

Title: The Modern Hero in *Night Watch*: Comparisons of Novel and Film
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The *Night Watch* novel and film are contemporary Russian cultural phenomena - each representing distinct eras: Yeltsin's chaotic late 90s versus Putin's more orderly mid 00s. The hero in both novel and film is called upon to serve what is perceived to be the greater good as viewed through his era's lens. In the novel, his role is that of a reluctant computer programmer forced to serve his faction of supernatural 'others' in order to keep the truce between good and evil. In the film he also plays a pawn (though now working for the state) in the great duel, yet he volunteers out of moral and fatherly obligation to right the wrong that brought him into this magical world.

This paper will rely on Eliot Borenstein's definition of the 'boevik hero' as "summoned, whether by individuals or organizations needing his aid or by voices within the culture decrying perceived crises of values and lack of positive models for emulation. His is a command performance in the service of an explicit ideology or as a response to a vaguer, but no less pressing, sense of the threat of an ideological void" (107). Both the novel and film present heroes that fight for good against evil; however, these are terms defined by the cultural and ideological model of their time.

The investigation will begin with a study of each hero's motivation in terms of his era's greatest needs. The novel typifies the concern of order versus chaos in the struggle between good and evil. The film changes the hero's motivation to that of family and home. The novel's ending continues the truce and no victor is named. In the film evil defeats good and the family is completely torn apart as proof that chaos still reins in our modern society.

Bibliography:

Borenstein, Eliot. *Overkill Sex and Violence in Contemporary Russian Popular Culture*. New York: Cornell UP, 2007. (Culture and Society After Socialism)