

The sun is horizontal, so the flesh of the near-naked girl bouncing a ball is netted in its light, an orange mesh waving between her and the shadowed wall. She kisses the hand beside her mouth. It is his hand or her hand, it hardly matters. The sun is flashing everything in gold. It bathes the blunt grey rocks and the stunted spruce and the low-lying lichens and the delicate tough rock cranberries. The river flows both ways. Granny was waiting on the floor of the parlor. She looked small, lonely, and patient, and at the sight of her the children and their mother were in a guilty state. Those who are many things (as I must confess the times require) may flay the carcass; the skin of which artificially dressed will make admirable gloves for ladies, and summer boots for fine gentlemen.

Focus on photography in book from renowned Society is stunning, in-depth and timeless

National Geographic: The Photographs
Leah Bendavid-Val, ed.
National Geographic Society

PAISE CRAFT

THE BRUNSWICKAN

National Geographic: The Photographs is nothing new to anyone familiar with the magazine which has become an American institution. Many of the photos in this large format coffee table

type book are ones which we have seen time and time again. The interesting, and ultimately redeeming, feature of this book is its focus on the technical and artistic innovation that National Geographic has always attempted to nurture in its photography.

Editor Leah Bendavid-Val has done a good job of coordinating photos, photo captions, and biographical information on the Geographic photographers with a broader discussion of the goals and history of photography at National Geographic. My only criticism is that the writing is

consistently awkward and often completely disjointed. Maybe this is a product of having too much to say in too little space.

Through the photos of National Geographic many of us have seen places and things far removed from our everyday experience. Photographically, National Geographic has extended our consciousness. The images in the photos speak out to us. Whether they are of distant places or our own backyards, these photos have always posed questions: Why are we here? What have we done? What is the meaning of this image?

This book also focuses on the technical innovations which have been made by National Geographic photographers. The first magazine to produce full-colour issues, National Geographic has, from its inception, been on the cutting edge of photography.

For the average person who has little knowledge of the mechanics of photography, *The Photographs* may be difficult to follow. The intricacies of photo development and production are mind-boggling, particularly when Geographic photographers relate their personal experiences of developing film in the field or of spending years of their lives on a single assignment, waiting to capture the essence of their subject in a single frame.

This is one aspect of this book which is wonderful. National Geographic has built its reputation on the integrity and innovativeness of its contents. This is possible only because of the incredible commitment which the photographers make to their work.

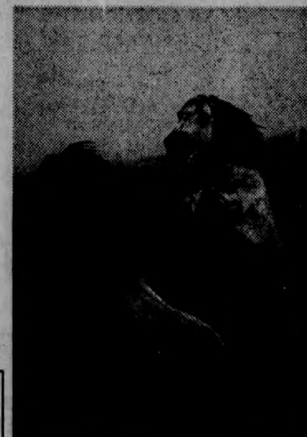
Bendavid-Val does a great job of interspersing the technical discussions with information about particular assignments. Some of the stories make you cringe, like Sam Abell's six month

search for bison skulls (fresh) or Bates Littlehales and Luis Marden's almost fatal encounter with the bends. Others make you want to drop everything to pick up a camera, like deeply spiritual images of human experience and magical underwater photos.

There is one photo in particular that remains in my mind after finishing this book. It is a photo of eight children standing in a row on a concrete floor against an institutional grey wall. The little girls and boys, no more than ten years old, stare into the camera's lens. They are naked except for their underpants.

At first glance this image looks reprehensible—it looks like kiddie porn. It's not. Each of these children has a genetic abnormality caused by devastating pollution in Moscow. They have no left hands. The picture stuns you with its strength.

I recommend this book for anyone, particularly those with an interest in photography, cultural anthropology, animals, the environment or National Geographic Magazine. It also makes a great gift and an impressive addition to any coffee table collection. It's a little pricey at \$67, but well worth the expense.



Portraits of the Gypsy people eloquent - both scholarly and passionate

Bury Me Standing: The Gypsies and Their Journey
by Isabel Fonseca
Vintage Departures

MARIA PAISLEY

THE BRUNSWICKAN

Bury Me Standing: The Gypsies and Their Journey is an insightful book about the Gypsy—or Roma—people who are among the least understood on earth.

Although they number about 12 million and are Europe's largest minority, their culture remains largely obscure. But author Isabel Fonseca, who lived among the Gypsy, eloquently writes a rich narrative about their culture and their search for identity.

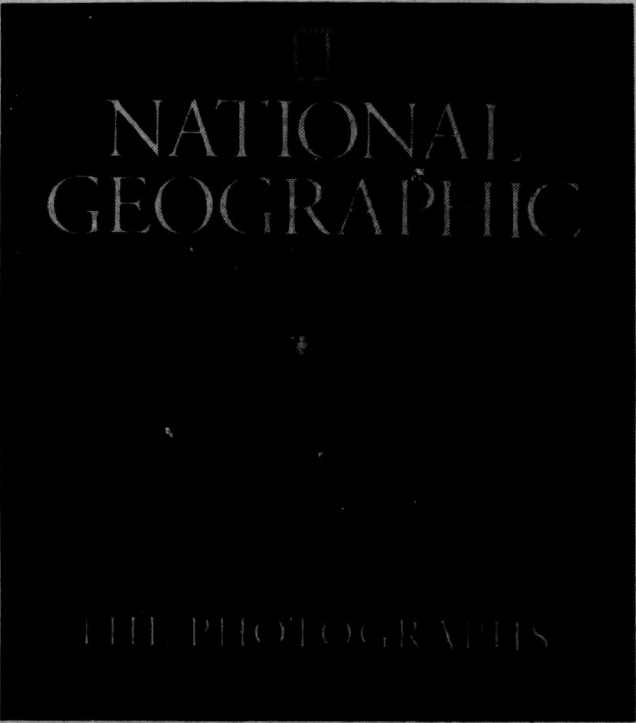
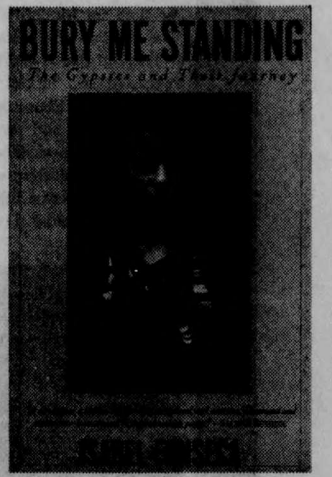
The book is well written with portraits of individuals—the poet, the politician, the child prostitute—to show insight into the lives, humor, language, wisdom and taboos of the Gypsies. *Bury Me Standing: The Gypsies and Their Journey* is a unique blend of a scholarly and vivid, the documentation and historic, the passionate and the disciplined. Fonseca writes in a manner which is not boring, but rather engaging, and still at the same time is profoundly understanding of their lives.

Fonseca traces the Roma's exodus out of India, 1000 years ago and their history of persecution; their enslavement by the Princes of Medieval Romania; the Nazi massacre; the Communist regimes force them to assimilate into society; and, most recently, evicted from their settlements by nationalist mobs throughout the new "democracies" of Eastern Europe.

The Roma have always been with us and have been used as handy scapegoats or figments of the romantic imagination, but this is the first time they have been so vividly brought to life.

Fonseca was educated at Columbia University and Oxford University. She was an assistant editor at the "Times Literary Supplement" and has written for a wide range of publications, including "The Independent," "Vogue," "The Nation" and "The Wall Street Journal." She currently lives in London.

Bury Me Standing: The Gypsies and Their Journey is a book that would interest those who enjoy politics, history, current events, anthropology, sociology and travel.



Platoon leader provides harsh criticism of his military experience

Doing Battle: The Making of a Skeptic
by Paul Fussell
who?

JOHN NELSON RICKARD

THE BRUNSWICKAN

Paul Fussell may or may not be a household name to some. His book, *The Great War and Modern Memory* won the National Book Prize in the United States in 1976. He has a Ph.D. from Harvard and has spent much of his

life as a literary scholar and critic. Before his literary fame, however, Fussell led a rifle platoon in the 103rd Infantry Division in France during 1944-45. It was his experience as a leader that generated this latest work, *Doing Battle: The Making of a Skeptic*.

Fussell's work is part diary of his days in combat and part autobiography. He takes the reader through his youth in "Anglo-Saxon" Pasadena, California through his days in the ROTC program at Pomona College to his wounding in France in March, 1945.

The tone of the work is completely irreverent, hence the sub-title. Fussell spends a lot of time attacking organized

religion, especially of the Protestant type stating that "To this day I can't pass a Presbyterian Church anywhere without a crushing feeling that boredom, rigidity, and fraud lurk inside." Elsewhere he tells the reader of the enemies he defeated as a child. It is clear from reading between the lines that he was likely latently homosexual, at least in his youth.

Even from a quick read one senses that Fussell is listing off a series of

"Thank God the troops, most of them, did not know how bad we were. It's hard enough to be asked to die in the midst of stumblebums led by fools - intolerable."

oppressions endured in his life, whether from his parents, his friends, the church, or the U.S. Army. It does not seem that he was inspired to do much, certainly not in the army, yet it is his reflections on life as an infantry platoon leader which are the most interesting.

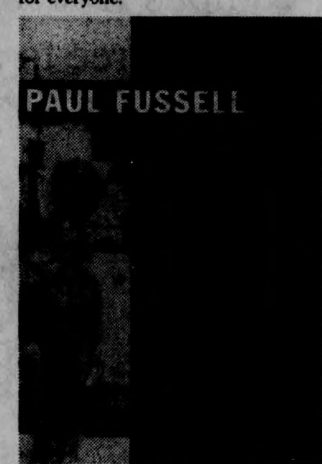
Fussell was quite right when he said that the training he received was inadequate to deal with the horrors of the battlefield. He firmly believed that infantry combat was the most extreme experience a human being can go through. In relating his first taste of combat he writes: "My boyish illusions, largely suddenly I knew that I was not and would never be in a world that was

reasonable and just." Fussell is rather unique in that his combat experience so warped his perception of what went on.

His later chapters are spent vilifying the army in which he served. His criticism reaches an apex with the comment that "Thank God the troops, most of them, did not know how bad we were. It's hard enough to be asked to die in the midst of heroes, but to die in the midst of stumblebums led by fools-intolerable." At least Fussell included himself in his indictment.

Whatever its faults (which are subjective anyway) *Doing Battle: The Making of a Skeptic* is an important contribution to our understanding of the world of combat. It is not a place for everyone.

PAUL FUSSELL



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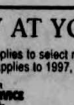
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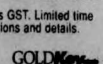
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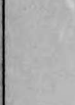
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