Heidegger's Neglect of and Dependence on the Body in Being and Time

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Abstract: Martin Heidegger explicitly refuses to discuss the ontological nature of the body in Being and Time. For him, to discuss the body is to mistake Dasein for something objectively present, an unbecoming description of the being with a relationship in its being to its being. Herein, I endeavor to show that Heidegger not only missteps when he does not discuss the body, but he actually needs it and presupposes it in his ontological treatment of Dasein as care. The body is what allows for our particular kind of being-in-the-world as beings that take care. I will show how Heidegger relies on the body in his ontology, and attempt to give an account of the body that remains in the framework of Being and Time.

Heidegger's lacking conception of the body in Being and Time (hereafter cited as BT) is both astonishing and vexing. He either presupposes it in the structure of Dasein, and so does not feel the need to give it a separate treatment, or he finds discussion of the body confounding in the overall discussion of Dasein. Perhaps it is actually because of the former that the latter is true; that is, to focus on the body at all would confound the analysis of the being of Dasein as something other than what it actually is, and the body is thus presupposed or ignored as obviously being part of Dasein. Even as Heidegger presupposes body in his descriptions of being-in-the-world, he does not ever give the body the full ontological treatment it deserves as a part of Dasein's being. Heidegger takes discussion of the body to be misguided because to think of the physical nature of Dasein is to consider it as an objectively present object (BT, 117). Further, an analysis of the physical nature

of Dasein would perhaps miss the point and reduce Dasein to a merely biological being, rather than a being with a particular relationship to being. Dasein, which is a being oriented toward a future of possibility, cannot just be an object that is present-at-hand, or a biological system determined by its physical characteristics. This would be to make the mistake of all previous ontologies in considering the human being as situated first and foremost in the present, between past and future. To put the human being in this position misses the fundamental structure of Dasein's being.

This need to situate Dasein in possibility unfortunately leaves the body in shadow, an obviously-there but nonetheless unarticulated part of Dasein's being. And yet one might wonder how Dasein as being-in-the-world relates to the world at all (this point is one Merleau-Ponty discusses at length in The Phenomenology of Perception.) For Heidegger, the world is disclosed to us, most primordially as ready-to-hand, and then more deficiently as present-at-hand. By our dealings-in, or our projects, we come to know the world by way of tools. Beings in the world that are not Dasein are first disclosed in their uses for our projects. But how can we discuss readiness-to-hand without a discussion of the hand? Is the hand also disclosed to us in the way other beings are, or is the hand taken for granted as our way to disclose the world - or is it even disclosed at all? It cannot be that we come to know our own bodies as objects separate from us. We must not revert to a phenomenological dualism of self and body by refusing to discuss the nature of the body in our overall being. Yet Heidegger seems to do something like this when he neglects the body in his ontology.

What I intend to show is that Heidegger indeed presupposes the body in his ontology, and he needs the body in order for his ontology to work. While Heidegger specifically expresses his intention not to discuss the body in *Being and Time* (BT, 108), he is mistaken in not doing so.

If one of the purposes of *Being and Time* is to elucidate the fundamental ontological structures of Dasein, to leave out the body is a gross misstep. I will show that it is only by body that we encounter the world as beings that relate to the world through care, proving that Heidegger must assume the structure of the body in order to develop his existential analysis of being-in-the-world. What I will show is that body is not only presupposed in Dasein's ontological structure, but also that it is an unstated and neglected structure of Dasein. I will then attempt to give an account of the body that is true to the ontology of *Being and Time*, staying as true to Heidegger's vocabulary as possible.

Body as Heidegger understands it is inessential to Dasein because to discuss it reverts back to traditional ontologies and misses the question of being altogether. The body is certainly a part of Dasein, it is true, but this does not tell us anything about the being of Dasein: "But in the question of the being of human being, this cannot be summarily calculated in terms of the kinds of being of body, soul, and spirit which have yet first to be defined. And even for an ontological attempt which is to proceed in this way, some idea of the being of the whole would have to be presupposed" (BT, 48). The being of Dasein is not the sum of the being of its various parts. Rather, some idea of the being of Dasein must already be thought in order to understand the being of its parts. Certainly this is true, and yet, as we will see, the body is what makes some of the ontological structures of Dasein possible. One of these ontological structures is care: "[T]he expression xz is used in this inquiry as an ontological term (an existential) to designate the being of a possible being-in-theworld...because Dasein itself is to be made visible as *care* [Sorge]" (BT, 57). Care is a fundamental structure of Dasein's being-in-theworld. It is how Dasein manifests in the world, not as an object or a regular being among other beings, but as a being that is always first and foremost involved in the world. But how is this care made possible? It is certainly one of the ontological structures of Dasein, but we can trace our ability to care by way of our bodiliness in the world.

Dasein has world ontologically, and Dasein also always has a body, at the very least as an ontic feature. More precisely, Dasein is its world. Here I will embark on an analysis of being-in-the -world that will conclude that Dasein is its body. It might immediately be objected that body is not a separate structure of Dasein. Insofar as Dasein is its world, its body is also part of world. Body is thus not separate from the structure of world, and to think of it as so is to separate Dasein too much from world. The point I will show here is that although body and world might be encountered at the same time and possibly in similar ways, they are still separate existentials of Dasein. I will first give an exposition of the ways in which we encounter beings in the world. Beings in the world are encountered most primordially in terms of their utility, not as merely things that are objectively present. To be sure, beings may be encountered as objectively present as well, but this is only when the network of interconnected involvements of things breaks down in some way. We thus encounter them in a deficient way. Most fundamentally, however, we encounter other beings in the world as tools that are at hand for us. We do not think of them as things per se, but as ways for us to take care in the world, and complete various goals and projects. Even a simple projection like picking up a cup of tea still encounters the cup not as a thing but as a way of taking care in the world (i.e. we want tea, we pick the cup up without really considering the cup itself, and we drink the tea). Our involvements in the world disclose world for us in the most fundamental way.

Further, no being in the world stands in isolation. Each being is part of a network of interconnected associations, such that one being discloses a totality of beings. Heidegger gives the example of the pen, which discloses paper and

the desk and the room as a whole (BT, 68). Dasein thus never encounters just the pen, but all the other beings that are connected to the pen. We do not necessarily notice this network, but we encounter it most primordially in this way. Not to notice it can still be an encountering. We also never encounter just one thing at a time. We encounter many things all at once; a tree never stands as a single thing that we encounter, thus unlocking a gateway to many other connections which form a landscape. We encounter the tree, the grass, the bird, and the sky all at once.

It is when the pen breaks (or the hammer, to use the usual example) that we suddenly notice the paper, the desk, the lamp, the room, because the web of connections between beings has been broken. Suddenly the pen, no longer ready-tohand, becomes conspicuous (BT, 73). It is unwieldy; it cannot be used to complete the project originally undertaken. It is a kind of unhandiness (BT 73). But we might also lose the pen, and thus it is missing, or *obtrusive* (BT, 73). And finally, we might find that we do not have a pen, but a carrot, but what we really need is a pen. The carrot is *obstinate*, it stands in the way of the care being taken (BT, 74). In each of the three cases mentioned, the involvements and interconnectedness of beings break down, and we view not only the being that is broken, missing, or incorrect, as something unhandy and merely objectively present, but the entire world becomes viewed from this distant and thematic position.

The descriptions used for beings in the world can in a way be applied to body, but with different effects. For example, we encounter the body when we are taking care in the world. Body, like other beings, may not consciously be perceived, and it fades into the background of our dealings in the world. We do not ignore it, just as we do not ignore other beings in the world when we encounter them in taking care. We do not, however, encounter body as a tool. Beings in the world are encountered in terms of their utility. They are ready-to-hand. But is it appropriate to speak of the body as being ready-

to-hand? Is the hand ready-to-hand, or do we have some other relationship to our bodies that is not the same as with the world? The term ready-to-hand seems to insinuate it is to the hand that other beings are first disclosed, and this can be generalized to the body as a whole. Insofar as we are taking care, we may do this with any part of our perceptive body. It is through the body, then, that world and other beings are disclosed in their most primordial fashion. It is through the body that we come to know the world. It is also via the body that world is disclosed in the various deficient ways of being present that are described above. Any sort of perception of world that we have access to is through the body.

What does this actually mean as far as our relationship to the body is concerned? We are beings-in-the-world, after all. Does it not follow, then, that our bodies, being a part of us, are in the world as well? Heidegger says that Dasein is its world, and if body is part of Dasein, is body not part of Dasein's world as a sort of innerworldly being? In a sense, yes it is. Insofar as Dasein is its world, body is part of Dasein's world as well. But this does not necessarily mean that we encounter our bodies in the same way that we encounter other beings in the world. We have a much more intimate relationship with our bodies than with other beings in the world. This is shown in the term ready-to-hand, as explained above. The body facilitates our involvements in the world by being that to which world is always disclosed. It is by our bodies that we can take care in the world at all. Heidegger argues that Dasein is only spatial insofar as it takes care in the world (BT, 367). I agree with this claim, but it is through body that we can take care at all. Without body, there is no taking care. Nothing could be handy without the hand. Even as we use tools in the world to take care, it is first through our bodies that we can encounter these tools. Our bodies orient us spatially in the world as care. They could not do this, of course, if they were not in the world as part of Dasein. But it is not the same as world, and it is certainly not

encountered in the world in the same way as other beings in the world.

Dasein encounters its body first and foremost as that which orients us in the world as care. We are spatial beings insofar as we take care in the world. The body, much like the other beings in the world, is not perceived as merely present, although it is not simply ignored, either. The body fades into the background as part of our everyday dealings-in; we do not typically think about our bodies as we go about our daily lives. Body in many ways seems much like part of the network of interconnected involvements that make up world and the relationships between beings in the world. Certainly, insofar as Dasein is a being-in-the-world, body is also part of Dasein's involvements. But it is part of them by being that which allows for these involvements at all. Dasein could not be involved in the world without body, and even if it could, it would be a very different sort of being-in-the-world. It would be a sort of phenomenological idealism, with the mind of Dasein somehow interacting with world psychically and taking care without the modes of perception that it has with body.

Much like beings in the world, we can encounter our bodies in deficient ways. We can repurpose Heidegger's own vocabulary describe these deficient modes of encounter. For example, the hammer breaks, and it becomes conspicuous, unhandy. Suppose the hand breaks. We can also call the hand conspicuous. The breakdown of the body, as happens in injury and disease, often frustrates our taking care, and it does this even more intimately than when other beings become conspicuous. When the body breaks, it does not disrupt the interconnectedness of beings in the world, yet it prevents us from encountering them in their primordial mode of being. If the hand is broken, it does not matter that the hammer, the nail, and the wood are all intact. Without the working, healthy hand, the hammer cannot disclose itself by its utility. Instead, the hammer becomes something objectively present, because we cannot encounter it as a tool without the hand to grasp it. Further, the network of involvements the hammer belongs to is disclosed deficiently as a set of objectively present objects. None of these innerworldly beings themselves become conspicuous, but the body can easily be said to be conspicuous here.

If a part of the body is missing, as in amputation or developmental problems where a part of the body was never there to begin with, we could call the body (or a specific part of it) obtrusive. Despite the fact that these situations are not the same, we can still call the body obtrusive in each case. An amputated limb would, of course, be a loss for us, whereas the absence of a limb we never had would not a loss. Still, even in the latter case, the world is disclosed in a way that is different from if we did have the limb. Even if we do not feel a loss in the absence of this limb, we might still find ourselves in situations where to have the limb would inevitably allow the world to be disclosed in ways that it cannot without the limb. Again, the world cannot but be encountered with this different orientation occurring. Nothing has necessarily changed about the beings in the world themselves, even if they all happen to be in their rightful place and not missing for any given dealing-in. The body, on the other hand, will be receptive to disclosure of the other beings in the world in a deficient mode. The mode will reveal other beings as objectively present, insofar as the part of the body missing would typically be needed for the other being to disclose itself in terms of its utility.

It is more difficult, it seems to me, to discuss the ways in which the body might become obstinate, since we are always with our bodies. In what way can the body get in the way of our taking care that is different from when the body is conspicuous or obtrusive. Perhaps one distinct way body might get in the way is if we do not yet have a skill, or are particularly bad at a type of dealing-in. Suppose we are bad carpenters, but need to hammer together a piece of wood. It is not the fault of the hammer being

broken, missing, or the wrong tool that we cannot complete this project. Our body is not properly equipped with the skill needed to take care in this particular way. The body gets in the way by being clumsy, and we are frustrated in our taking care by this clumsiness. This might be one way in which the body might be obstinate. Here again, the body is recognized by us as deficient, as are the other beings in the world. However, just like the other examples, the body and the world are disclosed to us in very different ways. When the body is conspicuous, obtrusive, or obstinate, the world need not necessarily be these things as well. We have proven again that the body and world might be disclosed at the same time, but not necessarily in the same way, and we have shown that the body is indeed separate from world insofar as the body and the world are constituted and rendered meaningful by Dasein in different ways.

What is most profound here is that we have shown why we must consider body and world to be two separate but nevertheless necessary components of Dasein. Body might be given at the same time as world, and thus given with world in a sense. But body cannot be the same as world. To return to one's body is precisely to withdraw from the world. Insofar as the body withdraws from the world in pain, the body is clearly distinct from world. Pain makes us, as bodies, withdraw from world, and this pain discloses our spatial limitation insofar as we are bodily.

We have discussed the difference between body and world, with the body as being how we can be-in-the-world as Dasein. Dasein must be bodily, but bodily how? There are not many clues in *Being and Time* about how we should think of body. However, we might be able to use this empty account to our advantage. Perhaps there is more insight in Heidegger's refusal to discuss the body than initially appears. At least we might be justified in expanding on this point while still remaining true to his ontology.

Dasein is *bodily*, and many sensations and experiences for Dasein are also bodily. Pain and suffering are two such experiences that can manifest in a bodily way (joy and pleasure are others). Indeed, it does seem like intense pain and suffering place limitations on the person feeling them. They may disclose to us a sort of limitation of our possibilities. Imagine for instance, a person in pain so intense that she cannot think about (or really be aware of) anything else. Presumably this person is not thinking about her ontological structure of possibility and relating to it in a way that allows her to participate in that possibility. In other words, she is so consumed by a relation to her limitation (her finitude) that she cannot be meaningfully aware that she also has a relationship to her possibility. I do not think that pain of that intensity is necessary to make one particularly aware of the limiting nature of their body. I do think however, that some bodily sensations are more prone to making one aware of the body's limiting nature than others, especially pain and suffering.

Dasein does not just have body. It is not merely embodied. Dasein is bodily. "Bodiliness" is always given with Dasein; it is part of the ontological structure of Dasein to be bodily. As such, we can be-toward-body. We may do so authentically or inauthentically. When we are being-toward-death authentically, we are confronted with our ownmost possibility. When we are authentic toward our death, the mode of attunement through which possibility, finitude, and world are disclosed is anxiety (BT, 251). Anxiety is the mode through which we authentically view our limits as finite beings, but also our possibilities as beings that are to-be. Similarly, it seems that with regard to the body, pain is the mode through which finitude and possibility are disclosed spatially. I think this finitude is something similar to the finitude we experience when we are authentically beingtoward-death. I will speak more about this later.

Heidegger does not want to speak of the body because he believes doing so mistakes Dasein for something objectively present, and I agree that to speak of the body in this way is incorrect. The body is not objectively present. But the body has presence, nonetheless. Pain, which has no object, cannot disclose objective presence. But pain discloses something immediate, and if it is the mode through which the body as limitation is disclosed, this might mean the body is present in some way as well. Pain might then be something analogous to a mode of attunement to the body, a way through which the body is disclosed. In fact it is also a way in which the possibility of the body is disclosed. Consider for instance exercise or physical activity. We put our bodies through a certain amount of pain that discloses to us what the limitations of our bodies are, but at the same time the possibilities of our body are disclosed. What is the body capable of? We find out through pain. Pain is not just a sensation, it is an existential mode of disclosure for Dasein, a mode of attunement through which possibility is revealed. I want to term modes of bodily disclosure such as pain as feelings. Feelings reveal the body.

Death represents a limitation on Dasein of a kind, in that it is because of death that we are finite beings. The kind of finitude that death discloses is that we are beings determined by a not (BT, 283). We cannot, as it were, get behind ourselves to discover our origin. Nor can we ground ourselves in anything outside ourselves. We are beings thrown into a world, ungrounded and without reason. In this sense, Dasein is said to be a temporally finite being.

Pain, similarly, represents limitation of Dasein in a spatial sense. How does it do this? Pain, or perhaps more encompassingly, vulnerability (this includes pain, illness, any form of suffering) shows the bounds of our body, its limitations, and its distinctness from world at the very least at the brute existentiell level. We choose from here on out to use the term vulnerability for the fact that everyone, as long as

they are bodily, is vulnerable. Death is an existential of Dasein because death is always a possibility for us, and thus anxiety is a mode of attunement available to everyone. But not everyone feels pain; there exist conditions that prevent one from feeling physical pain at all. If we want to make the body a structure of Dasein, we must find a mode of attunement that is available to all Dasein. For the moment, vulnerability is the best we can do, even though I acknowledge it is not a necessary part of Dasein's structure. It is merely certain in an existentiell sense.

Vulnerability, which reveals limitations of our body, does so by returning us to our body. When we are in pain, or ill, we are faced with our body as a limit of us. But more interestingly, we view ourselves as distinct from world. As Elaine Scarry argues in The Body in Pain (hereafter cited as BP), pain has no object, there is no pain "of" or pain "for" anything (BP, 162). There is nothing in the world that is the object of pain. And yet, pain is only possible by virtue of our bodiliness. Pain is bodily. Vulnerability, too, is bodily. But nothing in the world is the object of pain (nor for that matter, is our body an object of pain). It is only that pain is a mode of attunement of our existential body. When we feel most aware of the limitations of our body, we withdraw from the world, or at the very least, we are reoriented in our bodiliness to the world. When the hammer breaks, the world is no longer ready-to-hand, and the relations disclosed in our concernful dealings break down. Tools in the world break, and the world is disclosed as present-at-hand. What if the hand breaks? What is disclosed? World, certainly, as we previously discussed, but also body. Body as present in some way calls out to us, calls us back from the world, even as we are always in the world as bodily. I do not mean to say we come out of world and into body. As bodily we are always in a world. But we certainly can withdraw from the world. We can no longer relate to it with the same concernfulness, or we might take care in a different way.

Importantly, the breaking of the hand does not distance us from our body in the way the hammer breaking distances us from world. Rather it does the opposite. The failure of the hammer discloses the hammer deficiently as present-at-hand, but the failure of the hand discloses body more intimately as present, immediate body. Even as we are distanced from the involvements the body took part in, we are still brought back to our bodies. Thus the actualization of our vulnerability makes us aware of our bodies rather than allow them to fade into the background of our dealings-in.

What is ontically nearest to us is ontologically often what is furthest from us (BT, 108). Heidegger gives the example of glasses which are sitting on a person's nose, thus being quite literally near, but in terms of de-distancing through care, they are much further away than the pictures on the wall that are ontically quite far. Useful things are often furthest away from us, despite literally being at hand, in the ontological sense, they fade into the background of our projects. The body is something like this. Dasein is bodily, is always bodily, and it is only through body that Dasein can take care in the world. Insofar as Dasein is its body, body nearest to us in one sense. But insofar as the body is part of our taking care, it is perhaps even further away than the useful things it grasps. If we are not thinking of the hammer as a thing when we use it, we are almost certainly thinking less about our hand that grasps the hammer.

Can the body ever be what is nearest to us in an ontological sense? To the extent that the body can be disclosed to us or become a project for us in itself, this is possible. Pain, for example, brings us out of our concernful dealings in the world and back our bodies as that which is in pain. When the body breaks down in some way, we notice it as orienting us toward itself, it becomes that which we project towards, even as it is what orients our projection in the first place.

While it is true that pain and brokenness can lead to other possibilities that we can project towards, in the moment of that pain or brokenness, we are not projecting toward these possibilities.

Does the body in pain orient toward the body itself or toward nothing at all? Scarry would suggest that pain has no object. Heidegger, I'm certain, would say we are always already projecting toward something at all times. We could not be concernful beings in the world if we were not always projecting in some way. Yet we may not be oriented toward anything at all in the case of pain. In a similar way to how anxiety is about nothing, pain is also about nothing. Clearly anxiety is a mode of attunement nonetheless, and pain is a feeling nonetheless. But anxiety, even as it is disclosive, has no object. Anxiety is the mode of attunement that we are in when we are authentically being-toward-death. Being-toward one's ownmost possibility is what discloses all other possibilities.

Pain works in a similar way, but with regard to our spatial orientation in the world. Pain is of nothing at all, and yet it still invites possibility. As Scarry argues, "Any state that was permanently objectless would no doubt begin the process of invention" (BP, 162). Further, Scarry points out that "it is especially appropriate that the very state in which he is utterly objectless is also of all states the one that, by its aversiveness, makes most pressing the urge to move out and away from the body" (BP, 162). The body in pain is very closely linked with the imagination, which is of course full of possibilities. Perhaps what pain shows us is that we are nothing without the body, because we grasp helplessly for an object outside of the body to which we can cling. The world, insofar as we are in pain, becomes quite small; in fact it becomes nothing more than body. We withdraw from the world and our involvements in pain, and possibility, ever a part of Dasein's being, becomes a flailing of trying to escape the body via the imagination. We want to escape the body, but instead, we are confronted immediately with the body. It is true that when

the body is in pain, we are opened up to a whole new set of possibilities for how we might heal the pain. But in the moment of pain itself, and insofar as we are in pain, we are shown nothing more than our finite bodies. The projecting into the imagined world fails to find an object for pain, and thus we find that pain cannot orient us toward anything. It is pure sensation, without meaning.

Even as we find ourselves tethered to body when we are in pain, body is not the object of pain. True, the body hurts, but it does not hurt toward or for anything. Pain, even as it makes us aware of our bodies, does not take the body for its object. Thus pain remains objectless. The body is not objectively present for Dasein. Its attempt to orient us in pain may fail, but this failure does not reduce the body to an object. The body simply orients us toward nothing. The important conclusion here is that the body can never be objectively present for Dasein, even when its orientation is toward nothing. Further, pain orients us toward a not, in a similar way to how anxiety does this. When we are in the feeling of pain, we are momentarily ungrounded in a spatial sense. The orientation toward the world fails to find an object of pain, and thus ungrounds us from the world in a sense. We are still in the world, of course, but we are without involvement to the extent that we are in pain. Spatially, we become ungrounded; not reoriented, but disoriented. In this sense, we see our spatial finitude via the feeling of pain.

The body, when its vulnerability is actualized, cannot but orient us in a different way toward the world, and when it is in pain, this reorientation fails. Even more intimately, Dasein will feel its body become uncanny, as Svenaeus points out in his analysis of illness (Svenaeus 2010). We will be pulled out of average everydayness by pain and illness, and we are drawn back to a conscious noticing of our bodies. Even as we are drawn back into our bodies, we are distanced from the involvements and projects our bodies were a part of. Insofar as Dasein is its

projections, Dasein becomes distanced from itself in pain and illness. It is a simultaneous drawing into and distancing from oneself, and this feeling will no doubt be quite strange. The uncanniness of our most intimate connection to the world is indeed very striking. Alienation from the body and from Dasein's projects leaves it with a new set of unfamiliar projections that it can undertake. These might include the way in which we dress our wounds or take medicine or go to the hospital. Many projections no doubt remain intact; one can pick up a cup of tea in sickness just as one can do in health. But the tone of the phenomena is different in this case. Picking up the cup in each case signifies something different, and each experience takes on a different mode of attunement to the projection. One can also pick up a cup after having suffered a stroke or a broken hand, and this might be done with ease or difficulty. However, the significance of the projection is different than if a person had not had either of these injuries, and again, the mode of attunement to the projection is something different.

The body is always given as part of Dasein's structure, and it is spatially what orients us in the world as care. Through the hand, beings in the world become handy. For many reasons, the body is never something objectively present for Dasein. This is because bodiliness is how we can be-in-the-world at all, and the body is never to be taken as an object of that orientation toward the world. The body certainly can be a project for Dasein, as in when we exercise, or when the body breaks and we attempt to heal it—but this does not make it an object, since we project through our bodies. This strange paradoxical relationship will not be explored further here, but it goes to the point of how our bodies are more intimately part of us than any object could ever be. Moreover, pain, which is the spatial analog of anxiety, can never take the body for its object. What it does do is disorient us in the world, thus showing our finitude and ungroundedness in a different way. We have

shown the body to be an essential structure that is always given with Dasein, which makes being in the world possible, and which can reveal to us our finitude in a spatial way. We have done so while staying within the Heideggerian system as much as possible, thus showing that Heidegger indeed makes a mistake to neglect the body in his ontology.

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