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## **PATRIARCHAL CULTURE IN THE MOVIE *THE PREY* (2022)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research aims to analyze the portrayal of a female character in fighting patriarchal culture in the film *The Prey* (2022). This research uses the theory of patriarchy by Allan G. Johnson and the qualitative method by John Fiske's semiotics. This uses The Codes of Television, which are divided into three levels: reality, representation, and ideology. The results of this study show that in the movie *The Prey* (2022), patriarchal culture has become the root of life in the Comanche tribe. Therefore, a movement against patriarchy is required, as demonstrated by the character Naru in the film *The Prey* (2022).

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## **INTRODUCTION**

*Prey* (2022) is a breakthrough in the Predator film series which is a prequel to the previous films because this film raises new issues for Predator fans, one of which is the issue of women and Native Americans. The film drew criticism from those who considered the issues raised to be too 'awakened' and questioned how a traditional woman could fight against the predator, which the film's main character, Amber Midthunder, responded to as a commotion (Vanhoose, 2022). According to Culhim, the issue of women in this film represents the real Comanche Tribe, one of which is the fact that this tribe does have several female warriors.

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Even though he was underestimated, *Prey* managed to win the most-watched title in the first three days since his debut on the public streaming service. This film also received a much brighter rating on Rotten Tomatoes compared to other predatory films, namely 93 percent critic score and 82 percent audience score; A great value considering this film wasn't even released in theaters (Colbert, 2022).

This achievement makes Midthunder happy because it can prove to critics that this film is more complex than they expected. The film *Prey* tells the story of a female fighter from the Comanche Indian tribe who will face a foreign existence which is later dubbed as a predator. That woman is Naruto. In this film, we explain how the main character bravely fights against alien existences that the main character also doesn't know how to fight, but for the sake of proving to his mother, he is willing to fight to defeat these creatures and wants to save the land. where did his tribe come from? wants to be a hunter like his late father and older brother. But he is always yelled at by men in his tribe who doubt his abilities (Dhany Wahyudi, 2022). Naru also has a character who has trails in the forest, starting from bear, lion, and predator tracks. The beginning of Naru's meeting with the Predator begins with the phenomenon of finding an animal carcass whose skin is peeled off. Starting from there, Naru intends to save his tribe from the threat of alien creatures. It's just that in the process of his struggles, Naru is often underestimated because he is considered to have no stronger abilities than men. Because of that, in general, *Prey*'s film examines patriarchal culture.

Patriarchy is a social structure that makes men the dominating gender in the social sphere and mainly focuses on men as the center (Rokhmansyah, 2013; Sakina & A., 2017). Through this understanding, it can be interpreted that men are the main gender that dominates the social system of society and dominates women and the large number of women causes gender inequality and injustice. Because of the patriarchal culture that dominates the role of men in the social sphere and places women in second place which is not equal to men, male employees have more authority or rights than women in carrying out their social activities (Nasruloh & Hidayat, 202). Not only because of cultural construction regarding gender, patriarchy also views the social roles of men and women through a biological perspective as absolute and cannot be changed, which have been constructed into social agreements that are difficult to change (Mutiah, 2019) This causes women to experience inferiority in society and invite acts of discrimination and paradise against women.

The patriarchal culture that is still attached to a group of people still views women as weaker, emotional, and unable to think logically while men are considered the opposite, tough, competitive, and rational. This categorization results from a social construction that distinguishes the roles of women and men which are considered "proper" by the social community itself and legitimized by patriarchal ideological values so that women want to fight against the patriarchal culture that has been embedded in society. Society will encounter various resistances from the surrounding social environment. The film *Prey* (2022) depicts a patriarchal structure created by a group of people. The subject of patriarchy becomes a gender issue that underlies the story from the beginning to the end of the film *Prey* (2022). Several moments in this film illustrate how men control important parts of the existence of the Comanche nation, how men are labeled as superior, and how men become central in various sectors. This is under the notion of patriarchy which means the rule of the father or patriarch (Bhasin, 1993).

Naru's character has a talent for hunting, but because the patriarchal system does not make Naru natural in taking up this position, he must show effort and resistance to display his abilities. The patriarchal situation gave birth to various forms of discrimination against women which further strengthened the status of men in society (DAS, 2012). The patriarchal system in the film follows the four components of The Theory of Patriarchy by Allan G. Johnson: Male domination, male identification, male management, and obsessive male control. First, the film depicts male domination in the most important activity of the Comanche people at that time, especially hunting, where women were seen as illogical to carry out this activity. Second, the various sequences in the film show how often men underestimate women, apparently because their male identities are stronger than they are. Third, the moment when Comanche Nation residents admit that Taabe managed to shoot a lion represents an element of male alignment. Finally, a group of Comanche men uses a violent attack on Naru to illustrate the final element, the male obsession with control.

The film *Prey* 2022 is a patriarchal-themed film that has just been released, therefore in-depth research on this film has not been found. It's just that, there have been many studies that discuss patriarchal culture in everyday life. Herlambang (2022) reviews the female character in a film called *Naru*, according to her, the figure created by Amber Midthunder is a skilled figure and has more advanced intelligence compared to the people in her group, even though her strength is small compared to the male hunters. Pop Culture (2022) also praised the film's plot stating that the bait strategy is one of clever plotting, in

which the film introduces problems slowly but surely. In addition, the editor (2022) stated that the main conflict in this film greatly multiplied the anxiety of the inland forest group at that time. Where women work for light needs, while men struggle with animals and more terrible challenges in the wild.

According to Yucki (2022), *Prey*'s film still has several gaps in the story, namely some timelines feel lost and political figures who achieve are too underestimated. As for the film *Prey* (2022), only a few reviews are in the form of criticism. As for the context of academic criticism, the writer has not found any studies on the film *Prey*. However, if placed in a broader scope, film studies on patriarchal themes are often carried out, even with a variety of approaches. So here the author tries to review it using The Codes of Television approach by John Fiske, with the hope that this article will be able to follow the meaning of the film *Prey* among these studies. Therefore, this article tries to offer a model of film criticism of the film *Prey* (2022) in narrative and visual aspects to give meaning to patriarchal culture.

## **METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative method. The qualitative research method is a philosophical-based research method that places the researcher as a key instrument, data collection techniques are carried out by triangulation (combined), data analysis is inductive/qualitative, and the results of qualitative research emphasize meaning (Sugiyono, 2014). Qualitative research methods aim to analyze and describe phenomena or research objects through social activities, attitudes, and opinions of individuals or groups (Andini, 2022). This study uses a qualitative approach that focuses on several scene findings in the film *Prey*, especially those related to the role of a female character named Naru (Huda, 2020). A qualitative approach not only describes social processes and actions but also reveals their meaning (Djam'an & Aan, 2017).

This qualitative research uses a semiotic approach. Semiotic analysis seeks to find the meaning of signs including things hidden behind a sign, such as in texts, advertisements, news, films, etc. Because the sign system is very contextual according to the user of the sign. Semiotics is the study of signs, sign production, and how signs function. A sign is something that for someone means something else. Everything that can be observed or made observable can be called a sign. Therefore, signs are not limited to objects. The existence of an event, the absence of an event, the structure found in something, or a habit, all of these can be called signs (Nur, 2013). Semiotics has a broad scope in the study of

communication science. Semiotics can be used in various objects, one of which is mass communication. In mass communication, semiotics can be applied to journalism products, advertisements, music videos, to films (Andini, 2022).

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

#### Scene 1.1.



#### Scene 1.1.

Naru and Tabee are talking about their tribal experience in the middle of hunting. Tabee brags about his hunting skills which make Naru feels irritated. In the end, Tabee successfully takes down a hunted bird.

#### Scene 1.2.



#### Scene 1.2.

Naru's mother questions Naru's motivation to hunt. The former tells Naru that she is good at every other thing. Naru replies that she wants to hunt because everyone underestimates her.

### Scene 2.1.



### Scene 2.1.

Naru and Tabee argue about whether or not Naru can hunt. Tabee stops her from joining the hunt. Naru questions whether she needs his permission to hunt. Tabee replies that it is not about her mission, but he thinks she is unable to hunt.

### Scene 2.2.



### Scene 2.2.

Naru wants to join the group for hunting. Her fellow tribe people disrespect her by saying, "Who invites her? We don't need a cook here."

### Scene 3.1.





### Scene 3.1.

Naru was forced to return home by the Comanche tribe men. Because she refuses to go home, her tribe men force her with violence. She tries to fight back.

### Scene 3.2.



### Scene 3.2.

Naru and Tabee argue about Naru's desire to hunt. While Tabee claims that she cannot hunt, Naru keeps on convincing her brother.

### Scene 4.1.





#### **Scene 4.1.**

Naru leaves her house to prove her ability. She contemplates whether she should leave or not, she decides to go out and faces many of her tribe's frown stares.

#### **Scene 4.2.**



#### **Scene 4.2.**

Naru against the Predators. Naru tries to fight the Predator using his strategy of combat alongside the Predator's weapon which ends up with her winning and claiming victory.

### Scene 4. 3.



### Scene 4.3.

Naru's return after defeating the Predator. She brings home the Predator's head as a trophy of her victory. Then, the tribe declares her a warrior and Naru suggests her tribe move.

### Discussion

#### Patriarchal Culture in Comanche Life

#### Reality:

Naru and Taabe are practicing archery while talking about their childhood. Taabe, who is an older brother, said that when they were little, Taabe often did archery activities taught by his father. The level of reality in the scene is shown through the clothes used by Naru and Taabe. Naru and Taabe wore typical clothing from the Comanche tribe, these clothes they wore when they practiced archery. In this scene, there is behavior like Taabe who boasts about his archery skills. Taabe has been proficient in archery since childhood because he was trained by his father from crawling through the mud to practicing using a bow. In addition, if you take a closer look at Naru's expression, it shows his sincerity in practicing archery. This can be proven by the very good results from Naru's archery. In the hunting activities carried out by Naru, the mother also asked the reason why Naru wanted to do hunting activities. According to his mother, this activity could only be done by a man. After hearing the question from his mother, Naru's expression changed from the one that was very excited and enthusiastic to a little disappointed to know that his mother was

talking about that. This situation did not discourage Naru but made him even more serious about learning archery and hunting.

**Representative:**

Scene Naru and Tabee (1.1): Medium close-up, eye-level angle. In this scene, when the dialogue starts, the camera is fixed on Naru. There is a camera transition from Naru to Tabee, but the duration of the spotlight is more dominant on Naru. In addition, when the camera focuses on Tabee, the camera position is facing Naru's body. This represents the point of view used, namely the contents of Naru's mind. This is also strengthened by shooting medium close-ups, where this shoot aims to connect the character's personal space with the audience (Rabiger & Hurbis-Cherrier, 2020: 186). In this scene, the personal space that is revealed is Naru's expression of annoyance with Tabee, who talks a lot about his hunting experiences.

Scene Naru and his mother (1.2): Medium close-up, eye-level angle. This scene shows a conversation between Naru and his mother. There is a camera transition with a side angle, where the camera is positioned to Naru's right and his mother's left, showing them interacting while working on something. Even though the camera looks parallel to the two characters' views, Naru's position is lower than his mother's, as indicated by his mother looking down while talking to Naru. If the point of view in the scene is on Naru, then Naru's mother's downward gaze imitates the low angle technique, where the function is to show the power (Rabiger & Hurbis-Cherrier, 2020: 186) of her mother, while Naru is in a weaker position. This includes his mother's patriarchal views which are considered dominant over Naru's views.

**Ideology:**

In the scene above, it is explained that this film applies a patriarchal culture, namely a social system that places men as the main power holders who dominate compared to women (Mutiah, 2019). This can be seen in the daily life of the Comanche tribe. In this film, it can be seen that in their daily activities, men are given the task of hunting and being leaders. This is evident in the scene where Tabee says that "Dad and I climbed the hill, we crawled through the mud and bowstrings. Meanwhile, in this film, women are only given the task of cooking and carrying medicines. This is also shown by the line "Mom brought you to collect medicines". In addition, Naru's desire to hunt was also considered strange by her mother because basically, women should not have the desire to hunt. This is evidenced by the scene of Naru's mother asking "Why do you want to hunt even though

you are good at many other things?". Patriarchal culture seems to be applied throughout this film because from the start men were considered to be more powerful and physically stronger. They had more capable abilities so they were given tough tasks, such as hunting and fighting wild animals as a threat. Meanwhile, women are seen as weak, so they are only given easy and light tasks such as cooking and making medicines. Therefore, it can be concluded that this film shows the ideology of patriarchal culture in its storyline.

### **The Position of Men Is Considered Higher than Women**

#### **Reality:**

This scene tells of a woman, namely Naru, who is belittled and looked down upon by the men of her group. At that time, Naru wanted to help Taabe to hunt. However, Taabe does not allow Naru to join. Then, Naru spoke and asked Taabe the reason why Naru was not allowed to join the hunt. According to Naru, he doesn't need permission from Taabe to join because Naru is capable and proficient in hunting. In the end, Naru joined to join the hunt but it was very unfortunate that Naru was surprised by the words of another man (who also joined the hunt) who said that he did not need a cook, in which Naru joined to join the hunt not to become a cook. This scene shows Naru's angry expression, while the man's expression in the film shows an expression of looking down on women.

#### **Representative:**

Scene Naru and Taabe (2.1): medium close-up, eye-level angle. The two characters (Naru and Taabe) face each other and argue. There is a camera transition that highlights Naru and Taabe. The right eye-level angle serves to show a gripping confrontation (Rabiger & Hurbis-Cherrier, 2020: 186), so the function of the eye-level angle taken from the front view in this scene is to show the views of the two characters which are very firm and focused. to his interlocutor. Also in this scene, the shoot used is a medium close-up, its function is to show the expressions of each character to the audience when they argue so that the audience can understand the point of view of the two characters in conflict.

Scene Naru and his group hunting (2.2): Naru: medium close-up, eye-level angle; Colleagues: long shot, low angle. Naru was positioned under the gaze of his hunting colleagues. A low angle serves to show power so, in this scene, Naru is in a more vulnerable position because she is facing his colleague. This also shows that the position of men is higher than that of women.

#### **Ideology:**

The concept of gender related to patriarchy is proven to be quite strong in the Comanches. This can be seen from the efforts of mastery by men in a patriarchal culture, namely at the level of gender status which leads to women's rights, where women must make all confirmations or choices against men. Due to the superior position of men in a patriarchal culture in society which causes arbitrary behavior toward women who are considered to be men's subordinate position in society (Modiano, 2021). Here it is described that men are in control of everything. This shows that the position of men is above the position of women. Illustrated in the scene (picture 2.1), here it is shown how Naru was forbidden by his older brother to go hunting, even though it was Naru's wish, the older brother's role was shown quite largely how Taabe forbade his sister to go, because Naru as a woman would not be able to hunt physically. The scene (picture 2.2) is described where Naru is belittled by the Comanche tribe, when Naru comes following a group of men to join the hunt, they think that Naru's presence cannot help them hunt and hinder their journey, shown in the dialogue of one of the men to Naru "Who asked you?" "We don't need a cook" This sentence already shows how the Comanche men describe Naru as a woman who can only do light work. This shows how gender stereotypes in a patriarchal culture can limit women's roles and abilities, for example in hunting. This also shows that in the Comanche tribe, the existence of women is considered insignificant in the eyes of men because of the patriarchal view that places men as the holders of control and power in the tribe. Overall, the concept of gender related to patriarchy is deeply rooted in Comanche and influences the way women are treated and perceived in society. Women's subordinate position is strengthened through various cultural practices and beliefs, such as gender roles and stereotypes. This highlights the importance of recognizing and challenging patriarchal structures.

### **Male Control over Women's Movement**

#### **Reality:**

This scene, tells about the men who forbade women to become hunters. In one of the scenes where Naru is in the middle of a forest, Naru wants to join the hunt, but Naru's intentions are not well received by the tribe so what happens is Naru is forced to go home and in that scene, Naru engages in fighting activities as proof of resistance. The level of reality in this scene is also marked by the atmosphere of the place where Naru and Tabee are arguing, the atmosphere of the place is very dark and also dim. Then with a very angry

expression, Naru argued with Tabee after knowing that Tabee had ordered the Colonies to force Naru to return home. The debate created a tense atmosphere because when arguing Tabee forbade Naru to hunt because he was afraid that Naru would become a burden if he joined the hunting team. A very disappointed face mixed with anger and sadness symbolized Naru's expression when he heard this statement.

**Representative:**

Scene Naru and his group (3.1): When Naru is walking and meets a group of men from his tribe who are looking for him from a camera distance using a transition from medium close-up and transitioning to long-shot camera distance. The medium close-up is used with a camera distance technique that positions the human chest upward (Rabiger & Hurbis-Cherrier, 2020). The camera focuses on the actor, not the background. The camera position is a medium close-up shot when Naru and one of the boys from his group are talking with the camera focus changing every time the dialog changes and the focus is still dominant when Naru walks away after talking to the man. The camera transitions to long-shot, which is a camera distance technique that shows the entire human body (Rabiger & Hurbis-Cherrier, 2020). The camera focuses on the background which is dominant rather than the actor. The sequence in Naru's fight with the group of men has various transitions with different camera angles and different camera framing following the actor's movements. When Naru fights, the sequence is still dominated by the camera framing which is a medium long-shot that shows the human body from below the knee up (Rabiger & Hurbis-Cherrier, 2020). The dominant camera angle in this scene is the low angle, the camera position that adjusts human vision when looking and transitions to eye level and high angle (Mazur, 2000; Rabiger & Hurbis-Cherrier, 2020).

Scene Naru and Tabee (3.2): In the scene where Naru and Tabee are having a conversation, shooting is done using a medium close-up camera distance technique with backlight lighting techniques, this technique is a lighting technique that shows lighting from the back side of the human body and is not broadcast live directly on the human body (Rabiger & Hurbis-Cherrier, 2020). The medium close-up technique in this scene seeks to focus visuals and attention on the scene to create a more personal atmosphere (Rabiger & Hurbis-Cherrier, 2020).

**Ideology:**

This film shows the existence of control by men over women in a patriarchal culture, namely in this scene there is an attempt by men to control the movement of women in a

patriarchal culture. Patriarchy is a social system that places men as the main, central authority figure in people's lives. (Israpil, 2017. This is shown in the scene when Naru is violently picked up by a group of men from the Comanche Tribe. The men try to control Naru's movements violently. Starting from tying, kicking, punching, and hitting, to bringing Naru home by force and acts of violence. The violence perpetrated by men against Naru as a woman in the film *Prey* shows that men have full control over women's actions. Where women are considered not to have any power so they can easily resisted by men. In addition, male control over women can also be seen in the sentence "Do I need permission, chief? This is not about permission, you can't hunt". The scene shows that in this film men not only have control over physical violence but also have control over women's movements. It can be seen that Tabee, as a man, tries to control Naru's ambitions by forbidding him from hunting. Therefore, it can be concluded that this film shows that there is high control from men over women's behavior.

### **Naru's Way as a Woman Against Patriarchal Culture**

#### **Reality:**

As a woman, Naru wants to prove that women must fight against patriarchal culture. This is evidenced by Naru's passionate mood to become a monster hunter. Disappointment and not accepting that he had been underestimated made Naru more determined to go hunting. This scene illustrates that Naru's mood and enthusiasm are very burning for hunting. Her expression was very passionate followed by those around her who urged Naru to prove that women can do the same things that men do. Women and men have the same opportunity to be able to do all things. And in that scene, Naru is doing activities by going hunting. The spirit that envied Naru made him strong. On his hunting trip, Naru encounters monsters and fights. The atmosphere of war was very tense but resulted in victory for Naru. Naru got a happy and emotional expression after winning the fight. After winning the fight and finishing the monster hunt, Naru returned to his hometown and told the villagers that there was a threat near their residence. The meaning of success in hunting Naru is proof that women have no limitations in doing anything. Residents of the village where Nary lived gave appreciation in the form of a stick symbolizing honor and symbolically that Naru had been named Leader Hunt.

#### **Representative:**

Scene Naru leaving the house (4.1): This scene shows the atmosphere of the Comanche

tribe's residence in the morning with the Comanche women starting their activities to grow crops, this scene was taken using a long shot camera technique. The long shot technique is a camera technique that shows the entire human body to show the whole atmosphere (Rabiger & Hurbis-Cherrier, 2020) with a foreground that focuses on the back of Naru's body showing Naru's gestures and paying attention to his surroundings. The scene undergoes a transition which becomes the main focus back to Naru with the technique of taking a medium long shot camera with a backlight which depicts the lonely atmosphere in the scene. Then there are cuts from several scenes as transitions, which are editing techniques to change scenes to other scenes that are done suddenly (Mazur, 2000).

Scene Naru against the Predator (4.2): In this scene, editing techniques dominate the sequence technique as a transitional battle between Naru and the Predator that haunts the life of the Comanche tribe. The camera-taking technique in this scene begins with a long shot showing Naru's position above the tree and the predator's position below, then transitions to adjusting Naru's movements against the predator through various visual capture techniques, from long shot techniques to close-up techniques. In taking this scene by positioning the camera which is dominant at low angle and straight angle focusing the camera object on Naru and Predator. The long shot technique is usually used to create a contextual atmosphere that indicates the presence of other people in this scene (Mazur, 2000).

Naru's return scene (4.3): The camera-taking technique in this scene combines long shots, and medium long shots, and switches to close-up shots with an effort to integrate other scenes into the next scene through cuts that dominate the scene with the long shot camera-taking showing the meeting between the Comanche tribe with Naru who has succeeded in defeating the Predator that has been haunting the Comanche tribe's residence. The use of the long shot technique in this scene seeks to create a meeting between the visual context and the change of scene into an atmosphere or visual contact that is like the view of a human looking and observing around the room who sees a face-to-face encounter (Mazur, 2000)

### **Ideology:**

The limitations on women's movement in choosing their rights which are shown to the Naru character begin to be broken throughout the film. According to Simone de Beauvoir, women and men are not created equal but all individuals should have equal rights and freedoms. Women must find their identity through freedom. (Illa, 2021) In the 18th and

19th centuries, society, which at that time tended to be patriarchal, believed that women were irrational, fragile, and unable to think independently. Society at that time thought that women were like pets owned by their masters, and as animals, women needed to show obedience to their owners, namely their husbands (Weitz, 2003). The nature of society which is still dominated by patriarchy, is not surprising that many Indonesian people still consider gender roles and stereotypes to be normal. Beauvoir strongly rejects this and encourages women to find their true selves through freedom, without coercion or standards imposed on them. Beauvoir believes, although women and men are different, all individuals have the same rights in all aspects of life. (Illa, 2021)

Entering the storyline, Naru is described as a character that develops throughout the film, Naru dares to find his own identity and freedom without being under the shadow of men. Naru takes a stand about what he believes and believes. The main character, Naru is shown to have intelligence and a nature that is sensitive to their environment, the status of women is considered weaker and unable to do the work of men, and all their words and opinions are also often ignored. With this, Naru takes a step to break free from the chains and demonstrates the abilities the Comanche group of men and their families have always directed. It can be seen in the scene (4.1) here that she decided to go look for monsters and go hunting alone, on the other hand, it is described how the normalized women there only do limited housework, on the other hand, Naru walks into the forest to hunt. With his intelligence and courage, Naru in the scene (picture 4.2) managed to survive in the forest and made his strategy to defeat the monster. In the next scene, it is described how Naru's strategy succeeded in defeating the monster. At the end of the scene, scene (picture 4.3) only Naru is the only person who survived the monster and returns to his village carrying the head of the monster he defeated himself. It is also illustrated how the attitude of the Naru family and the Comanche tribe finally acknowledged Naru's ability as the chief hunter. Naru proved that women also had the same abilities as men and were able to go beyond the limitations imposed by the patriarchal society at that time. This film inspires other women to take a stand and fight against the injustice they experience in choosing their rights

## **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

Based on the discussion above, the conclusions that can be drawn are as follows:

This research was conducted using the semiotic method assisted by analysis by John

Fiske which is divided into reality levels, representation levels, and ideological levels. in the social structure.

There is an ideology that the patriarchal culture contained in the film "*Prey*" appears due to the arbitrary attitude of men toward women. Thus, women in "*Prey*" are trying to break down this action and are working on gender rights and equality.

The film "*Prey*" raises the issue of patriarchal control over women's productive power. In this film, control is depicted by a male figure who has power, strength, and control so men use it to control to the point of demeaning women.

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