

Address of the President of Latvia, Egils Levits, at the opening of Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga's book 'The Singer of Songs. On Cognitive Schemas and Sequential Structuring in Longer Latvian Folk Songs'

Published more than 5 years ago

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Your Excellency, Madam President,

Dear friends,

I

We have gathered here today to celebrate a book, which in many ways is a mirror reflection of Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga's personality. I would like to focus on three aspects reflected in this book.

Above all a president. Once a president, always a president. The same as in once a priest, always a priest.

The three aspects reflected in the book, however, are as follows: writer is a politician, writer is a public figure or, as nowadays people say, an influencer, a person whose opinion carries weight irrespective of the position, somebody who is listened to just because they are an opinion-leader. And, thirdly, writer is an academic.

All of these aspects can be observed in this book, because it is, first of all, an academic book. And Rūta Muktupāvela, who reviewed the book, has written the introduction from an academic perspective. That is all I want to say, because this is a specific book. You say you have merged two disciplines, and neither of them is 'my cup of tea'.

This is a political book. Why is it political? Well, because the Preamble of our Constitution and constitutional framework,

Satversme, says that our identity is shaped by Latvian traditions. It is a political opinion. We need to highlight these traditions, keep these traditions alive and pass them on to future generations. That is why this is a political book. It is a political extension of Satversme.

The third aspect of this book is that it, of course, is well received by the scientific community. I hope, and am actually certain, that it is appreciated by all people who are concerned with our nation, our traditions and the 'building blocks' of our identity. Therefore, we can say that this book has also social significance.

Let me repeat: your personality and this book embodies all three aspects: the political, social and academic.

II

We have primarily come here to celebrate the opening of the book, but there is another reason for celebration. Today is Vaira's name day. You can come to a name day uninvited, it is another one of Latvian traditions. So, I assume, some of you came upon invitation, while others came uninvited. Either way, we have all come here to wish you well on your special day.



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