

The Past is Not Dead



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Through one figure--Badin, eighteenth-century Afro-Caribbean slave given to the Swedish royal court--Allan Pred shows how stereotypes endure through the repeated confusion of facts and fiction, providing a highly original perspective on the perpetuation of racializing stereotypes in the West. In the first of two interlocking montages inspired by Walter Benjamin, the book focuses on Badin, who died in Stockholm in 1822, and representations of his life that appeared from the 1840s through the 1990s. In the second montage, Pred brings the late nineteenth century and the present into play, shifting to urban sites where racialized stereotyping is on public display, including a museum that has exhibited the bodily remains of the African male. Intriguing for its insight into the workings of race and immigration on the national imagination of a European nation--but with implications and ramifications far beyond that specific example--"The Past Is Not Dead is a bold inquiry into both the collective memory and the amnesia of those who stereotype versus the personal remembering and forgetting of the stereotyped.

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