

**Johan Schimanski and Stephen Wolfe**  
***Workshop 2: Reading the opening of Heart of Darkness through border poetics***

"Border Poetics? – A Comparative Perspective", Tromsø 11-13.11.2004

The purpose of this workshop is to show the usefulness of Border Poetics in the analysis of the first twenty pages of the well-known modern story "Heart of Darkness". We have picked this story because in it we share a constructed cultural idiom, a very good example of a border crossing narrative, and a controversial narrative that frames images of colonial violence, the scramble for Africa, and the misrepresentation of the Other. We will focus the workshop on the concurrence of topographical, temporal, symbolic, textual, and epistemological borders in the opening pages of the story. We will frame a series of questions about the ways in which these various borders are expressed and then juxtapose them with symmetrical and asymmetrical oppositions. We will also focus on use of textual borders seen as medial borders.

In the second part of the workshop, we will examine Marlow's description of his "border-crossing" to the African continent. We will set out some of the ways in which figurative tropes increase dramatically at this point in the story. On the edge of the African continent, the frames and boundaries of a text can be "charted" within the complex relationships created by a system of representation based upon imperialism. We will end the workshop by using Marlow's own comments on his role as an "impostor" to outline a way of reading which articulates the form as well as the function of the storytellers within this narrative.

Additional copies of the excerpt from Conrad will be available at the workshop.