

BROTHERHOOD IN HUMANITY AND GLOBAL MENTAL HEALTH - CHRISTIAN ASPECT

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SUMMARY

Brotherhood or fraternity is a very broad term, so its various aspects are described. These are the rhetorical, political, religious and psychological aspects of the fraternity. An interdisciplinary approach with an emphasis on communication theory, especially media ecology, is used. The author gives a short periodical historical review of the brotherhood through the various developmental phases of human consciousness. The thesis is that spiritual guidance is an extremely important element for the quality of growth and realization of brotherhood in humanity, because with every transition of consciousness there is a risk for mental health. However, scientific research shows that spirituality and spiritual development have positive effects on the psychophysical condition of humans. The paper shows that brotherhood can have positive and negative manifestations. The positive manifestation of brotherhood and spiritual friendship in today's global society has an invaluable influence on the mental health of people and provides guidelines for healthy integration and healing of the world burdened with conflicts. The development of civilization of compassion is possible through growing up and ingrowth in mystical Body of Christ through brotherhood.

Key words: brotherhood – mental health – Christology – spiritual guidance - media

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INTRODUCTION

And this commandment we have from him, that he who loves God should love his brother also. (1 Jn 4:21)¹

According to this commandment, brotherhood is imposed as an imperative on humanity in its interaction with the Creator and a counsel for harmonious existence. In "Human Power" Teilhard de Chardin² talks about the importance of humanity to the individual, and states that "to avoid hopelessness, one should trust mankind more than himself." In this statement, we can recognize the importance attached to communion and brotherhood in Judeo-Christian civilization, and that the key to battle against egoism and solipsism is faith in other people and, of course, in their spiritual source. This paper will therefore consider this unity and brotherhood³ among people and their impact on the mental health of the individual. Brotherhood is a very broad term, so some aspects of it are described. These are the communicological, rhetorical, political, religious and psychological aspect of brotherhood. An interdisciplinary approach is used, with an emphasis on communicative theory, especially media ecology. The

thesis is that spiritual guidance is an extremely important element for the quality of growth and realization of brotherhood in humanity, because with every transition of consciousness there is a risk for mental health. As St. Paul says, "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." (2 Cor 3:18). Until such a transformation does not happen, man needs the other man as a mirror and support on his way towards his goal. Let us take a look at how the concept of brotherhood evolved through history, from its beginnings in Palaeolithic and hunting societies, when the emphasis was on blood brotherhood, through a divine experiment with the combination of blood and spiritual kinship in the formation of the Chosen People, to its culmination within the Christian religion and practices, when the emphasis was shifted to spiritual brotherhood.

BROTHERHOOD - HISTORY

The basic encyclopedic definition of brotherhood is that it is a form of patrimonial organization in which members are held to be descendants of an ancestor. So, if we go far enough, we are all sons of Adam and Eve, and if we go deep enough we are all children of God, then the brotherhood embraces all men. The Croatian Encyclopedia speaks about the beginning of the notion that when a brotherhood is tied to one particular place, but with the subsequent relocation the sense of community does not disappear. Remember the legend of the settlement of Croats (five brothers and two sisters). Members of the same brotherhood sometimes share a common name, linked by traditions and customs, and

¹ Quotations from Bible according to The Revised Standard Version of the Bible: Catholic Edition, copyright © 1965, 1966 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved. (<https://www.biblegateway.com/>)

² Teilhard de Chardin, P: Ljudska snaga. Naprijed, Zagreb, 1991.

³ Of course, sisterhood too, the author thinks it is not necessary to be hyper-correct and to introduce gender issues in every place. When it comes to brotherhood, it refers to the general connection between humans, men and women.

there is a strong sense of solidarity that does not disappear even when individuals or entire sections of the brotherhood switch to a different religion (especially evident in the Balkans where frequent conversions were frequent due to political circumstances). The brotherhood played a large role in the nomadic tribes, which can be seen especially in the warring nations. The Encyclopaedia Britannica⁴ holds a blood brotherhood to one of several types of covenants or bonds that bind people in ways similar but different from kinship. Other forms of fictional kinship include adoption and godfathership. The Blood Brotherhood got its name from the ritual when the blood of the participants was mixed. The alliance thus created enables members to support each other, loyalty or affection. When practiced among groups, blood brotherhood is most often used to bring together potentially hostile groups of individuals, to form alliances in war or to make peace. References to the blood brotherhood occur in the works of many classical writers, beginning with Herodotus. Other reports of blood brotherhood are found in myths and sagas from central Europe, Scandinavia and Asia. It has also been documented in Africa, and occasionally among North American Indians (in popular culture, we most often associate it with the image of friendship/fraternization of an Indian and a cowboy who thus seek to reconcile the conflict of the races in the Wild West). The notion of term blood brotherhood seems to point us to the transition from physical, material to spiritual, ideational brotherhood.

The Bible clearly shows us which brotherhood is more important in God's eyes. Well-known examples of blood brothers like Cain and Abel, James and Esau, Joseph and his brothers, to name a few, show that we are often threatened by our relatives, and Christ signifies in the passage about his true relatives: "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?" And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brethren! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, and sister, and mother." (Mt, 12:49-50)

The article The Translation of Αδελφος and Αδελφοι A Response to Mark Strauss and I. Howard Marshall written by Michael D. Marlowe⁵ discusses the meaning of the Greek words adelphos and adelphoi. The text begins with a quote from the Gospel of Matthew when a group of disciples, whom Jesus taught at a house in Capernaum, said that his brothers were waiting outside to talk to him, and he replied that he already was with his brothers. As with everything Jesus said, the point he made was simple but profound. Physical brotherhood is

not as important as spiritual brotherhood and whatever the earthly family of someone may be, his real brothers are those who have the same Father in heaven. This is why the followers of Jesus used the word "brothers" when talking about one another. This use of the word "brother" was not invented by Jesus or the early Church. The Jews then called each other "brethren," as seen in Acts 2:29; 3:17; 7: 2; 13:15, 26, 38; 22: 1; 23: 1, 5, 6; and 28:17. However, in the New Testament we see that the word (adelphosin) was used more frequently by Christians when they thought of another member of the Church. Paul also uses the word pseudadelphos "false brother" in reference to his Jewish "brothers" who pretended to be Christian brothers (Galatians 2: 4). The word "Christian" was coined by non-Christians and was not otherwise used in the Church. The name Christian was used to describe themselves objectively, that is, from a pagan standpoint, as we see from Acts 11:26, 26:28, and 1st Peter 4:16.

COMMUNICATION WITH NEIGHBOR, GOD AND TECHNOLOGY

The formation of the chosen people of Israel through Moses' guidance and liberation from the bondage of material Egypt is a kind of experiment where spiritual freedom was attempted through blood brotherhood. The descendants of the brothers who sold Joseph into slavery under the guidance of God and two brothers (Moses and Aaron) are on a journey through the wilderness where they form a covenant to make Heaven on earth. However, despite clear divine manifestations, this community is eager and hesitant. Where does the first crack of this chosen brotherhood come from?

The brotherhood of the chosen people was broken in the expectation of Moses. In the impatience of the expectation of a particular sign, the people decided to worship the golden calf. Back then, it was a symbol of a leisurely life in Egypt and a return to full-stomach materialism. What would a golden calf represent today? The Croatian language offers us several possible answers - telephone, television (in Croatian tele is calf) ... What is adoration? Exactly, paying attention to someone or something. Instead of paying attention to God (their deepest core) or to others, people prefer to worship the reflection of TV screens, stare at their cell phones ... Great, shimmering images that distance us from ourselves and from God, and provide a deceptive illusion of fun and unburdened flow of time. We know what happened when Moses descended from the mountain top, broke the tablets containing divine instructions, and was disappointed in his brothers and their weakness. After that, we can follow more attempts to repair that crack until Zechariah and his dissolution of the brotherhood, which is a prophecy of betrayal in the Garden of Gethsemane. "Then the Lord said to me, "Cast it into the treasury" - the lordly price at which I

⁴ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/blood-brotherhood> (14.10.2019.)

⁵ Marlowe, Michael D: The Translation of Αδελφος and Αδελφοι A Response to Mark Strauss and I. Howard Marshall, 2004. //http://www.bible-researcher.com/ adelphos.html (30. 5. 2019.)

was paid off by them. So I took the thirty shekels of silver and cast them into the treasury in the house of the Lord. Then I broke my second staff Union, annulling the brotherhood between Judah and Israel." (Zechariah 11:13-14) Today, we can also fall in the judgement of our brothers and look from the high on the weakness of the chosen people in the wilderness, without seeing the desert of our spirit as we wallow in the benefits of the technological Egypt we are immersed in.

Let us consider the communicological (technological) aspect of this term. We have seen how the New Covenant was formed in the New Testament, however, let's look at how aspects of this covenant are recognized by Marshal McLuhan, the creator of perhaps the most famous syntagms in the field of communications (The world is a global village! The medium is the message!). He gave us a warning through the comparison of idols (from the 115th Psalm) and the medium which is "an extension and stimulus of the sensory life, every medium immediately affects the whole field of the senses." These idols have mouths, they do not speak, they have eyes, they do not see, they have ears and they do not hear ... Through the poet William Blake and his poem, Jerusalem, he explains why people have become what they have observed. By dividing reasoning power and imagination, one is led into a state of subconscious awareness and numbness (which began in the modern separation of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty, culminating in postmodernity). This numbness is particularly pronounced in the case of electrical technology. With our central nervous system, prolonged and exposed, we have to numb or we will die (In the electric age we wear all mankind as our skin. McLuhan, 2008: 46)⁶. The age of electronic media is an era of anxiety, unconsciousness and indifference (existentialism), but also a period of awareness of the unconscious (related to psychoanalysis). On the other hand, we become aware of post-conventional morality and set the economic, cultural, social and technological base to love our neighbor as ourselves. We are evolutionarily ready as a species, it remains a question of freedom of choice and whether we want to achieve it.

The two most famous 20th century utopias are, Orwell's 1984 and Huxley's Brave New World. Time has shown that Huxley, with his projection of a world where people live as happy consumers and like their slavery, is closer to today's reality than Orwell, who has frightened us with the politico-ideological Big Brother. In the wake of these dystopias, let us look at the brotherhood today. In *The Medium and the Light: Reflections on Religion. Literature and Theology* find interesting observations on the relationship between media and religion in McLuhan⁷, parts of which I refer to in an article by

⁶ McLuhan, M: Razumijevanje medija: mediji kao čovjekovi produžeci. Golden marketing - Tehnička knjiga, Zagreb, 2008.

⁷ As a Catholic convert and active believer, McLuhan is known to deeply reflect on the relationship between communication

and the mission of Christ (see Coupland, D: Marshall McLuhan: nemate vi pojma o mojemu djelu! Naklada Ljevak, Zagreb, 2012. for more details).

Read Mercer Schuchardt.⁸ When McLuhan was asked by Hubert Hoskins "If I were to say that the traditional Christian doctrine of the Incarnation can be expressed by the phrase, 'Christ is the medium and the message,' is that a percept or a concept?" McLuhan had this to say: It is a percept because, as Christ said over and over again, it is visible to babes, but not to sophisticates. The sophisticated, the conceptualizers, the Scribes and the Pharisees—these had too many theories to be able to perceive anything." So according to McLuhan, God must be perception, if it becomes a concept it loses vitality (which is a great, though probably unconscious, call to contemplation). We perceive it primarily through light. Like light, we can contrast the notion of brotherhood as false light from true light, Lucifer of Christ. False brotherhood prevents man from being true to his innermost essence. Electrical information environments encourage the illusion of the world as a wholly spiritual matter (as it used to be with the Gnostics). It is now suggested that a reasonable revelation of the mystical body, the virtual world and the matrix may be one of the manifest manifestations of the Antichrist. The prince of this world is the greatest PR expert, a great hardware and software dealer, and a great media master. It is his masterful move, to be not only part of the environment, but invisible, he becomes unconvincingly convincing when he is ignored and considered non-existent. When electricity allows all information for every human being to be simultaneous, it is Lucifer's moment. Technically speaking, the age we live in is certainly favorable to the Antichrist. Just think: any person can immediately be declared a "new Christ" and be mistaken for a real Christ. Everyone has their five minutes of glory, and various social networks feed the illusion of our divine status that we can maintain without actually surrendering to something higher and deeper than ourselves, and our neighbor's brother / sister serves us as food for ego and narcissism.

Yet, on the other hand, technology can bring us closer. For example, the Christian concept of the mystical body - all people as members of the body of Christ - can become a technological fact in electronic terms. Thus, the real McLuhan, who seemed to recognize the full spiritual importance of his media theory until 1977, notes that electric light is false light and Christ is true light, while his most famous aphorism⁹ is literally true in one and only one case: in Jesus Christ there is no distance or separation between the medium and the message: this is the only case where we can say that the

and the mission of Christ (see Coupland, D: Marshall McLuhan: nemate vi pojma o mojemu djelu! Naklada Ljevak, Zagreb, 2012. for more details).

⁸ Schuchardt, Read Mercer. *The Medium is the Messiah: McLuhan's Religion and its Relationship to His Media Theory*. 2013. // At: <https://secondnaturejournal.com/the-medium-is-the-messiah-mcluhans-religion-and-its-relationship-to-his-media-theory/> (22. 4. 2019.).

⁹ The medium is the message!

medium and the message are exactly the same. Does that mean we should sit by the candles and condemn Tesla and Edison? Certainly not! Considerations for electricity (and its most prominent media exponent today) confirm the old adage about fire (which we find also in variation - reason, fear, etc.) that it is a good servant and a bad master. While it fully occupies our senses and consumes time effectively keeping us away from ourselves, God and our neighbor, it is certainly a bad master.

In the chapter on *War of the icons* McLuhan believes that mechanical technology, as an extension of parts of the human body, has made a fragmentary impact, both psychologically and socially, and is most clearly seen in mechanical weapons. By extending the central nervous system through electrical technology, even weapons make the fact of unity of the human family more lifelong. Probably because it painfully brings us to the awareness of possible destruction. The abundance of information as a weapon is a daily reminder that politics and history must be transformed into a form of "concretization of the human brotherhood." (McLuhan, 2008: 304-305). This brings us to the political aspect of brotherhood. Communication and rhetorical achievements can be used for good or ill. In a political structure, such as that of Orwell (Big Brother), information technology is an instrument that controls all human activity. In a liberal democracy, by contrast, governing states can in the same way strengthen the individual's freedom of choice. So, it all depends on how information technology is used? Increased communication capacities are probably largely responsible for political change in Eastern Europe (which was much used by Pope John Paul II). European Communism was built on the ideas of universal brotherhood (Solymar, 1999: 298-299)¹⁰. The Communist Manifesto of 1848 emphasizes the fraternity (especially among one class) which goes on to the main slogan of the French Revolution of 1789 "Equality, Fraternity and Freedom!" what followed the second part of the slogan ... or death. Nevertheless, fraternity in Marxism is not the same as that of the Enlightenment because it excludes the adversary (capitalist) for whom there should be no mercy in the dialectical course of history. Brotherhood towards one (the proletariat), implies hostility to others (Ratzinger, 2008: 23)¹¹. Unlike the brotherhood proposed by Christ who accompanies love. All other media was ultimately not only false lights, but also false messiahs. That electricity was false light (when applied to spiritual reality) was equally clear to Vladimir Lenin, who in 1918 spoke with Leonid Krasin about the electrification of Russia: "Let the peasant pray for electricity. It will feel the power of the central authorities more than the celestial one. "

¹⁰ Solymar, L: *Getting the Message: A History of Communications*. Oxford University Press Inc, New York, 1999.

¹¹ Ratzinger, J: *Kršćansko bratstvo*. Kršćanska sadašnjost, Zagreb, 2008.

BROTHERHOOD IN PRACTICE - ETHICS AND PSYCHOLOGY

No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. (John 15: 13) The Nazarene commands us and shows the basic orientation of man towards another. Lest this work be merely a theoretical and historical consideration, I will try to identify some practices that make the brotherhood practical and sustainable. These are forgiveness, spiritual guidance, prayer¹² (meditation, contemplation) and charitable action. Forgiveness acts first and foremost on and through emotions (shame, anger and other negative emotions that persist in man if he does not forgive causing stress, weak immunity and leading to neurovegetative diseases),¹³ charitable activity affects the senses, deeply immersed in material reality, pastoral (advisory) role acts on the free will of the people and helps to identify the intuition that speaks through the conscience and the inner teacher, and finally the prayer that acts on the thought.¹⁴ These practices can be compared with pastoral anthropology (Szentmartoni, 2009)¹⁵ and the psychological approaches described through it. Thus, psychoanalysis would help to explain the process of motivation (intuition) through understanding the subconscious mechanisms, the process of forgiveness (to oneself and others). Humanistic psychology to help enjoy the world of another and create an atmosphere of warmth, behaviouralism that focuses on behaviour and would value good works that seem to be, and finally, existential theories that point us to meaning, and within which to create therapies of the present moment¹⁶ where we can recognize connection to most present-day meditative/contemplative techniques. As part of the Christian tradition, spiritual practices created on the foundations of desert fathers are rediscovered and reinterpreted.¹⁷ There is also a strong current that realizes a dialogue between modern psychology and classical Christian spiritual teachers and saints, gathered around the Contemplative Outreach.¹⁸ The key difference between active psychotherapeutic practices and this is the indulgence in the action of grace that

¹² Fraternal admonition and prayer together indicate the importance of working together to build spirituality (Lk 17: 3 and Mt 18:20).

¹³ Monbourquette J., d'Aspremont, I: *Tražiti oproštenje a ne poniziti se*. Svijetla točka, Zagreb, 2014.

¹⁴ Either the exclusion of thought through apophatic prayer. Jesus prayed in silence, especially at night (Lk 6:12) or retreated to solitary ends (Lk 5:16 and Mk 1,35).

¹⁵ Szentmartoni, M: *Osjetljivost za čovjeka: pastoralna psihologija*. Glas Koncila, Zagreb, 2009.

¹⁶ Reality therapy from psychiatrist W. Glasser and the horatherapie from Jesuit H. Jomin. See also *Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)*.

¹⁷ See Peter Dyckhoff. (2003). *Smirujuća molitva: Vježbanje po Kasijanu*. Đakovo: UPT.

¹⁸ Take a look at the works of Thomas Keating, Richard Rohr and Cynthia Bourgeault to name just a few.

spontaneously removes the emotional contents that burden the psyche (Keating 2005: 176). We should not forget the concise depictions of Bible-based psychotherapy that point to building a healthy foundation (Nikić 2012).¹⁹ When we have healed ground, we can feel our body through embodiment and establish connection with sacred (Stinissen 2013).²⁰

Many modern ethicists have tried to show that man is a fundamentally egoistic being, and that seemingly altruistic behaviour also has a foundation in egoistic motives. Ethicist Ivan Koprek²¹ (2018) speaks against such theses and finds the source of altruism in human reason. One of the most famous and respected founders of this nature is certainly the ancient philosopher Aristotle, who defines a friend as "one who loves and is loved in return." The Greek word for this kind of love is *philia*. Based on this mutual love, Aristotle says that a friend enjoys pleasure when good things happen to others and feels distress when others go through bad times. It then catalogues over 20 personal qualities that make people attractive as friends. For example, we have friendly feelings about those who are comfortable talking to, who share our interests, are not critical of others, ready to make a joke, and show that their friends are not inclined to leave them alone. Philosopher Eugene Garver concluded that Aristotle did not analyse friendship as a way to help Greek citizens develop close relationships. He had previously instructed speakers on how to make their case as likely as possible by creating a sense of goodwill with the audience, referring to the rhetorical aspect of brotherhood. If by word and deed the speaker seems friendly, listeners will be more open to the message. (Griffin 2009: 41)²²

However, when it comes to spiritual brotherhood and its impact on mental health, the relationship between the spiritual mentor and his protégé, which in Christianity is the older brother's relationship to the younger one, is crucial. "But you are not to be called *rabbi*, for you have one teacher, and you are all *brethren*." (Mt 23:8) Therefore, it is good to consider a psychological-pastoral approach to the person given through Jesus' command to preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). Mihaly Szentmartoni, a Jesuit and psychologist, demonstrates the breadth of pastoral activity and should not be confined to pastors. He correctly observes that the Church is in a transitional situation towards a pluralistic society, where it moves

from pastoral imposition of duty to pastoral free choice and enrichment. In practice, this means that members of the Church should not be viewed as a nameless mass but as a Church of small groups that have differences in temperament and activity. This is in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, where it is noted that "... there is an urgent and urgent obligation to be close to every human being and, when we meet him, to help him (...) effectively by reminding us of the Lord's word: *Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.*" (Mt 25:40) This is in the wake of the Allied mentality and a new approach to pastoral psychology where the priest is no longer just a leader but a companion (Szentmartoni 2009: 20-22).

CONCLUSION

Although there has been an emphasis on spiritual kinship throughout this work, blood kinship should by no means be neglected. We saw that almost all friends left Jesus under the cross, and the mother remained (Mt 27: 55-56; Mk 15: 40-41; Lk 23: 49; Jn 19: 25-28). The first leader of the Jerusalem church was Jesus' cousin James the Righteous (Gal 1: 13-19). So, the Bible teaches us that blood and spiritual brotherhood are both extremely important and deviations can occur within one and the other. The ethos of the Christian Brotherhood is described in detail by Joseph Ratzinger in his book²³ *The Christian Brotherhood*, which clearly shows his sources from the Old Testament and Greek spiritual environment, his construction through Jesus' words and the epistles of St. Paul also shows his appearances in the liberal ideology of the Enlightenment and in Marxist theory. As a solution to the negative phenomena of a broad interpretation of the brotherhood, Ratzinger finds a clear designation of the brothers as members of the Church. This valuable debate should certainly be considered and respected, but one must not forget who Jesus calls his brother (neighbor). Just a Samaritan from a despised section of the people, not members of the same religion but a brother in deeds and humanity. Pope Francis and his work *Our Father* can be cited here, where the emphasis is on ours and tells us: "There is a danger for us Christians to consider ourselves to be only children. No, no: everyone, even those despised, are children of the same Father."²⁴

We started with the New Testament, we end with the Old. The brotherhood in humanity, viewed in the light of universal bonding through the mystical body of Christ, can be compared to the beneficial effects of water from Ezekiel's vision in chapter 47: And wherever the river goes every living creature which swarms will live (...), there will grow all kinds of trees for food.

²³ This book describes the Christian Brotherhood phenomenon most thoroughly and certainly needs to be consulted when considering this topic.

²⁴ Bergoglio, J. M: *Oče naš*. Verbum, Split, 2017.

¹⁹ Nikić, Mijo (2012). *Biblijska psihoterapija*. Zagreb: ZBJL.

²⁰ Wilfrid Stinissen, *Moje ime je u tebi : Isusova molitva / O zazivanju Isusova imena / tekst napisao redovnik Istočne Crkve*. Zagreb : Naklada sv. Antuna, 2013.

²¹ Koprek, I: *Je li altruizam racionalan i na koji način. / Religija između hermeneutike i fenomenologije : zbornik u čast prof. dr. sc. Josipu Osliću povodom 65. godine života*. Katolički bogoslovni fakultet Sveučilišta: Kršćanska sadašnjost, Zagreb, 2018.

²² Griffin, E: *A first look at communication theory*. 8th ed. NY: McGraw-Hill Education, New York, 2012.

Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing. We have seen the concept of brotherhood move from gender, through blood to the Spirit, that is, from a positive to a negative effect on interpersonal relationships. Brotherly love for one's neighbor through the mechanisms of forgiveness and spiritual guidance enables healthy interpersonal relationships and spiritual growth gradually and gently leading us to the ideal we find in Sermon on the Mount. The first epistle of Peter (2: 16-17) tells us: Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. When and if we do so, we are well on our way to aligning ourselves with the will of Reality and to achieving global mental health, "for I am the Lord, your healer." (Exod. 15:26)

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