

SEA Panel Proposal: Regenerating *Regeneration Through Violence*: Looking Back on Fifty Years

Society of Early Americanists Biennial Conference, College Park, Maryland, June 8-11, 2023

This panel will consider the argument, method, and influence of Richard Slotkin's *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (RTV) on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of its publication in 1973. Google Scholar counts nearly four thousand citations of the book over the decades, nearly eighty a year for half a century. With its unique blend of literary history, racial analysis, masculinist frameworks, and popular studies, RTV represents one of the core texts in the formation of "American Studies" by merging the nationalist analyses of Henry Nash Smith and RWB Lewis with newer ideas about psychoanalysis, nationalism, and structuralism. Slotkin's work has been grouped with that of Annette Kolodny, Michael Rogin, and Robert Berkhofer among those who brought early American studies into conversation with modern critical techniques. His extended attention to early American materials contributed greatly at a crucial moment as our field began to expand beyond its assignment as mere prelude to the "American Renaissance" in older narratives by Parrington, Matthiesson, and Miller. However, RTV is not without its critics. Patricia Nelson Limerick calls it "as fascinating as it is maddening." Shirley Samuels and others have identified its difficulty with gender issues, for example.

I am seeking papers or contributors to a roundtable discussion that examines the legacy of RTV. Possible topics might include:

- *Analyzing "Critical Myth Theory" and other Jungian modes
- *RTV's role in the history of early American Studies
- *RTV's treatment of indigenous populations
- *Critical responses to RTV
- *RTV's treatment of women and sexuality
- *RTV and Charles Brockden Brown
- *RTV and Captivity Narratives
- *RTV and Daniel Boone
- *RTV and James Fenimore Cooper
- *RTV and the "big" scholarly book

Please send any proposed paper abstracts or expressions of interest (along with a brief CV) to Ned Watts (Michigan State University) by October 20 at wattse@msu.edu.