

231123 LRE - The solution comes after the tears - believes Lovis Ryan, Frankfurt am Main

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Written by Lovis Ryan, Frankfurt/Main, 23/11/23.

*Lovis Ryan sits in a group of older gents in a "How to build prose" workshop on 23.11.2023. The leader gives the order to write an identitarian text about two pages long in which the main character is diverse. It's a real treat for Lovis, because this writer is diverse and is known to write in such a way that the reflects on themselves as a diverse narrator while telling the story. The day after the horrific Hamas attack on Israeli settlers, Lovis was a guest at a teacher training course with a section of a comprehensive school and uses their observations of the visit to overcome the challenge.*

Linda Höchst supervises in the schoolyard of Essen-Altenessen comprehensive school. A crowd of eighth graders gathers around a cell phone. A shaky commercial is playing. Two Hamas fighters race past on a motorcycle. A young, lightly dressed woman is wedged between the uniformed men. Her long black hair blows in the wind. Bodies line the road to the right and left.

The kids talk excitedly in Arabic. Linda doesn't understand what they are saying. But she senses that some are enthusiastic, others are disgusted. The Pictures have a magical attraction for everyone in the group. The teacher can see this in the children's faces. Linda Höchst feels powerless, helpless, unable to do what she should be doing now. What horrifying images!

Lovis Ryan, poly-gender journalist in Frankfurt am Main, sees the same pictures together with Jolle, Lovis' partner, on the evening news on October 7, 2023: Two fighters rob a woman! Unbelievable! Warfare like in ancient times. The robbery of the beautiful Helena, in the 21st century. Unimaginably terrible. How might the two fighters feel, men in soldiers' uniforms, as if in a bloodlust on foreign territory? How might the woman feel? Does she realize what is happening to her? Lovi's eyes fill with tears. The unbelievable human suffering that unleashes itself in this scene! I have to write about it!

*The next day, Lovis sits at the keyboard of their computer. This is where they creates the texts that the diverse journalist wants to send out into the world. In retirement, they only writes about what's on her mind. What they wants to put into words. To overcome the shock, the lifelessness triggered by the shaking images in the news. Are there words that can overcome this disaster between the Hamas fighters and the young woman who was just dancing at a music festival?*

"I have to find a language to talk about these images!" is Lovi's calling. "Without language, these images destroy social life." So, speak up! Come on now! Speak!" *An old journalistic trick is to put language into people's mouths. Which person has to speak in the face of these images? I put myself in the shoes of a middle-aged teacher at a comprehensive school in the middle of the German Ruhr area. I know the school. I have written about her. About her efforts to make learning together possible in the face of great cultural heterogeneity. The teacher's name is Linda Höchst! The figure already appears in front of Lovis' inner eye.* Lovis senses the helpless inability of the dedicated teacher to speak. Just as violently as she torments Linda. Being speechless now, no, that's not possible!

Lovis identifies with the teacher, gets active, speaks to the kids and asks: "What do you feel when you see the pictures?"

"Great thing," shout two boys who had just been speaking Arabic.

"And the woman?" asks Lovis as Linda.

"It's just bad luck. Does she have to go dancing right now?"

Linda, Lovis senses, has to answer. She owes it to her role. *I'll try it in my male mode, Lovis decides as Linda:* "These Hamas fighters are committing murder, genocide and terrorism. The most serious crimes! Not only in our country, but also in the Middle East, this is punishable by the maximum penalty. Lifelong exclusion from the human community! You think that's cool?"

*Lovis hears himself speak and flinches. Does this masculine, rational approach work? How would I act as a woman in Linda's place? Lovis goes into feminine mode and tries again:*

"Would you like to be one of the two men? Or would you rather be the woman? How do you feel when you put yourself in the shoes of the characters?"

Yes, that's how it works! *The images immediately start running in Lovis' head.*

"The Hamas men hate women, so they think what they're doing is okay," explains one boy. "But they don't feel good. They are afraid. What will happen to them if the Israelis catch them? Then they're dead."

"The woman feels like she's being raped," a girl objects. "Squeezed between two men like that. Rape could happen to her at any time. She's scared to death. I find that totally horrible."

"And why," asks Linda, "are you happy? When both the men and the woman are in a bad way, both sides are full of fear and the horror is getting worse by the minute? What is there to be happy about?"

An awkward silence, *Lovis imagines*, sets in the schoolyard. The kids haven't asked themselves this question yet.

Finally, one of the boys says: "It's somehow good that something is happening at all. The hatred on both sides is so overwhelming. Nobody can stand that in the long run".

One girl adds: "I should actually be crying all day! It's so sad that they can't understand each other."

"What do these people need so that the hatred stops and doesn't get worse?"

"Respect for each other, everyone for each other," laughs the boy, who thinks it's good that something is happening at all.

*Lovis reads the lines that now appear on her computer screen. The journalist's thoughts wander back to a training day for colleagues last year.* The message was that collaborative learning can only succeed in a climate of mutual appreciation for diversity in the learning groups. *Lovis recalls* that the desire to create a school that offers such a climate is a real concern of the teaching staff. A school that will not do this can probably not survive in the long term.

Linda Höchst hears the bell ringing at the end of the break. She is still standing silently with the group, feeling helpless and incapable. "The break is over, please go to your classroom," she says kindly. The cell phone disappears into its owner's pocket. Cell phone use in the schoolyard is forbidden here. Linda lets it happen. In a daze, she goes to class 5b and starts the lesson.

After school, Linda is standing in the Essen-Altenessen subway station. The train rushes by, the train is full. Lots of people, just like they are on the subway in Essen. The crowds do Linda good. Lively conversations, the doors close, the train roars in the tunnel, the world turns. The scene in the schoolyard and the colorful bath in the inhabitants of the Ruhr area overlap in Linda's imagination. Somehow beautiful here in the hustle and bustle!

Linda feels tears welling up in her eyes. She is crying. Because of all the misfortune in the world. Because of the hatred of Hamas. Because of the horror of the woman on the motorcycle. Because of

the reactions of the kids in the schoolyard glorifying violence. The tears run silently, drip onto her chest and run down her coat. The terrible suffering of the people!

Standing next to Linda is a young Arab man with a close-shaven head of hair, trimmed beard, dark skin and brown eyes. He hands her a paper handkerchief and looks at her attentively. "Thank you," says Linda, smiling and thinking to herself: "Tomorrow I'll ask my teacher team at school how the others would have reacted if they had heard what I experienced in the school playground."