

## 05: Lucy Fricke: Her path to success

### Uma und Aaron:

Hello, we are Uma and Aaron and as part of the research module "Access - Questions of Access" at the UdK Berlin we spoke with Lucy Fricke. Lucy Fricke is an author and deals with different aspects of the topic of class and justice in her texts. In this context, we were allowed to ask Lucie Fricke various questions related to her text "Fish Factory" published in the anthology "Class and Struggle". We asked Lucy to read out a few passages from the text. We'll start with the text passage in a moment, before moving on to the questions. Have fun!

### Lucy Fricke:

"Even today I recognise myself in everyone who squats on their sleeping bag at the side of the road or in train stations and asks for money. The young and the old women. And I always think: that was me. That could be me. Why isn't it me? I can't get rid of the wonderment. Distance to what I am and what I was. And perhaps also to the world at large. As if I have no base, no roots, no footing. I always stand on the sidelines a little amazed and irritated, with a gentle incredulity, and strangely enough, that's exactly what I do for a living. What I remember today is an overwhelming sense of defiance. An angry, petulant energy. A single "you'll be sorry for this". I remember this feeling so clearly because it has never left me since. I still react to rejection, failure, failure, with the same defiance, with immense resistance and self-assertion. I still don't know where it comes from, this slight arrogance to think I'm better, to become stronger after each case, even if it takes years. This dogged energy when the way is blocked in front of me, the determination to look for someone else. The will, like everything really, is unevenly distributed. But until this will became something tangible, a time passed of which I can hardly say whether it was months or years. I don't know what would have become of me if I hadn't been picked up off the street.

### Uma:

Now we wanted to move on to the second question. If there was any lack of understanding about the second question, I can explain that again right away. It's called: What decisive turning point in your life is seen as the driving factor for your personal success? When you think of your own media coverage and then the second question again: What do you think is your own personal, biographical, driving factor, so to speak, when you think of your own personal success?

### Lucy Fricke:

Yes, I think there are two or three questions in one. So this one turning point is, I think, difficult to name. What I have noticed professionally is that what was certainly a turning point was that major critics, as they say, be it on television or on Spiegel Online or something, in very large media, reviewed the book very enthusiastically. That was the professional breakthrough, that simply helped. But it was also my fourth novel. That means that there was a long period of tenacity behind it. So this perseverance, this keeping going until one is noticed. And now for me personally, when I look back, it was very early, as it is in the text, at 16, 17, more or less on the street, that social workers helped me. That was also an individual. And later it was a counsellor at the employment office who was actually very, very helpful because he had more confidence in me than anyone else and put me on a new track. And what strikes me is that it's often people from the outside who open doors for you. They have given you a chance, they see something in you and really believe in you. And it's not so much the inner circle. It's rarely people from the family or from the close circle of friends, but it's always people who are actually in the second, third circle, that is, a bit further away, who turn to you and thus really have a great influence on your life. They can also be teachers or social workers. In retrospect, it was often people from the outside. And of course there were always supporters along the way. And this support is also close friends or the

partner. In my case, it was sometimes very, very helpful, because it also helped me financially. Now I want to do something completely different. I want to study now, when I was almost 30 and actually got out of my job and had a life with a big flat and big financial obligations. And then it's not so easy to say, "Now I'm going to study again" and manage it all on my own.

**Uma**

Yes, of course, of course. So many, many thanks for the beautiful answer to this question.

**Aaron:**

May I perhaps briefly ask another question?

**Lucy Fricke:**

Sure.

**Aaron:**

So we also wanted to find out a bit more about which media coverage or which public persona or which public institutions have also supported such funding.

**Lucy Fricke:**

In my case with the novels, it was Denis Scheck with ARD Druckfrisch, then it was a critic from Spiegel-Online. Spiegel Online still has the widest reach, so you can't call that a review. That was really a hymn to my novel "Daughters" and it appeared on Spiegel-Online. After that, 40 film productions got in touch to ask if the film rights were still available and the first edition was sold out after that review. It was just gone immediately. And it has to then: I think that the time is coming to an end where individual reviews bring so much. So it's still the case that Spiegel-Online has a huge reach. But what has to happen is that every two or three days an article appears somewhere. And that's still a lot. So in the field of literature, it's still the classic media like Süddeutsche, Spiegel, Zeit, FAZ. Then there's radio. And that tends to be public radio, something like Deutschlandradio, where the target groups are. And then there's - of course it's becoming more and more important now - Instagram, social media and so on. And there I notice that there is a difference. You can't promote my books via TikTok, that's somehow wrong. But there are now also some on Instagram who have several 1,000 followers or so. But what publishers always try to do is someone has 50,000 followers and then they try to promote the book to them, even though they don't otherwise make books. It's a marketing strategy of the publishers now. But I don't think social media helped me that much. So that was more the classic and then also very classic and is becoming increasingly rare, but was also the case with the book, such a bookseller success, you call it. So I'm going to expand on that a bit, but it's like this: many, many people, I think three quarters of people go into a bookshop and don't know what they want to buy. And then they often get advice from booksellers or there are things on the tables. So especially the independent book trade is of course very important. So with bookstore chains like Thalia or Hugendubel, the books that are there on the table, those are bought spaces, that's like an advertisement from the publisher. It still says staff, recommendation and so on, but it's bought.

**Uma:**

Okay. Many, many thanks for the really important factors.