21.

TRAINING THE SAGES OF INTEGRITY

Marian Popescu

Abstract

Drawing on his experience in the field and his familiarity with theatrical techniques, Marian Popescu offers us a stimulating reflection on what he ends up calling academic "integrative ethics" and on the role that "wise men of integrity" should play in its implementation. The author develops his proposal by understanding the historical flaws and advances in the field of character education. The training, combining cognitive devices and communicative and dramatic skills of these experts, mediators and referents appears, in his view, to be the key element in the current fight for integrity.[*]

1. Introduction

Summer 1942. The Warsaw ghetto. A column of almost 200 children, taken from the orphanage of Dr Korczak, who accompanied them, embarked on the wagons. Destination: Treblinka. The doctor's

fame was indisputable and the Nazis offered to allow him to leave the ghetto and pursue his career. He refused to give up 'his' children (whose shelter and food costs he covered by himself). The Polish doctor Janusz Korczak (1879–1942) enters legend not only as one of the great specialists in pediatrics and child pedagogy, but also as an (extreme) example of a man of integrity.[554]

Integrity is not just the ethic of standards to be applied. Integrity is a daily practice; it is the example we set for others. Our practice of teaching within the Center for Action, Resources, and Training for Academic Integrity (CARFIA), as well as the requests that are addressed to us during our seminars and training sessions at the Institute of Research and Action on Fraud and Plagiarism in Academia (IRAFPA), are clear: how can we live a daily ethic—reflexive and inspired—and not simply apply the ethical rules of an evolving profession?

The beginnings of a new approach to integrity must therefore be rooted in the very experience of a person capable of acquiring the reflexes of the fair consideration of the integrity-related questions that arise. However, the double problem of this consideration is that for too long we have entrusted the task to specialists in the teaching of ethics and that this teaching was intended for a narrow segment of the population: doctoral students. Downstream, for undergraduate and master's students, attention is focused on the control of cheating; upstream, for professors, the issue of integrity training seems not to arise. We are the descendants of a very specific history. Bertrand Russell modernized education following the progress of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries under the impetus of John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who reserved education for an elite: children from the aristocratic world. Russell democratized and opened up the educational

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[554] J. Korczak, *A Child's Right to Respect* (Warsaw: Rzecznik Praw Dziecka, 2017). The original *Prawo dziecka do szacunku* was published in Warsaw in 1929. Korczak's complete works published in Poland comprise 23 volumes.

field by jointly considering the education of intellect and character.[555] He believed that research was as important as education at the university, but that the time spent on research must be wisely used. Korczak, Russell's contemporary, published in 1929 the work that would give meaning to pedagogy by highlighting the respect due to the learner.[556] Its founding principle is that children are not people in the making but people in their own right. They have the right to be taken seriously; they have the right to be treated with tenderness and respect. They must be allowed to flourish so that they can realize their personality. During the twentieth century, philosophy, psychology, pedagogy, linguistics, and language sciences took hold of the discipline of educational sciences, mainly focusing on children. Higher education gradually lost the meaning of the discoveries made in the 1920s and 1930s in psychology and education: the attention paid to students has become more and more focused on their intellectual education, to the detriment of their moral training.

Yet our responsibility to civil society at a time of significant challenge is to enable our academic systems to answer this critical question in our work on integrity: what is the relationship between the development of the intellect and the formation of character in order to respond with morality, ethics, and responsibility to the stimuli of daily life? And this concerns all stakeholders, whether they are students, teachers, university presidents, or heads of doctoral schools. Because this is the question that motivates our research. It is not a matter of how to react to extraordinary situations—the exceptional temptation to defraud or the confrontation with a great plagiarist—but of practicing integrity on a daily basis. How can we advise benevolently but

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[555] B. Russell, *On Education, Especially in Early Childhood* (London: Unwin Books, 1926).

[556] J. Korczak, *How to Love a Child and Other Selected Works*, 2 volumes (London/Chicago: Vallentine Mitchell, 2018).

intransigently as regards integrity, whether with students or researchers, victims, witnesses, or, sometimes, fraudsters?

In this chapter, we focus not on the development of devices but on the personality of these beneficiaries of our training. The root of the word 'beneficiary' in Latin, is bene, ('good'), which transports us directly into the realm of morality. We propose a new approach to the training of versatile 'sages', benchmarks of integrity, whether they are integrity trainers, ethics board chairs, ombudspersons, or institutional specialists. The approach we propose in this chapter places integrity at the heart of personality. We will show how theatrical techniques allow the development of a culture of integrity in relations between colleagues but also with different institutional, academic, and research bodies.

2. Reintegrating integrity into our systems: attempts and failures

The academic world shares with the world of organizations and companies the illusion that it is protected by the enactment of ethical standards. For the OECD, for example, ethical infrastructure is purely normative: 'This infrastructure is based on three fundamental principles: control, guidance and management'.[557] This ethic of standards, which regulates collective conduct, mainly allows organizations to turn against the employee at fault in the event of fraud. Bergadaà criticizes this organizational framework, which leads to reasoning based on a utilitarian goal: the well-being of the group.[558] Thus, ethical charters inspired by English-language models make it possible to frame the effectiveness of individual agents. The persistence in seeking a solution

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[557] J. Bertok, 'Getting the Public Ethics Right', *OECD Observer*, 220 (2020), 41-42.

[558] M. Bergadaà, 'Evolution de l'épistémè économique et sociale: proposition d'un cadre de morale, de déontologie, d'éthique et de responsabilité pour le marketer', *Recherche et Applications en Marketing*, 19 (2004), 55-72.

within these ethical norms and responding *a posteriori* to proven breaches of integrity has increased the number of active knowledge delinquents.[559] Proof of this is the exponential growth in scientific fraud expressed, among other things, in the retraction of articles in academic journals.

The 1999 Bologna Process did not lead to the *creation of a common program* for trainers and researchers in knowledge transfer and appropriation that is rooted in reality and respects disciplinary specificities and European cultural differences.[560] In France, for example, the Corvol report proposes a distinction between ethics and integrity different from ours: 'A clear distinction must be made between scientific integrity, that is, the rules that govern the practice of research, and the ethics of research that address broader issues of scientific progress and its societal implications'.[561] Starting from this basis, the sixteen proposals in his text are all aimed at framing ethical standards, as in proposal 14: 'Develop and disseminate a structuring national reference text that, among other things, strengthens scientific integrity in institutions'. When we talk about education, we still talk about the intellect in order to prevent mistakes, fraud, and conflicts of interest, but not about strengthening individuals' character. It must be said that the issue is also to lift the *omertà* governing integrity issues in order to draw up a factual, objective overview. A report on the situation in the UK states:

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[559] T. Foltýnek and I. Glendinning, 'Impact of Policies for Plagiarism in Higher Education across Europe: Results of the Project', *Acta Universitatis Agriculturae et Silviculturae Mendelianae Brunensis,* 63(1) (2015), 207-16.

[560] *Higher Education System Reform. An International Comparison after Twenty Years of Bologna,* ed. by B. Broucker and others (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2019).

[561] P. Corvol, *Bilan et propositions de mise en œuvre de la charte nationale d'intégrité scientifique. Remise du rapport à Thierry Mandon, secrétaire d'État chargé de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche,* 29 June 2016, p. 8.

> The current lack of consistent transparency means that it is impossible to assess the scale of the research integrity issue, leading to accusations that parts of the sector are policing themselves in a secretive way in order to maintain its reputation or, worse, a perception that investigations are not conducted properly in order to avoid embarrassment.[562]

Thus, the initiatives remain at a macro level, which does not bother anyone.

The main instrument of the European Union's overall strategy on research ethics—the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity—is embodied in the initiatives of the European Network for Research Ethics and Integrity (ENERI). ENERI stresses that 'the reliability and credibility of research and science in the European Research Area (ERA) is not only dependent on its excellence and productivity, but also raising awareness of the highest ethical standards in research and their commitment to responsible conduct of research'. [563] A wide variety of formats (in terms of approaches, disciplines, sectors, cultures, nationalities, etc.) is evident here. The European Union has invested in developing networks to produce and disseminate lessons on integrity. Of course, we respect the results produced by networks such as SATORI, ETHICSWEB, ETINED, EnTIRE, and PRINTEGER. They are relevant for developing and disseminating ethics teachings. But, as Bergadaà points out, the question remains how can we educate about integrity when we know that, according to Eurostat, more than 725,000 people are engaged in doctoral studies in Europe, with more than 187,000 enrolments each year?[564] Teaching ethics in a traditional

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[562] House of Commons Science and Technology Committee, *Research Integrity, 6th Report of Session 2017–19* (London: House of Commons, 2018), p. 3.

[563] ENERI: http://www.eurecnet.org/eneri/

[564] M. Bergadaà, *Le temps. Entre science et création* (Caen: Éditions EMS, 2020); European Commission, *Tertiary Education Statistics,* September 2020.

classroom format, with a one-day class composed of up to fifteen students, would require over 12,000 training interventions. With such a 'one-shot' class, we could realistically only provide an overview of what ethics and integrity are. Many institutions are turning to teaching ethics online. As a result, our higher education programs are not anchored and supported by a culture of integrity. It is always, at best, a matter of instructing through isolated programs, usually undertaken by philosophers or theologians. Complying with codes of ethics, for example, is not a guarantee of an ethical practice in everyday life. Teaching ethics and research integrity to influence individual behavior is necessary but clearly insufficient. To maximize the quality and societal impact of research, integrity must be an integral part of the overall research and innovation process and the scientific system more generally. It must be the heart of the system and must no longer be seen as an addition and a means of creating an additional bureaucracy.

In this regard, the codes, standards, and rules offered on the websites of almost every university in Europe are simply not satisfactory.[565] All preventive and punitive devices follow a purely behavioral logic by superbly ignoring the individual 'black box'. It is therefore not surprising that many manipulators take their ease in our system invisibly and therefore in impunity. But how do we tackle the problem of how to merge integrity and daily practice head on? For the construction of a moral culture of education would call for an open culture of dialogue within universities and research groups. According to Topal, this would involve sharing and learning from each other both horizontally and vertically.[566] It would therefore also be a question of reintroducing a true

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[565] H. Maisonneuve, 'Development of Research Integrity in France Is on the Rise: The Introduction of Research Integrity Officers was a Progress', *Research Integrity and Peer Review*, 4(1) (2019), Article 20.

[566] J. Topal, 'The Practice of Anti-Corruption and Integrity of Government: On the Moral Learning Side of the Story', in *Corruption, Integrity and the Law:*

democratic debate on integrity in the very heart of our institutions instead of talking about fraud as a shameful disease until a highly publicized case briefly attracts our attention. This would mean moving toward a true wisdom of integrity.

3. Training sages of integrity

A quotation by Arnold S. Relman, editor of the *New England Journal of Medicine*, frequently repeated since 1983, formulates the paradoxical situation that 'scientific research, in many ways, one of the most questioning and skeptical of human activities, should be dependent on personal trust. But the fact is that without trust the research enterprise could not function'.[567] Indeed, in daily life at the university, each of us—students, researchers, librarians, laboratory assistants, or teachers— is confronted with ethical questions that we would like to discuss with an enlightened person in confidence. But that confidence is deteriorating. The cause of this is a variety of weaknesses—treated admirably in fiction by a famous chemist, Carl Djerassi, in his novel *Cantor's Dilemma*—as we have pointed out.[568] These weaknesses erode confidence in publication activity (priorities, order of authors, choice of journal) and collegiality and brutally distort competition, academic tenure, scholarships, and the Nobel Prize or show off the joys of bad practices. Crease points out: 'Considering its critical role in science, it is quite surprising that trust is not the focus of more research. One reason for the lack of attention is that a vast interdisciplinary effort is

Global Regulatory Challenges, ed. by N. Ryder and L. Pasculli (London: Routledge, 2020), pp. 268-85.

[567] A. S. Relman, 'Lessons from the Darsee Affair', *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 308(23) (1983), 1415-17, p. 1415.

[568] C. Djerassi, *Cantor's Dilemma* (New York: Knopf Doubleday, 1989).

required'.[569] Based on our experiences at CARFIA and IRAFPA, we are convinced that the only viable strategy to strengthen integrity in the academic and research world relies essentially on *trust*.

To be clear, educational strategies miss the point: the compelling, persuasive, operational dissemination of a culture of integrity as an effective vehicle of moral values that ensure the credibility of the production and, especially, the transmission and transfer of knowledge. To avoid what we have called the 'Tartuffe effect', which is pretense and imposture in its various forms, the academic and research community is called upon to fundamentally review its relationship with academic integrity.[570] It is about getting back to the roots, beyond bureaucracy, and creating a real operational culture within institutions. If a person has this broad, deep culture of integrity, they will have the confidence of their colleagues or students and will be able to listen to and advise them.

The question is not how to train our students, or even the professors who will teach ethics, about integrity. *Train-the-trainers* programs already exist, such as The Embassy of Good Science. [571] The ones we need to help today are our colleagues, the 'sages of integrity' who work every day in a complex environment that is conducive to the emergence of dilemmas such as the urgency of publishing and the urgency of conducting in-depth research. Because we, as researchers and university instructors, are transmitters of knowledge. Because we live every day among our doctoral students and young colleagues, we are also mirrors that allow them to develop a character of true integrity. This is how the

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[569] R. P. Crease, 'The Paradox of Trust in Science', *Physics World*, March (2004), 18.

[570] M. Popescu, 'The Tartuffe Effect or a Theatre of Ethics', Paper presented at the SRS Conference, Society for Romanian Studies, 26–30 June 2018, Bucharest.

[571] The Embassy of Good Science, *Training,* 2020.

culture of integrity spreads. But the question remains how to get them to ask us when they have questions about integrity.

Why is it so difficult to define integrity and to place it at the heart of the knowledge we seek to discover, communicate, and teach? Because there is not yet a language of integrity that would go beyond integrity regulations, codes, standards, or guidelines. So there is also no culture of integrity that any of these might carry. Let us try to promote the imagination which, according to Chavel, is 'mobilized to answer the question *how do we reason morally in context?*, and not *what is a just action in general?*'.[572] Thus, the focus becomes 'the singular process of our moral thinking, on the particular implementation of concepts, principles, and theories.' So we need to communicate with each other in a new language—*integrethics*—through which the proximity of ethics and integrity is more understandable, more humane, and less bureaucratic in the day-to-day practices of the university.

Let us imagine a way to understand this integrity. The Greeks did not have a term for 'integrity', but they developed the cult of *physical integrity* and the quest for the beauty of the human body. They preferred to speak of psychic unity reflected in non-contradictory behavior with a view to harmony. Thus, the process of civilization depends essentially on the ability to correct the lack of harmony of psychic functions. Consequently, a responsible person is always responsible in relation to the relationship that links intellectual honesty and decent behavior in a person of integrity.

Who are the sages of integrity who perceive themselves—or are perceived—as such? Could it be a professor? A young researcher who explains the rules of the ERI to colleagues? The director of a private laboratory? An inspector on a fraud commission? In our opinion, a sage

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[572] S. Chavel, 'L'imagination en morale dans la philosophie contemporaine de langue anglaise', *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger*, 136(4) (2011), 543-62.

of integrity is anyone who wants to acquire or strengthen their in-depth culture. For the people we receive in our classes are not the fraudsters or the plagiarists. Those people avoid us! The ones who participate in our training are already people who play an active role in their scientific or academic community. They are reinforcing a commitment they have already made.

What are they looking for from us? Unfettered speech and distinctive skills in the first place. Our method consists of a bottom-up approach, with an inductive research and training method. We also choose a cross-cutting approach to foster mutual enrichment around a fundamental identity: dynamic questioning rather than normative ethics, which also affect the personal development of participants in 'dramatic' situations. We use the word 'dramatic' in its original Greek sense (*drama* = 'action'). Our educational project aims to achieve a high degree of excellence by training a sufficient number of (1) heads of doctoral schools; (2) institutional integrity officers; and (3) administrators or managers of commissions of inquiry. So yes, there will be a real culture of integrity. Our pedagogical approach does not determine 'what' is taught, but rather 'how' to provide the skills and knowledge that are essential in terms of academic integrity. We give participants a tool box that allows them to intervene on a daily basis.

4. The content of the knowledge to be shared

Our strategy seeks to foster the emergence of a culture of integrity by working with these sages of integrity, encouraging interaction between different levels of training, partnering experienced researchers with young instructors (peer learning methodology), and raising participants' interest in ethical questions through engaging, participatory methodologies based on the co-construction of learning. For example, during our seminars, we give a three-part training course that takes place

over two and a half days during which the three parts described below take place in the morning, afternoon, and evening.

4.1 Knowledge transfer: Cognitive training

IRAFPA has developed turnkey tools that are transferred to participants. Participants can acquire them in workshops and small multidisciplinary groups. Thus, we work on the following themes (adapting the importance attributed to each to the participants' needs): the obligation of responsibility that elites (here, academics) must assume; the dimensions of integrity ('Morals', 'Deontology', 'Ethics', and 'Responsibility') in the analysis of decisions; the grid for assessing the ten potential consequences of an integrity breach (their nature and importance); laws and regulations that exist in participants' countries; copyright, defamation, slander, intellectual property; how to detect a knowledge delinquent (how do they become one?); recognizing and knowing how to interact with the different individual profiles of knowledge delinquents; analyzing plagiarism methods and preparing objective, factual records; conducting mediation; the art of negotiating a difficult situation; public communication techniques using recent discoveries, as well as those of Richard Bauman, who considered forms of communication as social resources, real 'equipment for living'; documenting a complaint; identifying the 'frame' in the sense of Gregory Bateson; etc.[573]

As we can see, these are pragmatic skills that allow our sages of integrity, whether they are ombudspersons, directors of doctoral schools, or integrity gatekeepers, to adopt a posture that is more balanced than emotional. To transfer these competences, we use the case method (IRAFPA has 300 real-world cases, compiled over the last ten years).

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[573] R. Bauman, *Verbal Art as Performance* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 1984); G. Bateson, 'A Theory of Play and Fantasy', in *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1971), pp. 67-73.

The cases take the cultural and research context into account in addition to generic guidelines that transcend cultures and domains. The choice of cases used is adapted to the topic in question and does not claim to cover all possible problematic situations.

4.2 Emotional appropriation through communication and theatrical techniques

Unlike the previous phase, the aim here is to really challenge the participants. In 'The neurobiology of trust, Zak and others note that the hormone oxytocin, which generates trust in human relationships is secreted very little in our institutions.[574] Our goal is to restore participants' trust in themselves, which they can then spread around. By acting as a teacher with student-actors or directors, we have observed that one of the main problems for participants is agreeing on a kind of pact of trust before moving on to discover the roles they need to learn. Our exercises to facilitate *parrhesia* in the historical Greek sense—that is, free speech beyond the techniques of rhetoric, as understood by Foucault—are similar to those we use in our academic integrity courses at the master's and PhD levels.[575] It is always a question of preparing the participants so that they can freely approach sensitive questions that are usually kept quiet. After the creation of CARFIA, the first university center on academic integrity in Romania, one of our challenges was, and still is, to encourage, through workshops, debates, small productions, and simulations, a freedom of speech that opens participants up to an ethic expressed as an inner strength anchored in their personality.

In order to address and develop the sages of integrity's *parrhesia*, we have created a series of events at IRAFPA entitled the 'Theater of

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[574] P. J. Zak, R. Kurzban, and W. T. Matzner, 'The Neurobiology of Trust', *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences,* 1032(1) (2004), 224-27.

[575] M. Foucault, 'The Meaning and Evolution of the Word "Parrhesia"', in *Discourse and Truth: The Problematization of Parrhesia* (Six Lectures Given by Michel Foucault at Berkeley, Oct-Nov. 1983); Rojas, 2012)

Integrity', which stage moral dilemmas. We have observed such dilemmas in all the mediations we conduct.[576] These might concern cases of academic misconduct, complicity of certain institutional players in the field of education, members of academia, or professional and parliamentary bodies. The Theater of Integrity is mainly based on an ethic of participatory theater in higher education and uses theater tools to train young academics by allowing them to actively participate in open debates through a method like Augusto Boal's, the improvisation techniques created by Viola Spolin, stage productions, role-playing, or acting.[577]

Our theater of integrity uses a variety of means, ranging from dramatized open debates to real one-act theatrical performances. Thus, we introduce improvisations based on real cases where one of the protagonists, for example, plays the role of a fraudster who minimizes his offenses and the other an ombudsperson who tries to make him face up to his responsibilities. The other participants debrief on what they learned from the positions of the two protagonists. But we also propose three role plays developed thematically around plagiarism, institutional procedures, and scientific fraud. Each role-playing game is implemented in the form of an educational detective story where one participant plays an investigator looking for administrative and procedural problems and not only for the faults of the suspect, who is too often the 'ideal culprit'. The other participants play the roles of the different stakeholders, integrating their specific reasoning and decision-making methods. These games are presented as detective stories in which the moderator of the

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[576] M. Bergadaà, *Le plagiat académique: Comprendre pour agir* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2015).

[577] A. Boal, *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* (London: Routledge, 1992); V. Spolin, *Improvisation for the Theater* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1999).

simulation can provide clues but never a solution. As the game unfolds, additional information is provided when requested by the participants.

4.3 Democratic debate

The third part of the training, which is usually at the end of the day, takes us back to the Greeks. For the Greeks, a barbarian was someone who did not know Greek, that is to say, who was ignorant of logic and dialectics and did not master the art of speech. How could he teach others? Legitimacy is not conferred by winning elections but by governing, making decisions for the *polis,* for the state as a whole. Interestingly, the word *barbaric* has the same root as the word for stuttering. To the Greeks, the language of the barbarians sounded like endless stuttering. If you stutter, you will not be legitimate.

We reintroduce the political debate using the techniques of public speaking, the art of arguing. In groups of two or three, participants should discuss a term chosen from the body of significant concepts of 'integrity'. For example, 'the duty to denounce fraud' or 'academic freedom versus academic duty'. Then, the debaters must express their conclusions to the group in order to convince them.[578] They must then apply a form of speech act in order to be both convincing and seductive.[579] Thus, performative acts in Austin's sense allow them to develop these skills to promote integrity. In this way, they participate in IRAFPA and in consolidating the common language of *integrethics,* which we mentioned above.

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[578] P. Charaudeau, 'La situation de communication comme lieu de conditionnement du surgissement interdiscursif', *Revue Tranel,* 44 (2006), 27-38.

[579] J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962).

5. Conclusion

Training the sages of deontology and integrity is an extraordinary undertaking the achievement of which could establish a true culture of integrity in our institutions and in interpersonal relations within our communities. The road ahead will be long. What IRAFPA offers to participants in its training is not only to showcase their expertise in integrity but also to use communicative and theatrical techniques to manage the approach to vulnerabilities and institutional responses to a lack of integrity.

Our project therefore aims to transmit all our knowledge to the sages of integrity so that, in their turn, they know how to free individual speech, through the exercise of *parrhesia*, because what victims or witnesses, whether they are students or colleagues, very often need is to be able to talk sincerely and in confidence. Second, our method fits into Austin's approach because the sages of integrity have already made their choice: they want to be able to produce 'performative' statements, that is, discourse that does not seek merely to describe the faults of our academic universe but rather to act upon it by the action they induce.

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