

Jacqueline A. Heinzelmann

(Be)Coming of Plant: (Eco)Narrative Moment to Growing Futures

Person and plant are enmeshed, blurring the boundaries between the human and the vegetal – this narrative moment, found aplenty in recent coming-of-age stories, has emerged as a frequent phenomenon of popular culture. This dissertation investigates what is being negotiated in coming-of-age narratives that center on the cultural figure of young individuals turning plant.

What at first may appear as only a moment of seclusion from their environment becomes a moment of transformation: when young individuals struggle to grow (up) in their current surroundings, they look for alternative ways of becoming. Instead of growing up *in* their environment, they choose to grow *with* their surroundings. As such, traditional boundaries separating humans and plants start to blur, thereby allowing a new generation of individuals to engage in a life of entangled symbiopoiesis. Although their hybrid futures remain unwritten in the past, young people's new-found vegetality allows for multiple potential futures to be imagined simultaneously, grounding them in a new present. A (be)coming of plant thus proposes a new Coming of Age, one that is not limited to the conventional ways of growing (up), nor in its choice of available growing future(s).

In investigating the (be)coming-of-plant moment, this dissertation proceeds (eco)narratologically: its roots are burrowed in Neo-Materialist Ecocriticism and Plant Studies, while its tendrils weave their way into Age Studies and Queer Theory.

Jacqueline A. Heinzelmann, MA

ISEK – Department of Social Anthropology and Cultural Studies, University of Zurich

E-mail: jacqueline.heinzelmann2@uzh.ch