

## **Frontiers of Philosophy and Flesh: A Feminist Perspective on Frame and Conceptual Metaphor in Canadian and American Frontier Literature**

Tiffany Johnstone, UBC

This paper explores how non-fiction representations of travelling bodies evoke conceptual metaphors in what I identify as North American cross-border frontier revival literature at the end of the nineteenth century. My work bridges feminist and conceptual metaphor theory to study how specific cultural concepts are *lived* and revised on the level of the female body in ways that cross geographical and disciplinary divides. Eastern Canadian and American adventure writers applied American discourses of Manifest Destiny to a western Canadian setting in response to a waning American frontier to promote the intercontinental expansion of Anglo-Saxon culture. I propose that this concept of a mythic cross-border frontier involved a complex frontier revival frame, including roles such as: a metonymic travelling body, a cyclical western journey, and trials in the wilderness. I see this frame as based on several interacting conceptual metaphors including the Locational Self metaphor, the Locational Event Structure metaphor, the Self as Container metaphor, and the Objective Standpoint metaphor.

Drawing on specific examples of American male frontier revival authors such as Hamlin Garland and Julian Ralph, I show how they *lived* conceptual metaphors and the experiential roles of the frontier revival frame through the eastern travelling white male body to convey ideas of cross-border Anglo-Saxon manifest destiny. I focus on specific examples from texts by Canadian and American female frontier revival authors such as Grace Gallatin Seton-Thompson, Sara Jeanette Duncan, Agnes Deans Cameron, and Mary Schäffer to show how the female travelling body enacted conceptual metaphors and frame roles that were culturally associated with men. I explore how these women use the conceptual metaphors in the frontier revival frame differently from their male peers. For instance, they draw on schematic tensions between the Self as Container and Objective Standpoint metaphors to indicate specific conflicts in their lived experience as metonymic female adventurers. As well, by proving their experiential access to conceptual metaphors that were culturally gendered as male, these authors extend ideas of cultural progress to women on both sides of the border.

Trying to locate the underlying ideas that connect these proto-feminist frontier texts to each other and to their broader cultural contexts means looking for the fundamental iconography with which they speak—that of the body itself. In bridging cognitive linguistics and feminist theory, I have found not only a way to analyze these texts, but rather a way of analyzing how we *live* and revise cultural concepts of the *self* through the body across divides of: gender, race, and class;

marginalized and mainstream texts; literary, political, and historical discourse; geographical borders; time periods; and academic disciplines.

By uniting these different theoretical paths, I seek to ground feminist close readings by providing a rigorous methodology with which to analyze how metaphors emerge through the body. Furthermore, my work grows out of cognitive linguistics to show how underlying conceptual metaphors take shape within the inevitably shared and yet diversely experienced cultural spaces of our everyday lives.

