

## They are Still Coming Back. Heroes for Time of Crisis: Vidvuds and Lāčplēsis

### *Viņi joprojām atgriežas. Varoņi krīzes laikam: Vidvuds un Lāčplēsis*

**Justyna Prusinowska**

Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

E-mail: [justyna.prusinowska@amu.edu.pl](mailto:justyna.prusinowska@amu.edu.pl)

The ground-breaking or especially difficult moments in the history of Latvia have almost always found their reflection in the literature. During each of the challenging moments an ideal hero is born, a hero ready to fight for his fatherland and nation, constituting a role model to be followed. However, Latvian writers do not create new heroes, but have been summoning the same figures for over a hundred years. The paper is going to present the stands and transformations of literary heroes – Vidvuds and Lāčplēsis – at different stages of Latvian history, as they face threats against national freedom and social integrity.

**Keywords:** Latvian literature, Latvian national hero, Latvian national identity.

During Latvian National Awakening a vital role was played by the “Young Latvians” (Latvian: *jaunlatvieši*) and their followers, especially through articles and poetry that they published in press. Among the plethora of very diverse texts one may find those that are devoted to the Latvian past, to its ancient religion, gods and heroes. These heroes in particular – gifted with extraordinary power and skills – were chosen as leaders and advocates of freedom and the new, better order. Throughout the entire 19<sup>th</sup> century quite a few of them appeared in the Latvian literary space, Imanta, Lāčplēsis, Vidvuds and Kurbads being the most prominent. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century they were joined by heroes from the plays by Jānis Rainis, especially Tots, the brave busker and the main character in *Spēleju, dancoju. Vēlnu nakts piecos cēlienos (I Played, I Sang)*, the new incarnation of Lāčplēsis. It is fascinating that those heroes – with an only exception of Kurbads and Tots – come, go and return once more at different points of time.

The era of Latvian heroes, however, began much earlier than in the 19<sup>th</sup> century – namely, in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century – due to Christophor Schaller and his eulogy *Encomivm Rigae Totivs Livoniae metropoleos celeberrimae Anno 1640. I die Octobris...* from 1641. There, for the first time ever, the Liv chief Kaupo (*Cobbius*) was mentioned. It is of utmost importance that Kaupo is actually a historical figure, a rich Liv from Turaida, the first or maybe one of the first to accept Christianity (possibly in 1191). In 1203, he travelled to Rome for an audience of pope Innocent

III. Allied with the Teutonic Order (due to which he will be referred to as traitor in the later source texts), he took part in battles against Livonians and died in 1217 as a consequence of injuries. Information about him is given in the oldest Livonian Chronicle *Heinrici Cronicon Lyvoniae* of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, which also mentions Imanta (*Imauts*) for the first time in history as the one who inflicted a deadly wound to the bishop Berthold (died 24 July 1198). Kaupo and Imanta are two of the very few historical characters to have been transferred from the pages of medieval chronicles into fiction and to have started a completely new life.

After Schaller's text they appeared, *inter alia*, in a dramatic play *Albert oder die Gründung von Riga. Ein Schuldrama* written by Johann Gotthelf Lindner in 1760<sup>1</sup> and in *Kaupo, der Edle Live von Thoreida* by Karl August Küttner from 1793.<sup>2</sup> The most important event, however, was undoubtedly the publication of Garlieb Helvig Merkel's *Wannem Ymanta*<sup>3</sup> in 1802. Contrary to his predecessors, Merkel pictures his hero against the background of Latvian spring festival devoted to pagan gods, whose participants are described in accordance to Rousseau's conception of "natural" people – free, happy and good. This idyll is interrupted by the appearance of German invaders, who soon turn Latvians into their slaves. The clash of these obviously horribly different realities was a conscious choice, through which the author wished to turn the attention of Western Europe to the extremely difficult situation of the Latvian people. Moreover, in order to emphasize the destructive effect of German invasion and expansion of Christianity, Merkel adapted the life story of the chief Imanta. In his work, Imanta is not the killer of the bishop but of his brother, childhood friend and brother-in-law, namely, Kaupo, whose mind has been poisoned by Germans and turned against the pagans. In the duel, supposed to decide the fate of Latvians, both Kaupo and Imanta are killed, since the weapon of the former has been soaked in venom.

The first pages of Merkel's text picture Imanta as an ordinary member of the Livonian community, who steps out of the crowd and assumes the role of chief only in the face of a critical situation that demands taking important decisions. The fight against invaders, which demands responsibility, decisiveness, but at the same time, remaining loyal to his beliefs and the religion of his ancestors, is going to change his life irretrievably. Ultimately, much to his own surprise, Imanta will stand up in front of his people and speak to them as a prophet. The path of growing and maturing into a leader, ready to take responsibility for his people and claim power over them, is a typical property of many national heroes. Imanta is the first character of this type given to Latvians. The ideal of hero – warrior, brave and loyal, ready to sacrifice for his faith and true to the love of his life – in Imanta's case, his wife Ajita – became popular and matured in the late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The creation of Imanta as a literary figure was, of course, motivated by historical events, but, as the time passed, the hero was reanalyzed as a legendary figure. The best illustration thereof is provided by two poems – *Imanta* by Jānis Ruģēns, and Andrejs Pumpurs, which, in turn, were inspired by Friedrich Rückert's poem *Barbarossa*, written in memory of the famous Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa (ca. 1125-1190):

The ancient Barbarossa  
By magic spell is bound,—  
Old Frederic the Kaiser,  
In castle underground.

The Kaiser hath not perished,  
He sleeps an iron sleep;  
For, in the castle hidden,  
He's sunk in slumber deep.

With him the chiefest treasures  
Of empire hath he ta'en,  
Wherewith, in fitting season,  
He shall appear again.

The Kaiser he is sitting  
Upon an ivory throne;  
Of marble is the table  
His head he resteth on.

His beard it is not flaxen,  
Like living fire it shines,  
And groweth through the table  
Whereon his chin reclines.

As in a dream he noddeth,  
Then wakes he, heavy-eyed,  
And calls, with lifted finger,  
A stripling to his side.

“Dwarf, get thee to the gateway,  
And tidings bring, if still  
Their course the ancient ravens  
Are wheeling round the hill.

“For if the ancient ravens  
Are flying still around,  
A hundred years to slumber  
By magic spell I'm bound.”<sup>4</sup>

The life of Barbarossa ended in the river Salef, where he drowned while bathing; however, according to legend, he did not die, but sleeps inside a mountain (in one of the caves of Kyffhäuser Massif) and together with other warriors awaits the moment to wake up and fight for the victory of Germany over other nations. Barbarossa and Imanta were exceptional figures whose lives intertwined in the most curious way:

the former was the organizer of the third Teutonic crusade, the latter, eight years after Barbarossa's death, took the life of his bishop – the advocate of the new faith. What is more, since the publication of the above-mentioned Pumpurs' poem in 1874, all Latvian heroes follow the example of Frederick I Barbarossa and, instead of dying, retreat to sleep, ready to wake up when called:

Imanta nevaids miris,  
Bet tikai apburts kluss,  
No darbošanās rimis,  
Zem Zilā kalna dus'.

Tam zelta pilī snauzot,  
Tas zobins nesarūs',  
Kurš, dzelzu bruņas laužot,  
Kā liesma kļūvis būs.

Par simtiem gadiem reizi,  
Mazs rūķīt' s augšā nāk;  
Un apskatās, vai migla  
Ap kalnu nodzist sāk.

Un kamēr zilo miglu  
Ap Zilo kalnu redz,  
Tik ilgam tūkstoš gadus  
Gan viņu zeme sedz!

Bet reizi Pērkoņ'dēli  
Tai kalnā lodes spers;  
Tad bēdzīs visi jodi;  
Pēc zobena tas ķers.

Un saules meitas nācīs  
Un miglu projām trauks;  
Un gaismas laika balsis  
Imantu ārā sauks!<sup>5</sup>

In opposition to the prophesy voiced by Merkel in his work, the death of Imanta did not become the beginning of the end of the whole nation. Latvians did not cease to exist, retained the hope for better times and the strength to fight for it. To the contrary, some tens of years later they awakened their hero in the form of Lāčplēsis, who completely changed not only the Latvian culture, but also the entire nation. This figure, born of a fairytale and its author's imagination, became the symbol of freedom and transgressed the boundaries of literary space.<sup>6</sup> Given his ultimate shape by Andrejs Pumpurs in the epos *Lāčplēsis*, he is the culmination of all the Latvian efforts at creating a national hero. Pumpurs' work came out in 1888 but, as it will

turn out later, it was not the right time for a hero. National romanticism already was a closed chapter in the Latvian literary history, the slogans of Young Latvians were outdated, and return to the past was not the direction Latvians wanted to take. It was probably the only time when Lāčplēsis appeared at the wrong moment.

Pumpurs created his hero on the basis of Latvian folktales belonging mainly to the types 650A and 301B, while the introduction to the epos contains a folk tale about the son of a bear, classified by Šmits as type 650A and included in his collection *Pasakas un teikas (Folk-Tales and Legends)*.<sup>7</sup> Šmits noted, however, that it is in all certainty an example of literary fantasy.<sup>8</sup> None of the other thirty variants of this tale collected by Šmits mentions a character named Lāčplēsis or contains information about his ears being the source of bear-like strength. These important elements were created by Pumpurs.

Contrary to Imanta, Lāčplēsis is not a historical figure, but a fictional character. He is a young man born to a bear female and adopted by the owner of Lielvārde castle, destined by Pērkons himself to be a hero. On the other hand, he grows up into a brave and fair warrior, ready to sacrifice his life defending his land – just like Imanta. In similar circumstances – during the festival of Līgo on the peak of the Blue Mountain – Lāčplēsis is elected by his community to be the leader of forces meant to fight the Germans. An interrupted festival once again becomes the forewarning of an upcoming battle against the enemy, this time impersonated by the Black Knight – a battle that will not end in Lāčplēsis' death, but his falling asleep to await the right moment to return once again, just as was the case with Barbarossa and Imanta.

Such a moment came in 1904, right at the outset of the revolution of 1905. Jānis Rainis, in his symbolic drama *Uguns un nakts (Fire and Night)*, resurrected Lāčplēsis in a new form – slightly less self-confident, less decisive, maybe a bit unstable. These features made him resemble other heroes brought to life around that time, for example, by Stanisław Wyspiański in his drama *Wyzwolenie (Liberation, 1903)* or by Tadeusz Miciński in *Noc rabinowa (The Night of the Rabbis, 1903–1904)*. Each of these texts documents the process of individual's and entire nation's growing up, the process of maturing to take power and control over oneself and fighting for freedom – again, the individual and the collective.

In the same year of 1904 the first sketches for *I Played, I Danced* were created. In this work, Rainis modelled his hero Tots to resemble Lāčplēsis in many important aspects. A common busker at the beginning, he becomes the one to win over evil through his courage and wit, and to bring back the sun to Latvia (symbolized by Lelde), immersed deep in the swamp. In both his dramas, Rainis sought an answer to the question: is it possible to find the national spirit and awaken it from lethargy, and what kind of effort can an ordinary man afford if he is chosen to play an important role in the life of the nation.

The author orders Tots to fight for Latvia on a magical, diabolical night, which seems to last for eternity. The cosmic fight between good and evil takes place also in the drama *Fire and Night*, here the battle is set in the mind of Lāčplēsis himself. In all Rainis' works dedicated to the life of the national hero, references to struggle against the night and its atrocities, the elements of the eternal conflict of good and bad, as well as motifs of sun, light and glow are abundant.

The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, not only in Latvia but in all Europe, witnesses an increased interest in the pagan history of nations, mythology, folklore, fairytales. Decomposition of society observed at that time is immersed in this illusionary, dreamy world full of monsters and apparitions, covered by a thick curtain of darkness and mystery, through which hope – the sparkle of light longed for by everyone – is expected to appear. Hope for a better tomorrow, for freedom. The first shy flash of this hope is already visible in the last scene of Pumpurs' epos:

Un ar reizi nāks tas brīdis,  
Kad viņš [Lāčplēsis – J. P.] savu naidnieku,  
Vienu pašu lejā grūdīs,  
Noslīcinās atvarā, –  
Tad zels tautai jauni laiki,  
Tad būs viņa svabada!<sup>9</sup>

In Rainis' contribution, Lāčplēsis reaches out for the key to the Castle of Light right before his fall into the abyss:

Lāčplēsis. Dodat šurp man gaismas pils atslēgu!  
(Noņem atslēgu no zelta spilvena, viņa sarūsējusi un nespodra.)  
Ā, atslēga rūst,  
Tu gribi krist un lūzt?  
Es nespēju augt,  
Bet nākotnei tomēr būs plaukt!  
(Melnais bruņinieks sacērt atslēgu, tā krīt, bet nu atspīd spožā gaišumā)<sup>10</sup>,

but is not able to use it. In the epos by Pumpurs, Lāčplēsis overcomes obstacles with the help of his friends, but in the final battle he stands up alone, as only he possesses the power to fight the enemy. On the other hand, Rainis points out that without the help of Spīdola, without her wisdom, Lāčplēsis is an incomplete figure, unable to assess his real power, immature to face the most horrible of enemies. While Pumpurs gives hope for freedom, the hero of *Uguns un nakts* cannot guarantee it. The victory seems to grow more and more distant.

Possibly, Rainis' disappointment in the hero's attitude – or the attitude of the entire Latvian nation – is expressed in the lines of a drama that was never finished: *Imants* (Act I was written in 1916–1917), wherein Lāčplēsis gives up the power to Imants and retreats into the shadows:

(Imanta priekšā piepeši parādās liels bruņots tēls ar šķēpu rokā – Lāčplēsis.)

Imants (Uzšaujas kājās un iesaucas.)  
Kas esi tu?

Lāčplēša tēls Es tas, kas nebeidz cīnīties pret nakti.  
Nāk nakts – še tev mans gars un vairi nakti!

- Ved galā to, ko nepabeidzu es!  
(Viņš ar šķēpa galu aizskar Imantu.)
- Imants (Satrūkstas.)  
Kas es? Kā zāle vīstu!
- Lāčplēša tēls Vīst, ne mirt.  
Tev augt caur laikiem! Stingušam vēl dzīvot!  
Vēl mūža kalnā starot zilās ceres!  
Segt agru sēklu, līdz tā vēlu dīgst!
- Imants Ak, māci mani!
- Lāčplēša tēls Ej! tik ne pret brāli!  
Iekš tavas sirds būs viena visa tauta.
- Imants Kur spēku ņemt?
- Lāčplēša tēls Iekš cīņas.
- Imants Dod man Zīmi!
- Lāčplēša tēls No tavas pieres šodien saule lēks.  
(Pazūd.)
- \*
- Imants (Viens, apsēstas, apsedz vaigu rokām.)  
Tu lielais gars!  
(*Tad uzlec kājās.*)  
Kā? Miegš bij mani veicis?  
Vai pēkšņa pūsma bij? Vai ļaužu runas?  
(*Gaiši.*)  
Nē – sakarsusi sirds top atkal dzidra,  
Kā vēsas Daugavdvašas noskalota!  
-- Iekš cīņas spēku ņemt – priekš tālāk cīņas –  
-- Ak, es tik jauns vēl esmu! es tik vājš!...<sup>11</sup>

The sun did not rise from Imanta's forehead, the hero was not able to take Lāčplēsis' place. However, in both Pumpurs' epos and *Fire and Night*, another character appears, more powerful than the son of bear, to whom a role of special importance is ascribed. This character is Vidveds, Viduveds – Rainis' *Laikavecis* (Father of time). His teaching is only for those "who are capable of understanding and enduring it".<sup>12</sup> The chosen one is Lāčplēsis, to whom the wise man's words are read by Laimdota from old, dusty pages that talk about the past and future of Latvia.

Viduveds himself emerges in Lāčplēsis' life completely unexpectedly, through a cloud of light, a moment after releasing the Burtnieki castle from a spell, and says the following words to him:

Mans dēls, vēlēju labu  
 Tevim un latviešu tautai! Tu esi pārspējis jodus  
 Negantos, atņēmis tumsības varai Burtnieku pili;  
 Rītā tā rādīsies dienas gaišumā. Gaišumu nesīs  
 Tautai ar šeitān sakrātās vectēvu garīgas mantas,  
 Kuru starpā atrodas arī likumi mani.  
 Saki tur augšā, ka likumi šie ir iz dievības ņemti, –  
 Uzturot viņus, tauta zels un mūžīgi nemirs!  
 Viduveds esmu es. Esmu dibināj's latviešu tautu.  
 Mans dēls, dzīvo ar dieviem, guli mierīgi tagad  
 Burtnieku pilī, manas meitiņas iemidzīs tevi!<sup>13</sup>

Also in the Prologue of *Fire and Night*, away from the main stream of the slow-moving flow of characters, Viduveds makes his appearance, bringing his three White Daughters (*Baltās meitas*) with him. The old man, who at the beginning seems to have only the role of an observer, suddenly comes to the fore and speaks the meaningful words: “Don't interrupt Lāčplēsis in his journey towards death! His fight is the mightiest that human race has seen, he is going to fulfill his destiny. What you perceive as unspeakable danger is only the first breath of morning, the day of the great battle is still ahead of us; beware lest I find you asleep, when the time comes for Lāčplēsis to lead you to the final battle. In you is the key and the castle. Even if you open the castle with the key, Lāčplēsis' journey will not be finished, a beautiful bloodless struggle under the lead of Spīdola will begin”.<sup>14</sup> Lāčplēsis will hear the voice of Viduveds once again, in his sleep the moment before the Castle of Light emerges from the depths:

Tu pārspēji visas ļaunuma varas,  
 Pašu ļaunuma patvaldnieku;  
 Tu ziedoji sevi, tu pārspēji sevi,  
 Tu esi brīvs un dari brīvus. –  
 Gaismai tu atslēdzi grimušo pili,  
 Nu viņas gaisma pa visu zemi staros.  
 Ļauj Latvijā gaišiem tapt visiem prātiem,  
 Ļauj visām sirdīm laimību just,  
 Ļauj visām vaimanām klust.  
 Lai visi vienādā pilnībā staigā:  
 Lai visiem darbs, lai visiem dusa,  
 Lai katram vaļa pēc saules sniegties,  
 Lai dīgli dvēselē un galvā nau jāapspiež,  
 Lai visi var zelt, tad tauta augs,  
 Kā puķu dārzs, tālu smaršojot plauks.

Es vecais tautas tēvs, es stāvējis  
 Pie viņas šūpuļa,  
 Pils brīvības atslēgu es tai kalu,  
 Tā grima dzelmē, kad tumsai ļāvām mūs mākt.  
 Ar tumsu mūžam cīņa iet;  
 Kaut uzcēli gaismu, bet neatlaidies,  
 Ar tumsu mūžam cīņa iet;  
 Nesniedz tai roku nekād,  
 Pats neierobežo gaismu piekāpdamies.  
 Brīvības atslēgu paturi rokās.  
 Ja viņa grimis, grimis pils un tu<sup>15</sup>.

Vidvuds speaks to Lāčplēsis in a dream like a prophet, and the dream does turn out to be prophetic. The old man was there when Latvia came to be; his successor, the new hero, is supposed to save it from evil, from immersing in the abyss for eternity.

Pumpurs, as many of his peers, was certain that Vidvuds – the progenitor of Latvians – was a historical figure.<sup>16</sup> In reality, the name Widewuto was mentioned for the first time in the 16<sup>th</sup> century by Erazm Stella,<sup>17</sup> Simon Grunau<sup>18</sup> and Lucas David<sup>19</sup> in relation to the ethnogeny of Prussians. The man was identified as Alan, who, together with forty six thousand other people, landed at the mouth of the Vistula in 514 AD and shortly afterwards was chosen chief of the people consisted of various tribes that will become known as Prussians. The most elaborate variant of this legend is found in the *Prussian Chronicle* written by Simon Grunau in 1529, which caused serious controversies for a couple of centuries. The first edition of this work appeared probably after the year 1521 in the Dominican community, while the above-mentioned monk Simon Grunau merely continued the work in 1526–1529 (1530).<sup>20</sup>

The editor of the *Chronicle* made use of some earlier works – *Kronika Oliwska* (*The Chronicle of Oliwa*), writings of Peter of Duisburg, Wigand of Marburg, Johann von Posilge, Maciej z Miechowa (Maciej of Miechów, Matthias de Miechow), Erazm Stella and many other documents. The most important, however, was bringing together Teutonic chronicles with the description of Pagan Prussia called *The Chronicle of Christian (of Prussia)*.<sup>21</sup> This connection resulted in the first Prussian Chronicle, which was not limited to presenting the history of the Teutonic Order, but also told the story of the Prussian tribe.

For quite a few centuries after its publication, Simon Grunau's chronicle escaped criticism, even though some serious mistakes, mainly in chronology, were noticed as early as in the 17<sup>th</sup> century by Christophor Hartknoch.<sup>22</sup> In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the chronicler and his writings were mercilessly criticized by Max Töppen, later on – by Wilhelm Mannhardt, Antoni Mierzyński and Aleksander Brückner. For many years until recently it was believed that the Dominican priest put together characters and events quite randomly, filling the gaps between them with stories of his own imagination. Even more, he was accused of enriching the Prussian chronicles with legends, folk stories, fairytales and superstitions heard during his journeys across Prussia.<sup>23</sup> Ultimately, Grunau was called a forger and a liar, his texts doomed to be

forgotten due to their allegedly low historical credibility.<sup>24</sup> Only in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, due to the results of research in the fields of archeology, religious studies, ethnology and linguistics, Grunau's texts have been appreciated; however, the story of Widewuto and his brother Bruteno still remain disregarded in terms of ethnogeny.<sup>25</sup>

At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the chronicle was used by the Baltic Germans to describe the history of Latvia. Among the first authors to include Grunau's Widewuto – the progenitor of Prussians – in the Latvian history were Karl August Küttner<sup>26</sup> and Garlieb Helwig Merkel. The latter in his work *Die Vorzeit Lieflands: ein Denkmahl des Pfaffen- und Rittergeistes* (1798–1799) called Widewuto the Latvian Moses (*Widewut, der Moses der Letten*),<sup>27</sup> picturing him as the king who gave Latvians law and religion. This law and regulations pertaining to an organized society attracted the most of the authors' attention, and, according to Merkel, provided evidence for the high level of cultural development of Latvians long before Germans ever arrived at the coast of the Baltic sea. It was Merkel who introduced Widewut to the Latvian literature; Pumpurs and Rainis found in him a wise, skillful, decisive figure capable not only of running and ruling a society, but also of comprehending and interpreting historical processes. Lāčplēsis, who was chosen in the literature of the late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century to be his successor, became also an heir of a state with a rich history. His task is to lead Latvians into the new century and do anything in his power to make them free and happy once again.

Another application for the figure of Widewuto was found by Jēkabs Lautenbahs-Jusmiņš (1847–1928) who did not attempt to replace him, but instead made him the main hero of his *Niedrīšu Vidvuds jeb varenu vīru darbi Latvijas senātnē* (*Niedrīšu Vidvuds*), a text intended as the Latvian national epos, published in 1891. Even more overdue than *Lāčplēsis*, it went unnoticed, though the creation of national hero that it contains is uncommonly dynamic and fascinating. Right after his birth he kills a bear and starts a life full of adventures and extraordinary deeds that is ended in an unexpected manner. While the description of his youth and adult years is a synthesis of various events and occurrences borrowed from Latvian fairytales and is located in the fairytale dimension, the old Vidvuds is basically Simon Grunau's Widewuto transferred from his *Chronicle* into the Latvian reality. Lautenbahs-Jusmiņš' Vidvuds in his old age chooses a hermit's life, becomes an authority in the Latvian religious sphere, founds a new religion, builds a temple for the new gods, acts as a judge and mediator, at last he mounts a pyre and burns himself in sacrifice to the gods. His death is not the end, though; as Barbarossa, Imanta and Lāčplēsis, Vidvuds also has gone to sleep to await the right moment for his return:

Nemira tautiņas labdaris, glābējs,  
Bet tik aizgāja citā saulē.  
Ap kalna galiņu, kur auga birze,  
Kur bija birzītē Pērkoņa akmens,  
Zem kuŗa glabāja Vidvuta pīšļus,  
Iesāka skraidelēt baltmelni putni.  
Ļautiņi tic, kad mitēsies skraidīt  
Ap kalnu žagatas, baltmelni svārcīši,

Ka tad Niedrīšu Vidvuts atkal  
Celsies pār savu tautiņu valdīt.<sup>28</sup>

After declaring this prophetic vision, Vidvuds returns to the Latvian literature following the end of the First World War, the proclamation of independent Latvia, and possibly before the outset of Latvian war for independence (1918–1920). In 1931, an author carrying the pseudonym Burtnieku Sencis (Vilis Mednis, 1894–?) published a drama written thirteen years earlier in a prison camp for Russian officers, called *Videvuts. Senlatvju teika 3 cēlienos (Videvuts)*. The text pictures the author's own variation of the figures of Vidvuds and Lāčplēsis inspired by Simon Grunau's *Chronicle*, Garlieb Merkel's *Die Vorzeit Lieflands* and the works by Andrejs Pumpurs and Rainis. The references to the actual events taking place in Latvia are very clear: Vidvuds fights against German invaders and is certain that Latvians will soon have to face the Russians, too. In this situation, to please the gods and secure Latvian victory, the old man burns himself; along with the collapse of the sacrificial pyre, the Castle of Burtnieki drowns. Lāčplēsis manages to bring it back up, and Laimdota, his wife and Vidvud's daughter, covers the victor with a red-white-red coat. "The Latvian state is from free now on! Let us fight for national, beautiful, strong Latvia!"<sup>29</sup> so says Lāčplēsis, who holds a victory over evil forces, but fails to make the prophesy come true. The author could not foresee the Second World War and another occupation. While a new storm rages over Latvia, its heroes stay hidden, as written by Valija Ruņģe:

"II pasaules kaŗš iznīcināja, vismaz mums [latvieŗiem – J. P.], I pasaules kaŗa ieguvumus. Tas arī citādi beidzās gluŗi atŗķirīgi. Tas nebeidzās ar gaiŗas nākotnes solījumu ne mums, ne lielajiem uzvarētājiem. Tas beidzās ar totālas iznīcības draudu noguruŗajai cilvēcēi – ar atombumbas briesmām. Tādā laikmetā grūti rakŗt drāmas vai traŗģēdijas ar gaiŗu pacēlumu. Tādā laikmetā nāŗ sardoniski smieklī par visu – arī rakŗtniekiem. Ne par velti pēc Otra pasaules kaŗa uzplauka Eiropā un Amerikā tā dēvētais absurdaŗs teātris. Tādā laikmetā rodas arī izstumto un piesmiēto dziļi traŗģiska reakcija pret aptraŗpītajiem pagājuŗo diēnu ideāliem. Ŷēves dēls Kurbads, Ŷis Lāčplēŗa pusbrālis, tāpat dziļi mīl savu tautu, tas pazīst savas tautas domas, vērtības, sakrāto gudrību pūru, bet ko lai viņŗ ar to iesāk, un ko viņŗ var savai tautai solīt pats? Varbūt, pasmejoties par paŗu vāŗjībām, palīdzēt, kā vieglāk tikt pāri posta dienām, līdz beigsies Raiŗa pieminētais, kaut arī citādā nozīmē saprastais, 'mūsu laiks', līdz radīŗies cerība, ka Lāčplēŗa cīŗa patieŗām vēl nav galā, nav beigusies, ka atnāŗks pasaulei, un arī mums, gaiŗākas diēnas. Ja pasakas Kurbads aiziet bojā, ja pasakas Lāčplēŗis iegāŗzas bezdībenī, ja Pumpura un Raiŗa Lāčplēŗim kā Arturam un Barbarosam jāgaida ēnu valŗtī uz jaunu cīŗas diēnu, tad Turbada Kurbads vismaz paliek dzīvs, kaut arī paglābīŗies birokrata birojā."<sup>30</sup>

Valija Ruņģe mentions Jānis Turbads' novel entitled *Ŷēves dēls Kurbads. Pasaka. Pēŗķŗņā pietātes trūkumā sarakŗstījis...* (*Mayor's son Kurbads*, 1970) that was printed

in exile but earlier published in fragments in the magazine “Jaunā Gaita” (1959, no. 19-21). The novel reanalyzes the role of Lāčplēsis: his place as the warrior and hero is taken by Kurbads,<sup>31</sup> who conquers the Black Knight; the latter in turn “vis nevaids midzis, viņš zārkā miris klus!<sup>32</sup>” Lāčplēsis, quite surprisingly, is a friend of the Black Knight and each year falls with him into the river Daugava<sup>33</sup> – so much for tradition. Turbads’ novel does not end with a sunrise, with the appearance of light, but with Kurbads’ headache and his great and overwhelming loneliness. Loneliness, which, according to Janīna Kursīte, is not a typical feature of heroes – they tend to be always surrounded with a certain number of friends.<sup>34</sup> As it turns out, this rule excludes heroes living in exile. The point is also illustrated by the novel of Dzintars Sodums (1922–2008) *Lāčplēsis trimdā* (*Lāčplēsis in exile*, 1960–1990), where the hero calls himself “bezdraugu lāčplēsis”<sup>35</sup> – a friendless Lāčplēsis. At the conference of heroes in Chicago, which Lāčplēsis goes to soon after his return from exile, he is one of the few heroes from Latvia, since the remaining ones have not obtained visas.<sup>36</sup>

In the Soviet Latvia, a place for Lāčplēsis was found after all (his friends, though, appear rarely), but he was forced into the only acceptable form and became a symbol of Soviet power.<sup>37</sup> No wonder, then, that the hero – who after the Second World War was given a piece of land in Babīte and was supposed to lead a happy, settled-down life with Laimdota – chose exile. His appearance in Stockholm, 1950 was described by Dzintars Sodums in *Lāčplēsis in exile* – a text which regards Latvian community in exile with satire and humor. Lāčplēsis – an emigrant, a careful observer, critic of reality – does not conceal his disappointment with the reality as distant from his vision of nation as conceivable. Latvians have ceased to be warriors, brave and full of hope. Lāčplēsis, degraded in Soviet Latvia to an element of folk culture, ordered by the ruling power to play in an opera looking like a hybrid of a Russian merchant and a Viking, at the side of drunken Spīdola, sweaty and vulgar Laimdota and a Georgian dressed as the Black Knight, is simply tired.<sup>38</sup>

“Dvēselpuķe pēkšņi: “Tu te sēdi tāds nolaidies. Nemaz neesi kā varonis. Kas no tevis tāda.”

Lāčplēsis pavērās viņā: “Ko lai es daru? Es te jūtos kā grimstošās smiltīs nostājies vai trako mājā.”

“Ko var gribēt no cilvēkiem, kas Latvijā nav bijuši ārpus sava pagasta vai mazpilsētas un nu nonāk raibu brīnumu pilnā zemē? Kam izglītība un vairāk jēgas, tie sen jau strādā starp iezemiešiem. Pats redzi, kādi šie te sabiedriski darbinieki. Mailītes tomātu mērcē.”

“Ko darīt?”

“Kas nomainīsies, iznīks. Kas mainīsies, dzīvos.”

“Cerēsim.””<sup>39</sup>

To change, to be ready to charge forward – this is what Lāčplēsis demands, what he most often thinks and talks about. In the course of time, Latvians do change, so do their heroes, but is it always a change for good? For instance, the conversation between Lāčplēsis and Tebe proves to the contrary:

““Es patiesi esmu Lāčplēsis, tas teiku un eposu Lāčplēsis.”

Tebe viņu pētīja. Tad teica:

“Kāpēc lai jūs nevarētu būt Lāčplēsis? Jāsaka gan, rakstos jūs esat rādīts citāds. Droši vien dažs teiktu, ka rādīt jūs tādu, kāds jūs tagad esat, ir zaimošana.”

“Es atjaunojos katrā paaudzē. Gara aristokrats Rainis lugā “Uguns un nakts” mani iztaisīja par diezgan dumju plātoņu, kas lamā Laimdotu un meklē kašķi.”

“Pumpura dzejojumā jūs rausta valkīriskas varas,” Tebe piemetināja.

“Tautas pasakās es jūku kopā ar citiem varoņiem. Bet man tik un tā savs darbs darāms. Es te dzirdēju vārdu “bankrots”. Jā, Latvijas demokrātijas bankrots un pēc tam totālais politiskais bankrots man bija vāles zvēlieni pa galvu. Ko es tur varēju līdzēt? Mani spēki bija aizņēmti smilšainā, celmainā jaunsaimniecībā, ko pēc Pirmā pasaules kara man piešķīra kā bezdraugu lāčplēsim. Satricinājumi man lika rainiski mainīties uz augšu. Racionāls ziemeļnieks maina rīkus un maina domas. Cik ilgi lai es paliktu tikai zemnieku kultūras varonis? Tautas veids dzīvot mainās, un tautai līdzī mainās tās varoņi.”<sup>40</sup>

The slogans from the turn of the century – advocating the constant change, adjustment to the developing world, following the *Zeitgeist* – did not lose their actuality. Ever since *Fire and Night* was published, these slogans have been applied to the concept of a hero, which is visible in the works of Sodums. Lāčplēsis has changed physically (the furry ears have remained the only unchanging element of his appearance) as well as internally. Sodums’ hero is smarter than Rainis’, but also more helpless and powerless.

A careful reader will notice that Lāčplēsis is not really alone and discover Vidvuds in emigration, as well. Sodums mentions that at an event celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> birthday of Putras Dauķis,<sup>41</sup> a paper was read out by *Widewood*-Jūsmiņa, who, in a way, carries on the spirit of Vidvuds created by Jūsmiņš. The author said: “Eternal values are ceaseless. As long as the spirit lives, the nation will not die”.<sup>42</sup> This may be interpreted as another prophecy of Vidvuds. It cannot be just a coincidence.

Sodums was not the only author to conceal the hero among words, hoping that someone will find and understand him. For example, Klāvs Elsbergs (1959–1987) published a volume of poetry *Pagaidīsim ausaino* (*We’ll waiting for a long-eared*, 1981) and wrote in its introduction:

“Starp krājuma rindām mājō ausainais. Viņš ir zemteksta dvēsele un var parādīties gan kā mīļš cilvēks, gan kā saules rotaļa krūma lapās vai kas cits. Ausainais ir zaķis tajā nozīmē, ka to grūti iemānīt dzejoļī iekšā. Trausls, paties, brīžam traģisks dzejoļa zemteksts lirikā izšķir visu. Neko citu jau dzejnieks nemeklē.

Krājums tapis piecus gadus. Žēl pirmo divu gadu dzejoļu, kur ausainais bija gana sirsniņš, bet vēl pārlietu jauns un glups. Bija arī rindas apgrauzis, tādas jau nevienam nevar rādīt.”<sup>43</sup>

This fragile, long-eared creature that looks out from between the lines must be Lāčplēsis. Possibly, he is also the lyrical “I” in the poem *Ķeipene-Ligatne, 42 km*:

Eju es. Viens un dzīvs.  
 Eju savā nākotnē.  
 Ko tu dves, Melnais mežs?  
 Ko tu saki, azote?

Kur tas ir. Kur tas būs.  
 Soļi, kilometri.  
 Kur tas ir. Kur tas būs.  
 Kopā nebūt vieno mūs.

Nedzirdu. Neredzu. Nejūtu neko.  
 Kā lai zinu, kur tu dzīvo,  
 Vai tu vispār mani gribi?  
 Dzīve nemāca neko.

Nāku es. Nāku es.  
 Viens uz visas pasaules.  
 Nedzen vis. Nedzen prom.  
 Jo no Prom jau nāku es.

Cik var cilvēks. Ilgi iet.  
 Cik var muti. Turēt ciet.  
 Tas ir viss.  
 Tā man šķiet.<sup>44</sup>

Another poem ends with words:

“mūsu bērniem varbūt / nekad un nekur nebūs jāiet”.<sup>45</sup>

Everything seems to calm down in the late 80ties – early 90ties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Everything and everyone returns to their proper places, Lāčplēsis included. All this is due to Māra Zālīte (1952) and her rock-opera *Lāčplēsis* (1986–1987), in which “Lāčplēsis is a hero. It is tempting to take a widely-known theme and turn it upside down. De-heroize a hero. Here it has not been done”.<sup>46</sup> The hero comes back from exile, shakes off his constraints and limitations, returns to his fairytale. Once again, he sees, hears and feels, once again he is able to stand and speak loud. The Latvians heard the hero brought back by Zālīte and would remember his words forever. The return of Lāčplēsis at the eve of regaining independence was not missed by anyone. It must be noticed, however, that this incarnation of the hero differed from the previous ones – the author merged Lāčplēsis with Spīdola, gave him her wisdom and maturity to go with his courage and prowess. At such a time in history, bringing back the hero with all his strength, with more self-confidence, able not only to fight, but also to heed and understand the nation, was a very important move. The libretto, however, does not end with a victory, but instead is concluded with words that predict an ever-lasting and never-ending struggle:

Sauc mani skaļāk, bērniņ, sauc!  
 Es dzirdu vēl.  
 Man vēl ir valoda un vārds.  
 Sauc mani, bērniņ!  
 Sauciet mani skaļāk!<sup>47</sup>

Vidvuds returned to Latvia as well – and quite recently: in 2006, in a surrealist novel *Vidvuda stāsts. Mazā cilvēka derība* (*Vidvuds' story. The Testament of a small man*) by Jānis Elksnītis and Edgars Krasts. They gave him the surname Ausainis, a third ear and friend Sostens Buzis, whom he calls an “infallible Koknesis”.<sup>48</sup> This incarnation of the Latvian national hero is, then, clearly a combination of Lāčplēsis and Vidvuds, has the strength of a knight and the power of a prophet, which must mean that the situation of Latvia is serious and demands special measures. Bārbala Stroda even claims that “the Latvian nation is going through its worst identity crisis since the times of national romanticism”,<sup>49</sup> but doubts if the hero created in *Vidvuds' story* is what Latvians really need.<sup>50</sup>

Vidvuds-Lāčplēsis discovers his destiny only after regaining consciousness lost in effect of a brutal assault. Three old men: Father, Son and the Spirit declare him the last of Lamekins, the hero responsible for the future of Latvia. His initial hesitation, so typical of the different incarnations of Lāčplēsis, passes away quickly and the new-born hero boards a train to Siberia in order to find a piece of parchment on which the fate of Latvia has been written down. After the fulfillment of this difficult assignment, a concert in the opera takes place, sponsored and organized by Vidvuds – by analogy to Andrejs Pumpurs' counsel of gods described at the beginning of *Lāčplēsis* or Sodums' conference of gods in Chicago. The meeting, which brings together the three old men, Vidvuds and his friends, takes an unexpected course. It turns out that Vidvuds has been talking to himself and assigning tasks to himself, since the three men exist only in his mind as projections of himself from outside time, combined with what was, what is and what will be. It's the people he has met and the deeds he has accomplished that prove his greatness, because “stories of people turn into a story about a person” – as the old men say.

“.. ko esi par savu saucis, kam esi ticējis, ko esi darījis, Videvut, vien jauns misējums, uz iepriekšējiem nākošs, un saprast var to izmisuma kļiedzienu, kas tagad krūtīs tev aplāpēts. Tad zini, ka tas tikai tavs ceļš, ne liels, ne mazs, ne tains, ne liks, bet tavs ceļš uz pilnību, brāli Videvut, un nav tajā nekā lieka vai nepareiza. Kad tavas ticības liesma bija maza, tad vajadzēja spēku, gaismu un norādi no āra, ko tev kā karogu nest, un tu darīji to, kā nu prazdams. Lamekina nama manta un stāsts par to, tam bija tik viens uzdevums laiku lokos, tas tikai ceļrādis, Videvut, uz tevi un to nenovērtējamo, kas tevī iekšā, savs laiks bija ruļļus lasīt un savs tos atnest, un tagad atmests ir pēdējais no ruļļiem. Tikai tas par gaismu tev var būt, tas, kas paliek pāri, kad atņemtas visas zinības, raksti, ierādes, ko citi tevīm devuši un kas tevī labi augsni raduši. [...] Tas bija tikai tavs ceļš, Videvut, izmisums, ticība, un tagad – tikai tavs lēmums un tikai tava atbildība par to. Tam visam bija savs laiks, un nu tas ir beidzies, un tagad visu šo ļaužu

priekšā nākušam, ar kuriem tevi trejdeviņu trejdeviņi pavedieni saista, tev galvenā un pēdēja vēsts ir jāuzklausā tas, ka tev nekas un ne no viena vairs nav jāuzklausā, brāli Videvut, te ir pasaules sākotne un te arī viņas beigas... Tikai tavs lēmums un tikai tava atbildība par to. Ieklausies vēlreiz vārdos šajos; tajos viss lielums un spēks, un ap to griezušās visas zemes un debesu lietas. Tikai sevī meklē ceļu un vēsti, tikai tur viņu var atrast, un pats labākais no visa pārējā ir tikai spieķis, uz kā vājiniekiem atpūsties. Ja tu šajā brīdī spēsi būt viss kopā, viss kopā ar runātāju, tik dziļi, ka izzūd visas atšķirības, arī starp runāto, runātāju un uzrunājamo, tad nav vairs nekas, ko tu nevari paveikt un saprast, brāli [...]"<sup>51</sup>

The prophesy of Vidvuds is directed to everyone, but – just like the spell that turned a knight into a national hero in Pumpurs' epos – will work only for those who are capable of understanding it. In the novel of the two debutants this understanding seems to be insufficient. Stroda critically points out that "they tried in all their might not to say anything and didn't even make an effort to tell a story about a person. Maybe that's why they almost did it".<sup>52</sup>

Still, the story of Vidvuds Ausainis is quite a successful synopsis of all the previous accounts of Latvian national heroes. A homeless pauper that avoids commitment, responsibility, that is not able to stand up for his rights, suddenly takes his life into his hands and starts changing it. He even has the power of influencing lives of others. This awareness of his own value and strength grows painfully slow in him, and every look in the mirror that shows the face of a hero responsible of saving his nation astonishes him. Elksnītis and Krasts' Vidvuds comes at a time of a very clear national identity crisis, when believing in heroes and their extraordinary powers is losing ground. At such a time, the authors' conviction that anyone can be a hero, that it actually requires so little, can be encouraging.

The Latvian heroes are always coming from the past, reflecting the knightly virtues but still too weak to strike the deadly blow. For more than 200 years, not a single new hero has been born in Latvia; those already there have had to adjust themselves to the changing conditions in their homeland. Still, they are always there when Latvians find themselves in need of a supernatural, mystical force: when they struggled against serfdom, before the revolution of 1905, during the fights for freedom in 1918–1920. They stand at the side of Latvians in exile and under the Soviet rule, finally, they participate in regaining independence. They are there for Latvians also today, though visible only to those who are able to understand their legacy.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> The author of this article has used the text available in the volume by J.G. Lindner, *Beitrag zu Schulhandlungen*, published in Königsberg in: 1762, pp. 93-148.
- <sup>2</sup> K. A. Küttner, *Kaupo, der Edle Live von Thoreida*, in: *Kurona. Dichtung und Gemälde aus der nordischen Vorzeit*. T. 1. Leipzig 1793, pp. 71-103.
- <sup>3</sup> G. Merkel, *Wannem Ymanta. Eine Lettische Sage*. Leipzig 1802.
- <sup>4</sup> F. Rückert, *Barbarossa*, in: *Poems of places*. Ed. Henry W. Longfellow. Vol. 1. *Germany*. Boston: James R. Osgood and Company 1877, pp. 172-173.

- <sup>5</sup> A. Pumpurs, *Imanta*, in: *Raksti*. E. Medņa sakārtojumā un ar viņa sarakstītu biogrāfisko apceri. Rīga: A. Gulbis 1935.
- <sup>6</sup> The presence of Lāčplēsis outside literature: in politics, economy, in the military discourse, sports or medicine was examined by Ausma Cimdiņa in her article *Nacionālā varoņa ģenēze un percepcija: Andrejs Pumpurs un Lāčplēsis ārpus literārās telpas*, in: *Latvija un latviskais. Nācija un valsts idejās, tēlos un simbolos / Latvia and Latvians. A people and a State in Ideas, Images and Symbols*. Ed. A. Cimdiņa, D. Hanovs. Rīga 2010, pp. 31-50.
- <sup>7</sup> P. Šmits, *Pasakas un teikas*. 650A: *Stiprais Ansis*, variant 23. The author uses the following webpage: <http://valoda.ailab.lv/folklor/pasakas/gr08/0802523.htm>; last accessed: May 2011.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibidem.
- <sup>9</sup> A. Pumpurs, *Lāčplēsis. Latvju tautas varonis. Tautas eposs*. Ar Jāzepa Rudzīša ievadapcerējumiem un komentāriem. Rīga 1988, p. 260.
- <sup>10</sup> J. Rainis, *Uguns un nakts. Sena dziesma jaunās skaņās*, in: J. Rainis, *Kopoti raksti*. Vol. 9, *Lugas*, Rīga 1980, p. 313.
- <sup>11</sup> J. Rainis, *Imants. Latviešu traģēdija piecos cēlienos. Fragments*, in: J. Rainis, *Kopoti raksti*. Vol. 14, *Nepabeigtās lugas*, Rīga 1981, pp. 16-17.
- <sup>12</sup> A. Pumpurs, op. cit., p. 189.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibidem, p. 184.
- <sup>14</sup> J. Rainis, *Uguns un nakts*, p. 170.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibidem, p. 220.
- <sup>16</sup> J. Rudzītis, *A. Pumpura eposs "Lāčplēsis"*, in: *Lāčplēsis. Latvju tautas varonis. Tautas eposs*. Ar Jāzepa Rudzīša ievadapcerējumiem un komentāriem. Rīga 1988, p. 60.
- <sup>17</sup> E. Stella, *De Borussiae antiquitatibus / Apie Prūsijos senovē*, in: *BRMŠ*. Vol. 2, *XVI amžius*. Ed. N. Vēlius. Vilnius, pp. 15-18; 20-23.
- <sup>18</sup> S. Grunau, *Preussische Chronik / Prūsijos kronika*, in: *BRMŠ*. Vol. 2, *XVI amžius*. Ed. N. Vēlius. Vilnius, pp. 52-81; 91-117.
- <sup>19</sup> Lucas David, *Preussische Chronik / Prūsijos kronika*, in: *BRMŠ*. Vol. 2, *XVI amžius*. Ed. N. Vēlius. Vilnius, pp. 243-246; 277-280.
- <sup>20</sup> J. Dworzaczkowa, *Kronika pruska Szymona Grunaua jako źródło historyczne*, in: "Studia Źródłoznawcze", 1958, vol. 2, p. 127.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibidem, p. 126.
- <sup>22</sup> R. Jاسas, *BRMŠ*. Vol. 2, *XVI amžius*. Ed. N. Vēlius. Vilnius, p. 38.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibidem, p. 36.
- <sup>24</sup> Only the 16th-century events were taken into consideration as the author was able to witness them himself.
- <sup>25</sup> The latest development in the research of Simon Grunau's chronicle: S. Zonenberg, *Kronika Szymona Grunaua*. Bydgoszcz 2009.
- <sup>26</sup> Karl August Küttner, *Die Wallfahrt nach Romowe. Erläuterungen*, in: *Kuronia. Oder: Dichtungen und Gemälde aus den ältesten kurländischen Zeiten*. Vol. 1. Mitau 1791, p. 24: "Widmut, der erste Regent der Letten an der Weichsel".
- <sup>27</sup> G. Merkel, *Die Vorzeit Livlands. Ein Denkmal des Pfaffen- und Rittergeistes*. Vol. 1. Berlin 1798, pp. 36-46. The article by Kārlis Kundziņš *Widewuts, Latweeschu Mohsus* was published in 1869 in "Baltijas Vēstnesis", No. 78-90, pp. 615-616; 622-623; 631-632. The text was based on the contents of Simon Grunau's Chronicle and the writings of G. Merkel.
- <sup>28</sup> J. Lautenbahs-Jusmiņš, *Niedrīšu Vidvuds jeb varenu vīru darbi Latvijas senātnē*. Rīga 1928.
- <sup>29</sup> Burtņieku Sencis, *Vidvuts. Senlatvju teika 3 cēlienos*. Rīga 1931, p. 29.

- <sup>30</sup> V. Ruņģe, *Tautas pasakas, Kurbads un Lāčplēsis. Divu populāru pasaku tipu un variantu analīze un to saistības ar literātūru*, in: "Jaunā Gaita" 1983, no. 146(5). The author uses the on-line version: [http://www.zagarins.net/jg/jg146/JG146\\_Valija\\_Runge.htm](http://www.zagarins.net/jg/jg146/JG146_Valija_Runge.htm); last accessed: May 2011.
- <sup>31</sup> J. Turbads, *Ķēves dēls Kurbads. Pasaka. Pēkšņā pietātes trūkumā sarakstījis...* Rīga 2007, p. 60.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibidem, p. 49.
- <sup>33</sup> Ibidem, p. 113.
- <sup>34</sup> J. Kursīte, *Valdis Zeps un viņa Kurbads*, in: J. Turbads, *Ķēves dēls Kurbads. Pasaka. Pēkšņā pietātes trūkumā sarakstījis...* Rīga 2007, p. 156.
- <sup>35</sup> Dz. Sodums, *Lāčplēsis trimdā*, in: Dz. Sodums, *Kopotī raksti. Vol. 5, Varoņu conference*. Rīga 2004, p. 41.
- <sup>36</sup> Dz. Sodums, *Varoņu conference*, in: Dz. Sodums, *Kopotī raksti. Vol. 5, Varoņu conference*. Rīga 2004, p. 98.
- <sup>37</sup> O. Lāms, *Lāčplēša zvaigznājs. Latviešu eposa ģenēze un funkcionalitāte Eiropas klasisko un jaunlaiku eposa tradīciju kontekstā*. Rīga 2008, pp. 214-221; J. Rudzītis, A. Pumpura eposs "Lāčplēsis", in: *Lāčplēsis. Latvju tautas varonis. Tautas eposs*. Ar Jāzepa Rudzīša ievadpārējumiem un komentāriem. Rīga 1988, pp. 108, 112; I. Kalniņa, "Lāčplēša" pieradināšana padomju kultūrā / *The Domestication of "Lāčplēsis" (Bearslayer) in Soviet Culture*, in: *Lāčplēša ceļš pasaulē. Latviešu eposs un Eiropas eposu tradīcijas*. Ed. A. Cimdiņa, O. Lāms. Rīga 2010, pp. 205-220.
- <sup>38</sup> Dz. Sodums, *Lāčplēsis trimdā*, p. 26.
- <sup>39</sup> Dz. Sodums, *Lāčplēsis trimdā*. The author uses the on-line version: [http://zagarins.net/jg/jg25/JG25\\_Sodums.htm](http://zagarins.net/jg/jg25/JG25_Sodums.htm); last accessed: May 2011.
- <sup>40</sup> Dz. Sodums, *Lāčplēsis trimdā*, pp. 40-41.
- <sup>41</sup> Actually, this is a fictional character from a novel entitled *Putras Dauķis* (1929), written by Kārlis Ieviņš (1888-1977), who had lived in Sweden for a couple of tens of years.
- <sup>42</sup> Dz. Sodums, *Lāčplēsis trimdā*, p. 44.
- <sup>43</sup> K. Elsbergs, *Pagaidīsim ausaino (1981)*, in: K. Elsbergs, *Dzeja*. Rīga 2009, p. 7.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibidem, p. 24.
- <sup>45</sup> Ibidem, p. 58.
- <sup>46</sup> M. Zālīte, *Lāčplēsis*. The author uses the on-line version: <http://www.marazalite.lv/2011/02/21/lacplesis/>; last accessed: May 2011.
- <sup>47</sup> M. Zālīte, *Rokopera "Lāčplēsis"*. The author uses the on-line version: <http://dziedava.lv/muzika/liml/lacplibr.htm>; last accessed: May 2011.
- <sup>48</sup> J. Elksnītis, E. Krasts, *Vidvuda stāsts. Mazā cilvēka derība*. Rīga 2006, p. 48.
- <sup>49</sup> B. Stroda, *Sakrālās tāles un virtuves palodzes filozofija. Jānis Elksnītis un Edgars Krasts. "Vidvuda stāsts. Mazā cilvēka derība"*. The author uses the on-line version: [http://www.satori.lv/raksts/1050/Barbala\\_Stroda/Sakralas\\_tales\\_un\\_virtuves\\_palodzes\\_filozofija](http://www.satori.lv/raksts/1050/Barbala_Stroda/Sakralas_tales_un_virtuves_palodzes_filozofija); last accessed: December 2010.
- <sup>50</sup> By the way, the same opinion is held by Guntis Berelis: G. Berelis, *Jānis Elksnītis, Edgars Krasts "Vidvuda stāsts. Mazā cilvēka derība"*. On-line version: <http://berelis.wordpress.com/category/recenzijas/elksnitis-janis-krasts-edgars-vidvuda-stasts/>; last accessed: December 2010; G. Berelis, "Karogs": *Guntis Berelis vērtē*. On-line version: <http://kultura.delfi.lv/news/entertainment/book/karogs-guntis-berelis-verte.d?id=17608123>; last accessed December 2010.
- <sup>51</sup> J. Elksnītis, E. Krasts, op. cit., pp. 103-104.
- <sup>52</sup> B. Stroda, op. cit.

## **Kopsavilkums**

*Lūzuma brīži, kā arī daži citi īpaši grūti momenti Latvijas vēsturē bieži atrod savu atspoguļojumu literatūrā. Katrā no šiem grūtākajiem brīžiem piedzimst ideāls varonis, kurš ir gatavs karot par savu dzimteni un tautu, un tajā pašā laikā kļūst arī par paraugu visiem nākamajiem cīnītājiem. Tomēr latviešu rakstnieki nerada jaunus varoņus, bet jau vairāk nekā simts gadus izmanto vienus un tos pašus tēlus, piemēram, Vidvudu un Lāčplēsi. Rakstā tiek aplūkota viņu abu stāja un transformācijas dažādos Latvijas vēstures posmos, kā arī viņu īpatnējā izpratne par varonību, atbildību un pretošanās pret valsts brīvības un sabiedrības integrācijas draudiem.*

**Raksturvārdi:** *latviešu literatūra, latviešu nacionālais varonis, latviešu identitāte.*