



YOU ARE INVITED

The Faculty of Science invites you to a Public Lecture by

Prof Debra Meyer

(Executive Dean: Faculty of Science)

on

Decolonisation: the 'missing link' between Sara Baartman, Comparative Anatomy and Afrikaans

Friday, 21 September 2018

12:00 – 13:00

CHINUA ACHEBE, Level 6, APK Library

Why is it that different race groups responded differently to the H&M 'coolest monkey' t-shirt earlier this year?

The origins of the discipline of Comparative Anatomy and the existence of scientific racism may shed some light on the matter. Comparative Anatomy (the study of similarities and differences in the anatomy of different species) is intricately linked to Sara Baartman through Georges Cuvier, who in life acknowledged her intelligence, multilingualism and excellent memory, but in death proclaimed her the missing link in the evolution of humankind. In the 1800's comparative anatomists were viewed as 'mediators between popular perception and scientific fact'. Sara Baartman spoke at least 5 languages including Afrikaans, the existence of which is arguably the most prominent example of successful decolonization. This lecture will challenge you to consider the dangers of generalization and perception, even if done through the lens of scientific investigation.

Prof Debra Meyer is a Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and Executive Dean of the Faculty of Science at the University of Johannesburg.



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