable of bringing such a wide selection of people

²⁹ Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851-1939* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1988), 129.

to the same place for the purpose of edification and entertainment.”³⁰ These elaborate events were not mere entertainment, however, as “they were intended to distract, indoctrinate and unify a population” and persistently concentrated upon the theme of Empire.³¹

The Panama-Pacific International Exposition was held to commemorate the building of the Panama Canal, completed in 1914, and like many other world’s fairs, the Exposition made use of “epic proportions” and monumental works of art to instill fair-goers with a sense of national pride for American advancement and achievement.³² The fair took place near Fort Mason in San Francisco and was a grandiose event which covered 635 acres of land and lasted for ten months.³³ This immense coverage of land dedicated to the exposition is itself indicative of the event’s symbolic associations with American colonial expansion and settlement.

World’s fairs were extremely costly and required a tremendous amount of planning and organization as “it was necessary for the themes carrying the national message to be expressed on an epic scale, larger than the efforts of other nations if possible.”³⁴ In accordance with its theme of epic scale and monumentality, the official poster for the Exposition was an image created by Perham Nahl, *The Thirteenth Labor of Hercules*, which depicted the mythological hero “forcing apart the Culebra Cut to create the Panama Canal.”³⁵

³⁰ Ibid, 49.

³¹ Ibid, 49; 50.

³² Alexandra Minna Stern, *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 2005), 28.

³³ Paul Greenhalgh, 50.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Elizabeth N. Armstrong, “Hercules and the Muses: Public Art at the Fair,” *The Anthropology of World’s Fairs* (Berkeley, California: Lowie Museum of Anthropology, 1983), 114.

Mythological figures like Hercules were not the only heroes of the fair, however. The Exposition itself and many of the works of art commissioned for the event by the sculptor-in chief, A. Stirling Calder, also glorified the figure of the pioneer and sought to liken his territorial progress to the creation of the Panama-Canal.³⁶ In this vein, a monumental sculpture by Solon Borglum, *The American Pioneer* was commissioned and exhibited at the fair (Fig. 3). Elizabeth N. Armstrong has demonstrated that within “Exposition imagery and rhetoric...the spirit of the American pioneer was linked...to the Herculean accomplishment of the Panama-Canal.”³⁷ The pioneer’s colonization of North American land was consequently equated with the mythological labors performed by Hercules and the figure of the American pioneer was symbolically imbued with an “‘indestructible spirit’ of optimism and vital momentum.”³⁸ Sheldon Cheney’s publication of *An Art-Lover’s Guide to the Exposition* in 1915, reinforced the notion that the underlying theme of the Exposition was that of achievement and that “the ideas of victory, achievement, progress and aspiration [were] expressed again and again” by the art at the fair.³⁹

Given the predominance of these optimistic and celebratory themes at the exposition, it is difficult to believe that exhibition-goers could really focus adequately upon the plight of Native American people or be entirely sympathetic to their oppression and displacement. Rather, in the context of the fair, Native American artistic subjects,

³⁶ Paul Greenhalgh, 128; Elizabeth Armstrong, 115

³⁷ Elizabeth Armstrong, 123.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Sheldon Cheney, *An Art-Lover’s Guide to the Exposition: Explanations of the Architecture, Sculpture and Mural Paintings, with a Guide for Study in the Art Gallery* (Berkeley: Sunset Publishing House, 1915), 7.

like Fraser's sculpture, were prompted to be pitied momentarily by viewers and then promptly disregarded by the event's celebration of American progress.

Support for this hypothesis can be found in the tourist guides, and artistic commentaries that were published in conjunction with the exhibition of Fraser's *The End of the Trail*, and which indicate that pity and condescension, as opposed to sympathy, were indeed the emotional frameworks through which the work was intended to be contemplated at the time. For example, one guidebook explicitly informed visitors that *The End of the Trail* represented "...the end of the Indian race. The poor Indian, following his long trail, has at last come to the end. The worn horse and its rider tell a long, pathetic story."⁴⁰ Similarly, Sheldon Cheney suggested that Fraser's *The End of the Trail* constituted "...an eloquent and pathetic reminder of a race that ha[d] seemingly come to the end of its trail" as well as a skillful "portrayal of th[e] racial tragedy" of Native American disappearance.⁴¹ Reading such publications in conjunction with viewing *The End of the Trail* would have inevitably served to perpetuate the credibility of the colonial discourse of the vanishing race while reinforcing the affective capabilities of the sculpted work.

It was the sculpture's exhibition directly opposite Solon Borglum's *The American Pioneer*, however, that most explicitly, undermined the work's potential to elicit genuine sympathy and compassion for Native American people. By being displayed opposite Borglum's pioneer, Fraser's work became increasingly intertwined with the Exposition's themes of colonial progress and achievement (Fig. 4). Fraser's Indian statue was exhibited in the Court of Palms, a central venue at the Fair, adjacent to the Court of

⁴⁰ Brian Dippie, 218.

⁴¹ Sheldon Cheney, 44.

Flowers in which Borglum's *Pioneer* stood; this strategic placement of the two works created an explicit binary juxtaposition between the advancement of the American pioneer and the presumed extinction of the Native American. In his artistic commentary, *The Art of the Exposition...*, published several months after the Exposition opened in 1915, Eugen Neuhaus suggested that the symbolic associations between the two sculptures were "a very fine expression of the destinies of two great races so important in our historical development."⁴² Neuhaus began by describing Borglum's pioneer:

The erect, energetic, powerful man, head high, with a challenge in his face, looking out into early morning, is very typical of the white man and the victorious march of his civilization...Contrast this picture of life with the overwhelming expression of physical fatigue...that Fraser gives to his Indian in 'The End of the Trail.'⁴³

Neuhaus' comments proclaimed to exhibition-goers that the American colonization of Native American land, or "the white man and the victorious march of his civilization," could be seen as inevitable consequences of historical development, or Manifest Destiny. As Armstrong has indicated, the discrepancy between the strength of the pioneer and the weakness of the Native American was abundantly apparent in the context of the Exposition as, "Borglum's stalwart...pioneer, seated upon his powerful horse...was alert and keenly alive in contrast to the vanquished Native American placed in the opposite Court" (Fig. 4).⁴⁴

The despondent yet patronizing implications of Fraser's equestrian Native American statue were further accentuated by its placement within the Court of Palms as

⁴² Eugen Neuhaus, *The Art of the Exposition: Personal Impressions of the Architecture, Sculpture, Mural Decorations, Color Scheme and Other Aesthetic Aspects of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition*, Blackmask Online, 2002, <http://www.blackmask.com>, Originally published in San Francisco, California: University of California Press, May 1, 1915, 11.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Elizabeth Armstrong, 121.

“palm fronds are the traditional designation of martyrs in Christian iconography, an apt association for the downcast, defeated Indian on his weather-beaten horse.”⁴⁵ As the symbolic martyr of North American colonization, the figure of the Native American was expected to willingly recede into the historical background and allow colonial powers to prevail. This was clearly the role that Fraser’s Native American warrior was intended to perform at the fair as the work’s placement opposite a sculpted American pioneer created the unmistakable impression that Fraser’s Indian was submissively bowing his head to the pioneer and graciously accepting his own fate.

The placement of Fraser and Borglum’s sculptures at the Exposition encouraged viewers to interpret the history of American colonial expansion as a simplistic “tale...with clear-cut winners and losers.”⁴⁶ The brutal displacement and removal of Native American people was essentially justified as being the inevitable cost of colonial advancement and the Panama-Pacific International Exposition encouraged visitors to interpret this colonial legacy as a mere extension of American development. As Paul Greenhalgh proposes, the juxtaposition of Fraser’s defeated Native American warrior with Borglum’s victorious American pioneer “...was a clear indication to the visitor of the way America had gone and would continue to go.”⁴⁷

Elizabeth N. Armstrong has also aptly observed that, “While the sculptor undoubtedly recognized and lamented the sorrowful plight of the American Indian, his work bespoke the general reaction of American society to the Native population: ‘That’s

⁴⁵ Joni L. Kinsey, “Viewing the West: The Popular Culture of American Western Painting,” in *Wanted Dead or Alive: The American West in Popular Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 260.

⁴⁶ Alexandra Stern, 36.

⁴⁷ Paul Greenhalgh, 128.

progress.”⁴⁸ The centrality of the celebratory theme of colonial progress at the fair would have inevitably overshadowed the potential for viewers to become compassionate for the despair of Native American people. Contemplating this optimistic notion of progress and settlement would have evidently been a more enjoyable experience for the non-Aboriginal exposition-goer than acknowledging how colonial settlement had produced Aboriginal suffering.⁴⁹

Whether it is interpreted as eliciting genuine sympathy or pity, it is apparent that within the triumphant colonial context of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, the ability of Fraser’s sculpture to elicit emotions of sympathy and/or pity endeavored to alleviate colonial guilt and accountability while obscuring the complex historical realities associated with colonial expansion. *The End of the Trail* arguably encouraged exposition-goers to interpret colonial oppression in abstract emotional terms, as opposed to historical ones. The tragic nature of Fraser’s Indian figure effectively embedded the Native American within the emotional terrain of the vanishing race discourse but, like most Indian images, it made no effort to consider how Native American people responded to the effects of colonization. This blatant disregard for the importance of Native American personal and emotional experience is not only demonstrated within Fraser’s original sculpture and its exposition at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, but also extends to the countless appropriations and re-uses that this image has undergone since 1915.

⁴⁸ Elizabeth Armstrong, 121.

⁴⁹ While there were undoubtedly some Native American or First Nations individuals in attendance at the Exposition, I did not encounter any historical documentation of their reactions to the work.

“The Endless Trail of *The End of the Trail*”⁵⁰: Interpreting Souvenir Objects and the Kitsch Aesthetic

Robert L. McGrath’s contention that Fraser’s *The End of the Trail* has left an “endless trail” of contemporary appropriations in its wake eloquently captures the omnipresence of this image within North American visual culture. There appears to be virtually no end in sight to the continued appropriation of Fraser’s Indian image by North American souvenir industries and popular culture at large. The remarkable afterlife of this image, which continues unabated today, indicates that the recognizable image of Fraser’s sculpture of a dying Indian on horseback with his head distinctively bowed in resignation has assumed the status of a national icon. The extensive and diverse uses to which the representation has been put over the course of the last century reveal that there is an insatiable public appetite for this renowned Indian image within the consumerist-driven context of North American popular culture (Figs. 5-11). In accordance with my intention to analyze the affective capabilities and emotionally-based content of Fraser’s work, this section explores how the aesthetics of souvenir objects contribute to effacing and obscuring the emotions and experiences of Aboriginal people. Instead, such souvenir objects permit non-Aboriginal purchasers and owners to impose their own emotional responses onto Aboriginal subjects and their history while effectively distancing themselves from that history.

Since the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in 1915, colonial beliefs surrounding the future disappearance of the Aboriginal population of North America have been legitimized by popular culture’s creation of kitschy “End of the Trail” souvenir

⁵⁰ Robert L. McGrath, 8.

objects. Such souvenir objects form components of what Michel Foucault calls “systems of dispersion,” and have promoted the widespread support and acceptance of the discourse of the vanishing race within North American culture. As Foucault has theorized, “systems of dispersion,” which encompass any and all means by which a discourse or group of ideas can be perpetuated and reinforced, become unified and create a discourse because they collectively interpret a particular theme or concept in similar ways.⁵¹ At the exposition, Fraser’s sculpture constituted an artistic and visual incarnation of the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century colonial discourse of the vanishing race and the work consequently became an integral part of the systems of dispersion that legitimized the discourse. The exhibition of the sculpture at the world fair in 1915 constituted a critical moment in the dissemination and propagation of the vanishing race discourse within North American culture as mass-produced “End of the Trail” tourist photographs and mementos, or afterimages, were churned out in astounding quantities both during and after the event.

There can be little dispute that in absence of being displayed at this historically-renowned world fair, *The End of the Trail* would not have become the iconic image that it is today. As Alexandra Minna Stern has proposed, this International Exposition was one of the most widely-attended cultural events in world history and records of ticket-sales indicate that within a ten-month period “nearly nineteen million people had passed through the PPIE’s turnstiles.”⁵² The vast attendance of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition propelled the American souvenir industries into action as countless “End of the Trail” souvenir objects of all kinds were produced en-masse to accommodate the

⁵¹ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge; and The Discourse on Language*, translated by A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon, 1982), 41.

⁵² Alexandra Stern, 28.

public desire for exhibition mementos. Photographs of the sculpture became “canonical exposition keepsakes” and “receipts from the sale of pictures reached \$150,000.”⁵³ As the recipient of the gold medal for the fair’s best sculpture, *The End of the Trail* naturally became one of the most recognized symbols of the exposition and the work’s popularity at the fair in San Francisco led to the production of a vast array of visual appropriations ranging from photographs and sculptural replicas to mass-produced kitschy souvenir objects such as ashtrays and paperweights.⁵⁴ As Paul Greenhalgh suggests, mass production itself “was one of the most distinctive features of Great Exhibitions and World Fairs” and the Panama-Pacific Exposition was no exception.⁵⁵

Small replicas of Fraser’s statue were soon on sale everywhere. Bookends, ashtrays, postcards, advertisements, paper-weights, trinkets, and even china and silverware featured it. Garish prints, in sepia and in color, showing the horse and rider silhouetted against a dying sunset, eventually decorated many American walls.⁵⁶

Paul Greenhalgh has demonstrated that most world’s fairs “left permanent features behind, such as galleries, museums...railway stations, sports stadiums, parks and even mass-housing,” but in the case of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition it is apparent that Fraser’s *The End of the Trail* became one of the most, if not the most, enduring legacy of this occasion.⁵⁷ Exhibition-goers naturally sought to purchase some form of “End of the Trail” souvenir to preserve and later recall their experiences of viewing and encountering this renowned sculpture at the fair.

⁵³ Karal Ann Marling, “Anxiety, Nostalgia, and World’s Fairs: Colossi Mark the Borders of Modern America,” *The Colossus of Roads: Myth and Symbol along the American Highway* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 29.

⁵⁴ Brian Dippie, 219.

⁵⁵ Paul Greenhalgh, 142.

⁵⁶ Brian Dippie, 219. Unfortunately, I did not come across any images of such souvenir objects from the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in my research; these objects are frequently referred to in historical writing but I have not encountered any visual representations of them.

⁵⁷ Paul Greenhalgh, 49.

Within his own lifetime Fraser saw his control of the work vanish in a sea of tourist objects. “[W]ho got the money, I don’t know,” he was to remark somewhat bitterly, “I do know I didn’t get any of it. As a matter of fact, everyone knew the statue but no one seemed to know its sculptor.”⁵⁸ Though Fraser did produce small replicas of his sculpture when commissioned after the Exposition, he did not participate in the production of kitschy “End of the Trail” souvenir objects; instead, the sculptor ultimately became disconnected and disassociated from his own work.

This separation of the sculptor from the image of his own creation reinforces Marita Sturken and Daniel Harris’ proposition that kitsch souvenir objects are characterized by a “twice-removed aesthetic” that effectively establishes a formal and conceptual distance between tourists and history.⁵⁹ Sturken’s analysis of the kitschy souvenir objects that have emerged in the aftermath of 9/11 is useful in considering how “End of the Trail” souvenirs have enabled their owners and viewers to become passive and innocent observers of North American colonial history. Like the snowglobes and F.D.N.Y (Fire Department of New York) Teddy Bears she discusses, “End of the Trail” souvenir objects are intended to elicit a pre-determined “sentimental” response from viewers that promotes a sense of historical disassociation and disengagement.⁶⁰ Souvenirs thus offer “a particular mode through which the American public is encouraged to experience history through media images, souvenirs and popular culture.”⁶¹ By purchasing kitschy “End of the Trail” souvenir or decorative objects such as a wall clock

⁵⁸ Robert L. McGrath: 9.

⁵⁹ Marita Sturken citing the work of Daniel Harris in: Marita Sturken, “Tourists of History: Souvenirs, Architecture and the Kitschification of Memory,” in *Technologies of Memory in the Arts*, edited by Liedke Plate and Anneke Smelik (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 25.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 18; 22; 28.

⁶¹ Ibid, 22.

or a pendant, non-Aboriginal people can effectively disconnect themselves from their nation's colonial past and become what Sturken calls "tourists of history"; such "mass produced objects of prepackaged sentiment" arguably "offer a cheapened way to engage with interpersonal emotions, tragic sites of loss and political complexity."⁶² Owners of kitschy "End of the Trail" souvenir objects may be regarded as tourists of history; in no way are they required to engage directly with the historical realities associated with Aboriginal colonial displacement or oppression as such objects are epitomized by the overtly tragic and sentimental connotations of Fraser's stereotypical Indian image of the vanishing race.

In conjunction with their sentimental impact, many "End of the Trail" souvenir objects also exemplify what Robert Solomon has defined as "sweet kitsch," a variation of the kitsch aesthetic "that appeals unsubtly and unapologetically to the softer, 'sweeter' sentiments."⁶³ This element of sweet kitsch is apparent in many "End of the Trail" souvenir objects as such objects are characterized by "the absence of any interpretive ambiguity or dissonance on the part of the viewer."⁶⁴ Like sweet kitsch objects devoted to Aboriginal themes, "End of the Trail" souvenir objects, deter their owners and viewers from understanding the complexities of Aboriginal history and identity.⁶⁵

The "easy formulas and predictable emotional registers" associated with kitsch facilitate a kind of historical escapism through which North American people can actively safeguard their positions as detached observers of colonial history.⁶⁶ In this sense, the consumption of "End of the Trail" kitsch objects can be understood as emblematic of an

⁶² Ibid, 24.

⁶³ Robert C. Solomon, 235.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 240.

⁶⁵ Marita Sturken, 26.

⁶⁶ Marita Sturken, 23.

“imperialist nostalgia” as the acquisition of such objects constitutes “both a sentimental escape and a kind of compensatory act.”⁶⁷ In other words, for many owners, the act of purchasing and viewing kitschy “End of the Trail” souvenir objects epitomizes a symbolic gesture of *being moved* by the sentimental connotations of Fraser’s tragic Indian image. Arguably the sentimental escape associated with purchasing such souvenir objects replaces any concrete act of compensation or recognition of accountability for Euro-American colonial practices.⁶⁸

Sturken argues that when kitschy souvenir objects emerge within “the context of politically charged sites of violence”—such as in the aftermath of the brutal colonization and dislocation of the North American Aboriginal population--“the effect is inevitably one that reduces the political complexity to simplified notions of tragedy.”⁶⁹ Thus, the use of Fraser’s afterimage of the vanishing race within the context of North American visual culture can also be interpreted as a form of what Sturken calls the “kistchification of cultural memory” as this Indian symbol aspires to elicit pathos and sympathy from the North American public while obscuring the realities of colonial history.

This denial of colonial history results in the simultaneous creation of historical distance and, as Sturken proposes, a culture of innocence. “End of the Trail” souvenir objects are integral to a kitschification process of historical erasure that “takes the edginess and tensions of history and makes them palatable and less present.”⁷⁰ As Sturken rightly observes, kitschy souvenir objects foster a narrative of innocence within

⁶⁷Ruth B. Phillips, *Trading Identities: The Souvenir in Native North American Art from the Northeast, 1700-1900* (Seattle: University of Washington Press; Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1998), 137.

⁶⁸ Marita Sturken, 23.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 25.

American culture which “functions to screen over the imperial projects of American history and its aspirations to empire, both historical and contemporary.”⁷¹ Within this framework, kitschy souvenir objects also epitomize what Daniel Harris calls “ironic kitsch,” which also results in historical distancing.⁷² This form of ironic kitsch enables North American people to comfortably extricate themselves from their continent’s colonial legacy by situating themselves as innocent observers and outsiders to this history of conflict and Aboriginal oppression.

The creation of historical distance is intricately related to the physical nature of the souvenir object itself as most “End of the Trail” souvenirs employ a drastically-simplified two-dimensional Indian image in order to create portable and convenient mementos such as earrings, handbags, pendants, baseball caps, and stickers (Figs. 5-9). These objects are clearly representative of souvenir art’s tendency “to reduce complex emblematic imagery into enigmatic signs,” as described by Ruth Phillips in her analysis of Aboriginal souvenirs.⁷³ In tandem with this ideological simplification comes a physical reduction from three to two dimensions. While some sculptural souvenirs do exist, most souvenir afterimages simplify Fraser’s intricately-refined and detailed three-dimensional work into a basic and condensed two-dimensional Indian icon, most frequently a black silhouette that references the defeated and dejected stance of the original Indian sculpture but blatantly strips the work of its aesthetic richness and complexity.

An aesthetic of miniaturization is integral to this process. Like many souvenir objects, virtually all “End of the Trail” souvenirs have been dramatically reduced in size from the original scale of Fraser’s work to accommodate physical portability. As Susan

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁷² Daniel Harris quoted in Marita Sturken, 25.

⁷³ Ruth Phillips, 135.

Stewart has observed, the small scale and physical portability of such objects arguably “offer a sense of containment.”⁷⁴ Marita Sturken and Kristina Huneault have extended the implications of this observation to tourist art and the colonial representation of First Nations peoples respectively. While Sturken argues that containment encourages souvenir owners to believe that they are holding and preserving a little piece of history in their own hands, Huneault observes that miniaturization effectively creates a “closed pictorial space” that “echoes the colonial process of oppression and containment.”⁷⁵ Huneault argues that “The effect of the miniature is encapsulation: the creation of a universe both contained in its own boundaries and transcended by the viewer...;” this effect is clearly visible within many “End of the Trail” souvenir objects as they symbolically confine Aboriginal people to a vanishing race and physically confine their representations to pre-determined pictorial spaces.⁷⁶ Significantly, this element of physical and spatial confinement further alludes to the forced placement of Aboriginal people within reservations and residential schools during the colonial period. Thus, the miniaturization of the afterimage of Fraser’s sculpture can perpetuate colonial relationships of power and dominance by symbolically replicating the physical containment of Aboriginal people in aesthetic and visual terms.

The aesthetic of miniaturization, characteristic of most “End of the Trail” souvenir objects, is also inextricably linked to the persistence of the work’s emotive and affective resonance as an emblem of cultural loss and defeat. In her analysis of miniatures and souvenir objects, Susan Stewart has argued that “the miniature, linked to

⁷⁴ Marita Sturken, 20.

⁷⁵ Kristina Huneault, “Always There: Aboriginal people and the consolation of miniature portraiture in British North American,” *Art and the British Empire* edited by Tim Barringer, Geoff Quilley, and Douglas Fordham (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007), 304.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 304.

nostalgic versions of childhood and history, presents a diminutive, and thereby manipulable, version of experience;" this reinforces the notion that miniature "End of the Trail" objects enable their purchasers and owners to become "tourists of history" as they promote predictably sentimental interpretations of colonial history as opposed to factually-based historical interpretations.⁷⁷ Huneault has substantiated this proposition by arguing that "the spatial transcendence presented by the miniature undermines the possibility of historical understanding" and that "The time of the miniature is nostalgia rather than history."⁷⁸ Such sentimental emotional responses not only "den[y] the ravages of colonial power," but also maintain the element of cultural innocence by "feed[ing] into a willful blindness."⁷⁹ Yet, as Huneault proposes "the evacuation of reality *becomes* the miniature's use value most exactly understood."⁸⁰

This "evacuation" of reality and the creation of historical distance are further facilitated by the kitsch aesthetic that pervades "End of the Trail" souvenir objects. Many such popular keepsakes visually embody the same characteristics of mass-produced tackiness that are specific to kitsch. As Marita Sturken indicates, "the word itself is derived from the German *verkitschen*, meaning 'to cheapen,'" and "kitsch is often associated with cheapness both in terms of cost and production," while kitschy objects are frequently perceived as being "without any cultural refinement or taste."⁸¹ In basic monetary terms, the majority of "End of the Trail" kitsch objects *are in fact* "cheap," as they are both inexpensively mass-produced and acquired. The "End of the Trail with

⁷⁷ Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1984), 69.

⁷⁸ Kristina Huneault, 304.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 305.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 305.

⁸¹ Marita Sturken, 23.

stone” pendant, for example, costs \$6.99, an exceptionally low price for any souvenir or memento (Fig. 10).

Many such souvenirs also lack aesthetic refinement as they not only rely upon the simplified two-dimensional silhouette of Fraser’s work but because they represent the fusion of this stereotypical afterimage with decorative and commercial purposes. The “End of the Trail Wall Clock” (Fig. 11), for instance, not only aesthetically “cheapens” and commodifies Fraser’s work by placing the words “crafts by steve” in the center of the clock but it also inserts this clichéd image of the vanishing race into a common household clock, an object that is symbolically equated with the passing of time. Given that Fraser’s work is associated with colonial assumptions that, over time, Aboriginal people would ultimately cease to exist, the use of this Indian image for a household wall clock is anything but subtle in its association with the colonial discourse of the vanishing race.

From the time of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in 1915, Fraser’s image of Native American despondency has been endlessly replicated and reproduced within souvenir objects intended to cater to touristic and detached experiences with colonial history. These objects, frequently characterized by the aesthetics of kitsch and miniaturization, have been integral to perpetuating the sentimental affective implications of Fraser’s work over time and maintaining a sense of non-Aboriginal detachment from colonial history. The North American public symbolically perpetuates a historical legacy of colonial domination of Aboriginal people through the act of purchasing “End of the Trail” souvenir objects. By wearing an “End of the Trail” handbag, baseball cap, pendant, or a pair of “End of the Trail” earrings, non-Aboriginal people can literally don Fraser’s

emblematic depiction of Native American defeat and appropriate this iconic Indian afterimage in daily life.

Not the End of the Trail: Contemporary Aboriginal Re-Appropriation and Critique

I really thought about [Fraser's image] and I thought—there's no end of the trail here. My ancestors sacrificed just so we could still be here...that's why I dislike that "End of the Trail." I always tell people that, 'I can't stand that thing.' It's just not true, it's a big lie, and unfortunately around Indian country people still believe that. It's like they are in a state of perpetual mourning.⁸²

These words, spoken by a Native American man living in Oklahoma who is simply referred to as "Pat," in James Hamill's *Going Indian*, poignantly capture the sense of anger and resentment that Fraser's work and its afterimage can elicit from many Aboriginal people today. The contemporary Aboriginal artists James Luna, Terrance Houle, and Kent Monkman strategically employ the concept of irony and "postmodern parody" to re-interpret and re-configure the emotional and affective capabilities of Fraser's sculpture within the contemporary world. I argue that, as postmodern parodies, James Luna's *End of the Frail*, Terrance Houle's *Trails End/End Trails*, and Kent Monkman's *Not the End of the Trail* and *Icon for a New Empire* (or *Si Je t'Aimes, Prends Garde a Toi*) rupture the notions of sympathy and/or pity traditionally associated with Fraser's work while creating the opportunity for Aboriginal emotional experiences to occupy center-stage (Figs. 12-17). The emotional responses of sentimentality and the creation of historical distance that result from the kitsch aesthetic are also re-conceptualized in each of these works. This re-conceptualization can either be achieved by collapsing the element of historical distance, as in the intimate self-portraits of Luna

⁸² Quoted by James Hamill and attributed to a Native American man from Oklahoma who is only referred to as "Pat" throughout the book. See James Hamill, *Going Indian* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 170.

and Houle, or by preserving it, as in the history paintings of Kent Monkman. These contemporary artistic re-interpretations of Fraser's renowned work constitute crucial gestures of re-appropriation, in both visual and emotional terms, as *The End of the Trail* has historically been monopolized by colonial interests.

The contemporary Aboriginal parodies explored in this section collectively adopt a critical stance toward Fraser's sculpture while explicitly contesting the affective resonances of sympathy and pity with which it is aligned. Emotions of anger and resentment pervade these contemporary artistic responses and the concept of "re-appropriation" is integral to all of these works; the artists James Luna, Terrance Houle, and Kent Monkman attempt to reclaim Aboriginal identity by extricating it from the colonial stereotype of the vanishing race.⁸³

Kent Monkman's *Not the End of the Trail* and *Icon for a New Empire* parody and re-appropriate Fraser's depiction of the vanishing race and emphasize the diversity of Aboriginal emotions and experiences by incorporating homoerotic narratives into a historical colonial context. Monkman, a First Nations artist of Cree ancestry, has recently gained widespread attention for his performance-based works involving his alternate persona "Miss Chief Cher Eagle Testickle," a sexually-transgressive Indian drag-queen, as well as for his immaculately-rendered and detailed history paintings. Monkman's *Not the End of the Trail* not only critically parodies Fraser's work but also uses the artistic

⁸³ The concept of "re-appropriation," an artistic technique that has recently emerged within contemporary Aboriginal artistic practice, is integral to all four of the contemporary Aboriginal works discussed. Within North America, use of the term "re-appropriation" has frequently been restricted to describing the process by which Aboriginal-produced artistic objects and artifacts are returned and restituted to Aboriginal communities.⁸³ In this discussion, the concept of re-appropriation is understood as an artistic means through which contemporary Aboriginal artists symbolically reclaim Aboriginal identity as well as the Aboriginal image by altering and re-interpreting the emotions of sympathy and/or pity and sentimentality traditionally equated with Fraser's sculpture.

medium of painting to counteract emotional responses of pity in relation to the vanishing race discourse (Figure 12). The work is an explicit form of re-appropriation of Aboriginal identity as well as an ironic attack upon the vanishing race discourse itself; Monkman clearly negates the element of procreation by depicting a homoerotic encounter. This effectively undermines the discourse of the vanishing race since it can only be presumed that there would be a dire “urgency to procreate” if Aboriginal people were actually in danger of vanishing.⁸⁴ Instead, female figures are omitted and the two Aboriginal men in *Not the End of the Trail* desire and contemplate one-another; there is no reference to heterosexuality or reproduction in this work.

The title itself expresses the sense of anger and resentment that can be elicited by many Aboriginal people today in response to Fraser’s sculpture. By stating that it is “not the end of the trail,” Monkman blatantly undermines the colonial discourse of the vanishing race while the work itself provocatively thrusts the frequently-obscured contemporary realities of Aboriginal homosexuality and sexual transgression into the spotlight. As Monkman has indicated:

a lot of my work... deals with colonized sexuality due to the influence of the church on our community—as forcibly as putting people into residential schools—and the influence of Judeo-Christian values. We’ve been colonized on many levels and one of the things that has been affected has been our sexuality.⁸⁵

Not the End of the Trail is significantly more enigmatic than its title suggests, however, as the painting subtly addresses the ultimatum offered to Aboriginal people by Euro-American colonizers from the late twentieth-century onwards: extinction or

⁸⁴ This interesting observation about Monkman’s work and the notion of procreation was provided by Dr. Alice Ming Wai Jim in her comments as second reader of the thesis.

⁸⁵ Kent Monkman quoted in Peter Goddard, “Kent Monkman: Man of Mischief,” *The Star.com*, November 22, 2007): 2.

assimilation (Fig. 13). The painting consists of two Aboriginal men who encounter one another within a sublime, romantic landscape reminiscent of nineteenth-century colonial landscape paintings. The figure of the warrior astride his weary horse is clearly inspired by Fraser's *The End of the Trail*, but the warrior's attire as a cross-dresser equipped with black high-heels also disrupts the traditional image. McMaster proposes that "the horse's demeanor is our only reference point to Fraser" as Monkman's warrior does not replicate the gesture of defeat emblematic of Fraser's work but rather alludes to survival and persistence as he curiously and inquisitively looks back at the figure of the Aboriginal priest.⁸⁶ It is apparent that these two Aboriginal men have chosen to follow different paths or trails in response to colonial incursions; the priest has chosen to assimilate with colonial powers and adopt the Christian faith as his black Jesuit robe indicates, while the warrior has seemingly chosen the path of opposition or defiance, not only through his preservation of the warrior status but also through his sexually-transgressive cross-dressing behavior.⁸⁷ The juxtaposition of two figures that have responded to colonization in such distinct ways clearly disrupts the simplistic notion of colonial sympathy and encourages viewers to consider the complexity of Aboriginal emotional responses during this period.

By exposing the ways in which religious assimilation and conversion policies were forced upon the Aboriginal population, Monkman effectively casts the symbolic "end of the trail" in a new light as he demonstrates that Fraser's representation of the vanishing race dismissed the importance of Aboriginal emotion and experience. The

⁸⁶ Gerald McMaster, "The Geography of Hope," *The Triumph of Mischief: Kent Monkman*, exhibition catalogue, curated by David Liss and Shirley J. Madill (Victoria, B.C: Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, 2008), 97.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

repression and colonization of Aboriginal sexuality and the ways in which the imposition of Judeo-Christian values rendered homosexual behavior such as cross-dressing unacceptably taboo are of particular interest to Monkman as a gay artist. The Aboriginal population of North America may not have vanished as a result of colonial invasion but, in Monkman's painting, colonization is represented as the ultimate cause underlying the dissolution and erasure of Aboriginal sexual and religious difference while colonial responses of sympathy and pity are re-conceptualized.

As a conflation of James Earl Fraser's *The End of the Trail* and Jean Leon Gerome's *Pygmalion and Galatea*, Monkman's *Icon for a New Empire* (or *Si Je t'Aimes, Prends Garde a Toi*) represents a contemporary re-working of emotional content and a re-appropriation of Fraser's iconic image of the vanishing race (Fig. 14). The painting is, furthermore, a provocative re-interpretation of Gerome's widely recognized and mythologically-based painting.⁸⁸ Eleanor Heartney has argued that Monkman's painting represents "the re-examination of history as the product of the interplay of fact and myth" as viewers are encouraged to reflect upon the colonial discourse of the vanishing race and the ways in which it is being critiqued and referenced by the artist.⁸⁹ In contrast to the perpetually static nature of Fraser's sculpted Indian, Monkman's Indian has literally and symbolically been imbued with life as he is depicted in the process of transforming from a marble statue into an actual human being. This attribution of life and strength to the sculpted warrior differs drastically from Fraser's image, which represents the Native American warrior in a state of physical and symbolic extinction and demise. The artist's

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Eleanor Heartney, "Native Identity in an Age of Hybridity," *Remix: New Modernities in a Post-Indian World*, exhibition catalogue (Washington and New York: National Museum of the American Indian and Smithsonian Institution, 2007), 43.

strategic choice to make reference to Gerome and Fraser's renowned works simultaneously is also noteworthy as it suggests that *The End of the Trail*, like *Pygmalion and Galatea*, should be viewed as a fictive and mythological representation, and not a historical one.

Resentment toward colonial pity and the conceptual re-appropriation of Aboriginal sexuality and identity are also integral to Monkman's *Icon for a New Empire*. The painting directly recalls Fraser's representation of the vanishing race but employs a homoerotic narrative to rupture the colonial relationship of power and control traditionally equated with the sculpture. As McMaster has argued, Monkman's painting is "about power relations more than it is about falling in love with a statue," and the work covertly addresses the colonial "desire for the cultural other."⁹⁰ In Monkman's visually stunning and provocative painting, the sculptor has, like the mythical sculptor Pygmalion, become so enraptured by the beauty of his own artistic creation that he begins to fantasize about bringing the sculpted figure to life, a fantasy which becomes reified in Greek mythology as well as *Icon for a New Empire*.

Monkman deliberately alters and distorts the traditional Pygmalion myth by replacing the nude female sculpted figure, Galatea, with that of a nude Aboriginal male warrior, rendering the homoerotic connotations of the painting explicit. In Monkman's painting, "a modern day Lothario...brings a marble version of Fraser's doleful Indian to life with a kiss" and the two figures become engaged in a passionately intense moment of homosexual arousal.⁹¹ Colonial sympathy for the vanishing race is inevitably rendered obsolete in this context as Monkman's male warrior is represented as the epitome of

⁹⁰ Gerald McMaster, 98.

⁹¹ Eleanor Heartney, 44.

strength and assumes complete control within a scenario of homosexual desire. The warrior is a flawless human specimen and his physique is clearly intended to recall the idealized and romanticized colonial representations of Aboriginal people from the nineteenth-century. In this instance of postmodern parody, the Native American warrior can no longer be pitied and viewed as the ultimate symbol of weakness and despondency, however, as Monkman does not depict him as being upon the brink of extinction but rather transforms him into a living being engaged in a homoerotic encounter. As Gerald McMaster rightly indicates “Monkman’s Indians now wield the power, and through it, the capability to control the discourse and thus its representation.”⁹²

The fundamental attribution of life to Aboriginal artistic subjects is echoed in the works of James Luna and Terrance Houle wherein the colonial emotions of sympathy and pity associated with the vanishing race discourse are also blatantly critiqued and undermined.⁹³ In Luna’s *End of the Frail* and Terrance Houle’s *Trails End/End Trails*, the artists employ their own bodies in a parodic fashion to relay emotional responses of anger and resentment toward the persistence of Fraser’s work and its accompanying emotions of pity and condescension (Figs 15 & 16). As variations of postmodern parody, Luna and Houle’s works constitute critical “re-enactments”; these re-enactments are characterized by “fantasy role-playing in which appropriation of either a real or an imagined past is a central theme.”⁹⁴ By replicating the highly recognizable physical

⁹² Gerald McMaster, 98.

⁹³ James Luna identifies himself as an interdisciplinary performance artist and a Luiseño Indian from the La Jolla Indian Reservation in San Diego, California; Terrance Houle self-identifies as a member of the Blackfoot/Saulteaux (Ojibwa) Nations and currently lives in Calgary. Adrien Stimson, “Entrails: Profile of Terrance Houle,” *Blackflash* 24.3 (2007): 40; James Luna and Steven Durland, “Call Me in ’93: An Interview with James Luna,” *communityartsnetwork reading room*, <http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archivefiles/2002/09/ca...: 1-5> [accessed February 23, 2009].

⁹⁴ Gerald McMaster, *The Double Entendre of Re-Enactment*, exhibition catalogue, (Ontario: Vtape and imagineNATIVE, October 2007, www.nmai.si.edu/fin/2008/Double_Entendre_Catalog.pdf: 5.

gesture of defeat and resignation of Fraser's sculpted Native American warrior, Luna and Houle literally re-enact and re-inscribe themselves within colonial art history. This act of bodily imitation not only makes the parody underlying the works apparent but also blatantly contradicts the vanishing race discourse and its traditional affective resonances.

In the catalogue to the exhibition of performance and video based-works, *The Double Entendre of Re-Enactment*, Gerald McMaster indicates that re-enactment can be used as means for Aboriginal artists to re-assert their contemporary identities as well as a form of historiography.⁹⁵ Thus, Luna and Houle's works can be interpreted as part of a larger effort to re-interpret colonial history from an Aboriginal perspective. Re-enactment also enables these artists to oppose Fraser's stereotypical Indian image of the vanishing race and re-inscribe the work with alternative and contemporary realities of Aboriginal emotion and experience. As Robin Franklin Nigh suggests of Luna's work, which could equally be applied to Houle's work, "Luna acknowledges image prototypes from art history...and re-invents them by positioning himself as an extension of the original. In this sense, Luna dispels the myth by replicating it."⁹⁶ The acts of mimicking the defeatist pose of Fraser's Indian warrior with tangible human presences not only dispel the colonial myth of the vanishing race but also render it increasingly difficult for viewers to pity Aboriginal artistic subjects in the customary way. The living presences of these two artists evidently challenge this discourse of extinction by insisting upon Aboriginal survival and persistence within the contemporary world.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Robin Franklin Nigh, "Contemporary Artists in the Contact Zone: Happy Meeting Grounds or Circling the Wagons?" *Dimensions of Native America: The Contact Zone*, exhibition catalogue, curated by Jehanne Tilnet-Fisk and Robin Franklin Nigh (Florida: Museum of Fine Arts, 1998), 127.

Jennifer Gonzalez has also recently applied the concept of “auto-ethnographic expression” to James Luna’s *End of the Frail*, but this postcolonial artistic strategy is equally apparent in Terrance Houle’s *Trails End/End Trails*. According to Mary-Louise Pratt, “auto-ethnographic expression” can be described as “instances in which colonized subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways that engage with the colonizer’s own terms.”⁹⁷ Houle and Luna effectively subvert Fraser’s iconic Indian symbol as they mutually engage in “auto-ethnographic expression” and situate themselves in a position of authorship that enables them to assume total control over their own representations (Figs. 15 & 16). As Jean Fisher has aptly argued, “when the Native artist speaks as the author rather than the bearer of (an other’s) meaning, she or he precipitates an epistemological crisis, which exposes the fundamental instability of those knowledges that circumscribe the social and political place of colonized peoples.”⁹⁸

In accordance with this strategy of auto-ethnographic expression, Luna and Houle make use of the colonial media of photographic portraiture in their performance-based works, recalling the photographic traditions associated with colonial modes of visual display. Luna and Houle “represent [themselves] in a way that engages with the colonizer’s own terms,” enabling them to “partia[lly collaborate] with and appropriat[e]...the idioms of the conqueror.”⁹⁹ The use of the photographic self-portrait signals the reclamation and “re-appropriation” of Fraser’s condescending Indian image

⁹⁷ Jennifer Gonzalez, *Subject to Display: Reframing Race in Contemporary Installation Art* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2008), 42.

⁹⁸ Jean Fisher, “In Search of the ‘Inauthentic’: Disturbing Signs in Contemporary Native Art,” *Art Journal* 51: 3 Recent Native American Art (Autumn 1992): 44.

⁹⁹ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 7.

and the replacement of Aboriginal emotions, values, and interests for the traditional emotions of sympathy and pity.

Although the colonial emotions of sympathy and pity are indeed re-conceptualized and critiqued in Luna and Houle's works, these critiques do not necessarily imply a total evacuation of the affective intensity of Fraser's traditional image. Houle's self-portrait, *Trails End/End Trails* is, at first glance, seemingly more humorous and playful than Luna's *End of the Frail* but both of these works arguably employ Fraser's original element of somberness to increase the strength and force of their own representations. For Houle, who sits astride a miniature rocking-horse in a children's park sporting feathers in his hair in a comedic fashion, this somberness is perhaps more difficult to detect, but his simulation of the defeated posture of Fraser's warrior clearly suggests that contemporary Aboriginal people continue to encounter difficulty and suffering today (Fig. 16). Houle's re-enactment of the sculpture's resigned pose demonstrates that his humorous re-interpretation is intended to be understood in tandem with emotions of sadness and despair. The crucial difference between Houle and Fraser's works is that in Houle's case, the somber aspects of the image function simultaneously with wit and humor; this strategy of presenting such conflicting emotions concurrently serves to complexify the nature of Aboriginal emotions and affective responses.

Similarly, pathos and despair permeate Luna's re-assessment of Fraser's image in *End of the Frail* as his self-portrait also exudes an unmistakably somber quality (Fig. 15). This effect is inevitably reinforced by Luna's choice to omit any colors from his photograph and to employ the aesthetic simplicity of black and white. In contrast to Houle's photograph, where color reinforces the contemporary and present context while

adding a dimension of playfulness to the image, Luna's black and white color scheme preserves the authority and seriousness of the historical black and white photograph. The powerful emotional content of Luna's work, as in Houle's, is amplified by the artist's imitation of the defeatist pose yet there is an additional element of pathos that differentiates Luna's image from Houle's: the bottle of Jack Daniels Whiskey that Luna holds in his right hand.

As a substitution for the spear of Fraser's sculpted warrior, the bottle of liquor emphasizes the issue of alcoholism within contemporary Aboriginal communities and attests to the presence of a social problem that is equally as dangerous, if not more detrimental to Aboriginal life than the warrior's spear. While the warrior's spear can be viewed as a symbol of strength and violence against animals or fellow human beings, the bottle of Jack Daniels Whiskey alludes to the violence that Aboriginal people can and have inflicted upon themselves through the abuse of alcohol. Just as Fraser's warrior communicates his downfall and despair by lowering his spear to the ground, so too does Luna demonstrate the potentially fatal effects of alcoholism by lowering his bottle to his side. Yet, the image is further complicated by the historical recognition that colonial powers were ultimately responsible for the introduction of the previously unknown substance of alcohol to Aboriginal communities. Thus, while Luna's work *does* undermine the rationale underlying the emergence of colonial sympathy and pity by parodying Fraser's image, the inclusion of a bottle of liquor also manages to alter and re-conceptualize the pathos of the original work within the contemporary world.

James Luna, Terrance Houle, and Kent Monkman's works also collectively critique and rupture the colonial emotion of sentimentality, encapsulated within the countless arrays of "End of the Trail" kitschy souvenir objects discussed in the preceding section. The kitsch aesthetic and the production of kitschy "End of the Trail" souvenir objects promote the creation of historical distance and detachment from colonization in non-Aboriginal viewers. The contemporary artists' gestures of artistic re-appropriation and re-interpretation of kitschy sentimentality relate directly to Linda Hutscheon's concept of "postmodern parody" in which parody is viewed as the creation of "repetition with critical distance which allows [for the] signaling of difference at the very heart of similarity."¹⁰⁰ This element of distance, however, is evidently not finite, as Luna and Houle ultimately disrupt traditions of historical detachment through self-portraiture while Monkman seemingly perpetuates them in his history paintings. What is crucial to the aesthetic strategy of postmodern parody is the establishment of a critical stance toward recognizable historical imagery, an effect that is apparent within the works of all three artists.

The historical distance equated with kitschy "End of the Trail" souvenir objects is clearly dissolved within the performance-based photographic works of James Luna and Terrance Houle who create explicit contradistinctions between contemporary Aboriginal experience and identity and Fraser's pitiable sculpted Indian warrior. The bold gesture of inserting themselves into their own re-enactments of Fraser's work also enables Luna and Houle to overtly "re-appropriate" the image for their own Aboriginal, as opposed colonial affective intents and purposes. As Gonzalez indicates in her analysis of *End of the Frail*,

¹⁰⁰ Linda Hutscheon quoted in Allan J. Ryan, "Postmodern Parody: A Political Strategy in Contemporary Canadian Native Art," *Art Journal* 51: 3 Recent Native American Art (Autumn 1992): 59.

by using “his own body as a primary medium of expression, Luna offers viewers the opportunity to encounter a tangible human presence as an alternative to pervasive cultural fictions.”¹⁰¹ Similarly, interdisciplinary First Nations artist Adrian Stimson, describes Terrance Houle as “the embodiment of an Indian spirit made flesh, staking out and defining the terrain of contemporary Aboriginal Indian-ness” in *Trails End/End Trails*.¹⁰² Viewers can no longer remove themselves from colonial history and gaze innocently upon the static emblem of the vanishing race; they are instead confronted with actual human presences that thrust Fraser’s historical icon of defeat into the realm of the present.

Monkman’s paintings also critique and undermine the notion of colonial sentimentality but they do so in a drastically different way. Monkman’s works seemingly preserve the notion of historical distance generally attributed to colonial Indian images and kitschy “End of the Trail” souvenirs, as his paintings *Not the End of the Trail* and *Icon for a New Empire* are characterized by an undeniable sense of ironic critique and detachment (Figs. 12-14). Monkman’s paintings maintain a sense of ironic historical disassociation as they ultimately perpetuate the idealized nature of colonial Indian images; yet, they do so in an effort to deliberately rupture colonial relationships of power with homosexual and homoerotic narratives. By replicating the romanticized and idealized artistic style of colonial Indian images within his own work, Monkman emphasizes the fictive and absurd nature of such representations while the provocative homoerotic situations presented in his paintings blatantly subvert the traditionally sentimental nature of kitschy “End of the Trail” souvenir objects. His painted medium enables him to maintain a sense of critical distance that compels viewers to compare his

¹⁰¹ Jennifer Gonzalez, 24.

¹⁰² Adrian Stimson: 40.

work to the immense corpus of colonial history paintings that have portrayed Aboriginal people as a dying race.

Emotions of anger and resentment toward the sentimental and idealized nature of colonial representations of the Indian, encapsulated in souvenir objects and Fraser's sculpture alike, is also addressed and critiqued by Luna, Houle, and Monkman's contemporary works of art. Luna's photographic reprise of Fraser's *End of the Trail* was originally displayed in an installation entitled *A.A. Meeting/Art History*, comprised of a series of photographs in which Luna mimicked classical poses from iconic art historical images such as Fraser's sculpture and Rodin's *Thinker*. These historical images were displayed within a room containing "folding chairs, empty beer bottles, ashtrays, filled with cigarette butts, used Styrofoam coffee cups, and Alcoholics Anonymous Books."¹⁰³

As Gonzalez has argued, exposing viewers to the harsh reality of alcoholism within Aboriginal communities is significant as it "provides information about contemporary life...the visitor does not want to see, thereby revealing the unconscious habits of display that romanticize and historicize the Indian as part of the vanishing past, existing in a pristine pre-colonial state."¹⁰⁴ Luna does not want to suggest that contemporary Native American life is entirely negative; he merely wants to reveal that it is infinitely more complex than sentimental kitschy souvenir objects have suggested. There is also an optimistic quality to Luna's work which points to survival and endurance as opposed to defeat; at the same time "the wordplay of the title," *End of the Frail*,

¹⁰³ Seonaid McArthur, "James Luna," *Blurring the Boundaries: Installation Art: 1969-1996* (San Diego: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1997), 60.

¹⁰⁴ Jennifer Gonzalez, 41.

“invites viewers to reassess the presumed frailty of the Indigenous population, its purported defeat and demise.”¹⁰⁵

Similarly, Terrance Houle’s *Trails End/End Trails* undermines the idealized and sentimental nature of the kitsch aesthetic as it presents viewers with a contemporary First Nations man, whose physique differs drastically from that of Fraser’s romanticized and idealized Indian warrior (Fig. 16). In Houle’s work, the Aboriginal individual is seated upon a miniaturized horse with a spring and Gerald McMaster proposes that, “in this instance, Houle is not only overweight with love handles but he sits astride a rocking horse. Houle comes to terms with his unrestrained body that is diametrically opposed to the perfect Indian male body...”¹⁰⁶ The title of Houle’s work, *Trails End/End Trails*, also provocatively and humorously critiques Fraser’s romantic title by wryly suggesting that trails inevitably end and that stereotypical Indian images such as *The End of the Trail*, can literally be compared to entrails, which are visually and physically repulsive. This work, in which Houle becomes the replacement for Fraser’s idealized warrior, also reached a wider audience when it was displayed as part of the *Urban Indian Series Bus Project Trails End/End Trails* for which the photograph was enlarged to colossal proportions and displayed on the ceilings of public buses in the city of Banff in 2006 (Fig. 17). In both James Luna’s *End of the Frail* and Houle’s *Trails End/End Trails*, the artists employ their own bodies in performance-based self-portraits to create blatant juxtapositions between the sentimental nature of *The End of the Trail*’s afterimage within souvenir objects and their own realistically-premised depictions of contemporary Aboriginal identity and existence.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 47.

¹⁰⁶ Gerald McMaster, *Double Entendre*, 23.

As critical responses to the emotionally-based colonial content of Fraser's work and its afterimage, the works of James Luna, Terrance Houle, and Kent Monkman can all be interpreted as mutual gestures of opposition to the colonial confinement of Aboriginal people to the "ethnographic present." As Eleanor Heartney indicates, the ethnographic present, originally described by James Clifford, "fixes ethnographic groups within the traditions that existed before the disruptions caused by modernity" and deliberately obscures or entirely disregards "the adjustments Native Americans have made and the transformations they have undergone in partaking of the complexities of contemporary American society."¹⁰⁷ In all cases the artists confront viewers with the contemporary realities of Aboriginal emotion and experience, and in all cases, these affective realities are drastically opposed to the colonial emotions of sympathy, pity and sentimentality traditionally elicited by James Earl Fraser's *The End of the Trail*. As Gerald McMaster suggests, in many instances "contemporary Native people have taken this image and used it as a positive sign. *The End of the Trail* no longer signifies the end of Native Americans; instead it is seen as a new beginning."¹⁰⁸

Conclusion: Reconsidering the Endless Trail of *The End of the Trail*

This thesis has endeavored to bring forward a possible explanation for the continued popularity and omnipresence of James Earl Fraser's *The End of the Trail* and its afterimage within North American visual culture since 1915. Three specific historical contexts have been analyzed over an extended period of time and a vast array of artistic media, including sculpture, varieties of kitschy mass-produced souvenir objects,

¹⁰⁷ Eleanor Heartney, 37.

¹⁰⁸ Gerald McMaster, "The Geography of Hope," 97.

performance art, photographic self-portraiture and painting have been explored. . Collectively, these historical contexts have demonstrated that the persistence of the image of Fraser's Indian stereotype of the vanishing race within North American visual culture has predominantly resulted from its affective resonance and ability to evoke powerful emotional responses. Since the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, however, this affective intensity has primarily been monopolized by non-Aboriginal individuals and manipulated to conform to colonial responses of sympathy, pity and sentimentality surrounding the vanishing race discourse. Sentimental affective responses have facilitated the creation of non-Aboriginal historical distance from Euro-American colonial practices, while the continued production and consumption of "End of the Trail" souvenir objects has only served to amplify this element of detachment and disassociation.

Today, however, the contemporary Aboriginal artists James Luna, Terrance Houle, and Kent Monkman, are not only re-appropriating and reclaiming Aboriginal identity and emotional experience by re-conceptualizing Fraser's image, but they are also re-investing this iconic Indian image with the power to appeal to Aboriginal as well as humanitarian emotions and interests. In distinct ways, the works of each of these Aboriginal contemporary artists divest Fraser's image of its traditional emotive capabilities to evoke sympathy, pity, and sentimentality and re-instill it with alternative, postcolonial affective meanings and implications. These artists also effectively disrupt the potential and tendency for non-Aboriginal viewers to maintain a sense of historical detachment and removal from colonization as they strategically play with this notion of distance and allow Aboriginal emotions and responses to assume precedence for the first time in relation to Fraser's iconic Indian image.

I conclude this thesis with a consideration of how the persistence of Fraser's *The End of the Trail* is ultimately steeped in irony. This irony emerges primarily from the recognition that a sculpture devoted to commemorating the literal disappearance and end of Native American people has ultimately never reached its own end of the trail. The notion that contemporary Aboriginal artists have re-envisioned and re-interpreted this symbol of Native American defeat for their own purposes also indicates that there *has been* no finite end of the trail for Aboriginal people as they have managed to survive and continue to evolve within contemporary North American society.

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FIGURES



Figure 1: James Earl Fraser, *The End of the Trail*, Displayed in its Restored State at the National Cowboy Museum of Western Heritage, 2006.

Source:

www.tripadvisor.com/LocationPhotos-g51560-d11...

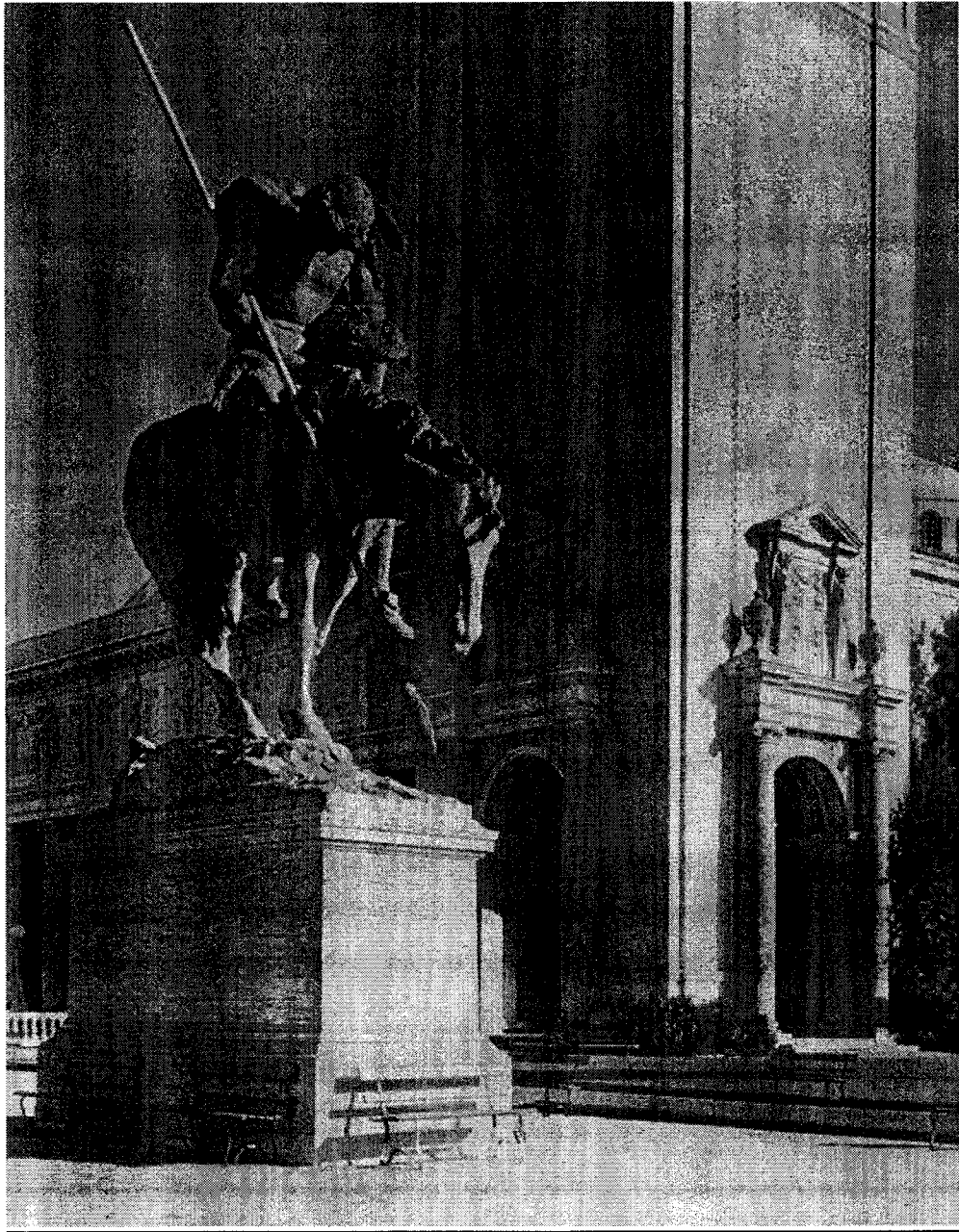


Figure 2: James Earl Fraser, *The End of the Trail*, Displayed in the Court of Palms at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in 1915.

Source:

www.oac.cdlib.org/.../tf9g501110/?brand=oac4

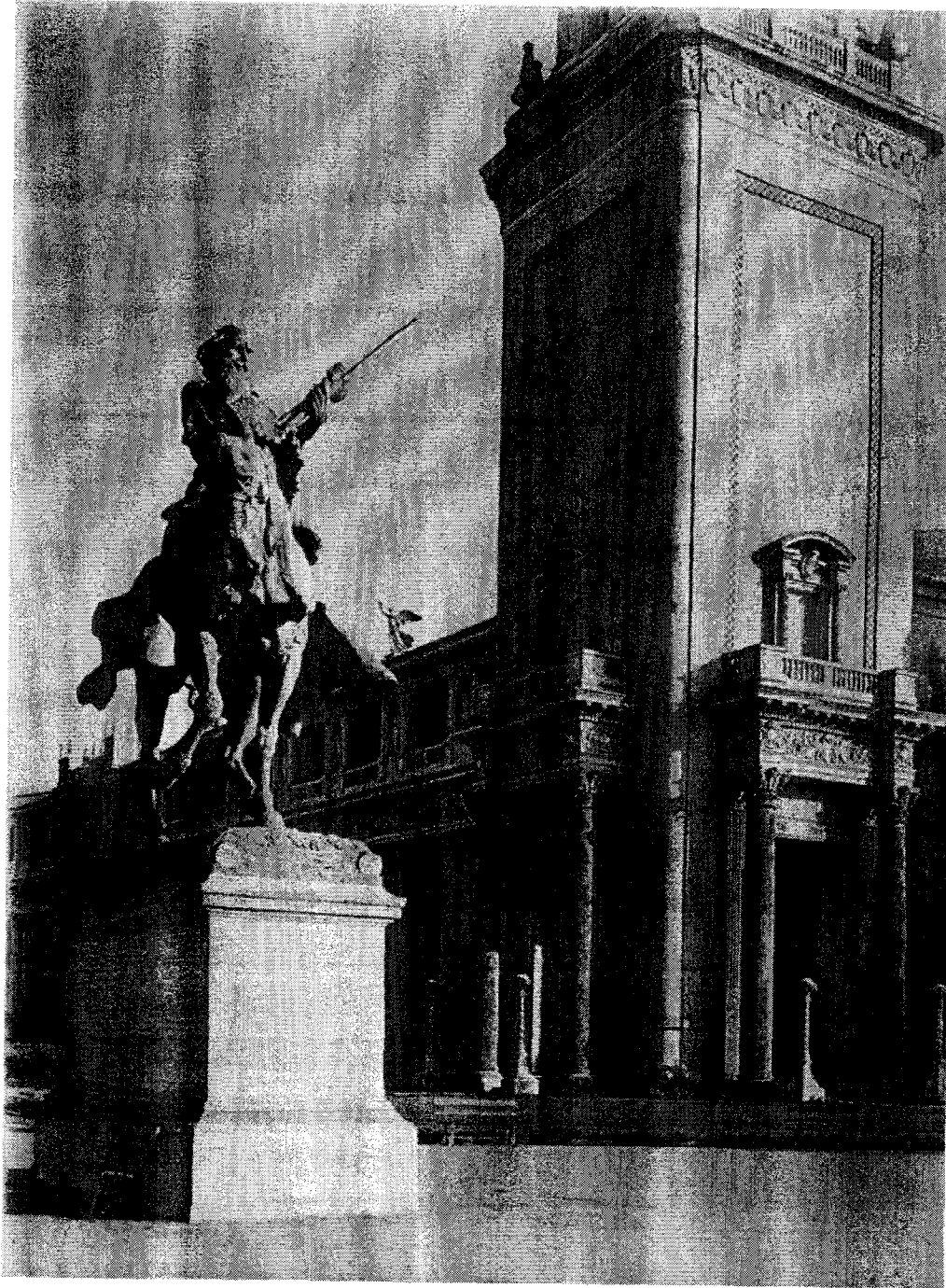
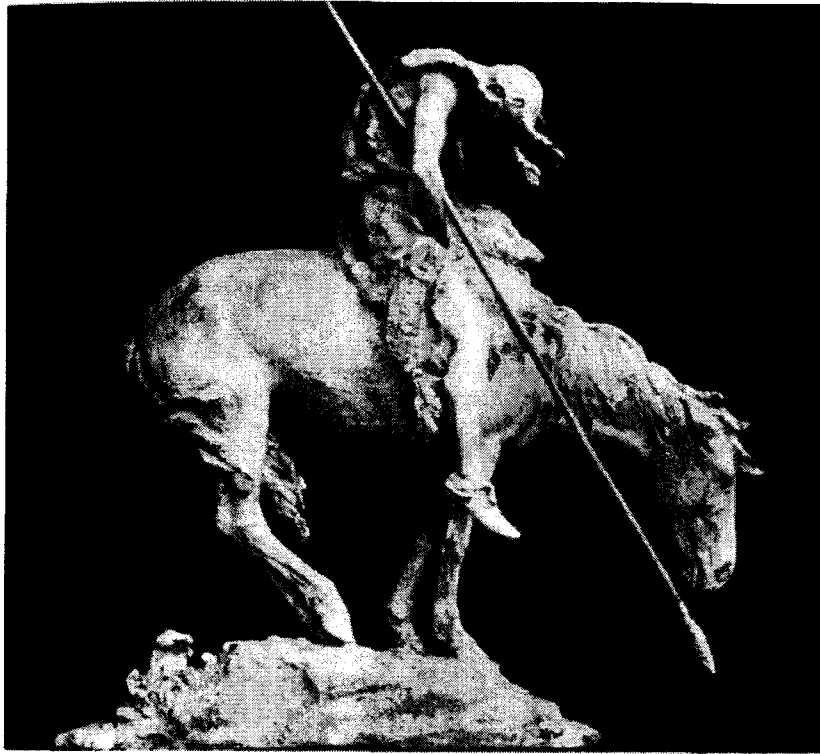


Figure 3: Solon Borglum, *The American Pioneer*, displayed in the Court of Flowers at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in 1915.

Source:

University of Bankroft Gallery: University of California, Berkeley,
content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf6000082s/?docId.. [accessed March 1, 2010].

Figure 4: Comparison of Fraser's *The End of the Trail* and Borglum's *American Pioneer*



THE END OF THE TRAIL
James Earle Fraser, Sculptor



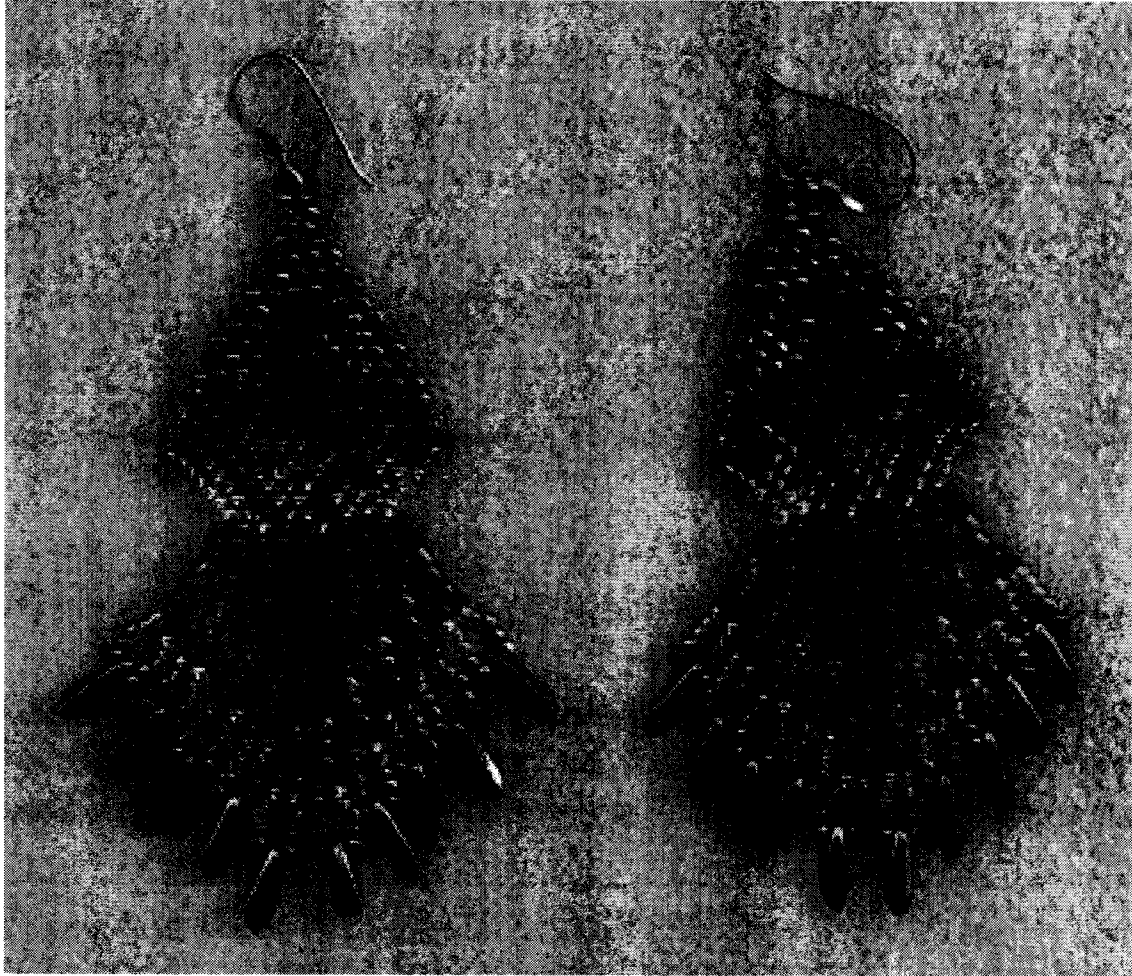


Figure 5: *End of the Trail Earrings*

Source:

Beaded Jewelry Originals, <http://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http>



Figure 6: *End of the Trail Shoulder Bag*

Source:

www.montana-cowboy-and-rustic.com/purse.htm



Figure 7: *End of the Trail Pendant*, \$8.95.

Caption Reads: “This well know symbol is the end of the trail. Known world wide by the Native American Culture.”

Source:

Tab Jewelers, www.tabjewelers.com/index.php?main_page=index...



Figure 8: *End of the Trail Black Cap*, \$17.50

Source:

Cafe Presse.ca, www.cafepress.com/+indian-culture+hats-caps



Figure 9: *End of the Trail Sticker*, \$3.00.

Source:

Cactus Cadillac,
<http://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.cactusmountain.com/Photos/New%2520Stock/Stickers/EndOfTrail.jpg>



Figure 10: *End of the Trail with stone*, \$6.99.

Source:

“C. Green, makers of New Age, Metaphysical, Paranormal, Supernatural & Rainbow Pride Stuff.”

cgreen.org/Shop/index.php?main_page=product_i.

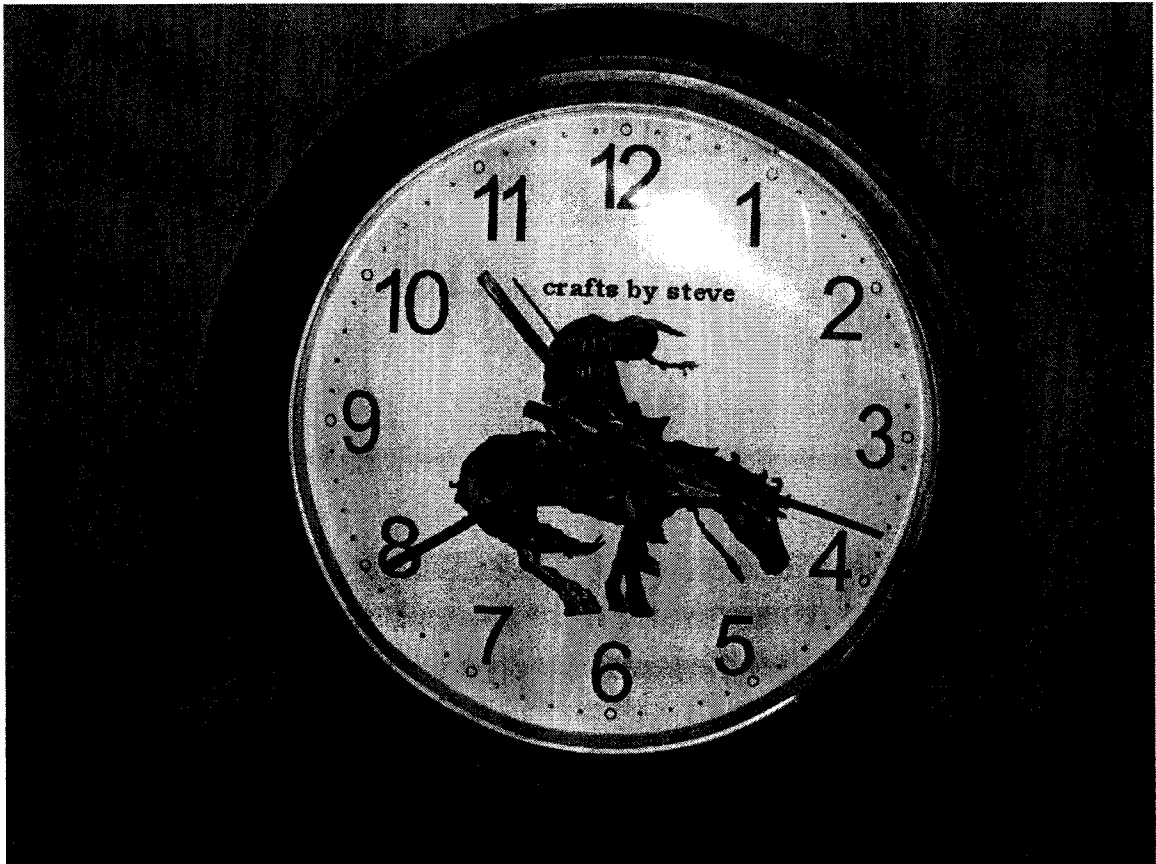


Figure 11: *End of the Trail Wall Clock*

Source:

“Crafts by Steve.com: Homemade arts and crafts,”

www.craftsbysteve.com/shop/index.php?manufact...

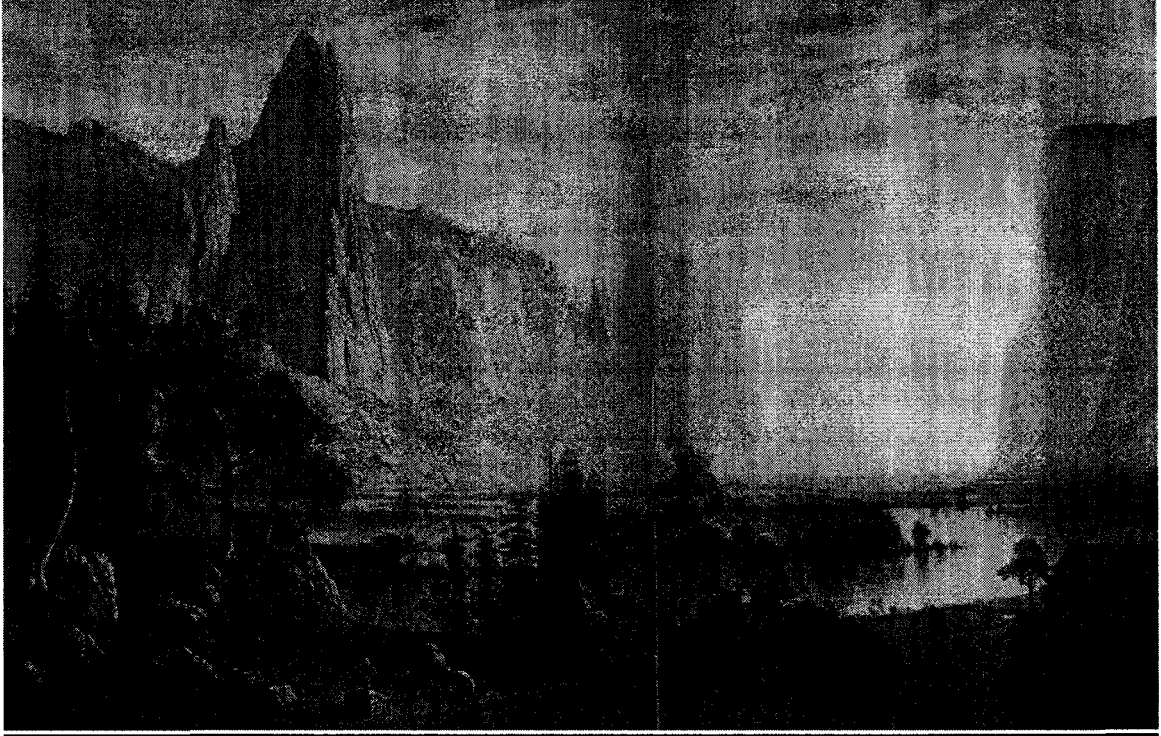


Figure 12: Kent Monkman, *Not the End of the Trail*, 2007

Source:

David Liss & Shirley J. Madill, Curators, *The Triumph of Mischief: Kent Monkman*, exhibition catalogue (Victoria, B.C.: Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, 2007), 71.



Figure 13: *Not the End of the Trail*, detail.

Source:

Ibid, 72.

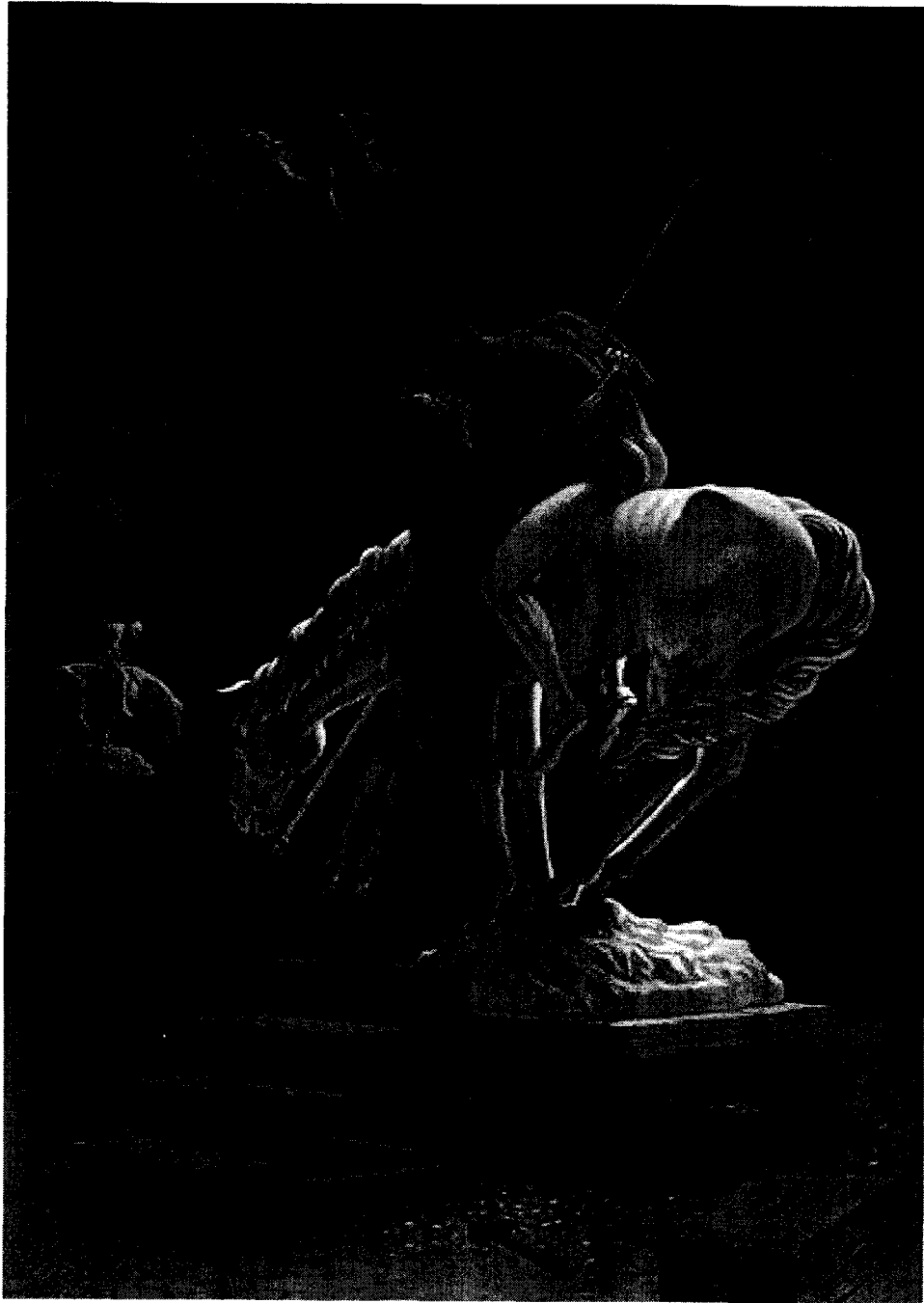


Figure 14: Kent Monkman, *Icon for a New Empire (Si Je t'Aime, Prends Garde à Toi)*, 2007.

Source : Kent Monkman, "Tonto Takes Charge: Miss Chief Eagle Testickle: a portrait," *The Walrus* (May 2008).



Figure 15: James Luna, *End of the Frail*, mixed-media installation, 1990-1991, various sites, Photo: Richard Lou.

Source:

<http://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.communityarts.net/ca/images/luna.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom>



Figure 16: Terrance Houle, *Trails End/End Trails*, 2006.

Source: www.comeintoland.com/interviews/terrancehoule/



Figure 17: Terrance Houle and Jarusha Brown, *End Trail/Not End Trail*, Installation on Banff Public Transit, 2006, Photo: Tara Nicholson.

Source:

Erin Mortin, "In Pursuit of the Textbook Authentic: Erin Morton in Conversation with Terrance Houle," *Fuse* 31:2 (April 2008): 32.