

Reading notes on Lovis Ryan's novel "Susan has to die at Little Rock"

This thrilling crime novel is a reader! You decide how you read it. Only as far as you like! **Here you can find more about the chapter "Reading notes - risks and side effects."**

What is your motive for reading? Are you interested in the core problem of the novel? Do you love crime stories? Do you read identitarian prose from the Agency for the Diverse Construction of Reality for the joy of the colorful variety of human identities that intertwine in the course of action?

In any case, please read "Prologue and reading notes" first, then sections 1.1. to 1.3 from the chapter "George". Now you are in the middle of the action. You are experiencing the effects of Susan's crime from a position mostly is repressed - what are the consequences for my loved ones if I commit a crime? **You are now prepared to choose your own individual path.**

From now on it becomes concrete. And therefore terrible, cruel, terrifying. Triggering emotions - from terrible to beautiful. If this is too much for you, please don't put the book down immediately. That would contradict the author's intention. **Instead, please read the "Epilogue" chapter. It shows that even the worst possible situation created by a crime can end in reconciliation.** This is how things should and must be in a civilized world!

Lovis Ryan looks at the criminal actions of the young American Susan Goldmann in the US state of Arkansas. Susan becomes a murderer. She flees from prosecution. But she is tracked down, put on trial and sentenced to death according to the law. Lovis sketches her identity from the retrospective of the last hours of her life. **The chapter "Susan" provides deep insights into this woman's development of identity who unexpectedly comes to such a terrible end.**

In the hours leading up to death, Susan's sad fate is determined by the people entangled in the execution. People who are involved in different roles. The death sentence brings them together on the mission to take Susan's life in the name of society. **Lovis tells the story of how they come to terms with this identity just as empathetically as the fate of the novel's main character** (chapters "Georg", "Roxana and Jill", and "Manja")

The character with probably the most exciting identity is Lovis Ryan himself. Because this poly-gender-identitarian author reflects on themselves while writing. What does the world of prose look like from the perspective of a non-binary-queer personality? **If you want to gain an insight into Lovis' special constructions of meaning, read the sections in italics in the book.** Pay attention to the typography as you leaf through the book. Less than 20% are in italics - still manageable despite the size of the reader.

Or are you more interested in crime stories? In the causes of the seemingly ineradicable motive for people to commit crimes? As a diverse journalist Lovis provides sensitive access to the lives of perpetrators, victims and those affected by prohibited violence. Everyone has the potential for violence - and is responsible for where and how they turn this potential into action, or whether it is better not to do so. The imagination is free! It only becomes criminal when someone puts criminal fantasies into practice in a way that is not permitted. Susan does so and is caught up in the consequences of her actions. **The two female executioners discover Susan's pattern of action when reading the investigation files** (section 3.2 of the chapter "Jill and Roxana") **from the perspective of the investigating police authority.** **Susan's own reflections on her criminal actions** (sections 2.6 and 2.7 of the chapter "Susan") **form a charming contrast to this**

How can it happen that a young woman like Susan develops a tendency to irresponsibly break the rules with fatal consequences? Susan comes from a middle-class, unremarkable family. She enjoys a

good education. Nevertheless, she becomes so loaded with violence that she turns it into criminal behavior. Where in this bourgeois idyll are the moments that tempt an adolescent young woman to act in this way? Lovis investigates these moments with socially critical intent that is typical of the journalist character. **They recounts relevant episodes of the criminal's social incarnation in childhood, youth and socialization and adult life as an answer to the question "Why does she actually do what she does"** (sections 2.10 and 2.11 of the chapter "Susan").

The central element of the novel is the human-made death of the murderess Susan. When executions were still carried out in public, people flocked to watch her die. It must be a satisfying feeling when someone is brought to justice who frightens the public with their terrible crimes. Watching them being punished awakens both pleasure and fear of the cruel violence on display. **Lovis advises: Don't be ashamed if you wouldn't resist the urge to watch.** It is in society's interest that people vividly imagine the experience that awaits anyone who is tempted to put criminal fantasies into practice. **So don't let this stop you from reading with empathy about both Georg's gruesome impressions of his wife dying in the electric chair** (sections 1.6 to 1.9 of the Georg chapter) **and the experience of the two executioners fulfilling their mission** (section 3.7 of the "Roxana and Jill" chapter) **with relish.** Lovis believes that these horror fantasies have a strong violence preventative effect that it is better to let it be.

Who would risk dying in this way? Susan does. Why? She doesn't keep her murderous desires in check. She lives it out. And she is called to account. As a chilling example, she is strapped naked and helpless to the execution chair in front of witnesses and experiences her gradual death through the ingenious application of electric current. Relatively painlessly, so that she can clearly feel the physiological process of dying in her own body. Nobody knows how she really feels. **Lovis imagines** (sections 2.13 and 2.14 of the "Susan" chapter) **what she might think and feel in the last minutes of her life** – for which she has been preparing for months – from the moment she is taken to the final act of execution until her spirits are extinguished on the horrifying killing machine. Lovis tells the story in a very sensual way. **This encourages you to imagine how you would have felt in Susan's place. Feel the reactions of your body as you fantasize and hear it telling you: "For heaven's sake, don't ever let it get that far!"**

What is exciting about Lovis' crime story is that Susan manages to find peace with the circumstances of her forced death. Lovis lets her find a "good death" under execution. Is that credible? Or stupidly naive? Lovis explains this unexpected development with the great respect that the murderess Susan receives from society, even if she is not released from the responsibility of atoning for her guilt. **This succeeds because, as an individual accused in court, she has a lawyer at her side who mediates empathetically between the legal situation from the state's point of view and Susan's perspective.** Karla's counseling, which implements the new philosophy of the state of Arkansas, has a significant impact on Susan's preparation for the electric chair awaiting her (sections 2.6 and 2.7 of chapter "Susan"; an identity sketch of the lawyer herself can be found in the middle of chapter "Epilogue", where Karla appears as the last mourner at Susan's grave).

Lovis Ryan's novel is socially critical. Is that why you are interested in picking up this book? As a diverse person, Lovis is passionate about the state taking its role as guarantor of the free development of all individuals in a safe environment seriously. For diversity to become a happiness factor, people need non-violent living spaces. Lovis believes it is possible to create them. Even if, unfortunately, our reality often looks different. **For the novel, Lovis chooses the conservative US state of Arkansas and imposes a eutopian image on it. They ascribes to it the serious intention of implementing its monopoly on the use of force fairly, strictly and mindfully.** This visionary state even treats its criminals with care when it has to bring them to justice. Lovis considers respect for human dignity in the act of punishment to be the central element of violence prevention. From a journalistic point of view, the concept of this state is forward-looking - despite all the horror that the punishment of final exclusion from the human community inevitably triggers. **Lovis explains how strange this conception seems to outsiders**

like Georg (section 1.3. of chapter "Georg"). **It feels just as weird when people meet for whom this concept is part of everyday life** (section 4.1 of chapter "Manja"). Lovis does not develop the theory of the concept here – the book it is supposed to be a novel, not a treatise on state philosophy - and **refers to another publication in the "Lovis Ryan Edition"** ("Consequence or Punishment – Systemically Moralization with Lovis Ryan, Frankfurt / Main").

Unlike classic crime stories, Lovis' novel does not end with the capture of the perpetrator. Lovis tells the story of Susan's crime from the beginning to the end: until the restoration of legal peace in the social community that she has damaged. **Lovis critically observes what the state, challenged to be guardian of peace of law, does to restore calm to the social community disturbed by the crime.** It punishes consistently and informs the public about it. Susan must atone for her murders by death penalty. Afterwards, the state can restore her dignity as a member of society. **In the novel, Manja embodies the unusual actions of the state** (especially in section 4.2 of chapter "Manja").

The social processing of a crime is successful if the offender accepts the punishment imposed on them as just. This is the case with Susan. After atoning for her grave guilt, she is once again given a respectful place in people's memories. But her final learning process does not save her own life. **Susan serves her society as a model for others to learn from her transgression.** Because the state of Arkansas, according to its visionary conservative legal philosophy, does not demonize its criminal citizen Susan, but treats her with respect and attentiveness. After Susan's death, the officials responsible for execution of the sentence reflect on whether this was successful. **Does what happen to Susan in the execution room** (sections 5.4 to 5.8 of the chapter "The world keeps turning") **feel "right" from the point of view of everyone involved?**

Many countries around the world outlaw the death penalty as "inhumane". But is it right? Human-hostile acts a state who misuse the death penalty as a means of terror. But that is not what this book is about. As the bearer of the monopoly on the use of force, the state has the right in unavoidable cases to demand people giving their lives to safeguard the social community. The American Constitution, the German Basic Law, the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights oblige states to uphold the inviolability of human dignity. Protection of life is subordinate to this state objective. How does this apply in the case of Susan's crime? **To form your opinion on the morality of the actions of the State of Arkansas, you must read the book in its entirety.**

Because Lovis makes it clear: executing people is an inhumane act. It destroys human life. Therefore, it is inhumane. Anyone who does it, who is involved in it, or who witnesses it, it will inevitably be traumatized. However, if it cannot be avoided, the state has a duty to heal the traumatization of the survivors. Lovis believes that the state of Arkansas is making an honest attempt to do so. **But will it succeed?** Or will the death penalty remain a no-go because no one can reasonably be expected to carry it out? **What do you think? If you have actually read the whole book, please write a feedback to Lovis about how you see things!**