

**50+ German masterpieces you
have to read before you die
(original illustrations):
Faust (Parts I & II), The Nutcracker
and the Mouse King, The
Trial, Letter To A Young Poet**

**Sebastian Brandt
The Ship of Fools**

Translator: Alexander Barclay

*Venerandissimo in Christo Patri ac Domino:
domino Thome Cornisshe Tenenensis pontifici ac
diocesis Badonensis Suffraganio vigilantissimo, sue
paternitatis Capellanus humilimus Alexander Barclay
suiipsius recommendacionem cum omni summissione, et
reuerentia.*

*Tametsi crebris negocijs: varioque
impedimentorum genere fatigatus paulo diutiùs quàm
volueram a studio reuulsus eram. Attamen
obseruandissime presul: Stultiferam classem (vt sum tue
paternati pollicitus) iam tandem absolui et impressam
ad te destinaui. Neque tamen certum laborem pro
incerto premio (humano. s.) meis impossuissem
humeris: nisi Seruianum illud dictum (longe anteaquam*

inceperam) admonuisset. Satius esse non incipere quàm inceptum minus perfectum relinquere. Completo tamen opere: nec quemquam magis dignum quàm tua sit paternitas existimaui cui id dedicarem: tum quia saluberrima tua prudentia, morum grauitas, vite sanctitas doctrineque assiduitas: errantes fatuos mundanis ab illecebris ad virtutis tramites: difficiles licet: possint reducere: tum vero: quia sacros ad ordines per te sublimatus et promotus, multisque aliis tuis beneficiis ditatus non potui tibi meum obsequium non coartare. Opus igitur tue paternitati dedicaui: meorum primicias laborum qui in lucem eruperunt Atque vt tua consuluerit paternatis: auctoris carmina cum meis vulgaribus rithmicis vná alternatim coniunxi: et quantum a vero carminum sensu errauerim, tue autoritatis iudicium erit. Fateor equidem multo plura adiecisse quam ademisse: partim ad vicia que hac nostra in regione abundantius pullulant mordacius carpenda: partimque ob Rithmi difficultatem. Adieci etiam quasdam Biblie aliorumque auctorum concordancias in margine notatas quo singula magis lectoribus illucescant: Simul ad inuidorum caninos latratus pacandos: et rabida ora obstruenda: qui vbi quid facinorum: quo ipsi scatent: reprehensum audierint. continuo patulo gutture liuida euomunt dicta, scripta dilacerant. digna scombris ac thus carmina recensent: sed hi si pergant maledicere: vt stultiuagi comites classem insiliant. At tu venerande Presul Discipuli tui

*exiguum munusculum: hilari fronte accipito,
Classemque nostram (si quid vagum, si quid erroneum:
si quid denique superfluum emineat: optimam in partem
interpretando: ab inuidorum faucibus: tue autoritatis
clipeo tucaris. Vale. Ex Impressoria officina Richardi
Pynson. iij. Idus Decembris.*

This present Boke named the Shyp
of folys of the worlde was translated in
the College of saynt mary Otery in the
counte of Deuonshyre: out of Laten,
French, and Doche into Englysshe tonge
by Alexander Barclay Preste: and at that
tyme Chaplen in the sayde College.
translated the yere of our Lorde god.
M.cccccc.viii. Imprentyd in the Cyte of
London in Fletestre at the signe of Saynt
George. By Rycharde Pynson to hys
Coste and charge: Ended the yere of our
Sauour. M. d. ix. The. xiiii. day of
December.

Alexander Barclay excusynge the rudenes of his translacion.

Go Boke: abasshe the thy rudenes to present.
To men auanced to worshyp, and honour.
By byrthe or fortune: or to men eloquent.

By thy submyssion excuse thy Translatour.
But whan I remember the comon behauour
Of men: I thynke thou ought to quake for fere
Of tunges enuyous whose venym may the dere
Tremble, fere, and quake, thou ought I say agayne.
For to the Redar thou shewest by euydence
Thy selfe of Rethoryke pryuate and barayne
In speche superflue: and fruteles of sentence.
Thou playnly blamest without al difference
Bothe hye and lowe sparinge eche mannes name.
Therefore no maruayle thoughe many do the blame.
But if thou fortune to lye before a State
As Kynge or Prince or Lordes great or smal.
Or doctour diuyn or other Graduate
Be this thy Excuse to content theyr mynde withal
My speche is rude my termes comon and rural
And I for rude peple moche more conuenient.
Than for Estates, lerned men, or eloquent.
But of this one poynt thou nedest not to fere
That any goode man: vertuous and Just.
Wyth his yl speche shal the hurt or dere.
But the defende. As I suppose and trust.
But suche Unthriftes as sue theyr carnal lust
Whome thou for vyce dost sharply rebuke and
blame
Shal the dyspraysse: emperisshinge thy name.

An exhortacion of Alexander Barclay.

But ye that shal rede this boke: I you exhorte.
And you that ar herars therof also I pray
Where as ye knowe that ye be of this sorte:
Amende your lyfe and expelle that vyce away.
Slomber nat in syn. Amende you whyle ye may.
And yf ye so do and ensue Vertue and grace.
Wythin my Shyp ye get no rowme ne place.

Barclay the translatur tho the Foles.

To Shyp galantes the se is at the ful.
The wynde vs calleth our sayles ar displayed.
Where may we best aryue? at Lyn or els at Hulle?
To vs may no hauen in Englonde be denayd.
Why tary we? the Ankers ar vp wayed.
If any corde or Cabyl vs hurt, let outhr hynder.
Let slyp the ende, or els hewe it in sonder.
Retourne your syght beholde vnto the shore.
There is great nomber that fayne wold be aborde.
They get no rowme our Shyp can holde no more.
Haws in the Cocke gyue them none other worde.
God gyde vs from Rockes, quicsonde tempest and

forde

If any man of warre, wether, or wynde apere.
My selfe shal trye the wynde and kepe the Stere.
But I pray you reders haue ye no dysdayne.
Thoughe Barclay haue presumed of audacite

This Shyp to rule as chefe mayster and Captayne.
Though some thynke them selfe moche worthyer
than he.

It were great maruayle forsoth syth he hath be.
A scoler longe: and that in dyuers scoles
But he myght be Captayne of a Shyp of Foles
But if that any one be in suche maner case.
That he wyl chalange the maystershyp fro me
Yet in my Shyp can I nat want a place.
For in euery place my selfe I oft may se.
But this I leue besechynge eche degre:
To pardon my youthe and to bolde interprise.
For harde is it duely to speke of euery vyce.
For yf I had tunges an hundreth: and wyt to fele
Al thinges natural and supernaturall
A thousand mouthes: and voyce as harde as stele.
And sene all the seuen Sciences lyberal.
Yet cowde I neuer touche the vyces all.
And syn of the worlde: ne theyr branches
comprehende:

Nat thoughe I lyued vnto the worldes ende.

But if these vyces whiche mankynde doth
incomber.

Were clene expellyd and vertue in theyr place.

I cowde nat haue gathered of fowles so great a
number.

Whose foly from them out chaseth goddys grace.
But euery man that knowes hym in that case

To this rude Boke let hym gladly intende.
And lerne the way his lewdnes to amende.

[The Prologe of James Locher.]

After that I haue longe mused by my self of the sore confounded and vncertayne cours of mannys lyfe, and thinges therto belonginge: at the last I haue by my vigilant meditacion found and noted many degrees of errorrs: wherby mankynd wandreth from the way of trouth I haue also noted that many wyse men and wel lettred haue writen right fruteful doctrines: wherby they haue heled these dyseses and intollerable perturbacions of the mynde: and the goostly woundes therof, moche better than Esculapius which was fyrst Inuentour of Phesyke and amonge the Gentyles worshypped as a God. In the contrey of Grece were stodyes fyrst founded and ordeyned in the which began and sprange holsom medicyne which gaue vnto infect myndes frutful doctryne and norisshinge. Amonge whome Socrates that great begynner and honourer of wysdom began to dispute of ye maners of men. But for that he coude nat fynde certayne ende of goodnes and hiest felicite in naturall thinges: nor induce men to the same, he gaue the hie contemplacions of his mynde to moral vertues. And in so moche passed he al other in Philosophy moral that it was sayde that he called Philosophy down from the Imperial heuen. whan this Socrates perceyued the

mindes of men to be prone, and extremely inclyned to viciousnes he had gret affeccion to subdue suche maners. Wherefore in comon places of the Cyte of Athenes he instruct and infourmed the peple in such doctrynes as compasith the clere and immaculate welles of the moste excellent and souerayne gode. After the disces of Socrates succeded ye godly Plato whiche in moral Philosophy ouerpassed also a great part of his tyme And certaynly nat without a cause was he called godly. For by what stody myght be more holely or better socour mankynde than by suche doctrynes as he gaue. He wrote and ordeyned lawes moste egal and iust He edityed vnto the Grekes a comon welthe stable, quyet and commendable. And ordeyned the societe and company of them most iocund and amyable. He prepared a brydel to refrayne the lust and sensualityte of the body. And fynally he changed the yl ignorance feblenes and negligence of youth vnto dylygence, strength and vertue. In tyme also of these Phylosophers sprange the florisshyng age of Poetes: whiche amonge lettred men had nat smal rowme and place. And that for theyr eloquent Retoryke and also for theyr mery ficcions and inuencions. Of the whiche Poetes some wrote in moste ornate termes in ditees heroycal wherin the noble actes and lyues both of dyuine and humayne creatures ar wont to be noted and writem. Some wrote of tylling of the grounde. Some of the Planetes, of the courses of ye sterres: and of the mouyng of the heuyn and fyrmament.

Some of the Empyre and shameful subieccion of disordred loue. And many other of the miserable ruyne and fal of Kynges and princes for vice: as Tragedies. And some other wrote Comedyes with great libertye of speche: which Comedies we cal Interludes. Amonge whome Aristophanes Eupolis and Cratinus mooste laudable Poetes passed al other. For whan they sawe the youth of Athenes and of al the remanent of Grece inclyned to al ylles they toke occasion to note suche myslyuinge. And so in playne wordes they repreued without fauour the vyces of the sayd yl disposyd peple of what condicion or order they were: Of this auncient wrytinge of Comedyes our laten Poetes deuysed a maner of wrytinge nat inelegant. And fyrst Lucilius composed one Satyre in the whiche he wrote by name the vices of certayne princes and Citezyns of Rome And that with many bourdes so yt with his mery speche myxt with rebukes he correct al them of the cyte that disordredly lyued. But this mery speche vsed he nat in his writing to the intent to excercyse wanton wordes or vnrefrayned lascyuyte, or to put his pleasour in suche dissolute langage: but to ye intent to quenche vyces and to prouoke the commons to wysdome and vertue, and to be asshamed of theyr foly and excessyfe lyuyng. of hym all the Latyn poetes haue takyn example, and begynnynge to wryte Satyrs whiche the grekes named Comedyes: As Fabius specifyeth in his X boke of institucions. After Lucilius succeeded Horacius, moche

more eloquent in wrytyng whiche in the same deseruyd
great laude: Persius also left to vs onely one boke by the
whiche he commytted his name and laude to perpetuall
memory. The last and prynce of all was Juuenall whiche
in his iocunde poemys comprehendyd al that was wryten
most eloquent and pleasaunt of all the poetis of that sorte
afore his tyme: O noble men, and diligent hertes and
myndes, o laudable maners and tymes, these worthy men
exyled ydelnes, wherby they haue obtayned nat small
worshyp and great commodyte example and doctryne
lefte to vs theyr posteryours why begyn we nat to
vnderstonde and perceyue. Why worshyp nat the people
of our tyme these poetis why do nat they reuerence to ye
interpretours of them do they nat vnderstonde: that no
poetes wryte, but outhere theyr mynde is to do pleasure or
els profyte to the reder, or ellys they togyther wyll doo
bothe profyte and pleasure why are they dyspysed of
many rude carters of nowe a dayes which vnderstonde
nat them, And for lacke of them haue nat latyn to vtter
and expresse ye wyl of their mynde. Se whether poetes
ar to be dispysed. they laude vertue and hym that vseth it
rebukying vices with the vsers therof, They teche what is
good and what is euyll: to what ende vyce, and what ende
vertue bringeth vs, and do nat Poetis reuyle and sharply
byte in their poemys all suche as ar vnmeke, Prowde,
Couetous, Lecherous, Wanton, delycious, Wrathfull
glotons, wasters, Enuyours, Enchauntours,
faythebrakers, rasshe, vnaused, malapert, drunken,