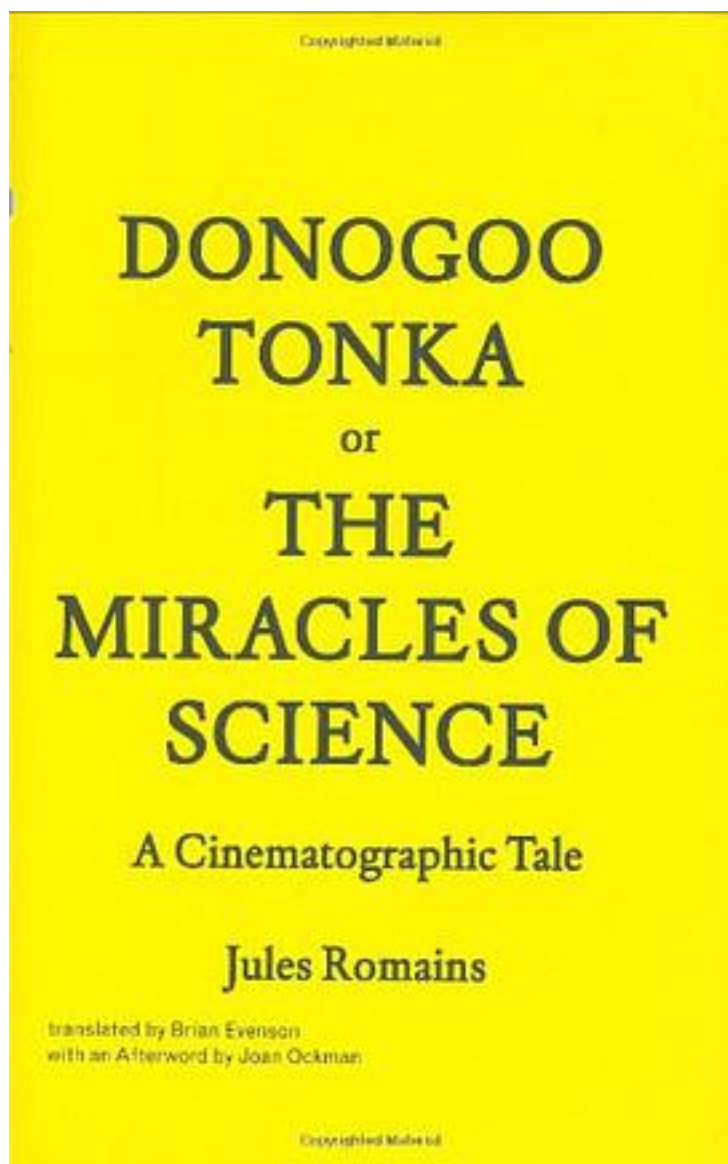


Donogoo Tonka or the Miracles of Science



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著者:Jules Romain

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Donogoo-Tonka or the Miracles of Science is a satirical, parable-like novel (or "cinematic novel" as referred to by author) published in 1920 by an important French modernist figure, Jules Romains. It has never been translated into English. The story begins with a famous geographer facing the embarrassment of being denied membership in the Academy of Sciences after it is discovered that his best-known work contains a map of South America showing a city named Donogoo-Tonka (allegedly full of gold) that does not exist. In a series of pseudoscientific accidents, a previously suicidal man rediscovers happiness and selfworth by helping the geographer regain his name (using false photography sets and manipulated publicity) and inadvertently helps establish a city of that name, which becomes a successful, thriving metropolis. The hilarious novel ends with the establishment in Donogoo-Tonka of an official cult of scientific error--to which the city owes its existence--and the erection of an honorary statue. The tale contemplates the meaning of the city and its origins. The book is simultaneously oblique and central to the FORuM Project. In January 1930 the literary theorist and critic Victor Shklovsky published an article in the Moscow Literary Gazette entitled "A Monument to Scientific Error." The title refers to Romains's novel, which had been translated into Russian. At the time Shklovsky, whose work was dedicated to studying the formal devices and techniques of the creative writer by means of an objective "scientific" method, was under attack by the postrevolutionary Soviet ideologues for propounding a theory of art as pure form. Written under pressure from the authorities, Shklovsky's 1930 newspaper article is on the surface a recantation of his formalist "error" and a capitulation to the regime. Read between the lines, however, "A Monument to Scientific Error" is a defense of artistic freedom and a subtle act of defiance. A part of the FORuM Project publication series published in association with the Temple Hoyne Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture at Columbia University. The screenplay was made into a film in 1936 (in German) by director Reinhold Schunzel and was performed on stage numerous times in the '20s and '30s. . The images in the book are of various translations and some images from the theatrical production; there is an image that is a portrait of the author by a photographer Carl Van Vechten. The book includes an afterword by Joan Oakman.

作者介绍:

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