

FEEL MY FUR, *BABY*

English appendix to my diploma

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Because of the way in which I have written my Diploma text, it is difficult to translate, and even more to summarize. Many of the expressions and word constructions only work in their designated language and their meaning, wit and/or ambiguity would suffer in the process of translation. Yes, even the simple attempt of translating the title of my diploma has caused severe confusion.

The German phrase: “KRAUL MIR DEN PELZ, *BABY*” receives a significantly different meaning when you try to move it to English, because it is already a colloquial phrase and uses “Baby”, an English loan word with a different meaning according to the situation it is used in. It’s only logical that a literal translation would be misleading and an idiomatically correct one would be really difficult and might not fit the diploma thesis anymore.

The word “kraulen” sounds soft, sweet and maybe a little bit shy to me but definitely loving – of course there is a cheeky meaning too but still always pleasant. In combination with the word “Pelz” it gets a little spicier and when you finally add “Baby” it becomes really cheeky, cool and funny.

Usually, I find it more difficult to express all states of feeling and emotion only in German and adding an English word afterwards can be helpful. English offers a wide variety of contemporary vocabulary to use for these situations, however this time I wanted to make use of this richness and really struggled with translating parts of the text.

For example, when I translate the word “kraulen” with “to pet”, it strongly suggests stroking some animal’s fur, especially in the combination with “Pelz” (fur). If I use a verb like “to rub / to stroke” the whole thing loses its ambiguity and gets stuck on the sexual connotation without any wit.

Further, the “Baby” is so common and part of everyday language that it simply becomes a normal tag ... the whole phrase resembles something like a proverb but it isn’t, even though it seems to be just as difficult to translate. This was the reason why I finally asked an English exchange student I know for help and she basically said that “FEEL MY FUR, *BABY*” might be the best translation in this context and still be tongue-in-cheek enough.

The text is a literal construction; there are protocol notes and diary-like entries; my thoughts while I was drawing and a glimpse of all those months of intensive artistic work. Some remarks I have written remain open questions about subjective speculations and personal views, although they might seem like true assertions.

The following text is an attempt to exemplify the character of the thesis:

...

The quill doesn't draw the way I want it to. It is scratching and refusing to let go of the ink; it takes forever for it to accept my drawings, this makes me a little aggressive, I use too much force and damage the paper. Of course, this doesn't help, I'll let myself get provoked anyway. At some point I finally get it. It flows.

How time flies without any time passing.

...

My arm is floating and my hand flies over the paper.

Pitch black. Quick minute strokes ... so fast, I loose count. I think the rhythm.

No direction. Nothing is consistent.

Chocolate cookies. Ink blots the paper. With my sleeve I wipe the crumbs off the paper, smear the ink stain. Now it looks as if a shooting star flew across my work.

This offers a new direction.

I'm going to draw on top of this and I try to figure out what ,coincidences' are.

....

Just now there were a lot of people in the room, around me as well, some feel more, some feel less approachable to me. Someone wanted to know, "What is it you are doing?" Disbelief. I immediately think, "Attack!" I feel that I am being watched, partly ignoring them. Then the questions come up ... why are you drawing with ink? ... why are you only using strokes? ... isn't this taking forever? ... how much longer are you going to do this? ... I would just leave it that way ... so delicate on this side and not at all on the other ... due to a culmination of strokes.

Counter question: What do you think about it? They giving me a long stare and then observe my work even longer, before I finally get an answer. It's good. Then they're gone.

...

Motivated! I keep thinking of geometry. Sometimes I just feel like getting into there with a large brush. Radically right into the drawing. I should give it a try. If I keep on turning a thought over and over in my head ... five thousand times ... it won't suddenly change its shape or transform into something different. This way I will never be able to follow my gut feeling.

...

How intriguing, I am back at that drawing resembling a snake ... the one that I've been working on for far too long. But now I have a very different feeling about it. What was that thing about time?

Time flies.

Without any time passing?

...

The text is about thoughts seemingly important while drawing; on chance, on feelings, on how to name and describe a painting. Are there actually words that can describe it? It's about time and the struggle for the right title, but first and foremost it is inherently all about drawing in itself.