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Representation of the concept TOTALITARIANISM in George Orwell's novel "1984"

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The article studies linguistic representation of the concept TOTALITARIANISM in George Orwell's novel "1984". This concept is the key one in the novel since the description of the totalitarian regime specificity and operation can be considered the message the author intends to convey in the dystopia. The author shows how totalitarianism works, which mechanisms put it into action and help to maintain the control over citizens who have to exist in the country where tyranny reigns. The conceptual analysis of the novel's key concept reveals the language means used by the writer to reflect the totalitarian regime to the fullest. Due to the fact that the totalitarian government never openly admits that they want total control, Orwell also represents the concept TOTALITARIANISM through other concepts and their verbalization, viz. the concepts POWER, FEAR, PROPAGANDA, and SURVEILLANCE. They are associated with the features typical of the society ruled by totalitarianism, i.e. all-pervading power (the concept POWER), citizens' constant fear of being punished by the Party (the concept FEAR), unlimited day-and-night control and ideology testing (the concept SURVEILLANCE), imposition of the only "correct" idea and denial of any other views (the concept PROPAGANDA). All these subconcepts are represented through their direct nomination as well as their derivational paradigm and collocations with words which activate the corresponding concept. Therefore, the comprehensive study of the novel and clear understanding of its messages made possible through the conceptual analysis can be viewed as a chance to see a warning for both contemporary and future generations.

Key words: totalitarianism, conceptual analysis, concept, verbalization, name of the concept, concept activators

Підгорна А. Б. Репрезентація концепту ТОТАЛІТАРИЗМ в романі Джорджа Орвелла «1984»

Стаття присвячена дослідженню лінгвальної репрезентації концепту ТОТАЛІТАРИЗМ в романі Дж. Орвелла «1984». Цей концепт є ключовим у романі, адже репрезентацію специфіки та функціонування тоталітарного режиму можна вважати основною ідеєю роману. Автор намагався показати, яким чином працює тоталітаризм, які механізми запускають його в дію і як підтримуються контроль над розумом громадян, які вимушені існувати у країні, де панує тиранія. Лінгвоконцептуальний аналіз ключового концепту роману, що пропонується у статті, показує за рахунок яких мовних засобів автор досягає найточнішої репрезентації світу тоталітаризму. Зважаючи на те, що тоталітарна влада ніколи відкрито не визнає того, що вони намагаються повністю контролювати дії і, навіть, думки громадян, Орвелл репрезентує концепт ТОТАЛІТАРИЗМ через інші концепти та їх вербалізацію. Так, влада, страх, пропаганда та спостереження є тим інструментарієм, що тримає людей під контролем. Саме тому вважаємо, що актуалізація однойменних концептів допомагає автору твору відтворити світ тоталітаризму без безпосереднього найменування ключового концепту роману. Окрім самого імені концепту, вищевикреслені концепти вербалізуються також синонімами до імені концепту та іншими одиницями, що асоціюються із концептом, включаючи і доволі незвичні колокації, аналіз яких, однак, дозволяє віднайти приховані значення аналізованих концептів. При дослідженні засобів вербалізації також приділялася увага атрибутивним одиницям, які, використовуючись у поєднанні із активізаторами концептів, виявляли авторське ставлення до певного поняття. Окрім того, слід підкреслити домінуючу кількість абстрактних іменників, що несуть додаткове стилістичне забарвлення та посилюють відчуття невпевненості у майбутньому, що є характерною рисою політики тоталітаризму. В цілому, аналіз мовних одиниць-активізаторів показав, що переважна більшість концептів роману об'єктивується лексичним шляхом, хоча окрему увагу привернуло частотне застосування пасивного стану, що також підкреслює непрямим шляхом залежність громадян від рішень керівників країни, де панує тоталітаризм.

Ключові слова: тоталітаризм, концептуальний аналіз, концепт, вербалізація, ім'я концепту, одиниці-активізатори

Подгорная А. Б. Репрезентация концепта ТОТАЛІТАРИЗМ в романе Джорджа Оруэлла «1984»

Статья посвящена исследованию лингвальной репрезентации концепта ТОТАЛІТАРИЗМ в романе Дж. Оруэлла «1984». Этот концепт – ключевой в романе, т.к. передача специфичности и функционирования тоталитарного режима можно считать основной идеей исследуемой антиутопии. Автор стремился показать, каким образом работает тоталитаризм, какие механизмы запускают его в действие и поддерживают контроль над разумом граждан, которые вынуждены существовать в стране, где царствует тирания. Концептуальный анализ ключевого концепта романа выявляет, за счет каких языковых средств писатель смог наиболее точно представить тоталитарный режим. Из-за того, что тоталитарная власть никогда открыто не признает, что они хотят полного контроля, Оруэлл также репрезентирует концепт ТОТАЛІТАРИЗМ через

другие концепты и их вербализацию. Другими словами, власть, страх, пропаганда и постоянное наблюдение за людьми являются теми инструментами, которые держат людей под контролем. В связи с этим считаем, что актуализация указанных концептов помогает автору воссоздать мир тоталитаризма без непосредственного наименования ключевого концепта романа. Кроме самих имен концептов они вербализируются также синонимами к имени концепта и другими единицами, которые ассоциируются с концептом, включая и достаточно непривычные коллокации, анализ которых, в свою очередь, помогает найти скрытые значения анализируемых концептов. При исследовании способов вербализации также уделялось внимание атрибутивным единицам, которые при использовании вместе с активизаторами концептов выявляют отношение автора к определенному понятию. Кроме этого, следует подчеркнуть доминантное количество абстрактных существительных, которые придают дополнительную стилистическую окраску и усиливают ощущение неуверенности в будущем, что собственно является одной из характеристик политики тоталитаризма.

Ключевые слова: тоталитаризм, концептуальный анализ, концепт, вербализация, имя концепта, единицы-активизаторы

George Orwell's dystopia "1984" is considered one of the most significant literary works of the 20th century [5]. However, the story told in the novel does not only give a very straightforward presentation of the past, it also remains quite topical for the present time. The totalitarianism techniques and manipulation methods described by Orwell are, on the one hand, clearly reminiscent of Stalin's and Hitler's regimes and, on the other hand, remind readers of some present-day governments, at least, in the way how ordinary people can be manipulated and made to think in the way that is desirable by those in power. The analysis of the author's messages hidden in the language can help to decipher both Orwell's literary world and the existing reality.

It cannot be said that Orwell's novel has been left without any attention throughout the years. But in most cases it has been considered from the literary point of view and in recent years – from the perspective of translation studies [1; 2]. The cognitive aspect of the novel's value has been recognized lately [12], but not thoroughly analyzed yet. Therefore, it can be said that the novel still hides a lot for researchers to reveal. Thus, the objective of this article is to show how the key concept TOTALITARIANISM is represented in the novel and how the linguistic means of its representation can be interpreted to derive deeper understanding of Orwell's message, which is still up to date.

It is common knowledge that although the literary world is a non-real world, it is undoubtedly based on its author's world perception and basic views that form his/her mentality. The representation of the totalitarian regime in "1984" definitely rests on George Orwell's almost lifelong anti-Stalinist ideas. From the early 1930ies Orwell wrote about "the hypocrisy of the British Empire and those who upheld it under a banner of freedom and enlightenment" [13]. His anti-totalitarian views became strong after fighting with the Loyalists in Spain in 1937, where he was wounded by fascists and where he witnessed the brutal Communist suppression of the revolutionary parties in the Republican alliance [6].

The main character of the novel under consideration is a 39-year-old man, Winston Smith, who lives in a state, named Oceania, where every aspect of life is under government control – family

life, social life, sex, history, thoughts, and feelings. The novel depicts, "with very great power, the horrors of a well-established totalitarian regime" [8, c. 71]. This regime uses its people "against themselves like pawns" [11, c. 2]. The total control of the government deprives the main character and all others of any privacy. Even memories do not belong to individuals in that state of totalitarianism and manipulation. Past is erased and all evidence is ruined so that no one is able to prove anything which is not wanted by the Party in power.

The main tools of Oceania's ruling Party are propaganda and surveillance. Thanks to them, people in Oceania are under control and made to do what is wanted. Those who protest or, at least, show even a slightest sign of unorthodoxy disappear – "vaporize" from life and from all records as if they had never existed. In Orwell's novel, both propaganda and surveillance are taken to extreme limits: total surveillance and total propaganda [14, c. 49]. The reader can see all kinds of propaganda described in the novel. It can be said that "persuasive power of every medium, technique and genre of communication is exploited to its maximum potential and single-mindedly put to work" [14, c. 50]. People cannot escape all those messages. They are bombarded with facts which are far from being true, but which are presented as the only truth possible. And people swallow this lie because it is the only information available to them. Everything which is unwanted by the government is erased from existence. As the main character explains, "the chosen lie would pass into the permanent records and become truth" [9, c. 58]. Winston Smith knows exactly how it happens because he works in the Ministry of Truth whose main aim is to fabricate the "right" truth, the one that will make citizens do what the Party wants and ignore the things that are sure to be outrageous for a thinking personality.

Analyzing the novel with the view of revealing the means of the concept TOTALITARIANISM representation, it is evident that there is no explicit way of naming the regime reigning in Oceania. It requires the reader's background knowledge to comprehend that total and undeniable power, overwhelming fear of Oceania's citizens, ubiquitous propaganda and surveillance described by Orwell on the pages of the novel are obvious indicators of totalitarianism. Similarly to the main character who knows the truth but is afraid of protesting openly, Orwell implies that the reader will understand the message even without the transparent linguistic nominations. It seems that the

author himself fears the consequences of direct nominations. That is why metaphoric nominations, paraphrases, and paradoxes which need to be deciphered are frequent in the novel.

To uncover the true meaning of the key concept, linguists can, first of all, refer to dictionaries which define the noun which is the name of the concept and, in addition, form certain associations with the concept under analysis. Thus, dictionaries define totalitarianism as follows:

- *centralized control by an autocratic authority* [7];

- *the political concept that the citizen should be totally subject to an absolute state authority* [7];

- *a system of government that is centralized and dictatorial and requires complete subservience to the state* [4];

- *a form of government in which the ruler is an absolute dictator (not restricted by a constitution or laws or opposition etc.)* [10];

- *the principle of complete and unrestricted power in government* [10];

- *a political system in which those in power have complete control and do not allow anyone to oppose them* [3];

- *absolute power, especially when exercised unjustly or cruelly* [10];

- *a political doctrine advocating the principle of absolute rule* [10].

As a result, it is possible to derive the main characteristics of the concept TOTALITARIANISM, which are common to the majority of the definitions given above. In most cases the concept is described with the help of such adjectives as *complete* and *absolute* as well as the participle *centralized*. Besides, the explanation of the concept often takes the nouns *power*, *control*, and *authority*. The negative connotation which the concept implies is expressed through such units as *not restricted*, *unrestricted*, *unjustly*, and *cruelly*. The totalitarian regime is accompanied by complete “*subservience*” and makes any opposition impossible (*not allow anyone to oppose them*). These key words and word-combinations define the notion TOTALITARIANISM, create the nominative field of the corresponding concept, and find peculiar collocations in the conceptual system of G. Orwell’s “1984” verbalizing simultaneously the concepts POWER (the nouns *power* and *authority*) and SURVEILLANCE (*complete/absolute control*) as well as building up close associations with the concepts PROPAGANDA and FEAR which are inherent in the totalitarian regime that spread false slogans, aggression, and terror. However, it should be said that contrary to the concept TOTALITARIANISM, the other supportive concepts, such as the abovementioned POWER, SURVEILLANCE, PROPAGANDA, and FEAR, find more transparent and, at times, even abundant linguistic representation.

Thus, it would be relevant to study verbalization of each abovementioned supportive concept. The first one under consideration is POWER which finds its direct nomination 70 times in the novel. It is worth noticing that the Cambridge Dictionary defines the noun *power* as “*an ability to control people and events; the amount of political control a person or group has in a country*” [3]. It is easy to observe associative and conceptual connections between the notions *power* and *control* as if “*power*” presupposes “*control*” whereas “*control*” makes “*power*” possible. It is also necessary to pay attention to word-combinations in which one of the components is the noun *power*: *hypnotic power*, *enormous power*, *mere power*, *frightening power*, *pure power*. All these collocations are used to make a deliberate emphasis on the single-party regime of power as well as on the impossibility of democratic rule establishment in the totalitarian state, which can be illustrated with the citation from the novel: “*It was possible, no doubt, to imagine a society in which WEALTH, in the sense of personal possessions and luxuries, should be evenly distributed, while POWER remained in the hands of a small privileged caste. But in practice such a society could not long remain stable*” [9, c. 240]. In this sentence the author graphically points out two words through capitalization in order to underline the opposition of ideas – the one which any government should follow (*wealth* in the meaning “*welfare*”) and the one which the government of Oceania pursues (*power* meaning “*control*”).

In G. Orwell’s “1984” there are also a range of derivatives from the noun *power* which nominates the concept: *powerful* (17 times), *overpowering* (1 time), *overpoweringly* (1 time), *powerless* (1 time). However, more conceptually strong are such metaphoric constructions as *power-hungry people*, *nerve of power*, *calm power*, *overwhelming preponderance of power*, and some others. It is obvious that the lexical unit *power* functioning in the metaphoric expressions accentuates the significance of the corresponding concept in the novel.

As mentioned before in reference to the dictionary definition of the word *power*, one of the main units associated with it is the noun *control*. This noun can be found on the pages of the novel 26 times whereas the corresponding verb in its different forms (both active and passive) – 15 times. The derivatives *controllable* and *uncontrollably* are found 2 and 3 times in the text correspondingly. One of the metaphoric expressions characterizing Oceania’s regime is *reality control*. It proves the absolute power of the government that can manipulate the citizens’ minds and change the reality. The unit *control* can also be found in the word-combinations *full control* (2 times) and *controlled insanity*, for example, *the prevailing mental condition must be controlled insanity* [9, c. 237]. This citation seems to point out that even madness must not be allowed without the Party’s permission.

Moreover, the concept POWER is also activated with the help of structures typical of the novel under study. For instance, the reader can encounter such word-combinations as *enormous face* (3 times),

Ministry of Truth/Love/Peace/Plenty (55 times), *Inner Party* (27 times), *arrests* (4 times), *confessions* (8 times), *executions* (4 times), *invincible* (2 times) and some others. All these examples assist in describing the Party's policy and realizing the danger which Oceania's citizens live in.

One of the main characters – O'Brien, who tortures and executes people in the cells of the Ministry of Love, openly explains the key motivating factor which rules the totalitarian idea and is often skillfully decorated with the appropriate make-up so that it could be described as a triumph of reason, justice, and democracy: "*The object of power is power*" [9, c. 332]. So, since the Big Brother is an abstract character and is found only in descriptions of placards or when mentioned by other characters, he is presented as someone inaccessible, illusive, and mysterious. O'Brien, in his turn, embodies the totalitarian regime. He functions as an executioner who spreads the state's ideology and personifies the tyranny. The main slogan of the Party, which says "*Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past*" [9, c. 44], proves the absence of any choice for those who live in Oceania.

In order to create the atmosphere of the totalitarian regime and reflect the psychological state of those who live under this rule, the author introduces many descriptions which smoothly correlate with the actions of the characters. For example, Orwell skillfully describe the torturing process and people's sufferings as well as the buildings where torturing takes place. He lets his readers in the atmosphere of horror and despair so that they could better understand the characters' behaviour. In general, though, in the novel "1984", like in any modernist novel, descriptions outnumber actions because the key objective of the novel is to get readers acquainted with lifestyle and daily routine of the imagined world. The emphasis is made on what that terrible world looks like rather than on what happens.

For that reason the semantic field of the concept FEAR is characterized by a variety of verbalization means. The most productive way of the concept FEAR linguistic realization in the novel under study is direct nomination with the help of the noun *fear* (20 times). Special attention should be paid to such word-combinations as *mingled fear*, *twinge of fear*, *terrible fear* (2 times), *frenzies of fear* [9]. These combinations with the component *fear* are used to strengthen the emotiveness as well as to emphasize a significantly higher degree of terror and panic experienced by the characters. This technique helps to recreate the society depicted and to convey the feeling of dismay spread due to Big Brother's policy. A peculiar example of emotional tension is the expression "*hideous ecstasy of fear*" [9, c. 19]. Each new word in this word-combination augments the intensity of fear expressed.

Along with the main lexeme *fear*, there are its derivatives to represent the concept, for example, *fearless* or *fear-ridden*. The author portrays the image of Big Brother as "*fearless protector*" in order to oppose him to the images of Oceania's citizens who, in contrast to Big Brother who has nothing to be scared of (*fearless*), exist in constant tension due to the dread of being punished for their thoughts (*fear-ridden*). The noun *fear* is often found in combination with other nouns: *fear and hatred*, *fear and disgust*, *fear and anger*, *fear and vindictiveness* [9]. Orwell shows that fear spread by the Party stimulates hatred and disgust making people long for revenge. Describing Oceania, the author names it "*a world of fear and treachery and torment*" [9, c. 336].

However, the unit *fear* is not the only one to activate the concept FEAR. Orwell often refers to the noun *terror* (8 times) meaning "extreme fear" as well as its derivative form *terrible* (13 times). This noun can often be observed in the metaphoric expressions: *a life of terror*, *horrible pang of terror*, *black terror*. The noun *horror* is very close in its meaning to the noun *terror* and means "*an intense feeling of fear, shock, or disgust*" [4]. It is also quite noticeable in the novel (10 times). The same can be said about its derivative form *horrible* (8 times) meaning "*marked by or arousing painful and intense fear, dread, dismay, or aversion*" [7]: *horrible thing*, *slightly horrible*, *horrible way*, etc.

In addition to the abovementioned nouns (*fear*, *terror*, *horror*), there are others which can also be viewed as activators of the concept FEAR. Among them there is *dread*, *dreadful*, *uneasiness*, *dismay*, *panic*, *alarmed feeling*, *restless*, *hostility*, *nervous tic*, *anxiety*, and others. Special attention should also be paid to the noun *fright*, its derivatives *frightening*, *frightened*, *frightful* and different word-combinations with it, such as "*scream with fright*" and "*be blue with fright*" [9, c. 12]. The use of idiomatic expressions strengthens the effect the noun produces and proves its importance for the overall conceptual sphere of the novel.

The other interesting idiom found on the pages of the novel is "*heart was thumping like a drum*" [9, c. 25]. Depicting the character's feelings, the author builds up certain associations which activate the concept FEAR in the reader's mind. The following example performs the same function. Describing Winston's handwriting as "*small but childish*" [9, c. 11], Orwell underlines how strong the fear controlling Smith is when he starts writing down his notes in the diary. The linguistic means mentioned above enable the author to reflect the atmosphere of totalitarianism reigning in the society. The people of Oceania live in constant fear that they might have a thought which differs from the Party's ideology. They fear because they are well aware that "*thoughtcrime does not entail death: thoughtcrime IS death*" [9, c. 36]. It must also be underlined that the abstract nouns *darkness* [9, c. 5] and *transparency* [9, c. 140] acquire specific meanings and imply that "*Big Brother Is Watching You*" [9, c. 4]) and everything is obvious to him since he can see both through walls and thoughts.

The other concept that is closely connected to the concept **TOTARITARIANISM** is **SURVEILLANCE**. According to the Cambridge dictionary, “*surveillance is the act of watching a person or a place, esp. a person believed to be involved with criminal activity or a place where criminals gather*” [3]. The direct nomination of the concept can be found only once on the pages of the novel, but the other lexical units, i.e. *examination* and *watching* which can be viewed as synonyms to *surveillance*, are more frequent. For example, the lexeme *watching* can often be seen in the slogan of the Party: **BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU**. This phrase is used three times throughout the novel and it evokes overwhelming fear each time. In addition, the slogan is also graphically emphasized, which enhances the effect.

The concept **SURVEILLANCE** is verbalized with the help of other nouns which denote different means of surveillance: *telescreens*, *cameras*, *microphones*. Describing telescreens, Orwell says: “*With the development of television, and technical advance which made it possible to receive and transmit simultaneously on the same instrument, private life came to the end*” [9, c. 259]. People do not know when they may be watched because wiretapping and video monitoring devices can be anywhere they go – in the forest, flat, or bedroom. In addition to telescreens, cameras, and microphones, people may meet *patrols* all the time: “*patrols ..., who examined the papers of any Party member they found there and asked awkward questions*” [9, c. 148]. If the patrol notices that a party member is outside during the working hours or at night, such behavior is viewed as deviant, which is equal to a *thoughtcrime*.

From the grammatical point of view, it is worth noticing that there are many passive constructions used in the novel. It underlines that citizens of Oceania are seen as objects and emphasizes that all their actions have already been defined and are being done for them by someone else. Residents are marionettes in Big Brother’s hands: *be picked up and recognized, be seen as well as heard, being watched, be overheard, be scrutinized*. These constructions describe processes which can assist in achieving the goal – surveillance and control.

One of the main features which characterizes the totalitarian regime and helps the government control the minds of the nation is propaganda. So, **PROPAGANDA** is another concept closely associated with **TOTARITARIANISM**. In the novel the concept **PROPAGANDA** unfolds through constant reference to the word *victory* when naming everyday things since the main tool of pressure used by the Party is the state of war which the country is in. In general, the lexical unit *victory* is mentioned 43 times in the novel, even though while reading the text it becomes clear that Oceania is not really in the state of war and has no real enemy to be defeated: *victory mansions, victory gin, victory cigarettes, victory coffee, victory square* [9].

The direct nomination of the concept through the noun *propaganda* is used only three times in the text. And this is not strange since the Party implements its policy implicitly pretending they are following the goals of the public welfare and security. The Cambridge dictionary defines the notion *propaganda* as “*information or ideas that are spread by an organized group or government to influence people’s opinions, esp. by not giving all the facts or by secretly emphasizing only one way of looking at the facts*” [3]. The Party’s activities described in the novel undoubtedly correspond to the definition of the term, the key characteristic of which is imposing the “*only one way of looking*” as the only correct one on other people. In most cases, propaganda is realized by a group of people (“*an organized group or government*”) who have certain law-making/law-enforcing rights and who hold senior positions. Due to the abovementioned it is possible to consider the lexical unit *influence* to be an equivalent activator of the concept described. It is often found in the novel including the passive forms of the corresponding verb. One more meaningful example of the lexeme use is the word-combination *sobering influence*, which implies that the Party’s policy is so unreasonable that it even produces a sobering effect.

G. Orwell counterposes the Party to the citizens. Therefore, it is quite predictable that the novel is based on contrasts, for example, the black-and-white colour of Newspeak, the language promoted by the Party: “*The keyword here is blackwhite. Like so many Newspeak words, this word has two mutually contradictory meanings. Applied to an opponent, it means the habit of impudently claiming that black is white, in contradiction of the plain facts*” [9, c. 267]. It is a means of propagandizing the Party’s ideas. It is applied to the opponent who tends to say that black is white, even though it contradicts the obvious facts. This idea divides the world into the right one (the world created by the Party) and the wrong one. If you think that $2+2=4$, but the Party says that it equals 5, your idea is whiteblack whereas the other is blackwhite.

The Party bosses actively promote treachery and demolition of all family values. The child who betrays the parents and informs on their anti-Party remarks becomes automatically “*a child hero*”. Moreover, children are often the ones who become traitors because it is easy to manipulate them and foist obedience principles on them from their early years. Such understanding of the concept **PROPAGANDA** is activated in the novel with the help of the following lexemes: *to overhear, to denounce, to be frightened, a compromising remark*, and others.

To sum up, it can be said that the conceptual core of G. Orwell’s novel “1984” is the concept **TOTALITARIANISM**, which does not find direct implementation on the pages of the novel but activated through other subconcepts. The analysis of several dictionary definitions of the term *totalitarianism* has led to revealing the significance of such notions as **POWER**, **FEAR**, **SURVEILLANCE**, and **PROPAGANDA**. They are associated with the features typical of the society ruled by totalitarianism, i.e. all-

pervading power (the concept POWER), citizens' constant fear of being punished by the Party (the concept FEAR), unlimited day-and-night control and ideology testing (the concept SURVEILLANCE), imposition of the only "correct" idea and denial of any other views (the concept PROPAGANDA). All these subconcepts are represented through their direct nomination as well as their derivational paradigm and collocations with words which activate the corresponding

concept. Thus, the message read through all those concepts activated on the pages of the novel is that total control by those in power, propaganda, surveillance and life in fear create, as a result, the nation of people who are not only afraid but consequently unable to think critically. Therefore, the comprehensive study of the novel and clear understanding of its messages made possible through the conceptual analysis can be viewed as a chance to see a warning for both contemporary and future generations.

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