

A Review of the Research on the Origin and Connotation of the Theory of "When There is Inequality, There is a Cry"

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Abstract: *Han Yu is a very important figure in the history of Chinese literature and thought. Su Shi of the Song Dynasty once evaluated his contributions as "the rise of literature and the decline of eight generations, and the drowning of the righteous". His theory of "When there is inequality, there is a cry" is one of the famous poetic theories in ancient China, which has always been highly valued. However, researchers have different opinions on it, and there are also significant differences. This article focuses on the origin and connotation of the theory, and provides a research review based on the research of modern scholars on the concept of "inequality leads to prosperity".*

Keywords: Han Yu, When there is inequality, There is a cry.

1. The Source of the Saying 'When There is Inequality, There is a Cry'

Han Yu's "When there is inequality, there is a cry" theory not only profoundly reveals the important driving force of literary creation, but also reflects the deep concern and critical spirit of literati for social reality. The proposal of this theory is not groundless, but a fusion of Han Yu's unique experiences and ideological system. This article will analyze in depth the formation process of Han Yu's theory of "injustice leads to prosperity" from two dimensions: theoretical basis and personal factors, revealing the historical and cultural context and individual spiritual pursuit behind it.

1.1 Theoretical Basis

The emergence of Han Yu's theory of "if there is no peace, then there will be a cry" has a profound historical and cultural accumulation. Tracing its origins, it is mainly influenced by the following ideas: Confucius' theory of "poetry can be complained about", Han Dynasty's theory of "beautiful thorns", and the theory of "indignation".

As is well known, Han Yu was a person who revered Confucianism. Throughout his life, he used his practical actions to exclude Taoism and Buddhism and maintain the orthodox status of Confucianism. The Confucian sages have always held a high position in Han Yu's thought, therefore, the influence of Confucian sages on Han Yu's literary thought cannot be underestimated. When it comes to Confucian sages, we cannot ignore Confucius. Therefore, the theoretical origin of the saying "if there is no peace, then there will be a cry" can be traced back to Confucius' "poetry can be complained about". Confucius once said in the Analects of Confucius, "Why should a young man not learn poetry from his husband? Poetry can inspire, observe, unite, and complain." What does "complain" mean? That is to say, poetry can intervene in reality and criticize dark societies. Confucius advocated the use of poetry to satirize negative politics, which is a high-level emotion of concern for national affairs. In his literary philosophy, more emphasis is placed on integrating personal emotions into the development of the country. From Han Yu's explanation, 'if there is no peace, then there will be a cry'

refers to the human heart being touched by the outside world to express inner feelings. The term 'injustice' referred to in it does not mean 'anger and injustice', nor does it mean 'unfair society' or 'unfair life'. It refers to the emotional fluctuations that arise when the soul is moved by external things. 'Ming' refers to the artistic works or academic works created by those who are good at singing under the control of emotions. Therefore, "poetry can be complained about" expresses affirmation of the function of literature in expressing personal grievances, and some of the content in Han Yu's "If there is no peace, then there will be a cry" ideology is consistent with "poetry can be complained about". Therefore, it can be said that Confucius' "poetry can be complained about" is one of the ideological origins of "if there is no peace, then there will be a cry".

Secondly, the saying 'if there is no peace, then there will be a sound' has a deep connection with the Han Dynasty's 'beautiful thorns' theory. The "Preface to Mao Poetry" of the Han Dynasty inherited the educative role of Confucian poetry theory and proposed the theory of "beautiful thorns". Beauty "means" a person who praises the prosperity and virtue of the king, and tells the gods of his success. "It means praising the king's prosperity and telling the ancestral gods about his successful career. 'Ci' means: 'The upper ruler uses' wind' to educate the lower common people, and the lower common people use 'wind' to satirize the upper ruler, using deep and implicit language for gentle advice. This way, the speaker will not offend, and the listener can be vigilant. Zheng Xuan, a master of Confucian classics in the late Eastern Han Dynasty, also pointed out the function of poetry in his "Preface to the Book of Poetry": "To praise virtue and merit, one should follow its beauty; to criticize and ridicule loss, one should remedy its evil." Although this did not have the expected effect in the Han Dynasty, this viewpoint still affirmed the practical role and significance of literary criticism, and even influenced later writers to write many great works when criticizing current problems. The Han Dynasty's theory of "beautiful thorns" aimed to criticize and suggest rulers or social phenomena through literary works or language, in order to improve social conditions and correct erroneous behaviors. This kind of satire often adopts a gentle and implicit expression to avoid direct conflict and offense. Han Yu's

"When there is inequality, there is a cry" theory also has the function of criticizing and reflecting social reality. When individuals or society encounter injustice, they express their dissatisfaction and spirit of resistance through literary works or words. This kind of unfair behavior aims to attract social attention and reflection, thereby promoting social progress and reform. Therefore, the proposal of Han Yu's "If there is no peace, then there will be a cry" can be said to be in line with the Han Confucian "beauty of thorns" theory.

Once again, many scholars believe that the most influential theory on Han Yu's "injustice leads to prosperity" is the "indignation" theory that has gradually developed over several generations. In the history of Chinese literary criticism, Qu Yuan first explicitly proposed the viewpoint of "expressing emotions through anger". Afterwards, Sima Qian emphasized Qu Yuan's idea of "covering oneself with resentment" and incorporated the spirit of Liu An's "Huainanzi" that was "angry in the middle but outwardly" on this basis, proposing the theory of "writing books with indignation".

Qu Yuan was the first person in the history of Chinese poetry criticism to explicitly state that the psychological motivation for literary creation is "anger" and "resentment", that is, "anger expresses emotions". This is the first time that Qu Yuan explicitly proposed the concept of "venting one's anger to express emotions" in "Nine Chapters on Lamentations", which means "cherishing recitation to the point of being indifferent, and venting one's anger to express emotions. Later, Qu Yuan repeatedly expressed similar views in his representative works "Li Sao" and other chapters of "Nine Chapters" such as "Drawing Thoughts", "Huai Sha", "Thinking of Beauty", "Regretting the Past", and "Regretting the Wind". It can be seen that many of Qu Yuan's excellent works are works of passionate expression after being suppressed and attacked. This idea can also be seen as an important ideological source of Han Yu's "When there is inequality, there is a cry" theory.

In fact, in the era of the Book of Songs before Qu Yuan, the concept of "venting one's anger" had already begun to emerge. The Book of Songs should be the earliest work to use poetry to vent the poet's inner dissatisfaction. Many chapters in the Book of Songs, such as "Pixiu Feng · July", "Pixiu Feng · Dongshan", "Wei Feng · Sandalwood Cutting", "Wei Feng · Shuoshu", "Xiaoya · He Cao Bu Huang", "Xiaoya · January", etc., are works that express worries and anger. Mr. Zhu Ziqing pointed out in his book "Distinguishing between Poetry and Aspiration: Poetry and Aspiration" that most of the works in the Book of Songs that clearly express creative intentions are works that express worries, anger, and injustice in the heart.

During the Han Dynasty, Liu An further elaborated on the concept of "indignation" in his work "Huainanzi". For example, "Anger is reflected in one's aspirations, accumulated internally, and pronounced with surplus, which is comparable to the rhythm and harmony of the heart" ("Huainanzi · Si Lun Xun"), and "The song of the husband is a sign of joy; the effect of crying is also a sign of sorrow. If one is angry in the middle, it should be directed outward" ("Huainanzi · Xiu Wu Xun"); Those who feel emotions of joy, anger, sorrow, and

happiness naturally, those who are indignant in the middle and outwardly, and those who express emotions in the middle and respond with their voices outwardly ("Huainanzi, Qi Folk Training). These discussions in 'Huainanzi' convey a core idea, profoundly revealing the inherent connection between emotions and expression, and how art has become an important carrier of human emotional expression. It is pointed out that the emergence of works of art is often due to the accumulation and precipitation of emotions such as joy, anger, sadness, and happiness. When these emotions surge in the chest and overflow, they can be presented through certain artistic forms, demonstrating the power of shock and awe.

In the "Reply to Li Yi's Book", Han Yu wrote: "At the beginning, one would not dare to read books from the Three Dynasties and Two Han Dynasties." Among these three Dynasties and Two Han Dynasties, besides Confucius and Qu Yuan, there was another person whom Han Yu highly respected, and that person was Ma Qian from the Tai Shi Company. Sima Qian maximized the spirit of 'exerting one's anger'. As someone highly respected by Han Yu, his literary ideas are bound to have a huge impact on his literary views. In the "Bao Ren An Shu", Sima Qian wrote: "King Wen was restrained and performed the Book of Changes; Zhong Nie wrote the Spring and Autumn Annals; Qu Yuan was exiled and wrote the poem "Li Sao"; Zuo Qiu lost his sight and only had the "Guoyu"; Sun Tzu's feet were inscribed in the "Art of War"; Wei was not moved to Shu and the "Lv Lan" was passed down in the world; Han Fei imprisoned Qin and wrote "Shuo Nan" and "Gu Fen"; there were three hundred poems, most of which were the works of the sages who were indignant. This person all had a sense of melancholy and could not understand the way. Therefore, when describing the past and thinking about others, it is like Zuo Qiu having no eyes and Sun Tzu having his feet cut off, which cannot be used in the end. When discussing books and strategies, we can take a look back at them Shu Qi Fen, think deeply about empty literature to see for himself." Sima Qian cited the experiences of seven people, including King Wen of Zhou, Confucius, Qu Yuan, Zuo Qiuming, Sun Wu, and Lv Buwei, who wrote works that have been passed down through generations due to their unfair experiences, proving the creative subject's "indignation" The importance of literary creation lies in the feelings of worry and anger that arise from personal setbacks and trigger a desire to create. This idea was later named the "Fen Fen Shu" theory. As an important proposition in the history of Chinese poetic criticism, the "Fen Fen" theory has had a profound impact on the development of poetry creation and poetic theory in later generations. Therefore, what we should see is that the "anger" that Sima Qian needs to express is not ordinary anger, but a kind of "anger" that promotes justice. The theory of 'venting one's anger' embodies a distinct spirit of realism and criticism, deeply influencing the outstanding literati who adhered to justice, cared about the well-being of the country and the people, and provided a solid theoretical basis for the emergence of Han Yu's 'When there is injustice, there is a cry' theory.

In summary, the proposal of Han Yu's "If there is no peace, then there will be a cry" has a profound foundation. He was deeply influenced by the "ancient path" and advocated and studied Confucian poetics, while also taking the "indignation theory" as an important theoretical basis. At the same time,

possessing extensive knowledge reserves and constantly striving, he has developed and surpassed previous theories on the basis of inheritance.

1.2 Personal Factors

In addition to the literary creation ideas that have been passed down from generation to generation, Han Yu's proposal of the saying "if there is no peace, then there will be a cry" is also related to the multiple identities of ancient literati. Firstly, although Han Yu was a "pure Confucian", his overall style of conduct and thinking were clearly different from Confucius' advocacy of "gentleness and honesty", breaking through the emotional expression requirement of "starting from emotions and ending with etiquette". Therefore, his "cry of injustice" is actually a continuation of Mencius' "wealth and status cannot be indulged, poverty and lowly cannot be moved, and power cannot be subdued", and is a "direct expression of resentment". Throughout his life, Han Yu talked about "injustice" and spoke out for his own poverty, lack of talent, the decay of the country, and the difficulties of the people. He inherited the Confucian personality that originated from Confucius and matured in Mencius.

Secondly, besides being a staunch defender of Confucianism, Han Yu was also a key figure in the literary world of the mid Tang Dynasty, a leading figure in the "Han Meng Poetry School," and an advocate of the "Classical Chinese Movement. Some previous literati and works had a great influence on his thoughts. Han Yu himself admires poets such as Chen Zi'ang, Li Bai, and Du Fu. "In the early Tang Dynasty, the style of poetry changed from Zi'ang to Li Du," and he consciously studied their poetry creation techniques and theories. The inner admiration, coupled with the similarity in life circumstances, easily resonates with Han Yu. Han Yu's "Tiao Zhang Ji" laments Li and Du's unfortunate fate and difficult creation. He believes that the reason why the two were able to write poems that are "shining brightly and stretching for thousands of miles" is entirely due to "the desolation of their homes". Although the understanding of the connotation of Li Du's poems is still shallow, it does provide a practical basis for Han Yu to summarize and generalize the theory of "if there is no peace, then there will be a cry".

Among them, Du Fu had the greatest impact on Han Yu. Han Yu was one of the earliest people to refer to Li and Du together, saying, 'Li and Du's writings shine brightly, stretching far and wide.'. His poetry clearly inherits Du Fu's creative tradition of feeling the times and criticizing reality. Part of his poetry and writings are realistic depictions of social injustice and the difficult lives of the people. Under the creative principles of realism, Han Yu's spontaneous attention to social injustice naturally leads to inner "injustice", coupled with his straightforward personality, which makes him strongly voice his dissatisfaction with the phenomenon. Poems such as Han Yu's "On the Hunger of People in the Drought", "Sending the Twelve Supplements to Wang on the Way to Jiangling", and "Li Shiyi Collecting the Legacy" not only express the difficulties of his own life, but also depict the people who are in dire straits under the dark politics.

In summary, the proposal of Han Yu's "When there is no peace, there is a cry" is the result of the combined effects of

historical and cultural accumulation and personal factors. It is not only an inheritance and development of the Confucian poetry teaching tradition, but also a deepening and expansion of the Han Dynasty's "beauty thorn" and "anger" theories. Han Yu, with his profound foundation in Confucianism and unique literary pursuit, carried forward the literary concept of "the cry of injustice" and became an important guiding ideology for literary creation in later generations. At the same time, Han Yu's multiple identities and rich experiences provide a solid foundation and vivid examples for proposing this theory. In Han Yu's writing, literature is not only an expression of personal emotions, but also a reflection of social reality. Therefore, the saying 'if there is inequality, then there will be a cry' is not only an exposition of the driving force behind literary creation, but also a highly summarized expression of the spiritual pursuit and social responsibility of literati.

2. The Connotation of the Saying 'When There is no Peace, There Will be a Cry'

The saying 'When things are not peaceful, they make a sound' was first proposed by Han Yu in his preface to 'Sending Off Meng Dongye' in the 17th year of the Zhenyuan era: 'When great things are not peaceful, they make a sound. The silence of plants and trees, the sound of wind scratching;... those above them make a sound of joy, while those below make a sound of sorrow.'. Among them, the phrase 'if a great thing cannot be level, it will sound' was simplified by later generations as 'if it is not level, it will sound'. For a long time, people have had different interpretations of the meaning of 'when there is inequality, there is a cry'.

One viewpoint holds that Han Yu's "injustice" causes people to feel frustrated and disappointed, and expresses their inner worries and anger, which only contains negative emotions. At this point, 'if there is no peace, then there will be a cry' is synonymous with Qu Yuan's 'expressing emotions with anger' and Sima Qian's 'writing books with anger', that is, the so-called 'self calling for misfortune', but does not include joy. The representative figure of this viewpoint is He Zhuo from the Qing Dynasty, who said in his book "Yimen Shuiji Ji": "But I ultimately doubt whether the four words 'if there is no peace, then there will be a sound' can be included in the prosperity of the country and the sound of the sages. He believes that there is a contradiction between "making a noise when there is inequality" and "making a noise when the country is prosperous". He believes that the "noise" of "making a noise when there is inequality" is only the "anger and indignation" of talented people who are oppressed. Meanwhile, renowned scholar Mr. Zhou Zhenfu is also a supporter of this viewpoint. He believed that 'if a great thing cannot be peaceful, it will sing', which should refer to talented people who are suppressed and feel unable to sing.

In Tang Xiaomin's article "On Han Yu's 'Unequal Voices' - A Comment on Qian Zhongshu's Viewpoint" published in 2003, she listed the personal experiences of five sons, including Yi Yin and Zhou Gong, who were representatives of the prosperous era, as listed in Han Yu's "Preface to Sending Meng Dongye". By writing about their personal experiences, she pointed out that they did not create purely out of joy, but out of the need to express their own difficulties. It is caused by one's own misfortune, in order to express one's resentment

and emotions. He believes that 'injustice' in Han Yu's writing refers to 'necessity'. Necessity and instability are actually different. The feeling of joy can be said to be unsettled, but it cannot be said to be 'necessity'.

In Zhang Qingyan's article "On the 'Unequal' in Han Yu's 'Unequal Voices'" published in 2010, the author refuted Tang Xiaomin's viewpoint that 'unfair' does not include joy and happiness through word meaning analysis and emotional characteristics exploration. Tang Xiaomin pointed out that "injustice" actually refers to feelings of "necessity", and feelings of "necessity" do not include joy and happiness, which is not precise. The author points out through the explanation of "necessity" in the "Chinese Dictionary" that "necessity" is not limited to "helplessness" and "inability not to do so", but also includes the uncontrollable positive emotions, such as the excitement and joy in "emotions beyond control" and "uncontrollable". Tang Xiaomin believes that the feeling of joy is characterized by high enjoyment and poor persistence, and is unwilling to get rid of it due to the need for satisfaction. But the author refutes this by pointing out that in the process of pursuing unmet needs, such as watching exciting performances or craving for something, people will experience a strong sense of joy due to dissatisfaction and desire, which is also a "last resort" emotion.

Another viewpoint holds that "injustice" encompasses both the indignant and indignant meaning of "self proclaiming misfortune" and the joyful meaning of "proclaiming the prosperity of the country". In short, this "injustice" not only refers to the sadness and anger in people's hearts, but also includes the psychological "imbalance" state that arises from happiness. The representative figure of this viewpoint is Qian Zhongshu, who proposed in his poem "Poetry can be complained about" that "Han Yu's injustice 'and' complaining about injustice 'are not equal. It not only refers to anger and depression, but also includes joy. Mr. Minze also made a similar argument in "The History of Chinese Aesthetic Thought". "Han Yu once raised the question of 'if there is injustice, then there will be a cry' in his preface to 'Sending Off Meng Dongye'. However, Han Yu's statement of 'injustice' at this time is a mixture of joy and sorrow, including both the aesthetic subject's 'success' and 'failure': 'success' leads to 'the prosperity of the country', while failure leads to 'self pity'.

Zhong Lin took her own position on these two viewpoints in her article "Han Yu's Theory of 'Unequal Voices' and His Creative Practice" published in the Chinese Language Journal in 2015. The author believes that the first viewpoint is more absolute and agrees with the argument of the second viewpoint. The author points out that 'when there is inequality, there will be a cry' is a certain emotion that Han Yu has accumulated in his heart, with a desire to not vomit or feel unhappy. Unequal "is not calm, and not calm is relative to the state of inner balance, which is a state of inner imbalance. And what causes this imbalance is not only negative emotions of inner anger, but also positive emotions of happiness and joy. At the same time, among the many examples cited in Han Yu's "Farewell to Meng Dongye", there is the successful politician Yi Yin, as well as the prosperous Yang Xiong and Sima Xiangru, who should express their inner emotions with joy. So we cannot deny the "injustice" generated by the

positive emotions in Han Yu's "When there is no peace, there is a cry". It is meaningful for Han Yu to use the joyful emotions in his mind as an internal reason for not speaking up or feeling unhappy, which is known as 'the cry of injustice'. However, there is still a focus on "self proclaiming misfortune" and "proclaiming the prosperity of the country". Due to his sympathy and pity for Meng Jiao's background, Han Yu wanted to use the phrase 'if there is no peace, then there will be a cry' to alleviate Meng Jiao's inner distress. Meanwhile, among the 41 famous sages he listed, the majority had a difficult fate and were poor but unable to achieve their goals. So, he still focuses on 'anger and resentment'.

For this explanation, a similar explanation can be found in Liu Huiqing's article "On Han Yu's Theory of 'Unequal Voices'" published in 2021. In the article, the author discusses the famous figures mentioned by Han Yu in his "Preface to Sending off Meng Dongye", starting from Yao, Shun, and Yu. They can be roughly divided into two categories: Yi Yin, who was relatively successful in politics, and Zhou Gong, who had a prosperous political era. These people should express a sense of happiness; The exile of Qu Yuan and the execution of Sima Qian in the palace expressed a sense of resentment and dissatisfaction. The author points out that there is a focus on "inequality" here. Han Yu expressed deep sympathy for Meng Jiao, who lived in poverty and faced numerous obstacles in his career. Therefore, he wanted to use these sages to inspire and motivate him; At the same time, considering Han Yu's dissatisfaction with his failure in the civil service election at that time, the selected sages were mostly unsuccessful, so the emphasis should be on expressing feelings of sadness, grief, and anger.

Lin Dan Yi Yi also believes that the second viewpoint is more objective and desirable in his article "Interpretation of the Theory of 'Unequal Causes Cry'" published in Literature Education (Part 2) in 2019. The author points out that if the application of the phrase 'when there is injustice, there is a cry' is limited to negative grief and anger, it would appear narrow and extreme. Therefore, the "injustice" in the phrase "the sound of injustice" should be an emotional fluctuation that combines sadness and joy, and a psychological state of "unrest".

In Liu Shiyu's article "On Han Yu's Theory of 'Unevenness Leads to Singing'" published in Theoretical World in 2012, the author pointed out that in the third paragraph of Han Yu's "Preface to Sending Meng Dongye", the Tang Yu period and the Taikang reign of the Xia Dynasty were first selected. The Tang Yu period, also known as the Yao and Shun period, was a wise era known for adopting the abdication system; During the reign of Taikang, he indulged in excessive leisure activities and caused resentment among the people, which is a contrast between one governance and one chaos. Subsequently, four time periods were chosen: the Yi Yin period of the Shang Dynasty, the Zhou Gong period of the Zhou Dynasty, and the decline of the Zhou Dynasty and the downfall of the Chu generals. This is a comparison of the two regimes and two rebellions. If the author wants to simply express that 'injustice' is a matter of concern and anger, then using such a clear comparison of governance and chaos, or even comparing the entire dynasty and time period as unbalanced as the Taikang period and the entire Yao and Shun

period, is meaningless. Therefore, the author believes that the use of this comparative approach to governance is actually intended to express that there are differences in the emotions of "injustice". Since there are differences in the emotions of "injustice" among literati in chaotic times, and the emotions of people like Qu Yuan are always sad and angry in chaotic times, then the emotions of Chinese people in governance should be filled with joy and happiness due to bathing in moral governance. In times of chaos, there is sorrow and anger, while in times of governance, there is joy. It can be seen that the emotion of "injustice" has both sorrow and joy. At the same time, it is also mentioned in the Preface to the Poetry of Jingtang that "the voice of Fu Pinghe is faint, while the voice of sorrow is faint. Joyful words are difficult to work with, while words of poverty are easy to understand. This kind of sentence can only prove that the saying 'if there is inequality, then there will be a cry' may be inclined towards melancholy emotions, but it cannot be said that there is no joyful emotion in this' inequality '. From this, it can be seen that this kind of 'when there is no peace, there is a cry', whether it is sad or happy, or more inclined towards sorrow, is a recognition of the primary importance of true emotions in literary creation, and a recognition of the importance of true emotions in literary creation.

Through a review of the academic perspectives on the above two viewpoints, the author believes that Mr. Qian Zhongshu's viewpoint is more in line with Han Yu's original meaning. From the many examples cited in Han Yu's "Preface to Sending Off Meng Dongye", it can be seen that Yi Yin and Zhou Gong were successful politicians in their official careers, while Gao Tao, Da Yu, Kui, Sima Xiangru, and Yang Xiong were all in their prime and should have "praised the prosperity of the country" with joy. Especially with the phrase 'Qin Zhi Xing, Li Siming Zhi', we cannot deny that Han Yu's words of 'injustice' include joy.

3. Conclusion

This article provides a research review on the origin and connotation of Han Yu's theory of "When there is inequality, there is a cry", revealing the rich connotations and historical origins of this theory. Han Yu's "When there is injustice, there will be a cry" theory not only inherits the Confucian idea of "poetry can be complained about", but also absorbs the Han Dynasty's "beauty thorn" theory and the "indignation" theory of Qu Yuan, Sima Qian and others, forming a unique literary criticism concept. In terms of connotation, there are differences in the academic community's understanding of the concept of "inequality leads to prosperity". One viewpoint holds that "injustice" only refers to inner anger and injustice, while another viewpoint believes that "injustice" includes both anger and joy. Through the analysis of works such as Han Yu's "Preface to Sending Off Meng Dongye" and a review of different scholars' views, this article tends to believe that Mr. Qian Zhongshu's viewpoint is more comprehensive and accurate, that is, the "injustice" in "injustice makes noise" should be a kind of emotional fluctuation that combines sadness and joy, and a psychological state of "unrest". Han Yu's "When there is inequality, there will be a cry" is not only a recognition of genuine emotions in literary creation, but also an emphasis on literature as a tool for social criticism. Han Yu's theory has had a profound impact on literary creation and

criticism in later generations, and its value and significance are worthy of further exploration and research.

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