

## **"Africa" as cliché**

"Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness helped cement many of the clichés that persist, starting with its title.

Africa has always been a concept as much as a place: an exotic backdrop for outsiders to have ennobling experiences, a land of theatric extremes of violence and beauty. In modern accounts, the native stereotypes have simply shifted, from barbarous and bloodthirsty to impoverished or corrupt. Simply saying Africa "is" anything implies a single amorphous entity, instead of fifty-three countries with a billion inhabitants."

Julian Smith, from his book Crossing the Heart of Africa