1. INTRODUCTION

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This PADS volume has been a long time in the works. It was initially envisioned as a book dedicated to Walt Wolfram, who has initiated so much work on African American English (AAE), first in Detroit (1969), then in Mississippi (1974), and since 1992 in North Carolina. The studies presented here were first introduced in two Linguistic Society of America symposia (Yaeger-Dror and Thomas 2007, 2008). Papers that were offshoots of those symposia were then delivered at the New Ways of Analyzing Variation conference or the International Conference on Language and Social Psychology and the results incorporated into the subsequent articles in this volume and in a forthcoming volume on interdialectal accommodation to be published in the *Journal of English Linguistics* in 2010 (Yaeger-Dror and Purnell forthcoming).

We address variation within African American English here—not the variation related to social class and gender that previous studies have examined, but geographical variation. African American English (AAE), in this text, will be used for the dialects spoken by African Americans who are citizens of the United States. For the most part, we are referring to speakers whose ancestors were living in the United States before the end of the Civil War in 1865. We will try to avoid the impression that we are including speakers who are from other parts of the New World (e.g., Guyana, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti) or are African immigrants themselves. The extent to which blacks who have immigrated to the United States since 1865 (much less 1965!) have assimilated into this African American culture and dialect is a much more complicated question that will be left to future studies.

We use Predominant Vernacular English (PVE) where previous studies have referred to European American English. The speakers of what is determined to be the predominant dialect, or local PVE, of a given locale are (in each study) non–African

Americans who speak the local KOINÉ—often referred to as the REGIONAL DIALECT of the area. This locution has been chosen both to emphasize that in each city studied there is a locally predominant vernacular norm which differs from city to city, as Labov, Ash, and Boberg (2006) have now reconfirmed, and to avoid the impression that the speakers of this dialect are all of European descent. This is an important point in a research environment where there is a great deal of evidence that Latinos (e.g., Thomas 2001; Fought 2003; Konopka and Pierrehumbert 2008; Roeder forthcoming) do not necessarily speak this dialect, although they certainly are influenced by it, and that Asian Americans (Wong 2007; Chun 2009; Hall-Lew 2009) generally do and may in fact have influenced the regional PVE.

AAE has generated several controversies, a fact which is not surprising for the most extensively studied single group of dialects in North America. During the 1960s, there was debate about whether vernacular forms of AAE (or AAVE) were "adequate" as linguistic systems. This debate was resolved by the early work of Labov, Wolfram, and their colleagues: AAVE certainly is a complete linguistic system (see, e.g., Labov 1972).

There were also debates about whether AAVE is consistently distinct from the predominant local vernacular in a given area. This debate emerged because the important early studies of AAVE (Labov et al. 1968; Wolfram 1969; Fasold 1972; Labov 1972; Rickford and McNair-Knox 1994) were conducted in Northern or semi-Northern cities of the diaspora, where AAVE was found to differ quite extensively from the local speech and was found to share many of the same patterns from city to city. However, AAVE had been transplanted from the South only a generation or two before these studies, and it was unclear to what extent it differed from Southern White Vernacular English (SWVE). Studies such as Wolfram's (1974) examination of speech in Mississippi demonstrated that it did, though other studies suggested that most differences were more quantitative than qualitative (e.g., Bailey and Bassett 1986; Dorrill 1986; Pederson et al. 1986–92; Thomas 1989a, 2001; Bernstein 1993).

Questions about the origins of AAE have attracted debate continuously since the 1960s. This debate has centered around two opposing positions: the Anglicist (e.g., McDavid and McDavid 1951) and neo-Anglicist (e.g., Poplack 2000) position that AAE features originated from dialects of the British Isles, and the Creolist position (e.g., Dillard 1972) that AAE originated from a creole that was once widely spoken on plantations across the South. However, there are other positions, such as a view that early AAE exhibited substrate features from western African languages without coalescing into a true creole and a hybrid view that AAE combined features from British Isles dialects and from creoles, since, after all, many slaves were brought from the West Indies to the American South.

Other issues have concerned the continuing development of AAE with respect to specific local vernaculars. The first was the Divergence/Convergence Controversy, which flared up during the 1980s, based at first on data that had been collected during the 1960s and early 1970s. It began when Labov and Harris (1986) reported that AAVE and the local PVE in Philadelphia were diverging, not converging as had been assumed for AAVE and PVEs across the country up until that point. Considerable debate ensued (Fasold et al. 1987; Bailey and Maynor 1987, 1989; Butters 1989), but it was short-lived. Quite recently, a new controversy, the "Uniformity Controversy," has appeared (Thomas 2007). This controversy involves a number of related questions:

a. Is there a set of norms for AAE throughout the country to which many or most African Americans are oriented (even if not all African Americans acquire the normative forms)?
b. What degree of geographical uniformity does AAE exhibit?
c. How dependent or independent is geographical variation in AAE from geographical variation in the white vernaculars of the same region?

In earlier years, researchers tended to assume that AAE was geographically uniform and that the principal differentiations within it fell along social class and gender lines. As Thomas (2007)

notes, when a researcher encountered a difference between his or her own results and those of another researcher elsewhere, the difference was generally attributed to variations in corpus design or analysis methods. Earlier researchers assumed implicitly that there was a widespread set of norms for which AAVE speakers aimed. In fact, following Labov's earlier discussion of "group members" versus "Lames" (Labov et al. 1968; Labov 1972), studies often discounted speakers who did not converge toward those norms, based on the assumption that their behavior was, as Harlem preteen group members referred to them, "Lame" (Labov 1972).

However, even preceding the results from those early studies in the Northern diaspora, other studies had already shown there were regional variations within AAE in the South. Dialect geography revealed a rather complex picture, one that even the dialect geographers themselves were prone to oversimplifying. For example, Kurath (1949, 6) asserted that "by and large the Southern Negro speaks the language of the white man of his locality or area and of his education." However, Dorrill (1986), who compared African American and white speakers from the same communities using data from Kurath's own Linguistic Atlas of the Middle and South Atlantic States, found that the situation was more complex than Kurath had suggested. Dorrill's analysis showed that African Americans in these states shared numerous local features with nearby whites, such as the allophonic variations of the BITE and BOUT vowels that used to predominate in Virginia. Nonetheless, he also showed that African Americans tended to exhibit more monophthongal forms of the BOAT, BAIT, and BOUGHT vowels than whites in a given area. Data from the *Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States* (*LAGS*) (Pederson et al. 1986–92) also showed the same sort of mixed picture: AAE is far from geographically uniform in *LAGS*, but not identical to white speech, either. The clearest exemplification of the geographical heterogeneity is the Mississippi Delta region, in which African Americans (and whites) used numerous phonological and lexical forms seldom found elsewhere in the *LAGS* territory. However, African Americans also exhibited some general trends that set them off from whites, such as showing significantly less fronting of the BOUT nucleus than whites in *LAGS*.

More recent studies have also uncovered pockets illustrating the great diversity within Southern AAE. Wolfram and Thomas (2002), for example, found that African Americans in remote Hyde County, North Carolina, showed several features infrequent in AAE elsewhere. Among these were morphosyntactic features, such as leveled *weren't* (e.g., *it weren't cold*) and plural *-s* (*the cars goes too fast*), and vocalic features, such as fronted forms of the BOAT vowel and front-gliding forms of the BOUT diphthong. Nevertheless, younger African Americans were losing many of these features, and even older African Americans showed subtle differences from local whites. To the west, Fridland (2003) and Fridland and Bartlett (2006) have noted that African Americans in Memphis share some vowel developments with local whites, such as fronting of the BOAT vowel and a switch in the relative positions of the BAIT and BET nuclei (both associated with the Southern Shift proposed by Labov 1994). Nevertheless, they also found that African Americans were adopting the fronting of BOAT more slowly than whites.

The diversity of patterns reflects the diversity of communities across the South. Hyde County had a long history of isolation. For most of its history, it was much easier to reach by boat than by land, and its African Americans were particularly cut off from African Americans elsewhere. Similar kinds of situations occurred in many parts of the South, such as the Appalachians, where tiny African American communities existed in scattered locations; the Sea Islands off the coast of South Carolina and Georgia, where African Americans constituted the majority and have maintained the creole Gullah to this day; and the swampy hinterlands of southern Louisiana, where French was long the main medium of communication. Conversely, the more central areas where the plantation culture flourished in antebellum days had large African American populations but were not isolated. The growth of Southern cities with the rise of mill towns starting during the 1870s and continuing during the twentieth century (Woodward 1951; Cobb 1984; Feagin 2004; McNair 2005) created new and substantial communities of African Americans who had close contacts with other African American communities.

Outside the South, the Great Migration, the movement of African Americans to large Northern and Western cities, created a new situation for African Americans. This arrangement consisted of dense communities of African Americans in inner-city neighborhoods surrounded by white Anglo, Hispanic, or less often Asian American communities, which in turn were surrounded by rural areas with almost no African Americans. African Americans in these new urban neighborhoods lacked the kinship ties to nearby rural communities that had existed in the South. Economically, they were tied to factories and other industry and had left behind agriculture, exemplified by the old sharecropping system. Linguistically, African Americans from different parts of the South found themselves living side by side. This situation likely created the mixing of dialectal forms and subsequent leveling of regional differences that make up KOINEIZATION, as Trudgill (1986) defines it. (See also Payne 1976, 1980; Kerswill 2002; and Auer, Hinskens, and Kerswill 2004.)

As will be discussed in this volume, the Great Migration of African American speakers to the North occurred relatively recently, peaking during World War I, the Great Depression, and World War II. This had not left a great deal of time for geographic differences to develop when data were gathered in the 1960s. In addition, movement of African Americans between cities may also have encouraged the development of widespread norms for AAE at the expense of local norms, as has the prestige of musical styles like hip hop (Alim and Baugh 2007; Alim, Ibrahim, and Pennycook 2008; Alim 2009; Blake, Fix, and Shousterman 2009), which has even led to the "crossing" of white speakers (e.g., Bucholtz and Skapoulli 2009; Guy and Cutler forthcoming), providing further motivation for a supraregional norm. Much of the morphosyntactic evidence, as well as some lexical (Smitherman 2000) and vocalic evidence, suggests that widespread AAE norms emerged. However, the dialect contact that African Americans experienced with surrounding non–African Americans differed from what they had known in the South. The dialects with which they found themselves in contact differed from city to city, too. In building new communities, they were free to create new linguistic norms that might differ from

one city to another. While evidence emerged for widespread AAE norms, there is also evidence that AAE phonology and sometimes morphosyntax varies in different cities, even while their phonology remains (at least quantitatively) distinct from that of other ethnic groups (Thomas 1989b; Deser 1990; Henderson 1996; Pollock and Berni 1997; Hinton and Pollock 2000; Anderson 2002; Flood 2002; Jones 2003; Nguyen 2006; Bloomquist 2009). Evidence to be presented here will demonstrate that there is also convergence toward the local phonology.

A problem that follows from this evidence is that we should be just as careful not to imply hegemony of regional PVEs over African American varieties as we are to avoid the simplistic assumption that there is a single iconic AAVE.

While many forms of AAE retain their distinctiveness from neighboring varieties, an unanswered question is how much independence they show. Has AAE developed regional differentiation from a supraregional norm that did not result from accommodation to regional dominant dialects? The few previous papers addressing regional variation in AAE have discussed features, such as rhoticity and fronting of the BOAT vowel, that clearly represent accommodation to local varieties (Pollack and Berni 1997; Hinton and Pollock 2000; Flood 2002; Fridland and Bartlett 2006). This potential bias mirrors earlier reports by dialect geographers, such as the above-mentioned quotation from Kurath (1949).

In the reported cases in which accommodation to dominant varieties has been attested, whites outnumbered African Americans considerably, and the relative population sizes alone seem to account for the direction of assimilation. For one region in which African Americans vastly outnumbered whites at one time—the Low Country of coastal South Carolina and Georgia—it has been suggested that monophthongal forms of the BAIT and BOAT vowels spread from African American speech to white speech (Thomas and Bailey 1998) rather than vice versa. Other studies have suggested that the limited amount of copula deletion found in SWVE spread from AAE (Wolfram 1974) and have revived an old theory that nonrhoticity in Southern white English may have been promoted by nonrhoticity in AAE (Feagin 1997).

Another factor the studies in this volume consider is the degree of interaction that exists between different communities within the urban setting: the degree to which a given AAE accommodates to the local PVE norms is theoretically also influenced by the degree of actual face-to-face contact that occurs between members of each group in any given locale. Presumably, the greater the degree of segregation that exists in a given locale, the smaller the opportunity for assimilation or accommodation in either direction. Of course, the factors of power and prestige also play a role in the direction of assimilation, and their precise effects with regard to the transfer of features between AAE and local varieties remain to be worked out.

The number of studies that provide evidence for geographical diversity within AAE, especially outside of dialect geography, remains small, however. The previously mentioned studies do not provide anything close to a broad geographical picture of AAE phonology. Moreover, they either explore a small subset of phonological variables or focus on syntax. Nevertheless, this preliminary work has provided a tantalizing taste of how much geographical variation might exist in AAE now that there are large numbers of adult speakers native to each area. It can be used to provide a historical perspective on the work to be presented here. We have attempted to address this part of the Uniformity Controversy—the degree of geographical variation in AAE—in this collection. To facilitate comparability, each research group followed the same protocol, analyzing both African American and local PVE speakers. Each speaker's vowel system was analyzed to permit the comparison of the local AAE and "General American" vowel phonology, as compared with that of the archetype for a supralocal AAE, as well as with the local PVE's idiosyncrasies. Each research group also considered the available evidence on the degree to which speakers from one group actually are in contact with the other group. Some of these studies also considered the degree to which an individual AAE speaker interacts with local PVE speakers—either by considering where they live and what their own relationships are, or by self-reports of the individual speakers.

In fact, aside from our unifying the protocol for these studies so that the works are comparable, we also found that it would be

helpful to formulate a convention to unify the text and simplify the reader's task; with that thought in mind, we have suggested that authors use neither a phonological / / nor a variable ( ) presentation, both of which differ in conventions from author to author. We have chosen instead to refer to a given vowel class using keywords, following the principle behind Wells (1982). To further simplify, we turned to Ladefoged's (2005) choice of keyword paradigm, which uses words that are as untrammeled by their consonantal environment as possible. To obtain these keywords, he chose an H_D frame, to have his speakers "Say HEED again."

To minimize the need for varying the "carrier" environment, in each case, the vowel being focused on here will be a B_T paradigm (see table 1.1). Where the environment requires a more specific formulation, the paradigm word will be chosen to reflect that change. For example, most instances of BITE in the volume refer to the diphthong /aɪ/ in all contexts; however, where the following

TABLE 1.1
Keywords Used to Represent Vowel Classes

IPA	*Keyword*	[_r]	[_l]	*Specific Formulations*
/i/	BEET	BEER	PEEL	
/ɪ/	BIT		BILL	BIN [_N]
/e/	BAIT	BEAR	BAIL	
/ɛ/	BET		BELL	BEN [_N]; BEG [_g]
/æ/	BAT			BACK [_k]; BAG [_g]; BAN [_N]; TAP [_p]; TAB [_b]; BAD, for Milwaukee [_d], for New York see p. 109
/ɑ/	BOT	BAR		
/ɔ/	BOUGHT	BORder	BALL	
/o/	BOAT	BOAR	BOWL	
/ʌ/	BUT		CULL	
/ʊ/	BOOK	BOOR	PULL	
/u/	BOOT		POOL	TOOT [$C_{coronal}$_]
/aɪ/	BITE	PYRE	BILE	BIDE [_C_{vd}]; BUY [_#]; PINE [_N]
/aʊ/	BOUT	HOUR	HOWL	BOUGH [_#]
/oɪ/	BOY		BOIL	
/ɝ/	BIRD			BURR [_#]; bothER [–stress]

phonetic environment is pertinent, BITE, BIDE, PINE, and BUY are used to indicate /aɪ/ followed by a voiceless obstruent, followed by a voiceless obstruent, followed by a nasal, and in word-final position, respectively. Pre-/r/ and pre-/l/ vowels are differentiated with their own keywords. We hope that this convention will permit the reader to follow all the authors without difficult transitioning between chapters.

The communities included here represent strikingly diverse contact situations. First, there are two studies of communities in what might be called the "Old South"—rural, relatively isolated locales. These two chapters describe communities that are otherwise dissimilar. The first, by Childs, Mallinson, and Carpenter, examines two locales at the eastern end of North Carolina and two at the western end, all of which were surveyed in research initiated by Wolfram. One of the eastern locations is Hyde County, the same one studied by Wolfram and Thomas (2002) and Wolfram, Thomas, and Green (2000). In all four locales, African Americans formed fairly small communities that were isolated from other African Americans for long periods. The dominant dialects were the Pamlico Sound dialect in the east and the southern Appalachian dialect in the west, and African Americans showed considerable—if not complete—accommodation to them. The second study, by Wroblewski, Strand, and Dubois, examines AAE in three parishes in rural southern Louisiana. In striking contrast to the North Carolina locales, many African Americans in southern Louisiana, who often identify themselves as Creoles, have a long tradition of French language use. Like their white neighbors, the Cajuns, they exhibit dialectal features in a mixture not found elsewhere. They share features such as monophthongal forms of the BOAT and BAIT vowels with the Cajuns. Yet they show evidence of some older features as well.

Next is Andres and Votta's study of a "New South" community: Roswell, Georgia, an exurb of Atlanta. This community is as close to the mainstream of AAE as any surveyed in this volume. Even in Roswell, though, AAE appears to show some influence from the speech of the neighboring PVE. Andres and Votta examine some features associated with the "Southern Shift" (e.g., Labov 1994), a

series of vowel shifts that occur in Southern white speech, and the merger of the BOT and BOUGHT vowels. These processes seem to have spilled over from the PVE to AAE, but the details are more complicated. Andres and Votta's results are similar to those from Memphis that appeared in Fridland (2003) and Fridland and Bartlett (2006). It is notable that evidence for both convergence and dialect maintenance occurring together was not found in earlier studies, when most of the parents of the AAE speakers were not from the local community, but is more likely to be found in these newer studies based on more settled communities. After the urban South, we move to the urban Northeast. Here we examine two cities with strikingly different PVEs as well as different settlement histories: New York and Pittsburgh.

An intricate interethnic relationship appears in Pittsburgh in the chapter by Eberhardt. African Americans came to Pittsburgh even before the Great Migration, to work in the steel mills; they have adopted the local BOT-BOUGHT merger and fronting of the BOAT vowel from Pittsburgh's PVE. However, they have not adopted monophthongization of the BOUT diphthong, which they self-report as a feature indexing "white" identity rather than local identity and which Eberhardt finds is not being retained by younger white speakers either. At the same time, they have retained two widespread AAE features that are not common in Pittsburgh's PVE, the BIN-BEN merger and monophthongization of BIDE.

In New York, Coggshall and Becker also find that AAE and the PVE reveal a complex relationship. African Americans have lost some typical AAE features that were documented in Labov's earlier work, while accommodating to locally salient features, such as the complex offglide of the BOUGHT vowel; at the same time, they have retained other AAE features.

Finally, we have two studies of cities in the Midwest: Columbus, Ohio, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. However, like our featured Northeastern cities, the PVEs in these two cities differ substantially. Columbus lies in the Midland dialect region, typified by fronting of the BOAT and BOOT vowels and various mergers, including ongoing merger of the BOT and BOUGHT vowels. Milwaukee, meanwhile, lies in the Northern dialect area, where the series of vowel changes

called the Northern Cities Shift (Labov 1994) occurs. Milwaukee was largely settled by African Americans after the Great Migration was past.

The Northern Cities Shift includes, among other shifts, the raising and ingliding/downgliding of the BAT vowel in all contexts, fronting of the BOT vowel, and lowering or retraction of the BET vowel. The AAE speakers in the sample appear to share some of these local features, though they eschew Canadian Raising of BITE-BIDE (in which the nucleus is higher for BITE than for BIDE), which also occurs locally, and they retain the BIN-BEN merger. Purnell takes a closer look at the amount of contact a particular African American has with local PVE speakers and whether accommodation to an interviewer's speech occurs. He finds that certain variables—especially fronting of the BOOT vowel, the weakness of the BIDE glide, and the height of the BET vowel—are strongly affected by those factors in Milwaukee.

For Columbus, Durian, Dodsworth, and Schumacher find, once again, that African Americans converge toward the local PVE for some features but not others. They have adopted fronting of the BOAT and BOOT vowels but differ from whites in their environmentally influenced realizations of the BOT and BOUGHT vowels. They also show a raising and fronting shift of the BUT vowel that is not reported in the PVE, but which Thomas (2001) suggested would be more advanced in AAE than in most PVE speech.

These studies should be considered as preliminary evidence for the early years of the twenty-first century. The evidence described in these studies reflects a much more nuanced assessment, linguistically speaking, than was possible in the late 1960s or even in the 1980s. Certainly, the evidence presented here from the South (in the papers by Childs et al., Andres and Votta, and Strand et al.) supports Wolfram's (2007) assertion that the hypothesis (or, as he now refers to it, the "myth") of a uniform AAE cannot be maintained.

However, perhaps the theory was never intended to be relevant for communities in which AAE and local vernacular speakers had been in consistent contact for 200 years. Maybe it reflected the "new town" situation that arose during the Great Migration—with the parents of the speakers, as well as most of the speakers them-

selves, new to the area and interacting primarily with other speakers whose roots were in various regions of the South rather than with African American OR with white speakers who were from the local area. It may pertain primarily to settings where AAE speakers—like people in the situations discussed in Trudgill (1986), the mostly white children in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania (Payne 1976, 1980), families in mill communities such as Anniston, Alabama (Feagin 2004), and Griffin, Georgia (McNair 2005), or the "new towns" of Milton Keynes, England (Kerswill and Williams 2000), and the suburbs of Texas (Thomas 1997)—had relatively limited contact with speakers from outside the nonlocal, nonnative, segregated community.

Thus, while the more insular Southern communities provide a sense of perspective on what members of the parent generation may have had as a linguistic background, evidence from non-Southern communities 20–50 years further on provides crucial points for comparison as well. In the Northeastern and Midwestern cities discussed here, we find a great deal of regional diversity, even while certain characteristic features of AAE appear repeatedly. As discussed above, it appears that each local AAE community has incorporated features of the local predominant vernacular, while maintaining some nonlocal features, presumably to index social identity.

Is there some consensus by these authors that this increased accommodation to a given locally predominant vernacular is caused by increasing integration into the local community? Unfortunately, the studies are fairly clear that actual integration has been reduced since the 1970s, so the degree of face-to-face interaction with local vernacular speakers has perhaps even decreased since the studies that were carried out in the 1960s. On the other hand, we would be wise to consider the results in the light of earlier theoretical work: the work of Milroy (1980) and Sankoff (Sankoff and Laberge 1978) is particularly helpful. The interaction of social network and Linguistic Marketplace (developed on the basis of Bourdieu's early theories) may weight the importance of local vernacular features so the speakers in the workforce are more prone to accommodate to them.

Thus, the picture this text paints is more nuanced than earlier studies, but it also leads to new questions about AAE that will have to be resolved in future work. Is there a way to determine which local features will be used to index local identity? How can we determine which AAE features will be used to index racial identity? Exactly what role does the level of contact with non–African Americans play in a speaker's vowel configuration? While some communities seem to favor, for example, the BIN-BEN merger as a marker of ethnicity, that is not universally the case. There seems to be a suite of variants that are widespread in AAE, but in a given community, African Americans keep some of those features, discard others, and adopt selected features from the local PVE. The studies included in this volume demonstrate clearly and importantly the direction future research needs to go. The next steps will be to examine whether and how the local situation determines the development of local AAE, whether contact with African Americans from other regions reinforces the variants that are widespread in AAE, whether—even in the absence of extensive supraregional AAE contacts—the speakers in a given place will focus on the same AAE features to index/demonstrate their ethnic/racial affiliation, and the degree to which the use of such indexical features is contingent on processes similar to those that cause "crossing" among the white fans of rap and hip hop.

Initial studies of the importance of various factors on Speech Accommodation (Giles 1973, 1984; Coupland 2007) are already providing preliminary analyses of "accommodative" tendencies in different communities (e.g., Bucholtz and Skapoulli 2009; Harwood and Pitts 2009; Yaeger-Dror and Purnell forthcoming). However, very little of that work has addressed the issue of the degree to which AAE speakers accommodate to the national "General American" norm, to the locally dominant norm, or neither, and whether the degree to which they may do so is influenced by the degree of actual face-to-face contact that occurs between African Americans and PVE speakers; future research will also focus on the importance of indexical weighting (Yaeger and Feagin 2005) of favored and disfavored realizations.

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