

Notes

- A Avital Ronell, *Finitude's Score: Essays for the End of the Millennium*, University of Nebraska Press, 1994, p. 100
- B Mythologically characterized as the allegory of rumor, *Fama* moves in the dialectic of fame and infamy, speech and chatter, rumor and gossip. Since her first appearance in Virgil's epic *Aeneid*, she has been in a cyclical state of boom and bust.
- C «Vorhänge und Tische, die beiden Zentralelemente des Gerichts» Cornelia Vismann, *Medien der Rechtsprechung*, S. Fischer, 2011, p. 341
- D German terms, translated to the *International Phonetic Alphabet*
- E The tree of justice, regarded as an oracle and situated outside a village, was consulted for judgments and the maintenance of peace in different cultures. It was already important in pre-Christian mythologies.
- F The «Gerichtstheater» (Pierre Legendre, here citing Vismann, pp. 38–71) has functioned as an ordinary court since the 18th century (in Germany). It is characterized by a closed space, a high degree of formality and skepticism towards media. Truth is sought through investigations in order to make an unprejudiced decision according to the given law. A neutral judge moderates the disputing parties.
- G The tribunal has its roots in the Greek tragedy as well as in the «Dingstätte» of the Middle Ages.

Because there is no neutral third party, the plaintiff often steps into a judgmental position. Since tribunals do not only refer to positive (valid) law, they are associated with jurisprudence and usually follow a pedagogical impulse. In the middle of the 20th century, heterogeneous legal formats less averse to media, such as international tribunals and truth commissions, developed.

- H The *Nürnberger Hauptkriegsverbrecherprozess*, held 1945/1946, was followed by 12 further trials.
- I Cf. Vismann, pp. 241–270, transl. LS
- J Cf. Ronell, pp. 85–97
- K Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 86–91
- L Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 96
- M Paul Ricœur, *De l'interprétation: Essai sur Sigmund Freud*, Éditions du Seuil, 1965
- N Cf. Leo Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown: Fame and Its History*, Oxford University Press, 1986, p. 128
- O X, Y, and Z are reference to spatial coordinates.
- P *Untimely Media* was the title of a conference organized by Caroline Lillian Schopp and Barbara Reisinger at the University of Vienna in 2019.
- Q The genre of the courtroom drama flourished on television between the 1950s and the 1990s. Featuring some of the actual documentary footage, but centered on a fictionalized case within the case, *Judgment at Nuremberg* becomes a case itself.
- R See Note A, emphasis LS

spread-
ing
rumor
takes on
the quali-
ties of
a story

without
author or
term^A

www.lisastuckey.net

Supervisor
Prof. Constanze Ruhm

Fama facing Trial:
Words as Currency
Diploma Exhibition
Art and Digital Media
Institute for Fine Arts
Academy of Fine Arts Vienna

Lisa Stuckey
01/2020

Fama facing Trial: Words as Currency

This work contrasts (media-) architectures of jurisdiction with *Fama*^B, allegory of rumor, poetically responding to global transitional justice processes. The basic components of the installation are also the fundamental elements of the judicial scenography: a table serving as the central locus of the trial, and a curtain or a glass wall, an instrument for regulating publicity by including and excluding audiences.^C Display and projections make use of shot-reverse-shot montages to critically examine configurations of judgment.

Gerichtslinde

[gə'riçts,lɪndə]

Gerichtstheater

[gə'riçts,the:ate]

Kinogericht

[ki:no:gə'riçt]

This work directs the focus from the people involved in judicial negotiations and rituals to media-architectures and spatial dispositifs. On this basis, a history can be retraced, which according to the European foundational myth begins in antiquity: from the assembly in open courtyards, public forums, or around trees of justice (*Gerichtslinden*^E), to the 18th century windowless and formal courtrooms that resemble theaters (*Gerichtstheater*^F), to the various tribunals^G of the 20th century, held in different locations and halls. To ask alongside Bruno Latour: how does the *Broken Jug* (as referring to Heinrich von Kleist's infamous play from 1808) bring us together because it divides us?

The *Nuremberg trials*^H functioned as a «cinema courtroom», constructed and functioning like a film-set, where the trials were documented and broadcast; during these proceedings, for the first time, a documentary film was admitted as evidence to be presented «as a cinematographic argument for the prosecution».^I Since then, elements of theatrical courts and agonal tribunals have been incorporated in international jurisprudence, where a post-dramatic version of the *Gerichtstheater* is realized in hybrid formats.

Gericht und Gerücht (justice and gossip/rumor) both work with gaps that they try to overcome. «Rumorological» thinking creates a «countertext», an «interference».^J

Fama might deliberately miss the tone when she is «cited before the court», where words cut words short (*fallen sich gegenseitig ins Wort*).

In Ronell's reception, *Fama* was formally depicted as wind, until the figure became characterized by mediation technologies, such as the radio, the teleprinter, and the signal.^K While nowadays rumors spread in real time, *Fama* from the previous century flew through newspapers, if these weren't «lagging behind the speed of rumor»^L. Having a structure of repetition and variation—the basis of every permutational narrative—rumors arise alongside facts. They can be testimony and a symptom of fame, banal talk, political leverage, or a bearer of hope (for the fall of a regime). They precede information and function through a «hermeneutics of suspicion»^M.

Is the antipode to fame really the public service?^N The dictum of publicness/publicity (*Öffentlichkeitsdogma*) has existed since the 19th century, demanding for orality before the court.

When gossip has become socially accepted (*salonfähig*), are several *Famas* assigned to the status of «ear witnesses»? Anticipating surveillance, they rely upon advanced perceptual abilities (vision, acoustics), trumpeting broadcasts and mumbling with a thousand tongues. Their place of residence is on roofs and architectures with countless doors and peepholes.

Projection I: X-Y-Z Gerichtszeichnerin

[gə'riçts,tʃaɪçnərɪn]

How can a commentary on post-digital co-presences and absences be formulated via an unfashionable medium? Where audio- and video-recordings are prohibited, the analogue technique of courtroom sketching is practiced as a means of documenting trial scenes even today. Following the aim of this work, the *Gerichtszeichnerin* draws four different motives.

The courtroom hall (motive X^O) and gallery (motive Y) of the International Criminal Court in The Hague testify to the presence of media technologies, including a live stream based on the surrounding cameras. The hall of the Law Court of Caen (motive Z) is also medially amplified and equipped with an interpreter's booth. The tree of justice (motive /) continues to exist as a common reference, activated when a linden is planted in the atrium of this court.

Projection II: Fama facing Trial

Fama is facing trial.

Is she facing it?

Sie wird vor Gericht zitiert.

But she doesn't show.

Wünscht sie, formellen Protest einzulegen?

Or is she stuck or even hiding in untimely^P media?

The film *Judgment at Nuremberg* (1961), audibly present, relates the trials regarded as the beginning of simultaneous interpreting. It was an event that inspired the genre of the «courtroom drama»^Q in its loops of media ecologies. Without showing the film and by including the translations of the translations, boundaries between the original version (English and German) and the synchronized dubs (French, Italian, Spanish) become unclear. Most of the words, sentences, and phrases therefore recur—dislocated like in a rumor—in another medium (spoken, written) or another language. *Words as Testimonials, Words as Currency*.

Traces of *Fama* have been disrupted in transmission processes. Text fragments of theoretical-poetic and cultural-scientific reflections, such as verses of Roman writers remain as archival material (visible also in the collage). In whispers, we hear unsecured knowledge by a multiplied figure, playing critically with gossip as an alleged female form of communication. Different versions of *Fama's* possible disappearance or death, her lawsuit and considered countersuit can be noticed—with unpredictable consequences, because «*spreading rumor takes on the qualities of a story told, without author or term, imposing itself as an ineluctable and unforgettable account.*»^R

Rumors can be anticipatory calls determining the future. But they may also be directed at the past: as such, this work pays tribute to Cornelia Vismann's cultural theoretical writings on the media of law in the form of an artistic *Nachruf*.

Projection I: X-Y-Z

HD Video, b/w, 24 min

Concept, Editing

Lisa Stuckey

Camera

Manuel Carreón López

Drawing

Eva Kraller

Projection II: Fama facing Trial

HD Video, b/w, 12 min

Concept, Montage

Lisa Stuckey

Camera

Manuel Carreón López

Sound Design

Jakob Kolb

Fama's Voices

Kelsey Baker, Julia Boog-Kaminski
Hannah Bruckmüller, Miles Russell

Text Fragments

Vergil, *Aeneis*, 1952

Ovid, *Metamorphosen*, 1999

Leo Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown:*

Fame and Its History, 1986

Avital Ronell, *Finitude's Score: Essays for the End of the Millennium*, 1994

Courtroom Drama Audio Footage

Anatomy of a Murder, 1959

To Kill a Mockingbird, 1960

Judgment at Nuremberg, 1961

Film Permit

Thanks to

Österreichisches Filmmuseum

Wiener Stadthalle

Schlosspark Grafenegg

Funding

Thanks to

Sofie und Emanuel Fohn Stiftung

Objects

Conception

Lisa Stuckey, Manuel Carreón López

Metal Display

Wolfgang Holland

Text Fragments Collage

Vergil, Ovid, Braudy, Ronell

Leaflet

Text, Layout

Lisa Stuckey

Fonts

Fira Sans, Tavriraj

Special Thanks

Constanze Ruhm for the invaluable intellectual exchange

Manuel Carreón López for conceptual dialogues and generous support

Barbara Feller & Karin Feller for support and advice

Hannah Bruckmüller for thinking together about Fama