CREATING A PROFILE OF PREFERRED PATTERN OF RESPONSE OF THE FORM FIVE STUDENTS OF SEKOLAH MENENGAH KEBANGSAAN LABUAN (SMKL) IN LITERARY PROSE TEXTS (SHORT STORIES).

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UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH
2005

UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

BORANG PENGESAHAN STATUS TESIS@

JUDUL : Creating a profile of preferred pattern of response of the form five students of Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Labuan (SMKL) in literary prose texts (short stories).

IJAZAH: Sarjana Pendidikan (Pengajaran Bahasa Inggeris Sebagai Bahasa Kedua -TESL)

SESI PENGAJIAN :   SESI 2003/2004

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CATATAN: @ Tesis dimaksudkan sebagai tesis bagi Ijazah Doktor Falsafah dan Sarjana secara penyelidikan, atau disertasi bagi pengajian secara kerja kursus dan penyelidikan, atau Laporan Projek Sarjana Muda (LPSM).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DECLARATION

The materials in this thesis are original except for quotations, excerpts, summaries and references, which have been duly acknowledged.

MAIMUNAH BT MOHD ALI
PS2002-006(K)-269
25 NOV 2004

ABSTRAK

MEMBINA PROFIL BERDASARKAN TINDAKBALAS PELAJAR TINGKATAN LIMA SEKOLAH MENENGAH KEBANGSAAN LABUAN (SMKL) TERHADAP KESUSASTERAAN DIDALAM BAHASA INGGERIS (CERITA PENDEK).

Disertasi ini adalah berkaitan dengan pengajaran kesusasteraan Bahasa Inggeris dalam sistem persekolahan di Malaysia. Kesusasteraan Inggeris adalah merupakan salah satu kompenan kertas Bahasa Inggeris yang diuji dalam peperiksaan Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia. Kesusateraan Inggeris yang terangkum dalam program Kurikulum Baru Sekolah Menengah (KBSM) membawa maksud penggunaan teks-teks sastera Inggeris bagi membantu pelajar-pelajar menggunakan, menghargai dan menghayati penggunaan Bahasa Inggeris dalam pembelajaran dan kehidupan seharian. Kajian ini memberi fokus kepada pelajar-pelajar tingkatan lima Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Labuan (SMKL). Pelajar dikehendaki memberi maklumbalas kepada pelbagai genre dalam kesusasteraan Bahasa Inggeris yang digunakan di sekolah. Oleh itu, adalah penting bagi pengkaji menyediakan sebuah profil secara penjadualan data tentang maklumbalas pelajar terhadap gaya bahasa yang paling digemari dan yang kurang digemari oleh pelajar. Ini adalah bertujuan untuk mengetahui bagaimana pelajar memberi maklumbalas terhadap teks-teks sastera Bahasa Inggeris. Kajian ini juga adalah bertujuan untuk melihat perbezaan maklumbalas antara pelajar lelaki dan perempuan Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Labuan. Kajian bagi membina profil tentang maklumbalas pelajar ini adalah berdasarkan "Reader-Response Theory" dan kajian perbezaan maklumbalas diantara pelajar lelaki dan perempuan adalah berdasarkan "Schema Theory" (Caroll, 1972). Genre yang di gunakan didalam kajian ini adalah berdasarkan genre naratif dan deskriptif yang berteraskan cerita-cerita pendek yang terdapat di dalam teks sastera Bahasa Inggeris yang digunakan oleh pelajar sebagai teks kajian bagi peperiksaan Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM).

ABSTRACT

CREATING A PROFILE OF PREFERRED PATTERN OF RESPONSE OF THE FORM FIVE STUDENTS OF SEKOLAH MENENGAH KEBANGSAAN LABUAN (SMKL) IN LITERARY PROSE TEXTS (SHORT STORIES).

This dissertation is concerned with the teaching of Literature in English in the Malaysian school system. Literature in English is also one of the components tested in the SPM English Examination. Literature in the KBSM English Language Program means the use of literary texts to help students appreciate both the language and its esthetic values. The study focuses on the Form Five students of Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Labuan (SMKL). Students responded to varieties of literary texts in school. Thus, it was felt that a profile of the preferred patterns of response to literary prose texts should be empirically established to find out some basis of understanding of the nature of students' responses to given literary prose texts. The study also intended at creating a profile of preferred patterns of response of boys and girls of SMKL. Theoretical framework of creating a profile of preferred patterns of response was based on the Reader Response Theory and the preferred patterns of response of boys and girls was based on the theoretical framework of the Schema Theory (Caroll, 1972). The genres employed in this study was the Narrative and Descriptive (short stories) prose texts. The findings of this study would particularly be useful for classroom practitioners in the contact of facilitating students' learning and enhancing understanding of the nature of students' response to literary prose texts, particularly short stories.

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INTRODUCTION

1.1. Overview

The study will provide through empirical means a profile of preferred pattern of response of students for the teachers to gauge the nature of students' sensitivity to literary texts. The profile is expected to reveal some universal useful measures of individual differences in readers' presentation toward literary texts. The subjects employed were the pioneer batch of students introduced to characteristics of literary response and elements found in Literature in English.

The profile will reveals the preferred patterns of response of the student in terms of their importance in the understanding of the four literary prose texts. The study focuses on; Narrative and Descriptive prose texts; the category of importance response stances according to text types; the categories in terms of their importance in the understanding of four literary prose texts based on gender (male and female) and the order of importance according to texts types.

As to that, while learning English Literature in the class, students were made aware of the literary devices employed by the writer of the texts. Through understanding of the students' preferred patterns of response to literary texts; teacher can use this knowledge to facilitate students in their learning of Literature in English and would be able to identify appropriate methodology to be employed in class and promotes personal growth as it engages the individual

holistically, aesthetically, intellectually and emotionally. It is also hope that literary texts could become a means for evoking the experiences of life and a source for reading for enjoyment.

1.2.   Organization of the dissertation.

This section will outline the structure of the dissertation in order to guide the reader through the chapters. Chapter 1, the chapter opens with   the introduction;   discusses the background of English Language; describes the background of English Literature; the position of English and English Literature in Malaysia. It includes the Malaysian Educational policies in upgrading the level of performance and competence in the use of English among students so as to enable Malaysian to compete successfully in the globalization era; the relevant of teaching Literature in English in the classrooms so as to fulfill the needs to branch into Literature in English in order to source for materials that was seen interesting to explore;   gives insight into what is genres; gives information on narrative genres; describing descriptive genre; discuss the role of Literature in Literature in English and the role of teachers in Literature; research problem; aims and objectives of the study and the significance of the study.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of relevant learning theories which are the Reader – Response Theory and Schema Theory. The initial discussion will provides information on history of Reader - Response Theory, what is Reader - Response Theory, the skills and values inculcated by the Reader-Response Theory. The discussion further elaborated Schema Theory, what is Schema Theory, the skills and values inculcated by Schema Theory and related research findings that introduce different perspectives on how to integrate   students'

response to various genres in literary texts. The various perspectives of the students' response based on Reader – Response Theory and Schema Theory will described the importance of the findings in enhancing students' competence and performance in the language, skills in comprehending texts, encouraging personal growth and inculcate critical thinking in students. The findings would also assist teachers on what and how to motivate and create interest in students in literary texts.

Chapter 3 will outline the methodology of the research study an how issue of validity and reliability have been addressed. The discussion is centered on the pilot study conducted beforehand on one of the Form Five classes. The instruments used are described in details to give a clearer picture of the empirical aspects of the study.

Chapter 4 will provide some insight into what is data analysis and the limitation of the study. This is to bring out the constraints faced by the researcher while conducting the study.

Chapter 5 provides the analysis and discussion of the empirical data. The discussion is based upon the patterns, which emerge from the data and will also informed on the most preferred/significance literary element to the least preferred / significance. The data will also portray if there is any difference in preferred patterns of response of boys and girls, and the preferred patterns of response stances based on text types (narrative and descriptive) in chronological order.

1.3.   Background of the study.

The specific driving force and relevance for undertaking research in this area will be substantiated through context review of the study. Initially, an introduction to history of English Language and English Literature will be discussed. This is then followed by a discussion on the relevant of English Literature in the classroom, the position of English Language and English Literature in Malaysia which also gave insight into the Malaysian Education policies in upgrading the proficiency of the students and with the command of the language would enable Malaysian to compete globally. The needs to upgrade students' performance and competency ventures into Literature in English in order to source for materials that was seen interesting to explore. The discussion will then moves to elaborating on what is genre and proceed on to discussing on the two types of genres which were the focused in this study which were the narrative and descriptive genres. The end of the chapter will elaborate on the role of Literature in English and the role of teachers in Literature.

English Language, is the member of the West Germanic group of the Germanic subfamily of the Indo-European family of languages. Spoken by about 470 million people throughout the world, English is the official language of about 45 nations. It is the mother tongue of about 60 million persons in the British Isles, from where it spread to many other parts of the world owing to British exploring, colonizing, and empire-building from the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries. It is now also the first language of an additional 228 million people in the United States; 16.5 million in Canada; 17 million in Australia; 3 million in New Zealand and a number of Pacific islands; and approximately 15

million others in different parts of the Western Hemisphere, Africa, and Asia. As a result of such expansion, English is the most widely scattered of the great speech communities. It is also the most commonly used auxiliary language in the world. The United Nations uses English not only as one of its official languages but also as one of its two working languages (Almanac Atlas Dictionary Encyclopedia, 2004).

Specifically, the English Literature was written in English since 1450 century by the inhabitants of the British Isles; it was during the 15th century that the English language acquired much of its modern form. Literature in English has gone through several periods which were:-

a.   The Tudors and the Elizabethan Age; (1558 – 1603)

b.   The Jacobean Era, Cromwell, and the Restoration; (seventeenth century)

c.   The Eighteenth Century;

d.   The Romantic Period; (1820 – 1900)

e.   The Victorian Age; (1832 – 1901)

f.   The Early Twentieth Century;

g.   The Postwar Era to the Present. (1945 until now)

(Almanac Atlas Dictionary Encyclopedia, 2004).

1.4.   The background and the position of English Literature in Malaysia.

The background and the position of English and English Literature in Malaysia has to do with the policy of the government. The Malaysian education policies was formulated to support and facilitate the achievement of the national aspirations and goals in helping Malaysia to become a develop country. By the year 2020 it is envisioned that Malaysia will achieve the status of a fully

industrialized and developed country in terms of its economy, social cohesion, social justice, political stability system of government, quality of life, social and spiritual values, national pride and confidence (Mahathir, 1991). In achieving the goals, the use of English was considered significance partly due to its status as one of the most commonly used language in the world. It is also the widely use language in term of communication.

In Malaysia, because of its historical antecedents, English occupies a special position of an L2 (second language) in the Malaysian education system. The status of English has changed from being the medium of instruction in national-type schools to that of being only a compulsory subject in the national school curriculum from 1970. In relation to this, the students performance and competence in the language deteriorated. Other factors that contributed to the disheartening failure was the lack of interest and motivation in the students in acquiring English. Much was also attributed to the fact that ESL (English as a second language) texts used in lower and upper secondary are either too structured or too rigidly communicational in nature. Therefore, planners and educationalists, realizing the nature of the problem, felt that they need to introduce changes in classroom pedagogy and to a more interesting and meaningful materials. This means that they have to source for other material. Hence, English Literature was considered an important source that should be explored in Malaysian classroom in order to achieve the national aspiration.

Literature in the KBSM (Kurikulum Baru Sekolah Menengah) English language programmed means the use of literary texts to help students appreciate both the language and its literature. They can be from a variety of

source: novels, short stories, plays or poetry (Compedium, 1989). Oster (1989) certifies that in using literary materials, students will gain in seeing issues and topics for discussion and help them learn to read in new ways. Carter and Long (1991), sum up *"Literature is a legitimate and valuable resource for language teaching".*

1.5. The relevance of Literature in English in the classrooms.

Literature has the potential of fostering emotional intelligence by providing vicarious emotional experiences that sharp the brain circuits for empathy and help the child gain insight into human behavior. Moreover, literature can provide a motivating and low-anxiety context for language learning (Vandegrift, et al., 1990). Quality literature can also help the child gain into human behavior and it can demonstrate that there is always hope and that one can overcome even seemingly insurmountable obstacle (Vandergrift, et al., 1990).

Literature also promote language learning by enriching a learner's vocabulary and modeling new structures (Crystal 1987; Hill 1986). Most importantly, quality literature provides models for rich, natural language and a variety of different registers. (Bassnett and Grundy,1993: 7). Ghosn, (2001) described Literature as "*Literature is a high point of language usage; arguably it marks the greatest skill a language user can demonstrate".* (Ghosn, 2001).

With respect to literacy development, through the recurrent process of individual and social discourse-reading , writing, and discussing-studying Literature helps students learn to comprehend texts, make connections between the texts and their own lives, and develop more fully formed concepts about the themes addressed in the units (Tharp & Gallimore, 1989).

In term of the language acquisition (Cummins, 1989; Krashen, 1987), literature units help provide substantial comprehensible input-language that includes slightly more sophisticated structures or vocabulary that learners can produce on their own, but that is understandable within the total context in which it is used. The literature units become a meaningful social context in which words, phrases, language structures, and concepts are used, acquired, and learned (Saunders et al., 1998).

When readers' response to a piece of literature, they relate their prior knowledge to the ideas presented in the text (Martinez & Roser, 1991). This process allows readers from diverse backgrounds to bring their own personal perspectives to their reading and actively construct meaning. In this way the construction of meaning becomes a transaction between the reader and the text (Rosenblatt, 1938; 1976). In addition, as students' response to literature in a variety of ways, they develop critical thinking abilities. Successful readers use their responses to help them understand what they read (Pappas & Brown, 1987; Wells, 1986). In understanding, recognizing and valuing students' response to literature, teachers help students to become a better readers.

1.6. The roles of teachers in Literature in English.

The roles of teachers in literature based instruction is one of decision maker, mentor, and coach. The teacher plans and supports activities that allow children to do those things one naturally does with literature (Routman, 1991). This role includes planning themes, helping students activate their prior knowledge, and supporting students in reading and responding to the literature in appropriate way (Martinez & Roser, 1991). Through shares writing (Mc Kenzie, 1985), the

teacher models all aspects of writing, grammar, usage, and spelling. By supporting students with such activities as shared reading, literature discussion circles, and response activities, the teacher plays the role of coach (Cooper, 1993). Teacher read-alouds and pleasure reading expose students to good literature and to support their independent reading behaviors. Teacher read-alouds serve various purposes: to expose students to the language of expert writers and the fluency of an expert reader, to engage students in material they may not yet be able to read on their own, and to introduce them to new authors and genres (Saunders et al., 1999).

1.7. Background of genres.

The relation of genres to the study was relevant as it was what the study was based on. The selected genre was the narrative and descriptive genres which was based on the short stories. Genre is define by various linguists as follows:

a.   Kellner.

A genre consists of a coded set of formulas and conventions which indicate a culturally accepted way of organizing material into distinct patterns. Once established, genres dictate the basic conventions of cultural production and reception. For example, crime dramas invariably have a violent crime, a search for its perpetrators, and often a chase, fight, or bloody elimination of the criminal, communicating the message "Crime does not pay". The audience comes to expect these predictable pleasures and a crime drama "code" develops enshrined in production studio texts and practices (Kellner, cited in Manfred, 1999).

b.   Swales.

A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style (Swale, 1990: 58).

C.   Bhatia.

Practicing a genre is almost like playing a game, with its own rules and conventions. Established genre participants, both writers and readers, are liked skilled players, who succeeded by their manipulation and exploitation of, rather than a strict compliance with, the rules of the game. It is not simply a matter of learning the language, or even learning the rules of the game, it is more like acquiring the rules of the game in order to be able to exploit and manipulate them to fulfill professional and disciplinary purposes (Bhatia, 1999: 25-26).

1.8. Literary narratives in creating a preferred patterns of students' response.

Creating a profile of preferred patterns of response by the researcher was based on two text types that were the narrative and descriptive prose texts with the focus on short stories. As to that, discussion on the background information of the narrative genre was seen vital to the study. The discussion will focus on what is narrative genre and followed by descriptive genre.

Manfred (1999) defined narrative as : " *A narrative has a story based on an action caused and experienced by characters, and a narrator who tells it".*

Genres that reflect narrative genre are poetry. drama, and fiction (novel's and short stories); real-world narratives such as anecdotes, news reports, etc; nonfiction, natural narrative, drama, film, etc. However, the main focus of this study is on short stories. In relation to narrative the discussion was as follows:-

Genette (1972) suggested two types of narratives, namely :-

i. *Homodiegetic narrative* (=roughly, first person narrative) the story is told by a (homodiegetic) narrator who is present as a character in the story. The prefix 'homo' – points to the fact that the individual who acts as a narrator is also a character on the level of action.

ii. *Heterodiegetic narrative* (= third person narrative), the story is told by a (heterodiegetic) narrator who is *not* present as a character in the story. The prefix *'hetero'* - alludes to the *'different nature'* of the narrator's world as compared to the world of the action.

Gennette, opt for a narrow meaning of the term 'narrative', restricting narratives to verbally narrated texts (Genette, 1988: 17); others (Barthes, 1975; Chatman, 1990; Pavel, 1985; Bal, 1985) argue that anything that tells a story, in whatever genre, constitutes a narrative. Narrative could be anything that tells or presents a story, be it by text, picture, performance, or a combination of these. Hence novels, plays, films, comic strips, etc., are narratives.

Plato's (428 – 348 BC) and Aristotle's (384 – 322 BC) described narrative as the distinction between 'mimesis (imitation) and 'diegesis' (narration). Chatman (1990: ch. 7) uses these concepts to distinguish diegetic narrative genres (epic narratives, novels, short stories) from mimetic narrative genres (plays, films, cartoons); most commentators, however, follow Genette's

(1972, 1981:p. 49) proposed that narrative fiction is a 'patchwork' consisting of both mimetic and diegetic parts (mainly 'narrative of words' and 'narrative of events', 1988:43).

As such there are countless forms of narrative in the world. First of all, there is a prodigious variety of genres, each of which branches out into a variety of media, as it all substances could be relied upon to accommodate man's stories. Among the vehicles of narrative are articulated language, whether oral or written, pictures, still or moving, gestures, and an ordered mixture of all those substances: narrative is present in myth, legend, fables, tales, short stories, epic history, tragedy, drama [suspense drama], comedy, pantomime, paintings, stained-glass windows, movies, local news, conversation. In this infinite variety of form, it is present at all times, in all places, in all societies; indeed narrative starts with the very history of mankind; there is not, there has never been anywhere, any people without narrative; all classes, all human group, have their stories, and very often these stories are enjoyed by men of different and even opposite cultural backgrounds. (Barthes, 1966, 1975 : p. 237). Barthes proposed the framework of narrative genre based on his taxonomy (see figure 1.1). Barthes's taxonomy of narrative genres gave an insight into what narrative consist of.

Figure 1.1: Taxonomy of narrative genres by Barthes's.
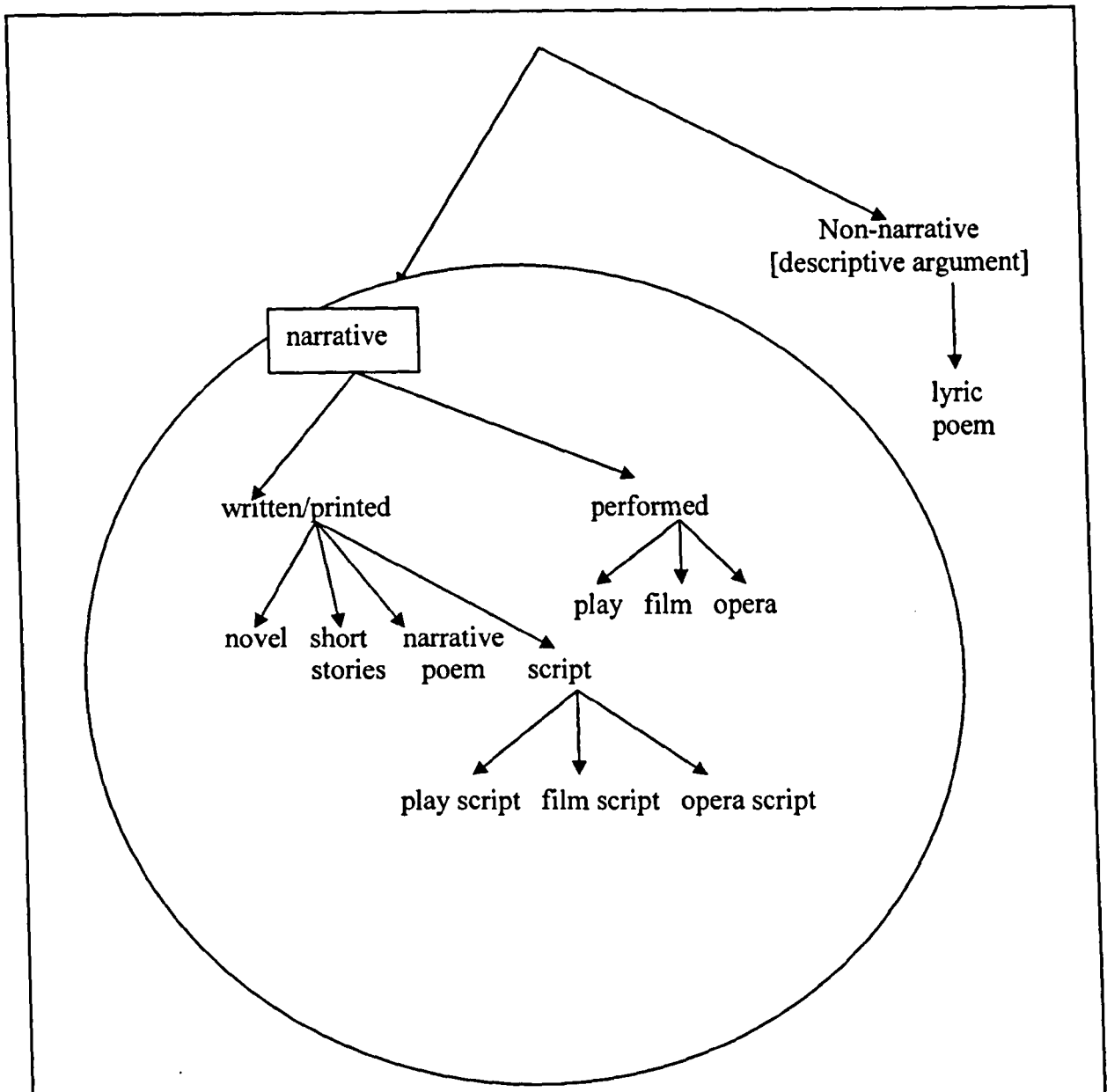
Narrative genre features was also highlighted by Kintsch (1976), Freytage (1863) and Bremond (1972). The arrangements or patterns of narrative feature was described as follows:-

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