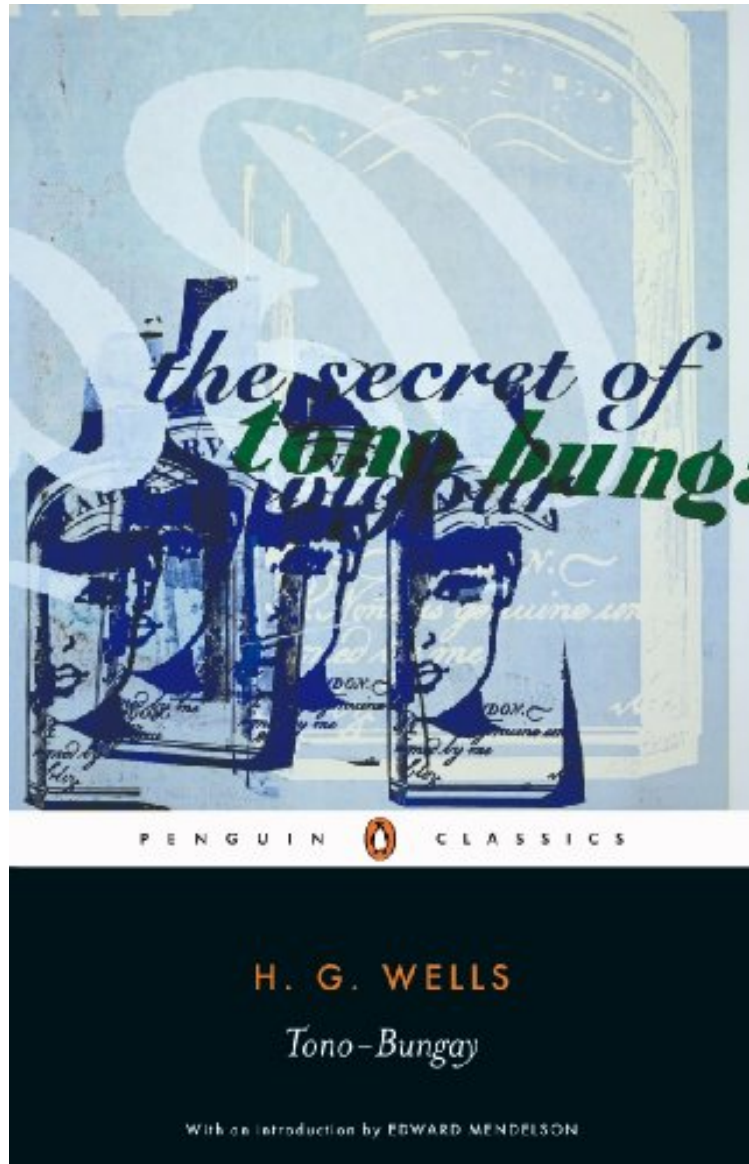


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Tono-Bungay (Penguin Classics)

H.G. Wells

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#1019777 in Books H G Wells Patrick Parrinder Edward Mendelson 2005-06-28 2005-06-28Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 7.80 x .80 x 5.10l, .69 #File Name: 0141441119384 pagesTono bungay | File size: 60.Mb

H.G. Wells : Tono-Bungay (Penguin Classics) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Tono-Bungay (Penguin Classics):

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Could have been betterBy bkpillowsHonestly, I did not like Tono-Bungay in the least, but Wells clearly had something to say about society he just didn't get around to saying those

things. Sections of the book are incredibly long-winded. There are too many anecdotes that, in my opinion, do not contribute to the flow of the story or any major themes or motifs in the book. This is a major flaw in the book. There isn't good flow. *Tono-Bungay* reads as if it is a combination of different stories. This can go two ways: the book can be more amazing or a disorganized mess. *Tono-Bungay* feels so disorganized. The narrator jumps from one story to next and then tries to make them connect but it didn't work for me. The overall plot seems interesting and there are many interesting turning points in the book but the excitement of those turning points isn't delivered. The book, plain and simple, is boring. It felt like I was trying to read a textbook like a novel. Reading it made me sleepy. I barely made it through. *Tono-Bungay* isn't a bad book but it isn't good either. A lot could have been said about money, socio-economic status, and the values that come from them but it just didn't happen. 1 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Trust fund squanderer 5 stars 8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. capitalism amok By zashibis Kind of sad to see only a couple other reviews of this book in all the various editions available on . It's not a forgotten "great" novel, but it's a very near miss--a scathing indictment of 20th century Capitalism that reads far more like it was written in 2009 than in 1909. George Ponderovo, whose life story closely parallels that of the author in many respects, is the rebellious son of a housekeeper for the English landed gentry. After a set-to with a social superior, George is farmed off to his uncle, Edward Ponderovo, a small-town pharmacist who dreams of rising to the highest pinnacles of British society. To this end, Edward starts peddling a worthless patent medicine, and soon enough parlays his initial success into an ever-expanding financial empire based on little more than savvy advertising and wishful thinking. Inevitably, however, the bubble bursts and there is a price to pay for all involved. Wells's novel is a brilliant dissection of a society adrift, whose Old Order, based upon land and hereditary privilege, has been fatally undermined, but whose New Order are a bunch of rapacious, self-centered and amoral commercial hucksters preying on the credulous and greedy. A motif running through the novel is one of moral and social corruption: a society that has blindly accepted perpetual "growth" as the only desirable goal, not realizing that this same unhealthy and unsustainable cancerous "growth" is, in fact, destroying it. The resonances with 2012 are absolutely chilling. Further, Wells shows genius on the confusions and rationalizations of young love, still fettered in 1909 by very Victorian ideas of propriety and sublimation. The very long "Marion" chapter is one of the most brutally honest accounts of falling in love for the first time that I've ever read, and a highlight of the book. Regrettably, however, the novel loses focus in a very big way in its last 100 pages. Up to that point, I was prepared to hail it as a "masterpiece," but then, alas, it runs badly off the rails. The last of the protagonist's love affairs (with a member of the landed aristocracy he first knew as a boy) is full of wincingly overwrought, utterly implausible dialogue; and a trip to Africa on a desperate mission to rescue the Ponderovo empire seems under-written and ill-conceived, even as it glancingly touches on some of the horrors of British Colonialism. This, and a very melodramatic "escape" and death-bed scene, seriously soured me on the novel. Still, the first 2/3 of the book is so superb that the novel deserves more attention and respect. And if the ending is very flawed, it's flawed in interesting ways. More people should read this novel and see how very, very little has, in fact, changed during the last 100 years.

One of the greatest of all satires of the power of advertising and the modern press Presented as a miraculous cure-all, *Tono-Bungay* is in fact nothing other than a pleasant-tasting liquid with no positive effects. Nonetheless, when the young George Ponderovo is employed by his Uncle Edward to help market this ineffective medicine, he finds his life overwhelmed by its sudden success. Soon, the worthless substance is turned into a formidable fortune, as society becomes convinced of the merits of *Tono-Bungay* through a combination of skilled advertising and public credulity. As the newly rich George discovers, however, there is far more to class in England than merely the possession of wealth. This edition includes a newly established text, a full biographical essay on Wells, a list of further reading, and detailed notes. Edward Mendelson's introduction explores the many ways in which *Tono-Bungay* satirizes the fictions and delusions that shape modern life. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

"Wells is less a man of letters than a literature." —Jorge Luis Borges About the Author H.G. Wells was a professional writer and journalist, who published more than a hundred books, including novels, histories, essays and programmes for world regeneration. Wells's prophetic imagination was first displayed in pioneering works of science fiction, but later he became an apostle of socialism, science and progress. His controversial views on sexual equality and the shape of a truly developed nation remain directly relevant to our world today. He was, in Bertrand Russell's words, 'an important liberator of thought and action'. Edward Mendelson is a writer and critic with a particular interest in W.H. Auden. Patrick Parrinder has written on H.G. Wells, science fiction, James Joyce and the history of the English novel. Since 1986 he has been Professor of English at the University of Reading. Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. chapter the first Of Blades over House, and My Mother; and the Constitution of Society I Most people in

this world seem to live “in character”; they have a beginning, a middle and an end, and the three are congruous one with another and true to the rules of their type. You can speak of them as being of this sort of people or that. They are, as theatrical people say, no more (and no less) than “character actors.” They have a class, they have a place, they know what is becoming in them and what is due to them, and their proper size of tombstone tells at last how properly they have played the part. But there is also another kind of life that is not so much living as a miscellaneous tasting of life. One gets hit by some unusual transverse force, one is jerked out of one’s stratum and lives crosswise for the rest of the time, and, as it were, in a succession of samples. That has been my lot, and that is what has set me at last writing something in the nature of a novel. I have got an unusual series of impressions that I want very urgently to tell. I have seen life at very different levels, and at all these levels I have seen it with a sort of intimacy and in good faith. I have been a native in many social countries. I have been the unwelcome guest of a working baker, my cousin, who has since died in the Chatham infirmary; I have eaten illegal snacks—the unjustifiable gifts of footmen—in pantries, and been despised for my want of style (and subsequently married and divorced) by the daughter of a gasworks clerk; and—to go to my other extreme—I was once—oh, glittering days!—an item in the house-party of a countess. She was, I admit, a countess with a financial aspect, but still, you know, a countess. I’ve seen these people at various angles. At the dinner-table I’ve met not simply the titled but the great. On one occasion—it is my brightest memory—I upset my champagne over the trousers of the greatest statesman in the empire—Heaven forbid I should be so invidious as to name him!—in the warmth of our mutual admiration. And once (though it is the most incidental thing in my life) I murdered a man. . . . Yes, I’ve seen a curious variety of people and ways of living altogether. Odd people they all are, great and small, very much alike at bottom and curiously different on their surfaces. I wish I had ranged just a little further both up and down, seeing I have ranged so far. Royalty must be worth knowing and very great fun. But my contacts with princes have been limited to quite public occasions, nor at the other end of the scale have I had what I should call an inside acquaintance with that dusty but attractive class of people who go about on the high-roads drunk but en famille (so redeeming the minor lapse), in the summertime, with a perambulator, lavender to sell, sun-brown children, a smell, and ambiguous bundles that fire the imagination. Navvies, farm-labourers, sailormen and stokers, all such as sit in 1834 beer-houses, are beyond me also, and I suppose must remain so now for ever. My intercourse with the ducal rank too has been negligible; I once went shooting with a duke, and in an outburst of what was no doubt snobbishness, did my best to get him in the legs. But that failed. I’m sorry I haven’t done the whole lot though. . . . You will ask by what merit I achieved this remarkable social range, this extensive cross-section of the British social organism. It was the Accident of Birth. It always is in England. Indeed, if I may make the remark so cosmic, everything is. But that is by the way. I was my uncle’s nephew, and my uncle was no less a person than Edward Ponderevo, whose comet-like transit of the financial heavens happened—it is now ten years ago! Do you remember the days of Ponderevo, the great days, I mean, of Ponderevo? Perhaps you had a trifle in some world-shaking enterprise! Then you know him only too well. Astraddle on Tono-Bungay, he flashed athwart the empty heavens—like a comet—rather, like a stupendous rocket!—and overawed investors spoke of his star. At his zenith he burst into a cloud of the most magnificent promotions. What a time that was! The Napoleon of domestic conveniences! . . . I was his nephew, his peculiar and intimate nephew. I was hanging on to his coat-tails all the way through. I made pills with him in the chemist’s shop at Wimblehurst before he began. I was, you might say, the stick on his rocket; and after our tremendous soar, after he had played with millions, a golden rain in the sky, after my bird’s-eye view of the modern world, I fell again, a little scarred and blistered perhaps, two and twenty years older, with my youth gone, my manhood eaten in upon, but greatly edified, into this Thames-side yard, into these white heats and hammerings, amidst the fine realities of steel—to think it all over in my leisure and jot down the notes and inconsecutive observations that make this book. It was more, you know, than a figurative soar. The zenith of that career was surely our flight across the channel in the Lord Roberts b. . . . I warn you this book is going to be something of an agglomeration. I want to trace my social trajectory (and my uncle’s) as the main line of my story, but as this is my first novel and almost certainly my last, I want to get in, too, all sorts of things that struck me, things that amused me and impressions I got—even although they don’t minister directly to my narrative at all. I want to set out my own queer love experiences too, such as they are, for they troubled and distressed and swayed me hugely, and they still seem to me to contain all sorts of irrational and debatable elements that I shall be the clearer-headed for getting on paper. And possibly I may even flow into descriptions of people who are really no more than people seen in transit, just because it amuses me to recall what they said and did to us, and more particularly how they behaved in the brief but splendid glare of Tono-Bungay and its still more glaring offspring. It lit some of them up, I can assure you! Indeed, I want to get in all sorts of things. My ideas of a novel all through are comprehensive rather than austere. . . . Tono-Bungay still figures on the hoardings, it stands in rows in every chemist’s storeroom, it still assuages the coughs of age and brightens the elderly eye and loosens the elderly tongue; but its social glory, its financial illumination, have faded from the world for ever. And I, sole scorched survivor from the blaze, sit writing of it here in an air that is never still for the clang and thunder of machines, on a table littered with working drawings, and amid fragments of models and notes about velocities and air and water pressures and trajectories—of an altogether different sort from that of Tono-Bungay.