

Table of three selected data events: Assembling a multimodal analysis

Annamária Neag (Charles University) and Sarah Healy (The University of Melbourne)

doi: 10.26188/19790431

	Data event 1. 'The teacher gets up and you can see his belly' (early March 2020) – focusing on children, parents and technology	Data event 2. 'This teaching equals zero' (late March 2020) – focusing on parents and technology	Data event 3. Kneading board with chalkboard paint (late May 2020) – focusing on teachers and technology
Context / metadata	This article was published on March 16 th , 2020, on 444.hu, a popular anti-governmental media outlet, and it was shared on the same day on their official Facebook page. As of 2022.02.03, the Facebook post received 289 'reactions' (likes and laughing emojis), 41 comments and 22 shares. The article is an account of the journalist's experiences of the first day of remote learning - as a parent. The quote from the title then is something his daughter shared with him when discussing the best moments of their first day of learning at home. The data event consists thus of the article published on 444.hu; a photo depicting the journalist's daughter in her room while attending an online English class; 41 comments, 289 'reactions' and 22 shares.	The second data event revolves around an article titled „Parents in several schools in the capital are upset about the online education that started with the school closures: "This teaching equals zero". It was published on the website of leftist, anti-governmental weekly 168Óra, and it presents the (mostly negative) experience of two parents during the first Covid lockdown. The data event consists thus of this article; a Stock photo used as illustration within the article; 20 comments, 59 'reactions' and 24 shares.	The third data event selected is comprised of an article titled “Kneading board with chalkboard paint - distance learning does not spare teachers either”, published on a popular women's magazine's website (noklapja.hu). The article was shared on the Facebook page of the publication, receiving 46 likes and 3 comments. The post was shared 28 times. The data event consists of the above-mentioned elements, and a stock photo accompanying the text.
Broader network of relations / social-economic-political scene	<p>Socio-political: The children are attending a private alternative school in the capital, where there has been extensive digital learning before. This is something that is brought up by those commenting on Facebook too: “You are lucky. How about those places where there are more kids than computers?” The blurring of the boundaries of learning is only possible when there are ICT tools for doing so.</p> <p>Political: A very much polarised Hungarian society along the axis of pro- and anti-government stance which becomes clear when reading the comments. A lot of anger is present in some of the comments: “This is totally characteristic of the Leftist-liberal opposition media...on Friday they were demanding to shut the schools. Then on Friday evening, Orbán [PM] announced that they will and from Monday there will be digital learning. Then on Saturday-Sunday, they were already writing articles about 'who is going to stay at home with the kids, the whole thing is hasty, by the way what is digital learning, nothing will come out of it'. Then today (within two days), digital learning started and right now the problem is that 'AAAAA, IT'SNOTWORKING'! Leftist-liberals, get your **** out of here!”</p>	<p>Socio-political: The article presents a critique of the overall educational system as not being prepared for this event: KRÉTA online e-learning platform crashing, most of the time it is only available during afternoons: “Overall, parents feel left on their own, not to mention families who do not have digital tools, even if online education is launched as promised. The biggest problem is that neither teachers nor parents have received practical training in distance learning.”</p> <p>From comments: “Parents have already been pitted against the teachers, who have solved the problem from scratch in a couple of days without any central help. The government stole the EU money 4 years ago, and now it is the job of paid trolls to vilify teachers. But note, online education requires parents to get off their arses and help the kids. This distance education in developed countries works by one parent helping.” [critique of the government; again, an emphasis of the polarised Hungarian society – this time parents vs teachers] Educational system:</p> <p>Making up for the lost time – parents and commenters worry about the time that was lost on preparations for remote learning. Just like with the focus on fraud/grading/evaluation, it says something about how education is perceived in This data-event illuminates the tensions involved in parent-teacher boundary crossings, and how a struggle to assemble a new parent-teacher hybrid subjectivity brought up fear, anxiety, blame (of schools / teachers / government), frustration, anger, exasperation AND humorous takes on the situation (satire). These responses, as conveyed in the data, show how parents' dispositions towards children's remote learning are affectively charged. We can trace these 'lines' or 'flows' of affect</p> <p>Hungarian society: a focus on the curriculum, on the things that need to be taught/learned, otherwise pupils will have problems with the exams later on</p> <p>Comment: “3.5 months behind. Minus spring break and the beginning of June, when no one is teaching anything. That's 2.5 months. If they teach a month worth of the curriculum, they'll only have 1.5 to make up next year... that's not a disaster.”</p>	<p>Socio-political: Again, a critique of the government and the educational system that was not prepared for this. The theme of the time comes up over and over again: much time spent on setting up the tests, much time is needed to create a 30 min video, the burden of parents. But also time in a positive sense: finally, parents have time to spend with the kids and co-create something, as they are not rushing to extra classes (an unexpected outcome of ordinary affect – settling into a slower, less hectic routine – making time to exist in kid-time rather than).</p> <p>The interconnected themes of accountability, grades and trust (trust-control relations are brought under the spotlight) comes up – a critique of the system. The satire that erupts (more at the beginning) is almost like a commentary of a growing awareness of a shift in perception (cracking up)</p>
Social actors:	Children: talked about and talking; mix of identities: children (dog on the lap) and pupils; described as skilled in digital technologies, thrilled by the novelty of remote learning; when asked they are sceptical about the future of remote learning.	Children: only talked about, they are not invited to present their views; parents' views on them: the fifth grader cannot learn because there was no discussion about remote teaching at the school. The parent is worried because she doesn't know where to send her child's homework and “How will he [the teacher] know that he wrote it?” [the question of fraud comes up, as the school moves into the home. Here too: “as there is no possibility of oral exams, the grading goes wrong” [The exact translation would be: the grading is done by the teacher hitting on their belly [meaning: randomly]]. The	Children, talked about: one of the teachers says: students are tired, exhausted and feel that it is unfair that “they have to stay at home all day while those who are vulnerable can go outside. They feel they are being punished because of the elderly.”. Frustration because of Covid-closures: “Of course, they don't want to scold the elderly so much, because they know that I'm at-risk and they are empathetic because of that, but there is a

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		<p>importance of (correct) evaluations seems to be heightened, not dismissed during this period]</p> <p>Commentors on children: “It should be left to some children to set up an online platform (Moodle, Discord, Goggle Classroom, etc.) EMMI and OH [governmental educational institutions] have given recommendations. They work. I don't understand.[...] This is what happened in our case. They started struggling with KRETA [official educational platform] so the kids have now switched teachers to Google.” Children presented as capable for creating their own learning environment; a blurring of roles between children and their teachers because they are more in tune with technologies</p> <p>Reaction to evaluating kids' learning performance during the pandemic: “But what the hell is there to grade in the first week of such a sudden changeover??” Replying to this: “Right? I don't understand why education is not geared towards survival now. Obviously, it won't last forever. And if it does, it's all the same.”</p> <p>The parental anxieties around 'learning loss' and lack of assessment shows a strong attachment to neoliberal discourse / practices such as standardised testing regimes and an emphasis on responsibility / accountability / individual success. This is then countered by later comments saying education should be geared towards survival (presumably not assessment) "But what the hell is there to grade?"</p>	<p>big dose of frustration and anger because of it," adds Anikó (the teacher)</p> <p>“Accountability is nonsense, because it can't be a coincidence that people who used to fail physics are now getting straight A's. To avoid the trap of copying and plagiarism, for a while I asked them to handwrite their presentation notes and photograph them, but many students don't have the tools to do that either, not just me.” This statement can be connected to the previous vignette about parents worried about grades, but also to the other teacher who is talking about trust.</p> <p>Teachers say that children are less likely to engage, it's more difficult to get them to tell the teacher if they want something to be explained in more detail</p> <p>This comes back to the problem of existing learning design and approaches to assessment not being directly translatable into online environments - if assessment and learning is designed well then students do not plagiarise, or not as much. The blaming of children indicates another boundary being blurred - the teacher power over children is no longer as strong and children are exerting their increase in power by working around 'accountability measures'. Trust suddenly becomes much more valuable than control.</p>
	<p>Teachers: mostly talked about: what did they do, what ICT programs they used, how they solved the technical issues; some struggling with digital technologies (and how they solved it or not), the need to stay relevant and interesting</p> <p>One teacher presenting his views: “The truth is that since we found out about this [remote learning], some incredible dumping has started, where everyone comes up with newer and newer ideas about what platform to use (Facebook, Discord, Viber), which virtual classrooms (MS Teams, Google Classroom, Hashtag school), what applications (LearningApps, Redmenta, Smartbox). The biggest problem is that a teacher can drown in this (but also children if each teacher uses a different thing). The whole thing is treated as a technical matter only. It is as if pedagogy is not primarily about methods and about searching for tools for these methods.”</p> <p>Teacher as commentors: “To be interesting and relevant??? From Friday to Monday!!! What not! Nothing more natural in this setting!!! This writer blessed with a 'high-brow' intellect must know a lot about the everyday life of a school and the complexity of the teaching process. The teacher and his belly. So funny! He really caught the gist of it!”</p>	<p>Teachers/Schools: teachers and schools talked about, their view is not presented except for a later update to the article in which the school criticised in the text sent a press statement highlighting that “The school's teachers are making an incredible effort to ensure that the digital curriculum, which will start on 23 March 2020, is the best for all parents and students.” There is also an interesting duality when parents talk about their experiences; it seems like there is a blurring of borders between teachers as professionals and their institution (i.e. the school represents all teachers): e.g. ‘our school is a joke!’ – says one of the parents than goes on to present what the teachers have done so far</p> <p>Most of the teachers' actions are either assessed as negative or at best ambivalent: e.g., the class teacher is very cool, but he could only advise parents to revise with the kids, read a couple of pages aloud, write poems and move every 3 to 4 hours. Some teachers started recording videos, but one parent says: “They get the assignment, then f**** do it! How can an 11-year-old do the tasks? By watching three videos?”</p> <p>Children, teachers and parents all lacked the digital literacies to make it work well in the early days - especially. those children who were not yet reading independently. As lockdown dragged on those literacies improved (for many but not all). Emergency remote teaching got better and the responsibility for successful integration of ed tech into learning shifted from parent to child with good results (for many but not all).</p> <p>Some positive assessments in one of the comments: “The lesson comes on KRÉTA, but they work in the Classroom. Hats off to our teachers who have made the switch to digital teaching in no time!”</p> <p>Teacher as a commentor (on Facebook): “The OFI and Mosaic textbooks are also available digitally for free. On YouTube you can find short videos with all the maths material for primary and secondary school... And these are just a few of the many. It is NOT for parents to teach, ask teachers for help.”</p>	<p>Teachers, talked about: they have still not received real support, albeit remote learning has been in place for two months. Using digital tools is more of a challenge for older teachers, while those with families have to manage their own children's education at home alongside teaching. Teachers feel that their knowledge and methods of assessment are useless in the digital system</p> <p>Teachers, in their own words: <i>First teacher interviewed is a 65-year-old physics and chemistry teacher:</i> Trying to use regular teaching methods in the online proves nearly impossible: “I can't go and see if they've written it down well, if they've solved the problem well, because a lot of times they can't even see what I'm writing. I've tried everything in vain - I've even covered my kneading board with chalkboard paint and put it on a ladder - if the child can only follow the lesson on a smartphone screen, they won't see it.” This is a good example of the pedagogisation of everyday life turning home 'appliances' into educational objects</p> <p>“I often get the feeling that I would have to be a programmer, or at least a graphic designer, to make it work effectively.” – she once worked on setting up a test for 11 hours; struggles with the digital platform used as she cannot create graphs, diagrams etc. needed for teaching the subject [see above]</p> <p>This connects with the data-event 2 and the perceived need to test / assess even while remote emergency teaching</p>

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			<p>- Bridging the two identities and highlighting the gains of this period: “But the teacher says that this shared experience and insight is not necessarily a disadvantage, just as she thinks it’s important to see that behind every half-hour video the teacher sends out, there are hours of work. And if we can see the mutual investment of energy and the extra workload that this period puts on everyone, it might also strengthen the relationship of trust between teacher and student, teacher and parent, parent and child. This is significant. If parents/teachers/children are able to navigate the changed conditions of remote emergency teaching effectively together, then the possibilities that learning from home creates may be realised. The changed conditions are marked by a shift in power relationships, with teachers relinquishing control (a hierarchical relation) and replacing it with trust (a more horizontal relation). The capacity of trust to be formed in a given set of relationships will be situated and dependant on multiple factors.</p>
	<p>Parents</p> <p>The journalist-parent: embarrassment for crashing the MS Teams call while searching for the dog. There’s a mix of identities: parent and journalist discussing the topic of remote learning with a teacher. Feelings expressed through verbs, adjectives, nouns highlighting the emotion of embarrassment of being out of place in their own home (“zavaromban”, “motyogtam”, “elnézéstkérek”).</p> <p>The parent as a commentor: anger that there is not enough information shared about remote learning (“In our case, nothing!!! Hmmmmm!; “We barely received any info from the two schools. The only info was that there’ll be info...”). One parent highlighting that it went okay for them at another alternative school, and that they use Teams as well.</p> <p>The embarrassment comes from affective dissonance with shifting boundaries and the increased scrutiny / visibility that bringing the classroom into the home makes possible (it’s not just the teacher that is more visible but the domestic space is too)? Also, usually being in control and suddenly appearing less competent is a cause for embarrassment - a re-assembling of the self as learner</p> <p>In terms of unmaking boundaries – the journalist-parent expresses embarrassment at being out of place in the place where one usually feels at home. Similarly, the teacher’s belly would ordinarily be at home in their home but now is a source of laughter (and news headline) because it is also out of place in a school from home</p>	<p>Parents: Two parents’ direct quotes are presented in the article. The defining sentiment is worry and anger</p> <p>The parent as a teacher: “How can I teach this, if I am not good in it?” [Multiple identities – see for a different identity data event 1] “If I do not speak English, how can I teach my child?”; “I have to read all the subjects to understand and explain them. And if I don’t understand?”</p> <p>The emphasis is not on parents complaining about the technical issues of remote learning, rather on the educational aspects. The blurring of the boundaries of learning here is obvious again, so is the clash between the roles one had to take up during the pandemic</p> <p>This thinking may be underpinned by a belief that good teachers are experts in delivering content knowledge rather than expert facilitators of learning - it belies an outdated understanding of the teaching profession itself and a lack of faith in children as being able to engage in learning without direct instruction from parents. It shows a narrow conception what is involved in teaching and learning processes. Troubles idea of teacher as expert / child as receptacle of knowledge - with parents recognising that adhering to this may send them mad (to the mental hospital): “Right now parents are teaching the children, but by the time this shit is over, all the parents will be going to the mental hospital, to the empty containers that Orban [the PM] is now putting up [built during the pandemic for possible Covid patients],” he exclaims</p> <p>Commentors: Criticizing the parents presented in the article: “How many days has it been? In all that time, what new and beautiful things has the kind parent built? The kind parent should rather help than freak out. Doing something is hard, freaking out is easy.” “Daddy should search for help on Google instead of swearing... Ask for help from the educators...or something”</p>	<p>Parents, talked about: Digital learning has been around for two months, putting a huge burden not only on children but also on parents. The extra burden of home education has added to the already considerable overload of parents, most of whom have to spend 6-7 hours at home with their children, in addition to their own work.</p>

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Photo analysis



Upper middle class real life setting: Two laptops, expensive wallpaper Reaction to this in the comment section on FB: „That Cole& Son wallpaper is awesome.”

Relaxed posture with a dog in her lap, without socks or shoes on
Ordinary affect: the whole picture expressing a feeling of relaxation, familiarity, flower pots in the window, personal belongings of the girl

Size of frame: medium shot, not only the girl, but her room too so as to signify the new learning space her room turned into) - the bedroom multiple (or classroom multiple)

The girl looks away, so not towards the reader (off-frame), „which tends to encourage us to observe participants more ‘objectively’ and consider what their thoughts are” p. 97

These choices allow us to place people in the social world and to highlight certain aspects of identity we wish to draw attention to or omit” (Machin and Mayr, 2012, p. 103)

Angle: side-on view „if we see them further away, there is a greater sense that we are an observer of the scene” p. 99 This photo would be quite unusual in a school setting, to take a photo in a classroom while the class is on-going; it shows the blurring of the borders, also it can signify a closeness/familiarity

Slightly from behind: this can often serve to offer us their point of view, their perspective on the world

Vertical angle: we are looking down on the girl

The teacher in the background: one has to really look to be able to see her on the screen – this is also a clear semiotic choice that comes through from the text (only one teacher speaks, in all other cases they are talked about)

„Such choices may serve to implicitly legitimise or deligitimise the actions of participants implicitly, since representational choices can connote broader associations of ideas, values and motives.”

This intimate space of the girl's bedroom, replete with dog, has been folded into the more public space of the school classroom. The dog, usually located within the family nexus, is transported to school ... but without the usual obstacles that largely prevent pets from participating in classrooms. These familial multi-species relations could no longer be cut out of or distanced from school when school was brought into the home.

Two different types of photos: the one in the classroom can be classified as a photojournalism (the history of ‘bearing witness, and being a reliable document, or recording of reality - Ledin & Machin, 2018, p. 41); the second one is the symbolic image. ‘Visual semiotic resources also have the potential to mean that is realised in specific contexts. The term ‘meaning potential’ [...] suggests not something fixed, but a possibility, and it encourages us to consider specifically how any visual element or feature is connected to and used with other visual elements [...] (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 51) The connection between the image showcasing an empty classroom and the stock photo showing books: possible ideas suggested: the difficulties of learning without pedagogic support + people being absent from both photos (one of course can argue that there is someone in the stock photo, but we can't really see them). It can also be the representation of Covid social distancing



https://www.pexels.com/photo/adult-blur-books-close-up-261909/?utm_content=attributionCopyText&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=pexels

Stock photo: staged photograph, bought from a commercial image archive “Such images can be purchased from commercial image archives such as Getty Images which has a collection of many millions of images and film stock. These images are created precisely to be used in this symbolic way. Professional photographers are guided by companies as to what kinds of images best.” (Ledin & Machin, 2018, p. 46)

Ordinary affect: The book image connects with the earlier (Vignette 1) quote of Kathy Stewart and banality of “staged perfection”

Foregrounding: on the books, the person behind can't even actually be seen, only his arms (suggesting someone young, in a T-shirt, wearing a leather bracelet). The importance of the books is highlighted with this

Size of frame: close shot (intimate/personal distance) strengthened by a horizontal angle

Colours: muted (‘colours that are more diluted or muted tend to communicate more mellow or reserved moods.’ (Ledin & Machin, 2018, p. 50)

Setting: not much on the table, beyond books, which is odd, as one would expect pens, papers, or perhaps a computer if someone is studying. ‘It is a typical setting of these kind of photographs [...]. They are stripped back of much artifice so that a number of objects can better serve their symbolic role.’ (Ledin & Machin, 2018, p. 51)



Stock photo: can be found by searching for ‘online learning’; staged photo

Denotation on this photo we find a blurred image of a young person writing with a pen and watching their laptop. This person is wearing a cherry red top and is wearing glasses. She/he has multiple pencils and notebooks scattered around the laptop. The laptop seems to be a fairly new thin light one. As if it were an image in an image, we can see a teacher giving an online class [the call buttons are visible in the middle low part of the screen]. She seems to be an older teacher, wearing a pale pink blouse. She is standing in front of a white board with a marker in her hands. The white board cannot be deciphered, but it looks like it is filled with formulas.

Connotation (Barthes, 1977): objects in pictures always carry ideas and values (e.g. about education)

Objects: we find a number of objects used to signify (an ideal?) online education setting (no connection issues, good hardware, one kid/computer, etc.). Colours in the image are coordinated (see the colour of the clothes and pencil and notebook, the colour of the desk and the blurred background). It seems like a relaxed learning environment, in stark contrast with what the article describes. Although the student is in the front, her/his body is blurred, and the focus of the photo is on the laptop and the teacher. The laptop occupies thus a symbolic and central role. The teacher is made salient as everything else is out of focus. This draws us closer to her. ‘Cultural categorization can be found through kinds of dress, hairstyle, body adornment, and so on.’ (Ledin & Machin, 2018, p. 55): semi-professional attire, youthful hairstyle, body language (she is explaining something) but even the white board and the books in the background can function as objects to show this is a teacher. Emotional processes “[...] the content of emotions are coded by bodily and facial expression” (Ledin & Machin, 2018, p. 57): straight face, seriousness

Size of frame: close shot

Angle: slightly vertical

Gaze: the teacher is looking at us, there is a symbolic contact between us and the participant, which might seem odd, as one would expect the teacher to look at the students, not at the photographer

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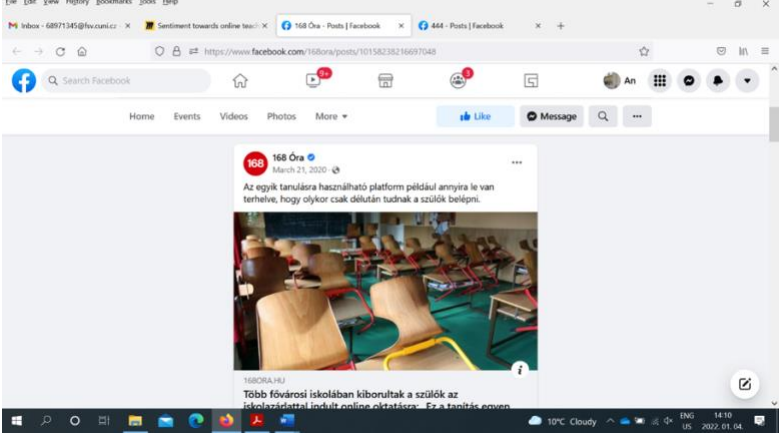
		 <p>The classroom: photos as ‘reality interrupted’ (Sontag, 2004): it shows a moment in time, but not the complex ongoing processes. A very traditional classroom setting (frontal teaching), though we don’t know where this shot was taken or when exactly. Emptiness, the chairs occupying the central position here. Ideas represented: children should be at school, the classroom is empty without them, it looks deserted, there is nothing on the blackboard, there is no teacher. The classroom looks clean, nothing on the floors, no messiness.</p> <p>Size of frame: medium shot, showing social distance</p> <p>Angle: low-level angle (denoting a power position), but oblique angle, which denotes detachment (it’s not a frontal angle)</p> <p>Focus: on the chair in the back</p> <p>The juxtaposition of the 'staged' stock photo beside the uninhabited classroom shot is poignant. The space that’s been left behind and the space that parents perhaps wish school at home had become (learning through books not computers?).</p>	
<p>Linguistic expressions of sentiment</p>	<p>Embarrassment as a defining sentiment expressed linguistically: muttered, apologise, confusion, very personal situation.</p>	<p>: Big chaos, worry “What if I don’t understand it myself?” [the feeling of not being good enough? Uncomfortable with occupying the unknown – unable to ‘trust in the process’]; feeling of being left alone in this. Untethering from what is known / fixed / should be</p>	<p>Challenge, huge burden, does not spare, unprepared, to cope alone, tiredness, unfair, useless, no regard for individual cases, frustration, anger, difficult situation, not that bad, together.</p>
<p>Non-linguistic reactions</p>	<p>This particular post got 289 reactions, either as ‘likes’ or ‘haha’ (laughing face emoji). FB offers “off the shelf” emotive responses/ resources to express feelings / technological affordances (Jovanovic and Van Leeuwen, 2018) There are obviously no ‘sad’ or ‘angry’ emojis used, which shows a positive reaction to the post and the article. People find it amusing. We are in this together? – feeling perhaps?] From Stewart’s Ordinary Affects book: “A world of shared banalities can be a basis of sociality, or an exhausting undertow, or just something to do. It can pop up as a picture of staged perfection, as a momentary recognition, or as a sense of shock or relief at being “in” something with others.” – p. 38</p> <p>It might also be an indicator of the stage of the pandemic this occurred. Earlier we note the children were finding the situation quite novel, and this feeling of novelty was tinged with scepticism of the long-term viability of the situation. The intensity of the emotions and anger around pro-longed online schooling hadn’t really begun to gain traction. In those early days there really was more readiness to see the humour in the situations that we were presented with - which relates back to earlier comments (above).</p>	<p>In comparison to the first vignette, here the reactions to the article are quite varied: it received 33 likes, 15 crying face emojis, 6 laughing face emojis, 3 surprised face (wow) and 2 angry face emojis.</p>	<p>Reactions are not varied: 46 likes, 3 comments, 28 shares</p>

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