TECHNOLOGIES IN EDUCATION AND THE DEHUMANIZATION AND IMPERIALIZATION OF PEDAGOGY: THE AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract. Information and communications technologies in education remain the toast of the millennium in the sphere of education. The irony however in such situation is that the professionals (the teachers) in the sector who marvel and revel at it may not be aware that in one hand they are creating and promoting their own albatross and on the other hand that the younger generation of beneficiaries are at the receiving end as the aims and purposes of education has been unknowingly redefined for them. This paper maintains that education has a normative dimension which is negated or blurred by technologies. It discusses the impact of these technologies on traditional pedagogy and argues on the dangers of replacing the traditional face to face encounter in teaching and learning, limitations these technologies in the philosophy of education. It also argues strongly that these technologies in education are an imperialist economic agenda in the current trend of globalisation. This imperialist agenda is the latent albatross hanging on the neck of the teaching profession.

Keywords: ICT, philosophy, education, exutio, imperialisation, pedagogy, Africa

Introduction

Since the advent of industrial revolution, humanity has witnessed series of revolutions both positive and negative. In most cases, such revolutions are double edged swords. Industrial revolution led to the replacement of certain grades and classes of workers. Among those replaced, some took it in good faith while a great many revolted destructively and some are still reacting till today – see the Luddites, the Amish, the Neo-Luddites, etc. Such is definitely going to be the case in the ICT–Education sector and its fast menacing revolutions in education. In short many believe that history is going to be replicated but not in the physical challenge-styled way.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in education is a welcome development/revolution but not without some limitations or restrictions. The education of man involves a synergy, a synergy of different factors and dimensions. The human being, according to the philosopher Mondin (1985) is an open project, a project that needs to be completed through education. A project needs various implements, materials, human resources, etc. from as diverse a source as there are many contributions to ensure its completion. Thus since humans are open projects, to complete this project demands concerted efforts to stimulate, grow and develop the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. All these cannot be ensured entirely through the ICT in education. Surely ICT in education cannot take care of the growth and development of these domains, it can only take care of one or two of the three domains and leave one to lie fallow and thus make the educated person to 'malfunction' in the society arguing from the functionalist perspective.

When Frankenstein developed or created his monster, he had only one dimension of its role in mind. The dimension he wanted the monster to go is the good intention of ICT in education. But unfortunately the monster by fate or feat had a spiral, trickle down, butterfly effect. These were not originally intended by Frankenstein. Serendipity always plays a role, a factor in many situations for both the researcher and the explorer of the product. Typical examples include Alfred Nobel and his dynamite; the invention of the gun and its uses which has led to the saying in some circles in philosophy of technology that 'Guns don't kill, people kill' In essence what is being emphasized here is that, yes, the introductory intention for ICT in education is good but we are oblivious of the potentially negative serendipity it is yielding and will still yield in the educational sector specifically, and in the education of humanity in general as we try to complete the 'human project' as projected by philosophers. By the time this would be realized, we would have already drunk deep the waters of the Pierian Spring of Alexander Pope.

In this paper, ICTs in education would be seen as all the various aspects of technological media applications involved in the teaching and learning process. In view of this ICTs in education covers such technological concepts, terminologies and media as internet-based or online education, elearning, virtual education, virtual classrooms, interactive software, CD-ROMs, Mobile education – m-learning (which involves the current use of mobile phones as education media) in Nigeria MTN has started such bundles with the education of kids. These tend to have serious impacts and consequences on pedagogy and the fundamental essence of education. These the paper would argue are means through which a new dimension of imperialism is being propagated. They prompt us to pursue unclarified educational objectives. This paper believes with Johnson (2004) that 'education aims to improve and complete the human being described as an open and uncompleted project by nature. That it aims at improving the lives of individuals by giving them the tools they need to think for themselves and make decisions about their lives. Thus education is targeted at going to the core of what it means to be human; it facilitates individuals in developing their hopes and desires and their capacities to reason, make choices and act on those choices. Education is both intrinsically and instrumentally valuable through the improvement of the quality and character of human lives and through the provision of knowledge and development of skills that would enable students to work and function as citizens of their societies respectively'.

Due to these fundamental and broad aims of education we have to be extremely careful that the introduction and use of ICTs in education does not thwart the achievement of these fundamental goals. This is the *point de depart* of this essay.

The hermeneutics of dehumanization of pedagogy

Pedagogy as both an art and a science, from its inception, history and development has had a human face. It is a human face that sees its interaction as those involving humans in the exchange and cross pollination of ideas. It was a pedagogy that took into considerations human potentials, human limitations and disabilities. It also took into consideration the ontological, psychological and anthropological constitutions of what it means to be human.

Despite the fact that we humans have certain common characteristic traits, no two individual human beings are the same. This is more glaring when it comes to cognitive, affective and psychomotor abilities of individual. When it comes to education, these three capacities work in synergy to portray an educated person. To portray someone as really educated none of these can work in isolation of the other. Following the disparities in abilities of individuals in the acquisitions of knowledge there is no further need of gain saying the fact that there are decipherable differences in learning abilities. This is a factor that stares the art and science of pedagogy in the face.

In a class of different categories of individuals with differing cognitive, affective and psychomotor abilities, the teacher has an onerous challenge to take care of these individual differences in learning brings to fore an aspect of the human dimension of pedagogy. The teacher always brings his or her personal experiences into the classroom, experiences that criss-cross the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains thereby bridging certain gaps in individual learning abilities. The classroom teacher always stands in loco parentis'. Standing in *loco parentis* underscores the challenging role of the teacher in the completion of the human project (the open project) earlier referred to. The moulding of a good-natured individual is not the sole responsibility of the parents. In most cases the parents lack the moral will power to train their children in the right part. In most cases also parents might erroneously think they are giving the right training only for the teachers to discover that such has been the misnomer. Thus the onus of correcting the child and even the parents now rests on the teachers in such circumstances. The essence here is that pedagogy is in the service of humanity, humanity the philosopher Heidegger (1962) described as 'belongingness', 'being with' and 'for others'.

With the introduction of ICTs in education, the human factor, the belongingness is bracketed out, the affective domain remains far-fetched. Also the cognitive domain did not remain sacrosanct.

Generally, it is believed that one of the major primary aims of education is individual development. The secondary aims of education include social development. As a necessary corollary, individual development determines the level and success of social development. Individual development leads to the conquest of internal freedoms, according to Maritain (1943) it leads to self-awareness and development of one's personality. The way this is achieved will go to a great extent to determine the nature of the secondary aims of education, especially social development. Education helps one to understand the world around one and to fully relate well with one's natural and social development. This type of relationship between humans and their natural and societal environment, based on understanding of them is not an artificial type of relationship. It is a natural experience. Based on this great fundamental, the National Policy on Education of Nigeria stated as two of its educational goals, the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around', and the inculcation of the right types of values and attitudes, for the survival of the individual and the (Nigerian) society', see (FRN, 2004). These point to its appreciation of education as a natural and social experience which every human being and society that seeks to survive must undergo. This education is a collective experience and not an isolated one. But with the advent of ICTs and its components such as virtual or online education, the reverse is becoming the case. It is no longer taking a human face, but rather a faceless one. Education has lost its social aspects; the socialization aspect is fast going out of the picture. It is now an interaction between the learner and the computer. Thus one may at this point state that the major aspect of dehumanization of pedagogy by the introduction of ICTs in education is the fact of social disorientation.

Social disorientation is one of the pseudo aims or counter aims of education in this postmodern era. The social experience encountered in education is fast becoming a mirage. It is one of the inherent and latent adverse effects of ICTs in education. In view of this, the affective domain is ruled out as one of the targets of ICTs in the process education of humans. The cognitive and psychomotor domains may be artificialized, but the affective domain cannot be. It is this domain that marks the human being out as specific specie from all other creatures. It is also this aspect that made Aristotle to declare in his *Politics* that humans are social animals. The affective domain helps humans in creating a life-world of total understanding for the harmonious relationships that exist in our present day societies. With these developments, it appears that the educational goals cited above are to be overtaken and thus needs to be expunged or redefined by the incursion of ICTs into education.

If we become disoriented in the necessary values that should ensure the survival of the individual and the society, as the next few generations of computer-nurtured humans would be, then the nature of relationships obtainable in the society would be an artificial one, an artificial one with a differently disoriented atmosphere. Aristotle also in his *Politics* made us to understand that he who likes solitude is either a world beast or a god. With the atmosphere of de-socialized learning, human relationship will very soon become a strained one, and thus the possibility of behaving like wild beasts or gods would be rife.

With the availability of the internet by a click of any enabled gadgets any sort of information can be accessed as educational materials. These ICT materials are easily and readily provided by various organizations, both local and international, with different hidden agenda. Since there are no regulations controlling material resources, by way of information control anything can be uploaded and accessed for different purposes. The child, the pupil, the student or the individual accessing such sites may not have a strong moral judgment over such information. The impacts of such information on such young minds may not be immediately manifested. Thus a wrong personality is being developed. In most cases, it may be developed with contradictory value orientations which may be out of tune with one's social environments. It may not be too early to predict that the emergence of ICT is facilitating the breeding of social perverts and terrorists who may not comprehend and appreciate the human social relationship.

Apart from such impacts as social disorientation, isolated learning devoid of human relationships that exist in the traditional classroom setting, seriously affects learning. It has already been stressed here that learning is a social experience. Elias et al. (1997) in their neuropsychological research demonstrated that many elements of learning are based on human and social relationships. In essence, the affective domain influences greatly the cognitive domain in the learning process. This position is corroborated by Jenson (1998) who pointed out that brain research show that 'affect and cognition' work together, that their combined efforts is greater than the sum of their individual effects in the learning process. The ICT only stresses the cognitive domain at the expense of the affective domain. The social experience of learning involves the classroom teacher and also the fellow students of the learner who come from various social and cultural backgrounds and who exhibit different characters and behaviours that are all useful in the teaching and learning process. They all serve as life lessons and practical experiences for communications in the learning process. Here people's emotional side are trained for the good of social relationship for the survival of the individual and the society. In their various researches Goleman (1995) and Seligman & Cikszentmihalyi (2000) point to the fact that there is a strong relationship between cognition and affection in the human learning process. Thus the intellect cannot be separated from emotion in any learning process. They believe that the affective domain is very crucial to all aspects positive human functioning which cannot be achieved through the isolated and artificial experience characteristic of ICTs in education.

The affective domain makes us the distinctive individuals we are. When such situations as emphasized above are relegated to oblivion in the quest for educational efficiency and effectiveness and improved outcome, the dehumanizing dimension becomes glaring. No matter the level of effectiveness, efficiency, and outcome 'man' is still a member of a society. The goal of education is not to produce a social misfit, a social recluse with a highly and exceptionally functional cognitive domain. One should not so easily forget the experience of Ted Kaczynski, the 'Unabomber'. The presence of the teacher has a lot positive impacts in the teaching and learning process. This is even more strategic when we realize the issue of learning differences. Whisler (1991) in his research demonstrated evidence which point to the powerful positive influence of a teacher–student relationship on motivation and learning. Voronkov (2004) also pointed out that ICTs in education may weaken the communicative structure of education and also disorient students. He further pointed it out that it may serve to erode academic culture and lessen the quality of education. In a summary of the entire situation Johnson (2001) opined that computer technologies in education have the potential to promote and even impose on the unsuspecting user a variety of different cultural and moral values. This aspect will be discussed later in this paper in the section of imperialism. Dreyfus (2001) believed that ICTs disrupt the essential communication character inherent in education especially in the teaching and learning process (see also¹⁾).

Psycho-social impacts of ICTs dehumanization vis-a-vis exutio

Exutio is a Latin root word popular in the field of philosophy of technology. It means withdrawal, immobilization, obsoletion/obsolence. It is the loss of any skill or ability due to disuse or redundancy. (One example is seen in the Hegelian Bondsman dialectics) A typical example is the current loss of calculating abilities in modern day or postmodern school children due to the advent of calculating machines in calculators and mobile handsets.

With the advent of ICTs humanity is losing out the norms and values that govern human social relationships. The individual is becoming 'withdrawn' from the society and his/her environment. One thus becomes a social stranger or an indigenous foreigner. Alexeyeva (2004) reported studies that point to changes in modes of thought of children and teenagers which are now becoming 'computer-like', deformation of emotional sphere, social isolation and tendencies to cybercrimes. There is also the increase in the automation of the human being (Hassing, 1987). Alexeyeva (2004) also highlighted the position of Лекторский (2001) who asserts that the ICT culture will have serious consequences of the younger generation especially the development of a new type of personality whose awareness of self-identity will be slight or will even disappear.

There are also strong evidences which point to the fact that ICTs are affecting the level of concentration of the younger generation of students and learners. Students now seek for shortcuts to all tasks and assignments. As Richtel reports²): students have always faced distractions, but with the advent of ICTs in the learning process coupled with the constant stream of stimuli the offer a profound new challenge is facing students focusing of attention and concentration in the learning processes. She reports that researchers have revealed that such developments have serious risks and consequences on developing brains which tend to be more easily habituated to consistently switching tasks and thus become less able to sustain attention. Teachers and lecturers can attest to this in their various classrooms and lecture halls that students can hardly pay attention throughout the lecture period without pulling out their cell phones unless there was a strict instruction by the teachers and lecturers that all cell phones be switched off during the lecture period. The irony she observed is that despite the fact that the society sees such ugly developments they continue to intensify efforts in the introduction and use of ICTs in education seeing them as the only current avenue to facilitate learning and development of essential skills. Even as Trucano pointed out,³⁾ mobile phones are fast joining the ICTs in education and thus the child would have every right to use his/her cell phone in the lecture halls. They are the digital distraction devices in the classrooms that we have the enormous task now to challenge.

Reports also indicate that ICTs in education have created now sets of social types on campuses; the texters and the gamers, the face bookers and the

Blackberry families. Students now text during and between classes, while on their way to school and even while studying, their gadgets are beside them.

They have now developed the 'essential' skill of multitasking – which is synonymous with high distraction and lowered attention and concentration. Most students involved or caught up in such a mix always end up with lower or average grades when compared with their initial performances before their technological 'conversions'. Technology or ICT in education is now a new faith in the education sector. Either you believe and join or you perish. This seems to be their ideology.

ICTs generally have created a wider gulf in human social relationships. There is no longer a direct human interaction. Social relationships have deteriorated since the introduction of these high tech communications. It has increased the tendencies to lie, to create false impressions and they make us become unruly. People now pay more attention to these gadgets than to their fellow human beings. In most occasions, while interacting, some people prefer meddling with their phones and laptops thus giving you a divided attention. Thus we have a generation of people growing up fully distracted. This would definitely redefine human relationship. Of course when one hears interactive learning, one expects human interaction in the learning process but unfortunately this is not so. What we get is human-to-computer interaction.

The paralogisms of effectiveness

The zeal, the revel and crave for ICTs in education can be summed by the idea of effectiveness in the learning process. According to Alexeyeva (2004) the supporters and proponents of this view point believe that ICTs in education implies effectiveness which equally implies that students digest school subjects and university courses better with the aid of computer technologies and also that computer technologies should positively influence human cognition. This she pointed out is a position strongly advocated by the initiators of Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) research. Thus ICTs are seen as the panaceas for all educational problems in the teaching and learning process. This has led to the nomenclature of ICTs in education as a 'technology fix' philosophy.

Hosie & Schibeci (2001) believe that the hope of the 'technology fix' is still a mirage. They believe that despite the large investment in information technology by educational institutions, there is still scant evidence to establish the proposition that the technologies have led to significant learning gains among students'. In their earlier research, Russell (1999) discovered that there is no significant difference between test scores of learners taking ICT-based education and those receiving the face-to face instruction. In view of these, Trucano observed³⁾ that 'some groups and people associated with the 'technology fix' and 'give kids computers, expect magic to happen' philosophy appear to have had some of their more extreme views tampered in recent years by the reality on ground in these philosophies. He further observed that claims that test scores improve with ICTs stand to much scrutiny. In essence impacts of ICT use on student achievement remains open to much reasonable debates, he further opined. He strongly pointed out that the advent of ICTs in education stunts creativity and objectiveness in education. With ICTs in education academic dishonesty is on the increase.

ICTs in education have appeared to have summed up the essence and goal of education to be effectiveness. But one may ask effectiveness in what and in doing what? According to Johnson (2004) with ICT educational effectiveness is now understood more and more to be learning how to manage information as opposed to creating, evaluating and acquiring information in databases. Effectiveness now means interacting with systems, cutting and pasting information.

The hermeneutics of imperialization of pedagogy

This section is going to be gleaned at from two perspectives of imperialization. The first one is cultural imperialization. The second one is economic imperialization. However both are from a globalist purview of analysis and criss-cross.

Cultural imperialization of pedagogy

In the first place, not all nations are involved in the research and development that lead to the manufacture of ICTS. In essence, those who access them have little chances at controlling and manipulating whatever these portend. In fine, many nations become easily pliable tools and markets for any and possible imperialist agenda. These imperialists have created a situation that will make the realization of their agenda as facile as possible by creating the impression that technology has a messianic effect in all problems facing humans. These technological utopians believe that ICTs are a 'fix it all' for all educational problems – a 'technology fix' earlier iterated. However the truth of this is yet to be ascertained.

In all there is a certain truth in philosophy of technology surrounding technologies which include that there are inherent political, economic and social attachments in the manufacture, development and innovations of technologies. These agenda are manifest and latent in differing situations. It is in view of these that this paper wishes to discuss such under the aegis of imperialization of pedagogy.

The ICTs are driving all nations towards one culture, the MacWorld culture (Nneji, 2011). It thus becomes clear that whoever is in control of the global information super highway has gross control of people's *weltanschauung*. This is because the influence of this on peoples' orientations is quite unbridled and unlimited.

Education is seen as an agent and means of socialization of the younger generation by the older through the fostering of worth and values essential for the survival and continuity of the society. Many nations use education as their major channel of citizenship development and education. It is the major channel through which their national goals are achieved. The cherished values of any society are fostered on their citizens through education. However with the advent of ICTs and their packaged contents, the younger generation of citizens may be receiving a differently negative value orientation which the imperialist nations wish to propagate. This is very easy as information upload and access through the internet is in no way strictly censored and the users are not in a good position to give value judgement as to these information and their intentions. That the younger generation have a different value and cultural orientation from their parents is a pointer to this cultural imperialization.

Children now force their parents to accept a totally different value and culture orientations, which in most cases are antithetical to their fundamental socio-cultural values. As Voronkov (2004) observed, researches indicate that ICTs even in education increases the danger of tensions between values and standards characteristic of different national cultures. He quoted the Australian scientist J. Weckert who defined cultural imperialism as the use of political and economic power to disseminate values and customs of a foreign culture, which leads to the ousting of national or indigenous values and culture, a sort of Social-Darwinism. Weckert, however, noted that in the issue of cultural imperialism by way of social–Darwinism, the 'stronger' does not necessarily mean the 'better'. He also pointed out that replacement of the values of a societly or group by a 'stronger' one should not be seen as a manifestation of social progress or growth as the ICT utopians tend to express. He summed up that the diversity of cultures *per se* should be regarded as a value.

Also, Ершова (2001) noted that ICT uses give rise to new forms of aggression of more developed countries in relation to less developed ones. He

observed that danger arises for whole communities to lose their cultural and national originality, including indigenous language, and consumer preferences and tastes are forced upon the humanity in the interest of a narrow group of people, the transnational product companies.

Economic imperialization of pedagogy

The writer would like to begin here with the metaphor of Johnson (2004) that ICTs in education create a condition, a false need to 'create nails for the hammer'. Thus once one has a hammer, everything will appear to be a nail so that the hammer can function and become meaningful or justify its existence even when there is no need for it.

The advent of ICTs in education has many ugly side-effects. It leads to downsizing. It will also lead to the extinction of certain professions as librarians as the e-library is fast becoming the norm as most books are now online even their purchases. If information is affordable and accessible online what role will the normal librarian play again? This is also the same fate for many non-academic administrative staff associated with the educational sector.

It is the business world of technology that introduced the concept of effectiveness. Effectiveness in business cannot be totally equiperable to that of the educational sector. Business approaches issues from a 'cost-benefit-analysis' (CBA) but this is not the approach in education. The education of humans is not a business endeavour. It takes into consideration the ontological nature and constitution of humans, their psychological and social developments. The worldview of the business people and professionals are quite different from the professionals in education the science and art of pedagogy. This will definitely lead to a total clash of values. According to Kaplan⁴⁾ ICTs in education is part of the trend among multinational corporations of substituting classrooms with CD - ROMs and other online interactive softwares.

The above position of Johnson is already predicted by Postman (1995) that 'technology is already here, or will be here soon; we must use it because it is here; we will become the kind of people technology requires us to be; and, whether we like it or not, we will redesign all our institutions so they are compatible with technology'. Thus humans are now there for technology and no longer the other way round.

Winner (1997) addressing ICTs global assault on education and its concomitant imperialism observed that the evolving arrangements of technoglobalism places strong pressures on the institutions and practices of education. He noted that many of the forces that have transformed corporate structures, shifted the distribution of wealth and undermined the coherence of human relations in society as a whole now promises to alter and degrade education at all levels from Kindergarten to the doctorate degree. Thus education is now being negotiated to respond to the business and technological realities of the new economy. According to Winner (1997) one of the economic impacts of ICTs on education is educational downsizing. There are quests now to cut costs, cutbacks and layoffs. The next is outsourcing. Instead of utilizing human resources as professionals, certain courses are now rendered online. People are now replaced with information machines. The professor who brings and shares live personal experiences is now a mirage as they are now replaced by interactive machines. Business firms now thrive in packaging multimedia applications, CD – ROMs to replace the conventional education. He noted with disgust the growing list of educational products for personal computers. Thus education is now a commodity for sale, he observed. This has led to the emergence of what he called 'infopreneurs'.

In a recent release in Nigeria by the National Office for Technology Acquisition and Promotion (NOTAP) statistics from the Ministry of Communications Technology inform that Nigeria spent N59b on foreign softwares within 3 months. The impression has already been made that we can't survive without ICT thus we have no option than to invest hook, line and sinker into it, Nigeria seems to have believed this imperialist chicanery for us to invest such an amount within 3 most and these technology come fast and outdate faster than they came. In matters of technology transfer this paper believes that developed nations would never transfer current technologies safe those they have ulterior motives attached to.

One ugly dimension of thus imperialization of pedagogy is that teachers in the developing nations are now being replaced by ICTs. Winner (1997) observed that as these corporate innovations enter the educational sector conventional schools and colleges face the distinct possibility that the services they normally provide will be taken over by the high-tech alternative providers in the commercial sector. At a point the power of threats of strikers by teachers and lecturers, especially in Nigeria will be a thing of the past as they can be replaced by these teaching machines.

Critical evaluation

The role and presence of the teacher in the traditional face-to-face pedagogy cannot be overemphasized or ruled out. Technology and its 'magic fix' and panacea appear to be the accepted unphilosophical answer in education. But what is/are the questions that philosophically define education? Why must we define education in a manner that makes ICTs to be the answer and solutions to educational problems? Why must we present educational problems in a way that ICT would become the only available answer? We have already created a peg to fit a whole not yet existent thus we have to option that to ensure that any and all potential holes must be the ones that our already created peg must fit. According to Johnson (2004) we are not going to redefine educational goals and aims in order to have a place for ICTs. Such recasting can result into unintentional degradation of the foundational aims and goals of education.

Conclusion

The position of this paper is not that ICTs should be totally abhorred. It, however, stresses that ICTs should be approached and introduced into education with serious precautions so as not to defeat the fundamental aims and essence of education. This is the bottom line of the precautionary principle. We should not go into ICTs because they are there. We do not buy things because we have money. This is a wrong attitude to life and economy. The bottom line of this piece is that ICTs in education should not change or unnecessarily divert the essence of education and its fundamental aims and goals.

In the introduction, it was pointed out that education has as one of its fundamental aims the improvement of the individual by giving them the tools they need to think for themselves and make decisions about their lives. This aim appears to be suffering defeat by the introduction of ICTs into education. The younger generation of addicts are no longer capable of thinking for themselves, the computer now thinks for them, on their behalf – they have lost their autonomy. Their intellect and brains are being replaced by computer chips and *exutio* would become the order of the day very soon.

NOTES

1. Computers can unify campuses, but also drive students apart. *New York Times*, November, 11, 1996.

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21, 2010.

3. <u>https://blogs.worldbank.org/edutech/10-things</u>

4. Technology and Careers. Los Angeles Times, April, 8, 1996.

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