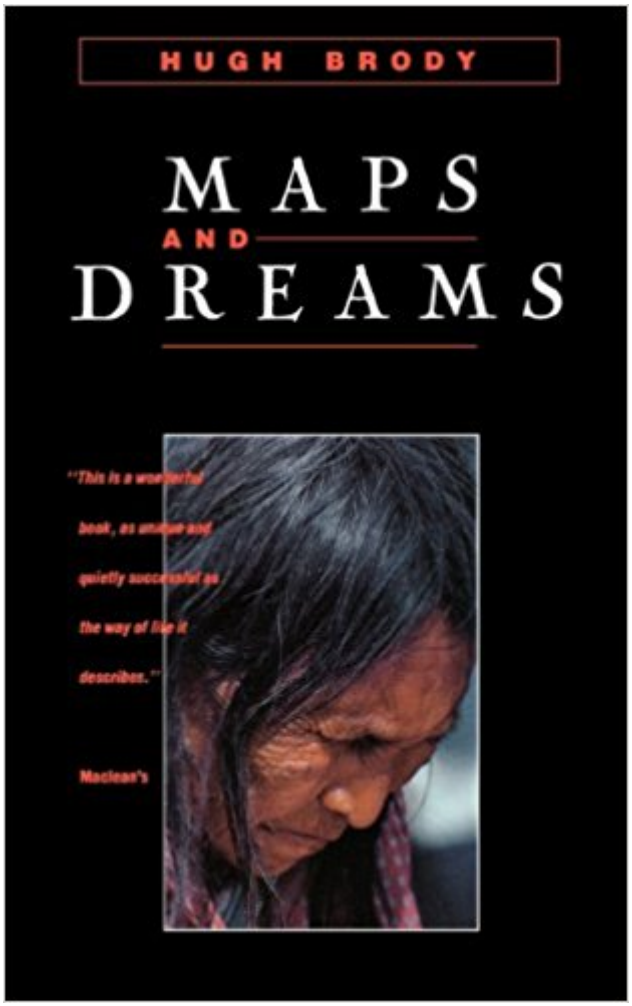
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Maps And Dreams



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Synopsis

A wonderful book, full of travel and people. Most of all, it is superb anthropology, challenging many of the accepted notions about the lives of hunters. Paul TherouxFascinating descriptions of daily life and the Indians dreams of hunting trails and of heaven alternate with a perceptive commentary on the history, politics and social conditions of northeastern British Columbia. Two realities emerge: the rapacious dreams and plans of the white man, and the maps the Indians made to demonstrate the tenacity of a hunting and trapping economy. Conflicts of interest and the collision of points of view are reflected in the structure of the book. Odd-numbered chapters are a narrative of the Indians in their hunting territory of forests and foothills. The even-numbered chapters explore how Indians must compete with resource and recreational industries for an ever-greater piece of the North. Drawing on the authors experiences of living with Beaver Indians, this book makes a significant contribution to social science and history, without depriving the reader of the pure enjoyment of fine writing and storytelling.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Eloquent." -- Kirkus Reviews"Privileged as few whites have been, Brody took part in several hunts during his stay. His accounts of these expeditions are stirring and dramatic . . . when he writes of Indian life, his prose sparkles." -- Washington Post"This is a wonderful book, as unique and quietly successful as the way of life it describes." --Maclean’s --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Hugh Brody is a writer, anthropologist and filmmaker. He has taught philosophy at Queens University, Belfast, geography at McGill University and social anthropology at Cambridge. His films include 1919, On Indian Land, Hunters and Bombers, Time Immemorial and The Washing of Tears. His fieldwork in the High Arctic in the 1970s formed the basis for a television movie and a book, The Peoples Land, and several films.

The Big Boys planned to build a pipeline from Alaska down to the US Midwest, bringing energy from source to consumer. The line had to cross some hundreds of miles of British Columbia, over land that had once belonged exclusively to Indians, but which had already been invaded by trappers, sport hunters, ranchers, oil and gas explorers, loggers, drillers, and the beginnings of suburbia. By some miracle, somebody thought that it might be a good idea to see what the Indians thought about this. It seems they had never been consulted up to then. Treaties had been made, then subverted---the old North American pattern. In general, nobody had paid much attention to the Indians of northeastern British Columbia. It was believed that their way of life was kaput, that they were all alcoholics living on welfare, and that they hadn't kept their traditions. It seems they had been living for centuries in an "energy corridor" without a viable way of life. But now they were seriously in the way. Enter Hugh Brody, a British anthropologist.In MAPS AND DREAMS, Brody accomplishes the near impossible. He writes a marvelously sensitive, interesting report, incorporating such often-boring details as hunting and land use maps, and accounts of meetings. Not only does he show that the culture of the Athapaskan Indians was alive in 1979, he allows them to speak, describes the land use situation from their point of view, and connects their economy with their culture and daily lives. His book is at once a report, an answer to those who had written off the Indians, and a readable work of anthropology. White man's dreams of ever bigger projects, ever more exploitation of the land, he says so exactly, "are the most established carcinoma of the North American imagination". They are ever poised to crush the Indian dreams. The Indian dreams, of how to find game, how to find their way to Heaven, stand in the way of the white man's maps---the maps that show where to put the pipeline, where to drill, where to stake out more claims. Both the Indian maps on paper, which showed how they used the land and their traditional dream maps, showing the way to the Beyond, stood in the way of the white man's dreams. A few thousand souls against the tide of Western visions of "progress". We don't find out what happened, but it wasn't looking hopeful. Different maps, different dreams. For good anthropology, for deeper understanding of the problems of the Far North, for just a fascinating book, you can do a lot worse than read MAPS

AND DREAMS.

I usually eschew much associated with Canadian History. Canadians, like Australians, have an exagerated sense of their own importance in the world. Most of the literature from Canada, especially on native peoples either is very particular or waxes wildly about such things as noble indians with a mystical, yet undefined attachement to their land. Such analysis does nothing either for the First Nations peoples or the whites that might be trying to understand them.It takes of course a Brit like Hugh Brody to really tell Canadians what exactly that connection is with the land. Sometimes mysterious, sometimes just simply empathetic, from hunting practises to the function of dreams in Beaver culture, Brody descibes in a combination of narrative and anecdotal evidence the beauty of the Beaver People in North Eastern British Columbia.While the context is noticably Canadian (the Canadian and British govts. never waged war against the Indians in the same way the US did) the lessons are truly timeless and something that one can take away and extroplate on other social problems and situations. The economics of the attachment to the land are well detailed - that is the function of the maps. Brody shows that there is a clear link, palpable and real, to the land and it is hard to argue with him.One personal thing I would add is that having camped and hunted in this region with my father, Brody’s prose are so evocative that I could at times feel the bite in the fall air, the smoke from fires around the village and the wide sweeps of gravel in the wild rivers and creeks teaming with trout. Brody writes extremely well and on the strength of his prose alone I am looking to add more or his titles on native peoples to my reading list.

I came to this book in an effort to understand how First Peoples adapted to the landscape they live in. Mr. Brody eloquently presents the people, their land, and their inherited way of life. It is heartbreaking to read how their claims to this way of life have been ignored in the past hundred years under the impact of colonization. I lived in this area as a child and it is difficult to describe the impact of this book - it presents aspects of experience so many in our inherited colonial culture wish to either eradicate or to ignore. This book is a powerful indictment of the way the people and the land in this province have been abused.

Maps and dreams is a special book. As the lector, we can understand a reality that is far from us. The writter give us the chance to know somme people by is experience. He also explain the politic context in which this people lives and why they have somme specials demands for their communauties. The book is not perfect, but he propose to the lector a series of questions that only

the lector could answer or the autochtones themselves.

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