

## **TRANSGRESSION IN WORK OF JAKOB MICHAEL REINHOLD LENZ**

"I love all strange instances/cases; they are the sign of not mean hearts. I can't stand a quarter of an hour with anyone who trots along the beaten track". These are the words Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz, the son of the pastor of Tartu's (Dorpat's) St John's Church, wrote to his friend, the German writer Sophie von La Roche, from Strasbourg in July 1775.

The strange instances that often provocatively test and possibly transgress the norms and boundaries of the social or moral order are also treated by Lenz in his work. Lenz is a transgressive author par excellence, if one understands by transgression the transgression of a norm, law or taboo (in terms of Georges Bataille, Michel Foucault and others).

A subject of his time, burdened with taboos and norms, which occupies a very important place in his work, is sexuality. In both his theoretical and fictional works, Lenz treats this theme with a directness that was rare until then.

In my paper, I explore the representation of transgressions in the realm of the sexual in Lenz's work. I focus primarily on his most transgressive work, the comedy "Der Hofmeister, oder Vorteile einer Privaterziehung" (1774).

### **Biography**

Liina Lukas is Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Tartu. Her research focuses on literary relations in the multilingual Baltic cultural area, especially from the 18th to the early 20th century. Since 2001, he has organised international symposia on Baltic literary culture, which have brought together scholars from different disciplines interested in Baltic cultural history. He is the editor-in-chief of the eight-volume collective monograph "The History of Baltic Literary Culture" (Volume 1 was published 2021) and has been the director of EEVA, a digital text collection of early Estonian literature, for 20 years.

She is the head of the Estonian Comparative Literature Association and of the Estonian Goethe-Society; she is the corresponding member of the Göttingen Academy of Sciences.