



## The new wave in Late Soviet Latvian Literature: The Early Prose Fiction by Andra Neiburga

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### ABSTRACT

In the late phase of the ‘developed socialism’, shortly before the reforms of *perestroika* initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985 had reached Latvian cultural establishment, a young generation of poets, writers, playwrights, journalists, musicians, cinema and theatre artists throughout the socialist bloc countries and the Soviet Union initiated new trends in culture. In Latvia the new trends in prose fiction produced by young writers were labelled the ‘New Wave’; among them there emerged a group of women writers called ‘angry young girls’ who addressed new themes including the negative sides of the Soviet reality and everyday life, silenced pages of Latvian history, issues of sexuality, etc., as well as introduced new poetic features in the prose narrative. Andra Neiburga is one of this group who remained devoted to the genre of short story. She entered the scene of Latvian literature in 1985 with the publication of short stories in press periodicals; her first collection of stories “Izbāzti putni un putni būros” (Stuffed Birds and Birds in Cages) was published in 1988. The present paper regards the narrative peculiarities of A. Neiburga’s early short stories that reflect the specific ambiguity characteristic of the late Soviet epoch as a time anticipating change in discourse and expression. Along with other young generation writers of the late Soviet period A. Neiburga distanced from the canon of socialist realism and executed what Alice Jardine termed ‘gynesis’ by introducing a new voice that expressed indignation, frustration, uncertainty and inscribing a radically different vision of reality with a subversive potential of the accepted structures and forms of expression.

**Keywords:** generation; gynesis; narrative; socialist realism; subversive