

Journal of Advanced Research in Applied Sciences and Engineering Technology

Journal homepage:

https://semarakilmu.com.my/journals/index.php/applied_sciences_eng_tech/index ISSN: 2462-1943



The Energy Field of Museum Spatial Narrative: A Case Study of Hunan Provincial Museum in China

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 15 July 2023 Received in revised form 10 November 2023 Accepted 23 November 2023 Available online 5 December 2023

ABSTRACT

Museum space narrative continues to develop today. The exhibition is not only a means of display but also a means of narrative. Paying attention to the narrative means we must pay attention to the energy "field" of the spatial narrative. In the spatial field, an object with some internal force exerts a force on the object it is not touching, and the latter responds to that force, and the two interact and form an energy field. This also means the spatial narrative design must establish a more diverse relationship between exhibits. Exhibits must be appropriately combined according to the narrative logic, and the relationship between exhibits and space, exhibits, and audience must also become more dynamic, flexible, and dramatic. Currently, there is little research on the energy "field" in the narrative design of museum spaces. In the past, the monotonous experience of a museum has been that each space is neat and uniform, which can easily lead to aesthetic fatigue. The relatively simple narrative form of the museum leads to the problem of low audience experience and participation. It cannot meet modern people's museum experience and spiritual pursuit needs. Therefore, this study aims to clarify the representation of its energy field by using the theory of spatial narrative, and especially to explore how the concept of "field" can be used to explore the relationship between space and the narrative of Hunan Provincial Museum. This study adopts the method of field investigation, and the exhibition of the Mawangdui Han Tomb in the Hunan Provincial Museum is the focus of the study. Documenting the components of the energy field: exhibits, exhibition Spaces, and narratives. The analysis results show that the museum is the place of spatial narrative, and the space is both the coordinator and the result of the generation of the exhibition structure, which gathers scattered energy together to build a complete energy field. Paying attention to the display of the energy field can improve the audience's experience and participation, which proves to be beneficial to the long-term development of the museum.

Keywords:

Spatial narrative; Field; Museum; Exhibits; Exhibition spaces

1. Introduction

Nowadays, people spend about 85% -90 % of their time staying indoors [1]. Museums are one of the indoor places that consume people's time, and more and more people visit museums each year, alone or in groups. The museum interior space is a place of cultural narrative, which reshapes the

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https://doi.org/10.37934/araset.33.1.517528

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loose collection into narrative space and builds a complete energy field. With the progress of science and technology, the state of narrative space in today's museums is becoming more and more unpredictable. It also provides many benefits for the energy field in the narrative space of the museum, such as improving the participation, experience, and interaction of the audience in the museum so that each museum has its characteristics, which requires designers to give space energy and rhythm when designing museum space and pay attention to each museum has its features. The energy field in the museum needs to be recognized and scientifically summarized, all of which will help the museum make more effective and efficient use of existing resources to achieve its own goals. Therefore, the exhibition space must be properly combined according to the narrative logic. The relationship between the exhibit and the space, between the exhibit and the audience, also needs to become more organic, flexible, and dramatic. When the theory of quantum fields is valid, we see objects moving not through the separate medium of "space" alone but through the field-excited energy of their own (static) movement, corresponding to their motion. According to the ontology of the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclius, the energy of the field can be constantly changing, transforming, combining, separating, regulating, fluctuating, and interacting in space. So, the object's energy is eternal and impermanent, i.e., static and changing. When the position of the audience's movement in the museum building space changes, the energy of the field changes. From the viewer's point of view, they think they have moved and have changed position, but fundamentally the field has not driven. Only the energy within the field has changed. Therefore, we can look at any individual exhibit as an energy field; the entire museum is one big energy field. As viewers and exhibits move around the museum's interior and interact, they make this energy field fluctuate and create movement. That understanding is an essential element that guides the museum narratives in this thesis, and the relationship between them is something to focus on [2]. This study reasonably applies the concept of the energy field to the spatial narrative. It can make the internal structure of the museum exhibition space increasingly become an indivisible whole, increase the audience's experiential and participation, and the energy interaction between the audience and the exhibits makes the internal structure of the museum narrative space present an active state. In this study, however, the researchers raised some questions. There are few studies on the energy "field" in museum space narrative. In the past, the museum experience was monotonous because every room was uniform, which made it easy for people to feel aesthetic fatigue. The relatively simple narrative form of the museum has caused the audience's low experience and participation, which has been unable to meet modern people's demand for museum experience and spiritual pursuit. When the spatial order of the museum narrative satisfies the audience's experience and participation at a certain stage, the main value of the spatial narrative in the museum will shift from creation to the statement of the objects in the space, which is the main source of energy in the energy field, which also needs our serious attention.

The case study of the Mawangdui Han Tomb Exhibition in Hunan Provincial Museum is considered to be the focus of this study. The exhibits in this exhibition have a common attribute: the energy field in Hunan Museum breaks the tradition of building the entire exhibition space as an exhibit centre, and each exhibit is no longer a "king" in its territory but has a representation of its own identity, which greatly enhances the correlation between exhibits and exhibits. The research scope is limited to the Mawangdui Exhibition on the third floor of the Hunan Provincial Museum.

Accompanied by social development and the improvement of the economic level, the interior space design of museums has entered the process of architectural history with rapid momentum. We can use the Hunan Provincial Museum interior space design as an example; Hunan Provincial Museum interior space design, fully embodies the traditional Chinese concept of "five elements"; the meaning of the five elements contains five essential dynamics through the evolution of yin and yang:

gold (on behalf of the convergence), wood (on behalf of the growth), water (on behalf of the wet), fire (on behalf of the destruction), earth (on behalf of the integration). They are also the five elements that constitute the nature. Ancient Chinese philosophers used the five elements theory to describe the formation of all things in the world and their interrelationships. It emphasizes wholeness and aims to describe the changes in the movement of things, foreshadowing the endlessness of all things in the universe. The endlessness of life also conveys the definition of the museum: connecting history with the future. Gold - the metal roof; wood - the water feature platform and lobby walls; water - the water feature in the entrance plaza; fire - the torch on top of the entrance hall; and earth - the restored tomb pit of the core artifacts of Mawangdui. Therefore, the interior space of the museum space is also one of the ways of spatial narrative. Both the interior space of the museum and the narrative of the museum space start from the narrative and have different ways of presentation.

This study aims to use the new perspective of the energy field to explore the museum space narrative in the unique era background, which should not only be rich in content and diverse in forms but also have a forward-looking prediction to deepen the audience's sense of experience and participation, which requires a reasonable structure and clear characteristics of the combination of energy exhibits. It is more beneficial for researchers to plan scientific spatial narratives in limited space. The objective of this study is

- i. to study the representation of the energy field in the Mawangdui Han Tomb exhibition
- ii. to use the concept of "field" to explore the relationship between museum space and narrative in Hunan Province.

Finally, it is essential to study the perspective of an experiential and participatory museum space narrative, which can satisfy people's experiential and spiritual needs for museums.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Concept of the Field

In Heraclius' doctrine of mobility and the theory of eternal change of existence, it is emphasized that all things are in a state of constant change and that to say that everything is in a state of continuous change implies that nothing exists independently of anything else, and directs us to look at things in terms of constant change, and that things interact with each other. When we exist in a common "field," our collective senses transmit to each other like antennas, influence each other, and perceive each other. British biologist Rupert Sheldrake proposed the "Morphogenetic field or Mfield" and "Morphological resonance" in the 1980s. His theory of morphological resonance explains that the energy field has a specific form of totem, which will surround and penetrate other objects. The conclusion is that every object has its particular energy field, which is universal, everywhere, all the time, existing in the invisible universe, and can be used at any time.

2.2 The Relationship Between Narrative and Space

Philipp Schorch refers to "narrative" as "hermeneutic expression" [8]. The term "expression" in this context can be traced back to Dilthey, who states that "the interrelationship between life, expression, and understanding encompasses gestures, facial expressions, and speech, all of which are used by human beings to communicate." Bruner brings the discussion to the point that "narratives" are specific human "expressions," "as expressive or performative texts, structured units of experience, such as stories or dramas, are socially constructed units of meaning. Constructed units

of meaning. While the museum's narrative approach to representation is recognized as the most appropriate way to facilitate meaning-making for museum visitors, it is important to note that the museum's narrative approach to representation has been recognized as the most appropriate way to facilitate meaning-making for museum visitors. At the most general level, this study reveals the depth to which space and narrative, such as space, can have a long-term impact on the "layout" and "structure" inherent in exhibitions, such as the power to attract and hold them. It helps museum theorists and practitioners to reflect on the implications of their respective positions and actions. Since the 21st century, influenced by the trend of "from things to things" in the international museum world, curation has gradually been understood as telling the story of collections. Using the perspectives of comprehensive narratology and generalized narratology, narrative can be defined at the attribute level; that is, the communication content of an actual narrative text should contain at least three elements: characters (including personification), events, and causation [12].

2.3 The Relationship Between the Audience and the Space

Studies have found that how visitors confront a museum space does not seem to be related to the content or design of the museum, and one of the earliest conclusions made in the 20th century was that most visitors change their behaviour throughout a visit. Benjamin Cilman first noted that "museum fatigue" refers to the fact that visitors see fewer exhibits and for shorter periods over time, suggesting that the physical exhaustion of the visitor contributes to the state of museum fatigue. Arthur Melton, a student of Benjamin Cilman's, found that visitors spent more time in the first few galleries than in the later ones, regardless of the content of the galleries. There is no doubt that the spatial layout of a museum now seems to affect visitor activity. Arthur Melton later discovered that exits can pull visitors towards them: visitors usually go out through the first door they encounter. The layout of the space affects the behaviour of the audience; if the content and quality of the design are not taken into account, the number of times the audience visits exhibitions on the first floor is more than the number of times they visit exhibitions upstairs; the number of times the audience visits entrances is far more than the number of times they visit exhibitions deeper in the museum. So, the layout of the exhibition space is one of the factors affecting the way the audience visits. Developers of the museum space layout design need to pay attention to what details will help to make the museum more popular, help more audience feel comfortable, and improve the quality of the visit.

This section selects the T-shaped silk painting in Mawangdui Han Tomb as a case. According to the above judgment, this exhibit has a narrative character. This exhibit is the medium for the tomb owner to lead the soul to heaven, which will be covered in the inner coffin when buried. By analysing the energy field inherent in this T-shaped silk painting, we can see from Figure 1 that both silk paintings are located in black space, the light is concentrated on the exhibits, and there is a certain distance between the exhibits. Both exhibits are regarded as two kinds of "energy sources," their energy will slowly weaken from the centre to the outside. When the audience walks toward the exhibits, the energy of the audience moves towards the energy of the exhibits, and when some audience gets close, the energy gathers more. An energy field is formed [21].

To investigate the strength of the energy field, the number of papers on weaving nets in China was compared by selecting four kinds of Hunan Museum exhibits. This study conducted a thorough literature evaluation to understand the sensitivity of different researchers to museum exhibits in Hunan Province. Therefore, by studying the frequency of appearance of exhibits in these papers and writings, we should be able to come to the logical conclusion that the most frequent and highest frequency of appearance in the sensitivity analysis of a particular topic is also the exhibit with the relatively strongest energy [25]. As of July 2023, Mrs. Xin, who has not been rotting for thousands of

years, has 150 academic journals and 17 academic dissertations; Mawangdui has 109 academic papers and 12 academic dissertations on silk. Han Dynasty Lacquerware has 45 academic papers and 15 academic theses, 36 scholarly papers, and nine academic dissertations on textile clothing.

Foreign papers use Sci-Sub literature retrieval as a reference, among which there are about 100 papers by Madame Xin Zhuan, who has not been corrupted for thousands of years. There are about 85 paintings on silk in Mawangdui; There are about 60 articles on lacquerware in the Han Dynasty. There are about 40 articles on textile clothing. Rupert Sheldrake argues that all morphological fields may ultimately originate from the primordial field of the universe and considers the possibility that this universal field may be connected to previous universes. Fields play a fundamental role in modern science: matter is said to be composed of energy organized by fields. Sheldrake said, "The field has replaced the soul as the invisible organizing principle [27]." Before considering other types of form fields, it is necessary to examine what form fields are. Sheldrake described them as "information fields," saying that they are neither matter nor energy types and can only be detected by their effect on the material system. The immaterial form field does not need to be considered, and the exhibits we choose and the space in which they are placed are both physical. In this sense, it is reasonable for us to judge the strength of the energy field by the amount of information carried by the exhibits [28]. In 1976, Valerie Hunt argued for the existence of human energy in Valerie, which will not be repeated here.



Fig. 1. Mawangdui Han Tomb T-shaped painting on silk

3. Methodology

The qualitative research adopted the methods of field investigation and semi-structured interviews. To investigate the representation of the energy field and the relationship between space and narrative in Hunan Provincial Museum. Field research and semi-structured interviews were conducted simultaneously.

3.1 Mawangdui Han Tomb Exhibition Selection

The Mawangdui Han Tomb Display Exhibition in Hunan Province is the leading study case of this research. Hunan is located in the south of China and is the hub of land and water transportation between the north and the south. Influenced by its ancient political and geographic location, its culture embodies tolerance and openness while preserving traditional characteristics and forming a school of its own. The Hunan Provincial Museum has made remarkable achievements in operation

and management, cultural relics collection, academic research, displays and exhibitions, education services, media dissemination, and cultural and creative development. It has been ranked among the most advanced museums in the world. This museum contains China's most valuable cultural relics and historical materials, requiring architectural space and narrative to match. After all, museum space with robust structural features is rare, and most museum space is neutral and lacks clear boundaries. Space is structured, and the narrative also has a structure; the space structure involved in the exhibition narrative is completely compatible. In the traditional museum, the primary function of the exhibition is to display rather than narrative; even so, the spatial structure is already involved in the museum's narrative. For example, the British Museum in Europe, the Louvre, and the Gammon Museum's exhibition hall pattern distribution almost all follow the same principle: ancient Greek culture and the country's classical culture occupy the most prominent position. (such as the centre hall), other European and West Asian cultures, and African, South American, and East Asian cultures in a more secondary position. It is clear that this spatial pattern already exudes a strong sense of self-centeredness, regardless of the exhibits inside.

This study divides the spatial structure of the museum into the following four parts according to the content of the exhibition halls:

- i. "World Discovery"
- ii. "Life and Art"
- iii. "Silk Collection"
- iv. "Dream of eternal life" (Figure 2).

These four sections are also the energy fields mentioned in this study. In these four energy fields, the Mawangdui Han Tomb Exhibition utilizes technology and art to join in the display of the exhibits, reassembles the exhibits, and embeds the storylines of the four sections in the exhibition hall, thus creating a narrative space full of narrative plots and historical memories. In the structure of this energy field space, the spatial narrative exhibition structure is presented in the form of a sub-total. From the above narrative, we can conclude that each exhibit is an energy field. When the viewer enters the No.1 exhibition hall of the Mawangdui Exhibition, he or she will continue to watch the No. 2, No. 3, and No. 4 exhibition halls according to the arrows planned in Figure 2 and then watch the exhibits in the order.



Fig. 2. Four parts of Mawangdui Han Tomb energy field

Through the audience's energy field and the exhibits' energy field constantly combine, separating, regulating, fluctuating, and interacting to feel the different strengths and weaknesses that the energy field brings to the audience. The audience will feel the scene of people's lives in the Han Dynasty in the energy fields of No. 1, 2, and 3, and the audience will associate the flourishing scene of the Han Dynasty with their living customs. In the No. 4 Dream of Eternal Life energy field, the museum uses a 1:1 ratio to restore the Han Tomb of Lady Xin Zhui. This No. 4 exhibition hall runs through the museum's three-floor exhibition space (Figure 3). The audience in the inverted trapezoidal tomb pit before the production of a huge dynamic projection can truly feel the energy field to bring the audience to talk about the Han Tomb of the grandeur of the time. The energy field from No. 1 to No. 4 is also a process of return, which brings people to feel a sequence from life to death. The dream of immortality (immortality means rebirth) in the No. 4 exhibition hall is the most vital part of the energy field of the tomb. This concept of rebirth was the concept of life and death for the people of the Han Dynasty. It also corresponds to the energy field concept in this study, emphasizing that everything has its energy field, which is constantly changing, guiding us to look at the spatial layout of these four exhibition halls with an ever-changing perspective. The Hunan Provincial Museum Mawangdui display exhibition integrates art and technology into the combined exhibits, creating a new type of narrative in the museum space, which also forms a richer energy field state. In this large energy field, when the narrative space component in the museum is projecting information dissemination signals, it can maximize the audience's access to energy messages and spread culture effectively and widely so that the audience itself is invested in the exhibition rather than "wandering" outside the exhibition. The combined relationship between the exhibits in Figure 2 possesses a reasonable structure and clear features, and the clearer the energy field between the space and its display, the more favourable it is for the curator to plan the spatial narrative under a clear structure.



Fig. 3. Space plan of Mawangdui Han Tomb

3.2 Field Investigation

The Mawangdui Han Tomb Exhibition area is located on the third floor of the Hunan Provincial Museum. The exhibition hall of Mawangdui Han Tomb Exhibition in Changsha is divided into four parts: "World Discovery," "Life and Art," "Silk Collection," and "Dream of eternal life." First, the classification of Mawangdui Han Tomb exhibits, this part of the museum, has been done before. It

can be divided into lacquer, fabric, metal, ceramics, jade, bamboo, wood, and the corpse of Madame Xin. When we are on-site, the energy performance between exhibits can no longer satisfy our research process because we are in a complete exhibition, and the exhibition needs to appear as a narrative means. We must pay attention to the spatial narrative and indicate that the exhibition must establish a richer connection between exhibits and exhibits. Therefore, during the on-site research, we will focus on the recording: The classification of exhibits, the distance between exhibits, the display arrangement of exhibit space, and the narrative background of exhibits are also the focus of the exhibition space and narrative in the space energy field of Han Tomb in Mawangdui. Here, we choose the second part of the exhibition hall living in art, "Jun Xing Food," as an example. In Figure 4, its exhibits are food and food utensils; the left side is food, the right side is utensils, the left side of the food is in storage space, and the right side of the food is placed in a space. The external space of the two is the space that coordinates the energy field between the two, establishes the internal unity of the food and the space that is separated from the outside, and also unifies the scattered space collection. Thus, to discuss the spatial narrative in this topic, we should pay attention to the relationship between spatial structures of things rather than just looking at the space itself.



Fig. 4. "Jun Xing Happy Food" in Life and Art

3.3 Semi-Structured Interview

Based on the characterization of the energy field recorded in the field investigation, the researcher needs to explore the relationship between space and narrative in the energy field of Hunan Museum and further explain it to obtain in-depth information from the sampling. This qualitative semi-structured interview enriched the record gathered from the field research. A purposive sampling technique was used in this study. The subjects of this study are mainly museum staff and related researchers engaged in field research, as well as randomly selected museum visitors. The selected information providers participated in the relevant work of the museum. They engaged in the teaching work of this study and had a particular understanding of the exhibition of the Mawangdui Han Tomb in Hunan Provincial Museum. Therefore, the interview forms in this study are mainly divided into online and offline formats, and the online semi-structured interview is conducted using the Tencent conference application. The interviews were recorded and then translated into text to analyse and summarize the purpose of the research. In the semi-structured interview, I will

explore the interviewees' thoughts and grasp the critical direction of the interview meeting. The researcher can immediately modify the questions and questioning methods in response to the interviewees' responses to collect more information. In the later stage, the depth and scope of questions can also be deepened according to the depth that the interviewees can accept to obtain more valuable material collection. The following questions are mainly solved. Semi-structured interviews with museum staff and related researchers in the field research mainly include:

- i. What constitutes the narrative perspective of Hunan Provincial Museum?
- ii. What changes do you hope Hunan Provincial Museum will have in the future?
- iii. What are your views on how museum visitors can participate in the narrative?

The main content of the semi-structured interview is to track the audience's movement and record the reasons for their stay. Connect the visibility analysis with the primary movement trajectory of the audience and the location of the points where the visitors stop to visit the exhibits, and consider more possibilities for the audience to participate in the space energy field.

4. Result

The study results concluded that in the Hunan Province Mawangdui Exhibition, each static exhibit is an energy field. These energy fields are composed of exhibits in the distance between the exhibits, exhibits space display arrangements, and exhibits of the narrative background of each other to produce significant and weak differences in the energy field. According to the records of the field research, we can analyse the Mawangdui Exhibition, which is located on the third floor of the Hunan Provincial Museum. The categories of the exhibits can be divided into four parts of the field of energy, such as:

- i. "World Discovery"
- ii. "Life and Art"
- iii. "Silk Collection"
- iv. "Dream of eternal life"

To summarize, the point of view of this study is that the four energy fields are independent and unified, and the energy can either propagate in any medium, be regarded as a whole, or interact with other fields. When the audience feels the energy of the exhibits, the exhibits will attract the audience to come closer, and the energy of the two exchanges and interacts with each other, giving the audience a stronger sense of participation and experience. The interviews also showed that in the spatial energy field of the Mawangdui Exhibition, the space and the audience act as the coordinator of the narrative structural relationship and as the result of the generation of the narrative structural relationship. In order to discuss narrative space in the modern sense, we have to start by focusing on the structural relations of spatial narratives rather than the space itself. The definition of space has been connected with the definition of narrative structural relations.

This study shows a new perspective to explore the method of spatial narrative, which is a very different way of conceptualizing objects and their presentation in space, including what the energy is and how it moves. The viewer is made to feel that the exhibit does not exist in isolation from the space but that it is itself integrated with the space, and through the analysis of this energy field in space, the results indicate that the essence of the manifestation of energy in space is within and around the exhibit. They refer to the energy, i.e., within and around the energy field, just as the

human energy field, i.e., within and around the earth. Therefore, the discussion of the energy field in this paper is different from the traditional definition of spatial narrative theory.

This research addresses some pressing issues in contemporary museums with the energy field approach to museum storytelling. For example, how museums use their resources to meet modern people's experience needs and spiritual pursuits of museums. Taking the "Mawangdui Exhibition of Hunan Provincial Museum" as an example, the concept of "energy" breaks the inherent thinking of museum space narratives and helps us examine the problems arising from changes in exhibits and audiences, which is of great importance to both science and humanities meaning. While trying to explore, the viewpoint of the energy field is brought into the discussion. The purpose is to explore the influence of different factors on the relationship between narrative and space and the relationship between audience and space in museum narrative and get inspiration from it. It is hoped that through this research, people will pay special attention to museum narrative issues, emphasizing the influence of exhibits and audience participation on the energy field. This research is expected to become a topic of common concern among the international museum community and scholars and encourage people to think about more possibilities to influence the spatial narrative of museums so that museums can play a role in the process of social change.

5. Conclusion

In museums, perspective is the beginning of the narrative, which determines how we see the exhibits and shapes the relationship between the audience and the exhibits. The perspective of the exhibition in the energy field is related to the narrative and the spatial arrangement of the audience and the exhibits. If the museum is regarded as a place for spatial narrative, the exhibits and the audience must be created jointly. The work of the exhibition designer is not only narrative but also takes the initiative to assume the theme planner and become the chief director of the scene to optimize the design of the energy field. From the perspective of the overall development of the Hunan Provincial Museum, the museum space planning has entered a mature stage at this time. The comfort zone of rigid planning should be abandoned, and a more open attitude should be adopted to cope with the development of today's society.

The indoor space of the museum is a place of cultural narrative, which reshapes the loose assemblage into a narrative space and builds a complete energy field. The audience and the space act as "coordinators" of the structural relationship but also as the result of the generation of the structural relationship. The conclusion further points out that the space of Hunan Provincial Museum records that the Han Dynasty tombs and coffin portraits hide a complete cosmic world, reproducing the pre-burial world of the dead in the tombs, symbolizing the status and rights and becoming a kind of top-down belief, which makes the exhibits combined. Exhibits never exist in isolation, and the exhibits move and combine inside the space and exchange energy to become a complete energy field in the end. This study shows that focusing on the planning and design of the energy field in the narrative design of the museum space can improve the audience's experience and participation, which proves that in the long run, designing a narrative place of the museum space that focuses on the energy field is beneficial, and points out a new direction for the development of the narrative space of the museum.

This study shows that paying attention to the display of the energy field in the narrative design of a museum space can improve the audience's experience and participation, which proves that in the long run, it is beneficial to design a museum space narrative place that pays attention to the energy field, and points out a new direction for the development of museum narrative space.

Acknowledgement

This research was funded by the School of Housing, Building, and Planning, Universiti Sains Malaysia.

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