5. Unveiling Self-Discovery Amidst Turmoil: Analyzing Anne Frank's Diary of a Young Girl

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Abstract:

Have you ever felt confined physically and mentally? Have you ever experienced war within you? Have you ever longed to have a friend? To answer all these questions, I will tell you about a 15-year Young girl who changed history by writing an extraordinary diary giving a glimpse into the futility of World War 2 and how it could lead to destruction and devastation, Hitler's ruthless laws to reduce Jewish community, isolation, and disconnection from family, tackling complicated relationship, falling in love, self – discovery and finding true identity and enhancing one's passion by writing a diary and too optimistic in times of despair and uncertainty. The girl is undoubtedly Anne Frank, whose diary became a classic of war literature, decoding the horrors of the Holocaust and accounts her innermost thoughts and sufferings as she finds her diary as her source of comfort, "Because paper has more patience than people". (Frank, pg 6, 1942). Therefore, this research takes a close look at Diary as a source of historical events, how The Diary of a Young Girl is an example of a wartime diary, the historical background of the diary, Anne Frank's internal turmoil and finding her true self, Editing, Adaptation, case study and reviews of the diary, implications, and conclusion.

Keywords:

Anne Frank; Diary; Literature; Solitude; Lonely

Introduction:

Writing is known as a therapy to reduce stress, but have you ever written a diary? But firstly, let's understand, "What is a diary?". According to British writer Walter Scott, "What is a diary as a rule? A document useful to the person who keeps it. Dull to the contemporary who reads it and invaluable to the student, centuries afterward, who treasures it". In simpler terms, the diary is a genre of literature that is written by an Individual to record his or her activities or reflections. A diary also stores individuals' emotions, thoughts, or feelings. The occurrence of the term diarium in Latin derives from the word dies which ultimately means day.

This form of literary genre blossomed in the late Renaissance when the value of chronicling social and political history became apparent. Dairies were also written to record the historical events witnessed by individuals so that they could not be forgotten. An excellent example is – "A Journal of the Plague Year" by Daniel Defoe who is known as the shadowy author of Robinson Crusoe. Defoe has given an extraordinary account of the devastation and human suffering inflicted on the city of London by the Great Plague of 1665. His narrative that for its vivid and gruesome detail seems possible only from an eyewitness.

Diaries as a Source of Historical Events:

If we take a closer look at human history, War has been a part of human culture since its birth. War diaries are eventually preserved in order to provide an accurate historical record that can be used in fighting reconstruction. The tradition of keeping accurate war diaries dated back a thousand years which are an invaluable historical source to historians. Hayashi Ichizo, a Japanese Kamikaze Pilot's Disturb, the Japanese term Kamikaze means "divine wind" and refers to the Japanese practice of sending young men on suicide missions in planes equipped with incendiary devices during the second world war. Hayashi Ichizo, a 23-year-old student was forced to join it and kept a diary to express his thoughts. In one of his entries, Ichizo admitted, "To be honest, I cannot say that the wish to die for the emperor is genuine, coming from my heart. However, it is decided for me that I die for the emperor" (Ichizo, 1945). An additional heart-rending entry, Ichizo desires to be back with his mother as a little child: "I dread death so much and yet, it is already decided for us ... Mother, I still want to be loved and spoiled by you. I want to be held in your arms and sleep." (Ichizo, 1945). Another tragic diary of a sixteen-year-old Russian high school student who experienced the Leningrad siege, Lena Mukhina who started keeping a diary in May 1941 when she was 16 years old. She wrote about the agony of seeing her family perish as well as the struggles of growing up. The adolescent described how she endured the complete 900-day Nazi blockade of Leningrad, but not before witnessing her mother starve to death and witnessing multiple bombing strikes by German troops. The recently released diary has received praise from historians and specialists for vividly writing accounts of starvation, desperation, and death. Lena's touching diary not only recounts atrocities like having to eat the family cat to avoid famine but also more typical fears and hopes. These traces from the wartime diaries give an excellent gruesome picture of the frightening visions of the war and confronts the readers like us about the misery faced by them. These traces of wartime diaries give horrifying Consequences of war on individuals who had experienced it and confront the readers like us about the gruesome effects of wars.

The Diary of a Young Girl as an Example of a Wartime Diary:

The Diary of a Young Girl is often considered one of the most famous wartime diaries reflecting the life of Jews during the second world war under the dictatorship of Adolf Hitler. This diary is written by a young Jewish girl named Annelies Marie Frank or famously known as Anne Frank, who was born on June 12, 1929, in Frankfurt, Germany. When Anne was only four, her family left Germany in 1933 to avoid the Nazi anti-Jewish policies. But slowly in 1940, the Nazis began to impose anti-Jewish measures in Holland also.

In her diary, Anne listed some of the facilities which were restricted for the Jews: "Jews were required to wear a yellow star, Jews were required to turn in their bicycles; Jews were forbidden to use trams; Jews were forbidden to ride cars, even their own; Jews were required to do their shopping between 3:00 and 5:00 PM...

Jews were forbidden to go any athletic activity in public; Jews were forbidden to sit in their gardens or those of their friends after 8:00 P.M. Jews were forbidden to visit Christians in their homes:

Jews were required to attend Jewish schools etc." (Frank, pg 8, 1942).

On June 12, 1942, Anne received a red and white checked diary for her 13th birthday in which she began to write her thoughts and experiences in the form of letters to an imaginary friend named Kitty in the hope to find comfort and support:

"I hope I will be able to confide everything to you, as I have never been able to confide in anyone, and I hope you will be a great source of comfort and support." (Frank, pg 1, 1942)

One month later her family went into a hiding place in Anne's father, Otto Frank's business premises at Prinsengrach 263. When Anne's elder sister, Margot received a call-up to report to the 'labor camp' on 5th July 1942 which was a trap for the Jews in order to lead them to Death camps and an inhuman agenda to depopulate the Jewish community.

Over 25 months, Anne kept a diary of her adventures hiding from the German troops. Her diary captures both humorous and happy moments as well as the worries and emotional difficulties of people huddled together in secrecy. She gave pseudonyms to the people hiding along with her family - Auguste Van Pels, Hermann Van Pels, Peter Van Pels, and Fritz Pfeffer as Petronella Van Daan Hermann Van Daan Peter Van Daan, and Albert Dussel. Her diary captures her Daily employment in the secret Annex, her feelings of being left out and isolated, and her romantic relationship with Peter Van Pels, she also mentions her dreams and her aspirations (to return to her lessons at school, to breathe in the fresh air, to become a mother and to be a journalist) birthdays celebrated while hiding, her complicated relationship with her mother and her inner turmoil amidst the war. The passages are frequently centered on Anne's emotional development and her discoveries about her herself. Therefore Delinda C. Hanley describes the young girl's excellence as "mature and insightful penetration into the human mind". Apart from it Hanley also suggests that the diary "Provides an intimate examination of daily life of Nazi Occupation".

"A Thesis submitted by Ranjana Regmi "Traumatic Experiences in Anne Frank 's The Diary of a Young Girl" published on September 2009, states that " Anne's diary describes the two arduous years she spent in seclusion before her tragic death at the age of 15. Most readers and critics are spellbound by the fact that such a young girl, in confinement and under extreme mental conditions, could pen down her diary with such intelligence. Perhaps more than any figure, Anne gave a human face to the victims of the Holocaust, which makes her diary a worldwide success." This before getting into detail about Anne Frank, let us know about the historical background during which she wrote her diary.

Historical Background:

Anne Frank emerged as a powerful emblem of the Nazi genocide that killed nearly Six million Jews and roughly five million non-Jews between 1939 and 1945. She was one of the many millions of Jews who were slaughtered by the Nazis. But she is undoubtedly the most well-known victim of the Shoah, her words and her life have come to represent it in powerful ways. The second world war serves as the backdrop for Anne Frank's diary. After the devastation of WORLD WAR 1, the Treaty of Versailles was signed on June 28, 1919, at the Palace of Versailles outside Paris, France because according to the Allies, Germany was responsible for starting the war and therefore in return Germany was required to pay a heavy fine, reduce their military strength and gave up all of its overseas colonies.

But socialists and the entire Jewish Population were held responsible for the loss. When Adolf Hitler and his Nazi party surged to power with full control by the Enabling Laws, on 23 March 1933. All the other political parties were instantly declared illegal, which was achieved by a policy known as 'Gleichschaltung', meaning forcible coordination. In order to implement his new regulations, Hitler also established State Secret Police, the 'Gestapo' (Geheime Staatspolizei). At the same time, the government confiscated radio, newspapers, and even motion pictures to spread Nazi Propaganda and it became dangerous to oppose or criticize the government in any way. The education system was closely controlled so that children could be indoctrinated with Nazi opinions. The school textbooks were rewritten to fit in with the Nazi theory. History was skewed to meet Hitler's belief that great things could be accomplished by force. The Nazi race doctrine governed human biology. Teachers, Professors were constantly monitored to ensure that they should not voice thoughts that differed from the party line, and many lived in fear of being denounced to the Gestapo by children of committed Nazis.

Hitler delivered a speech in Nuremberg on September 1935:

"In our eyes, the German youth of the future must be slim and slender, Swift as the Greyhound, tough as leather, and hard as Krupp steel. We must educate a new type of man so that our people are not ruined by the symptoms of the degeneracy of our day". (Hitler, 1935)

Hence by this speech, it's pretty much clear that German youths were really important to him as they were required to join at the age of 14, while girls joined the League of German Maidens. The administration purposefully sought to undermine conventional relationships such as family loyalty: Children were taught that their first duty was to obey Hitler, who took on the title "Führer" meaning leader or guide. The popular motto was "The Führer is always right". Children were even encouraged to betray their parents to the Gestapo and many did so. But it was worse for the Jews, as Hitler started his efforts to purify Germany by removing all races, except the Pure Aryan race because he had a strong belief in ethnic cleansing. All Jews and others were suspected as 'enemies of the state'. False arrests, torture, wrongful detention, and even murder were frequent occurrences. Hitler intended to exterminate the entire Jewish race, which he called 'the final solution'. It is believed that out of a total of 9 million Jews about 5.7 million had been murdered by forcibly sent into 'the five killing centers' in German occupied – Poland- Chelmno, Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, and Auschwitz – Birkenau. The Jews were locked in Gas Chambers, brutally beaten, and starved and women were frequently violated and raped.

Anne Frank's Internal Turmoil and Finding Her True Self:

In order to escape the Anti – Semitic laws made by the new dictator of Germany i.e., Adolf Hitler, Otto Frank along with his family left Germany and moved to Amsterdam, Netherlands. But after Anne's elder sister, Margot received a call-up to report to a labor camp in July 1942. They went hiding in the abandoned offices located behind Otto Frank's office building. Before going into hiding her diary contained details about her teenage experience, writing about her friendship with other girls, her interest in boys, and her admirers. But her tone completely changed after hiding for over two years living with the seven other people. Anne's diary shows her internal suffering and cries for independence and liberation in plain language.

Being the youngest among the other seven people in hiding, it was difficult for her to adjust to being trapped and restricted from the outside world. Being safe at the hiding place makes Anne feel that she is quite fortunate and luckier than millions of people as she mentions, "Terrible things are happening outside. At any time of night and day, poor helpless people are being dragged out of their homes... Families are torn apart; men, women, and children are separated.

Children come home from school to find that their parents have disappeared. Women return from shopping to find their houses sealed, their families gone" (Frank, Pg 83,1943) She also adds the destructive situation of the Grim War that was spread worldwide, "The Christians in Holland are also living in fear because their sons are being sent to Germany. Everyone is scared. Every night hundreds of planes pass over Holland on their way to German cities, to sow their bombs on German soil. Every hour hundreds of people are being killed in Russia and Africa. No one can keep out of the conflict, the entire world is at war, and even though the Allies are doing better, the end is nowhere in sight". (Frank, Pg 83, 1943) On September 16, 1943, Anne recorded that she was fighting anxiety and depression, "I've been taking valerian every day to fight the anxiety and depression, but it doesn't stop me from being even more miserable the next day". (Frank, pg 137, 1943)

Living together in a confined place, Anne and her mother's relationship became problematic. Their personalities were mismatched, and they frequently clashed. Therefore, Anne made negative remarks about her mother in the diary,

"We are exact opposites in everything, so naturally we are bound to run up against each other. I don't pronounce judgment on Mummy's character, for that is something I can judge. I only look at her as a mother, and she just doesn't succeed in being that to me.

I have to be my own mother. I've drawn myself apart from them all, I am my own skipper and later on I shall see where I come to land. All this comes about particularly because I have in my mind's eye an image of what perfect mother and wife should be, and in her whom I must call "mother". I find no trace of that image." (Frank, pg 61,1942)

Frank desired for her mother to be a true mother, friend, and guide, in order to alleviate the anguish of being isolated from the rest of the world. Rather than understanding Frank's inner and psychological sufferings, her mother imposed on her philosophy and harsh discipline that ultimately made her feel more depressed.

As Frank's loneliness grew more and more, she decided to confide in Peter Van Daan, whom she assumed to be a "Rather soft, shy, gawky youth; can't expect much from his company." (Frank, pg 30,1942)

But soon Frank falls in love with Peter, "As for Peter.... I don't want to give him up. He's so sweet and I admire him so much. He and I could have a really beautiful relationship." (Frank, Anne pg 241,1944)

Gradually Frank's desire for Peter dried up as she realized that Peter would never become the friend she had hoped for.

Franks develops an understanding of the inner source of happiness and she beautifully quotes,

"I don't have much in the way of money or worldly possessions, I'm happy, and I intend to stay that way! I was born happy, I love people, I have a trusting nature, and I'd like everyone else to be happy too." (Frank, Anne pg 237,1944)

She even tries to develop patience, and acceptance towards her mother and the adults and at such a tender age writes the most remarkable quote, "People are truly good at heart." (Frank, pg ,1944)

Frank has gone through self-discovery and found two personalities residing inside her,

"I'm split in two. One side contains my exuberant cheerfulness, my flippancy, my joy in life, and, above all, my ability to appreciate the lighter side of things. By that, I mean not finding anything wrong with flirtations, a kiss, an embrace, a saucy joke. This side of me is usually lying in wait to ambush the other one, which is much purer, deeper and finer. No one knows Anne's better side, and that's why most people can't stand me...I'm afraid that people who know me as I usually am will discover I have another side, better and fine side. I'm afraid they'll mock me, think I'm ridiculous and sentimental and not take me seriously... the deeper Anne is too weak. If I force the good Anne into the spotlight for even fifteen minutes, she shuts up like a clam the moment she's called upon to speak, and let Anne number one do the talking. Before I realize it, she's disappeared". (Frank, pg 332-333, 1944)

This was the last entry before her arrest, according to the Afterword provided in *The Diary of a Young Girl* - on the morning of August 4, 1944. Sometimes between ten and ten-thirty, a car pulled up at 263 Prinsengracht. Several figures emerged and arrested the eight people hiding in the Annex.

Editing, Adaptations, Case Study and Reviews About Anne's Diary:

According to Otto Frank, after the arrest, Hermann Van Pels (Van Daan) was gassed to death in Auschwitz shortly before the Gas Chambers were dismantled. Auguste Van Pels (Petronella Van Daan) did not survive the concentration camp. Peter Van Pels (Van Daan) was forced to take part in the 16th January 1945 "Death March 'where he died three days before the camp was liberated. Fritz Pfeffer (Albert Dussel) died in the Neuengamme Concentration camp. Edith Frank (Otto Frank's wife) died in Auschwitz – Birkenau on January 6, 1946, from hunger and exhaustion. Margot and Anne Frank were transported from Auschwitz at the end of October and taken to Bergen – Belsen, where the Typhus epidemic broke out and killed thousands of prisoners, including Margot and a few days later, Anne. Among the eight only Otto Frank survived and was liberated by the Russian troops.

Meip Gies and Bep Voskuijl, the two secretaries working in the building found Anne's diaries strewn all over the floor. They tucked them away in a desk drawer for safekeeping and waited for Anne to return. When it was clear that Anne did not survive. Meip handed over the unread diaries to Otto Frank, who decided to fulfill his daughter's wish and published her diary. He selected materials from versions a and b.

Later edited them into a smaller version known as version c and omitted several passages dealing with Anne's sexuality, unflattering passages about her mother and her menstruation period. Today the diary is read by millions of readers over the world and is famously known as *The Diary of a Young Girl*. The diary has been translated into more than 65 languages and is widely read as Diary of the Holocaust. The English translation was published in 1995 which contains materials that were edited out of the original version and made it nearly one—third longer than the first one.

Diary on Screen:

The story of Anne Frank has been made widely available throughout the years through several adaptations of the diary for film, television, music, theater, dance, graphic diaries, and exhibitions. Meyer Levin advocated for the diary's release and distribution in the English – speaking world, and began to work on a stage version of Anne Frank material in 1952. But his version was not well received by theater producers. The Pulitzer Prizewinning 1955 play of the same name was based on the posthumously published diary of Anne Frank, which served as the basis for the 1959 historical drama film "The Diary of Anne Frank". It was the first movie adaptation of the play and the original plot was directed by George Stevens the screenplay was written by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett. According To one review, they converted Anne Frank's diary into a witness of "a pure heart in a time of horror", as the theatrical version was more popular than the book edition and this became the dominant image of "Anne Frank: the girl who despite everything believes in the good in people "remarked by Otto Frank at the close of the play who himself watched it.

Finally, some 60 years after the first dramatization, Leon de Winter and Jessica Durlacher's "Anne" brought an entirely new play to the stage in 2014. The drama was set inside a framework plot: after the war, Anne Frank informs a publisher about her diary, transporting the audience back to 1942, when she is handed the notebook for her 13th birthday. While Otto's position is pushed further into the background, the depth of the mother-daughter bond is highlighted in de Winter and Durlacher's version. The tale extends beyond the Diary as well. The raid on the Secret Annex is witnessed by the audience, who watches as the eight persons in hiding are brought away. Anne Frank's life has been adapted for film regularly in a variety of nations and with varying aims.

The award-winning docudrama "Meine Tochter Anne Frank" (My Daughter Anne Frank) depicts the story from Otto Frank's point of view. Friends of Anne Frank, as well as Otto Frank, Hannah Goslar, and Buddy Elias, talk in the video, which combines narrative and documentary aspects. Hessian, West German, and Berlin-Brandenburg Broadcasting Companies co-produced the film.

A year later, on February 16, 2016, the literary film adaptation of "The Diary of Anne Frank" premiered at the 66th Berlinale film festival. The film, directed by Hans Steinbichler, focuses on Anne's personal development as she goes through puberty in the hidden annex under critical and dangerous conditions. Anne's texts are converted into scenes in this film. The Diary entries are frequently spoken literally, with Anne staring directly at the audience. The film aims to use this modernized rendition of Anne Frank's narrative to reach a new generation of young people.

Case Study of Anne Frank:

An updated graphic version rendition of Anne Frank's diary was first released in 1947 in the language Dutch, which was reviewed by Ruth Franklin in a lecture series available on YouTube, called "Acts of Remembrance: Shaping Holocaust Memory in the Twenty–First Century". According to Franklin, Anne Frank was indeed one of the first to contribute to the public shaping of Holocaust Memory and Anne's diary is a landmark in the canon of Holocaust Literature.

She explains and critics what Meyer Levin author of "Compulsion" had reviewed about "Anne Frank: Diary of a young girl "which was published in the New York Times Book Review with the headline, "The child behind the Secret Door" that emphasizes Anne's youth and innocence According to Levin "Because the diary was not written in retrospect, it contains the trembling life of every moment ... surely, she (Anne Frank) will be widely loved, for this wise and wonderful. A young girl brings back a poignant delight in the infinite human spirit." (Levin, Meyer, The Child Behind the Secret Door; An Adolescent Girl's Own Story of How She Hid for Two Years During the Nazi Terror, The New York Times, June 15, 1952, Section BR, page 1)

Franklin comments on this review that it does not really focus on the testimonial aspects of the book; but much more about Anne as a kind of typical adolescent, depicting the trials and tribulations of going through puberty, extremely unusual and difficult circumstances. Several decades later, in 1986, Harry Mulish, a Dutch writer republished in the New York Review of Books where he calls it,

"The work by this child is not simply not a work of art, but in a certain sense, it is a found object. It was after all literally found among the debris on the floor after the eight characters departed" - Mulisch, Harry, Death and Maiden, July 17, 1986) But Ruth Franklin strongly registers an absolute disagreement with Mulisch, as according to her, Anne was not a child at the time she wrote the diary. Anne was fully aware of the agency's going around her and her controls deliberately in constructing her book and its alteration from a private diary into a public work.

Individuals who have ever read the diary will also suggest this because it's really iconic, how a 15-year-old managed to put down her thoughts so beautifully in an absolutely clear manner. People may misinterpret her as a child, but she was really mature enough among the futile adults living with her and she really had a different spectrum to see the world so positively in the gloomy environment. While other girls were getting ready to marry, she was working hard rewriting and editing her diary in order to become a journalist and telling tales about her hiding in the Secret Annex. Yet her dreams never came true but her father successfully published her diary in front of a broad audience.

Implications:

An archetypal Jew, Holocaust Victim, a young diarist, and a female voice. These attributes either fit Anne perfectly or completely explain her significance. In the poem "The Darkling Thrush", written by Thomas Hardy, this girl is actually portrayed as a symbol of hope, her never giving up spirit is commendable, and her ability to seek positivity in a melancholic situation.

"I don't think of all the misery, but of the beauty that still remains"

British author Graham Greene in his book, "Ways of Escape "put into words what most writers know: "Writing is a form of therapy; sometimes I wonder how all those who do not write, compose or paint can manage to escape the madness, melancholia, the panic and fear which is inherent in a human situation" (Greene 9)

It is noted that the above lines are actually effective as these work as a mood elevator and when we talk about Anne Frank, these really worked for her as a therapy to pen down her emotions and face reality.

A rhetorical question often arises in our minds,

"What if Anne Frank never chose to write?"

Answering this might be difficult because she never chose to write her diaries. Then we would never be able to read about this young passionate writer, which was written within the course of 2 years. Her story would have remained underground and would never have been an inspiration for millions of people to write a diary.

On June 12, 2020, during the first wave of Coronavirus, Tanushree Singh published an article in the Times of India, in which she emphasized to everyone to read Anne Frank's Diary. Compare her forced confinement to lockdown in many ways. Tanushree Singh, suggests the readers to re-read the diary so that they could feel better and blessed because Anne's situation was worse than ours. But still, Anne remained positive as writing diaries and reading books serves as a way of escapism from reality. Anne constantly told her diary about what she was reading. How a funny series lightened her mood, and how mythology fascinated her despite being away from school. She never stopped herself from being educated or learning something new. It's interesting that we could learn so much from this young girl.

Anne's voice was heard when millions of others were silenced, thanks to her diary, which was saved by one of the Secret Annex's volunteers, Miep Gies, and published by her father, Otto Frank, who survived the war. She was a young woman fleeing persecution whose life was brutally cut short. Anne and the majority of her family and 6 million other Jewish people were slaughtered by the German Nazi regime for being different. They had been victims of evil. They were the targets of hatred.

Conclusion:

At the end of the research, I would like to conclude that "Diary of a young girl" is not just a mere book written by a teenage girl. But it's an extraordinary account of the glimpse of not only World War 2 or the cruel laws of the Nazi party. But also deals with complex topics such as human growth, sharing experiences with others, and learning lessons through pain. Reading Anne's diary allowed us to understand what it feels like to be prisoned, mentally frustrated, and to share a room with a stranger. Anne's story is really heart-touching and deep as she proved that nobody got to control one's growing thoughts even in prison.

On May 3, 1960, 'Anne Frank's House' was inaugurated as a museum for visitors to preserve her legacy. Otto Frank, Anne Frank's father who was the sole survivor of the eight people hiding in the Secret Annex as well as Anne's childhood friend Hannah Goslar who also survived the concentration camp were invited. Reporters say that Otto Frank was emotional during the ceremony. A few years later Hannah Goslar enclosed her testimony, "Anne wrote in her diary on November 27, 1943, about me. She asked why should I (Anne Frank) be chosen to live and she (Hannah Goslar) probably died.

Ironically the opposite came true. Now I am a happy grandmother in Israel, and it was Anne who died. Because of this irony, I feel obliged to tell as much as I can about Anne Frank. Anne wanted to be famous and live on after her death. By telling what I remember, perhaps I can add a little to her fame, though Anne never would have dreamed how famous she is now ..." - (Scholastic Website, May 1997 and 1999)

But in my opinion, Anne Frank still lives inside millions of hearts who were moved by her story and took her as an inspiration. She is a sensation and is a person who is an answer to the bitter truth that forced her to stop writing her diary and her diary proves that history is a source of suffering and has stored the pain of uncountable people like Anne.

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