混血的名字:

1960 年代韓國影像式論文的誕生

The Mixed Names:

The Birth of the Photo-Essay in South Korea in the 1960s

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摘要

本篇論文探討朱明德(Joo Myung-Duck)《混血的名字》系列攝影作品及其攝影書,與朝鮮戰爭前後韓國攝影運動的演變發展之關聯,並分析韓國攝影界在 1960 年代的典範移轉。當時的攝影師開始以特定主題進行創作,並以系列攝影作品對該主題進行深入分析,試圖跨越諸如「砂塵沙龍」和「日常主義」等此前攝影運動的侷限。本文旨在彰顯韓國史上第一部影像式論文《混血的名字》之意義,本作首見以影像式論文之形式發表系列攝影作品,亦闡明攝影書如何並陳照片和充滿情感的文字,以有力地傳達攝影師的創作意圖。本文更近一步指出,朱明德透過該系列作品和影像論文喚醒人們對官方論述中忽略的混血戰爭孤兒之記憶,進而使觀眾產生內疚感和責任感。

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Abstract

This essay examines Joo Myung-Duck's *The Mixed Names* series and the photobook in relation to the evolution of photography movements in South Korea before and after the Korean War. It analyses the shift in the country's photography scene in the 1960s, when creating a series of photographs began to be discussed as a way of presenting an in-depth analysis of a topic and overcome limitations of the preceding photography movements, such as Salon Sajin and Saenghwal Juui photography. The essay aims to demonstrate the significance of *The Mixed Names* as the first-ever photographic series that took the form of a photo-essay, and it explains how the photobook powerfully delivered the photographer's intention by affective juxtapositions of photographs and emotional texts. It also points out how the series and the photobook were designed to engender a sense of guilt and responsibility in viewers by re-enacting memories of mixed-race war orphans neglected in the official narratives.

Figure 1 shows a photograph of a little boy standing in front of a blackboard. Holding a book in one hand and a piece of chalk in the other, he is looking back into the lens of the camera whilst writing Korean letters on the blackboard. The image portrays a moment when the boy's writing practice is interrupted by the photographer, as he has not yet finished his sentence. The carefully written letters on the board read 'Kkak Kkak Kkak (cawing sound of the magpie in the Korean language), a magpie in the morning is ... 'The boy has a distinctly calm demeanour and blank facial expression for a child of his age, which sets a calm tone to the image. The abstractness of this black-and-white image, which is divided into two monochrome parts by the edge of the blackboard hanging on the white wall, makes the image even more silent and still. Looking directly into the camera's lens and thus into the viewers' eyes, the boy appears to be a child of mixed-race parentage. This photograph was taken at the Harry Holt Memorial Orphanage in Seoul, 1966, 13 years after the Korean War ended in an armistice. It is a part of Joo Myung-Duck's (b. 1940, Hwanghae-do) seminal photographic series The Mixed Names (Seokyojin Irumdul) (1963-65), which was created at an orphanage of the mixed-race children of American servicemen and Korean women.

Considering that the presence and activities of the U.S. military have rarely figured as a subject of photography in post-war South Korea, Joo Myung-Duck's photographic series on war orphans provides an unusual example that implies what the war brought to the lives of ordinary people in the country. The series was published as a photobook in 1969 under the same title, and it is known to be the country's first photobook with consistent narratives revolving around a topic. The tradition of using photobooks as an outlet for photography circulation is relatively short in South Korea. The delay in the formation of photobook cultures was caused by social ruptures that Japan's colonial occupation (1910–45) and the Korean War (1950–53)



Fig. 1 Joo Myung-Duck. Harry Holt Memorial Orphanage. 1965, Gelatin Silver Print, 27.9 × 35.5cm. © Joo Myung-Duck.

brought about. It was not until the 1960s that photographers began to consider the importance of the documentary quality of photography and create photographic series. Until this time, achieving an autonomous status as art or revealing the difficult realities of post-war society from an objective viewpoint had been regarded as more urgent tasks among photographers. Joo's The Mixed Names - both the series itself and the photobook - provides valuable insight into an important period of transitions in South Korea's photography scene, when the dominant trends of photographic realism declined, and the in-depth analysis of a particular topic began to be considered necessary in photography productions. In this essay, I would like to analyse The Mixed Names series and the photobook in relation to the shift in the country's photography scene in the 1960s, when the country's rapid economic growth and political uncertainties disrupted the social fabric and national identity. To better understand the significance that Joo's works hold, the essay will examine the evolution of early photography movements in the country and discuss how Joo's works were differentiated from the work of preceding generations. In addition to analysing individual photographs included in the series and the photobook itself, the essay will also discuss the social impact of the work, since it evinces the significance of the medium of the photobook in the re-enactment of memory.

Photographic Culture Before and After the Korean War

Early photographic culture in South Korea was formed under the strong influence of the Japanese colonial occupation. Photography became popular between the 1920s and 1930s thanks to the supply of small cameras, when leisure cultures began to develop among the urban middle class, leading to a rise in amateur photographers. Several newspaper companies began to host photography contests, contributing to the booming of amateur photography. The most prominent contest was Jeon Joseon

Sajin Jeonramhoe (National Photography Exhibition), sponsored by the Gyeongseong Ilbo (The Keiji Nippo) - a daily newspaper published by the Japanese Governors-General of Korea. Greongseong Ilbo actively introduced Japan's new art trends to the Korean public. Under the influence of such ideas, photographs adopting the trends of Japanese photography tended to win awards from the contest. The most significant photographic trend that dominated 1930s' Korea was 'Salon Sajin' - an imported term from Japan. It was regarded as a dominant trend of photography that uses dramatic contrast of light and aims to achieve high aesthetic quality in photography. One example is Im Eung Sik's (1912–2001, Busan) Walking on a Bank (1935), for which he received an award from the fourth Jeon Joseon Sajin Salon in 1937 (Fig. 2). The photograph shows two farmers carrying loads on their back, employing a blurred focus that makes the image picturesque.

Regarding Walking on a Bank, Im explained that he tried to represent the burdens of history carried by two men in white clothes, symbolising the Korean people as they call themselves Baekui Minjok (the white-clad people) indirectly referring to the hardships faced by Koreans. Im recalled that the jury committee commented that the photograph depicts 'pure Korean folklore in a balanced composition,' praising its quality as pictorial photography. This reconfirms how pictorial photography and the Japanese style remained a dominant trend in the Korean photography scene while ignoring the difficult realities that the Korean public was experiencing at the time.

The turning point in Korea's photography scene was the Korean War, during which many local photographers served with the U.S. military units. As soon as the war broke out, Im, like many other photographers of the time, began to work as a correspondent for the U.S. State Department. Although most of his photographs from the front line were immediately sent to the U.S., some photographs he took

- 1 Jeon Joseon Sajin Junramhoe was thus considered the official photography contest under the Japanese colonial occupation.
- Yook, Myong-Shim. '1950 nyundae Hanguk Sajin ui Donghyang (The Trend of Korean Photography in the 1950s),' Sajin Yesul (Aug, 1986). Cited in Park, Jonghyun. 'Hanguk Realism Sajin ui Sajinsajeok Wisang gwa Nonjaeng aie Gwangan Yeongu (A Study on the Status of and Debate on the Realist Photography in Korea), Gicho Johyeonghak Yeongu, 15 (4) (2014): 172. Translation mine.



Fig. 2 Im Eung Sik. Walking on a Bank. 1935, Gelatin Silver Print, 61×71cm. © Im Eung Sik.

- 3 Im, Eung Sik. Naega Geoleoon Hanguk Sadan (The Path of Korean Photography Scenes that I have Walked) (Seoul: Nunbit, 1999), 55. Translation mine.
- 4 Ibid.

with his personal Miroflex camera remained in his possession and were exhibited for the general public. Apart from such few remaining photographs taken by Korean photographers, however, most of the photographs taken during the war were created by U.S. army photographers and photojournalists. Life magazine, for example, sent correspondents such as David Douglas Duncan, who produced close-up photographs of intense combat. These photographs were released in *Life* and later published by Duncan as a separate photobook entitled This Is War! (1951), but the Koreans had no access to the images at the time. This lack of visual materials produced by Korean photographers was caused mainly by the destruction of newspaper company offices in Seoul during the early stages of the war, making the production and transmission of photographs impossible. Furthermore, strict censorship of photographic records of the war operated in the following decades under the military government, resulting in an even smaller amount of surviving materials. Memories of the Korean War were thus shaped by the extremely limited sources of visual materials, and the Korean public's exposure to the war photography only came ex post facto.

Analysing the works of Korean photographers who indirectly depicted the impact of the war on civilians' everyday lives is thus crucial to understanding how memories of the war have been constructed through photography in post-war Korea. Such works filled the void in photographic documentation of the war until the Korean domestic public had finally been exposed to the U.S.'s photographic records of the war. A small number of these photographers from the first post-independence, post-war generation pioneered the photography scene in Korea, where cultural institutions for photographic production and circulation did not exist. Having experienced a dramatic transition in status from a photographer of Salon Sajin to a war photographer in a U.S. military unit, Im became a leading figure who contributed to the emergence of a new photography trend in post-war South Korea - 'Saenghwal

- 5 Ji, Sanghyun. 'Im Eung Sik, Hanguk Sajin ui Gilul Yeolda (Im Eung Sik, Opening a Road for Korean Photography), in Im Eung Sik (Seoul: Yeolhwadang Sajin Mungo, 2013), 5. Translation mine.
- Lee, Jung Joon. 'No End to the Image War: Photography and the Contentious Memories of the Korean War,' Journal of Korean Studies, 18 (2) (Fall, 2013): 346; Duncan, David Douglas. THIS IS WAR! (New York: Harper, 1951).
- 7 Ibid: 346.
- Ibid: 347.

Juui.' Saenghwal Juui, a term coined by Im, can be translated as 'life-ism,' a movement promoting a realistic approach to the documentation of life after the war. This movement sought to go beyond the style of Salon Sajin and ultimately promote photography as autonomous art. In an article titled 'The Victory of Saenghwal Juui' that Im contributed to Kyunghyang Sinmun (Kyunghyang Daily) in 1956, he wrote that 'pictorial photography in the past has nothing to do with the lives of the public' and that it was 'intoxicated in the conceptual beauty of nature,' thus only representing 'the figurative composition of the frame.' He further explained that 'the young generation, after going through the hardship of the war, began to see, hear, and think of actual realities, thus becoming able to extract lively fragments of everyday life in creating photography.'10 His statement reveals what the Saenghwal Juui movement aimed to achieve, namely the emphasis of 'everyday life' and 'actual realities' of 'the public' against the notions of 'conceptual beauty' and 'figurative composition.' 11

The use of the ambiguous term Saenghwal Juui was a conscious choice by Im since he wanted to avoid using the term 'realism,' which he thought was associated with socialism. In a post-war society in which socialism was taboo, and realism was regarded as a style of art usually promoted by socialists such as the Soviets and North Korean sympathisers, Im believed that Saenghwal Juui better suited the needs of the South Korean society. 12 However, there are criticisms that, due to this restriction of social and political contexts that regarded realism as promoting socialism, Saenghwal Juui tended to confine itself on a superficial level. It would be worth emphasising that the photographers did not manage to establish their own ways of circulating photography, such as publishing photobooks, but continued applying to photography contests and having group shows, which were the format that was introduced to the Korean photography scene by the Japanese. 13 Such limitations

- Im, Eung Sik. 'Saenghwal Juui ui Seungri, Sang (The Victory of Saenghwal Juui, First),' Kyunghyang Sinmun (19 Dec, 1956): 4. Translation mine.
- 10 Ibid
- 11 Im, Eung Sik (1956): 4.

12 Interview with Im Yeong-gyun (1998), Cited in Ji, Sanghyun (2013), 7.

13 Park, Jonghyun (2014): 175.

of Saenghwal Juui reflect the characteristics of post-war Korean society, where the memories of the war and the legacies of Japanese colonial occupation were still fresh. Despite the criticism that Saenghwal Juui did not overcome the restriction of self-criticism and remained a 'romantic realism,' it still has value as the first-ever attempt in the country to produce critical discourses about photography production and shed light on marginalised people in post-war Korean society. 14 It is also worth noting that they profoundly influenced the second and third post-war generations of lens-based artists. Among others, Joo Myung-Duck focused on the aftermath of the war and, in doing so, photographed – and exhibited his photos of – mixed-race war orphans the first time a Korean photographer had done so. His exhibition provoked a strong public reaction and ignited a heated social discussion on war orphans in the 1960s, leaving a good precedent of socially engaged photographic practice for the following generations.

The Mixed Names

Joo Myung-Duck's photography is regarded as the first example that overcame the limitations of the preceding Saenghwal Juui and met the qualifications to become the documentation of the reality – a key goal that many photographers in South Korea began to pursue in the 1960s. He was the first photographer who created a series of photographs with narratives that revolved around a topic, representing an in-depth and multifaceted analysis of social realities. Joo was born ten years before the Korean War broke out in a town located in present-day North Korea. Starting his career as an amateur photographer in Seoul, he began taking portrait photographs in the early 1960s when Park Chung-Hee's military regime concentrated on developing the country's post-war economy. The Mixed Names was conceived in the context of the ambitious first Five-Year Economic Development Plan of the Park regime, which

14 Ibid.

constructed industrial cities and promoted the growth of *Chaebol* companies. 15 At the same time, the wartime past was being wiped out from the collective memory. In the art world, photography was added as a new category in the Kukjeon (National Art Exhibition) for the first time in 1964, slowly achieving the autonomous status as an art form for which previous photographers such as Im had striven.

The Mixed Names was a series of photography that Joo began to create after an accidental visit to the Harry Holt Memorial Orphanage after following his sister who did volunteer work there. To better understand how this series was conceived, it is useful to look at how his earlier works were received by the members of Hyundai Sajin Yeonguhoe (Modern Photography Society) that he had joined as a member in November 1964. In January 1965, Joo exhibited twenty-five photographs under the topic of 'children' at Salon d'Alliance, Seoul. In the sixth issue of Sa-an, a bulletin that Hyundai Sajin Yeonguhoe published every two to three months, fellow photographers' reviews of the exhibition were included. The reviews pointed out that Joo should 'focus solely on mixed-race orphans' rather than children in general and that 'it should develop a more in-depth analysis of a specific topic.' It can thus be assumed that Joo had already embarked on creating works on mixed-race war orphans by this time, but the key theme or the structure of the photographic series with a consistent narrative was not yet formed. As Park Ju Seok points out, it is fair to assume that these comments of experienced photographers largely influenced Joo since he developed the series in the direction that they advised. 19 It is also worth highlighting that delving into a specific topic by creating a series of photographs began to be an important goal for photographers of the time.

In the following year, Joo was given a solo exhibition for the orphan photographs at Jungang Gongbogwan (Central Public Information) Gallery under the title Photo15 The Five-Year Economic Development Plans were designed and led by the regime of Park Chung-Hee in order to increase the national wealth and political stability of South Korea. First implemented in 1962, the Five-Year Plans are thought to have significantly contributed to the growth of the post-war South Korean economy and decreased the country's dependence on support from the U.S. Chaebol is a Korean term that literally translates to 'faction of wealth,' and refers to a large, family-owned industrial conglomerate.

- 16 Park, Ju Seok. '1960 nyeondae Joo Myung-Duck gwa "Hyundai Sajin Yeonguhoe" ui Gwangye Yeongu (A Study on the Relationship of Joo Myung Duck and the "Modern Photography Society" in the 1960s), Hanguk Sajin Hakhoe, 37 (2016): 10. Translation mine.
- 17 Lee, Hyungrok et al. 'Eorinyi Juje ai uihan Joo Myung-Duck Sajin Sopumjeon ui Hoego (A Review of Joo Myung-Duck's Exhibition of Children Photography), Sa-an, 6 (Feb, 1965): 45. Cited in Ibid.: 11.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Park, Ju Seok (2016): 11.

Essay Holtssi Goawon (Photo-essay Harry Holt Memorial Orphanage). 20 Since there had never been photographs that extensively documented the phenomenon of mixed-race war orphans in Korea, his photographs immediately received a great deal of public attention. The gallery hall was packed with visitors, and the exhibition received a great deal of attention from domestic newspapers. 21 One major newspaper published an editorial on the education of mixed-race children, proving the social impact of the exhibition. For a country obsessed with the goal of rapid economic growth, Joo's photographs of war orphans were painful reminders of the wartime past, during which many children were born to Korean women that American GIs had fathered and then abandoned.

The successful exhibition of the series eventually led to the publication of the photobook. It was first published in 1969 and later republished in 1998 and 2015, becoming an iconic photobook that symbolised the hidden side of the collective memory of the war. 23 The book comprises some forty black-and-white portraits of children and photographs depicting daily life in the orphanage. Throughout the photobook, the photographs do not come with captions. However, they are accompanied by poem-like texts written by Hong Hwija, designed to evoke sympathy for the children depicted in the photographs. For instance, Figure 3 is a portrait of an orphan named Lee Hyesook, displayed as the first photograph both in the 1966 exhibition and in the photobook. The image tightly frames the child's face without providing viewers with any context of the surroundings, and her facial attributes show that she is a child of mixed-race parentage. In both the exhibition and the photobook, this photograph was accompanied by the following emotional statement: 'I have no siblings, no life, and of course no feelings. I have only black skin and an unavoidable "destiny". 25

- 20 Shin, Sujin. 'Hanguk, Hanguk Jeokin Gut ai Aijeong uro Geori Dugi (Distancing with Affection from Korea and Koreanness),' in Joo Myung-Duck (Seoul: Yeolhwadang Sajin Mungo, 2006), 5. Translation mine.
- Cho, Woo-Suk, 'Joo Myung-Duck,' Jungang Ilbo (12 Mar, 1998). Accessed 11th Jul, 2018. url: http://www.feelwith.com/yc4/bbs/board. php?bo_table=c6_10&wr_id=349&sca=%C6 %DF%B1%DB%B0%AD%C1%C2&page=1. Translation mine.
- 22 Ibid.



Fig. 3 Joo Myung-Duck. Harry Holt Memorial Orphanage. 1965, Gelatin Silver Print, 27.9×35.5cm. © Joo Myung-Duck.

- 23 Shin, Sujin (2006), 5.
- 24 Park, Ju Seok. 'Seokyojin Irumdul, Ge Hyundaiseong gwa Yeoksaseong (The Mixed Names: The Contemporary and the History), in Seokyojin Irumdul, Joo Myung-Duck (Seoul: Shigak, 2015), unpaginated.
- 25 Ibid.

Another similar example is Figure 4, which, unusually, depicts a child with his mother. In this image, a young Korean woman in a leopard-print fur coat is holding a baby in a cardigan, who is grimacing as if he is crying. It is hard to speculate whether she was his birth mother or not, but the accompanying text allows viewers to suppose that she is. Part of the text reads, 'my mother came. [...] She was the mother who abandoned me and denied our blood ties [...] I tried to feel my mother through the softness of her mink coat. [...] The allusion to the mink coat implies that the woman is the child's mother and that she had come back to see her son after abandoning him at an orphanage. Although it is not clear whether the content of the text is based on interviews with the protagonists, it helps to set the sentimental tone of the images and invites readers to experience feelings of sympathy. Furthermore, by juxtaposing the portraits of innocent-looking children with the phrases like 'who am I?' or 'whose descendent am I?' the book portrays children as those who are inevitably faced with the ultimate question of identity. In this way, the photographer frames the children as vulnerable beings who require social support, urging viewers to think about their responsibility for leaving them in the realm of collective amnesia. The demand for social responsibility is more clearly stated in the preface of the photobook written by the poet Jeon Bong-Geon, where strong claims like 'it was





Joo, Myung-Duck.'The Artist's Statement,'(Jun, 1969) in Seokyojin Irumdul, Joo Myung-Duck (2015), unpaginated. Translation mine.

Fig. 4 (left) Joo Myung-Duck. Harry Holt Memorial Orphanage. 1965, Gelatin Silver Print, 27.9 × 35.5cm. © Joo Myung-Duck.

Fig. 5 (right) Joo Myung-Duck. Harry Holt Memorial Orphanage. 1965, Gelatin Silver Print, 27.9 × 35.5cm. © Joo Myung-Duck.

no other than us who let them be born into the dark turmoil of war' and 'we are responsible for their grief, despair, tears and loneliness' are made. 27

What is noteworthy about Joo's photobook is that it attempted to achieve such goals - to evoke sympathy and a sense of responsibility - by presenting a series of photographs in the then unfamiliar photo-essay format. For example, the photograph of Lee Hyesook is followed by the image implying the presence of American GIs, thus alluding to the social and political contexts that brought about the phenomenon of mixed-race war orphans (Figs. 3 & 5). In this photograph depicting a military jeep driven by two American soldiers, the truck is captured in the middle of the photograph's frame, passing in the middle of an unpaved road. Signboards written in both English and Korean are only clues that the photograph was taken near a U.S. army base, allowing viewers to assume that the photograph represents U.S. military camp towns in Korea. The accompanying text asserts that 'the termination of the war is an illusion the Korean people have' and that 'the "Korean War" is still going on,' pointing to the legacy of the war that remained in the country in 1965 in the form of the war orphans and the presence of the American military. 28 Furthermore, to depict the hardships that the orphans had to endure, the photographer intermittently inserted some close-up shots of worn-out clothes and socks that children wore. Through such juxtapositions of photographs and texts, Joo managed to deliver a consistent story that powerfully evokes emotions in the viewers.

At the end of the photobook, the artist included a short statement stressing the importance of creating a series that revolved around a topic. He noted that photography should document 'reality,' and he, as a photographer, aimed to work towards that goal.²⁹ Calling the documentation of reality as 'the 27 Jeon, Bong-Geon. 'Bits ui Jeongshin (The Spirit of Light) (Jun, 1969), in Seokyojin Irumdul, Joo Myung-Duck (2015), unpaginated. Translation

28 Joo, Myung-Duck (1969).

29 Ibid.

climax of photography,' Joo explained that he always chose a specific subject and gathered images and thoughts to reach such climax. 30 The reality he explained here was differentiated from the post-war actualities that preceding Saenghwal Juui photographers sought to capture in their photography, and the distinction was made by the format of photographic essay. The decision to create a photobook was also part of his efforts to reach such a climax of photography, as evinced by a text of the American journalist Bruce Downes that Joo translated for the seventh issue of Sa-an. In this text, according to Joo, Downes argued that it is better to put photography on the pages of a book rather than on the gallery's walls since books grant photographer greater autonomy in explaining photographed subjects. 31 It might therefore be fair to assume that Joo was inspired by this viewpoint and chose the medium of the photobook to investigate the topic of mixed-race war orphans, thus successfully representing his perspectives on the subjects that request sympathy and social responsibility while enjoying greater autonomy as a photographer.

Conclusion: The Photobook as a Medium of Memory

This essay briefly examined The Mixed Names series and the photobook as related to the evolution of photography movements in the country before and after the Korean War. It analysed the shift in the country's photography scene in the 1960s, when creating a series of photographs began to be discussed as a way of presenting an indepth analysis of a topic and overcome limitations of the preceding photography movements, such as Salon Sajin and Saenghwal Juui photography. The essay aimed to demonstrate the significance of *The Mixed Names* as the first-ever photographic series that took the form of photo-essay, and it explained how the photobook powerfully delivered the photographer's intention by affective juxtapositions of photographs and emotional texts. It also pointed out how the series and the

30 Ibid.

31 Joo, Myung-Duck. 'Bruce Downes: 65 nyeon ui Sajin Yesul (Photographic Art in 1965),' Sa-an, 7 (Apr, 1965): 39. Cited in Park, Ju Seok (2016): photobook were designed to engender a sense of guilt and responsibility in viewers by re-visiting memories neglected in the official narratives. The success of Joo's works in 1960s Korea is interesting, considering that the presence of mixed-race war orphans was still a taboo subject in the country. The domestic public was hostile to sex workers in U.S. military camp towns, and the resulting mixed-race children were largely abandoned in orphanages. However, Joo's photographs depicting pitiful children were a perfect reminder of Korean suffering during the war, thus resulting in the topic being embraced by the public without resistance. The affective presentation of photography in the photo-essay format also helped *The Mixed Names* become a place where viewers could project their own memories of victimhood onto the photographed orphans. This reconfirms the potential of the medium of the photobook for the affective re-enactment of memory. By tracing the lives of the ordinary people who had been affected by the war, Joo's works showcased a ground-breaking way of creating socially engaged photography, leaving a remarkable precedent for the next generation of photographers. Active academic investigations on the historical significance of *The Mixed Names*, in relation to the discourses about new photographic tendencies in the 1960s, would thus be essential for a better understanding of photography and the photobook culture for following generations in South Korea.

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