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ISABEL KRANZ: IFK_LIVE: PLANTS AS AGENTS AND TROPES OF TRANSLATION

Isabel Kranz

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Both literally and metaphorically, plants form the basis of our lives as humans. Yet traditionally, their agency in our shared culture has often been overlooked. By considering the many diverse processes of translation plants partake in, this talk will propose new ways of thinking about and with the vegetal. Plants can be objects as well as subjects of geographical translations. Using wind, water, animals, as well as humans, in manifold ways, plants have played a central role in colonialization processes and are thus deeply enmeshed in the *translatio imperii*: along with humans they traverse spaces in trade and travel, carrying with them not only their physical bodies but also their names, stories, and political and symbolic associations. Figurative language from antiquity to today bears witness to these entanglements. Any thinking about plants is therefore always already an act of translation, conceptualized broadly as a continuous process of understanding, transcribing, and transposing them into a new register – geographically (e.g. acclimatization), linguistically (e.g. nomenclature), and culturally (e.g. symbolism). Isabel Kranz is a researcher in comparative literature and a co-founder of the Literary and Cultural Plant Studies Network. In 2011, she received her Ph.D. with a dissertation on Walter Benjamin's Arcades Project. She is lecturer at the Department of German Studies at the University of Vienna and currently an IFK_Research Fellow.