

SEA Panel Proposal: Promotional Rhetorics

Walter Woodward once observed that while a large archive of a variety of texts promoting colonial ventures exists, “the tactics shaping those texts and the ways in which they were deployed have usually been assumed rather than analyzed” (Woodward 91). However, recent scholarship on seventeenth and eighteenth-century texts that depict the exploration and settlement of the Americas by Europeans examines how different discourses translated people, land, and experience through language into images readily consumable by European audiences. Promotional literature writ large served as a discursive laboratory for theorizing, imagining, and organizing settler colonial occupation of the Americas, providing aesthetic and rhetorical structures that continue to shape settler colonialism today. This panel aims to bring this kind of close, careful work with the language of seventeenth and early eighteenth-century promotional texts into conversation with aesthetic and rhetorical methodologies to delineate the forms, genres, and figures that constitute promotional literature. Of particular interest are accounts that historicize changes in promotional literature, that take New Formalist approaches to promotional texts, or whose methodology takes into account Carolyn R. Miller’s definition of genre as “typified rhetorical actions based in recurring situations” (Miller 159).

Possible topics include:

- Rhetorics of enclosure, extraction, assimilation
- Rhetorics of violence
- Forms of promotion: lists, descriptions, relations, maps, compilations
- Genres of promotion
- Figures of promotion: Indigenous Peoples, merchants, captains
- Promotional narratologies
- Major promotional writers/producers: Capt. John Smith, Sir Thomas Smythe, Hakluyt, Purchas
- Promotion and settler colonial ideology, temporality, or narrative
- Etc.

Please submit a title and short proposal for your paper to nmohlmann@uwf.edu along with a short CV by midnight on Friday, October 21st.