

# The Construction and Enlightenment of Russian National Image in "Becoming the Fighting Nationality"

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**Abstract**—In recent years, the cultural exchanges between China and Russia have become increasingly close, but the exchange of film and television has yet to be strengthened. In 2016, the Russian drama "Becoming the Fighting Nationality" was broadcast on the Chinese network, providing an important case for us to study the current Sino-Russian film and television exchange. This article takes the evaluation of "Becoming the Fighting Nationality" and the Chinese audience's evaluation of the drama as the research object, studies the reasons for the drama in China and the shaping of the image of the Russian state. On this basis, it summarizes its inspiration on "going out" of the Chinese TV series.

**Keywords**—"Becoming the Fighting Nationality"; Russia; national image

## I. INTRODUCTION

The national image is an important part of the country's soft power. In 2016, the popular broadcast of the Russian drama "Becoming the Fighting Nationality" made the Russian drama, which has always been a niche in China, into the public's field of vision, and also became a window for the Chinese audience to understand Russia's economic, political and social life.

## II. THE NATIONAL IMAGE OF RUSSIA IN "BECOMING THE FIGHTING NATIONALITY"

The national image is the overall evaluation and recognition of the international public opinion and the

domestic people's material basis, national policy, national spirit, state behavior, state affairs and general evaluation and recognition of the achievements of a particular country. The national image is a comprehensive manifestation of the country's material and spiritual strength. It is the country's most important intangible asset and an important source of strength for the country to stand on the international stage. [1] With the development of mass media such as television and internet, the public is increasingly relying on mass media to complete the recognition of the national image. Excellent film and television works have become an important business card for a country. In the process of reshaping the image of the country in Russia, Russian film and television art with profound knowledge plays an important role.

"Becoming the Fighting Nationality" is a story about the funny events that took place after an American journalist, Alex, being sent to work in Russia. Every time the protagonist encounters a Russian custom that makes him unacceptable, some real problems in Russian society are also truly presented. At the beginning of each episode in the play, the protagonist will ask a question about a certain aspect of Russia. After encountering a series of hilarious experiences, the end of the episode will express his understanding on the previous questions through the "Russian Diary". The author excerpts the main contents of each episode of "Russian Diary" as follows: (see "Table. I")

TABLE I. MAIN VIEWPOINTS OF EACH EPISODE OF "BECOMING THE FIGHTING NATIONALITY"

Episode	Main Viewpoints
Episode 1	Russia is a country that cannot distinguish between hospitality and alcoholism, a country with the longest road and the most traffic jam, and a country of conceit and selfishness. It is also the pure land on the planet running with the soul of Russia.
Episode 2	Russian women are strong and weak. Russian girls have a fascinating charm, and they are fascinating wherever they go.
Episode 3	The Russians are rude and serious on the surface, and they hide the goodness and the longing for good. The Russians are always full of hope in the face of difficulties.
Episode 4	The Russians hide themselves with suspicion and speculation. They save their emotions and leave the feelings only to those who are close to them.
Episode 5	The life of the Russians is full of excitement. Life in Russia is like riding a bicycle without a handlebar, and it is also blindfolded.
Episode 6	In order to succeed, Americans like to take positive actions, and sometimes it is best to do nothing in Russia in order to get good results.
Episode 7	Russia is a complex country, and the sparks of different cultures over thousands of years have made Russian culture a colorful palette.

Episode	Main Viewpoints
Episode 8	The character of the Russians is often puzzling, crying and laughing in one day. Although they love life, they can laugh when talking about death.
Episode 9	Americans are accustomed to customizing plans, and making plans in Russia does not work. This country is often the most powerful with direction actions.
Episode 10	The Russians believe in the signs because these superstitions are the experience gained from the laws of the past thousands of years of life.
Episode 11	Russians are either infinitely loyal or have no sense of responsibility. They can love someone so sincerely, and they can ruin the love without thinking.
Episode 12	Russians never give in, but even when they touch love, even Russians sometimes have to give in. It is the power of tolerance and understanding that makes the soul of the Russians so mysterious.
Episode 13	Americans and Russians are still very similar in some respects, and some things are not well thought out and people are easy to impulsive.
Episode 14	All the twists in Russia can be accompanied by tragedies. When they open a new chapter in their lives with confidence, they are ready to be torn at any time.
Episode 15	Russians are often not tolerant of foreigners, but they are inseparable from foreigners in their lives.
Episode 16	Discretion in Russia often turns into distrust. People believe in their feelings, believe in authority and do not believe in facts.
Episode 17	Even if you live in Russia for a lifetime, you may not fully understand this country. Russia can make everyone dump, including those who haven't adapted to it two months ago, and even one day you want to stay here forever.
Episode 18	Russia is a country that needs connections. Here, people believe in each other more than the law. If this trust develops into love, Russians can sacrifice everything for you.
Episode 19	The Russians love to push everything to tomorrow, but they can't do what they did a year before the disaster strikes.
Episode 20	For those who want to leave Russia, there is always an indescribable force that makes them not want to be separated from this country.

By sorting out and summarizing the contents of the above table, it can be found some characteristics of the formation of the national image of Russia in "Becoming the Fighting Nationality":

#### A. Government Image

The government image is the overall impression and evaluation of the public's ability to govern and the performance of the government. In recent social surveys, Russian domestic people have expressed great dissatisfaction with the government's bribery and overstaffing. The "Becoming the Fighting Nationality" does not evade the above problems, but unlike the cold strokes of realism films such as "Leviathan" and "Fool", the play is shown through "self-deprecating". It satires the police regardless of the events: "when the passport lost, it would be useless to call the police, because the police have to do murder, rape, robbery ... if it can be found, it would be years later!" It satires the President: "Here in our country, the less the president does, the more comfortable the people live." "It also satires that drunk driving are prevalent: "In Russia, people with clear minds will be afraid to drive." In order to repair the water pipes, the protagonist had to bribe the plumbers from top to bottom. On the way to the ambulance, the driver got off the car and bought the cigarettes. The doctor didn't stop him but to let the driver bring a box of gums; Doctors must make their own makeup first before the surgery... The humorous way of weakening the critical power of the film makes these problems more acceptable to the audience.

"Becoming the Fighting Nationality" is a deliberate evasion of the serious economic pressures facing the Russian government and the international relations with the Western countries. In the play, the financial oligarchs are busy drinking and falling in love every day. The ordinary people in Russia live happily and do not see the impact of the economic downturn. Although the journalist from the United

States is always ridiculed by other roles, the Russians have given him more tolerance and friendliness. The play is colorful, bright, well-dressed and stylish, creating a positive atmosphere. The Western world often compares Russia to a "polar bear" to express its impression of Russian barbarism and aggression, but in the "Becoming the Fighting Nationality" it can be seen that this "polar bear" is also learning to smile and show its gentle side — as an official of the Russian Federation Committee said: "At present, Russia should promote the 'good' image, rather than blindly showing the 'hard' power." [2]

#### B. National Image

In addition to the meaning of "state image", the word "National Image" in English also means "ethnic image". Russia is a country with a strong national pride — as Chadayev said: "There are some people who are destined to teach the world some great truths. We are such a country." [3] Art comes from life. When creative people conceive, they always inject national character into their roles. The shaping of the national image is the biggest highlight of the drama "Becoming the Fighting Nationality".

The word "fighting nationality" first came from the Japanese anime "Dragon Ball", which called the Saiyan people "fighting people." Chinese netizens often use the term to refer to the Russian nation to show that the Russians are brave and warlike, sometimes naive and ridiculous. The straightforward and contradictory character of the Russians portrayed in "Becoming the Fighting Nationality" is indeed satisfying the imagination of Chinese netizens on the Russian nation. Compared with the "being satisfied with a smattering of knowledge" when reflecting social problems, "Becoming the Fighting Nationality" is a deep and comprehensive presentation of Russian character and daily life. This drama is a propaganda film for the daily life of Russians. It shows the Russian nation from many aspects such as love, friendship, family, marriage and work.

Compared with the well-planned American journalists, the actions of Russians in the play are often simple and rude: drinking without a word, ignoring a word, and swearing in a word... complex, fickle is another remarkable Russian in the film. Characteristics, the characters often sway in the extremes of optimism and pessimism, struggle and laziness, indifference and enthusiasm, loyalty and betrayal, inferiority and arrogance, just as the Russian poet Chutchev's verse: "Russia can't be understood with wisdom, and Russia can't be measured by the general standard." "Liquor is an important element in the life of Russians. Most of the characters in the play are doing vodka while eating, while interviewing, while taking a bath, while chatting, or while riding a car. They set a bottle of vodka on the working desk. Due to war and other reasons, the proportion of men and women in Russia is out of balance, and women occupy an important position in Russian social life. The "Becoming the Fighting Nationality" fully demonstrates the fascinating charm of the Russian girl. Many female characters with good looks and distinctive characters are also the most beautiful scenery in the drama.

From the above two points, it can be seen that the image of the Russian nation in the "Becoming of the Fighting People" is worthy of praise, and the image of the government needs to be improved. Art is an abstraction and refinement of reality. Real life is far more stereoscopic and diverse than script. According to Lippmann's "mimic environment" theory, the national image in film and television works as a "symbolic reality" is not entirely a mirror-like representation of the real world. It is a typical, structured social reality. [4]The "Becoming the Fighting Nationality" is generally resounding in Russia. The Russian people do not fully agree with the national image built in the drama. However, due to the lack of actual contact with Russia, the Chinese audience often feels that they are significantly influenced by the drama.

### III. THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF "BECOMING THE FIGHTING NATIONALITY"

The national image is not a self-identified, self-named cultural attribute, but a cultural force that can be recognized and accepted by others after widespread dissemination. Film and television is a common language in the world and should be an important carrier of the national image. Taking China and Russia as examples, although cultural exchanges between the two countries have become increasingly close, the imbalance in exchanges is also obvious. The main manifestations are that there are many official activities and less civil exchanges; the participation of elite groups is large, and the exposure of ordinary people is small; the input to China is more, and the output to Russia is less. Therefore, film and television should become an important way for the Russian people to understand China. By other's faults, wise men correct their own. The success of "Becoming the Fighting Nationality" in China can also provide reference for more national dramas "going out".

The first is the revelation of the narrative level. Eliminating cultural discounts, enhancing the cross-cultural sense of narrative, and pursuing universal interest are the main factors that "Becoming the Fighting Nationality" can

achieve the spreading effects in China. At present, foreign audiences are most exposed to Chinese historical dramas and martial arts dramas, which will inevitably lead to aesthetic fatigue. Chinese culture is extensive and profound, which also increases their cognitive difficulty and learning costs. The contemporary dramas such as urban dramas will have the common daily secular life as the link of cultural links, which will undoubtedly be more easily accepted by foreign audiences and show the rapid development of China, thus subtly realizing the shaping and dissemination of the national image.

Second, the channels of communication must be unblocked. "Becoming the Fighting Nationality" is a popular hit in China, and subtitle groups and social networks play a very important role. Nowadays, there are also some voluntary organizations in Russia that regularly translate Chinese film and television works, create interest groups on social networking sites for discussion and publicity activities. Their scale and translation and communication capabilities are still limited. In this regard, it will be necessary to face up to the role of the subtitle group in the cross-cultural communication of film and television dramas, actively guide and encourage the participation of the majority of netizens, and establish foreign language subtitles groups at home and abroad to solve language barriers and expand cultural influence.

Finally, cultural confidence must be strengthened. "Becoming the Fighting Nationality" is a vision and courage to show the many problems facing Russia. It is highly self-confident behind the black. Therefore, Russia in the drama will be real and charming. Since the party's "18th National Congress", General Secretary Xi Jinping has repeatedly stressed the need to strengthen cultural self-confidence and point out that cultural self-confidence is a more basic, deeper and more lasting force. Confidence can make the national drama "going out" more stable. It does not deliberately cater to the image of China in the Western vision. At the same time, it does not evade the problems in Chinese history and reality, and can create a more cohesive and attractive image of China.

### IV. CONCLUSION

Film and television works are the business cards of the national image of the country and an important component of the national cultural soft power. It is undoubtedly of great significance to analyze the reasons for the popularization of the "Becoming the Fighting Nationality" in China and its gains and losses in the construction of the Russian national image, and to better enlighten the transnational and inter-ethnic communication of Chinese film and television works.

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