

POPULAR CLASSICS OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

by

JOHN DOUGILL

Annotated by

TORU MITSUI

THE SIGN OF



A GOOD BOOK

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—Tokyo—

POPULAR CLASSICS
OF
ENGLISH LITERATURE

by
John Dougill

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は し が き

『ロミオとジュリエット』、『ロビンソン・クルーソー』、『ガリバー旅行記』から『フランケンシュタイン』、また、『不思議の国のアリス』や『第三の男』、それにシャーロック・ホームズの探偵シリーズ、アガサ・クリスティの数々の推理もの……

こんなぐあいに挙げていくと、広く人びとに親しまれてきているフィクションの実に多くがイギリスのものであることに気がつく。

親しまれてきているのは、それが少年少女用の読物としてやさしく書きなおされたり、映画化されたりしたためであることに気がつく。つまり、この本を手にする大学生世代の人たちもすぐになじんでいるものが非常に多い。

そのなじみということから、この本は出発した。

みんなが、すでに話は知っている。あるいは断片的な内容、また題はとにかく知っている。しかし、子供向けの物語や漫画、また映画版ではない、もとの作品を読んだ人たちはあまりいないのではないか。それではひとつ案内をしてみようとジョン・ドゥーギル氏は思った。

それぞれの作品のもともとの内容がどんなものであったのか。それをどんな時代に、どんな状況で、どんな人が書いたのか。これだけ人気を維持してきている楽しい話の背後にはどんな教えがあるのか。そういったことがらを、逸話をまじえ、平易な英語で案内をしながら、それが、イギリスの文学の豊かさに対して読者が興味をもつ刺激になることも目指す。英語を母国語としない人に英語を教えることを天職とするイギリス人、ドゥーギル氏の得

意とするところである。

もちろん、世界規模の大衆性をもったイギリスのフィクションは、これだけにはとどまらない。読者がこの本を読んでもとの作品に向かってくれることを願う一方で、それではあの話は、この話はどのようなだろうといった関心ももって頂けるとありがたい。つまり、『天路歷程』（ジョン・バニャン）、『宝島』（R.L. スティーヴンソン）、ピーター・パン（J.M. バリー）、『蠅の王』（ウィリアム・ゴールディング）などまだまだあるのだ。

1990 年 9 月

注 釈 者

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ROMEO AND JULIET



WILLIAM
SHAKESPEARE
(1564–1616)

The world's greatest love story

In the town of Verona in Italy thousands of visitors go each year to view the remains of a tomb and balcony. They are 5 supposedly those of Giulietta, original of Shakespeare's Juliet. Though the story is legendary and the site unlikely, the visitors are drawn by the power of Juliet's story, their journey a testimony to the spell it casts. All the world loves a lover, the saying goes, and no greater lovers ever 10 existed than Shakespeare's Juliet and her Romeo.

Of all the different types of love the romance of Romeo and Juliet represents the most passionate kind. It is the love of youth; whole-hearted, innocent and impatient.

Origins

15

That a story with such universal appeal should have an international background is only fitting. Originating in Italy, this tragic tale of two young lovers arrived in England by way of France. By the time Shakespeare wrote his ver-

sion it was already one of Europe's best-known stories.

In thirteenth-century Italy lived two powerful families, the Montecchi of Verona and the Capelleti of Cremona. They belonged to different political factions, hence the supposed
5 rivalry, though little is really known about them. Over succeeding generations a story grew up around them which entered local folklore. In 1535 it was recorded by Luigi da Porto in a novel called *La Giulietta*.

The story attracted another Italian writer, Bandello, a few
10 years later, and a French version, varying in some details, appeared soon afterwards. In 1562 came a translation into English verse by Arthur Brooke with the title *The Tragical Historie of Romeus and Juliet*.

Though Shakespeare may have had some knowledge of
15 earlier versions, his play, written about 1595, was based on Brooke's poem. So close is Shakespeare's story to that of Brooke, in fact, that some commentators believe he had the poem by his side as he was writing.

Yet if the plot was not Shakespeare's, the poetry was.
20 Never before had the story been told in such inspired language, never before the joys and pains of young passion seen in such wondrous terms. Through the words of Shakespeare a tragic tale was rendered immortal.

The play

In the prologue to the play Shakespeare tells of the two feuding families in Verona where “a pair of star-cross’d lovers take their life”. The love of Romeo and Juliet is set within a context of hatred—that between their families, 5 the Montagues and Capulets. The background of feuding, duelling and death provides a stark contrast to the innocence and purity of the two young lovers.

When the play begins, Romeo is already in love—with Rosaline, Juliet’s cousin. It is when he goes in secret to 10 attend the Capulet ball that he first sees Juliet and is struck with the full force of love at first sight. It is as if Rosaline never existed:

Did my heart love till now? Forswear it, sight.

For I ne’er saw true beauty till this night. 15

Juliet too falls irresistibly in love. Yet the seeds of tragedy already lie in their first meeting. Realising her love is a Montague, Juliet bemoans her fate: “My only love sprung from my only hate.” But such is their passion for each other that the couple are blind to any other thought. 20

After the ball Romeo hides in the Capulet garden where he sees Juliet come out onto her bedroom balcony. It is the most famous scene in the play with some of the most beautiful language. Here is how Romeo reacts when he

first sees Juliet:

But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks?
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.

.....

5 It is my lady; O! it is my love:
O! that she knew she were.

.....

See! how she leans her cheek upon her hand:
O! that I were a glove upon her hand,
10 That I might touch that cheek.

Juliet's thoughts too are upon her new-found love, though
tormented by the fact that he is a Montague by name. She
talks aloud to herself upon the balcony:

O, Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?
15 Deny thy father, and refuse thy name;
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

.....

What's in a name? that which we call a rose
20 By any other name would smell as sweet.

Romeo overhears Juliet's speech, then tells her of his own
feelings and wins her consent to a secret marriage. With
all the impetuosity of youth—Juliet is just fourteen—the

couple are married the very next day.

Meanwhile, as love pursues its breathless course, the forces of hatred are also on the march. Tybalt, Juliet's kinsman, spotted Romeo at the ball and is eager to take revenge. He quarrels with Mercutio, Romeo's friend, kills him, ⁵ then is killed in turn by an enraged Romeo.

As punishment Romeo is banished from Verona, just at the moment when Juliet is being pressured by her parents into an arranged marriage. Friar Lawrence, friend and ally of the young lovers, arranges for Juliet to take a potion and ¹⁰ pretend to be dead. The plan is for Romeo to return in secret to her tomb and take her away with him once she has reawakened.

The plan misfires disastrously, for Romeo fails to get the right message and learns that Juliet is truly dead. Rushing ¹⁵ back to her tomb he finds her seemingly lifeless:

Death lies upon her like an untimely frost
Upon the sweetest flower of all the field.

In his distress Romeo swallows some poison and dies almost instantly. The tragedy is completed when Juliet awakes full of expectation, only to discover the body of her newly-wedded husband. In her grief she stabs herself, and the couple are united in death as they never could be in life.

The play ends with a note of consolation, for the deaths of the two lovers bring about the reconciliation of their families.

Shakespeare and love

5 It is tempting to wonder what the author of all this poetry and passion knew of love in his own life. Despite the many hundreds of books written about him, however, Shakespeare's private life remains a mystery. The facts are few and the implications uncertain.

10 At eighteen Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, eight years his senior; just six months later the couple had a baby. Whether Shakespeare had fallen in love with the older woman, or whether as some speculate he was tricked into marriage, no-one knows for sure. What is certain is that
15 the couple had twins twenty months later, and that while Shakespeare went to seek his fortune in London his wife stayed in Stratford. Towards the end of his life Shakespeare returned to live with her, and when he died left her—curiously—"the second best bed with the furniture."

20 If there was passion in Shakespeare's life it seems to have been for a certain Dark Lady rather than for his wife. In the early and mid-1590's Shakespeare wrote a series of sonnets in which he told of his love for a mysterious mistress as well as his (fraternal) love for another man. The
25 identities of the two people remain unclear, though the man

appears to have been his patron, the Earl of Southampton.

The sonnets suggest that around the time Shakespeare was writing *Romeo and Juliet* there was tragedy in the poet's own life, for he writes of his mistress and friend having an affair and causing him great anguish. 5

Though the dates and events remain unclear, it is an intriguing thought that Shakespeare may have been inspired by his own love and loss when he came to write of the "star-cross'd lovers". Just how deep, one wonders, within his own soul did the poet reach for the words that have 10 touched millions?

For never was a story of more woe
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.

ROBINSON CRUSOE



DANIEL DEFOE

(1661–1731)

Daniel Defoe

On January 10, 1703 a proclamation was made calling for the arrest of a certain Daniel
5 Defoe: “He is a middle-sized man, about forty years old, of a brown complexion, and dark-brown coloured hair, but wears a wig, a hooked nose, a sharp chin, grey eyes, and a large mole near his mouth.”

10 Defoe’s crime was to have written “a scandalous and seditious pamphlet”. For most of his life Defoe made his living from political journalism. Sometimes he ran into trouble with the authorities and was fined or spent short periods in prison, but he also found political favour too. He was a
15 strong supporter of King William for instance and was granted a personal interview. On another occasion he was sent by the English government to Scotland to promote the union of the two countries.

Defoe achieved a modest reputation among his contemporaries, but it is for a novel written late in life that he is
20 remembered today, a novel whose inspiration derived from

an incident on the other side of the world.

The true story of Alexander Selkirk

People often wonder what it would be like to live alone on a desert island. Alexander Selkirk actually did. For four years and four months he lived on the uninhabited island of Juan Fernandez, 400 miles off the coast of Chile.

Selkirk, a Scottish sailor, had joined the crew of a ship on a commercial voyage around the world. In 1704, when the ship stopped at Juan Fernandez for fresh water and other provisions, Selkirk quarrelled with the ship's captain and was left behind as punishment to survive as best he could.

In some respects Selkirk was fortunate. The island was moderately warm, with a short, mild winter, and there were no dangerous wild animals. There was plenty of wood, some fruit, and previous visitors to the island had introduced goats and patches of vegetables. Selkirk was also left with a few useful items: a gun, a hunting knife, some books, mathematical instruments, a kettle and tobacco.

Nevertheless Selkirk's position was plainly desperate, for the island was completely uninhabited and the chances of rescue slim. For the first eight months he struggled to survive. He built a couple of huts out of pimento trees covered with long grass and lined with goats' skins. One

hut was his living and sleeping area, in the other he prepared food. This was mainly fish and goats' meat, supplemented by wild pimento and black peppers as well as cultivated turnips and cabbage.

5 For a time Selkirk relied on his gun for hunting. Soon, however, he ran out of bullets and had to chase after the goats to knife them. He cooked them on a fire made by rubbing two sticks together. When his shoes wore out, he went barefoot and in time the soles of his feet became hard
10 enough for him to walk anywhere. When his clothes wore out, he made new ones from goat skins using a nail for a needle.

Slowly Selkirk came to terms with his circumstances. He spent hours in prayer and meditation. He tamed some of
15 the goats' kids as well as cats left behind by previous expeditions. The cats were particularly welcome in guarding against the rats which at night-time gnawed at Selkirk's clothes and feet. For entertainment Selkirk talked, sang and even danced with his companions—the goats and cats
20 he had tamed.

Twice ships appeared off the island, but they were Spanish and Selkirk hid for fear of being taken prisoner and punished. Then in 1709 a British ship arrived to take on fresh provisions. Selkirk's fire was seen by the sailors and his
25 long period of isolation came to an end.

Although delighted by his rescue, it took Selkirk a while to adjust to his new conditions. For a time he could barely make himself understood, for he had almost forgotten how to speak English. He could not eat the ship's food, and he found it impossible to wear shoes. Nonetheless he served 5 as a crew member and resumed his interrupted voyage of the world. When the ship returned to Britain in 1711, the ship's captain wrote an account of the journey and included a chapter entitled "The Remarkable History of Alexander Selkirk". It was this that gave Defoe his inspiration. 10

In later years Selkirk looked back on his solitary adventure with nostalgic regret. For all the enjoyments that normal life had to offer, he felt he had lost a certain serenity and tranquillity. He continued his life as a sailor, eventually dying mid-voyage and being buried at sea. 15

Fact into fiction

Defoe took Selkirk's story as the basis for a piece of imaginative literature remarkable for someone who had spent nearly all of his life in London. Just as remarkable was that he was able to do this at sixty after a lifetime of 20 journalism.

There are many similarities between *Robinson Crusoe* and Selkirk's story, but Defoe also added several new aspects. It is as the result of a shipwreck, for example, that Crusoe becomes stranded, and he is later able to save quite a few 25

goods from the ship's remains. Defoe describes in detail the ingenuity of Crusoe in surviving, as well as the workings of his mind. As a firm believer in Christianity, Defoe gives the book a strong religious flavour.

5 One day, after some fifteen years alone on his island, Crusoe makes a disturbing discovery—in the sand of the beach he comes across a human footprint. It takes him some time before he realises its origin. Groups of cannibals from a neighbouring country make occasional visits to the island
10 where they kill their prisoners and consume them. Crusoe manages to rescue one such potential victim, and in the passage below describes to the reader the way in which the rescued man expresses his gratitude.

At last he lays his head flat upon the ground, close
15 to my foot, and sets my other foot upon his head, as he had done before; and after this, made all the signs to me of subjection, servitude, and submission imaginable, to let me know how much he would serve me as long as he lived. I understood him in many things,
20 and let him know I was very well pleased with him. In a little time I began to speak to him, and teach him to speak to me; and first, I made him know his name should be Friday, which was the day I saved his life; and I called him so for the memory of the time; I
25 likewise taught him to say Master, and then let him know that was to be my name; I likewise taught him

to say Yes and No, and to know the meaning of them.

Friday, like his master one of the most famous characters in English literature, becomes Crusoe's pupil and devoted servant. He learns to speak simple English and is instructed in religion. The term Man Friday, meaning a hard-working 5 and badly-paid assistant, has entered the English language, but to the modern reader Crusoe's attempts to "civilize" Friday look less like education than simple exploitation. In the 1975 film *Man Friday* the tables are turned and it is Crusoe who has to be educated by Friday and his tribe 10 about how to live in harmony with nature and his fellow human beings.

Crusoe teaches Friday how to use a gun, fortunate since the pair become involved in fighting, first with another group of cannibals and then with mutineers from an Eng- 15 lish ship. Crusoe comes to the rescue of the ship's captain and helps him recover his ship. After twenty-eight years on his desert island, Crusoe is finally able to leave, taking his faithful Friday with him.

The success of *Robinson Crusoe* was such that in 1719 20 Defoe brought out a sequel, *The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, which tells how Crusoe and Friday revisit their island, are attacked by a fleet of canoes, and Friday killed. In 1720 appeared a further book about Crusoe, *Serious Reflections . . . of Robinson Crusoe . . . with his* 25

vision of the Angelick World, more a religious work than an adventure story and never as popular as its predecessors.

Defoe's legacy

Defoe's literary success late in life found further outlet in
5 other works of fiction, the most popular of which is *Moll Flanders*, but it is *Robinson Crusoe* for which he remains best known. It is a story that has captured the imagination of the world, as if deep in every human being is the dream of escaping to a desert island. Defoe dressed that dream
10 in words. Yet his accomplishment was even greater than that. *Robinson Crusoe* is generally acknowledged as the first major English novel, forerunner of that long line of works that have given pleasure to readers the world over. That simple sailor Alexander Selkirk would surely never have
15 believed it!

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS



JONATHAN SWIFT

(1667–1745)

Jonathan Swift

Swift's view of mankind was hardly a happy one. He saw his fellow humans as full of faults yet possessed of an absurd vanity. His response was

to write satire, some of the most cutting and humorous satire in the English language. Though a committed Christian—he was dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin, his home-town—he spared little sympathy for the human race in his writings.

Swift was a prolific writer, his main work a travel-book of a unique kind, with journeys to the world of fantasy, not fact. Books of travel and adventure like *Robinson Crusoe* were much in fashion at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and Swift's book was clearly a parody.

Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World . . . by Lemuel Gulliver is the book's full title, with Gulliver described on the title-page as "First a Surgeon, and then a Captain of several ships". There is an introductory piece about Gulliver by his "friend", maps of the countries visited

and accounts of how Gulliver first reached them. These include shipwreck, abandonment, mutiny and pirates, much like *Robinson Crusoe* in fact.

But Swift's parody had a serious purpose, for he wanted to show his contemporaries just how ridiculous they were. In the four different parts of the book Swift holds up to them four different mirrors.

A Voyage to Lilliput

The first part of Gulliver's travels takes him to the tiny world of Lilliput, the best-known of all the countries Gulliver visits. Swift used a scale of an inch to a human foot to create his miniature kingdom, with the Lilliputians themselves just six inches tall. Gulliver, it is estimated, will consume as much food as 1728 Lilliputians put together!

After being taken prisoner by his tiny foes, the "Man-Mountain" Gulliver comes to an understanding with the Emperor and is allowed to go free. He learns about the customs and history of the country. The Emperor's ministers, for instance, compete for promotion by dancing on a tightrope, and "whoever jumps the highest without falling, succeeds in the office". Swift's satire here is plain enough! Just as plain is the mockery of political disputes. In Lilliput the danger of war goes back to an old argument about whether to eat a boiled egg by breaking the sharp or the rounded end!

For Swift, Lilliput was simply a reflection of his own society, the intrigue of politicians as ridiculous as the Lilliputian rope-jumping, the political issues as senseless as the dispute about the egg. The Lilliputians' self-pride seems absurd because of their tiny size, and the pomp of the emperor, the feuds and wars appear laughably petty. And so are we, is the implication, when viewed in the grand scheme of things.

Gulliver urinates on the Empress's apartment to put out a fire, a measure, it would seem, of Swift's distaste for his miniature kingdom. The action leads to plans to charge Gulliver with treason, but before they can be realised, he manages to escape back to England. It is not long before he sets off on his travels again.

A Voyage to Brobdingnag

15

Brobdingnag is the reverse of Lilliput, a land of giants, albeit gentle giants. In Lilliput the scale is one inch to a normal foot; in Brobdingnag it is one foot to a normal inch.

Strange as life seems to Gulliver in a land with human-sized rats, he is impressed with the humanity of the giants. The King, for instance, hates political intrigue, preferring simple common sense, justice and lenity. "Whoever could make two ears of corn or two blades of grass grow upon a spot of ground where only one grew before," he held,

“would deserve better of mankind. . . . than the whole race of politicians put together.”

The peacefulness of Brobdingnag contrasts with Gulliver’s account of life in his own society, and the King can hardly
5 believe his ears.

He was perfectly astonished with the historical account I gave him of our affairs during the last century, protesting it was only an heap of conspiracies, rebellions, murders, massacres, revolutions, banishments, the
10 very worst effects that avarice, faction, hypocrisy, perfidiousness, cruelty, rage, madness, hatred, envy, lust, malice, or ambition, could produce.

Gulliver has a portable box to live in, with a ring attached so that it can be carried around. This is seized one day by
15 an eagle which drops the box with Gulliver inside into the sea, from where he is rescued by a passing ship and returned to England. His view of the world has now greatly changed. The sailors, for example, by comparison with the giants of Brobding appear “the most little contemptible
20 creatures I had ever beheld”. The reader is reminded of the words of the King of Brobdingnag:

By what I have gathered . . . I cannot but conclude the bulk of your natives to be the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to

crawl upon the surface of the earth.

A Voyage to Laputa

For Swift intellectuals lived in a world of airy abstractions, remote from that of common sense. Gulliver's next voyage takes him to the flying island of Laputa, full of philosophers⁵ who are plain idiots when it comes to everyday affairs.

Scientists too are parodied. At the Academy of Lagano men exhaust themselves in unlikely experiments: making silk from spiders' webs; softening marble for pin-cushions; returning excrement to its original food; and trying to¹⁰ extract sunshine from cucumbers!

On the neighbouring island of Glubbudrib, Gulliver calls up great figures of the past, only to discover they are not so great. His view of history changes when he learns of the mean motives and "the contemptible accidents to which¹⁵ they owed their success."

Later on Gulliver comes across the Struldrugs, a race of immortals. Far from enjoying their never-ending lives, though, they turn out to suffer from eternal senility and are the most miserable of creatures.

20

The Struldrugs inhabit Luggnagg, a country with strong commercial ties to its neighbour—Japan! Gulliver makes his way there, arriving at the end of May, 1709 in the port of "Xamoschi" from where he is taken to a private audience

with the Emperor. Gulliver claims to be a Dutch merchant, talks his way out of treading on the cross to refute Christianity, and is allowed to go to "Nangasac" (Nagasaki) where he boards a boat for Amsterdam and eventually
 5 England.

A Voyage to the Country of Houyhnhnms

Gulliver's final journey takes him to a land of intelligent horses, the Houyhnhnms, who live in a clean, rational and simple society which values friendship and benevolence.
 10 Another type of creature inhabits the country, a disgusting, smelly and aggressive animal called the Yahoo, used by the Houyhnhnms for menial service.

Despite his physical similarity to the Yahoos, Gulliver's sympathies lie with the Houyhnhnms. Gradually, however,
 15 he is forced to recognize that like himself the Yahoos are humans. After all, they exhibit familiar human characteristics: greed, malice, treachery, aggression, cruelty, promiscuity and pride! When the Houyhnhnms themselves realize that Gulliver is simply an advanced Yahoo, they ask him
 20 to leave.

Gulliver returns to England, a changed man. He prefers the company of horses to humans, and cannot stand the smell of even his own wife and children. In the book's closing words Gulliver maintains he has only written the
 25 truth for the public good, and he asks all Yahoos to rid

themselves of their “absurd vice”—vanity.

Swift's final joke

Even at the point of death Swift could not resist mocking the follies of his fellow countrymen. In his Will he left money to build a Hospital for the Insane, and in the poem ⁵ he prepared for the occasion—“On the Death of Dr. Swift”—he explained the reason why. It was Swift's last laugh.

He gave the little Wealth he had,
To build a House for Fools and Mad:
And shew'd by one satyric Touch,
No Nation wanted it so much.

FRANKENSTEIN



MARY SHELLEY
(1797–1851)

The writing of Frankenstein

In the summer of 1816 a group of English exiles gathered in a villa by the shores of Lake Geneva. The villa belonged to Lord Byron, renowned Romantic and man of notoriety. In residence with him was Dr. John Polidori, personal physician and secretary. They were joined by the young poet P.B. Shelley, his lover, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, and her foster-sister Clare Clairmont. The three of them were living nearby and were frequent guests at the villa.

Mary, just eighteen, had run away with the married Shelley two years previously. She was no stranger to free-thinking ways, for her parents were famous literary and libertarian figures themselves. Her father, the political philosopher William Godwin, was an atheist and anarchist while her mother, who died shortly after Mary's birth, was an early champion of women's rights.

Byron and his group of friends spent the summer going for trips on the lake or taking walks along its shores, with