

English Translation of Conceptual Metaphors in Xi Jinping's Diplomatic Speeches: A Case Study of the Keynote Speeches at the Opening Ceremony of the Asian Civilization Dialogue Conference and the China International Import Expo

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Abstract

Diplomatic speeches are an important activity for heads of state and representatives of diplomatic organizations to achieve their foreign policy goals through peaceful dialogue. It can not only safeguard national interests and expand international influence, but also develop diplomatic relations with other countries. As Chinese leader of the Party and the State, General Secretary Xi Jinping's diplomatic speeches are an important way for domestic and foreign audiences to understand China's values and policy guidelines. This article selects President Xi Jinping's keynote speeches at the opening ceremony of the Asian Civilization Dialogue Conference and the China International Import Expo as research subjects. By classifying and counting the conceptual metaphors in the 2 speeches, 210 metaphorical expressions are compiled and summarized. Furthermore, their English translations are further studied through summarizing corresponding translation strategies. The study also reveals the distribution pattern of conceptual metaphors in Xi's diplomatic speeches, so that the target language audiences can correctly understand the translations, which effectively promote Chinese culture.

Keywords

Diplomatic Speeches; Conceptual Metaphors; Translation Strategies.

1. Introduction

Since the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, Xi Jinping has published a series of important diplomatic speeches in the practice of leading and promoting the governance of the country in the new era, and put forward many major ideological viewpoints that are original, contemporary and instructive, which have further enriched and developed theoretical achievements of the CPC. The achievements of the Communist Party's theoretical innovation have drawn a grand blueprint for the new great project of Communist Party building on the coordinates of a new era.

As a special kind of political discourse, diplomatic speech has become a hot topic for many scholars. Linguists have done some research on conceptual metaphor in political discourse. Miller[1] is the first to attempt to discuss the importance of metaphor in the political realm. Since then, many scholars have paid their attention to diplomatic speech. Abdulwahid [2] uses conceptual metaphor theory to analyze president Obama's three speeches and King Abdullah's three speeches. Mose [3] analyzes war metaphors used in conflict management in her 2013 Kenyan presidential election speech. Pasaribu [4] examines Joko Widodo's victory speech and inauguration speech. Nguyen [5] applies conceptual metaphor theory and conceptual integration theory to conduct a comparative analysis of metaphorical strategies in Obama's and Trump's inaugural speeches. From the perspective of metaphor, Cabrejas-Peñuelas [6] makes

a comparative analysis of two kinds of political speeches in Spain and the United States. Li Xue and Liangbin Tian [7] analyze the conceptual metaphors in President Xi's speeches at the Boao Forum for Asia in 2013 and 2015.

However, there are still few studies on the combination of conceptual metaphor and diplomatic speeches. This paper selects 2 speeches as research objects in the diplomatic parts of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China (Volume III)*. Based on the source domain of conceptual metaphor, this paper classifies and studies the conceptual metaphors that appear in these diplomatic speeches. Furthermore, based on the working mechanism of metaphor in conceptual metaphor theory, the translation strategies adopted in the English version are summarized and described. This study has some innovative value in diplomatic speech translation guided by conceptual metaphor theory. It plays an important role in promoting Chinese culture and enhancing China's international discourse power.

2. Basic Introduction to Conceptual Metaphor

Since Lakoff and Johnson have mentioned conceptual metaphor in their book *Metaphors We Live By*, published in 1980, conceptual metaphor has been studied by scholars at home and abroad. Lakoff and Johnson argue that conceptual metaphor usually refers to the use of one thing to understand and experience another thing, the essence is to understand and experience [8]. They call the former the "source domain", which is like a tool for understanding another thing. While the latter is named after the "target domain", which refers to the object to be understood. The source domain usually refers to familiar things or concepts, while the target domain usually are unfamiliar, abstract concepts.

Next, examples of conceptual metaphor will be given, such as the metaphor of "Argument is war". "Argument" is a kind of discourse form, while war is a strategy of military activity, and they belong to different domains. However, "argument" is often seen as a form of war, and some of the expressions used in the concept of "war" are used to construct, understand and describe a verbal debate, thus giving rise to the phrases "he lost to the other side in the argument", "he defeated others in the argument [8]".

Lakoff and Johnson also classify conceptual metaphor into three main types: structural metaphor, ontological metaphor, and orientation metaphor. The first type is structural metaphor, which Lakoff defines as the construction of one concept through another, usually through some concrete concept to construct a more abstract conceptual meaning [8]. Structural metaphor uses concrete things that are more familiar in reality to better convey the content of the speech and its cultural and spiritual connotations to the audience. The second type is the ontological metaphor, which is the basis of human cognitive conceptual systems and refers to the way in which people perceive abstract and complex ideas, emotions, states, mental activities and other intangible concepts as concrete, tangible entities [8]. It is the cognitive process of projecting one concept into another concept domain [8]. When there is more abstract and obscure lexical content in a speech, ontological metaphor can be used to turn the abstract into the concrete and convey the cultural content of the text. The third type is the orientation metaphor, which is derived from people's direct bodily experience, i.e., it refers to the self-organization of elements within the same conceptual system, following space orientations such as up and down, inside and outside, front and back, depth, central edge, etc. [9]. The orientation metaphor is a measure of mapping some popular orientation terms in human life into abstract concepts.

As mentioned above, Lakoff and Johnson held that conceptual metaphor is to understand and experience one kind of thing through another. Lakoff and Johnson further explain the mapping process of conceptual metaphor by introducing the concepts of "source domain" and "target domain". The "source domain" usually refers to the things that people are more familiar with,

while the target domain is usually the things that are unfamiliar to people [8]. The existence of domain is just like a huge network, which connects the source domain and the target domain through some well-known experiential mapping process so that realizes the leap from the source domain to the target domain.

Lakoff takes "Life is a journey" as an example, where "the traveler", "the starting point", "obstacles", "distance" and "destination" in the journey domain correspond to "the person", "birth", "difficulties", "duration" and "death" in the life domain [10]. As the following chart shows:

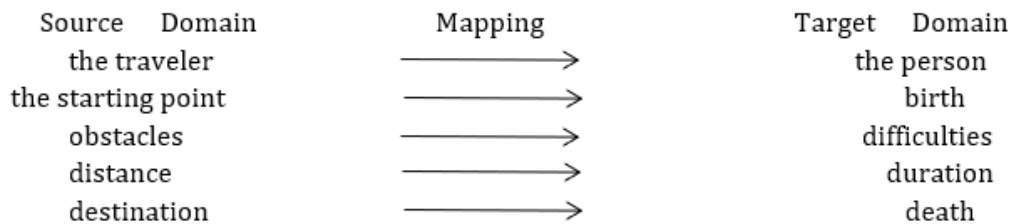


Fig 1. The mapping of "Life is a journey"

To sum up, conceptual metaphor is a mapping process from source domain to target domain based on human cognitive experience. However, not all knowledge and structures in the source domain are mapped to the target domain. Generally speaking, the same or similar parts of the source domain and target domain are selected and retained in the mapping process. Only in this way, some political concepts in diplomatic speech texts can be better understood by the audience, so as to achieve the icing on the cake effect.

3. Study on Conceptual Metaphors in Xi's Diplomatic Speeches

Xi's public speeches have also attracted attention from political and media circles at home and abroad. Xi often uses vivid, graphic metaphors, plain language, and accessible arguments in his speeches [11]. Reading through his diplomatic speeches, we can not only appreciate the feelings of cosmopolitanism, but also experience the emotion of Chinese cultural heritage. Based on conceptual metaphors, this paper studies and analyzes the metaphors in the selected speeches, further studies the corresponding translation strategies in their English translations, and interprets their positive significance for the promotion of Chinese culture.

3.1. Statistics of Conceptual Metaphors

The texts of the speeches selected for this article are taken from *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China (Volume III)*. The author has selected the infectious speeches of the opening ceremony of the Conference on Dialogue of Asian Civilizations and the China International Import Expo. Both the 2 speeches were published in 2019. Their English version were jointly compiled by Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee, the State Council Information Office, Institute of Party History and Literature of the CPC Central Committee, and China Foreign Languages. The translator takes the reader's perspective into account, while taking into account the core content of the source text, and flexibly uses different translation strategies to maximize the effect of the translation on the target language. In this study, the English-Chinese database of Xi Jinping's 2 diplomatic speeches was constructed, and the conceptual metaphors were categorized based on this database.

3.2. Different Types of Conceptual Metaphors

In *Metaphors We Live by*, Lakoff and Johnson formally introduce conceptual metaphor theory, which is the first comprehensive exploration of metaphor in terms of human experience,

categories, and conceptual systems. The theory argues that human cannot understand or adequately represent metaphors if they lack an experiential basis [8]. Thus, the skillful use of conceptual metaphors, both in speech and in discourse, can lead to a more accurate understanding of the content of a particular conversation or discourse. A check of relevant studies show as follows: Cao Lingmei and Hong Wang [12] studied the English translation of metaphors with Chinese characteristics in Xi Jinping's discourse, and classified the metaphors with Chinese characteristics in President Xi's discourse into five types: animal metaphor, disease metaphor, building metaphor, diet metaphor and life metaphor; Yu Qin [13] divides metaphors into seven types: war, journey, disease, life, natural environment, body and animal in her research; Ji Yan [14] divides conceptual metaphor into seven subcategories: nature, animal, living goods, disease, body, food and plant in an analysis of conceptual metaphor in General Secretary Xi Jinping's political discourse. According to the study, there are 210 conceptual metaphors in the 2 diplomatic speeches of Xi Jinping. Based on Lakoff and Johnson's classification as well as the scholars mentioned above, the author firstly subdivides conceptual metaphor from three perspectives: structural metaphor, ontological metaphor and orientation metaphor. Next, the author further divides structural metaphor into architecture metaphor, nature metaphor, journey metaphor, war metaphor, and machine metaphor. Ontological metaphor is further divided into plant metaphor and body metaphor. Orientation metaphor can be further divided into space metaphor and time metaphor.

3.2.1. Structural Metaphor

As mentioned above, structural metaphor is the construction of more abstract concepts through some concrete ones. Structural metaphors use concrete things that people are more familiar with in reality. In these 2 diplomatic speeches, the structural metaphors are divided into five sub-categories: architecture metaphors, journey metaphors, nature metaphors, war metaphors, and machine metaphors, as shown in the following table.

Table 1. Structural metaphor categories and their frequency

Structural Metaphors	Key words	Examples	Total
architecture metaphors	建设、基础、门、平台、壁垒、路、道、拆墙、筑墙等	坚持“拆墙”而不是“筑墙”。	63
		亚洲文明对话大会，为促进亚洲及世界各国文开展平等对话、交流互鉴、相互启迪提供了一个新的平台。	
nature metaphors	潮流、色调等	面向未来，我们应该把握大势、顺应潮流，努力把亚洲人民对美好生活的向往变成现实。	32
		如果人类文明变得只有一个色调、一个模式了，那这个世界就太单调了，也太无趣了！	
journey metaphors	起点、步伐、进步、推进等	站在新的历史起点，中国开放的大门只会越开越大。	25
war metaphors	战略、封锁等	为了更好运用知识的创造以造福人类，我们应该共同加强知识产权保护，而不是搞知识封锁，制造甚至扩大科技鸿沟。	13
machine metaphors	动力、阻力、动能等	共同把经济全球化动力搞得越大越好、阻力搞得越小越好。	10

In President Xi's speech, structural metaphors are used most frequently, with 143 cases, accounting for 68.0952% of the overall metaphors. As can be seen from Table3-2-1, architecture metaphors are the most frequently used, accounting for 30%. Then, it followed by

nature metaphors, accounting for 15.2381%. Finally, journey metaphors, war metaphors, and machine metaphors, account for 11.9048%, 6.1905%, and 4.7619% respectively. The architecture metaphor takes the first place, depicting building actions (建设、拆、筑), building categories (壁垒、路、道), and building components (基础、门、平台). President Xi uses such common building actions to different cultures to carry out metaphors, trying to make the audience immerse themselves in the building actions and become the collaborators to eventually achieve the building goals. This not only brings the audience closer to him, but also facilitates the understanding and dissemination of complex political ideas.

3.2.2. Ontological Metaphor

Ontological metaphor is the basis of human cognitive concept system, which refers to the cognitive process of projecting one concept to another concept domain by considering abstract and complex ideas, emotions, states, mental activities and other intangible concepts as concrete and tangible entities that can be reasoned, quantified and categorized [8]. When there are more abstract and obscure words in the speech, ontological metaphors can be used to turn the abstract into concrete, so as to convey the cultural connotation of the text. The ontological metaphors in these 2 speeches are divided into two subcategories: plant metaphors and body metaphors, which are distributed as follows.

Table 2. Ontological metaphor categories and their frequency

Ontological Metaphors	Key words	Examples	Total
plant metaphors	成果、共享、落实等	各国应该加强创新合作，推动科技同经济深度融合，加强创新成果共享.....	24
body metaphors	双臂、站、拉手、松手等	坚持“拉手”而不是“松手”	10

From the statistics in Table 2, we can see that there are 34 cases ontological metaphors in the 2 speeches, with the proportion of 16.1905%, the proportion of plant metaphors is 11.4286%, and the proportion of human body metaphors is 4.7619%. Xi uses more plant metaphors in his speeches, such as "成果共享" and "让发展成果惠及" in the source text, so that the audience can feel the vitality of the speaker's words. The body metaphor regards things as an obvious ontological metaphor with human nature" [15]. And in the source text, Xi uses "张开双臂", "拉手", and "松手". President Xi uses these body metaphors to map intangible political concepts into concrete, tangible human actions or behaviors, making the abstract concepts directly perceptible to people, and thus successfully conveying its political connotations.

3.2.3. Orientation Metaphor

The orientation metaphor is derived from direct bodily experience, i.e., the organization of elements within the same conceptual system, following spatial orientations such as up and down, inside and outside, front and back, depth, center and edge, etc. [9]. The orientation metaphor is a way to map some orientation words that are common in human life to some abstract concepts as a measure. Time metaphor and space metaphor are subcategories of orientation metaphor. In diplomatic speeches, we can understand the emotions and attitudes of the speaker more deeply by using orientation words that are commonly known in our daily life. The orientation metaphors used in this speech are divided into two categories: space metaphor and time metaphor, as follows.

As shown in Table 3, we can see that there are 33 cases ontological metaphors in the 2 speeches. The total percentage of orientation metaphors is 15.7143%, of which 13.3333% are space metaphors and 2.3810% are time metaphors. Space metaphors such as "高" and "低" are mainly

used to describe the equality of civilizations, while the temporal metaphors such as "前" and "后" are usually used to describe the actual development gap between some countries, so that the audience can better understand the current development status of the country as a whole, and thus better set the right attitude to create a civilized society.

Table 3. Orientation metaphor categories and their frequency

Orientation Metaphors	Key words	Examples	Total
space metaphors	上、下、高、低	各国应该坚持人类优先的理念，而不应把一己之利凌驾于人类利益之上。	28
time metaphors	前、后	中国将积极参与联合国、二十国集团、亚太经合组织、金砖国家等机制合作，共同推动经济全球化向前发展。	5
		共同消除一些国家民众依然面临的贫穷落后。	

3.3. Summary

According to the analysis, it can be seen that the percentages of the three major metaphor types in the overall metaphor of this speech are: structural metaphor:68.0952%; ontological metaphor:16.1905%; and orientation metaphor:15.7143%. It can be seen that the structural metaphor accounts for more than half of the speech, and is the main force of the conceptual metaphor used in the speeches. Because people have more cognitive psychological and experience-based commonality of the structural metaphor in speech, among which the architecture metaphor is used the most. In this way, the speaker makes the audience become the collaborator of the building action and realize the building goal together through the architecture metaphor. This not only brings the speaker closer to the audience, but also facilitates the dissemination of political ideas in diplomatic speeches. The ontology metaphor and the orientation metaphor are similarly used in this speech, though not as frequently as the structural metaphor, but their metaphorical effects cannot be ignored. The ontological metaphor gives the abstract economic concept a practical meaning related to organic life, which makes the whole speech more vital, conveying the political connotation successfully. The orientation metaphor, on the other hand, uses familiar orientation words to make a call and appeal, which persuades, infects and moves the audience while conveying the message.

4. Translation Strategies of Conceptual Metaphors in Xi's Diplomatic Speeches

As a kind of thinking practice activity, translation should properly deal with the complex cognitive process of conceptual metaphor between the source text and the target text. The origin domain, target domain, mapping and knowledge experience are the key elements of conceptual metaphor. The metaphorical map is the process of motivating the audience to transfer from the source domain to the corresponding target domain. In the process of reconstructing the cultural model of the source language, translators usually have various choices, such as: transferring its metaphorical meaning, reshaping its subject image, modifying its metaphorical meaning, and adjusting its metaphorical meaning in combination with the original domain [16]. Through the analysis of the translation of conceptual metaphors in Xi's diplomatic speeches, it is found that translators mainly adopt the following translation strategies of conceptual metaphors: "retaining conceptual metaphor", "transforming conceptual metaphor", "deleting conceptual metaphor" and "adding conceptual metaphor". In the following part, the above four translation strategies will be introduced, and some representative examples will be selected to elaborate.

4.1. Retaining Conceptual Metaphor

Human beings perceive the world based on the experience of objective things. Despite the differences in various cultures, the perception of the natural laws of nature, natural phenomena and architectures in the objective world are basically common. Therefore, human beings may use the same conceptual metaphors when recognizing and expressing abstract things or concepts. In translating such conceptual metaphors that have commonality of cognitive experience, the method of retaining conceptual metaphor is often used.

Example 1

ST: 坚持“拆墙”而不是“筑墙” [17].

TT: We need to tear down walls rather than erecting them [18].

Example 2

ST: 面对矛盾和摩擦，协商合作才是正道 [17]

TT: The right solution to any problem lies in consultation and cooperation [18]

Example 3

ST: 亚洲文明对话大会，为促进亚洲及世界各国文开展平等对话、交流互鉴、相互启迪提供了一个新的平台 [17]。

TT: The Conference on Dialogue of Asian Civilizations is for this very purpose, as it provides a new platform for civilizations [18].

In Example 1, President Xi has used the metaphor of "墙". "拆墙" refers to openness and cooperation, while "筑墙" is the opposite. It is easy for the audience to understand the use of "拆" and "筑" as a metaphor for communication and cooperation. In Example 2, "正道" refers to the correct way of all things, the right path and method, etc. The translator uses "正道" to convey a similar meaning, which helps the target language audience to understand. In Example 3, the word "平台" refers to a good opportunity and a solid foundation for civilization cooperation among countries. The English translation of the target domain does not differ much from the origin domain, so the translator directly translates it as "platform", which ensures the successful mapping of the conceptual metaphor in the most direct way. All three examples above can find corresponding metaphors in the translation, which can make the target language readers receive the same cultural expressions and convey the same metaphorical meanings. Therefore, the translation method of directly retaining metaphors can satisfy the audience's experience.

From the above examples, we can see that the mechanism of architecture metaphor mapping in Chinese and Western cultures is basically the same. In this case, the retention of the conceptual metaphor ensures the success of the conceptual metaphor mapping process in the easiest way, and fundamentally preserves the cultural connotation that the source language culture is intended to convey, maximizing the sense of cultural experience in the source language for the target language audience.

4.2. Transforming Conceptual Metaphor

Although there are similarities in people's perception of objective things, there are certain differences in the language habits of various ethnic groups, and the expressions and metaphors of the same thing may also be different. When translating such conceptual metaphors,

translators need to replace the original metaphors appropriately according to the habits of the translated language, and select the most suitable translation strategies .

Example 4

ST: 坚持“拉手”而不是“松手” [17]

TT: We need to stick together rather than drifting apart [18]

Example 5

ST: 而不是搞知识封锁，制造甚至扩大科技鸿沟 [17]

TT: Rather than stifling the flow of knowledge, or even widening the technology divide [18]

In Example 4, "拉手" and "松手" have the same function as "拆墙" and "筑墙" in Example 1. They refer to the fact that in the context of globalization. Countries should work together instead of falling apart. However, unlike Example 1, which adopts the direct retention method, Example 3 adopts "transforming conceptual metaphor" strategy to translate the body metaphors into the nature metaphors of "stick together" and "drifting apart". The replaced metaphor is more natural and vivid, which is in line with the linguistic thinking of the English language, and the metaphorical meaning is more acceptable to target readers. In Example 5, "封锁" is a war metaphor, while "鸿沟" is a nature metaphor. Both metaphors in this sentence adopt transforming conceptual metaphor method, "封锁" is translated as "stifling", which expresses human behavior and action. Similarly, if the word "鸿沟" is directly translated into "wide gap", it will make the target language readers difficult to understand the content. So, the translate selects the word "divide" instead of direct translation.

From the above examples, we can see that there are certain differences in the cognitive patterns of body metaphors and war metaphors between China and the West. In such situation, the direct retention of conceptual metaphors is likely to cause misunderstanding among the target language audience. Therefore, it is necessary to replace metaphors flexibly and use translation methods acceptable to the target language audience to ensure the successful mapping of conceptual metaphors.

4.3. Deleting Conceptual Metaphor

Metaphors have relatively unique socio-cultural characteristics. Sometimes, there are metaphorical gaps or metaphorical repetitions in different language habits, which may lead to misunderstandings or comprehension barriers if metaphors are forcibly retained. Therefore, if the metaphor in source language is repeated while the target language is vacant, the metaphor in source language metaphor can be deleted based on the understanding the perspective of target reader.

Example 6

ST: 共同把全球市场的蛋糕做大 [17]

TT: We must work tighter to make the global market bigger [18]

Example 7

ST: 营商环境是企业生存发展的土壤 [17]

TT: A sound business environment provides the necessary conditions for enterprises to survive and thrive [18]

In Example 6, "蛋糕" is a common economic term, which refers to market share, national economic value, etc. In the source text, "蛋糕" is a synonym of "global market". And it is in line with the linguistic habit in Chinese. Therefore, the translation is simplified by dropping the "cake", which not only avoids repetition but also increases the readability of the translation. Similarly, in Example 7, "土壤" is a synonym of "business environment", so the translator also discards the translation of "soil", adopting the method of deleting metaphor to achieve the purpose of language communication.

4.4. Adding Conceptual Metaphor

Adding conceptual metaphor means that some non-metaphorical expressions in the source language are transformed into metaphorical expressions in the target language. For metaphors that are unique to the target language but missing in the source language, in order to ensure that the target language audience can successfully read the cultural connotation of the source language, it is necessary to flexibly apply translation strategies and add appropriate metaphorical mapping mechanisms to the translation.

Example 8

ST: 中国将增强国内消费对经济发展的基础性作用 [17]

TT: China will better leverage the fundamental role of domestic consumption in fueling economic development [18]

The word "leverage" in the translation of Example 8 is also a common economic term, and it means to play a role, to exert influence, to make use of, etc. According to the context, the word "leverage" is used here and modified by "better". However, the source text is highly condensed and concise, which does not contain the meaning of "make use of".

Due to text limitation, only the metaphorical keywords that appear relatively frequently in these 2 diplomatic speeches are listed above as examples. Their translations are described and analyzed in terms of the translation strategies of retaining conceptual metaphor, transforming conceptual metaphor, deleting conceptual metaphor, and adding conceptual metaphor. The translator's translation of the source text was found to be a considerate examination of the source language culture and the target language culture. On the basis of ensuring that the readers of the target language can correctly understand the content of the source language, the translator effectively ensures the successful output of the cultural connotations and emotional attitudes of the source language, and provides excellent translations for the readers of the target language.

5. Conclusion

The current China is standing on a new starting point. Diplomatic speeches, as the top priority in political discourse, are the central medium of language exchange among countries. The diplomatic speeches delivered by General Secretary Xi in public are of great significance to domestic and international audiences in understanding China's current development philosophy and related policies. Diplomatic speeches in the new era should not only shock and convince the audience, but also reflect the spirit of a country's culture. For the metaphor translation of diplomatic speeches, it should not only retain the same target connotation when the metaphors are similar, but also effectively compensate for the differences in the target extension when there are metaphor deviation. In the translation of diplomatic speeches from the perspective of conceptual metaphor, the translator should not only focus on the surface meaning of the words, but also take into account the differences in the way of thinking and

culture mode between the source language and the target language. Furthermore, they should also dig deeper into the target domain products of the source language in the process of conceptual metaphor mapping, and choose the optimal translation strategy. In this way, an excellent translation will be presented to the target language audience, and it will also play an active role in promoting the culture of diplomatic discourse system.

Acknowledgments

This work was supported by grants from Postgraduate Scientific Research Innovation Project of Hunan Province "A Study on English Translation of Conceptual Metaphors in *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China (Volume III)*" (No. CX20210929) and the Project of Social Science Foundation of Hunan Province (No. 18YBA366).

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