

Title: Adventures of a Russian 'Teen Fabulist,' or Adolescence in Iurii Klavdiev's 'The Bullet Collector'

Author: Jenny Kaminer, University of California-Davis

Abstract:

Adolescent heroes have dotted the fictional landscape of Russian literature since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Beginning with Viktor Pelevin's 'Omon Ra' (1992), about a pubescent boy enlisted to stage a fake moon landing for a corrupt Soviet space agency, post-Soviet writers have turned repeatedly to the adolescent protagonist as a locus for the exploration of existential, historical, spiritual, and other anxieties. This paper examines the representation of adolescence in the drama 'The Bullet Collector' (2004), written by Iurii Klavdiev—one of the most well-known representatives of the New Drama movement that emerged in Russia in the early 2000s. It identifies a particular pattern according to which the process of maturation is presented in the play. This process entails, first, the male adolescent's immersion in the realm of fantasy, followed by an attempt to inscribe that fantasy into his everyday life. It culminates in the adolescent protagonist definitively assuming the role of either victim or victimizer. Klavdiev—like other New Dramatists examined in the larger project from which this paper is derived—presents adolescence as a period when his hero must navigate the continuum between victimhood and aggression, between succumbing to and inflicting violence. For the hero of *The Bullet Collector*, a combustible mix of fantasy and aggression characterizes his adolescent experience, rendering impossible any evolution from individualistic outsider to representative of a stable social order.