

A S S O C I A T I O N S

Newsletter of the Western New England Psychoanalytic Society

April 2017

Editor's Note

When in April ambivalent winter lightens it's cold, dry grip upon us, then we can turn and reflect upon the academic year. This issue looks back at scientific meetings, a joint conference, and a colloquium that enriched our Society; and it looks ahead to those offerings still to come. We add a recurring column on a candidate's reveries inspired from an analytic education. We begin with a letter of hope from the Institute President that our community will prosper in years to come.

WNEIP President's Message

Rachel Bergeron, JD, PhD

Thank you to all who responded to our end-of-year-giving request. I am happy to report that we received \$9,205 in donations. Because of your generosity, we are able to do needed masonry repairs to the chimneys and basement this spring.

The Board continues to focus on doing needed repairs to our building while keeping an eye on our fiscal health. We have learned that we need to replace our furnace before next winter; and we hope to be able to do another piece of the needed repairs and restoration of the exterior of the building before the end of 2017.

We are a small community with a large task regarding the building that is Western New England's home. Please keep Western New England in mind when you are making donations at any time throughout the year.

Best wishes,
Rachel Bergeron
President, WNEIP

OFF THE COUCH

Candidates' Column

By Gretchen Hermes, MD PhD

Correspondence with Fleiss

RE: Successful Analysis of Babar

Sig. Freud

I. Dearest Wilhelm: Some time ago, I received a letter from **Celeste**, the concerned wife of **Babar**, King of the Elephants. She indicated that while Babar was adequately managing his duties as King, difficulties had developed between Babar and his children, **Pom**, **Flora** and **Alexander**. Celeste was careful not to divulge any details except to say that Babar had become increasingly absent. She willingly shared a painful and well-known bit of Babar's early history, thinking this might be useful in an analysis, should I be willing to proceed. "Babar was riding happily on his mother's back when a wicked hunter, hidden behind some bushes, shot at them and killed Babar's mother. Babar ran away because he was afraid of the hunter. After several days, very tired indeed, he came to a town. Luckily a very rich **Old Lady** who was very fond of little elephants took him in." With this small but important fragment of history, I agreed to meet with Babar in consultation.

On the day of our meeting, Babar wore a suit in a becoming shade of green, a handsome crown, and shoes with spats. He exhibited the most courtly of manners; these, I gathered, he had learned from the **Old Lady**. I learned that Celeste was Babar's wife and second cousin. Babar saw my eyebrow raise and said he too wondered about this as Celeste and Babar agreed hastily to marriage on a car ride from the city back to the jungle. Babar went

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on to describe his reign as King as benevolent but autocratic; this was the only form of government he was comfortable with. He had left **Cornelius**, the oldest of the elephants and his trusted general, in charge while Babar travelled to Vienna. There was a war brewing with the **Rhinoceroses**; Babar was emphatic that he would need to return to **Babar Land** if hostilities escalated. During the consultation phase, a tic emerged, flapping ears, when Babar related the story of his mother's death. Babar described his desperate aloneness after she was shot. His father did not come to his aid. He was chased by a hunter, feared for his life, and ran to an unknown land. Babar wept during his account; his ears flapped uncontrollably. I felt for the young elephant; we agreed to proceed with a formal analysis.



concluded I was running toward him. He wept because in his desperation he was not alone.

Shortly, thereafter, Babar returned to the continent of Africa to address the hostilities with the **Rhinoceroses**. This war has been viewed unfavorably by several historians and yet, it represented a transformational shift for Babar. He was able to defend himself, to hold his ground, and to protect his family. He felt the analysis made this possible. I was certain it had. During the war on **Rhino Land**, I chose to take a sabbatical and spent several months in the outskirts of **Celesteville**. Here, Babar's analysis continued. He rested in a hammock while I sat behind him. In these conditions, Babar was able to regress more fully. He spoke in his own language and shared more affectively charged memories

(NB: The significance of this arrangement came later when Babar showed me the only existing photo of his mother, taken just days before her death. See faded copy above.)

II. Dearest Wilhelm: I hope you are well. I write with news of the analysis of Babar. The transference took hold immediately, however, it has been fraught with issues of attachment and aggression. Babar was initially stunned that we would meet with such frequency that I would be reliably present. However, he quickly became sensitive to the placement of objects in my office. Any shifts in time or spatial arrangements proved to be derailing, threatening the analysis entirely. His responses devolved into low-frequency rumbles, nearly inaudible to me. Aggression took the form of personal slights directed at my attire; at points, Babar went so far as to recommend that I see his haberdasher. My hopes for the analysis began to deteriorate until one afternoon, when I was returning from Paris a serious fire broke out in the train station. It was just minutes before the hour of Babar's appointment; I raced to return to my office only to find Babar on a bench outside weeping. I tried to explain. Babar said there was no need for explanations; elephants, he said, have highly developed olfactory sensibilities. He knew there had been a fire and he could smell the musk of my cologne and therefore

III. Dearest Wilhelm: The successful analysis of Babar called to mind an unusual visit by a young analyst from L'Alsace, an **H. Loewald**. He came by train from Colmar one afternoon to discuss alternative ideas about fathers and Oedipal configurations. Loewald's thoughts as well as the mutative benefits of Babar's analysis, including his shift to more democratic and less autocratic ideals as a result of the analysis, have me re-thinking **Totem and Taboo**. The wish to kill the father is indeed great; the wish to be loved and cared for by him is perhaps greater. Indeed, I wonder if the sublimations Loewald spoke of are related in some measure to the facilitating bonds with fathers. As you well know Wilhelm, you have provided a reliable father figure for me to love all these many years. My work and productivity owes much to your enthusiasm and our correspondence.

P.S. For your amusement, some months after the analysis of Babar, I received a letter from Babar's sons Pom and Alexander who said they had greatly enjoyed recent outings with their father. Cheerfully, they included a photo of their pet lemur, **Dr. Freud**.

Library Committee Update**By Lisa Marcus**

The Library Committee thanks members of our community for many recent contributions to our collection, especially Lauri Robertson, William Sledge, Paul Schwaber and Rosemary Balsam. In addition we have added several new books at the request of faculty:

The Psychoanalytic Model of the Mind

by Elizabeth Auchincloss

Long-Term Psychodynamic Psychotherapy: A Basic Text

by Glen Gabbard

Unrepresented States and the Construction of Meaning

by Howard B. Levine

The Analytic Field and Its Transformations

by Antonino Ferro

New Models of Bereavement Theory and Treatment

by George Hagman

Psychoanalytic Treatment in Adults: A Longitudinal Study of Change

by Rosemary Cogan

**Lawrence Levenson, MD
Mourning and Maturation
Scientific Meeting****February 4, 2017****Discussant: Sybil Houlding, MSW****Reviewed by Lee David Brauer, MD**

Dr. Levenson's paper poses the general question, "Why Mourn" and more specifically, how does the mind change raw grief into productive mourning, and with what outcomes?

He immediately begins with a compelling story of loss, *His for Hawk: A Memoir* by Helen MacDonald. Her father died suddenly. He was a beloved man who had taught her about hawks and about the patience required to observe them. A photographer, he viewed the world through a lens at a certain distance. She collapsed upon receiving the news of his sudden death, and wondered who she was now that he was gone. Who would she become? To assuage the ache of forlorn yearning, she sought a hawk as a substitute,

and gave up most other activities to be fully present with the hawk. She raised it from soon after its birth and felt sudden love for the man who raised it from a hatchling. At first it was on a lunge, a leash for a hawk, but soon it hunted freely and then returned to her. Eventually her relationship changed, and the hawk, as a hunter, became a predator, and the death of its prey made it cease to seem human.

This marks the start of the border between loss and internalization. Dr. Levenson turns to Hans Loewald for analytic clarification and explication of what he has so movingly described. In his work, *On Internalization*, Loewald says that inner life, with structure and secondary process mentation, and a differentiated self in relation to differentiated objects, result from loss, mourning and internalization. Writing about the Oedipus Complex, Loewald differentiates between fixation from being bound to old objects and mourning. When the loss is accepted and mourned, internalization becomes a positive achievement, an activity of advancement, and an expansion of the psyche. *"The assumption of responsibility for one's own life...is in psychic reality tantamount to the murder of the parents. Mourning draws upon aggressive energy. Mourning, like non-objective art, is an act of creative destruction."*

Grief is the struggle between the hypercathexis of the lost object and the absence of the object in external reality. There is always a struggle between giving up the object and internalizing it, and clinging to the object and being melancholic. Why does one go on and not give into grief? Eros, the force for binding together, leads to internalization, a force for a richer life.

Dr. Levenson notes that bonding with the hawk permitted a wild grieving, with hunting, non-human oral sadism. It also contained the fantasy of oral incorporation underlying internalization. As MacDonald differentiates and separates from the hawk, she gains new insights into herself and a greater, not lesser capacity to relate to others.

Dr. Levenson relates the experience of mourning to the resolution of the transference neurosis. He refers to Loewald's most powerful summary of this process in the well-known quote, *"the establishment and resolution of it [the transference neurosis] is due to the blood of recognition, which the patient's unconscious*

is given to taste so that the old ghosts may reawakened to life. Those who know ghosts tell us that they long to be released from their ghost life and led to rest as ancestors...In the daylight of analysis, the ghosts of the unconscious are laid and led to rest as ancestors whose power is taken over and transformed into the newer intensity of present life, of the secondary process and contemporary objects."

Dr. Levenson says that when we mourn objects, we release them but do not lose them. In this paragraph Dr. Levenson summarizes a central and powerful insight of the paper, *"Our deceased objects don't come back to us. And there is no flying to them either. But they are with us always in our mourning for them. Unmourned, they are lost, dead objects we are trying futilely to resuscitate in a melancholy way. When we are able to mourn them, we mourn them forever and sorrowfully, but not in a melancholy way, rather in a way that animates, even if sorrowfully our tie to them, and they fill us with gratitude and enduring love for him, for her, even if – always – sorrowfully."*

Ms. Sybil Houlding presented a clear, focused summary of the main ideas of Dr. Levenson's paper by emphasizing that recovery involves the establishment of a transference relationship to permit the recovery of the lost object and for development to continue. She notes the identification with the hawk, and her fleeing from society. MacDonald does consult a psychiatrist for help. She notes that the resolution of trauma depends on whether "things go well." This involves developmental level, objects available for help, and differentiates between melancholia and growth.

Ms. Houlding further explores MacDonald's life as a falconer, and her unusual attachment to her hawk. She notes MacDonald

had a twin brother, a boy who died a birth. The family never spoke of him. Ms. Houlding postulates that Helen has always known of this loss, and was further traumatized by being kept in an incubator after birth. She identified early with the loss and with birds of prey, and the loss of her father perhaps reawakened the earlier trauma of the loss of her twin. Ms. Sybil

Houlding quotes Helen eventually professing her love for the man, who initially nurtured the hawk, which she begged for and adopted, was love for her and her father. In this paper, Dr. Levenson brilliantly explains loss, its pain, and perhaps its eventual gain. Using MacDonald's story of her grief for her father, and her temporary substitution of the hawk, he describes the loss, the hate, the turmoil, the revision of the world and of personality that comes with acute grief. In the task of relinquishing the hawk, we see MacDonald recover and grow. Dr. Levenson juxtaposes a vivid, passionate, account of loss filled with sadness, coping, bizarre accommodation, and

eventual resolution with the thoughtful, lucid explanations of the process in more abstract psychoanalytic terms by Loewald. Each part of the paper enriches the other.

Dr. Levenson mentioned at the outset of his talk he had sustained a recent loss. This paper, with its emotional power, insights and clarity shows remarkable resilience and emotional fortitude. The paper itself serves as an illustration of the processes which he has so well described. Those hearing the paper, and psychoanalytic knowledge in general, profit greatly from his effort.



Jennifer Stuart, PhD

Love, Hate, and the Maternal Body

Scientific Meeting

September 24, 2016

Discussant: Rosemary Balsam, MD

Reviewed by Gretchen Hermes, MD, PhD

The 2016-2017 season of Scientific Meetings at Western New England began in September with Dr. Jennifer Stuart's searching discussion of the complex interplay between mothers and daughters, based on a Hollywood remake of the film classic, *Sleeping Beauty*: Angelina Jolie's *Maleficent*. This update, as Stuart noted, avoided all the pitfalls of an overly simplistic assignment of good and evil to a mother-daughter pair. Told from the perspective of its eponymous antagonist, the film depicts a conflicted relationship between Maleficent, a powerful but betrayed and deeply traumatized fairy, and the newborn Princess Aurora, whom she condemns to a death-like sleep from which she will never awaken, as in the original story. In this re-telling, however, Maleficent is not doomed by her infanticidal wishes; her powers of transformation are mobilized in an arc of development that ultimately includes a moving expression of love and caregiving for the young princess.

Both Stuart and Dr. Rosemary Balsam, the discussant for the meeting, highlighted the signal importance of Sigmund Freud's ideas in the development of the character of Maleficent in this film version. Stuart spoke of Freud's matter-of-fact acceptance, in the *Interpretation of Dreams*, of the forbidden wishes of young married women who were "far from pleased when they became pregnant," wishing furtively that the child in their wombs might die. Balsam reminded us that cinema and psychoanalysis were born at the same time and suggested that Maleficent's rich and "psychologically-tinged backstory"—a modern device—reflected Freud's absorption into Hollywood culture and curiosities about why people do the things they do. Why is Maleficent as malevolent as she is beneficent? We learn through the film that

Maleficent has survived extremes of abandonment and mutilation. The film's script offers, as Stuart and Balsam observed, a stunning psychological transformation of a character scorned and hated for centuries—the original fairytale version written in the 17th century.

Stuart wove her film analysis with a forensic examination of the creative forces behind the making of this film. The film was seen by Stuart as Jolie's creative response to carrying the BRCA1 gene, to her prophylactic surgery to address vulnerability to breast and ovarian cancer, and also, in equal measure, to the inheritance from her mother of great beauty and the capacity for bearing children. As Stuart noted at the outset of her presentation, Jolie's film version depicts ways in which love and hate between mother and daughter are inscribed in the body and the mind of each. Stuart spoke of the "developmental importance of loving ties between mother and daughter that are strong enough—and elastic enough—to withstand their inevitable mutual hatred."



A number of interesting questions and comments emerged in response to the presentation. Jo Kremer, MD, noted a trend in Hollywood, both in the film *Frozen*

and *Maleficent*, in which the kiss of true love that dispels the curse of death is not left to Prince Charming but to a female figure. These newly gendered love potions reflect Balsam's work—that it is the presence of a mother that fuels the "eros and aggression necessary for a daughter's fullest emotional and object relational experiences." Barbara Mason, MD, remarked on a humorous scene from the film in which a group of bumbling fairies, newly adoptive parents of Aurora who hadn't the slightest idea about child-rearing wished they could grow into motherhood—as easy as one, two, three. How nice it would be for parents to press pause in order to catch up with the developing child! This scene and Mason's comment echoed Stuart's contention that motherhood is a lifelong, sometimes rough and tumble, developmental process filled with

regressions, disruptions, and transformations. This non-linear development of maternity, Stuart noted, deserves more thoughtful attention in psychoanalytic literature and treatment. Lee Brauer, MD, commented on the absence of Aurora's father and the potential costs of a lost triadic relationship. He reminded the group of Loewald's beautiful writing on the salience of the father in the development of ego and reality.

Maleficent's relationship with Aurora seemed powerful and instructive in other ways as well. In anthropological terms, Maleficent is an *other* mother, not Aurora's biological mother but an allo-parent. In *Mother Nature (2009)*, anthropologist Sara Blaffer Hrdy argues that *homo sapiens* could not have evolved without allo-parents, other social actors, beyond dedicated biological mothers, who provided for young. In a later book, *Mothers and Others (2014)*, Hrdy explains that great apes that developed in contexts that included multiple caretakers—and who could engage these others—ultimately provided the substrate for mentalizing and inter-subjectivity in human communities. When more fully expressed, these traits, involving theory of mind, were rendered more visible and available to Darwinian selection.

For Hrdy, the biosocial forces between mothers, infants and allo-parents formed the evolutionary crucible for human society. In this Hollywood re-visioning of an *other* mother—from reluctant ambivalent invisible caregiver to psychologically real, engaged mother whose presence fuels development—Maleficent, to her surprise, Hollywood's, and ours becomes a powerful advocate for affordable, available childcare provided by loving adults.



Scientific Meeting Schedule 2017 to 2018

September 23rd

Nancy Chodorow, PhD

Towards an American Independent Tradition

Discussant: Rosemary Balsam, MD

October 21st

Kirsten Dahl, PhD

Blow Out Your Candles... and Goodbye

Discussant: Sid Phillips, MD

November 18th

Tom Kohut, PhD

Popular Anti-Semitism in the Third Reich: A Psychological Perspective

Discussant: Dick Honig, MD

December 16th

Robert White, MD

Peter Pan: A Lost Boy and His Dead Mother

Discussant: Gretchen Hermes, MD, PhD

January 13th

Steve Ablon, MD

Traumatic Attachment: Play & Therapeutic Action in the Lars & The Real Girl

No discussant

March 31st

Anne Pellegrini, PhD

Taking A Leak: Bodies, Boundaries, and Bathrooms

Discussant: Ann Dailey, JD

April 28th

Lois Oppenheim, PhD

Resisting Representation: A Psychoanalytic Consideration of Form and Formlessness in the Work of Agnes Martin

Discussant: Nancy Olson, MD

**Responding to Narcissism:
Joint CSPP/WNEPS Conference**

**By Angelica Kaner, PhD
and Barbara Marcus, PhD**

British psychoanalyst and contemporary Kleinian, Dr. Michael Feldman, was the keynote speaker at the biannual jointly sponsored CSPP and WNEPS conference, *Responding to Narcissism*. The conference addressed dilemmas posed by narcissistic patients and ways of working with them.

The formal presentations were preceded Friday night by a festive welcome sponsored by the Joint Program Committee, Chaired by Angelica Kaner (CSPP/WNEPS) and Barbara Marcus (CSPP/WNEPS). The engaging evening was catered with a continental flair by Crepes Chouquette, graciously hosted by Kay Long.

This unique two-day conference first featured Dr. Feldman's case presentation and a discussion by Dr. Kay Long to a full house on Saturday October 22nd, followed by 4 separate clinical workshops, two guided by Dr. Feldman and two by Dr. Eileen McGinley, his fellow member at the British Psychoanalytical Society who is a gifted clinician, accomplished scholar, and sought after speaker and teacher in her own right.

In his keynote address, Michael Feldman outlined his way of understanding clinical material. He began by drawing our attention to the observation that clinical hours are fraught with dangers associated with anxieties derived from the patient's early experience. These anxieties are projected into the analyst who must bear their full brunt. The projected anxieties can interfere with the analyst's capacity for thinking and interpretive activities and interrupt the capacity to attend to the immediacy of the clinical moment. Feldman believes that live transference interpretation is the most compelling way to engage the patient

meaningfully and thereby to facilitate psychic change.

To illustrate, Dr. Feldman presented a compelling clinical narrative that centered on his responses to a woman patient with pronounced narcissistic features. He described being drawn into a fascinated contemplation of her body and mind wherein he lost the link to the tragedy of her situation-- her underlying despair that the patient requires the other – mother, sister, analyst –and is drawn into a state of mutual idealization. Through self-reflection on his own fascination with her, he was able to recover his capacity to escape her mesmerizing hold, becoming at once more threatening to her and yet, more able to help her confront disavowed desire, guilt and shame. Both the content and style of Dr. Feldman's presentation challenged the audience itself to stay in the here and now as well. He presented dense and difficult clinical material of 'here and now' interactions between analyst and patient without the usual organizing context of detailed developmental history, course of the treatment, and

overarching dynamic formulation.

In the absence of these customary touchstones, we too, were drawn into the immediacy of Dr. Feldman's way of working and the attendant anxiety that immersion in the moment inevitably engenders in the analyst. Many audience members' questions and comments reflected a search for the familiar orienting handholds that Feldman's approach eschews in favor of staying directly within the transference matrix. Thus, his style of presenting conveyed experientially the anxiety engendered in this kind of clinical encounter as well as the its therapeutic value.



Discussion

Dr. Kay Long's clear and thoughtful discussion highlighted and further elucidated Dr. Feldman's conceptual framework and its application to clinical work. She emphasized how Dr. Feldman used the full range of his countertransference experiences to try to engage his patient in meaningful analytic work in both profound and subtle ways, noting that it was in his very experience of being pulled in one direction or another, losing his bearings, finding his footing and then losing it again that he could eventually address and make use of the disturbance created in himself.

She also underscored that it is always difficult for the analyst to recognize and to find words to capture these underlying forces, the primitive phantasies they embody, and the inevitable discomfort and uncertainty they evoke. If we are to engage these forces, Dr. Feldman insists that we recognize the *analyst's* trouble tolerating the disturbance evoked in him or her when addressing these deadly forces.

Finally, Dr. Long aptly observed of Dr. Feldman, "He is remarkably unflinching in the face of his own failures, as he uses them to refine his understanding...and shows us that if we are to truly engage with our patients we will suffer states of mind that are hard to bear. But he also shows us how essential this is if we are to sympathetically understand our patients and find a way to speak to them that reaches them and brings about real change."

Clinical Workshops

More than 50 of the attendees accepted the additional opportunity to join one of 4 smaller workshops, 2 guided by Michael Feldman and 2 led by Eileen McGinley. In each workshop, a member of our professional community presented clinical material to our British guests. Angelica Kaner, PhD and Matthew Shaw, PhD presented their work to Dr. Feldman, and Eileen Becker-Dunn, LCSW and Robert White, MD presented to Dr. McGinley. Each of the presenters shared their work generously, providing workshop members with the rare opportunity to grapple in-depth with the unfolding of several clinical hours.

Workshop members posed interesting, sometimes challenging questions from their various theoretical perspectives. Drs. Feldman and McGinley remarked appreciatively on the clinical talents and openness of our presenters while also replying thoughtfully about their own

ways of working with the material. These discussions provided a clinical platform from which to better understand the technical approach and its application offered by these two master Kleinian clinicians.

Generally, the workshop format was endorsed as a unique and very successful venue for the close examination of clinical material. Both the small group format and the expanse of time allowed for the emergence of lively discussion

All agreed that these three hours flew by--Drs. Feldman and McGinley included. Then back "across the pond" they flew, while those fortunate to attend shared a mutual appreciation for time well spent.

The Imagined Infant

February 18, 2017

Anne-Marie Sandler Colloquium

Reviewed by Matthew Shaw, PhD

In February, the first annual Anne-Marie Sandler Colloquium, entitled *The Imagined Infant*, was held at the Yale Child Study Center. It spanned two days, integrated psychoanalysis, neuroscience, developmental research and cross-cultural studies, and brought together clinicians and researchers from across the U.S. and England. Surpassing the scope of the event was the spirit of the gathering. It was a lively, generative, creative couple of days.

Rosemary Balsam, Joan Raphael-Leff, Linda Mayes, Norka Malberg, Alexandra Harrison, and Talia Hatzor presented papers. The audience responded enthusiastically. Conversations developed following these sessions, during the break out groups, and in the final extended discussion. Given that the themes, case material, and research were too broad to summarize in any kind of comprehensive way, I'll use Linda Mayes' lovely, detailed portrait of Anne-Marie Sandler to represent the event.

Through describing Sandler's intellectual vigor, moral courage, and generous spirit, Mayes told a larger story about the history of psychoanalysis, the personal ways in which analysts develop and learn, and the need for analytic thinking within and beyond the consulting room. In so doing, she provided the people present with a sense of mission. Using Sandler's example, she called on the attendees to work and re-work analytic theories and techniques, conduct and consume research,

converse late into the night only to begin again in the morning, and help people within and outside of the consulting room, and not only practice but live fully. She emphasized both the need for psychoanalytic approaches and the pleasure in pursuing them.

For example, Mayes described how Sandler established a daycare for blind infants. These children's development had stalled in a variety of ways. Sandler noticed that the infants often lay still when interacting with their mothers. Their seeming disinterest led the mothers to withdraw and even become depressed. The connection between mother and child withered and the infants' development atrophied. Sandler and her colleagues noticed the deleterious interactions and intervened. They worked closely with the mothers, listening to their experiences but also describing the

infants' states of mind. They framed the infants' stillness as close, attentive listening. The children, relying heavily on hearing, did not want to move and risk missing their mothers' communications. Far from disinterested, they were rapt. The mothers, with newfound understanding, reached again toward their children and re-found themselves as mothers. They spoke and the children responded. Both became livelier. Mayes used this vignette as a way to highlight Sandler's deep commitment to communication and in order to make a larger point about the invigorating possibilities of analytic work.

Norka Malberg, Linda Mayes, Janet Madigan, and Michael Garland worked hard to make this rich colloquium possible. And most promisingly, they established it as an annual event.

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