The Impact of Media in Cancel Culture Phenomenon

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Abstract
The life of our society has gone through enough changes along with the development of technology. One of the changes that can be felt is the appearance of digital culture such as Cancel Culture, an action where netizens boycott a celebrity or a certain public figure due to his/her taboo action. The purpose of this research is to know the role of the media in the cancel culture phenomenon by using Determination Technology theory. This study uses descriptive qualitative approaches with virtual ethnography. The scope of the research focuses on the Cancellation phenomenon of the Instagram accounts of @arawindak and @kite..entertainment for two reasons. The first reason is the alleged cancellation of "Arawinda" known as the "pelakor" (a married woman who engages in adultery with a man other than her husband) who received the attention of the Indonesian media and society resulting in easy access to related data regarding Cancel Culture. The second reason is the lack of scientific studies about Cancel Culture especially on Instagram. The large amount of data and the analysis that would be required to study the Cancel culture as a whole in a qualitatively extensive manner will result in a lack of clarity of the end results. Researchers also held interviews with 5 informants (2 informants who did not engage in cancel culture and 3 informants who engaged in the cancel culture). The results of this study find that the media plays an important role in the cancel culture phenomenon through social media. The media plays a role in accelerating the boycott process in view of the characteristics of social media, which are not restricted to time and space. Thus, it can reach even more members than boycotts that occur in the real world. The impact felt through the cancel culture phenomenon carried in the media is even bigger and permanent. Therefore, through this research, it is hoped that people will be more careful in their actions and understand the concept of cancel culture.

Keywords: cancel culture; social media; instagram; arawinda; impact of media

Introduction
The development of information technology has brought about an increase in internet usage. Social media, which is a forum for communication facilitated by the internet, also continues to increase. Findings from the databoks.katadata.com website states that in October 2022 the number of internet users worldwide increased by 3.89% to 5.07 billion or 63.45% of the global population compared to a year earlier. The number of social media users around the world also increased by 190 million, bringing the total number of social media users in 2022 to 4.47 billion (We Are Social & Hootsuite, 2022).

The increase in the number of internet and social media users indicates that more and more individuals express their opinions and actions freely. As of January 2022, the number of active social media users in Indonesia was
191 million. The use of social media which increase by 12.35% indicates that social media is used as a tool to express public opinion and free speech as a form of exercising their human rights. The trend of social media use in Indonesia continues to increase every year. We Are Social (2022) reported that there were 170 million social media users in the country in 2021.

Social media has created freedom for internet users, thus giving rise to a new phenomenon called Cancel Culture. Cancel Culture, which is known in Indonesian as “budaya boikot” is a phenomenon that developed in 2016/2017 with the aim of calling out problematic celebrities/artists. Cancel culture can be understood as a cultural tool to advocate for social justice by “attracting all kinds of support (viewers, following social media, purchasing products endorsed by that person, etc.) for those who are judged to have said or done something that is unacceptable or very problematic,” as evidenced in the #MeToo and Black Twitter movements (Clark, 2019; Ng, 2020).

Social media has the ability to mobilize issues through trending topic features (topics that are currently being discussed). From this, it can be seen that social media has great power in opening portals and making individuals collectively act as judge, jury and executioner for others (Mueller, 2021). In the evolving influencer space in the field of the economy, cancellation can also be considered as a way for consumers to deal with any immoral transactions made by business entities such as influencers. In general, followers claim credit for the circulation, popularity, and visibility of Influencer content, measured through subscriptions, likes, and views (Jenkins et al., 2018).

This cultural phenomenon is also considered as a public forum that often criticize individuals, business, or ideas by President Trump in year 2020. Even though this cultural phenomenon develops and occurs in various countries, there are still some individuals who do not approve of this action, one of whom is a German singer, Zolita, who created a status through her Twitter social media in 2018, “cancel culture needs to be canceled” (Greenspan, 2020; Accessed on January 23, 2023, at 20:24).

In Indonesia, the “budaya boikot” or cancel culture began to take roots around 2019. This culture mostly occurs on social media such as Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. In general, those who are affected by the cancel culture are individuals who violate the prevailing norms in Indonesia. Netizens in Indonesia use social media as a means of voicing public opinions to respond to a controversial statement of certain public figures. Netizens jointly and massively attacked a public figure in the virtual world. Entities that are on the receiving end of this attack are subjected to social sanctions and cancellation both in cyberspace and real life.

Instagram provides the dissemination of discourse on a mass scale and the ability to communicate with the people who are its followers. This provides an understanding of why and how people use social media as a tool for cancelling individuals and entities. The scope of this research is focused on one particular moment in the cancellation phenomenon on the Instagram accounts of Arawinda and Kite Entertainment for two reasons. The first reason is that the cancellation of "Arawinda" and "Kite Entertainment" received a lot of attention from the Indonesian media and society, so it is "rich in data" and will make it easier to collect data related to cancel culture. The second reason is the lack of scientific research on cancel culture specifically on Instagram. The large amount of data and the analysis that would be required to study the Cancel culture as a whole in a qualitatively extensive manner will result in a lack of clarity in the end results. Therefore, researchers focus on the case of Arawinda's cancel culture. Studying one specific instance of the phenomenon rather than studying the phenomenon as a whole increases the clarity of the end results.

This descriptive qualitative research will use the virtual ethnographic method with the theory of technological determinism initiated by Marshall McLuhan. He states that the development of a technology can affect people’s lives on a large scale, especially in social and cultural aspects. Based on the explanation of the background above, the purpose of this research is to understand “The Role of Instagram Against the Cancel Culture Phenomenon”.

Theoretical Framework

Technological developments have led to differences in the way of communicating.
Communication is currently carried out in different ways through online (in-network) or offline (out-of-network) media. The presence of digital media in the field of communication also changes the perspective and public space. The presence of new media is a new way of distributing various information that combines digital communication technology and is connected through a network. New media is a collection of communication technologies that have differences and consist of certain features. The use of digital-based new media is widely available as a communication device. New media has characteristics, namely interconnection in access from individuals as message senders and message recipients, open or visible, and has interactivity (McQuail, 2011).

**Technology Determinism**

Technology generally refers to the exploration of computer-mediated media systems and content culture in contemporary society. This theory also takes into account the influence of the media on individual societies. Theoretical approaches in research attribute a larger role to technology (media) than mediated content in terms of influencing society. The theory of Technological Determinism or Media Ecology was initiated by Marshall McLuhan in 1964. According to this theory, mass media technology not only shapes people's attitudes and behaviour, but also brings about a revolution in the way a social system operates. The theory further proposes that the functioning of the social structure changes according to the emergence of each new technology. The basic principle of media ecology theory is that human survival in the world is shaped according to variations in human communication systems.

According to McLuhan (1964) the growth of mass communication technology ensures the diffusion of culture in society which in turn helps change human behaviour. As McLuhan famously quotes "We shape our tools, and they in turn shape us" to fit the discourse, West R. & Turner, (2008) also cites McLuhan by stating that “we have a symbolic relationship with mediated technology; we create technology, and technology in turn recreates who we are.” The historical perspective of this theory proposes that technological revolutions over time have brought about corresponding changes in society. McLuhan (1964) classifies human society into tribal age, literate age, print age, and electronic age. The diffusion of communication technologies helped to modernize this society at least one step further (Jan et al., 2020).

The lifestyle of the people in their respective eras was revolutionized accordingly. If McLuhan's continuum from one stage of society to the next exists, then we are of course witnessing another stage commonly referred to as the digital age. This new technology has brought sudden changes in people's lives. Since then, Finnemann (2002) has suggested that social media has not replaced other types of traditional mass media. Instead it has integrated all other forms of media such as "electronic text, telephone, radio, and television.” Users of Social Network Sites can read electronic editions of every newspaper, they can make phone calls easily and almost for free, they can listen to every radio channel in the world with great ease and comfort and can watch any television channel of their choice. Unlike the mainstream media, social media platforms offer a wide variety of content contributed by their users. Social media users have the freedom to enjoy what and when they want to and even share with other users. Social media users can generate their own content and share the same content with other users (Abdulahi et al., 2014). Theory of Technological Determinism frames three assumptions. First, the media embed every action in society. Second, the media shape perception and regulate human experience. Third, the media connects the world (West R. & Turner LH, 2008).

**Material and Methodology**

This research is a qualitative research using virtual ethnography method. The data collection is conducted through observing the Instagram account @arawindak, the public figure who was cancelled and @kite.entertainment as her management agency. Questions in the research will be answered by analyzing the data. The phenomenon of Cancel Culture on social media, especially Instagram, is the object to be examined in this study. Three of five informants who cancelled or agreed to cancel Arawinda and the remaining two who did not participate in cancelling or disagreed with cancelling Arawinda are the subjects in this study. This research uses three data collection methods, i.e. observation, interviews and documentation.
In conducting this research, the data analysis techniques proposed by Miles et al., (2014) were used, consisting of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion or verification. Data reduction, is defined as a selection process, focusing attention on simplifying, abstracting, and transforming raw data that emerges from written records in the field. In research, before data is actually collected, the anticipation of data reduction is evident when the researcher decides on the conceptual framework of the research area, the research problem and the chosen data collection approach.

Presentation of data is a set of structured information that gives the possibility of drawing conclusions and taking action. Qualitative data can be presented in the form of narrative text, various types of matrices, graphs, networks, and charts. Drawing Conclusions/Verifications, after the data collection and data reduction have been completed, including searching for the meaning of things, and noting regularities, patterns, explanations, possible configurations, causal flows and propositions, the researcher then draws conclusions which continue to be verified during the research taking place (Miles and Huberman 2014). The virtual ethnographic method employed in this study uses Cyber Media Analysis (CMA) in which this method can describe culture and cultural artifacts on the internet. In analyzing culture on the internet, CMA consists of two units of analysis, namely text at the micro level and context at the macro level. The micro level is more about descriptions of internet devices, links, and things that can be seen on the surface. While the macro level looks at the existing context that causes the text to appear and the reasons that encourage the appearance of the text. The micro-macro level is divided into four levels, namely media space, media documents (media archive), media objects, and experiences (experiential stories).

Questions in the research will be answered by analyzing the data. Creswell (2016) explains that data analysis is a process of continuously reflecting on existing data (Creswell, 2016). Data analysis was carried out in this study by asking questions analytically and making brief field notes throughout the study. The data that has been obtained is then analyzed by coding the data to be placed and grouped based on the established themes (Yin, 2010). The data analysis process used is an interactive analysis model (Miles et al., 2014).

Data were analyzed throughout the research. This is done in order to open up opportunities to generate further questions. During the observation which took place spontaneously without being bound by space and time, the researcher observed members who actively participated through comments from followers, both angry and defensive comments from influencers and their management. Based on the results of account observations conducted by observing comments from followers, the researcher determined the members to be interviewed. The results of the interviews were then transcribed.

The researcher collected all the comments on the Instagram accounts under study. Some of the comments considered meaningful were captured and the results of interviews were transcribed. All transcripts of interviews and observations were given a file name based on the abbreviation of the member's name and were later coded based on certain themes for qualitative content analysis. Data analysis consists of three activity streams: data reduction, data presentation, conclusion drawing/verification of analytical techniques (Miles et al., 2014).

**Result and Discussion**

In virtual ethnography, the analysis of the data obtained is grouped into 4 levels to be elaborated below:

**Media Space Levels**

Based on this level, this research uses social media Instagram as a media space or medium and focuses on the Instagram accounts @kite.entertainment and @arawindak in collecting the required data. The researcher chose to analyze the two accounts because many followers on both accounts commented to cancel Arawinda. This means that the Cancel culture that occurred was experienced by both Arawinda as an actor and her management. Arawinda's Instagram account has 65.9 thousand followers with 183 visible posts, and her management's Instagram account has 11.7 thousand followers with 817 posts.

Based on the observations regarding the cancel culture communication process that was carried out to Arawinda, it began with a wife's story uploaded on an Instagram gossip account about how her husband cheated on her with a
young actress. Gossip, which became the topic of discussion on Instagram, then turned into a topic of conversation that was quite viral on Twitter and made netizens curious about the young actress who committed adultery.

This story drew attention from netizens on social media and many began to figure out the individuals who were involved in the story, until finally a netizen on Twitter informed the account of the legal wife in the story. Many netizens believed that Amanda was the legal wife. It was believed so because there is a photo of Amanda with the legal wife’s child in the bedroom where it stated that the affair occurred in the victim's room where the bed was attached to the bed of their child.

Netizens were still guessing who the third figure in Amanda's relationship is even though there are already several names of young artists who are said to match the characteristics of the young artists being discussed. Not a few also thought that it was Arawinda and when someone saw Amanda making an Instagram Story with one of the film scenes played by Arawinda by adding the word "gws" plastered on Arawinda’s character, that's where netizens were sure that the third person was Arawinda and immediately gave negative remarks and cancel her.

The hate speech occurred because of an affair scandal case involving a young actress with a man who already had a wife and caused the breakdown of the husband and wife's household, in which Arawinda was mentioned as the third person who caused the household of a woman named Amanda and also the husband at the time, Guiddo cracked. Hate speech aimed not only at Arawinda but also at Arawinda's management, namely kite. entertainment. This happened due to a press release issued through their official Instagram account which contained clarifications and also defended Arawinda. The management said that Arawinda was not a perpetrator as the community accused. It was further explained that Arawinda was the victim of the married man. The man is described as giving "love bombing" in the form of sweet words and attention to Arawinda for two weeks. However, when Arawinda found out that the man was already married, the management responded firmly, only to confide in friends and support him in returning to his family.

The issue of perpetrators in recent years in Indonesia has been phenomenal because several celebrities have become perpetrators. Comments that often appear are not wanting to watch the film, pretending to be feminine, just cancel it, just kick it, boycott Arawinda and so on. The word "kick" is an English word that means kick or kick off. However, in cyberspace, such as social media, "kick" is a term for removing members from a group. Kick "Arawinda" here means to expel Arawinda from the life of a public figure because she is felt to have violated the norms that prevail in society. The next word is "cancel" which also comes from English which means "cancel". Likewise, the word "boycott" is a form of rejection by a number or group of people against a person or organization by refusing to buy, use, or deal with the boycotted person or party (KBBI, 2017). Meanwhile, the "boycott of Arawinda" in the comments implies not following Arawinda's account, its management, not watching the films she stars in, not buying advertised products (endorsements), and not caring about anything related to Arawinda.

Media Document Level

Based on media documents, the researcher uses the sites popbela.com and popmama.com as the initial source for the spread of the scandal involving the young actress and clarifications from management which were published through the official management account.

It started with uploading a screenshot of the account @wanita.cl on social media Instagram on June 25 2022, which gave rise to a woman's complaint saying that her brother's husband, who had been in a relationship for two years and had a child, had an affair with a newcomer actress. At first the husband apologized when the woman found out about the affair, but it didn't have any effect so the husband started having an affair again.

In the end, the woman was hurt and returned to her parents' house with her child. However, it turned out that when she returned to her parents' house, the husband brought his mistress to their house and had an improper relationship. On the popbela site, it was informed that the two of them had had this relationship three times at their home. This news was also widely discussed on social media Instagram which was then re-uploaded via social media Twitter and attracted the attention and emotions of netizens.
Not a few thought that the third person in question was a young Indonesian actress, namely Arawinda because of the characteristics of the third person revealed in the screenshots. In addition, netizens began to believe that he was the person because of his legal wife, Amanda's Instagram Story, which brought up a scene from the film "Yuni", the film played by Arawinda and added the word "GWS" which stands for Get Well Soon which is generally spoken to people who are "Sick". It is from this Instagram Story that netizens are increasingly convinced that the third person or actor who has been widely discussed on social media is Arawinda. This is because "pelakor" or adulterer is considered a disease that exists within humans, and "gws" is an expression so that humans quickly become aware of their wrong actions.

Many netizens were disappointed and regretted this because apart from being an actress, Arawinda was also an activist who spoke out about women supporting women but turned out to be involved in problems that damaged someone's household.

**Media Object Levels**

The scandal that was widely discussed in 2022 started with a wife's complaint which was uploaded to an account on social media Instagram. The story of a wife who opened up stories for women which later became big until Arawinda experienced the Cancel culture phenomenon. This Cancel culture phenomenon culminated when Arawinda's management issued a press release as clarification and almost all of the comments in the upload were expressions of emotion and cancelling.

These comments were not only from netizens, but there were also other influencer accounts. Comments from a netizen stating that management made a big mistake and should have dismissed the talent instead of retaining it, the first thing you have to do is fire this one talent. Eh, they still kept her. sick. Disgusting.

This comment is directed at kite.entertainment which is considered to have made a big mistake. Netizens suggest studying the issue first, acknowledging the public's discomfort regarding the issue and expressing an apology for the inconvenience. The important point suggested is the follow-up plan for the case and according to netizens the press release from management is an inappropriate handling of the crisis and doesn't even help client.

Netizens also made other negative comments in the comments column on Arawinda's Instagram account in several of her uploads. Even so, there are still some positive comments and praise for the photos he uploaded on Instagram. This case also affected Arawinda's Instagram followers for one year, namely from July 2022 to July 2023. Data from socialblade.com shows that in July 2022 Arawinda's Instagram followers touched 72,938 thousand, while in July 2023 based Arawinda's Instagram account has more than 65,600 followers. This means that Arawinda has experienced a decrease in followers by approximately 7,000 thousand.

**Experience Levels**

Cases of cancelling or boycotting like what happened to Arawinda in the world of social media have recently been common among actresses, especially those who are considered to have committed bad actions or outside the norms and values prevailing in society. Things like this are also one of the clear evidences where technological developments and sophistication bring about and create quite big changes in society. What a person is doing
nowadays is easily spread through social media and seen by almost everyone from all walks of life and even almost the whole world.

The case that happened to Arawinda not only had an impact on the many people who wanted or voiced to boycott the talent, but also gave a bad assessment regarding the film in which he played. The film "Like & Share", which was released on December 8, 2022, received negative comments and also bad reviews when some people learned that one of the main players was Arawinda. Not a few invite on social media Instagram not to watch the film. The comments they share on the official website IMDb (Internet Movie Database) is an information site related to movies or television shows, games. People who find a movie title worth watching usually use the IMDb site. Based on the IMDb site in Indonesia, many gave one star to the film "Like & Share" as many as 440 individuals or 57.9%. On IMDb, one star is a bad rating or a bad movie. But as many as 92 individuals or 12.1% gave 10 stars, meaning they liked the plot of the film apart from what one of the main players experienced.

The development of digital technology has given rise to new media as a means of communicating and interacting with audiences, bringing various implications. One of them is cancel culture or better known as cancel culture. Boycott culture has actually occurred in the real world (offline) as a form of social control due to the behavior of a person or organization that violates the values, norms and ethics in society. Before the Internet, consumers and the general public complained mostly through newspapers, consumer groups and letters to companies. The turnaround time for substantive responses was relatively slower than quick responses as seen in the messages to boycott Arawinda. Real-world boycotts are usually hampered by time and location factors. As a result of the rapid development of technology, humans have found new ways to build communities and communicate skills in the online world. Social media has provided a space for society to grow and develop where individuals can find each other without the dependence of factors such as time and location. There is no limit to the number of communities that social media users can be a part of.

Social media users can simply log in and join the conversation and communicate with other people present on the platform. This aspect of social media is an important part of continuing the cycle of users discovering community and each other (Shuter, 2012). When someone identifies with a group they cannot access directly, social media provides a space to find solidarity and support they may not otherwise have.

The features provided by Instagram support users to load something and share it with their followers. This feature also allows followers to comment with narration, symbols in the form of emoticons, like signs (which show likes) or unlike (dislikes). The comments column is a place for interaction between users and followers.

The Cancel culture phenomenon is a new culture that is busy happening on social media, one of which is on Instagram social media and this phenomenon is also called digital culture. Cancel Culture usually starts with negative remarks from netizens regarding issues related to boycotted figures, and then continues with comments that are out of context or issue so that it turns into cyberbullying. The digital community cancels culture or boycotts the figure (public figure) "Arawinda" for committing taboo acts or actions that violate the values, norms or rules that apply in Indonesia. Thus, people choose to boycott or cancel the figure in question, of course, hoping that this will not spread and be followed by other people.

By using social media, of course this boycott phenomenon can reach a wider scope. Over (2016) explains that a sense of self-belonging is built through interaction with other people and learning existing and unacceptable behavior. While one's identity and reach may be constrained beyond technology, the existence of social media opens a gateway to limitless opportunities to find and bond with those who share the same experiences and interests (Pfister & Soliz, 2011).

This is why lately many figures have experienced cancel culture. Today's social media is not just a place or platform to get fun and entertainment, but to express emotions towards someone who is felt to have violated or taken an action outside of values and norms.

The current speed of society towards a case or problem is of course faster and greater with social media assisted by internet technology. This means that people do not only express opinions or exchange ideas with the closest people, such as family, friends and
neighbours, but also with people who are not known and who are in different places and times. People do not need a long time to exchange ideas and even debate. Online media platforms or social media are a forum or intermediary for the community to discuss, express opinions, and also invite other individuals in various ways, such as cancelling someone.

Before technology developed, it became more sophisticated, faster, and had many features that made it easier for humans to communicate, express opinions, complain, appreciate, and praise. These things are only done in the closest circle, such as among family, friends, and neighbors to talk about someone, incite someone not to be friends or socialize with a certain person or group, inform someone's actions that are not good in their environment, and ostracize someone. The loss felt by that person was not as big as the loss of the boycott carried out through social media. Digital footprints are not easy or even difficult to simply erase, unlike human memory. Therefore, the impact that is felt is definitely greater because what was experienced, the reasons and evidence of what was experienced will still have traces even though it has been decades.

Even though it cannot be denied that Cancel Culture is starting to develop and occur on social media, the holder of control and power of this phenomenon remains in the hands of its users, namely humans. So, in the Cancel Culture phenomenon, it is believed that both humans and the media have their respective roles. It's just that, based on the interviews conducted with the five informants, it can be concluded that indeed humans use the media as a forum or intermediary to boycott certain figures, but without the media the Cancel Culture phenomenon will not work perfectly. Boycott or Cancel Culture may still occur, but with a small scope, not worldwide or as widespread as it is today.

The media is still a place to broadcast and even invite other individuals to participate in cancelling these figures. But the media also plays a role in making this phenomenon process faster, because it doesn't take a long time and makes people dare to act, not just speak because they feel there are people who feel the same way or are now known as relate. Even though informants who disagree with this phenomenon reveal that doing Cancel Culture on social media is something that cannot be justified and does not deserve to be accepted by anyone, it all comes back to technology users and social media itself.

Motivation to cancel is an action on social media in an effort to challenge offensive behavior. Offensive behavior is behavior that is born from thoughts and principles of strength that can uphold the truth. The truth he means is also the truth according to himself. In society, “if something is deemed inappropriate, taboo, immoral, or offensive, there must be a general set of cultural standards that inform us what is or is not appropriate (Jay, 2017). In the case of Arawinda, followers consider "the perpetrator" inappropriate in the context of values or norms. Impropriety is highly dependent on the context of 'who, what, where and when' as being questioned.

In Arawinda's case, followers or Instagram social media users were angry at judging this behavior, considering it taboo, and demanding change. What is known as “cancel culture” can sometimes be equated with “outrageous culture”. As Jay (2017) further notes, “taboo forces protect us from harm (we distance ourselves from taboo behavior)”. Social media users carry out a "cancel culture" or online cancellation culture to fight for the truth. Boycotts related to a person, product or organization are actually not much different and have been happening or are commonly used by society for decades. The role of social media, especially Instagram, only facilitates the use of this power.

Instagram Users using the app perform almost similar activities turning them into a homogeneous mass. Similarly, online profiles reflect identity features and most of them use social media for fun. Social media connects people across cultures, religions and boundaries and makes them feel part of a community. Social media not only turns the world into a community but also shapes every aspect of human social life.

Conclusions

Before the Internet, audiences and consumers complained mostly through newspapers, consumer groups and letters to companies. The turnaround time for substantive responses was relatively slower than quick responses as seen in messages to boycott someone. Real-world boycotts are hampered by time and location factors. With the very fast
development and change of technology, social media has provided a space for society to grow and develop. Individuals can find each other without being dependent on factors such as time and location. There is no limit to the number of social media user communities to be part of the space. The digital community in Indonesia has cancelled culture for celebrities on social media, especially Instagram, because these figures are considered to have committed taboo actions or actions that violate the values, norms or rules that prevail in Indonesia. The boycott aims to uphold the truth. There have been boycotts before, but in the current era, boycotts are stronger. The process experienced in the Cancel Culture phenomenon is even faster without any restrictions on time, place, and the number of masses. The research has implications for providing opportunities for people inside and outside of social media to understand the cancel culture which can have a major impact on someone who has a position in the eyes of society.

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