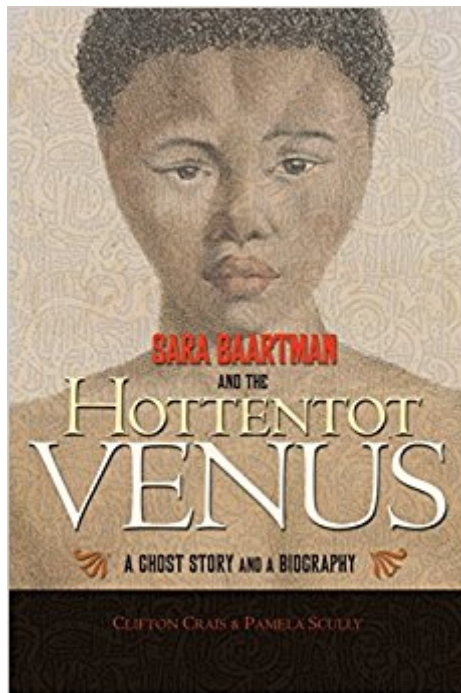




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Sara Baartman And The Hottentot Venus: A Ghost Story And A Biography



Synopsis

Displayed on European stages from 1810 to 1815 as the Hottentot Venus, Sara Baartman was one of the most famous women of her day, and also one of the least known. As the Hottentot Venus, she was seen by Westerners as alluring and primitive, a reflection of their fears and suppressed desires. But who was Sara Baartman? Who was the woman who became the Hottentot Venus? Based on research and interviews that span three continents, *Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus* tells the entwined histories of an illusive life and a famous icon. In doing so, the book raises questions about the possibilities and limits of biography for understanding those who live between and among different cultures. In reconstructing Baartman's life, the book traverses the South African frontier and its genocidal violence, cosmopolitan Cape Town, the ending of the slave trade, the Industrial Revolution, the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars, London and Parisian high society, and the rise of racial science. The authors discuss the ramifications of discovering that when Baartman went to London, she was older than originally assumed, and they explore the enduring impact of the Hottentot Venus on ideas about women, race, and sexuality. The book concludes with the politics involved in returning Baartman's remains to her home country, and connects Baartman's story to her descendants in nineteenth- and twentieth-century South Africa. *Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus* offers the authoritative account of one woman's life and reinstates her to the full complexity of her history.

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review. While the body of Sara Baartman (1789–1815), also known as the Hottentot Venus, has been the subject of intense Western scrutiny (she was regarded as a paradoxical freak of race and sexuality, both alluring and primitive) and exploitation to the point of postmortem dissection, little is known about her life beyond her careers as sideshow exhibit and posthumous icon for a variety of causes, from artifact repatriation to the evils of science. Crais (*The Politics of Evil*) and Scully (*Liberating the Family*) chase down obscure references to Baartman's life in South Africa and discover a rich if difficult life: a woman who loved and lost and traveled farther (from Cambedoo and Cape Town to London and Paris) than many of her peers. Her life personifies the shames of colonialism, slavery and gender persecution, but Baartman showed too much independence to be reduced to mere victim or symbol (The more iconic Sara Baartman became, the more she stood for a range of causes, the less complicated her past became). The authors dig deep into the limited remaining evidence but the biography wears its research lightly, a backdrop to this well-written and fascinating story of a woman who remains an elusive figure. (Dec.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Sara Baartman, a young South African woman brought to London in 1810 and displayed seminude to show off her ample bottom, was named the Hottentot Venus by her captors and managers. Historians Crais and Scully examine the cultural context of Baartman's exploitation in Europe as Westerners grappled with issues of race and sex and later racialized science. Baartman attracted the attention of prominent British abolitionists and French scientists as well as voyeurs. After five years of researching archives and libraries and conducting genealogical research to uncover some of Baartman's relatives, the authors also look beyond Baartman's life as a curiosity and an exhibit to explore her life as a woman. Crais and Scully place Baartman's contributions in such areas as the rights of the unlawfully detained, global feminism, and later when her body was returned to South Africa from France the politics of indigenous identity. Readers who enjoyed *African Queen* (2007), by Rachel Holmes, will appreciate this further examination of the life of an extraordinary woman. --Vanessa Bush --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I just wish I could have bought a digital version - I don't care for physical books because I like to have 5 - 7 with me at all times.

Very informative and definitely a great read. Quite enlightening. I have recommended this book to my close associates. This should be required reading for all African American youths.

Great book would definitely recommend this to friends and family to read. I have enjoyed the parts that i have read

Excellent read and great historical record. Africans are the original human beings and Im glad she is part of the human story in writing!!

Excellent condition

book came as described, having began reading it yet but am super excited to dive in! highly recommend purchasing from this user.

Sorry, but this woman like any women of her generation was slaved into this practice. Was mistreated and taken advantage of. Yes, she had nice shape but a far cry for anyone to be calling her Hottentot Venus when clearly this woman was ridiculed yet forced into this without any comprehension of what was going on around her. Yet, given misinform interviews of what assumed when not being certain of the facts. Not to mention, it was a bit difficult to read.

The story of Sara Baartman is at first seen as quite a cut-and-dry story, involving the exploitation and restraint over a southern African woman around the turn of the 19th century, showcased around Europe as a specimen of the "lower" forms of human kind at the tip of Africa, and touted as the possible link between humans and other animals by scientists. Her life has been used in many contexts since her death, and has most recently stood in the limelight, upon her return to South Africa from Parisian museums, as a glaring symbol of the colonial oppression associated with the late 18th and 19th centuries. What Crais and Scully vividly portray, however, is that Sara Baartman's history is anything but a cut-and-dry account. By extensively surveying primary and secondary sources from across the world, Crais and Scully not only explain the life of Sara Baartman, but also take the reader on a side-by-side voyage with Sara as she went from the rural areas of South Africa to the growing colonial outpost of Cape Town, and then all the way to the metropolises of London and Paris. The book drives home the point the interpretive values held within the field of history, as well as the frequent lack of self-power and choice given posthumously to

historical figures. By empowering Sara Baartman, and returning her voice to her after centuries of only others speaking on her behalf, Crais and Scully guide the reader through a questioning of otherwise-assumed historical fact and exploration of the different themes underlying a very prominent character in world history. This book serves as a wonderful insight into the topics of world history, scientific research, and gender studies. The writing style and storyline superbly captures the continued attention and fascination of the reader, and offers a welcomed change to a field typically inundated with dry, solely analytical role. Crais and Scully's book actively energises the life of Sara Baartman and her role in it, and takes the reader on a trip around a world of the not-so-distant past.

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