

Thomas Hardy's Representation of Eustacia as the Sexual Stereotype in the Male Dominated Society in *The Return of the Native*



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ABSTRACT: In *The Return Of The Native*, Hardy's Protagonist Eustacia Vye Materializes As A Single Body Which Makes Her A Unitary Sex Object. He Depicts That She Becomes Bound To Be Subordinate To The Patriarchal Power Relations. As A Narrative, He Shows Over-Generalized Statements About Her Women Characters. By The Term Over-Generalizing Femaleness, Hardy Represents Femininity As A Unified Entity To The Middle-Class Victorians. Women Also Make Them Object, Allow Males To Dominate Them. In This Novel, Thomasin And Mrs. Yeobright Are Submissive But Eustacia Rejects The Conventional Views Of Women And Expresses Dreams Of Paris By Marring Clym. She Is So Over Ambitious To Lead An Aristocratic Life. Thus, Hardy's Generalization About Eustacia Presents Her As Representatives Of Her Sex.

KEYWORDS: Representation, Sexual Stereotype, Patriarchal Power, Over-Generalizing Femaleness And Conventional Views.

INTRODUCTION

Hardy Presents Generalizing Assertion About Women With A View To Protecting The Male Characters From It. He Focuses On A Beautiful Woman, Eustacia Looking For Fulfillment In The Dull Surroundings Of Egdon Heath. The People Of Egdon Heath Are Used To The Older Conventional Ways Of Life. She Is A Very Passionate Woman; She Has A Lot Of Love Affairs, And Therefore Huge Rumors Started To Appear. Because Of Being Very Passionate, Eustacia Is Not Tied-Up By Traditional Victorian Morality; Even She Does Not Feel Any Guilt Over Her Affairs. Hardy Represents Her As The Subject Of Authorial Intervention.

All Emotional Things Were Possible To The Speaker Of That 'Good Night'. Eustacia's Imagination Supplied The Rest — Except The Solution To One Riddle. What Could The Taste Of That Man Be Who Saw Friendliness And Geniality In These Shaggy Hills?

On Such Occasions As This A Thousand Ideas Pass Through A Highly Charged Woman's Head; And They Indicate Themselves On Her Face; But The Changes, Though Actual, Are Minute. Eustacia's Features Went Through A Rhythmical Succession Of Them. She Glowed; Remembering The Mendacity Of The Imagination, She Flagged; Then She Freshened; Then She Fired; Then She Cooled Again. It Was A Cycle Of Aspects, Produced By A Cycle Of Visions.¹

Thus, Hardy Highlights The Female Character Through Hiding The Male Characters. Eustacia Is Presented As The Epitome Of A Highly Charged Woman And Clym Remains Out Of The Light. Hardy Depicts The Difference Between Masculine And Feminine Vision. Clym Finds Amiability And Friendliness In The Hills Which Is Related To Practicality. On The Contrary, Eustacia Goes Through Imaginary World That Influences Of An Outside Agency Of Her Sexual Appetite. It Points Out The Sharp Distinction To Clym's Attitudes. Hardy Represents Eustacia As A Passive Object Of External Influences.

Hardy's Representation Of Women Characters In *The Return Of The Native* Describes Femininity And Perpetual Sexual Stereotypes. His Representations Of Women Are Largely Reliant Upon The Opposition Of Sex, Complexity And The Societal Double Standards On Women. In Michel Foucault's *History Of Sexuality*, He Says, "A Hysterization Of Women's Bodies"² Presents The Four Strategic Unities Of Sexual Discourse. He Notices The Actions Of Hysterization As That Tradition "Whereby The Feminine Body Was Analyzed — Qualified And Disqualified — As Being Thoroughly Saturated With Sexuality."³ This Is Seen In Hardy's Representation Of Eustacia's Feminine Hesitation Becomes Also An Erotic Image.

¹ Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native* (New York: Norton & Company, 2003).P. 172.

² Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*. Volume One. Introduction. Trans. Robert Hurley. (New York: Pantheon, 1978). P.55.

³ Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*. Volume One. Introduction. Trans. Robert Hurley. (New York: Pantheon, 1978). P.55.

Thomas Hardy's Representation of Eustacia as the Sexual Stereotype in the Male Dominated Society in The Return of the Native

Eustacia Sighed: It Was No Fragile Maiden Sigh, But A Sigh Which Shook Her Like A Shiver. Whenever A Flash Of Reason Darted Like An Electric Light Upon Her Lover — As It Sometimes Would — And Showed His Imperfections, She Shivered Thus. But It Was Over In A Second, And She Loved On. She Knew That He Trifled With Her; But She Loved On. .. Amid The Rusties Which Denoted Her To Be Undressing In The Darkness Other Heavy Breaths Frequently Came; And The Same Kind Of Shudder Occasionally Moved Through Her When, Ten Minutes Later, She Lay On Her Bed Asleep.⁴

Hardy Describes Eustacia's Penetration, Sexual Tension And Heavy Breaths. She Is Unable To Escape His Penetrating Notion Even In Her Sleep. She Is So Emotional Which Frequently Comes In Her Asleep And This Is Showed As Interpretation Of A Flash Of Reason. Hardy Signifies Her Society's Conservative Outlook Is Responsible For Her Thoroughly Saturated With Sexuality.

Research Question

- i. Why Eustacia Does Reject The Conventional View Of Women?
- ii. How Does Hardy Represent Her As The Subject Of Authorial Intervention?
- iii. What Are The Characteristics Of Eustacia Presents Her Femininity And Perpetual Sexual Stereotypes?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Descriptive And Qualitative Research Methodology Has Been Applied In This Research Paper. The Research Work Is Mainly Based On Content Analysis. Textual Analysis Method Has Been Applied In This Qualitative Study To Collect Data From Both The Primary And The Secondary Sources. A Detailed Analysis Extracted From The Primary And Secondary Sources Has Been The Process Of Reaching To A Conclusion. Different Techniques Of Historical Method Have Been Applied Essential Contexts Sociological, Anthropological And Cultural Analyses Have Been Brought Under Observation.

The Predicament Of The Life Of Eustacia Vye

Eustacia Is The Protagonist Of *The Return Of The Native* Who Moves To Her Grandfather's House In Heath Because Of The Death Of Her Parents. She Is A Nineteen Year Old Beautiful Girl Who Has Desired To Marry A Worthy Man And To Travel With Him To Exotic Distant Lands. Hardy Introduces Her As The Stereotypical Fidgety And Malcontent Female Looking For Escapade And Exhilaration Deviating From The Expected Behavior Of A Woman. Eustacia Toys With Her Lovers By Using These Clichés Of Women In This Novel, While Evoking Condolence For Her Unusual Attitudes And Craving For Gratification In Life Which Has Reduced The Devoted And Malleable Women Into Slight And Apparently Unimportant Creatures.

She Keeps Herself Apart From The Heath Dwellers Because Her Grandfather's House Is Isolated From Other Houses. She Visits The Summit Of Rainbarrow At Night Alone. Her Neighbors Consider Her Unfriendly And Proud. Susan Nunsuch Thinks That Eustacia Is A Witch. Most Of The People Of Heath Consider Her A Combination Of The Angelic And Wicked Passions Except Clym Because The General People Believe In Superstitions. According To Rosemarie Morgan,

Clym's Perception Of Eustacia Is Circumscribed By A Host Of Assumptions That Range Around The Polarized Stereotypes Of Goddess And Whore; But Hardy's Own Perspective Even While Invoking Visions Of Goddesses, Emphasizes Eustacia's Painfully Isolated, Nullified Existence.⁵

Eustacia Is Also A Very Restless And Ambitious Dreamer. That Is Why She Chooses To Marry Clym. Eustacia Has Self-Respect Which Cannot Be Perceived By The Two Men, Clym And Wildeve. They Cannot Counter Her "Flame-Like" Spirit And She Rejects Wildeve Finally. From The Feminist Critical Point Of View, Wildeve Insults Eustacia's Womanhood Terribly And This Focuses On His Conversation With Eustacia. Wildeve Says Mischievously,

I Do And I Do Not. That Is, I Have My Times And My Seasons. One Moment You Are Too Tall, Another Moment You Are Do-Nothing, Another Too Melancholy, Another Too Dark, Another I Don't Know What, Expect—That You Are Not The Whole World To Me That You Used To Be, My Dear.⁶

It Is The Flattery Promise Of Wildeve Which Shows The Cowardice Attitudes Of The Victorian Males. The Stereotypes Assertion Presents A Sexual Difference. He Pretends The Real Instance Because It Conceals His Real Motive To Marry Thomasin. He Mentions, "But You Are A Pleasant Lady To Know, And Nice To Meet, And I Dare Say As Sweet As Ever—Almost. Eustacia Remains Silent, And She Turns From Him, Till She Says, In A Voice Of Suspended Mightiness, I Am For A Walk, And This Is My Way. Well, I Can Do Worse Than Follow You."⁷

Thus, She Is Fantasized Her Marriage But Unfortunately, Her Love Relation With Wildeve Makes Her Depressed Because She Attempts To Get Rid Of Her Loneliness. Moreover, Eustacia Likes Entertaining The Game Of Love When The Opposition Is Acute As Well As Her Ennui Is Set Aside For A Time, But When The Opposition Dims, The Game Is No Longer Fascinating. She

⁴ Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native* (New York: Norton & Company, 2003).P. 116-117.

⁵ Rosemarie Morgan, *Women and Sexuality in the Novels of Thomas Hardy* (London: Routledge, 1988). P.81.

⁶ Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native* (New York: Norton & Company, 2003).P. 78.

⁷ Ibid.P. 78.

Thomas Hardy's Representation of Eustacia as the Sexual Stereotype in the Male Dominated Society in The Return of the Native

Is Not Perturbed With Her Fame Or The Notions Of Others; She Wants Only Enjoyment Which Can Bring Love. J. Hills Miller Says:

Eustacia Has Felt That She Has Loved Wildevve Directly For Himself. She Has Believed That The Glory And The Dream He Radiates Are Evidence Of Powers In Him, His Numinous Glow Making Him So Different From Other People As To Be Almost Like A God In His Superiority. Now Through Her Rival's Indifference She Discovers In A Moment That Her Love Has Gone By Way Of That Rival. The Divine Radiance Which Seems Intrinsic To Wildevve Is A Subjective Mirage Cast On Eustacia's Vision Of Him By The Fact That Thomasin Loves Him.⁸

She Enjoys Playing The Game Of Love With Wileve And Also Realizes That He Is Not Able To Fulfill Her High Expectations. She Is Looking For Another Lover Who Can Give Her Aristocratic Life. She Is Never Worried About Her Reputation Or Thoughts Of Others. She Believes That Only Deep Passion And Engagement With Love Can Guide Her. Miller Also Says:

Eustacia Ceases To Love The Man Who Is Not Loved By Others And Loves Him Again When He Becomes Desirable To Another Person. Her Relation To Wildevve Is Mediated By Way Of His Relation To Thomasin. When Eustacia Has Wildevve To Herself She Soon Tires Of Him; But As Soon As He Turns From Her To Thomasin He Becomes Desirable Again.⁹

Eustacia Likes Aristocratic Life Style Outside Heath, And Only Clym Can Fulfill Her Desires. Beach Explains That Eustacia Is A Woman Of Rich And Stormy Passions, Pent Up In A Lonely Place, And Longing For The Larger And Livelier Movement Of The Great World. She Desires That Her Life Be Full Of Poetry, Music, Passion. Johnson Also Mentions That Eustacia Was A Dreamer Of Great Dreams, And In Love With The Imageries Of A Heroic Life. She Hates The Lonely Heath, And Wants To Move An Ideal Place. She Is Besotted Straight Away With Clym Because He Returns From Paris. Miller Further Says,

Clym Yeobright ... Is Desirable To Eustacia Vye Because Of His Association With Paris, That Distant Place Which ... Seems To Promise Her The Rich Life For Which She Longs. Eustacia's Love For Clym Is Directed Not Toward Him, But Toward What He Seems To Stand For Or To Promise Her.¹⁰

However, Clym Presents The Romance Of Paris In Eustacia's Eyes; She Is Attracted To His Name And Fame. Eustacia Falls In Love With Clym Before She Even Sees Him, Falls In Love Because He Promises Access To That Celestial Place, Paris. Eustacia Wants To Visit Paris And She Also Has The Desire To Make Herself Happy By Hook Or By Crook. The Amalgamation Of Her Idealized Notion Of Love And Her Romanticized View Of The World Make A Recipe For Tragedy.

Eustacia's Idealization Of Love

Eustacia Romanticizes Her Marriage With Clym And She Intuitively Assumes That He Will Save Her From The Heath. She Also Believes That Their Goals In Life Are The Same. Hardy Indicates The Impending Contradiction As Follows: "Take All The Varying Hates Felt By Eustacia Towards The Heath, And Translates Them Into Loves, And You Have The Heart Of Clym".¹¹ Clym Says:

'How Extraordinary That You And My Mother Should Be Of One Mind About This!' Said Yeobright. 'I Have Vowed Not To Go Back, Eustacia. It Is Not The Place I Dislike; It Is The Occupation.'

'But You Can Go In Some Other Capacity.'

'No. Besides, It Would Interfere With My Scheme. Don't Press That, Eustacia. Will You Marry Me?'

'I Cannot Tell.'

'Now —Never Mind Paris; It Is No Better Than Other Spots. Promise, Sweet!'

'You Will Never Adhere To Your Education Plan, I Am Quite Sure; And Then It Will Be All Right For Me; And So I Promise To Be Yours For Ever And Ever.'¹²

Though They Belong To The Two Different Poles In Terms Of Their Vision Of Life, They Fall In Love Blindly With Each Other. Laura Green Notices The Conflict As One Between The Social Restlessness Of Eustacia And The Reforming Intellectual Zeal Of Clym.¹³ Stave Explains That Eustacia And Clym Marry For Reasons That Grantee Failure. Clym Assumes Marriage Will Relieve Him Of The Distress Of Passion And Will Provide Him A Helpmate In His Mission To Educate The Egdon Folk. Eustacia Marries Because Her Boredom Is Great And Her Choices Are Limited In The Isolated World Of The Heath, She Has No Other Suitors. The Two Lovers Look For Different Objects To Fill Their Voids:

⁸ J. Hills Miller, *Thomas Hardy, Distance and Desire* (Cambridge: Belknap, 1970).p.161.

⁹ Ibid. p. 159.

¹⁰ J. Hills Miller, *Thomas Hardy, Distance and Desire* (Cambridge: Belknap, 1970).p.161.

¹¹ Ibid. p.178.

¹² Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native* (New York: Norton & Company, 2003). p. 169-170.

¹³ Laura Green, "Strange [In] difference of Sex': Thomas Hardy, the Victorian Man of Letters, and the Temptations of Androgyny." *Victorian Studies* 38 (1995). P. 523-549.

Thomas Hardy's Representation of Eustacia as the Sexual Stereotype in the Male Dominated Society in *The Return of the Native*

The Young Woman Comes Unconsciously To Love The Being Who Is Destined To Occupy The Void Within Her Soul, While Clym Goes Forth To Find The Companion Who Should Become The Help-Meet He Seeks In His Projects Of Study And Instruction.¹⁴

Although Eustacia Apparently Reveals This To Clym With An Aim To Reassure Him Of Her Love, She Instantly Becomes Restless About The Boring Routine Of Their Monotonous Life On The Heath. The Truth Comes Which Eustacia Confesses To Clym: "You Are Ambitious, Eustacia—No, Not Exactly Ambitious, Luxurious. I Ought To Be Of The Same Vein, To Make You Happy, I Suppose. And, Yet, Far From That, I Could Live And Die In A Hermitage Here, With Proper Work To Do."¹⁵ She Is Over Ambitious Of Her Life But She Should Realize The Real Fact Of Keeping Patience In Adverse Situation. She Was Always In Hurry And She Wants Everything Instantly That Was Her Real Problem. She Brought Up To Her Grandfather But If She Gets Lessons From Her Parents This Sort Of Attitudes Would Change. He Also Says, "There Was That In His Tone Which Implied Distrust Of His Position As A Solicitous Lover, A Doubt If He Were Acting Fairly Towards One Whose Tastes Touched His Own Only At Rare And Infrequent Points."¹⁶ She Saw His Meaning, And Whispered, In A Low, Full Accent Of Eager Assurance,

Don't Mistake Me, Clym: Though I Should Like Paris, I Love You For Yourself Alone. To Be Your Wife And Live In Paris Would Be Heaven To Me; But I Would Rather Live With You In A Hermitage Here Than Not Be Yours At All. It Is Gain To Me Either Way, And Very Great Gain. There's My Too Candid Confession.¹⁷

Thus, Clym Becomes Infatuated Towards Eustacia Because She Uses Her Power To Fall In Love With Her. She Is Endowed With An Extended Scope Which Is Very Rare Power Over The Apparently Innocent Males. However, Clym Becomes The Victim Of Eustacia's Preternatural Power. Hardy Evokes The Complicity Of Contemporary Patriarchal Notions In Inspecting Of Womankind. It Is The Ironic Representations Of The Males In Victorian Society.

Eustacia Ignores The Societal Norms

Eustacia Has A Blend Of Superficial Imperious Dignity And Passion In Her Personality. She Has The Rare Combination Of Manly Courage And Womanly Beauty Because She Rejects The Opinions Of The Patriarchal Society. She Disguises Herself As A Man In The Turkish Night To Attract Clym. This Kind Of Rebellious Characteristic Of Eustacia Emphasizes Her Strength To Break The Social Boundaries. Eustacia Says,

Women Have Done Much For Themselves In Histrionic Dress. To Look Far Below Those Who, Like A Certain Fair Personator Of Polly Peachum Early In The Last Century, And Another Of Lydia Languish Early In This, Have Won Only But Ducal Coronets Into The Bargain, Whole Shoals Of Them Have Reached To The Initial Satisfaction Of Getting Love Almost Whence They Would. But The Turkish Knight Was Denied Even The Chance Of Achieving This By The Fluttering Ribbons Which She Dared Not Brush Aside.¹⁸

She Suffers From Malcontent When Clym Loses His Eyesight And Starts Cutting Furze For Way Of Life. Her Inner Agony Speaks Of The Misfortune Of Her Life Which Hardy Explains That On One Of These Warm Afternoons Eustacia Walked Out Alone In The Direction Of Yeobright's Place Of Work. He Was Busily Chopping Away At The Furze, A Long Row Of Faggots Which Stretched Downward From His Position Representing The Labor Of The Day. However, Hardy Technically Mentions That He Did Not Observe Her Approach. She Stood Close To Him, And Heard His Undercurrent Of Song. It Shocked Her. To See Him There, A Poor Afflicted Man, Earning Money By The Sweat Of His Brow, Had At First Moved Her To Tears. But To Hear Him Sing And Not At All Rebel Against An Occupation Which, However Satisfactory To Himself, Was Degrading To Her, As An Educated Lady-Wife, Wounded Her Thought.

She Loses Her Interest When She Observes Clym Is No Longer The Upper-Class Man Who Can Draw Her Away From Egdon Heath And Execute Her Craving For Exploitation. Afterward, She Encounters Wildeve At The Nearby Village Commemoration And Puts Forward To His Entreaty For A Spin. It Unlocks The Way To The Resurrection Of Old Devotions And The Muffling Of The New. Being Disturbed With The Struggles Of Her Conjugal Life With Clyme, Eustacia Thinks Of Renewing Her Past Relationship With Wildeve And Leave Egdon Heath So That She Can Gain A Trouble Free, Aristocratic Life Of Which She Has Always Dreamt Of. She Sees Him Only As A Means To Get Away From Weariness And Entry Into Exhilaration. She Can Candidly Retire From Him And His Fellowship And Look For Escapade Elsewhere. Clym Seems Her Only Means Of Relief From Boredom Because She Is An Independent Woman And She Considers Her Conjugal Life With Him As A Means Of Meaningless Relation.

¹⁴ Pierre D'Exideuil, *The Human Pair in the Work of Thomas Hardy: An Essay on the Sexual Problem as Treated in the Wessex Novels, Tales, and Poems* (Port Washington: Kennikat, 1970). P. 73-74.

¹⁵ Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native* (New York: Norton & Company, 2003). p. 169-170.

¹⁶ Ibid. p.170.

¹⁷ Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native* (New York: Norton & Company, 2003). p.170.

¹⁸ Ibid. P.126.

Thomas Hardy's Representation of Eustacia as the Sexual Stereotype in the Male Dominated Society in The Return of the Native

Eustacia's Plan Of Running Away Deteriorates Unfortunately. Whether She Slips And Willingly Falls From The Greasy Bridge To Run-Away From Her Continuous Struggle For Happiness Is Uncertain But Her Demise Is Certain.¹⁹ As Morgan Asserts, "She Is Prevented From Coming Into Being In A World That Denies Autonomy, Identity, Purpose, And Power To Women."²⁰ The Conventional Patriarchal Society Cannot Receive Her Fervid Being And She Detects Potency To Get Out. Elaine Showalter Explains, "The Suffocation Of Family Life, Boredom, And Patriarchal Protectivism Gradually Destroys Women's Capacity To Dream, To Work, Or To Act."²¹ However, Whether Or Not Her Demise Is Fortuitous And Her Impulse Is Limpid, She Is A Tragic Heroine. Jekel Mentions This Intramural Grapple Of The Tragic Heroine:

Filled With Great Longings, Eustacia Is A Fine Example Of A Woman Who Is Unable To Sort Out Her Needs From Her Desire And Who Is Driven To A World Of Fantasy And Finally To Destruction. Hardy Has Here Caught With Much Intensity That Edge Of Moral Confusion Which Tangles So Many, But Especially Women Who Must Balance Their Own Needs With The Needs (And Repressions) Of Others.²²

Her Demise At The End Stimulates Commiseration With Readers And Strengths Them To Perceive The Nugatory Wrestle Of Those Intense Hardly Any To Observe Attained And Got In The Stern Culture Of Their Tempo. Hardy Does Not Censure Eustacia's Steps But In Lieu Shows Her As Swindled By Her Society And Dejectedly Tricked In A Contemptuous And Mediocre Territory.

Stave Explains That Eustacia's Divergence With Thomasin, Eustacia's Strength And Courage Are Epic In A Time When Societal Stereotypes Insisted Women Be Frail And Weak. He Also Says, "We Are Told She Has Never Once In Her Life Been Ill, An Odd Circumstance In A Time When Femininity Was Virtually Equated With Illness."²³ They Are Not Physically And Mentally Distinct.

Pamela L. Jekel Illustrates, "Eustacia Is, Of Course, Thomasin's Emotional Opposite. Together, The Two Women Reflect Hardy's Attitudes Toward Love And Marriage."²⁴ Thomasin Is Devoted And Permanently Sanguine Of The Accomplishment And Accuracy Of Her Wedding But Eustacia Swiftly Perceives The Misfortune Progressing In Her Own And Prolongs For Run Off. Grimsditch Explains Hardy's Representation Of Eustacia Is Deliberately Intricate And Acute. The Method Employed In Describing Her Shows That She Is Intended To Be Taken Very Seriously, As A Study Of Strong But Abnormal Personality, And By No Means A Mere Vulgar Butterfly, Pining For Frivolity At Any Cost.²⁵ The Firmness Of Eustacia's Character And Hardy's Accounts Of Her Divulge The Depth Of Her Individuality And In Turn The Fight Of Women With Close Attributes To Reside Entirely.

CONCLUSION

Hardy Attempts To Attack The Social Norms And Family Systems Of The Victorian Era By Drawing The Two Opposite Characters Of Eustacia And Thomasin. Hardy Views That A Submissive And Dependent Woman Like Thomasin, Can Live A Happy Life But The Independent And Courageous Woman Like Eustacia Suffers Greatly And Meets Her Ultimate Downfall. Eustacia Changes The Track Because She Does Not Compromise With The Social System. Thus, Eustacia Has Rebelliousness Which Marginalizes Her To Bear The Full Burden Of Responsibility. She Is Also Identified As A Saturnine Woman By Refusing The Conventional Modes Of Being A Woman In The Patriarchal Society.

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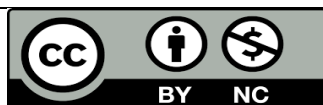
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Thomas Hardy's Representation of Eustacia as the Sexual Stereotype in the Male Dominated Society in The Return of the Native

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