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## THE CONDITION OF THE AMISH LIFE AND ENGLISHCHER CULTURE AS REFLECTED IN JODY PICOULT'S PLAIN TRUTH: A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH

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**Abstract:** *The Condition of the Amish Life and Englishcher Culture as Reflected in Jody Picoult's plain truth". It primarily intended to describe the Amish life portrait, Englishcher culture, and how far the influence of the religious aspect to outsider world. The data of the study are taken through alibrary research that employs the descriptive technique to give clearer explanation of the problem statement. In this research, the writer employs sociological study to analyze the data. The main data of this research is taken from the novel "plain truth" written by Jody Picoult and the source of data of this research becomes the primary source and secondary source. In relation to primary source the writer reads the novel carefully and critically. The secondary source the writer takes from the materials, which are relevant to support the analysis. The result of this study can be briefly stated as followers. The characters are presented by using the technique of telling story and it divided into major and minor characters; they are Ellie Hathaway, Katie Fisher, while the minor characters are Coop, Jacob Fisher, Aaron Fisher, Sarah of plain truth story is taken place mostly in Lancaster County, Paradise, Pennsylvania and a little in Philadelphia, Unites states at summer 2000. The Englishcher or American culture as describe in the novel and basically each of them has different condition and treatment in every part of life*

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## INTRODUCTION

The United States of America is located in the middle of the North American continent, with Canada to the north and the United Mexican States to the south. The United States ranges from the Atlantic Ocean on the nation's east coast to the Pacific Ocean bordering the west, and also includes the state of Hawaii, a series of islands located in the Pacific Ocean, the state of Alaska located in the northwestern part of the continent above the Yukon, and numerous other holdings and territories.

The first known inhabitants of the area now known as the United States are believed to have arrived over a period of several thousand years beginning approximately 20,000

years ago by crossing the Bering land bridge into Alaska. The first solid evidence of these cultures settling in what would become the US begins as early as 15,000 years ago with the Clovis culture.

Relatively little is known of these early settlers compared to the Europeans who colonized the area after voyage of navigator Christopher Columbus in 1492 of Spain. Columbus' men were also the first documented Old Worlders to land in the territory of the United States when they arrived in Puerto Rico during their second voyage in 1493. The first European known to set foot in the continental U.S. was Juan Ponce de Leon, who arrived in Florida in 1513, though there is some evidence suggesting that he may have been preceded by John Cabot in 1497.

Every society has each culture that becomes characteristic of society. In addition, there are no differences between one culture and another, all of them has same value. Many authors write about culture in their literary work. One of them is Jody Picoult in *Plain Truth*. She discussed about life, culture, and society.

Culture is the product of leaning, rather than of heredity. The cultures of the world are systems of collective habits. The differences observable among them are the cumulative product of mass learning under diverse geographic and social conditions. Race and biological factors influence culture only in so far as they effect the conditions under which learning occurs, as when the presence of people of markedly different physique operates as a factor in the development of race prejudice (Shapiro:247)

The Amish (Amish or Amische) are an Anabaptist Christian denomination in the United States and Canada (Ontaria and Manitoba) known for their plain dress and avoidance of modern conveniences such as car and electricity. The Amish separate themselves from mainstream society for religious reasons: They do not join military, apply for social security benefits, take out insurance, or accept any form of financial assistance from the government. The Amish people most speak a German dialect known as Pennsylvania Dutch (Pennsylvania German or Pennsylvania Deutsch) at home and in church services, and learning English in school. The Amish are dividing into separate fellowships consisting of geographical districts or congregation. Each district is fully independent and has it own *Ordnung*.

They most speak German dialect known as Pennsylvania Dutch at home and in church services, and learn English in school. The Amish are divided into separate fellowship consisting of geographical district or congregations. Each district is fully independent and has it own *Ordnung*, or set of unwritten rules.

The old order Amish are distinguished from the Beachy Amish and the New Order Amish by their strict adherence to be use of horses for farming and transportation, their traditional manner of dress, and their refusal to allow electricity or telephones in their home. The Old Older Amish is the concept many outsiders have when they think of "Amish". The Amish are united by a common Swiss-German ancestry, language, and culture and they marry within the Amish community. The Amish therefore meet the criteria of an ethnic group. However, the Amish themselves generally use the term only to refer to accepted members of their church community, and not as an ethnic designation. Those who do not choose to live an Amish lifestyle and join the church are not longer considered Amish, just as those who live the plain lifestyle but are not baptized into the Amish church are not

Amish. Certain Mennonite churches were formerly Amish Congregations. In fact, although more Amish immigrated to America in the 19<sup>th</sup> century than during 18<sup>th</sup> century, most Amish today descend primarily from 18<sup>th</sup> century immigrants, since the Amish immigrants of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were more liberal and most liberal and most of their communities eventually lost their Amish identity. (Nolt, S. M. p.104)

The Amish movement takes its name from that of Jacob Amman (c. 1656-c.1730), a Swiss-German Mennonite leader. Amman believed the Mennonite Dordrecht Confession of Faith, particularly the practice of shunning excluded members (known as the ban or Meidung). However, the Swiss Mennonites (who, because of unwelcoming conditions in Switzerland, were by then scattered throughout Alsace and the Palatinate) never practiced strict shunning as the Lowland Anabaptist did. Amman insisted upon this practice, even to the point of expecting a spouse to refuse to sleep or eat with the banned member until he/she repented of his/her behavior. This strict literalism brought about a division in the Swiss Mennonite movement in 1693 and led to the establishment of the Amish. Because the Amish are the result of a division with the Mennonites, some consider the Amish a conservative Mennonite group. An old Amish cemetery in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, 1941. The stones are plain; the inscriptions are simple.

The first Amish began migrating to the colony of Pennsylvania in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and were part of a larger migration from the Palatinate and neighboring areas. They came, along with their nonAnabaptist neighbors, largely to avoid religious wars and poverty, but also to avoid religious persecution. The first immigrants went to Berks County, Pennsylvania, but later moved, motivated both by land issues and by security concerns tied to the French and Indian war. Many eventually settled in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Other groups later settled in or spread to Alabama, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, Ohio, Maryland, Tennessee, Wisconsin, Maine, and Canada. The Amish congregation to merge with the Mennonites. The last Amish congregation, which merged with the neighboring Mennonite Church in 1937. Some Mennonite congregations, including most in Alsace, are descended directly from former Amish Congregation. No Old Order movement ever developed in Europe and all Old Order communities are in Americas. (Nolt, S. M)

Amish lifestyle is dictated by the *Ordnung* (German, meaning: order), which differs slightly from community to community, and, within a community, from district to district. What is acceptable in one community may not be acceptable in another. No summary of Amish lifestyle and culture can be very adequate because there are few generalities that are true for all Amish. Groups may separate over matters such as the width of a hat-brim, the color of buggies, various other issues. The use of tobacco (excluding cigarettes, which are "worldly") and moderate use of alcohol are generally permitted, particularly among older and more conservative groups. (Brad Igou and Amy Beth G).

It is difficult to leave Lancaster County without hearing of the Amish aversion to having photographs taken. Nevertheless, few tourists return home without photos, while books and postcards with spectacular pictures sell well in local gift shops. (Christian, p.1).

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bordering the west, and also includes the state of Alaska located in the northwestern part of the continent above the Yukon, and numerous other holdings and territories.

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The United States's first contribution to the war was simultaneously to cut off the oil and raw material supplies desperately needed by Japan to maintain its offensive in Manchuria, and to increase military and financial aid to China. Its first contribution to the Allies came in September 1940, when the United States gave Britain 50 old destroyers in exchange for military bases in the Caribbean. This was followed in December 1940, when the United States began a "Lend-Lease" program with Britain, supplying much needed military equipment.

The presidential election in 2000 between George W. Bush (R) and Al Gore (D) was one of the closest in American history, and helped lay the seeds for political polarization to come (<http://historyofunitedstates-wikipedia.thefreewikipedia.html>)

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Carla defines that culture is as the shared patterns of behaviors and interaction, cognitive constructs, and affective understanding that are learned through a process of socialization. These shared patterns identify the members of a culture group while also distinguishing of another group (<http://www.carla.umn.edu/culture/definition.html/>). American culture also exhibits a tendency to hybridize pop culture and so-called high culture, and generally questions normative standards for artistic output. This is likely an effect of the country's egalitarian tradition, and the nation's history of constitutionally protected freedom of speech and expression, as enshrined in the First Amendment.

The characteristic of high culture are written, creative with both conceptual and theory as well as talent, individual work, creative for an ideal, acquisition of money is not the chief goal recorded in the form of high literature, fine art, classical music (Muhni, 2003:36)

Sociology of literature is an approach has point of view that literature becomes a social institution that is made or created by an author who is member of the society (Subhan, 2005:6). According to Domono states that, "sociology of literature is kind of approach, which considers the social aspects in a literary work (Damono, 1979:4)

The word sociology in general meaning is the science that studies about people. Soejono Soekanto says that the word sociology comes from two words; they are the Latin word "socion" mean friend and the Greek word "logos" means talking. It means that sociology studies about the social structure. The process includes the social changes and the social problems (Soejono Soekanto, 1985:3). Furthermore, Thomas Ford Hault in Horton

Paul B of sociologist's book definition that "sociology: the intellectual discipline concerned with developing systematic, reliable knowledge about human social reactions in general and about the products of such relationship ..." (Thomas Ford Hout in Horton Paul B, 1980:2).

Basically, one of the aspects in sociology of literature is the understanding about literature as a sociology of literature is the understanding about literature as a social mirror. Because of that, social reaction of an author to the social phenomenon motivated to write literary work.

Literature is the expression of the society. De Bonald in Rene Wellek states that literature is the expression of the social sense. The creator must express the life globally or the life of certain age concretely. In addition, the author must be sensitive toward the social institution and the face of low people (1995:77). A work of literature may be a mirror of the society through the work of art. Furthermore, literature represents life and life is, in large measure, a social reality, even though literature is also imitation of natural word and subjective world of the man. Literature has social functions in which it cannot be purely individual. Thus, a large majority of the questions raised by literary study are, at least ultimately or by implication, social question like, question of tradition, conversations, moral values, norm, symbol, and myths (Wellek and Warren, 1976:94).

Jody Picoult was born and raised happily on long island something that she believed at first was a detriment to a girl who wanted to be writer. She and Tim and three children live in Hanover, New Hampshire with a dog, a rabbit, to Jersey calves, and the occasional Holstein. Because of fantastic talent, she got some award such as; The Richard and Judy best read of the year best novel nominee (2005), and Sainsbury's popular fiction award best novel nominee (2006): My sister's keeper.

An author has certain ideas about life. An author intends to make the reader observe and share pieces of human experiences so the author can share the idea and the feeling that she has about life. An author uses prose to tell a story, which is assumed to be made up. This does not mean that a fiction author many not use material drawn fro-real life.

The writer focuses on the condition of the Amish life and Englischer or American culture. This limitation intends to make the discussion more clearly.

## **METHOD**

The data of the study are taken through alibrary research that employs the descriptive technique to give clearer explanation of the problem statement. There are some theories of character and characterization, the theory of setting, the theory of society in the literature and the review of the Amish history and culture. The writer used the sociological approach to analyze the problems. This approach is suitable to analyze the Amish society in the history because it gives clear understanding that literature is description of the society. This Study used sociological criticism to analyze the novel. In the Critical Approach to Literature, David Daiches status the function of sociological criticism as follows.

Sociological criticism can, then help US to avoid making mistakes about the nature of the work literature we have before US, by throwing light on it' s function or on the conventions with reference to certain aspects of it are you be understood. It has therefore

an important descriptive function, and as accurate description must precede evaluation it can be called a handmaid criticism. And a very important handmaid it often is (1981:356)

From the quotation above we can see that sociological criticism give US clear understanding about the function of literature work as the description of the certain aspects.

There are free steps which the writer conducts in analyzing the novel. Firstly, the writer read the novel carefully and the writer was interested with the Amish society condition in the novel. The writer found the problem and formulated it into detail. Secondly, the writer searched the data to answer to problem formulation. Thirdly, the writer tried to analyze the Amish character through their physical appearance, behavior. Next analyze the setting of the story by looking at the place, time, social circumstances of the novel. Fifth, the writer used Amish characters' characterization and setting to reveal the idea of Amish society from the story.

## DISCUSSION

### A. Synopsis

Plain truth is a novel written by Jodi Picoult about a murder on an Amish farm. The book tell about a dead infant found on Amish farm and shock the entire community. As the police investigate the death. they discover that the baby was not stillborn, but that it died a short time after being born. As they gather more and more evidence, everything starts to point to an eighteenyear old, unmarried Amish girl named, Katie Fisher, who is believed to be the mother of the child.

Ellie Hathaway, who never loses a case even when her clients might well be guilty, is reaching breakdown point with her life and relationship. She retreats to her aunt in a small town of the Amish community. Leda, her excommunicated Amish force her to handle the unprecedented case of her niece Amish girl, Katie Fisher, accused of smothering her new born baby to conceal its existence. To keep her unwilling client from awaiting her trial in jail, Ellie agrees to act as her warden, which means she has to spend the next few months living the Amish life with her client's family and she must learn the culture and way of the "plain" people in order to gain Katie's trust and find out what really happened.

A quiet town shortly became the center of press attention with a murder trial of an Amish girl. Many times, Ellie regrets taking on the stubborn Katie Fisher as a client, but as she involves deeper into the truth surrounding corn, but to harvest her heart, as well. Through this experience, Ellie goes through a self-discovery. She figures out what she truly wants in life and love, and her life is changed forever.

The facts that Amish as religious group that keep on themselves and seem don't make don't make waves, don't mean they are perfect and far from troubles. Through observing the simple Amish way of life and their philosophy of forgiveness, Ellie gradually comes to term with the unresolved issues that caused her near breakdown and reshapes her life.

### B. Characters

Diverse characters such as Aaron, Elam, Sarah, Samuel, Mary, and Bishop Ephram enrich the story with interesting views of life from a perspective of which we are not

familiar. Add to the mix Cooper, Jacob, Leda, Adam, and George, and readers can have an assortment of opposing views that create an understanding of how life can be so different for everyone.

- ~ Ellie Hathaway, a 39-year-old lawyer. Katie is distantly related to her.
- ~ Katie Fisher, an unmarried 18-year-old Amish farm girl. She is the main focus of the story. After having a baby, she pushes it from her mind and is accused of murdering it.
- ~ Coop, Ellie's ex-boyfriend, a psychiatrist that help her in defending Katie.
- ~ Jacob Fisher, Katie's older brother. He was excommunicated from his church for continuing schooling and giving up his Amish ways.
- ~ Aaron Fisher, Katie's father. He owns the dairy farm. He is extremely self-righteous in his views on his Religion, not wanting to do anything to go against it whatsoever.
- ~ Sarah Fisher, Katie's mother. She truly loves her children, and would do anything for them, though she must follow her husband's belief system in order not to go against the church.
- ~ Adam Sinclair, a friend of Jacob's in college. He lets Jacob rent out his apartment while he's in Scotland for work. He is the father of Katie's baby.
- ~ Samuel Stoltzfus, an Amish boy who works for Aaron Fisher. He is Katie's boyfriend, and loves her very much, he would do anything to help Katie.
- ~ Leda, Katie's aunt and Sarah Fisher's sister who was once excommunicated and now serves as the Fisher's confidant (Except for Aaron Fisher).
- ~ George Callahan, the ambitious prosecutor that would do anything to win the case and develop his career.

### C. Setting

The Plain Truth story takes place mostly in Lancaster County, Paradise, Pennsylvania and a little in Philadelphia, United States at summer 2000.

### D. Social Condition of Amish

#### 1. Amish Lifestyle and Culture

Amish lifestyle is dictated by the Ordnung (German, meaning, order), which differs slightly from community to community, and, within a community, from district to district. What is acceptable in one community may not be acceptable in another. No summary of Amish lifestyle and culture can be very adequate because there are few generalities that are true for all Amish. Groups may separate over matters such as the width of a hat-brim, the color of buggies, various other issues. The use of tobacco (excluding cigarettes, which are "worldly") and moderate use of alcohol are generally permitted, particularly among older and more conservative groups.

You could not summer in Paradise and not come in contact with the Old Order Amish, who were such an intrinsic part of the Lancaster area. The Plain people, as they called themselves, clipped along in their buggies in the thick automobile traffic; they stood in line at the grocery store in their old-fashioned clothing; they smiled shyly from behind their farm stands where we went to buy fresh vegetables (P,21)

The Amish, especially those of the Old Order, are probably most known for their avoidance of certain modern technologies. The avoidance of items such as automobiles and

electricity is largely misunderstood. The Amish do not view technology as evil. Individuals may petition for acceptance of a particular technology in the local community. In some communities, the church leaders meet annually to review such proposals. In other, it is done whenever necessary. Because the Amish do not have a hierarchical governing structure, differing communities often have different ideas as to which technological item are acceptable. Some Amish families have non-electric versions of vital appliances, such as kerosene-powered refrigerators.

To my amazement, the Fisher home was not that much different from the one I'd grown up in. Braided rag rugs were scattered across the hardwood floors, a bright quilt sat folded over the back of a rocking chair, an intricately carved hutch held an assortment of delft china bowls and teacups. I think, in a way, I'd be expecting to step back into Little House on the Prairie – these were people, after all, who willingly set aside modern conveniences. But there was an oven, refrigerator, even a washing machine that looked like one my grandmother had in 1950s (P,56).

Electricity, for instance, is viewed as a connection to. And reliance on, “the World”, the “English”, or “Yankees” (the outside world), which is against their doctrine of separation. The use of electricity also could lead to the use of worldly household appliances such as television, which would complicate the Amish tradition of a simple life, and introduce individualist competition for worldly goods that would be destructive of community. In certain Amish groups, however, electricity can be used in very specific situation: for example, if electricity can be produced without access to outside power lines. Twelve-volt batteries, with their limited applications, are acceptable to these groups.

The bishop held up his hands. ‘The computer is not yours Aaron, and I do not doubt your personal commitment to our ways. But like I told the Zooks. the ends justifies the means, in this case. For as long as the lawyer needs it, I will allow an inverter on this farm, to be used by is Hathway for the electric.’ ‘An inverter?’ He turned to me. ‘Inverter converts twelve-volt current into one-hundred ten volt. Our businessmen use them to power cash registers. We can't use electric straight from a generator, but an inverter, it runs off a battery, which is okay for the Ordnung.’ (P112)

Electric generators can be used for welding, recharging batteries, and powering milk stirrers. In certain situations, outdoor electrical appliances may be used: lawn mowers (riding and hand-pushed) and string trimmers, for example.

Once Katie was asleep, I tiptoed out of the room with my purse. Outside, on the porch, I withdrew my cell phone. Ironically, you could get a decent signal in Lancaster County – some of the more progressive Amish farmers had agreed to allow cellular towers on their land, for a fee that negated the need to grow a winter crop (P.73)

The telephone is another technology whose avoidance is often misunderstood. The Amish dislike the telephone because it interferes with their separation from the world; it brings the outside world into the home; it is an intrusion into the privacy and sanctity of the family and interferes with social community by eliminating face-to-face communication. In American culture, let out belch after or during dinner is disrespectful and it shows disgust. In contrary with the Amish, it shows that belching is the sign of satisfaction and fulfillment.

## 2. Religion

The Old Order Amish have worship services every other Sunday at private homes. Somehow, all people are fit in the farmhouse by removing the furniture to make room for the long, backless church benches, which arrived by wagon and could be transported from home to home. The wide doors and folding room partitions made it possible for nearly everyone to see the center of the house where the ordained men would stand from his or her seat. Women and men are sat in the same room but on different sides.

Worship begins with a short sermon by one of several preachers or the bishop of the church district, followed by scripture reading and silent prayer, and another, longer sermon. The service is interspersed with hymns, sung without instrumental accompaniment or harmony. Singing is usually very slow, and a single hymn may take 15 minutes to finish. Worship is followed by lunch and socializing. The service and all hymns are in Deitsch. Amish preachers and deacons are selected by lot out of a group of men nominated by the congregation. They serve for life and life and have no formal training. Amish bishops are similarly chosen by lot from those selected as preachers.

The Amish practice of adult baptism is part the admission into the church. Admission is taken seriously; those who choose not to join the church can still visit their friends and family, but the entire Amish community shuns those who leave the church after joining. Those who come to be baptized sit with one hand over their face, to represent their submission and humility to the church. Typically, a Deacon will ladle water from a bucket into the Bishop's hand, and the Bishop will sprinkle the head three times, in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, after which he blesses each new male member of the church and greets each into the fellowship of the church with holy kiss. His wife similarly blesses and greets each new female church member.

## 3. Education

Most Amish kids had never gone to college. The Amish don't believe in schooling past eight grade because it against the Ordnung, the rules of the church. So there is a choice give up on college or leave the church. Jacob Fisher chose to leave the church so he got excommunicated.

## 4. Amish Fashion

Amish girls in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania usually wear calf-length Plain-cut dresses in a solid color such as blue. Aprons are often worn, usually in white or black, at home and always worn when attending church. A cape, which consists of a triangular shape of cloth, is usually worn beginning around the teenage years and pinned into the apron. In the colder months, a long woolen cloak is sported. Heavy bonnets are worn over the prayer coverings when Amish women are out and about in cold weather, with the exception of the Nebraska Amish who do not wear bonnets.

During the summer months, the majority of Amish children go barefoot, including to school. The prevalence of the practice is attested in the Pennsylvania Deitsch saying, "Deel leit laafe baarfiessich rum un die annre hen ken Schuh." (Some people walk around barefooted, and the rest have no shoes.) The amount of time spent barefoot varies, but most children and adults go barefoot whenever possible.

It is difficult to leave Lancaster County without hearing the Amish aversion to having photographs taken. Nevertheless, few tourists return home without photos, while books and postcards with spectacular pictures sell well in local gift shops.

### 5. Teenagers Socialization

Like any other normal kids, Amish teenagers also make some groups or gangs and some teenagers' deed. They will buy beer at the Turkey Hill and race their buggies after midnight down Route 340 and on Sunday nights, they get together sing hymns. Sometimes, they dance, drink, and sing to the music which is considered as sin. All the parents know that their kids are up to something but they just look the other way and hope it isn't too dangerous.

### E. The influence of religious Life

Most people associate with Amish by the fact that they can't drive cars or use tractors, by the way they dress, and also the lack of electricity and telephones, and all things that make them recognizable as a group. When they're baptized, they vow to live by these conditions. People who've sinned are put under the *bann* for a little while, and during that time, other Plain folks can't eat with them or conduct business, or having sexual relations.

### CONCLUSION

The Amish (Amisch or Amische) are an Anabaptist Christian denomination in Lancaster County, United States known for their plain dress and avoidance of modern conveniences such as car and electricity. They called themselves Plain people. The Amish separate themselves from mainstream society benefits, take out insurance, or accept any form of financial assistance from the government.

The Amish people most speak a German dialect known as Pennsylvania Dutch (Pennsylvania German or Pennsylvania Deutsch) at home and in church services, and learning English in school until eight only. The Amish are divided into separate fellowship consisting of geographical districts or congregations. Each district is fully independent and has its own *Ordnung* (rules).

There's a certain level of experimentation that plain folks expect from their children before they settle down to take the baptismal vow. Teenagers who've been brought up Amish when they're about fifteen or sixteen and they come into their running-around years, they join a gang of peers to socialize with by dressing in jeans, or hanging out at a mall, going to movie or maybe even drinking a few beers. and when they turn eighteen, they are baptized by the church and must live under the *Ordnung*.

Plain Truth explores the issue of identity, and how the concept of identity differs so dramatically between the American and the Amish communities. In an American court, defendants strive to prove their innocence and avoid punishment. In the Amish culture, individuals strive for acceptance. and will confess to crimes or wrongdoings acceptance in the community. The concepts of innocence and guilt are less important to Amish than the reality of forgiveness, we can learn that they're also human being that can make mistakes and back to the right path after doing wrong.

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