

Afterword

The Blue House is the second novel by Alois Vogel that this team of translators has rendered into English. Everything we said in the afterword to our translation of *Totale Verdunkelung* (*Total Blackout*) could be repeated here, as the trials and tribulations of the translator have essentially been the same, ever since the very first attempt was made to transmit meaning from one language into another.

Translation always involves compromise, and we were certainly not spared the torments of the translator's perennial Catch-22: whether to strive for total loyalty to the original text, or reader comfort in the target language. We decided in favour of the latter, and hope that the result is an idiomatic and readable text, which accurately conveys to the English reader a sense of Vogel's original design, while being first and foremost a reader's novel, driven by characters, and with a story to tell.

However, keeping in mind that this is a story specifically set in Vienna, not London, or New York, or Dunedin, we were careful not to over-Anglicize *The Blue House*. We kept the titles Herr, Frau, Doktor, Direktor, and Architekt in order to maintain this Austrian flavour, and similar reasoning led us to retain the street and place names in their original form (e.g. Milchgasse, not Milch street)

We also kept the euphemistic reference to "Götz von Berlichingen" (p. 91) which refers to the hero of Goethe's play of the same name (1773). Götz has become infamous within the German-speaking realm for the rude message he sends to the captain of the troop which has been detached to capture him alive (Tell him he can kiss my ass). The quotes in chapter ten are taken from Rainer Maria Rilke's poetry, specifically 'Autumn' and 'The Panther', sources no doubt easier for a German-speaking audience to identify than an English one.

And of course, in spite of the difficulties inherent in such an undertaking, we derived great pleasure from translating this text. It

seems fitting to reiterate the same concluding sentence we used in our earlier afterword: Should we have succeeded in communicating the literary acumen of Alois Vogel and the art of his novel to the reader, we would feel very rewarded indeed.

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