

Cosmos Friendly Ethics: Home, Environment, Common World

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The author investigates the prospects of holistic ethics in the contemporary world. From the standpoint of individual existence observed three modes of ethical attitude towards the world in their historic genesis: home, environment, and common world. The ancient idea of home as a place of love and revelation of God was eroded by the expansion of human civilization on the natural, social, and cosmic scale. This process is reflected in the concept of a multiform environment as a source of material, biological, economic, political, cultural possibilities, and a space of physical, social, and informational (digital) mobility. The crises of those environments put the problem of the proper ethical norms and values for human survival and further development. The ethical dimension of its solution presents the idea of a common world and the relevant ethical principles of advocacy, responsibility, solidarity, justice with the aim of consensus on the basis of a rational discourse where people represent all the other being's interests. Thus, based on regularly open for better arguments discussion, the author views the possibility of the formation of a cosmos friendly ethics.

Keywords: home, environment, common world, advocacy, responsibility, solidarity, justice, reverence for life, discourse, consensus, cosmos friendly ethics

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Introduction

From ancient times cosmos has had a definite ethical sense in the idea of good. For instance, Plato understood this meaningful unity of being, where people, nature, and gods submitted to universal laws, as the good which “is in the intelligible region... where truth and reality shine resplendent” (The Republic VI, 6: 508c-d). Yet, harmony in the human world has never been achieved. Moreover, the material world and social reality are comprehended in the dialectics of chaos and order (Prokopovych, 2019; Seliverstova, 2019). The permanent

task of philosophy is to find the ratio between finite and infinite, freedom and necessity, the certainty of human feelings, and moral obligations. Nowadays, encountering the global challenges of survival, mankind is looking for the balance of own needs, rights, and possibilities (The 2030 Agenda). It particularly implies a global partnership of all the agents and civil society, which is impossible without a friendly to nature and aware of the finitude of all beings holistic ethics. In this article, we analyze three modes of human existential and ethical inclusion in the Universe. They are home, environment, and common world. We observe the historical genesis of those modes and their contradictions and correspondences to the idea of a cosmos-friendly ethics.

Home

What is home? A house, a place, space, or a feeling? Is it our physical or virtual castle, a center of gravity, or a point of departure? The possible answers depend on cultural and historical conditions and personal attitudes. The notion of home is as old as people understand themselves. The Greek word “oikos,” translated as “home,” “house,” “dwelling place,” and “household,” meant first of all, the union of people. It is the origin of the words which have the root “eco.” Therefore, the concepts of “economy” and “ecology” cover our relations with an environment where and with whom we live (Foucault, 1998: 83; Yermolenko, 2010: 50). Every living being dwells in an environment which can be, and usually is, a sphere of coexistence, a place of the other beings and things. Thus, in our understanding and actions, we open the dimensions of the other beings, enter into the neighborhood with them, penetrate and change their worlds.

It is an ethical problem, whereas we make our homes on account of the other people and living creatures in their surroundings, and even inside some parts of their “homes.” A domesticating practice is based on ownership and privacy. A human settling supposes the establishment and protection of rights and morals. Thus, a home is not only a form of “materialization of identity” (Young, 1997: 149) but also of objectification of the spiritual dimension. The personal identity is hardly possible, at least in a socially positive form, without a home, a motherland. Moreover, in families and communities, people form their collective ethos and spread their ideas to the entire world.

Home is what people defend first of all. One can lose a home or at least the feeling of it. This displacement can happen, and it happens on an individual and national scale. The last is the hardest situation. Thus, Hannah Arendt observed that the loss of the state throws a man out of mankind (Arendt, 1979). Concerning the individual life, the challenge of getting or regaining a home develops a person. Sometimes, one has to leave home, family, community in order to keep and build own identity in a new dimension of existence. All human metaphysics is a longing for “being at home” as in the sphere of true existence in the world (Heidegger, 2010: 7) and of possible infinity (Berdyayev, 1991: 50). Thus, the home comprises a spiritual dimension where people are not just living beings but those who transcend the natural limits of their life.

People always needed a home as the place in the world to go beyond and to come back. From time to time, we rethink and redesign our homes accordingly to our worldview. The contemporary philosopher Peter Sloterdijk in his interview “Spheres Theory, Taking to Myself about the Poetics of Space,” ponders that “humans are themselves an effect of the space they create.” Thus, the present picture of the Universe corresponds to a foam consisted of many bubbles rather than one big cosmic house (Sloterdijk, 2009). This picture of the multiple spaces reflects and supports the high mobility of the digital human world. Nowadays, the personal area is not built on steady ground; it is virtual as our travels, especially under the quarantine.

The interplay of immanence and transcendence, identity and difference, living by something and against it constitutes human subjectivity. The complicated, split, and not “already formed” character of subjectivity was understood in various ways by postmodern thinkers of the 20th century and developed by the contemporary philosophers of analytical inspiration like Vincent Descombes and Sandra Laugier. Thus, Descombes offers the conception of the subject as formed not by his inside world (the pronoun “I” does not call anyone) but by his social action (Descombes, 2020). On the other hand, Laugier “defends the skeptical understanding of subjectivity as a property of the action of the delocalized subject of language and knowledge” (Yosypenko, 2020: 57). This deconstruction of the reflexive subject undermines the idea of home as a center of gravity of a person. The entire concept of the world as the home of people needs to be reconsidered on the new foundations. The multiplicity of spaces, multi-culturalism of society, and inter-subjectivity of consciousness are realized in the idea of coexistence of people in the world, which implies the ethics of dialogue and universal communication, including inhuman reality.

Meanwhile, we can observe the possibilities for the consolidation of people given by the contemporaneous technical civilization. For example, the psychological research of a digital social reality finds the phenomenon of online “we-space” and numerous forms of affective support through the Internet. Digitally shared space with another opens the possibilities of actions and interpersonal understanding based on the “sense of connectedness” in social life (Krueger & Osler, 2019: 207). This leads us to the hope of “solidarity” and the “common home” idea in a sphere of coexistence on a planetary or cosmic scale. Nevertheless, the modern idea of humanity as a center of metaphysical thought and civilizational efforts to conquer the Universe survives. Moreover, modern, postmodern, and digital projects of the world are intertwined. Modernity gave birth to technical revolution, globalization, space exploration, and ecological thinking. As a reflection of the people-centered picture of the world appeared the concept of environment. Its connection and contradictions with the traditional idea of home and the contemporaneous understanding of the common world we are going to consider.

Environment

From a biological standpoint, there are three dimensions of the world of every living creature. Jakob von Uexküll distinguished them as an outside world (Außenwelt), a surrounding (Umgebung), and an environment (Umwelt) (Uexküll, 2010). From the phenomenological point of view, there is no possible sense “outside” the consciousness. Whether natural or social, planetary, or cosmic, everything has its meaning in a human living world (Lebenswelt). Consequently, home and environment are cultural concepts. People make a living at home and restructure the natural surrounding into their environment. The environment covers the nearest horizon of what one marks as useful or useless and where one acts in everyday living. So, what is the environment, and how many are the environments depends on existing being-in-the-world. Every human being and every natural or artificial system get their environments and present elements of the environment to each other. People have natural, economic, historical, and cultural environments consisting of what they adjust, adapt, or fear.

“Home” and “environment” are different modes of positioning in the world in terms of values and ethics. “Oikos” is a sphere where we make our living, hold a house, a property, and economic activity. The concept of the environment reflects the sphere of mastering over the external world where one struggles to survive and to get necessary resources. It is rather

expansive and industrial. When a home is a space of comfort, the environment is organized of favorable and recognized as dangerous things. People protect their homes and make their environments safe. We love our homes, feel and make them hospitable whereas manage our environment rather indifferently to the other beings.

Since humans are usually careless about the remote consequences of their activity, the crises of the environment are permanent. When people exhaust accessible resources, destroy the natural balance, they reorganize their environment and expand it. That was not a big problem until it reached a global scale. During the last 50 years, the ecological crisis has been widely understood firstly as a threat of survival, secondly as a symptom of the crisis of ethics. It was related to the values of the home as well. The Ukrainian philosopher Anatoliy Yermolenko defines the cause of the ecological crisis in people's reduction of the Universe to the "oikos" that is, to measure the world by own yardstick as if nature does not have its value. Henceforth, when people understand the world as only their environment (Umwelt) and consider all that they do not reach and do not need as a kind of trash, they meet the crisis of the environment itself (Yermolenko, 2010: 29-38).

Therefore, the ethical problems of ecology cannot be solved by just switching from an environmental to a pre-modern domestic mode. Ecological thinking respectful to the environments of other beings can be more relevant than the familiar and proprietor mastering. Trying to solve the ethical dilemmas of these attitudes, we can see two main options. The first is the ethos of human being in the world as in own home on the base of feelings of sympathy, love, and hospitality. The second is rational responsibility, which does not exclude emotions and convictions but obliges to weigh up the consequences of human actions and their playback.

Home as the ethos is open to transcendent as it is expressed in the interpretation of Heraclitus's words "Ethos anthropoi daimon" (ἦθος ἀνθρώπων δαίμων, the destiny of man is his own character / a man's character is his fate (Heraclitus fr. B119) by Heidegger: "The familiar abode for humans is the open region for the presencing of god (the unfamiliar)" (Heidegger, 1975: 35). Home is sacred, and this also means that we can sacrifice something for it. Sacrifice, in turn, points to the finitude of things and the finiteness of human existence. The ethics of being in the world as at home cares about things, the purpose of every living being. Thus, the concept of home brings an individual dimension into ethical thinking about the world. On the other hand, the environmental concept conceals individual finitude, possessed instead by the problems of effectiveness and resources for mankind and the next generations. It is intended for accountability and proper solution to the problems. Environmental thinking takes the world from the known side. It is proactive, recognizing, calculating. Although global, it is inattentive towards individual existence, whereas, at the standpoint of home, significant is the search for reconciliation with the familiar things and looking at the concealed matters of existence. Although a kind of a combination of both concepts is mostly desirable, they do not cover the transcendence of the world.

Why it is important to look onto what is beyond the grasp of the human hand and mind in cosmology and philosophy shows particularly Gregory Phipps in the article about the parallels between Heidegger's philosophy of being and time with contemporary astrophysical view on the nature of black holes. Phipps points that thinking of time as a kind of a natural dimension of the world omits the individual phenomenology of finitude. "What society, physics, and modern technology conceal is the existential threat at the core of time, the individual's mortality" (Phipps, 2020: 26). In existential ontology, time is not a measure of length, but a possibility of life. Just measuring the length of our lives, we are reckoning the

cosmos and its elements as the environment, something independent from us and eternal. Yet, it is wrong. Even such vast cosmic objects as, for example, black holes, which emerge from the outside like consuming matter and stopping time, are finite and can be understood in the view of the possibility of their impossibility. So, “everything in existence, no matter how powerful, is afflicted with death and decay” (Phipps, 2020: 29).

On this cosmological supposition, the problem of the environment that we are trying to preserve on the Earth is a significant but interim task of mankind. On the other hand, every individual being’s death as a “possibility of impossibility” is much closer, more convincing than the threat of ecological collapse. That is why environmental problems lie in the middle between individual existence and cosmic processes. In the domain of ethics, the values of home, even of cosmos as a home, are emerging from the finitude of everything and the infinity revealed as transcendence in the presence of God behind the time and creature. So, every environment has the limits and horizons of its constitution. People transcend it from inside in their home attitudes and from outside on a cosmic scale. From the environmental standpoint, breaking ecological limits, one only invades into the domains of other beings and competes with them for resources. Being inside the environmental attitude towards the world, one does not transcend the operational mode of existence as a consumer and a survivor. The distinction lies in the principle of ends and means. The environment is a sphere of means, whereas home and the cosmos are the ends in themselves.

The ethical problem becomes more acute when a pious mood of being at home in the presence of God changes to the claim of people for ownership of the world for themselves. It is a characteristic feature of modernity that devaluated the ancient ethos of the home as the attitude towards the Universe. Thus, losing the feeling of home, people did not get a sense of their existence. They became strangers in the world. That was obvious for Pascal, who in the 17th century wrote about the lack of understanding by a man of himself, of the infinite Universe, and his own finitude (Pascal, 2018). People of modernity felt that they could not retain the sense of individual existence looking at furthermore expanding into infinity space.

For feeling at home in the Universe, we should overcome its enmity, transcend its infinity, make it reasonable. Furthermore, the technical civilization developed via a kind of “*epoche*,” oblivion of all the useless and throwing wastes outside the mastered territory. Thus, when human activity came to the limits of growth, evolution turned to devolution. Humans understood that nature could force them out. So, they need to conclude that making a comfortable living is possible when it fits nature. Therefore, every new attempt of thinking in the paradigm of the home has to draw the sense of the entire world, of the common human world as well. Even if it is concealed, one should live with that enigma of purposeful cosmos to harmonize own anxiety of finiteness and lack of knowledge.

Common World

The progress of technology and globalization corresponds to the idea of a common world which needs ethical explication. The philosophic concept of the common world was formed in phenomenology, anthropology, and ethics of the 20th century. First of all, Heidegger in “Being and time” (1927) posited that “...the world is always the one I share with Others. The world of Dasein is a *with-world* [Mitwelt].” (Heidegger, 1973: 155, “...die Welt je schon immer die, die ich mit den Anderen teile. Die Welt des Daseins ist *Mitwelt*.” Heidegger, 1967: 118). Thus, Heidegger set the concept of coexistence of people (Mitdasein) against the originally biological concept environment (Umwelt) of Jakob von Uexküll. In its further development, this concept was transformed by Karl Löwith to “being-with-one-another”

(Miteinandersein) and “being-one-for-another” (Füreinandersein) (Cera, 2018) and by Klaus Michael Meyer-Abich to the understanding of equal and own value of all living beings with people (Meyer-Abich, 1990).

The holistic ethics based on ontology and natural philosophy of Klaus Michael Meyer-Abich, Hans Jonas (Jonas, 1979), and others can be combined with the ethics of universal discourse of Karl-Otto Apel, Dietrich Böhler (Böhler, 2008) and others which develops the procedures of the dialogue and ethical responsibility. Particularly, Apel argued that the effective reaction to the ecological crisis is possible only in the form of the collective ethical responsibility of all people on a planetary scale because just conventions of institutions and governments are insufficient (Apel, 1994). Within the contemporary natural philosophy itself growth the broad understanding that it “should encompass an ethics and morality grounded in human nature and in nature as a whole” particularly because of human’s cultural role and communicational capacities in the global ecosystem in order “to enhance its health rather than to harm it” (MacLennan, 2019: 6, 8).

Thus, in contemporary science and philosophical ethics emerges a point of distancing from looking at the nonhuman beings as only a source of goods for human use and, consequently, understanding of their intrinsic value (Yermolenko, 2010: 251). All the other beings get a cultural value which is, at least in some relations and spheres, independent or equal to human beings. In a certain sense, such kind of ethics comes back to the ancient idea of a home where not only people but all the things and gods have their (cosmic) place. The ethos of home aims at the balance of all the beings in the cosmos. However, the idea of a cosmic home is only a metaphor unless we build our living in the world based on holistic ethics. That would be a cosmos-friendly discourse intended to reach the agreement of all the possible participants. Along with technical possibilities, this discourse needs political application, particularly in the development of the international environmental law appealing for “reconceptualization” of state sovereignty towards humanity at large and Earth as a whole (Bosselmann, 2020).

For the realistic view, however, there is a problem of shortage of natural resources and struggle for them. Not less important is a voluntary restriction of their consumption. Therefore, it has to be a search of a balance starting from the feed circuit, private and public interests, and ending by the measure of general human interference into the natural processes. That balance means a partnership. If not real, the nonhuman world must be an imaginary subject of relations in the common world. In terms of law and ethics, people should behave “as if” they represent the other world. That would be the first rule of the ethics of the common world. Let us call it *advocacy*. Although there is no direct equality between people and nature, holistic cosmic ethics means symmetry, i.e., the equal claim of meaning for all beings and parts of reality. Humans need to use animated and inanimate entities for our living but should understand their claim for existence. It means that every being is having own purpose of existence. Because people are endowed by reason, they should understand, along with their necessities and ends, the universal meaning of the existence of all the other creatures. So, the next ethical principle is holistic *responsibility*.

Common world ethics presumes that there is a reason for existence for all kinds of beings. All of them take part in the meaningful unity of the Universe and share their existence with others. Therefore, in the holistic ethics, the Kantian formula of morality “Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never merely as a means, but always at the same time as an end” (Kant, 1997: 429) has to be transformed to the duty to treat every animated or inanimate being as an end in itself. This morality assumes and substantiates the universal discourse where people take their special

responsibility as those capable of understanding and representing the rights of all beings (Yermolenko, 2010: 250; Kopnina et al., 2018: 122). Thereto, we have to use the power of imagination when every other being is represented as a subject of a moral claim. Again, it provides the responsibility of people. Responsibility means the ability to hear and respond and understand the need of the other. Moreover, we have to comprehend the voices of things and beings which have no language but possess the ontological right to exist. In this way, we can talk about *justice* as the following rule. There can be solidarity as a value spread beyond the human reality based on the ethical principles of freedom, equity, and justice (Yermolenko, 2010: 272).

On the universal ground of integrity, the next principle and the aim of cosmos friendly ethics is a *consensus*. The regulative idea of consensus “as if” (“als ob”) all the beings have their voice in a discourse of norms and values can be realized when people take responsibility as representatives of nature and cosmos. Certainly, there is a plurality of voices and worldviews that we cannot put together and even do not need to do it. At the same time, the existence of every being is finite, and thus it is unique. Everyone and everything in the world is valuable, at least as God’s creature. Thus, ethics also claim *reverence for life* (Schweitzer, 1966) and requires even recognition of the holiness of the “Other”. The last principle means in the philosophy of *Emmanuel* Levinas that only in the face of the Other can one understand God’s presence (Levinas, 2007: 236). From a holistic view, it should be extended to all animated or inanimate beings.

Therefore, in contemporary philosophy, takes place the idea of the common world as well as the rehabilitation of the concept of home. It overcomes the narrowness of the modern concept of the world as just an environment of people or indifferent infinite space. Thus, we can understand the common world as a home not only for people but for all beings. In terms of cosmos friendly ethics, we can presume that people in their cosmic dwelling have an ethical obligation to become providers of a universal discourse where the voice of every being should be represented by those creatures who are the bearers of ethical rationality and able to sympathy.

Discussion about the possible cosmos friendly ethics

We cannot just return to the ancient ideas of home and cosmos to harmonize our living in the world. It is also impossible to keep unlimited exploitation of nature which produces crises and encounters many threats. We should reject egocentrism in social life and industrocentrism in the economy, whereas the core problem which prevents the formation of ethical norms and values on a planetary scale is anthropocentrism. As a human-centered valuation theory, it provides “the lack of ethical consideration for the intrinsic value of nonhuman forms” (Kopnina et al., 2018: 115). In a broader sense, we should think of good “to be found in the world *without* any relation to human preference or even human existence” as if it objectively “was here long before us and will outlive us” (Kopnina et al., 2018: 121). Although the ethical norms and values are unavoidably anthropogenic, they do “not have to be *anthropocentric*” (Kopnina et al., 2018: 122). That will be a proper ethical point for a cosmos friendly thought. In practice, people need to consider the universal ethical discourse in which all beings can be represented in their rights. For this representation, people have to assume an appropriate responsibility and the claim of advocacy for the rights of other beings in the common world.

Still, humans are explorers of nature and space, and the development of civilization cannot stop. On the pages of “Philosophy and Cosmology” Journal (Vol. 24, 2020) was presented the concept of ethics for exploration of cosmos by Bazaluk and Balinchenko. The authors follow

the principles of the philosophy of cosmos based particularly on Platonism and the concepts of existential analytics of Heidegger. Their objective is “in the formation of the ontological orientation and limits of self-realization of Dasein-mentality-about’s being and the being of Dasein-Intelligent-Matter in accordance with the idea of a man who transforms the Universe” (Bazaluk & Balinchenko, 2020: 134). As a basis for the norms and values of this cosmic ethics, the authors consider the Ten Commandments taken from a wide philosophic perspective. According to them, human intelligence was given a “cosmic power” in the Universe. Thus, people have to avoid an idle living and any kind of “idolatry” inherent to *das Man* as inauthentic existence. They also call for “a conscious concentration on the action, and on the end result” (Bazaluk & Balinchenko, 2020: 135). On the other hand, this ethics implies the “conditions for introspection, self-assessment, self-control, self-regulation, etc.,” and “avoids the transformation of serving into fanaticism.” Particularly, the 4th Biblical commandment “Honour your father and your mother” is interpreted as “a way of knowing the history of Dasein-mentality-about’s being,” so that arises “an appeal to the root cause of individual being and an awareness of the boundaries of freedom of self-realization.” The next law, “Thou shalt not kill,” preserves the “foundations of being” because every species of being is “the potential of Dasein-the-One’s being,” i.e., God or transcendent “the One” of Plotinus (Bazaluk & Balinchenko, 2020: 136). Consequently, the value of family is high as it is considered “as an ideal environment.” Then, the ethical law prevents theft as “it zeroes out the products of self-realization” and protects from stealing of time which was the input in any activity, care, creation, and self-cognition (Bazaluk & Balinchenko, 2020: 137). It also affirms the significance of individual presence and care, respects the truth, and awareness of the untruth. In the end, it renders “to every man according to his works” (Bazaluk & Balinchenko, 2020: 138). Thus, the authors define “the conditions for the transcendence of being of Dasein-Intelligent-Matter of the Earth into cosmic power” (Bazaluk & Balinchenko, 2020: 138).

We would like to comment on this concept in relation to the idea of cosmos friendly ethics. Biblical ethics describes and prescribes the rules relating to the human existence of a certain historical and cultural epoch. It is hardly applicable for every possible rational being in the cosmos. Therefore, relevant is the author’s reformulation of the original religious rules in a more formal holistic way. The second remark is about the rather risky formula of “the priority of action (*prêxis*) over discourse (*lógos*)” (Bazaluk & Balinchenko, 2020: 135). Action without a discourse can be wrong. However, the authors regulate this, pointing that their ethics “ensures communication and cohesion of the being...” (Bazaluk & Balinchenko, 2020: 138). Our last observation concerns the necessity of avoiding the anthropocentric or even “naturalistic fallacy” in ethics. By Moore, good is self-evident, axiomatic, and cannot be derived from any heteronomous source (Moore, 1993). It means that we have to be vigilant in our theoretical constructions for not grounding universalistic ethics on the natural premises, whether based on physical or “informational” matter.

Plato taught that the idea of good lies behind and over any possible being. Heidegger did not offer ethics based on the analytics of Dasein. His thought was only about the truth of existence. Levinas argued that ethics is not premised on ontology. Therefore, cosmos friendly ethics rests on the principles of people’s *advocacy, responsibility, solidarity, justice, reverence for life* and aims at a *consensus* of interests of all beings, human and nonhuman. This ethics appeals to the open discourse of norms and values of all possible participants where nobody has an exceptional right to the final truth. However, human beings possess their primary responsibility to represent those creatures and entities that cannot have their voices in that discourse.

Conclusion

The discussion about the possible ethics for the cosmic era is not going to be ever finished. The concept of the cosmos is formed in ancient philosophy, but it has always been revived according to the achieved level of development and new challenges of mankind. The same status is of the idea of home. Home has always been a place of gravity and a point of departure for human endeavors. It is a safe and holy space of love, hospitality, and the presence of God. At the same time, it is fragile and open for transcendence. The outer living circle of every animate being makes an environment. Technic civilization extends the idea of the environment to all global society, nature, and even the cosmos and treats them as resources for human activity. In practice, that is an activity of individuals and corporations pursuing their interests contrary to the interests of mankind. This activity appears to be wrong, which is evident in the ecological crisis and social problems. That is why the idea of the cosmos as a “home” of all beings should be rehabilitated in its universal meaning. It implies a philosophical concept of the common world and requires holistic ethics.

One of the possible conceptualizations of holistic cosmos friendly ethics can be accomplished based on the principle of a universal discourse of norms and values. Universalistic ethics appeals to reason, whatever origin it is. Its special issue is to overcome the artifacts of anthropocentrism since every ethic is *anthropogenic*, but it does not have to be *anthropocentric*. The particular problem of every attempt to form specific ethical rules is avoiding the naturalistic fallacy. Not heteronomous premises but arguments are driven by the idea of good itself are acceptable in the discourse of ethical norms and values. Only a better argument and consensus of all possible participants are relevant. Humans, as the solely known creatures endowed by rational thinking, have to represent all the other beings in a common world. Anyway, the formation of cosmos-friendly ethics must go on as far as human and nonhuman intellect will be developing.

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