

WHY IS IT NECESSARY TO RETHINK THE PARAMETERS OF IMPERIALISM AND COLONIALISM FOR A CONTEMPORARY ERA?

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Abstract

This research explores the impact of imperialism and colonialism on the suffering of the Kashmiri people, drawing upon the profound insights of Suzanna Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. The novel serves as a politically charged narrative that unveils the hidden agendas of imperial power while advocating for humanity and justice. Roy's commitment to truth and resistance against oppression underscores her belief that literature can expose the cruelty of colonial structures. Her stance on Kashmir as an "occupied territory," expressed in a 2010 interview, reinforces her ideological support for its independence. Through the character of Musa, a freedom fighter enduring relentless hardship, Roy depicts the Kashmiri struggle for liberation and dignity. The novel's postcolonial framework echoes Gayatri Spivak's question, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988), emphasizing the silenced voices of marginalized communities. Ultimately, Roy's work broadens the discourse on how both dominant nations must reassess their treatment of Kashmiris. This study argues that the path to peace lies in acknowledging Kashmir's distinct identity and ending the cycle of violence symbolized by guns, stones, and bloodshed.

Keywords: Colonialism, Hindu-Muslim, Kashmir, Human Rights, Political Instability, Subaltern

Introduction

The study's primary source is Suzanna Arundhati Roy's novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017). The study has been chosen to highlight and analyze Jammu & Kashmir's unsolved conflict and the marginalization of its people. Additionally, it will attempt to delve into the stigmatizing post-colonial frame of the word "Subaltern." Musa Yeswi, a young Kashmiri guy, represents a community that is judged based on its double colonization. The term "Double Colonization" applies to Kashmir because the British first colonized it before being colonized by the states nearby. Due to beatings, killings, carnage, and militarization, its people suffer from double oppression.

Literary scholar, postcolonial theorist, and influential feminist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is originally from India. Her most important theoretical contribution to post-colonial studies is "*Can the Subaltern Speak* (1988)". Spivak uses the term "Subaltern" to refer to silenced and marginalized women. However, this article refers to those marginalized and excluded from mainstream society due to their religion, where they live, their experiences, how they are spoken about, or other social or economic factors. She advocates for these marginalized groups while discussing economic and cultural issues and how the West segregates the Indian subcontinent.

The word "Subaltern," introduced by Italian academic Antonio Gramsci in 1971, refers to the post-colonial masses. He referenced the underrepresented group of persons in society who cannot express their experiences and speak up for fundamental rights. Peasants, workers, and other social classes barred from hegemonic power may be among these. This idea is applied to Kashmiris in this work since they are more marginalized than any of the other social groups identified earlier.

The British colonized the Indian subcontinent from 1858 to 1947. Their strong socioeconomic and political system rendered them helpless. Most colonial reforms and programs were against the interests and well-being of the subcontinent's inhabitants.

Suzana Arundhati Roy is an Indian author and advocate of human rights. She writes on Kashmir's political inequities, bloodshed, and violations of human rights. She has consistently worked to advance human rights and serve the Indian people, and brusquely rejects India's militarization of the Kashmir region.

She is direct when discussing the rights of persons who frequently speak with trembling voices. She is the perfect candidate because she has experience speaking about subalterns, and Spivak will never challenge her arguments.

The Ministry of Utmost Happiness (2017) examines post-colonial India's politics. It depicts social injustice, social brutality, and religion as central topics.

In *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, Arundhati Roy appropriately presents Spivak's decision in fictional form from her essay *Can the Subaltern Speak* (2017). She has given Spivak's idea a human face and done much more to shift people's perspectives. She resides in India and works to protect human rights.

Literature Review

South Asian literature and research are the main topics of this overview of literature, depicting the dreadful and destructive human tragedy of the subaltern voice of Kashmir. India has taken their spaces and is refusing to accept them. It will concentrate on the research project related to Kashmir's landscape and people.

In the introduction to Agha Shahid Ali's translation of Faiz Ahmed Faiz's poem "The Rebel's Silhouette," "In Faiz's poetry, suffering is seldom, perhaps never, private [Kashmir Lit. (n.d.)]. Though deeply personal, it is rarely isolated from a sense of history and injustice."

In "The Terrible and Destructive Human Tragedy of Subaltern Research Work, Kashmir in the Light of Agha Shahid Ali's Poetry", the researchers (Khan & Jahangir, 2017) exposed the despair, darkness, and destruction marked by the blood of Kashmiri youth. Ali's poems reveal the complicated play of international and inter-religious politics. From his poems, it is revealed that he knows that Hindus are against Muslims, likewise India against Pakistan, so this conflict is one important cause of the pain and cruelty that have been so obvious in Kashmir in recent years.

The present-day situation of Kashmir can be exposed by the words of Ananya Jahanara Kabir as "Disappeared youth, raped women, intercommunal breakdown, interrupted childhoods, traumatized soldiers, and above all the thickness of rumor turned the region into a veritable 'space of death' (p. 9-10). Ali is aware of the difficulty regarding the territorial clash over Kashmir among three nuclear countries: India, Pakistan, China, and the helpless people of Kashmir. As emphasized by the author, **"PARADISE ON EARTH BECOMES HELL"** (2009, p. 257) on the other hand Amir Khusrau who was an Indo Persian Sufi singer, musician and poet, famously quoted this place as: "If there is a paradise on earth, it is this, it is this, it is this" (Amir Khusrau, n.d.).

In the poem "The Last Saffron," Agha Shahid Ali considers his motherland, Kashmir, exceptionally admirable for being called a "Paradise". But now it has become Inferno. This work speaks like a tongue for the silenced people of Kashmir. It gives voice to the voiceless people.

A matchless poetic technique of Amitav Ghosh pays the following tribute: "If the twin terrors of insurgency and repression could be said to have engendered any single literary leitmotif, it is surely the

narrative of the loss of Paradise...The reason why there is no greater sorrow than the recalling of times of joy, is ... that this is a grief beyond consolation (Ghosh, 308, 313)."

In the article Disappearance, Delusion and Disappointment: Salma, a Victim of Conflict in Shafi Ahmed's *The Half Widow*, research scholar Muhd Nageen discusses the unresolved age-old Jammu & Kashmir conflict. The researcher raises such an issue that involves the miseries and atrocities of widows caused by both Kashmiris and Indian forces. This conflict has produced many half-widows whose husbands have disappeared but are not declared dead. They are officially not considered widows because their husbands disappeared/or abducted during the conflict; so instead, they are seen as half widows. Social taboos consume these half-widows and spend their lives searching for their missing better halves. Their existence has become meaningless and purposeless.

Salma is a half-widow in this novel, representing thousands of wives whose husbands disappeared. They cannot get their property rights because of the unavailability of the death certificate. They can't remarry due to doubts about their husband's fate. They have to rely on their in-laws for their economic needs, and ultimately, they are the only breadwinners of their children, who depend on them. If they stepped out of their homes, family members would accuse them of being women of bad character. They also labeled them as the stigma of widowhood. "Caught between her children and a missing husband, she is victimized all the way around" (R. Aman, 2012.). It could be said that Shafi's work is truth written as fiction.

It seems half-Kashmir and half-widows are suffering in multiple ways, financially, socially, economically, and psychologically. They have fallen apart in all ways.

Curfewed Night and the emergence of Kashmiri Anglophone Resistance Literature, is an article written by the researchers Neogi and Anil Kumar Aneja, which shows the political oppression, military occupation, physical torture, propaganda, extrajudicial killings, and disappearances. They chose Basharat Peer's novel to highlight the marginalized state and its people. Peer discusses the incident known as the Gawkadal massacre on 21 January 1990, where Indian troops opened fire on a civilian protest and killed about fifty unarmed protesters (p. 14). He took interviews with the people present at that time and the families of the disappeared and killed persons. Peer is participating in this war while using the medium of writing to raise the issue of Kashmir. As Terry Eagleton observes, art can make us "see", "perceive", and feel, and literature can accomplish this "with a naturalness, Spontaneity, and experimental immediacy" (Eagleton, 1983/1996, pp. 56, 83).

To answer the abusive counterinsurgency practices of Indian state forces, young Kashmiri men initiated an armed insurgency against the Indian state. They crossed the Line of Control into Pakistan to acquire weapons and combat training (Boss: 1995). It could be said that Resistance Literature by Peer and combat training by the youth of this land are the faces of the same coin.

Killing young men and keeping the female is the need of Firoon in the times of Hazrat Musa. Modi is also behaving like him. Let us wait for Musa to answer him. This firm believes in the story of Hazrat Musa and the cruel leader Firon, which gives hope to Muslims that one day the Pharaoh will be destroyed.

In the article, *Arrival of Indian Paramilitary Forces and Insurgency in Kashmir: A Realistic Study*, " the books "Gold Leaves" and "Half Mother" research scholars Irshad Ahmed and Dr. Shrivastava further shed light on this unresolved issue. The above-mentioned novels are the works of Mirza Waheed and Shahnaz Bashir. The situation of Kashmir is discussed in this article through the love story of a protagonist, who belongs to a Shia family, and a Suni female protagonist, Roohi. These love birds firstly faced the opposition of religious sects, which was further complicated by the intervention of the Indian forces. Later on, Faiz crossed the Line of Control to Pakistan for armed training, representing thousands of Kashmiris.

Yasin Malik, who is a Kashmiri separatist leader and former militant, was sentenced to life imprisonment in a terror funding case by the Indian government. According to an article published on 1st Oct 2021 by Al Jazeera Staff, "Social media behemoths are accused of silencing Kashmiri voices: 'Kashmiris' accounts are being deleted on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

The research publications cited above provide context for the current study paper, focusing on identifying subaltern and marginalized groups. Social media giants are accused of stifling Kashmiri voices: "Kashmiris' accounts are being deleted on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. The research publications cited above provide context for the current study paper, which will focus on identifying the subaltern state and the situation of its citizens.

We can speak for their rights through literature, and postcolonial writers must raise the voices of these voiceless human beings.

Research Methodology

It is a qualitative study. It outlines an investigation into the political, military, and historical forces in India within the life span of a marginalized Kashmiri Architect turned militant, Musa. It investigates these issues using viewpoints, justifications, and sources. It is like a source to feel the pain of the Kashmiri people. This study's primary goal is to evaluate Arundhati Roy's book TMOUH to determine the subaltern identities of a state that is severely split into several sectors depending on economics, citizenship, and religion in J&K. Living conditions in this community are the worst in their own country. Additionally, it examines Kashmir's social, economic, and cultural difficulties as emphasized in the book. In post-colonial periods, Kashmiris are also discussed as being inferior.

The findings of this study will help readers to comprehend how human behavior is influenced by imposed militarization and curfew-restricted citizens. Additionally, it is advantageous for readers to become interested in marginalization and subalternity.

The study's importance rests in challenging the so-called paramilitary and military deployed forces, trying to occupy Kashmir, and the Kashmiris are pushed back to the periphery since they are classified as subaltern or marginalized in India.

This study will look at Kashmir's past and present as a state before shedding light on the future of its deprived and doubly subordinated individuals. People from Pakistan, India, and Kashmir will be able to recognize and address the problems of those who have long been subjected to oppression and neglected. India redefined the domicile through the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Order (2020). The Non-Kashmiris and their offspring are now qualified for domicile under the new law.

Research Questions

The following research questions have been devised for this study:

- In what ways are they made to feel like a second-class state?
- How do India and Pakistan treat them?
- What are their concerns and hopes for the future?
- In which location on the map of the world should they be placed?

The paper will stress the subaltern identity of a character and a state discussed in this novel, TMOUH, which shall be the main topic of this article. It will examine Gayatri Spivak's definition of the subaltern from her essay "*Can the Subaltern Speak?*" (Spivak, 1988), the journal *Wedge*. This paper examines the Indian government's treatment of this individual, who serves as the voice of the entire Kashmiri community.

Analysis

Roy presents a Muslim, Musa Yeswi, in the setting of Delhi and Kashmir. This character will be discussed after giving specific details about the Kashmir conflict, in an article, "Wounds that Never Heal: What Torture in Kashmir Says About India" (2019), published in TRT World, by Mohammad Junaid. In this article, he mentioned a documentary film about an older-looking Kashmiri man. He was on crutches to walk as both his feet were missing during an interrogation by Border Security forces in Srinagar. He also showed his "hooked fingers, which, he said, the soldiers are beaten out of shape". (Junaid, 2019).

His statement echoes like Roy, stating, "Torture may shatter the world of its Kashmiri victims, but it is Indian society that is becoming irretrievably corroded". (Roy)

Roy, through the character of Musa, gave her own inner thoughts in this way, "One day Kashmir will make India self-destruct in the same way. You may have blinded all of us, every one of us, with your pellet guns by then. However, you will still have eyes to see what you have done to us. You are not destroying us. You are constructing us. It is you that you are destroying". (Roy, 2017, pp. 433–434)

The growing development of subaltern political processes is a significant conflict found in the rise of ethnic nationalist movements, and the Kashmir movement is also one of them. It is a subaltern state. According to Guha's vague use of the Concise Oxford Dictionary, a subaltern is a person of "inferior rank." He further defines this term as "a name for the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society," regardless of how it is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender, or office (1988, p. 35). Spivak contends, as was already said before in this article, that while there isn't a single, homogenous subaltern, there are groups that a subaltern might belong to, albeit with some fluidity and ability for mobility into other categories (1988, p. 284).

Kashmir is a subaltern state and is a prime case for studying subaltern elements within its past and present context. It is a disputed territory, soon after the partition of India in 1947, as both India and Pakistan claimed the entirety of this territory for themselves. This dispute over the region escalated into three wars, several skirmishes, repeated uprisings, protests, and independence movements. So, this issue has caused tension and conflict in the Indian sub-continent. It is a clear example of control of one state over another while using military and law enforcement agencies. So, it has become a militarized zone, as Violations of human rights have continued for many years by Indian law enforcement agencies. These forces are committing various killings, abduction, assaults, kidnapping, tortures and rapes. It is also said that Pakistan is providing moral and material support to Kashmiri militants.

"Sangbad" (stone-pelters) is a tribute to held Kashmir. The lyrics refer to the allegation that soldiers shoot rubber bullets at rock-throwers' eyes to blind them, and it sounds like this: "You can snatch out our eyes, but you cannot snatch our dreams". This song expresses solidarity with stone-pelters while taking actual footage from Inside India-held Kashmir.

Musa Yeswi, gentle and serene, a graduate from the architecture school and an artist by nature, is a Kashmiri. His friend Biplap describes him as, "Both exceptionally gifted artists, Musa's watercolors of the ruins of the older cities of Delhi, Tughlakabad, Feroz Shah Kotla, and Purana Qila, and his pencil drawings of horses-sometimes just parts of horses-a head, an eye, a wild mane, galloping hooves. He said that he dreamed about them. I found that disquieting... distinctive and dazzling...and his surprising hands- they were not the hands of an artist at all, they were a peasant's hands, big and strong, with stocky fingers" (Roy, p. 156). He returned to Kashmir after graduating. After seeing the situation of his homeland he asserts, "The absurd notion that Kashmir could have 'freedom' swept him up as it did a whole generation of young Kashmiri men. He indeed suffered the kind of tragedy that nobody ever should, but Kashmir was a war zone then. I can put my hands on my heart and swear that, whatever the provocation, I would never contemplate doing what he did... He did what he did. Furthermore, he paid the price for it. As ye sow, so shall ye reap." (Roy, p. 160).

Musa, with his Kashmiri identity, is one of the primary motivators for politically mobilizing Kashmir. He represents several generations of this state, calling for greater autonomy and outright independence from India. Various other freedom fighters are mentioned in this novel, like Jalil Kadri, Gulrez, and Ghafoor, who are killed by Indian forces, but Musa's miseries are the worst of all. They are fighting an "old war" and a "new war". As a Kashmiri subaltern identity, they are collectively going through the experience of discrimination and exclusion, so they put the foundation for collective action of protest, strikes, and boycotts. The common call for freedom in Kashmir can be viewed as a collective consciousness. As Roy mentioned, "The security forces fired at the crowds and killed fourteen more people. Curfew was declared in all the larger towns-Spore, Baramulla and Srinagar ... But calling for freedom: Azadi! Azadi! Azadi! On and on and on..." (p. 173).

The city breathed through a single pair of lungs, swelling like a throat with that urgent, keening cry. this Kashmiri chant.... a political demand, an anthem, a hymn, a prayer.” (Roy, p. 180)

This political movement is relying on the forces of increasing political pressure, violent insurgency, uprising, massive demonstration, and stone-pelting in response to pellets, rubber bullets, slingshots, tear gas, arrest, brutal torture, and murder by deployed forces. India has deployed officers like Amrik Singh, who, according to Biplap, is known as “Spotter”, for his uncanny ability to spot the snake in the grass, the militant hidden among a crowd of civilians. A few months after I arrived in Srinagar in January 1995, Amrik Singh had, “on orders, quite likely” (Roy, p. 175) arrested a lawyer and human rights activist, Jalib Qadri, and this arrest was not formally registered as usual. There was a great hue and cry about Qadri’s abduction, a much bigger one than we expected, so after a few days, we thought it prudent to release the man. However, he was nowhere to be found... A few days later, Jalib Qadri’s body showed up in a sack floating down the Jhelum. This is how Singh worked one step ahead of the orders. He also killed all the witnesses who saw Qadri in his custody. This is how law enforcement agencies silence a human rights activist.

Musa’s father, Showkat Yeswi (Godzilla to Musa and his friends), was a building contractor, and he sent his son to Delhi to study architecture in the hope that he would help him in business. In 1990, when Tehreek began, Musa joined it, but his father continued his work with the army. Amrik Singh is a friend of Showkat Yeswi and visits him at their place whenever he is required to keep an eye on Musa. He informed his father about his militant activities and instructed him to stop them.

Amrik Singh plan to kill Musa’s wife and daughter, as he knows well about them and their place. It is planned to be done during a funeral procession. “From the safety of their balcony Miss Jebeen and her mother watched the funeral procession...procession had to pass a large bunker ...less than a hundred feet from where Arifa and her daughter sat...suddenly, an explosion...fired their light machine guns straight into the unarmed crowd ... and on those watching from windows and balconies, and emptied their magazines into people and railings, walls and Into Miss Jebeen and her mother. The facts were never established. Nobody was blamed. This was Kashmir...Life went on. Death went on, the war went on.” (p. 322-24).

His daughter “became one of the movement’s youngest martyrs...Mother and daughter died by the same bullet. It entered Miss Jebeen’s head through her left temple and came to rest in her mother’s heart... the bullet wound looked like a cheerful summer rose arranged just above her left ear (p. 310). They were buried in the Mazar-e-Shohada graveyard, and Musa wrote on his wife’s tombstone, “Now dust blows on autumn’s breeze, Where once were flowers, only flowers” (p. 315). Next to it, Miss Jebeen’s tombstone said, “Miss Jebeen, Beloved d/o Arifa and Musa Yeswi” (p. 315). “Musa knew he did not have much time...Life as he once knew it was over. He knew that Kashmir had swallowed him and he was now part of its entrails” (p. 344). Musa buried his family without displaying any grief as he knew he was watched by the soldiers, “how quiet...seemed withdrawn and distracted” (p. 325). Later, he was arrested at his house and released to be captured again. Musa is now aware of the threat; he would be arrested in one or two days, so he planned to leave his house. “The next morning, when the Yeswi household woke up to its grief, Musa was gone.... Thus began his life underground. A life that lasted precisely nine months, like a pregnancy... the consequence was the opposite of a pregnancy. It ended in a kind of death, instead of a kind of life” (p. 345)

Musa once visited his friend Biplap, and they discussed the issue of Kashmir in this way: “We circled the subject of Kashmir, but only in abstract ways ... you may be right, but you will never win... I think the opposite, he smiled...We may turn out to be wrong, but we have already won” (p. 431). “But finally, I came out with it. Did you kill Amrik Singh? I did not kill him. But we made him kill himself” (p. 432)

Musa further describes that he searched for him in Clovis and found him working, “at a truck-washing garage at a workshop, He was a completely different person from the murderer and killer... He was scared and broke. I assured him that I was not going to harm him and that I was only there to tell him that we

would not allow him to forget the things that he had done. Butcher of Kashmir ... was forced to look at us and remember. It must have driven him crazy. Eventually, it made him self-destruct. So... to answer your question ... no, I did not kill him”

Eventually, during his life as an underground freedom fighter he was known as, “I am known as Commander Gulrez. No one knows me as Musa Yeswi” (p. 365). He dies as a martyr for Kashmiri independence.

Tilo is another character who remained present during the life span of Musa. Roy introduced both the characters of Musa and Tilo as an “exceptionally gifted artists” (p. 156), seemed more like “siblings than lovers” who met at the set of a play and “patched-together” till the death of Musa. They played the game of hide and seek between Delhi and Kashmir. “It was Musa’s third night in Jannat Guest House” (p. 435), “Tilo travelled back to Kashmir to still her troubled heart” (p. 270). She also wrote a line on a piece of paper and pasted it on her window, “Who can know from the word goodbye what kind of parting is in store for us” (p. 256), and if we see, Musa, he was in the state of,

Duniya ki mehfilon sa ukta gaya hoon ya Rub

Kya lutf anjuman ka, jub dil hi buj gaya ho (p. 266.)

“He would die the way he wanted to be a faceless man in a nameless grave...Tilo would receive a massage.... Commander Gulrez and Gulrez are together now” (p. 437). This dialogue tells the reader and Tilo that Musa is no longer with them. He dies as a martyr for Kashmiri independence.

Furthermore, if we look at history, it could be compared with the revolt of Hindu-Muslims against Britain; they fought unitedly and gained freedom from them. Kashmir's case is viewed as a subaltern identity because of its inferior political relationship with the superior dominant political country. It has developed an insurgent consciousness based on the ground realities of a militarized zone. Over the years, it has strengthened because of continuous silence and subjugation. It has left behind the issues of marginalization based on caste, religion, and gender discrimination.

The Indian state has deployed a large number of troops, military camps, an investigation center, and checkpoints to silence Kashmiris while committing human rights violations over there. This has developed a collective subaltern Kashmiri consciousness. They are united in their sorrows, deaths, and burials. As the war progressed in the Kashmir Valley, graveyards became as common as the multi-story parking lots. “Only for gravediggers there was no rest, it was just work, work, work. With no extra pay for overtime or night shifts” (p. 315).

These politically, socially, and economically subaltern masses are eager to let their voices be heard. They are helpless, weaponless, unarmed beings; their loved ones are dying in front of them, just as when Musa’s wife and daughter are killed, he is left with no cause in life and ultimately pushed to kill armed forces or to be killed by them. Musa, who is an artist and a graduate from Architecture school, has not become a freedom fighter overnight, but if everything is lost, that is when he would not care anymore. Intellectuals must pave the way for the subaltern groups, at least through writings like Roy's, to raise their voices to be heard by the world.

As Spivak affirmed in Loui (2012, p. 7), “...the task of an intellectual is to pave the way for the subaltern groups and let them speak freely for themselves.”

Regardless of the discipline or the methodologies utilized, it is the duty of the academic to ensure that these voices are being ‘heard’ and analyzed to justly represent them where they would otherwise be condemned to silence.

At the end, I must say that Roy, being an Indian writer, proved that the people across the border also condemn this brutality on Kashmiri people, and this act gives birth to a spark of humanity. However, on the other hand, the Indian army is making the situation worse for the Kashmiri people. One day, these little sparks will be transformed into an uncontrolled fire that will lighten the hearts of everyone living around

the world, and a strong wall will stand against it. Put yourself into the same situation for a second, and it scares the soul.

Conclusion

Considering views on this unresolved issue, the agenda is quite clear now, as Kashmiris are now fed up with this war between the two masses that has always affected the innocent people of Kashmir so badly that now they cannot take it anymore. Now they fight back and raise their voices, they do not see any other way to get rid of this doom, and I think they are right on this point that they want a distinct identity of just being Kashmiri rather than being a part of Pakistan or India. As a nation, they must have the right to decide their own fate. If the circumstances remain lost in finding which side is right for Kashmiri people, this brutality will never end, so they should have a separate identity. This cannot be defined as a religious issue; it has nothing to do with religion; it is a land dispute. Inscribing the reference given by Arundhati Roy in her book, if actions are not taken against this dispute, many MusaYeswis will be sacrificed just because of raising their voice against brutality. Humanity dies every day in Kashmir.

This piece of Heaven is being crushed between the prejudices of two unlikely forces.

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