

Changes of Chinese Names From the Perspective of the Evolution of Symbolic Rhetoric Four Master Tropes

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ABSTRACT

Semiotic rhetoric four master tropes follow the law of transformation of metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony. There is a negative progressive relationship between the four master tropes. Each one of semiotic rhetoric is the negation of each other. This principle corresponds to the development of four different stages of things. As an indicator, name refers to the way of thinking when the parents named their children under the historical and cultural context at that time. To reflect the characteristics of the Chinese name with this principle, people's psychological changes and social-cultural changes in the process of historical development will be fully revealed. This paper will study the laws and trends of Chinese newborn names (Han nationality) from the founding of new China to present times with large data. The changes of parents' implied vision behind these names and the particular historical tide, the influence of cultural traditions, and the intergenerational changes of Chinese autonomy will be explored.

Keywords: *semiotic rhetoric, four master tropes, Chinese names, changes, autonomy*

I. INTRODUCTION

A name is one of the primary symbols that distinguish one person from another and is one of the legal proofs of identity. In China, a country with a long history of civilization, the name is more than bearing the expectations and prospects of the name givers, but also shows the historical evolution of a particular period and cultural traditions. Chinese name includes two parts: the form and the content. The form is the surname + single name/double name combination; the content is the pronunciation of the given name and its denotative meaning and connotative meaning. Because "surname" (family name) is inherited by the ancestors of the veins handed down, it cannot choose by chance. According to the Chinese clan lineage concept, surname will not be easily changed. So, a research on the content of a name is almost the "given name" after "surname". The name contains more than just the owner's code, but also significant textual meaning. "The name not only exists as an individual symbol, but also as a signal and symbol of the unique Chinese aesthetic ability and aesthetic characteristics." [1]

According to Marx's point of view, the first attribute of man is sociality. The name is the first pass to enter society. People constitute a variety of social relations, names therefore have attribute of sociality, reflecting specific social awareness in the form of a social presence. During the feudal rule in China, the name was not used freely by people, and many words should be

used with caution in order to show the order of the supremacy. However, contemporary Chinese do not have such a worry for giving name. Chinese characters contain a rich historical and cultural heritage, and there are many superficial implications of the meaning. Of course, there are many implications for the name made up of Chinese characters. Therefore, when parents give their children a name, they often employ this chance to express their specific wishes. Zhao Yiheng believes that "the name is a synecdoche of the historical trend, customs, parents' cultural background and many other things." [1]

However, parents' expectation of their children is, in fact, greatly influenced by the prevailing social trends and cultural habits of the time. The wishes of parents, in reality, is given by the times. It is also a matter of course that children's names in the same era had "times features" of that period. As a result, the name is not only a linguistic sign, a statutory sign, and an indicator signifying each other, but also a link that studies social psychology and cultural identity. This article will use big data statistics to study the laws and trends of the name of the newborn (Han nationality) in China since the founding of New China. In this study, the names will be divided into four generations according to the characteristics of commonly used names. These four generations are precisely the four phases of economic and political development after the founding of new China. Finally, the article will use semiotic rhetoric evolution of the four master tropes to

analyze the four stages of the child's name changes. By borrowing the universal laws of the development of things revealed in the evolutionary theory of the four master tropes, we can explore the implicit cognition of parents and the influence of certain historical and cultural traditions behind the children's names. And seeks to find out the changes in the vision of parents who make name changes happen, as well as the intergenerational changes in the autonomy of Chinese people thereby referring to.

II. EVOLUTION OF SYMBOLIC RHETORIC FOUR MASTER TROPES

There is a negative progression between the four main figures of speech in any symbolic genre, namely metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, irony. Each figure of speech is the negation of each other. Metaphors are aimed at "combining" with each other, while irony uses "separation" as the basic approach; metonymy is adjacency and cooperation; irony is cooperation and disagreement; while synecdoche is partly contained in the whole, irony is partly excluded from another; irony completely disintegrates metaphor-based traditional rhetoric. Therefore, irony negates all figures of speech and it is a reverse rhetoric.

In this way, a process of gradual decomposition of the meaning of the two genres of text from the beginning of metaphor is formed. This four-step negative association of meaning has developed into a huge historical evolution model among Chinese and foreign thinkers who use it to analyze social changes and cultural evolution. The evolution of the four master tropes has gradually become a measure of social development and historical evolution.

In the early eighteenth century, Vico, the Italian thinker in the Enlightenment era, first proposed the evolution of the four master tropes. In *New Science* (1725), he divided world history into four stages of degeneration. "God period": metaphor is the main trend and God endows each aspect of nature with intent or spirit. This is the stage of theocracy; "Heroic period": metonymy dominated, some special characters bear this heroic spirit, as the aristocratic stage; "Human period": the metaphor, the upper and lower shared some same kind of humanity, special sublimate to the general, partial to the whole, as a rational stage; "Decadent period": irony, consciousness goes to lie, people have realized the difference between truth and disguise, it is the irrational stage.

Vico's point of view has always been incompatible with the thinking of the times and was not accepted. Until the middle of the twentieth century, Canadian critic Frye revived this model. In the 1957 *Critique of Anatomy*, Frye divides the development of protagonists in European literature into four stages: the romance

characterized by metaphor, the protagonist in temperament beyond the mortals who is a legendary typical figure like God. Such as Jean Valjean in *Les Miserables*; the tragic era of metonymy, emphasizing the externalities of things, and the protagonists having authority and passion, but what he does must obey social judgment. For example, Nekhludoff in *Resurrection*; in the synecdochical comedy era, the protagonist has universal humanity, and readers will resonate with it. Such as Duoluo in *Bel-Ami*; in the stage of irony denied by modernism, the protagonist is inferior in ability and intelligence to the reader, and the readers feel contemptuous of their situation.

Frye's literature stage promotion theory had a great impact. In fact, before him, Carl Mannheim proposed the evolution of the four worldviews in his 1929 *Ideology and Utopia*. Mannheim, unlike Frye, did not regard these four patterns as a historic evolution. By the 1970s, with the rise of neo-historicism, Hayden White appreciated Mannheim's assertion and he recognized "every aspect of history has an irreconcilable ideological factor." [2]

Actually, in ancient China, the *Great Power of the World* by Shao Yong (1011-1077), a scholar of the Song Dynasty, pushed forward his theory and linked the staging of Chinese history (imperialism, imperialism, kings, tyrants) with the broader concept of the universe. Regard this staging as the natural characteristics of the four seasons. Shao Yong's "Emperor, Emperor, King, and tyrant" four-stage theory of historical degeneration, was earlier than Vivendi for 700 years; and the four seasons with the four master tropes evolution was earlier than Frye for nearly 900 years.

Whether Vico, Frey, or White and Shao Yong, in fact, they all noticed the general explanatory power of the semiotic rhetoric four master tropes evolution on human ideational activities. What is the reason for the evolution of the four master tropes? Zhao Yiheng argues that the evolution of the four master tropes is the maturation of any kind of ideographic approach: we can think of it as a theory of historical degeneration because the sense of loft has vanished to give way to skepticism; and we can also think of it as progress because culture become diverse, people's understanding turn complicated. "Any dogma, any concept, or even any business, is essentially a symbolic model of meaning, so long as it is a form of expression, it is hard to escape this law of evolution." [2]

III. CHANGES OF NAMES ACCORDING TO THE EVOLUTION OF FOUR MASTER TROPES

As the above analysis, any kind of symbolic ideation is difficult to escape the evolution of the four laws. By using this law to reflect on the characteristics

of Chinese names, we can outline the psychological and cognitive changes of the people and the social and cultural changes in the course of historical development. This article will focus on the characteristics of the names of Chinese newborns (Han nationality) since the 1950s, that is, the founding of New China. Text data using China's first name big data report 2016 *Big Data* "to see "What Chinese parents love to name their baby and common names for each age provided by Qi Ming Tong"[3] (a handbook for people to choose names according to their preference) website statistics[4].

From the characteristics of the name showed in the data, the name of contemporary China appeared the phenomenon of sharing the same name within the same era. These phenomena are actually different stages of people's independent development. Combined with the history and culture of a particular period as well we the state of economic development, we divide the characteristics of names parents pick for their children into four stages. The first phase: from the early days of New China to the 1960s, metaphorical period, which was an era full of major historical expectations. The name of the period reflected a strong concept of family and country. In the second stage, the 1970s, the metonymic period. It is a special historical era, in which life related to the situation and fate of the country more closely. The name of the transitional phase reflects the parental choice of position; In the third stage, during the 1980s and 1990s, the synecdochical period. The reform and opening up was carried out in an all-round way, and the socio-cultural economy was gradually recovering. People's standard of living was greatly improved. At the same time, their self-concept gradually awakened and their children's names pin on their hopes; the fourth stage, since the 00s up till now (2016) is the irony period, the culture has developed in multiple ways. The name shows that the parents have greater autonomy. The expectation of becoming outstanding hold by parents has turned into being ordinary and peaceful.

A. *The early days since the founding of New China to the 1960s — metaphorical period — the name shows the era characteristics*

Statistics show that at this stage, the first ten Chinese newborn babies are: boys: Jun(military), Yong(brave), Wei(great), Jianguo(founding a state), Jianhua(founding new china), Jianjun(founding the army), Ping(peace), Jianping(building peace), Bin(both good at arts and arms), Qiang(strong). Girls: Xiuying(beautiful and heroic) , Guiying(laurel and heroic), Ying(hero), Yulan(magnolia), Xiulan(beautiful and excellent), Ping(duckweed), Yumei(geraldton wax flower), Li(beauty), Min(agile).

Judging from the names of the top 10 boys, the "Jun", "Jianguo," "Jianhua," and "Jianping" all coincide with the historical period when New China was founded. All of China are immersed in the celebration of founding ceremony, looking forward to the bright future of the motherland. In the era of extraordinary significance for everyone, the most direct way for ordinary people to express their own patriotism is to give their children those "grand" names, so in this stage, it's not surprising for most new born boys to bear the name of "Jianguo". At the same time, Chinese people advocate the gratitude of "source of drinking water." We did not forget those "lovely people" in our stable life. Therefore, "Jianjun" has also become the best choice. "Yong", "Qiang" and "Bin" reflect the expectation that parents hope their son can be as powerful as the country and capable of both civil and military education.

The name of a girl carries more of the traditional merits that parents hold girls should have. In the top of the "Ying" still bears a distinctive mark of the times, despite being female, parents also hope they can own "heroic" qualities, and this is consistent with the culture of the community as a whole. "Lan", "Mei", "Ping" and "Li" reflect the image of women's pure and beautiful in traditional Chinese culture.

Looking at the parents in the 1960s to name their children, the characteristics is: only carry the features of the times, lack of self-characteristics. The reason is because at that time, people have limited access to information, only turn to the dictionary if they want, in addition, most Chinese people have the mentality to follow the majority, it also exacerbated the limitations of their horizons. A large number of names carry the times flavor have confirmed the historical trend and cultural tradition imposed on people's cognition. In Long Revolution, Raymond Williams extended and developed the core concept of "emotional structure" to illustrate the formation of a generation's thoughts and feelings. "It is as strict and explicit as the structure suggests, however, it operates in the most delicate and imprecise part of our activity, in a way that is a culture of time: it is a general organization the special extant result of all the factors in the book." [5] In the 1960s, Chinese, living in the context of building an all-round New China, advocated dedication and hard work from home and abroad. Collective is more important than individuals. Many parents, when giving names to their children, will also be unwittingly influenced by the atmosphere of this society. At the same time, they did not advocate uniqueness at that time. Instead, they advocated more for the general public. So, giving name is only more than giving a title. It is no surprising that a large number of children share the same name.

Metaphor is the "self-carrying meta language" of symbolic texts. because the characteristics of the era are

too obvious, the interpretant of the commonly used names of the 1960s naturally point to the social context; name reflects the people's one-dimensional values.

B. 1970's — metonymic period — there is a stratification of names and sprouting of parents' autonomy

During this period, the social and cultural development was in a transitional phase, and the newborn's name reflected new characteristics. While continued to maintain the concept of homeland also added more cultural and traditional expectations. In this stage, the top ten newborn names are: boys: Yong, Jun, Wei, Qiang, Tao(billow), Gang(rigid), Jianjun, Bo(wave), Bin, Hui(brilliance). Girls: Li, Yan(gorgeous), Min, Fang(fragrance), Jing(silence), Hongmei(red plum), Xia(rosy clouds), Yan(swallow), Ying(hero).

In the names of the top 10 boys, some features of the 1960s are still inherited. Such as "Jianjun," "Jun," "Yong," and "Qiang." At the same time, the newly emerged "Wei", "Bo", "Hui" and "Gang" demonstrate the temperament that parents give their sons. In the traditional Chinese culture, the standard image of men is: strong, brave, tall, tenacious, upright, both good at civil and military and ambitious and so on. These fine traditions are expressed by parents in honor of names. Among the girls' names, the phenomenon of the weakening of the times is even more obvious. The "Ying" which ranked first in the 1960s is only the last. The names on the list, are more like the display of women with the characteristics of Chinese culture, such as "Fang", "Jing", "Xia", "Yan". This shows that the traditional concept of "gentle and virtuous, beautiful and generous" is still accepted by the majority of the people, and parents hope that this beautiful wish will be conveyed by name.

Compared with the 1960s, more than 50% of the high-frequency names used in the 1970s overlapped. (6 boys and 5 girls). According to the analysis of the morphological factors of the existing products of Williams' culture, the cultural patterns of an era include the dominant culture, the remnant culture and the emerging culture. This is a dynamic development. "Culture is a reflection of the overall lifestyle of a society,"[6] and the three-part culture represents the confrontation between different forces. "Residual culture is an effective factor that has been formed in the past but has been active in the current process of culture. It is still valid. It exists not only because as tradition but also for meeting certain specific needs of the present and provide space for values that dominant culture cannot effectively implement. "The strong nationalist conception of the 1960s is the remnant culture of this category. As can be seen from the data, they still occupy half of the list. dominant culture will

try to incorporate the residual culture, especially when there is a flaw in itself, the remnants are again recognized. The dominant culture of the 1970s did not get obvious displayed because of the special historical reasons at that time. Therefore, according to the characteristics of the names, most of the parents chose the remnant cultural concept of the 1960s.

New name in the list is what Williams called "emerging culture." This is the most threatening factor for the dominant culture. When it was just created, it cannot be explained by the existing category. It is an empirical and exists as a kind of ideas and consciousness. It continues to accumulate until the emergence of a new emotional structure, with more and more people to be absorbed in, and finally become stable, it also means the new cultural transformation. From the data, new names are mostly for parents to give children the due quality based on the tradition of Chinese culture. This indicates that the factors that parents are influenced by a specific historical background are slowly diminishing. Parents consciously return to their own recognized culture; their autonomy began to sprout.

Metonymy is widely used in non-linguistic symbols. It is essentially "non-verbal." Its symbolic nature is contiguous. The commonly used names in the 1970s reflected partly the characteristics of the times and the partial searches for other representations, indicating that people's names were not entirely determined by external factors. This corresponds to metonymy function of "sameness with difference" in evolution of four master tropes.

C. The 80s and 90s — the synecdochical period — the name highlights the further enhancement of parental autonomy

At this stage of the reform and opening up period, the economy took off and the situation was good. The living standards of the people have been greatly improved. At the same time, with the awakening of self-concept, the child's name is entrusted with the expectation of the parent "making a success".

Data show that the most commonly used names of newborns at this stage are: boys: Wei, Le(candid), Yong, Chao(super), Tao, Peng(roc, a bird which can fly to thousands of miles), Qiang, Jie(outstanding), Liang(bright), Jun, Hao(grand), Xin(prosper), Shuai(handsome). Girls: Jing, Li, Juan(graceful), Yan, Yan (The same pronunciation in Chinese but different characters with different meaning.), Min, Na(elegant), Fang, Dan(red), Ling (sound of jade), Ting(graceful), Xue(snow), Qian(pretty). The statistics are based on 10 years. Since the 1980s and 1990s are divided into four stages of evolution, the common names in this stage are sorted in descending order according to the frequency

of use and the repeated names are removed, 13 names left.

Among the top names of boys, there are still remnants of "Wei", "Yong", "Qiang", "Jun" and "Tao". "Peng" and "Liang" represent the qualities that men are expected to have in Chinese culture: Brilliant, ambitious. "Jie", "Hao", "Xin", "Shuai" reflect the desire of parents to succeed in their sons. "Shuai" is directly a cry from the connotation rose to the outside; because of its own structural features, "Xin" shows that "Five Elements"(metal, wood, water, fire and earth, held by the ancients to compose the physical universe. 'Xin' is composed of three metal in Chinese character) has been used to measure the name. The common name for girls is slightly higher than that for boys in the 1970s (6/13). This is because girls in Chinese history and culture have always been given the dominant position of "mothering" and have not been given the hope of building their own career as boys do. The concept of "lack of talent in a woman is virtuous" makes many parents believe that what matters for women are gentle and beautiful. Therefore, the tradition of the beginning has been inherited. Among the new names, "Juan", "Na", "Dan", "Ling", "Ting", "Xue" and "Qian" are still the embodiment of women's qualities. This shows that "women have been given a good and beautiful aesthetic requirement in the social value system. Although they entered the 1980s, the degree of aesthetic taste for women has not changed so much." [1]

The common names of newborns in the 1980s and 1990s have shown new characteristics. Although in the stage of reform and opening up, no name associated with this historic trend, indicating that the influence of the external environment while giving names are weakened. People do not intend to impose the political slogans that are common in life on personal ideals and aesthetic requirements, and their social psychology is gradually maturing. In addition, almost all common names are single names, which means "people are bent on pursuing a simple, quiet and unpretentious attitude toward life." [2] In the commonly used names of boys, there appeared the "Shuai" "Jie" which fully demonstrated the individuality and the "Xin" which is related to the "five elements". This shows that people pay more attention to themselves when choosing their kids' names, and the ways of naming are gradually increasing. Studies by Su Hong. Also show that "for children born in the 1980s and 1990s, parents considered the feature of independence more important to children and also wanted to pass on the qualities associated with independence to their children." [7]

In the 1980s and 1990s, the commonly used characteristics of the era were basically completely weakened, and the social factors became smaller and smaller on the basis of their names. People's ideals and aesthetic requirements were increasingly prominent.

The name fully demonstrates the parents' inner and outer expectations for their children. This corresponds to the synecdochical characteristics of symbolic figures of speech. synecdoche is the relationship between part and overall, any representation is a synecdoche. The sublimation of people's values from the part to the whole is the manifestation of the function of the "division and combination" of the synecdoche.

D. The beginning of the 00s to the present (2016) — the irony period — the name embodies the multiple choice of parents and individuality

In the new era, the social culture has developed in a more diversified direction. The popularization of media information provides more references than dictionaries. The names show greater autonomy of parents and emphasis on children's independence. Usually, boys take Hao, Yu(universe), Rui(farsighted), Hao(boundless), Bo(abundant) and other words, girls are more likely to be given names as: Yue(happy), Xin(joyful), Yi(cheerful), Rui(stamen), Zi(home town), Han(conservative), Yan(beautiful), Xuan(day lily). During this period, newborn common names are: boys: Zixuan(lofty), Haoran(noble spirit), Haoyu, Bowen(abundant in arts), Yuxuan, Yuze, Junjie(elite), Junxi(handsome and bright), Zihao(forthright), Rui. Girls: Zihan, Xinyi, Chengxi(dawn), Shihan, Mengqi(angel), Jiayi, Zixuan, Yuhan, Kexin, Sitong(red).

The biggest feature of these names is: more unique, full of personality. The names of boys are not only the display of traditional masculine expectations of "noble, liberal wisdom," such as "Zixuan, Hao Ran, Haoyu, Bowen, Yuxuan, Zihao, Rui"; also full of personality with dual Emphasize on the exterior and inner, such as "Yuze, Junjie, Junxi." Parents expect their children to be "bright and sunny," which is totally different from the previous generation's emphasis on "greatness and struggles." The girl's names reflect the parents stressed that children should be "happy sunshine, gentle and elegant." Parents have realized the importance of mental health, and the traditional requirements of women being "gentle and beautiful" is no longer in the list of commonly used names. Compared with the first three stages, names of this period, have almost shake off the imprint of the trend of history. In the 1970s and 1980s, children grew up in the call of independence. With the development of all aspects of society, their educational level and the channels for receiving information were significantly higher than those of their elders. Therefore, the names they gave children were also the maximized demonstration of their own autonomy.

Almost all names in the list are double, this is also the expression of parental personality. In the 1970s and 1980s, parents grew up in a rapidly evolving

community of the internet and media. Facing the huge "fragmentation" knowledge and more considerations, when choosing a name, many people relied on name-giving websites or the traditional Chinese Five Elements and some even also refer to the Western constellation analysis. However, some problems exposed in the process of social development also allow people to give their children the missing part when they name their children, such as the "Nuo(promise)" that represents virtue and the "Zhi" of noble conduct. Compared with the first three stages of naming by social trends of thought, the independence of parents has been significantly enhanced. In the new era, the names of children show that people's social psychology become more mature, the expectations of children are more comprehensive, and their blind faith is no longer a success. Health, conservation and honesty are the new expectations.

Names of those post 00's are full of personality, which all reflect the new era of multiculturalism. They almost subvert the collectivism of the previous three stages. This is precisely the characteristic of irony: portion exclude each other, there are cooperation and there are differences. Whether from the name-giving website or the combination of Five Elements plus constellation, the reference of choosing the name is no longer a single mainstream value, and the independence of parents is further enhanced.

IV. CONCLUSION

From the above analysis we can see that the Chinese name changes with the times. From the 1960s, it reflected the distinctive characteristics of the times; the traditional expectations of the Chinese culture in the characteristics of the 1970s were sprout of autonomy; the features of times in the 1980s and 1990s were basically weakened; the independence of the Chinese culture implied further; and finally, since the beginning of the 00s, the names have their own distinctive features, which show the parents' expectations of the uniqueness of their children and reflect the gradual maturity of the Chinese people's social psychology. These four stages correspond exactly to the four stages of social, economic and cultural development in China. Name as an indicator, the object is the person who owns this name, the interpretant is the family background as well as the way of thinking of parents. From following the times to find the uniqueness of oneself, people's independence is also slowly increasing. This process is also in line with the negative progress law of evolution of the symbolic rhetorical four master tropes.

But, what for after irony? In the face of the evolution of the four master tropes, Zhao Yiheng holds there are two solutions. First, the new way of thinking begins again, reconstructing a long evolution from

metaphor to irony; Second, irony is a more ideal cultural status, we should extend this stage as much as possible[8]. In fact, from the above analysis of the characteristics of Chinese common names in different years, the possibility of these two solutions has been demonstrated. The name after the 00s has shown another "era characteristic". Although it is unlike a social context in the 1960s, these highly similar names indicate that online marketing and the mass media have gradually taken control of people's aesthetic standards. Web site tests show that six out of ten children called "Zihan", came from the name-giving website, and "Ruoxi" and its variants, all reminds us of the hit drama "BuBuJingXin"(an ancient china drama about how the princess survived during turns and twits) in which the actress was called "Ruoxi"; "Nuoyi" and its variants, were mostly affected by TV show of "where dad goes III" at the time. The report shows that in 2014, the name is still only the girl's first 2489, in 2015 it jumped to 95th. If parents continue to rely on popular culture to name their kids, then the phenomenon of sharing the same name with times-characteristics will start again.

However, the above concern may also be superfluous. For phenomena that rely on pop culture, research has shown that the frequency with which a name is used is proportional to the rate of abandonment. According to the survey, those who are going to be parents are not much interested in the popular names. This is due to a symbolic concern: the more popular names are, the more easily they are likely to be discarded.[9]

In the analysis of common name after the generation 00s, the data also showed some new features. First, children carry mother's surname is gradually recognized by society. Second, the proportion of children with two surnames is increased. Third, mother get the power to name their kids. Finally, the name has the geographical characteristics. According to the new features appearing in the above report, we can find that the name of the newborn in the new era fully shows the pluralistic development of culture. The concrete manifestation is the improvement of women's social status, the preservation of regional special culture and the orientation of pluralistic values.

In the new era, the emergence of multiculturalism makes the child's name bear more individuality, which fully demonstrate the values of parents for different cultural phenomena. Given the 2016 report, parents will be more cautious when naming children, to avoid "creative duplication." This article uses the symbolic rhetoric evolution of the four master tropes to reveal the law of universal development, combined with the results of big data statistics, analyzes the characteristics and trends of Chinese names since the founding of new China. From name in line with "social events" to the overall manifestation of individuality, the process

demonstrates the independence of Chinese people gradually increased with the passage of time. According to the law of evolution of the four master tropes, the trend after irony should be staying in the best state of full bloom, and we also expect that the name of the future newborn will be more self-specific.

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