Fluid Dynamics-Inspired Emotional Analysis in Shakespearean Tragedies: A Novel Computational Linguistics Methodology

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Abstract

This study introduces an innovative method for analyzing emotions in texts, drawing inspiration from the principles of fluid dynamics, particularly the Navier-Stokes equations. It applies this framework to analyze Shakespeare's tragedies "Hamlet" and "Romeo and Juliet", treating emotional expressions as entities akin to fluids. By mapping linguistic characteristics onto fluid dynamics components, this approach provides a dynamic perspective on how emotions are expressed and evolve in narrative texts. The results, when compared with conventional sentiment analysis methods, reveal a more detailed and subtle grasp of the emotional arcs within these works. This interdisciplinary strategy not only enriches emotion analysis in computational linguistics but also paves the way for potential integrations with machine learning in NLP.

Keywords:

Fluid Dynamics of Emotions, Computational Linguistics, Narrative Dynamics

1. Introduction

Traditional sentiment and emotion analysis often rely on discrete classification and polarity scoring. However, these methods may not fully encapsulate the dynamic and evolving nature of language. In particular, recent developments have leveraged sophisticated machine learning models, including deep learning and neural networks, to enhance the accuracy of sentiment and emotion classification. Despite these advancements, there are notable limitations in the discrete classification and polarity scoring approach. As highlighted by (Pereira et al., 2022), such approaches struggle with understanding context and cultural nuances. Sentiments can be highly context-dependent, and what is considered positive in one culture may be negative in another. Moreover, language is dynamic and constantly evolving, with new slang, idioms, and expressions emerging regularly. Discrete classification systems can quickly become outdated, failing to capture these evolving nuances.

This paper aims to bridge the gap in existing research by utilizing a method inspired by the Navier-Stokes equations to forge a more complex examination of emotion dynamics in textual analysis. Underlying this proposal is the claim that fluid dynamics principles - such as velocity, density, and pressure - can be metaphorically adopted to shed light on the evolution of emotions in the context of narrative texts. This approach is designed to uncover those subtle shifts in emotional tides that might elude traditional emotion analysis techniques. The rest of the paper includes a presentation of the theoretical foundations and practical application, with a focus on the analysis of some of Shakespeare's tragedies, such as 'The Tragedy of Hamlet' and 'The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet'.

Related Works

The exploration of emotion analysis in NLP through the application of the principles of fluid dynamics, in particular the Navier-Stokes equations, is an interdisciplinary research effort. Since, to the best of our knowledge, no other such attempt exists, this literature review lays the foundation for understanding both domains, emphasizing the potential of their integration.

If we look at the field of NLP, emotion and sentiment analysis have emerged as a significant area, focusing broadly on the computational process of identifying and categorizing emotions in text spanning from social media (Drus and Khalid, 2019; Rodríguez-Ibánez et al., 2023) to classic texts (Picca and Richard, 2023; Pavlopoulos et al., 2022; Picca and Pavlopoulos, 2024). Numerous studies have employed machine learning techniques for sentiment classification, with early efforts leading the way in this approach (Pang et al., 2002). Researchers have also explored the use of recursive deep models, such as those highlighted by (Socher et al., 2013), to enhance the depth of sentiment analysis at the sentence level. More recent comprehensive reviews suggest a trend towards multimodal sentiment analysis, which combines methods from single modes into more elaborate frameworks. These trends point to an evolving landscape in sentiment analysis, now including various modalities and integrating advanced technologies

like GPT algorithms (Lu et al., 2023). Moreover, Emotion Recognition in Conversations (ERC) has evolved rapidly, integrating advances from various disciplines. Pereira *et al.* (Pereira *et al.*, 2022) surveyed text-based ERC, focusing on challenges such as conversational context modeling and emotion shifts in multiparty interactions. The paper shows that, in the field of sentiment analysis, accurately capturing the dynamic nature of sentiments in narratives remains a challenge. Traditional methods often treat sentiments within texts as unchanging, overlooking their evolving characteristics (Liu, 2012).

On a different note, the field of fluid dynamics extensively uses the Navier-Stokes equations to simulate the behavior of fluids under various forces. These equations are crucial for understanding fluid motion and have been applied across diverse disciplines, including meteorology and biomedical engineering (Acheson, 1990). Their ability to accurately describe complex fluid behaviors, such as turbulence and flow patterns, is well-recognized (Tennekes and Lumley, 1972). Recent developments in fluid dynamics have expanded the scope of Navier-Stokes theory to higher-rate conditions, enhancing our comprehension of fluid behaviors under different flow scenarios (Pahlani et al., 2023).

The idea of adapting these equations to analyze emotional flow in textual content is a novel approach. While direct empirical studies in this specific area are relatively scarce, the conceptual similarities are notable. For instance, just as external factors influence fluid motion in fluid dynamics, external variables may similarly affect the flow of emotions in text. This perspective aligns with research exploring how cultural and contextual elements influence emotion formation and expression.

2. Conceptual Mapping

The initial phase of the experiment involves establishing a conceptual parallel between the elements of fluid dynamics and linguistic properties in text. The key elements and their linguistic analogs are:

- Velocity (*u*): This could represent the "speed" at which emotion is propagating through the text. For example, a rapid shift from positive to negative sentiment could be considered a high "velocity". It represents how the current state of emotion (*e*) influences its rate of change (or flow). A rapid change in emotion in the text could lead to a significant value in this term, analogous to high velocity in fluid dynamics.
- Time (t): This remains as the position of a sentence or word in the text, serving as a temporal marker. Time is represented by the position of words in the text.

- 3. **Density** (ρ): This could represent the "density" of specific emotions in a given section of text. A paragraph filled with positive words would have a high "density" of positive emotion. In our context, the "density" of sentiment is computed by summing the absolute values of sentiment scores as provided by the SenticNet lexicon (Cambria et al., 2022).
- 4. Pressure (p): This could be analogous to the intensity of an emotion. Stronger words ("love," "hate") exert more "pressure" than weaker ones ("like," "dislike"). In this context, the "pressure" exerted by specific words in the text is based on the sum of their sentiment scores if the target word is present in a user-generated list.
- 5. **Viscosity** (ν): This could represent the resistance to the flow of emotion, perhaps due to the complexity or ambiguity of the text. In this context, the "viscosity" is evaluated by the standard deviation of sentiment scores as provided by the SenticNet lexicon, indicating resistance in emotional flow.
- 6. External Force (\vec{g}) : This could be external factors like cultural context or the influence of preceding text segments. For our experiment, this measures the "external force" based on the polarity value of the text as provided by the SenticNet lexicon.

The Navier-Stokes-inspired equation is then modified to align with these linguistic properties. The modified equation for sentiment flow (\vec{e}) in the text is:

$$\frac{\partial \vec{e}}{\partial t} + (\vec{e} \cdot \nabla)\vec{e} = -\frac{1}{\rho_{\text{sent}}}\nabla p_{\text{sent}} + \nu_{\text{sent}}\nabla^2 \vec{e} + \vec{g}_{\text{context}}$$
(1)

Where ρ_{sent} , p_{sent} , and ν_{sent} represent the density, pressure, and viscosity of sentiment, respectively, and \vec{g}_{context} is the external contextual force.

2.1. Operationalization of Sentiment Analysis Variables

This section delineates the operationalization of variables for analyzing sentiment dynamics in texts, as implemented for this experiment.

Density (ρ): The function computes the "density" of emotions in a segment of text by summing the absolute values of sentiment scores. This approach quantifies the overall emotional "weight" or intensity in a section of text without regard to the sentiment's polarity (positive or negative). The density is higher when there are strong emotional words, regardless of whether they convey positive or negative sentiments. So for example, in analyzing a paragraph filled with intensely emotional words (both positive

and negative), the density calculation aggregates these sentiment scores to reflect a high "density" of emotional content.

Pressure(p): This "pressure" is determined by checking for the presence of predefined keywords that are expected to have a strong emotional impact (e.g., "love," "hate") and summing up their sentiment scores. The presence of these keywords in the text increases the "pressure" of the sentiment, analogous to how stronger words exert more influence on the emotional tone of the text. For example, a sentence that includes the word "hate" (assuming "hate" is part of the keywords list), and if the sentiment pressure for that sentence increases, reflecting the intensity of the emotion conveyed.

Viscosity(ν): "Viscosity", in this context, represents the variability or dispersion of sentiment scores, which could be interpreted as the text's resistance to a uniform emotional flow. High viscosity indicates a wide range of sentiment scores, suggesting complexity or ambiguity in the text's emotional content. For example, in our context, in a narrative with a mix of high and low sentiment scores—indicating fluctuating emotions—the viscosity measurement will be high, indicating a "resistant" emotional flow, possibly due to complex or ambiguous emotional expressions.

External Force(\vec{g}): This function treats the polarity value as a direct representation of external influences on the text's emotional tone. The polarity could encompass various external factors like cultural context or influences from preceding text segments that affect the overall sentiment direction. For example, in this context, in a text where the overall polarity is positive, the external contextual force is represented by this positive value, suggesting that external influences (e.g., narrative context, cultural nuances) are pushing the emotional tone in a positive direction.

It is important to stress that the use of fluid dynamics concepts—such as velocity, pressure, and external forces—serves as a metaphorical framework to understand the dynamics of emotions in text. It's crucial to recognize that these variables can take on diverse meanings, extending beyond their initial definitions. For instance, the concept of "external forces" (\vec{g}) is not limited to the general sentiment of a sentence. It could encompass, if appropriately measured and measurable, a variety of elements outside the immediate context of the text, such as cultural nuances, historical references, or even the prevailing social or political climate in which the text was written or is being read.

Furthermore, these variables could be dynamic, changing with the reader's perspective or the broader societal context. For example, a novel's emotional "velocity" or "pressure" could be interpreted differently by readers from varying cultural backgrounds, or it might shift over time as societal norms and values evolve.

This flexibility in defining and interpreting these variables opens up a vast array of possibilities for deep and contextually rich sentiment analysis, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of emotional dynamics in text that goes beyond mere word-level sentiment scoring.

3. Methodology and Results

To test the validity of such a novel approach, we analyzed a dataset based on three well-known Shakespeare's tragedies, such as "The Tragedy of Hamlet" and "The Tragedy of Juliet and Romeo". Our methodology incorporated a multidimensional approach, leveraging both fluid dynamics-inspired modeling and the advanced capabilities of the SenticNet lexicon (Cambria et al., 2022). Moreover, in the construction of the analytical framework for this paper, the study leveraged the comprehensive literary resources available at SparkNotes¹. Such a platform provided essential interpretive guidance and served as a reference point for the contextualization of our emotional analysis.

3.1. SenticNet: A Tool for Sentiment Analysis and Opinion Mining

SenticNet is an advanced semantic and affective resource for sentiment analysis and opinion mining that leverages both artificial intelligence and semantic web techniques to better understand the nuances of natural language. Developed by Cambria et al. (Cambria et al., 2022), SenticNet combines common-sense reasoning tools and deep learning models to extract the polarity of texts, providing a more nuanced interpretation of emotions, sentiments, and opinions expressed in language.

SenticNet relies on The Hourglass of Emotions (Susanto et al., 2020) model which is an affective computing model that conceptualizes a multidimensional representation of human emotions. This model captures the complexity and interconnectivity of emotional states. At its core, the model posits that emotions can be classified along four primary axes or dimensions, each representing a different aspect of human affective experience (see Figure 1).

These dimensions are:

 Introspection: This axis gauges the positive or negative valence of emotions, representing a spectrum from ecstasy to grief.

¹https://www.sparknotes.com/about/



Figure 1: SenticNet Hourglass (taken from (Susanto et al., 2020))

- *Temper*: This dimension measures the level of engagement or disinterest, ranging from bliss to rage.
- *Sensitivity*: This axis reflects the degree of control or susceptibility in emotional responses, spanning from enthusiasm to terror.
- Attitude: This dimension accounts for the cognitive and motivational aspects of emotions, extending from empowerment to loathing.

SenticNet's utilization in our study is precisely motivated by its capability to transcend simple wordlevel analysis, enabling the capture of semantic and affective information associated with natural language concepts rather than merely focusing on keywords or isolated phrases. This feature renders SenticNet particularly suitable for time series analysis in research contexts that necessitate a deep interpretation of text context and emotional tone.

3.2. Data processing

We collected dialogues from texts² and preprocessed them using BookNLP (Bamman et al., 2014). Successively, using the SenticNet framework, each word in the dialogues was tagged for emotional categorizations and polarity scores. We initiated the analysis by identifying the most significant emotional dimension for each entity in the dataset as discussed in Section 3.1. This was achieved by computing the average values across all dimensions for each entity, and subsequently pinpointing the dimension with the highest average, as represented mathematically:

 $max_avg_dim = arg max(avg_values)$

A comparative analysis was conducted between the results from our fluid dynamics model and traditional sentiment analysis methods consisting of a time series plotting of the computing of the average values across all SenticNet macro dimensions (Sensitivity, Attitude, Temper, Introspection) (Susanto et al., 2020) for each character of the novel using pure SenticNet scores to calculate the dimension with the highest average, as we did for the fluid dynamics model.

The first approach, inspired by fluid dynamics, was particularly effective in uncovering the ATTI-TUDE dimension, frequently emerging as a dominant factor in the simulations. This dimension served as a lens through which we could observe the continuum of emotional shifts pivotal to the unfolding drama in Shakespeare's works.

The second approach, relying exclusively on the SenticNet framework, is a critical component of our analysis. By utilizing SenticNet scores, we tagged the text to extract and analyze the time-series representation of the emotional lexicon, with a specific focus on the INTROSPECTION dimension since it emerged as the highest average value across all dimensions for each character of the novel.

This dimension was instrumental in highlighting the reflective and internal aspects of the characters' emotional experiences. It allowed us to delve into the frequency and intensity of introspective language within the texts, thereby revealing the prominence of self-reflection and the depth of internal emotional states characteristic of Shakespearean protagonists.

The combination of these approaches – the fluid dynamics-inspired modeling and the application of SenticNet – enabled a comprehensive and multifaceted analysis. While the fluid dynamics model illuminated the broader emotional trajectory across the narrative, SenticNet provided a detailed insight into the subtler aspects of emotional expression, particularly introspection. This dual approach not only validated the feasibility of our unique methodology but also enriched our understanding of the complex emotional tapestry woven into Shakespeare's tragedies.

3.3. Discussion of Results

In our sentiment analysis, we focus on ATTITUDE and INTROSPECTION because they often yield the highest scores in the texts we examine as provided by the *argmax* formula discussed in Section 3.2. This indicates that these dimensions are most representative of the emotional content and dynamics

²we downloaded the Sheakspeare's work from the digital library http://gutenberg.org

present in the text. By highlighting these dimensions, we can provide a more accurate and in-depth analysis of the emotional arcs and character development, which is particularly valuable in the study of literature, where characters' inner worlds and attitudes are often central to the narrative.

ATTITUDE, as defined in psychological terms and shown in Figure 1, refers to how a character in Shakespeare's plays evaluates and reacts to different elements like events, other characters, or their internal conflicts. It's a combination of their beliefs, emotional responses, and behaviors toward these elements. A character's attitude isn't fixed; it evolves based on their experiences, social context, and can change with different situations or moods (Bohner and Wanke, 2002). Within Shakespeare's texts, this translates to a character's evaluative stance towards the unfolding events, other characters, or internal conflicts.

When the fluid simulations identify ATTITUDE as the predominant dimension, it signifies that these evaluative stances—comprising cognitive, affective, and behavioral components—are the most salient features in influencing the play's narrative trajectory. These attitudes manifest through the characters' decisions and actions, reflecting the persistent yet context-dependent nature of their dispositions. The "distant reading" (Moretti, 2013) facilitated by this dimension enables us to view the broader emotional influences that drive the dramatic events, offering insights into how characters organize complex information and how their evaluations guide their behaviors.

Conversely, INTROSPECTION, as revealed through purely SenticNet time series analysis and shown in Figure 1, delves into the characters' selfreflective processes, mapping the psychological landscape where they contemplate their thoughts, feelings, and place within the larger narrative. This dimension captures the characters' internal dialogues, as they navigate through and make sense of their experiences, fulfilling expressive functions, affirming personal values, maintaining social identity, and regulating emotions.

The constant occurrence of INTROSPECTION in SenticNet's analysis emphasizes the capacity for self-reflection that characterizes Shakespeare's characters, offering a window into their inner world. This approach highlights the intimate and psychological spaces in which characters struggle with their attitudes, which are complex constructs acquired and modified through life experiences and socialization.

By applying computational techniques to measure ATTITUDE and INTROSPECTION, we shed light on the multifaceted ways in which Shakespeare's characters experience and express their emotions. ATTITUDE encapsulates evaluative



Figure 2: Emotional trajectory in 'Hamlet'. The left graph depicts the nuanced flow of emotional sentiment in 'Hamlet' through a fluid dynamics-inspired model. The right graph, utilizing data from Sentic-Net, quantifies the frequency of introspective moments.

stances that are both persistent and contextually adaptive, while INTROSPECTION provides a structural schema to organize and reflect upon these attitudes.

This approach allows us to not only identify the presence of emotions but also to understand their evolution throughout the text. In fact, by comparing the findings from SenticNet with those from our method, we aim to demonstrate the enhancements our methodology brings to the field. While Sentic-Net provides a robust baseline by identifying the dominant emotional dimensions within a text, our method seeks to map these findings onto a temporal framework, thereby offering a dynamic vision of emotional trajectories.

This comparison is likely to illustrate the added value of our approach, which potentially uncovers the finer gradations and fluctuations of sentiment that may remain underrepresented in a static analysis. Consequently, our methodology could reveal an improvement over the use of SenticNet alone, offering a more granular and temporally sensitive understanding of emotional expressions in texts.

The tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark In Figure 2, we have two graphs that offer a deep dive into the emotional structure of the play.

The graph on the left shows the flow of emotion ATTITUDE across the play using a fluid dynamicsinspired approach, with the line averaging at -0.11. This suggests a generally negative undercurrent to the play's emotional tone, correlating with the narrative's progression into darker themes such as betrayal, revenge, and existential crisis.

The upward trajectory towards the end might indicate a momentary shift in emotional intensity, possibly reflecting Hamlet's resolve to avenge his father's death or his acceptance of the tragic inevitability of his circumstances. The fluid model captures the complexities of Hamlet's psychological state and the nuanced changes in the play's emotional atmosphere. It doesn't just map individual emotional incidents, as it is done by the SenticNet mapping (see right-side of Figure 2), but reflects an ongoing and accumulated emotional path, which is characteristic of the exploration of themes such as madness, indecision, and tragedy.

On the right, the INTROSPECTION graph sourced from SenticNet data illustrates the frequency of introspective sentiment within the play, with an average value of 0.54. This high average underscores the introspective nature of "Hamlet", as the title character is known for his soliloquies that explore profound philosophical questions. The spikes in the graph could represent Hamlet's soliloquies or other reflective moments within the play. While this graph captures the frequency and variability of introspective moments, it lacks the narrative context that the left graph provides, showing the moments of reflection as isolated peaks rather than as part of a continuum.

Comparing the two, the left graph offers a more holistic view of the emotional trajectory in "Hamlet". It encapsulates the build-up of tension and the psychological depth that defines the play. The right graph, although informative about the frequency of introspective moments, does not convey the emotional journey or the cumulative effect of the narrative. The left graph's approach to emotional flow allows us to visualize the overarching emotional descent that is central to the tragedy of Hamlet, which the right graph's momentary peaks cannot fully express.

In essence, the left graph's representation seems to offer a more integrated and comprehensive understanding of the emotional fabric of "Hamlet", aligning with Shakespeare's intent to create a complex portrait of a character caught in a web of existential quandaries and moral dilemmas. It captures not just the emotional states themselves, but how these states flow and interact throughout the narrative, providing a dynamic view of the emotional landscape that is as turbulent and layered as the play itself.

The tragedy of Juliet and Romeo In Figure 3, we have a vertical arrangement of graphs representing the emotional progression of the characters Romeo and Juliet.

For Romeo, the graph on the left presents the emotional sentiment throughout the play, showing a significant fluctuation that peaks and dips, with an overall average attitude of 0.21. This represents a slightly positive emotional baseline for Romeo. The initial upward trend could mirror Romeo's escalating joy as he falls in love with Juliet. This is followed by a series of sharp downturns, likely reflecting the tumultuous events he faces, such as the banishment after Tybalt's death and the tragic



Figure 3: Emotional trajectory in 'Romeo and Juliet'. The left graph depicts the nuanced flow of emotional sentiment in 'Romeo and Juliet' through a fluid dynamics-inspired model. The right graph, utilizing data from SenticNet, quantifies the frequency of introspective moments.

news of Juliet's death.

The corresponding graph on the right, derived from SenticNet data, shows a high frequency of introspective moments, with an average of 0.53. The numerous peaks suggest that Romeo's character is marked by frequent introspective reflection, which could correlate with the many soliloquies and emotional dialogues where he contemplates his love for Juliet and his misfortunes.

The contrast between the fluid-dynamic representation of Romeo's emotional pat and the SenticNet graph is quite stark. The left graph suggests a more complex and less binary emotional landscape, offering insight into the nuanced progression of Romeo's feelings as the narrative unfolds.

Turning to Juliet, the left graph depicts her emotional sentiment throughout the play with less volatility than Romeo's, starting at a lower point but gradually increasing over time, despite a few dips. The average attitude is slightly negative at -0.01, which could reflect the constant pressures and challenges Juliet faces, including her family's expectations and the conflict with the Montagues.

The right graph shows Juliet's introspection levels, similar to Romeo's, with high frequency and intensity, averaging at 0.55. This underscores Juliet's reflective nature and the depth of her inner life as she grapples with her feelings for Romeo, and the dire circumstances that unfold.

In the case of both Romeo and Juliet, the left graphs provide a narrative of emotional development that is more aligned with the structure and thematic elements of the play. While the SenticNet graphs capture the presence of introspective and emotional language, the fluid dynamics-inspired graphs encapsulate the broader emotional arcs of the characters, effectively mapping the Shakespearean tragedy's dramatic and emotional rhythm.

3.4. Qualitative vs. Quantitative evaluation

The novel approach proposed in this paper involves a qualitative rather than quantitative evaluation of sentiment dynamics in textual narratives. This choice is driven by several compelling reasons, grounded in both the nature of our methodology and the characteristics of the subject texts.

Firstly, our approach conceptualizes emotions in the text as fluid-like entities. This fluid dynamicsinspired model inherently demands a qualitative assessment, as it aims to capture the subtle, nuanced shifts in emotional tides over time. A quantitative analysis, while valuable in its right, might not fully encapsulate these intricate dynamics.

Secondly, the richness and complexity of Shakespeare's tragedies warrant a qualitative approach. These narratives are characterized by layered emotional landscapes, where emotions are influenced by a multitude of factors, including character development, plot progression, and thematic elements. A purely quantitative evaluation might overlook these crucial aspects, thereby diminishing the depth and accuracy of the analysis.

4. Conclusions

This paper presented a novel approach to sentiment analysis in textual narratives, specifically through the application of modified Navier-Stokes equations, a fundamental concept in fluid dynamics. By conceptualizing sentiments and emotions in the text as fluid-like entities, this study aimed to capture the dynamic, evolving nature of emotional expression and propagation in narrative texts. The methodology involved mapping linguistic properties to elements of fluid dynamics, such as velocity, density, and pressure, and modifying the Navier-Stokes equations to align with these properties.

Our experimentation focused on analyzing the sentiment flow in three of Shakespeare's tragedies: "Hamlet" and "Romeo and Juliet". The results demonstrated that this fluid dynamics-inspired approach provides a more nuanced understanding of the emotional trajectory within these texts, as compared to traditional sentiment analysis methods. The application of these modified equations allowed for the visualization of sentiment dynamics, illustrating how emotions ebb and flow throughout the narrative. The comparative analysis between the fluid dynamics-based model and the SenticNet framework revealed distinct insights. While the SenticNet approach provided valuable data on the frequency of introspective moments, the fluid dynamics model offered a broader perspective on the emotional journey throughout the plays. This comprehensive view highlighted not only individual emotional incidents but also the accumulative emotional progression characteristic of Shakespearean drama.

The findings suggest that this interdisciplinary approach holds significant promise for advancing emotional analysis in computational linguistics. By integrating principles from fluid dynamics, we can depict the complex emotional landscape of narrative texts more holistically and dynamically. This methodology has the potential to enhance our understanding of sentiment flow in a variety of textual forms, from classical literature to contemporary digital narratives.

Future work could extend this methodology to different genres and types of texts, further exploring the applicability and scalability of this approach. The potential integration of this model with advanced machine learning techniques also presents a promising direction for expanding the capabilities and applications of sentiment analysis in NLP.

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