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We show that the rank generating function \( U(t; q) \) for strongly unimodal sequences lies at the interface of quantum modular forms and mock modular forms. We use \( U(-1; q) \) to obtain a quantum modular form which is “dual” to the quantum form Zagier constructed from Kontsevich’s “strange” function \( F(q) \). As a result, we obtain a new representation for a certain generating function for \( L \)-values. The series \( U(i; q) = U(-i; q) \) is a mock modular form, and we use this fact to obtain new congruences for certain enumerative functions.

1. Introduction and Statement of Results

A sequence of integers \( \{a_i\}_{i=1}^n \) is a strongly unimodal sequence of size \( n \) if it satisfies

\[ 0 < a_1 < a_2 < \ldots < a_k > a_{k+1} > a_{k+2} > \ldots > a_n > 0 \]

for some \( k \) and \( a_1 + \ldots + a_k = n \). Let \( u(n) \) be the number of such sequences. The rank of such a sequence is \( s = 2k + 1 \), the number of terms after the maximal term minus the number of terms that precede it.

By letting \( t \) (respectively, \( t^{-1} \)) keep track of the terms after (resp., before) a maximal term, we find that \( u(m, n) \), the number of size \( n \) and rank \( m \) sequences, satisfies

\[ U(t; q) = \sum_{m,n} u(m,n)q^m q^n = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} (-tq)^n(-t^{-1}q^n)q^{n+1} = q + q^2 + (t+1+t^{-1})q^3 + \ldots \]

where \( (x;q)_n = (1-x)(1-xq)(1-xq^2)\ldots(1-xq^{n-1}) \) for \( n \geq 1 \) and \( (x;q)_0 = 1 \).

Example: The strongly unimodal sequences of size 5 are: \( \{5\} \), \( \{1, 4\} \), \( \{4, 1\} \), \( \{1, 3, 1\} \), \( \{2, 3\} \), \( \{3, 2\} \), and so \( u(5) = 6 \). Respectively, their ranks are \( 0, 1, 0, -1, 1 \).

The \( q \)-series \( U(-1; q) \), the generating function for the number of size \( n \) sequences with even rank minus the number with odd rank, is intimately related to Kontsevich’s strange function

\[ F(q) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} (q^n - q^{n+1}) = 1 + (1-q)(1-q^2) + (1-q)(1-q^2)(1-q^3) + \ldots \]

It is strange because it does not converge on any open subset of \( C \), but is well-defined at all roots of unity. Zagier (1) proved that this function satisfies the even “stranger” identity

\[ F(q) = -\frac{1}{2} \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} nx_{12}(n)q^{2n+1}, \]

where \( x_{12}(\bullet) = \left(\frac{\bullet}{12}\right) \). Neither side of this identity makes sense simultaneously. Indeed, the right-hand side converges in the unit disk \(|q| < 1\), but nowhere on the unit circle. The identity means that \( F(q) \) at roots of unity agrees with the radial limit of the right-hand side.

We prove that \( U(-1; q) \), which converges in \(|q| < 1\), also gives \( F(q^{-1}) \) at roots of unity.

Theorem 1.1. If \( q \) is a root of unity, then \( F(q^{-1}) = U(-1; q) \).

Example: Here are two examples: \( U(-1; -1) = F(-1) = 3 \) and \( U(-1; i) = F(-i) = 8 + 3i \).

Remark: Theorem 1.1 is analogous to the result of Cohen (2, 3) that \( \sigma(q) = -\sigma'(q^{-1}) \) for roots of unity \( q \), for the well-known \( q \)-series \( \sigma(q) \) and \( \sigma'(q) \) that Andrews et al. (4) defined in their work on partition ranks.

Zagier (1) used Eq. 1.3 to obtain the following identity:

\[ e^{-\pi} \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{1}{n!} (1-e^{-\pi})(1-e^{-2\pi})\ldots(1-e^{-\pi n}) = \frac{\pi}{24} \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{T_n}{n!} \left(\frac{t}{24}\right)^n \]

where Zagier’s \( T_n \) numbers (see Eq. 2.3 and A002439 in ref. 5) are the “algebraic factors” of \( L(x_{12}, 2n+2) \). As a companion to Theorem 1.1, we use \( U(-1; q) \) to give these same \( L \)-values.

Theorem 1.2. As a power series in \( t \), we have

\[ e^{-\pi} U(-1; e^{-\pi}) = \frac{6\sqrt{3}}{\pi^2} \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{(2n+1)!}{n!} L(x_{12}, 2n+2) \cdot \left(\frac{-3!}{2\pi^2}\right)^n \]

These results are related to the next theorem, which gives a new quantum modular form. Following Zagier (5) (3), a weight \( k \) quantum modular form is a complex-valued function \( f \) on \( \mathbb{Q} \), or possibly \( \mathbb{P}^1(\mathbb{Q}) \setminus S \) for some finite set \( S \), such that for all \( \gamma = (a,b,c,d) \in \text{SL}_2(\mathbb{Z}) \), the function

\[ h_f(x) = f(x) - c(x) \left(\frac{ax+b}{cx+d}\right) k \]

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1In (7) \( u'\) is denoted \( u'(n) \) and \( U'(q) \) is denoted \( U'(q) \).

2Zagier credits Kontsevich for relating \( F(q) \) to Feynmann integrals in a lecture at Max Planck in 1997.

3As Zagier points out in section 6 of ref. 1, the right-hand side of the identity is essentially the “half-derivative” of Dedekind’s eta-function, which then suggests that the series may be related to a weight \( 1/2 \) modular object.

4Zagier’s definition of a quantum modular form is intentionally vague with the idea that sufficient flexibility is required to allow for interesting examples. Here, we modify his definition to include half-integral weights \( k \) and multiplier systems \( \epsilon(q) \).

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satisfies a “suitable” property of continuity or analyticity. The $e(q)$ are roots of unity, such as those in the theory of half-integral weight modular forms when $k \in \frac{1}{2} \mathbb{Z} \setminus \mathbb{Z}$. We prove that

$$\phi(x) = e^{-\pi i x} \cdot U(-1; e^{2\pi i x})$$

is a weight $\frac{1}{2}$ modular form. Because $\text{SL}_2(\mathbb{Z}) = \left\{ (a, b), (a', b') \right\}$, and $\phi(x) = e^{-\pi i x} \cdot \phi(x + 1) = 0$, it suffices to consider $\phi(0, 0)$. The following theorem establishes the desired relationship on the larger domain $\mathbb{Q} \cup \mathbb{H} = \{0\}$, where $\mathbb{H}$ is the upper-half of the complex plane.

**Theorem 1.3.** If $x \in \mathbb{Q} \cup \mathbb{H} = \{0\}$, then

$$\phi(x) + (-ix)^{-\frac{1}{2}} \phi(-1/x) = h(x),$$

where $(ix)^{-\frac{1}{2}}$ is the principal branch and

$$h(x) = \frac{\sqrt{3}}{2 \pi i \sqrt{x}} \int_{0}^{\sqrt{x}} \frac{\eta(\tau)}{(-i(x + \tau)^{\frac{1}{2}})} d\tau - \frac{i}{2} \cdot \frac{\eta(2\pi i x)}{\delta(x)} \cdot \int_{0}^{\sqrt{x}} \frac{\eta(\tau)}{(-i(x + \tau)^{\frac{1}{2}})} d\tau.$$

Here, $\frac{x}{\eta}(e^{2\pi i x}, e^{2\pi i x})$ is Dedekind's eta function. Moreover, taking $h(x) = 0$ for $x \in \mathbb{R}$, $h : \mathbb{R} \to \mathbb{C}$ is a $C^\infty$ function that is real analytic everywhere except at $x = 0$, and $h^{(n)}(0) = (-n/12)^n - T_n$, where $T_n$ is the nth Glaisher number.

**Remark:** Zagier (1) proved that $e^{\pi i / 6} \cdot F(e^{2\pi i / 6})$ is a quantum modular form. Theorem 1.3 gives a dual quantum modular form, one whose domain naturally extends beyond $\mathbb{Q}$ to include $\mathbb{H}$. This is somewhat analogous to the situation for $\sigma(q)$ and $\sigma^*(q)$ discussed above. Zagier constructed a quantum modular form from these $q$-series in example 1 of ref. 3.

**Remark:** Theorem 1.3 implies that $\Phi(z) = \eta(z)\phi(z)$ behaves analogously to a weight 2 modular form for $\text{SL}_2(\mathbb{Z})$ for $z \in \mathbb{H}$ with a suitable error function. Namely, $\Phi(z + 1) = \Phi(z)$ and $\Phi(z) \sim z^{-2} \Phi(z^{-1}) = \eta(z)\phi(z)$ see also theorem 1.1 of ref. 6.

It turns out that $U(1; q)$ and $U\left(\pm i; q\right)$ also possess deep properties. We have that $U(1; q)$ (7) is a mixed mock modular form, and $U(\pm i; q)$ is a mock theta function (see refs. 8–10). We use these facts to study congruences for certain enumerative functions.

**Theorem 1.4.** If $3 < \epsilon \not\equiv 23 (mod 24)$ is prime, $\delta(\epsilon) = (\epsilon^2 - 1)/24$ and $\epsilon \not\equiv k$, then for all $n$

$$u(\epsilon^2 n + k\epsilon - \delta(\epsilon)) \equiv 0 \quad (mod 2).$$

**Example:** If $\epsilon = 7$, then Theorem 1.4 gives $u(49n + a) \equiv 0 \ (mod 2)$ for $a \in \{5, 12, 19, 26, 33, 40\}$.

The nature of Theorem 1.4 suggests the existence of a Hecke-type identity for $U(-1; q)$ analogous to those obtained for $\sigma(q)$ and $\sigma^*(q)$ in ref. 4. Here we obtain such an identity.

**Theorem 1.5.** We have that

$$U(-1; q) = \sum_{n > 0} \sum_{a \equiv 0 \ (mod 2)} (-1)^{j+1} q^{2n^2 - \frac{(3n+1)}{2}} + 2 \sum_{n, m > 0} \sum_{a \equiv 0 \ (mod 2)} (-1)^{j+1} q^{2n^2 + mn - \frac{(3n+1)}{2}}.$$
\[ C(X) = \sum_{n=0}^{k-1} (X - \xi^{-1}) \cdots (X - \xi^{-n}). \]

We have the identity
\[ C(\xi^{-1}X) = (X - 1)^2 C(X) - X(X^k - 1) + X. \]  \[\text{[2.1]}\]

Define the functions \( u_a(X) \) for \( a \geq 1 \) by
\[ (2 - X^k)u_a(X) = C(\xi^a X) - (1 - X)^2 ... (1 - \xi^{a-1} X) C(X). \]

Hence, for \( a = k \) we have
\[ X^k C(X) = u_k(X). \]  \[\text{[2.2]}\]

Then we have
\[ (2 - X^k)(u_{a+1}(X) - u_a(X)) = (1 - \xi X)^2 ... (1 - \xi^a X)^2 (C(\xi^a X) - (1 - \xi^{a+1}) C(\xi^{a+1} X)). \]

By Eq. 2.1, we have
\[ C(\xi^a X) = (1 - \xi^{a+1} X)^2 C(\xi^{a+1} X) + \xi^{a+1}. \]

Letting \( X = 1 \) gives \( u_{a+1}(1) - u_a(1) = \xi^{a+1}(1 - \xi)^2 ... (1 - \xi^a) \),
Induction and Eq. 2.2 give
\[ C(1) = \sum_{n=0}^{k-1} \xi^{n+1}(1 - \xi)^2 ... (1 - \xi^{n}). \]

2.2 Proof of Theorem 1.2: By the results of Andrews et al. (6) (see equation 9.2 and propositions 9.2 and 9.3) with \( q = e^{-2\pi x} \), we have
\[ q^n(q) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} e^{2\pi i n x} \frac{\sinh(2\pi x)}{\cos(\pi x)} \int dx \left( 1 + O(z^N) \right) \]
for any positive \( N \) where \( v(q) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{q^n}{(q^n)^v} \). Because we have
\( U(-1;q) = (q;q)_{\infty} v(q) \) and \( (q;q)_{\infty} = e^{-\pi i (x^2 + x)} \), for any positive \( N \) we have
\[ q^{-r} U(-1;q) = \frac{1}{3z^2} \int_{\mathbb{R}} x^{-\frac{3}{2}} \sinh(\frac{2\pi x}{3}) \cos(\pi x) \int dx \left( 1 + O(z^N) \right) \]
for any \( N \). The Glaisher's \( T \)-numbers are given by
\[ \sinh(\frac{2\pi x}{3}) \cos(\pi x) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{T_n}{(2n+1)!} \left( \frac{ix}{3} \right)^{2n+1}. \]  \[\text{[2.3]}\]

We also have the identity
\[ \int_{\mathbb{R}} x^{j} e^{-\frac{x^2}{2}} dx = \frac{(2j)!}{2^j j!} \frac{3}{2\pi} \sqrt{2\pi}. \]

Combining these identities and then setting \( t = 2\pi x \) completes the proof.

2.3 Proof of Theorem 1.3: Define \( G(z) := (e^{2\pi it}; e^{2\pi iz})_{\infty} U(-1; e^{2\pi iz}) \). Theorem 1.1 of ref. 6 gives
\[ G(z) = \frac{1}{2\pi i} \int_{c-i\infty}^{c+i\infty} \frac{\eta(\tau)^3}{(\tau - i(z + \tau))^2} d\tau + \frac{\sqrt{3}}{2\pi i} \int_{-z}^{\infty} \frac{\eta(\tau)}{(\tau - i(z + \tau))^2} d\tau \]
\[ = z^{-2} \left( G\left(-\frac{1}{2}\right) - i \frac{1}{2\pi i} \int_{c-i\infty}^{c+i\infty} \frac{\eta(\tau)^3}{(\tau - i(z + \tau))^2} d\tau \right) \]
\[ + \frac{\sqrt{3}}{2\pi i} \int_{-z}^{\infty} \frac{\eta(\tau)}{(\tau - i(z + \tau))^2} d\tau. \]  \[\text{[2.4]}\]

Note that using \( \eta(\frac{1}{2}) = \sqrt{-i\pi \eta(z)} \), we have
\[ \eta\left(-\frac{1}{2}\right) = \frac{1}{2\pi i} \int_{c-i\infty}^{c+i\infty} \frac{\eta(\tau)^3}{(\tau - i(z + \tau))^2} d\tau \]
\[ = (\sqrt{-i\pi}) \eta(z)^3 \int_{c-i\infty}^{c+i\infty} \frac{\tau^{-2}}{(\tau - i(z + \tau))^2} d\tau \]
\[ = (\sqrt{-i\pi}) \eta(z)^3 \int_{c-i\infty}^{c+i\infty} \frac{\tau^{-2}}{(\tau - i(z + \tau))^2} d\tau \]
\[ = -z^2 \eta(z)^3 \int_{0}^{\infty} \frac{\eta(\tau)^3}{(\tau - i(z + \tau))^2} d\tau. \]  \[\text{[2.5]}\]

Similarly, we have
\[ \eta\left(-\frac{1}{2}\right) = \frac{1}{2\pi i} \int_{c-i\infty}^{c+i\infty} \frac{\eta(\tau)^3}{(\tau - i(z + \tau))^2} d\tau \]
\[ = z^{-2} \int_{0}^{\infty} \frac{\eta(\tau)^3}{(\tau - i(z + \tau))^2} d\tau. \]  \[\text{[2.6]}\]

Combining Eqs. 2.4–2.6 gives
\[ G(z) - z^{-2} G\left(-\frac{1}{2}\right) \]
\[ = \frac{\sqrt{3}}{2\pi i} \int_{c-i\infty}^{c+i\infty} \frac{\eta(\tau)}{(\tau - i(z + \tau))^2} d\tau \]
\[ - \frac{i}{2\pi i} \int_{0}^{\infty} \frac{\eta(\tau)^3}{(\tau - i(z + \tau))^2} d\tau. \]

Dividing by \( \eta(z) \) and using its modular transformation property give the result for \( x \in \mathbb{H} \).

For \( x \in \mathbb{Q} \), note that \( (e^{2\pi iz}; e^{2\pi iz})_{\infty} = 0 \). Moreover, Zagier, in the discussion after the theorem of section 6 of ref. 1, explains how the integral \( \int_{0}^{\infty} \eta(z) \eta(\tau) d\tau \) is real analytic for real \( x \).

3. Congruence Properties and the Hecke-Type Identity
We first prove Theorem 1.4 on the parity of \( u(n) \), and we then prove Theorem 1.5 giving the Hecke-type identity for \( U(-1;q) \). We then conclude this section with the proof of Theorem 1.7.

3.1 Proof of Theorem 1.4: By theorem 1 of ref. 14 (see Eq. 1.2), we have that
\[ U(-1;q) = \frac{1}{(q;q)_{\infty}} \left( \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} (-1)^{n-1} (1 + q^n) q^{\frac{2n^2}{2}} - \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} q^{n^2} \right) \]
\[ + 2 \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} (-1)^{n-1} q^{\frac{2n^2}{2}} \frac{1}{1 + q^n}. \]

If \( spt(n) \) is the smallest parts partition function of Andrews, then by theorem 4 of ref. 17 we have:

Bryson et al.
Some care is required for the Lemma 3.2.

\[ S(q) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \text{spt}(n) q^n = \frac{1}{(q; q)_\infty} \left( \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{q^n}{(1 - q^n)^2} + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{(-1)^n q^{3n+1}}{(1 - q^n)^2} \right). \]

We have used the elementary fact that

\[ \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \sum_{d|n} d q^n = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{q^n}{(1 - q^n)^2} = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} n q^n. \]  

[3.1]

We have \( U(-1; q) \equiv S(q) \) (mod 2), and so the theorem follows from theorem 1.2 in ref. 18.\(^1\)

### 3.2 Proof of Theorem 1.5

We prove Theorem 1.5 using the method of Bailey pairs. As usual, we let \( (a)_n = (a; q)_n \). Two sequences \((\alpha_n, \beta_n)\) form a Bailey pair for a if

\[
\beta_n = \sum_{r=0}^{\infty} \frac{\alpha_r}{(q; q)_r^2 (aq; q)_n^2} q^n \\
\alpha_n = \frac{(1 - a q^2)^2 (a q - (1-a) q^2)^n}{aq (1-a) (q)_n} \sum_{j=0}^{n} (q^{-n}; q)_j (aq^n; q)_j q^j \beta_j.
\]

The following Bailey pair is central to the proof of Theorem 1.5.

**Lemma 3.1.** If \( \beta_n = 1 \) and \( \alpha_0 = 1 \) and for \( n > 0 \)

\[
\alpha_n = (1 - q^2^n) 2 a^{2n-2} q^{-2n} \left( \frac{q - 2}{1 - q} \right)^{-1} \sum_{j=2}^{n} (-1)^{j-1} (1 - q^{2j-1}) (1 - q^{j-1}) q^{j-1} \frac{q^{jn+1}}{1 - q^n}. \]

then \((\alpha_n, \beta_n)\) is a Bailey pair with respect to 1.

**Proof:** We apply theorem 8 of ref. 19 with \( \beta_n = 1 \) for all \( n \). By letting \( b, c, d \rightarrow 0 \), and then letting \( a \rightarrow 1 \), one obtains the lemma. Some care is required for the \( j = 0 \) and \( j = 1 \) terms.

The following is Bailey’s Lemma (for example, see ref. 19).

**Lemma 3.2. (Bailey’s Lemma).** If \( \alpha_n \) and \( \beta_n \) form a Bailey pair relative to \( a \), then

\[
\sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{(p_1)_n (p_2)_n (aq/p_1 p_2)_n}{(aq/p_1)_n (aq/p_2)_n} \alpha_n = \frac{(aq)_n (aq/p_1)_n (aq/p_2)_n}{(aq/p_1)_n (aq/p_2)_n} \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} (p_1)_n (p_2)_n (aq/p_1 p_2)_n \beta_n.
\]

**Proof of Theorem 1.5:** By Lemma 3.2 with \( p_1 = x \), \( p_2 = x^{-1} \) and \( a = 1 \), Lemma 3.1 gives

\[
\sum_{n=0}^{\infty} (x)_n (x^{-1}) q^n = \frac{(x)_\infty (x^{-1}) q}_\infty + \frac{(x)_\infty (x^{-1})}_\infty q^n \times \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} (1 - qx^n) (1 - x^{-1} q^n) \alpha_n.
\]

Dividing by \((1-x)(1-x^{-1})\) and collecting the \( n = 0 \) terms gives

\[
\sum_{n=0}^{\infty} (x)_n (x^{-1}) q^n = \frac{1}{(1-x)(1-x^{-1})} \left( \frac{(x)_\infty (x^{-1}) q}_\infty + \frac{(x)_\infty (x^{-1})}_\infty q^n \right) \times \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} (1 - qx^n) (1 - x^{-1} q^n) \alpha_n.
\]

[3.2]

To simplify the \( \alpha_n \), we have that

\[
\frac{(x)_\infty (x^{-1}) q}_\infty + \frac{(x)_\infty (x^{-1})}_\infty q^n \]

which in turn implies that

\[
\sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{(-1)^n}{(x)_\infty (x^{-1})} q^n = \frac{1}{2} \left( 1 + q^{-1} + q^{-2} \right),
\]

Thus, \( \alpha_0 = 1 \), and for \( n \geq 1 \) we have

\[
\alpha_n = (1 - q^{2n}) 2 q a^{2n-1} \left( \frac{q - 2}{1 - q} \right)^{-1} \sum_{j=2}^{n} (-1)^{j-1} (1 + q^j) (1 + q^j q^2) q^{jn+1} \frac{q^{jn+1}}{1 - q^n}.
\]

We note that

\[
\lim_{x \to 1} \frac{1}{(1-x)(1-x^{-1})} \left( \frac{(x)_\infty (x^{-1}) q}_\infty + \frac{(x)_\infty (x^{-1})}_\infty q^n \right) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{q^n}{(1-q^n)^2}
\]

\[
= \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{(-1)^{n+1} q^{3n+1}}{(1-q^n)^2} (1 + q^n).
\]

Now, insert these facts in Eq. 3.2, let \( x \to 1 \), and use the identity \( \frac{1-q^m}{1-q} = 2 \sum_{m=2}^{q} q^{mn} \).

### 3.3 Proof of Theorem 1.7

We give a sketch because it is analogous to theorem 1.5 of ref. 12 and theorem 1 of ref. 20. We have

\[
U(\pm; q) = \Psi(q) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} (u(0,4; n) - u(2,4; n)) q^n,
\]

where \( \Psi(q) \) is one of Ramanujan’s third-order mock theta functions. We have that \( q^{-1/2} \Psi(q^{24}) \) is the holomorphic part of a weight 1/2 harmonic Maass form whose shadow is a unary theta function. Using quadratic and trivial twists modulo \( \mathcal{Q} \), one obtains a weight 1/2 weakly holomorphic modular form. By work of

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\(^1\)Theorem 1.2 in ref. 18 is not stated correctly in ref. 18. One must replace \( p_m^2 \) by \( p_{m+1}^2 \) where \( \gcd(p, m) = 1 \). Recent work by Andrews et al. (23) gives a new proof of this result.
Treneer (21), one obtains weakly holomorphic forms of half-integer weight that are congruent to cusp forms modulo $Q$. By the Shimura correspondence, we obtain even integer weight cusp forms, which by lemma 3.30 of ref. 22 are annihilated modulo $Q$. Because the Shimura correspondence is Hecke equivariant, it follows that infinitely many half-integral weight Hecke operators $T(p^2)$ annihilate these cusp forms modulo $Q$. The proof follows from the formula for the action of these operators.

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