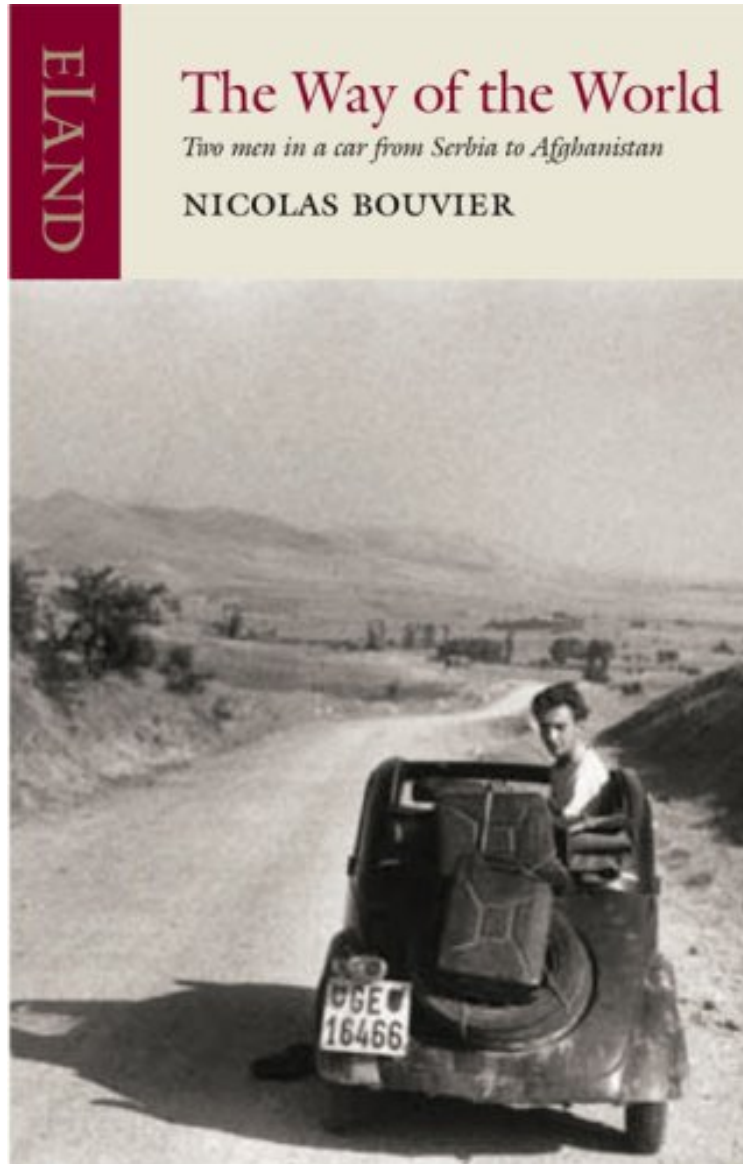


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The Law

Roger Vailland

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A Cult Classic, "The Way of the World" is one of the most beguiling travel books ever written. Reborn from the ashes of a Pakistan rubbish heap, it tells of a friendship between a writer and an artist, forged on an impecunious, life-enhancing journey from Serbia to Afghanistan in the 1950s. On one level it is a candid description of a road journey, on another a meditation on travel as a journey towards the self, all written by a sage with a golden pen and a wide infectious smile. It is published here for the first time in English with the Vernet drawings which are such a dynamic part of its whole.

From Library Journal In 1953, the author and an artist friend left Yugoslavia and worked their way across Greece, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan. Bouvier's recollections of their 18 months of travel captures the timeless nature of what happens when different cultures interact regardless of the events surrounding them. Originally published in 1963 under the title, *L'Usage du Monde*, the book became a cult classic in France and was translated into several European languages. Because it covers countries that have become accessible to all peoples through world events and the media, it seems appropriate that the book is available for the first time in English. For large travel collections. - Elizabeth Loftus, Onondaga Cty. P.L., Syracuse, N.Y. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Kirkus s Lyrical reminiscences of a footloose journey from Yugoslavia to India, undertaken 40 years ago by the then-25-year-old author of the enchanting *The Japanese Chronicles* (1992) and an equally young companion. Traveling in a distinctly fractious Fiat, the two friends, appealingly optimistic and resourceful, make their way "on the cheap," settling in at peasant inns, earning their expenses by writing articles, delivering lectures, and organizing exhibitions. Perhaps because of their winning ways, they attract a colorful band of cohorts as they wend their way eastward--beggars and brigands, muezzins and Marxists. In recounting his adventures, Bouvier frequently provides thought-provoking insights: At one point, discussing the shortcomings of US humanitarian aid programs, he observes that "practicing charity demands endless tact and humility"--qualities he finds lacking even in well-intentioned Americans; later, he points out that, "like a mirror, an intelligent face is the same age as what it reflects." Wherever he travels, Bouvier displays an artist's eye for the image-conjuring detail: a moustache "like a furled umbrella"; a Tabriz cinema in which the projectionist, eager to get home, speeds up his machine until "the story would take on a disturbing pace: caresses looked like slaps, ermine-clad empresses hurtled downstairs." Throughout, Robyn Marsack's translation from the French is a model of lucidity and smoothness, capturing the author's unique blend of humanity and humor, and, as a bonus, there's a gracefully appreciative introduction by travel-writer Patrick Leigh Fermor. Travel writing to be cherished and reread. -- Copyright 1993, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. "A genuine masterpiece, an exhilarating, innocent, perceptive and wholly enjoyable young man's travel book, and a discovery of the Asian road that by rights deserves to occupy the same shelf as great classics of the genre such as Robert Byron's *The Road to Oxiana* or Eric Newby's *Short Walk in the Hindu Kush*." --The Financial Times The exhilaration of the open road and the feeling of connectedness to the natural world that it can produce, is, after all, a common human experience. Simply expressed, it has produced some of mankind's greatest writing. The Swiss travel writer Nicolas Bouvier explores this territory in his youthful masterpiece, *The Way of the World*, where he conveys as well as anyone the raw intoxication of being on the road. The New York Times "The Way of the World is a masterpiece which elevates the mundane to the memorable and captures the thrill of two passionate and curious young men discovering both the world and themselves. Racy and meditative, romantic and realistic, the book is as brilliant as Patrick Leigh Fermor's *A Time of Gifts*, but with its erudition more lightly worn and as alive as Kerouac's *On the Road*, though without a whisper of self-aggrandisement... On every page a gem or two glitters, and the accumulation of colour, detail and inspired metaphor produce an intensely hypnotic effect... If you read any travel book this year--or indeed the next forty years--this should be it." --Rory Maclean, The Guardian (UK) "Bouvier has all the gifts a travel writer could want--curiosity, tolerance, hardiness--but above all he has a poet's sensibility with words. His is a lyrical style that is as pure as spring air." --James Owen, Telegraph (UK) "...it's about a journey in the 1950s from Belgrade to India. They try to go to India in a tiny battered Fiat and it takes them several years, these friends, and it probably describes the attraction of travel better than any book I've ever read." --Roy Moxam "Bouvier wrote only a handful of books, but this relatively small production has attained classic status in Europe... His prose is at once musical and remarkably factual, while the odd detail always seems captured with the deftness of a haiku poet. His gift for summing up significant experiences often rivals Thoreau's." --Paths to Contemporary French Literature "A classic on the Continent; [Bouvier's] youthful masterpiece... has something close to biblical status for the current generation of French travel writers... Like Lvi-Strauss, like Chatwin, like Sebald even, his writing binds elements of autobiography and travelogue, history and literature. Yet Nicolas Bouvier remains his own man; he is the minimalist of modern travel writing." --Ben

Hutchinson, Guardian (UK) "An exquisitely vivid and accurate translation." --Paths to Contemporary French Literature "It is difficult to isolate the best moments of [The Way of the World]. Bouvier is a colourist and a miniaturist of the highest order." --Le Monde "Bouvier alerts the reader to the transcendent dimensions of travel." --Jason Elliot "...like a meteor which comes to light up our atmosphere." --Andr Rollin "In the tradition of great travel writing it is beautifully written and works on many levels - being an account of the journey, a meditation on life and an appreciation of the spirit of a place." --Sarah Anderson, founder of the Travel Bookshop, in The Guardian