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### Multicultural Canada?

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Multiculturalism has been at the forefront of debate on equal opportunities, unity and national harmony in Canada since the State supported document on 'Multiculturalism', materialized in the Fourth Report of the Canadian Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in 1969. This was followed by an anti-assimilation strategy in 1970 which endorsed integration and was, in Canada's historical ethnocentric society, a ground-breaking approach (Fortier 2008). Although, Premdas (2004) points out that policies for inclusion may insist on assimilation, whereas policies for exclusion may involve permanent second class citizenship. Additionally, the United Nations have consistently declared Canada to be "the best country in the world to live" and since 1990 it has been in the top three countries in the world (Stasiulis and Bakan 1997). However, the United Nations International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination in 2007 highlighted several areas of concern. Included was the 'deterrence of racial prejudice in the organization and its implementation within the criminal justice system. Additionally, the Committee advised the Canadian government to assign adequate resources to prevent the barriers, currently faced by Aboriginal peoples, in their enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights.

The report further recommended that legislation eliminating unfairness in employment, all prejudiced conditions in the labour market and additional processes to diminish joblessness within ethnic minority groups be fully implemented, especially for first nations and African Canadian people. Numerous other recommendations on the marginalisation of ethnic minority groups in Canada were included in this paper (UN, CERD 2007) which include Chinese, Jewish, black African, first nations and Asian people. Relaxed Immigration laws in the 1970's and 1980's enabled citizens from many other countries to emigrate to Canada (Walker 2008). However, historically Canada's most marginalised citizens have been the first nation's people and black African slaves, who sought sanctuary in Canada from America (Walker 2008). Therefore, the examination and discussion of whether Canada is indeed Multicultural will be focused on first nation's people and black citizens. Colonialism in Canada by the French and English impacted on these two groups of people during Canada's earlier period with the foundations of racism being planted during this epoch. Consequently, historical and contemporary analysis is needed in order to understand, in a global context, the continuing oppression of 'the other' (Miller 1989 and Saizewich 1998).

**Pre 1900's racialisation, assimilation, marginalisation and racism towards the 'First Nations' people: also known as Aborigine peoples, Indians and Native peoples - all will be used throughout this study.**

"but the justification for injustice, the rationale for rapacity that made the collision of classes politically and intellectually viable was, Du Bois insisted,

the dichotomy of colour, the ideology of white supremacy” (Du Bois 1919-1963 cited in Lewis 2001:15).

Du Bois’ quote above exemplifies many of the inequalities, alienation and ethnic antagonisms faced by people across the globe whose ethnicity is the ‘other’, the ‘other’ being non white. Du Bois dichotomy of colour, white control and governance in Canada began with colonialism and is still visible in contemporary Canadian society. This paper will consequently examine the racialisation of the indigenous people of Canada from the arrival of Europeans, the substantiated ‘forced’ assimilation process and the marginalisation of Canada’s displaced peoples. Specifically, the compulsory taking of culturally sensitive land, the desire by the European settlers to ‘Europeanise’ the first nation’s people through forced education, institutional racism and the removal of their capacity to continue to provide for themselves both economically and culturally, will be scrutinized in depth during the initial stages of colonialism. The consequences of these social and structural processes will be discussed and explored in present-day Canada to validate the claim that Canada is indeed a Country where racism was and still is in existence.

The colonisation of Canada is historically complex although the French claim to be the first settlers and were in control during the period 1534 to 1763 when Britain laid claim to the land. However, it was the French who first created stable settlements in the northern territories despite other countries being present including Germany, Greece, China, Scotland, Poland, Africa and Switzerland. It was though, the colonising supremacy of the French and British explorers that had a central impact on the territory and indigenous people (Burnet and Palmer 1988). Land was seized for the financial benefit of the colonisers and used for farming, forestry and mining resulting in the financial subjugation of the native peoples (Multicultural Canada 2012). Under British rule, a Royal Proclamation 1763, although argued to be a way of placating the first nation’s people (Millay 1983 cited in Neu 2000:56), was introduced in order to recognise the rights of indigenous people to titled land that had not been relinquished to the government by treaty or otherwise. In effect, land had to be paid for by the settlers, which was essential for prosperous colonisation. Significantly, the land was ‘paid’ for beneath the coercion of military power, often in exchange for goods and was only accepted by the first nation’s people to maintain their existence (Neu 2000). The 1763 Royal Proclamation has to be questioned further, when one considers, it referred to first nation’s settlements as ‘terminal societies’ (Hall 2004).

The 1800’s saw the arrival of large numbers of settlers who began to outnumber the indigenous people putting further demands on their territories, which they began to see diminishing (Neu 2000). The land of the first nation’s people had provided their ‘means’ of survival, with its demise came the large decrease in their numbers. Additionally, diseases brought by the Europeans killed thousands and thousands of first nation’s peoples. Law validates the “disease epidemic” (2010:13), also suggesting that malnourishment and the eradication of food supplies, provided by wild animals on their previously owned land, was responsible for the horrific loss of lives of native citizens in Canada. Darwin’s theory, in which the natural evolutionary changes in the animal world, occurred through conflict over resources, the environment and competition, often referred to as the ‘survival of the fittest’, was correlated to the human species. In fact, it became both a rationalization and

vindication for the powerful to eliminate the weak (Ratcliffe 2004) and could be linked to the oppression of the first peoples by the dominant colonisers in Canada and beyond.

However, can the control and marginalisation of a land's first nation's people by invading colonisers, really be seen as a 'normal' phenomenon when their very sources of continued existence were pillaged from them by Europeans who deemed themselves to be more civilised? Incongruously, during the 1800's the settlers set about educating the inferior aboriginal behaviour (Saizewich 1998) considering them to be savage, wild and inexplicable to their civilised selves (Francis 1998) which originated with missionary programmes in the 1820's (Miller 1989). During the same period, the once military useful first peoples were becoming a financial burden on the British Empire and in order to free themselves of any responsibility, they marginalised them further (Miller 1989). The mid 1800's became a period of sustained assimilation of first nation's people through forced settlement into villages, often away from their ancestral lands and the dehumanising of their cultural heritage (Miller 1989). Indeed, Denis (2011) argues the enforced boundary controls and integration were characterised with the organization of the residential school system.

It was during the mid 1800's that 'science' was beginning to be used to verify the concept of the supremacy of white settlers over first nations people, which Miller (1989), suggests simply added to racist thought and behaviour and includes Darwin's evolution theory already discussed. Hence, schools became the foundation for the 'Canadianization' of first nation's children (Saizewich 1998). The first schools were introduced between 1830 and 1840 but failed to free Canadian society of the supposed 'barbaric' cultures of the first nation's people (Miller 1989). Hence, from the 1840's residential schools were established, with children often forced from their family homes and sent hundreds of miles to live and be assimilated into European cultures. Resocialising native children banned the traditions of their religious and cultural beliefs and rituals, speaking in their indigenous tongue, mentioning their families and obedience through strategies such as haircutting and standardized clothing (Nelson and Nelson 2004).

Residential homes were run jointly by the state and the Anglican Church of Canada so it is hard to comprehend that in a Statement of Apology, by the current Canadian Prime Minister in 2008, it was acknowledged that first native children were systematically beaten, starved, deprived care, stopped from returning home to their parents, sexually abused with death for some, the only means of escape (Government of Canada 2008). The effect of such racist abusive control by the State and Church has seen many indigenous peoples developing physical and mental health conditions (Alfred 2009). Further, Alfred (2009) suggests there is an association to colonialism and racism which is still in evidence today. Historically, the European settlers in Canada sought to assimilate the native people through oppression, racialisation, education and alienation. Goldberg (2009) advocates the social formations constructed during colonisation created and fixed the roots of racism in contemporary societies which became established and consequently challenges Darwin's naturally occurring theory.

**Black People in Canada – a land of freedom or overt racism?**

### **The arrival of black Canadians**

“Fundamentally, all racism/s are a cultural manifestation, a reflection or expression of tensions or problems within a society, rather than a phenomenon derived from an autonomous and somehow ‘objective’ sphere of scientific investigation and theory”. (MacMaster 2001 cited in Lentin 2008:2).

Nelson and Nelson (2004) suggest that historically Canada has constantly sought to be recognized as a white nation, so MacMaster’s quote could be compared with the racism faced by black settlers in Canada from as early as the 1600.s. In fact, the first black man arrived in Canada in 1603 with the earliest identified black slave verified in 1628 (Ministry of Citizenship, 2002). Between 1779 and 1793 black people, including women and children, were guaranteed their liberty if they united with Britain during the American Revolution. Many of these people settled on land in the South of Canada now identified as Ontario and were joined between 1800 and 1865 by over twenty thousand escapee black slaves from America, who entered Canada by the now famous ‘underground railway’ (Attwell et al 2010). ‘Slavery’, existed in Canada but on a relatively small scale compared to America and was abolished in 1867 (Vickers and Kwatiwo 2002). Many black Canadians are descendants of slaves who were either freed by the British or entered Canada via the underground railway in search of ‘freedom’.

Yet, in Canada they continued to be recognized by colour alone and were far from ‘free’ as they were judged unfit for Canadian citizenship (Vickers and Kwatiwo 2002). Throughout the 1800’s and up until the 1950’s black Canadians were subjected to segregation in education, housing and employment and were often ‘hidden’ away in self sufficient housing complexes to enable the denial of their existence by white citizens. It appears the majority of white people in Canada condoned the segregation of black people who became ‘Canada’s dirty little secret’ (Vickers and Kwatiwo 2002). Many black people entering Canada in the 1800’s were used in agriculture, construction, mining and as home makers for the Canadian elite, all of which were low paid low skilled jobs. Indeed, throughout Canada’s history black people have been marginalised in employment as white people refused to work alongside black citizens well into the 1900’s. Many black people settled in Toronto and records show that in 1881 thirteen percent of black people were employed as labourers compared to eight percent for all workers (Nelson and Nelson 2004).

Segregated education and low paid low skilled employment was not the only prejudice faced by the first black settlers. Legislation, often local, provided the white population with the means for racist practices (Vickers and Kwatiwo 2002) and the Criminal Justice System (CJS) records from 1867 – 1976 shows deaths due to execution were twenty three percent of all persons charged and convicted, which increased to fifty percent for black people alone. Moreover, black convicts were frequently deprived of clemency by white jurors (Nelson and Nelson 2004). Black Canadians did not foster the same belief systems as white citizens, which was illustrated at the start of the First World War in 1914. Initially the authorities refused to allow black people to fight for ‘their’ country and only gave in when black people made a stance and insisted but they were forced into segregated army units away from white Canadian soldiers (Ministry of Citizenship, 2002) which was replicated again during World War Two between 1939 and 1945 (Mensah 2002). Black Canadians were often prohibited from restaurants, hotels, clubs, and cinemas. If

they were able to enter, they were made to sit in 'black' areas and kept away from white people (McKague 1991).

Evidence suggests that black people in Canada during the 1800's up until the 1950's were segregated, marginalised and subjected to racism which was often perpetuated through legislation and regional resolutions. Indeed, in 1911 Edmonton City Council banned all black people from entering the City. Even the Supreme Court of Canada was involved in legitimizing segregation, with black people in the town of Halifax banned from cinemas in 1946 by the Court. It is suggested by Vickers and Kwatiwo (2002), the majority of white Canadians agreed with segregation which was both prevalent and often concealed. McKague (1991) deems white Canadians 'forgot' that people from many diverse races and nations built Canada. He suggests further, that Canadian historical workbooks often direct people to believe as true, Canada was settled and built entirely by white Europeans. First nation's people, as discussed earlier were also subjected to racialisation but Mensah (2002) argues that their rightful claim to a unique standing in Canada restricted their marginalisation in comparison to the racism received by black people.

### **Why, how and when did Canada become a racist nation?**

Before examining how first nations and black people are subjugated in contemporary Canada, it is important to try to understand how nation's become racialised and whether there is a universal approach to racism. Two opposing arguments of racialisation come from Dikotter (2008) and Goldberg (2009). Although Dikotter acknowledges there are racist principles functioning globally, he suggests these are different in each Country, but are inextricably linked to power with politics underpinning racism. In short, Dikotter's 'interactive' approach to racism is most certainly universal but neither widespread nor uniform. In Canada, the power relations were obviously cemented during colonisation as the coloniser's took control of the first nation's people and politically dominated them into an inferior race. During the 1800's science, specifically Darwin's evolution theories provided the white race with a feeling of supremacy over anyone with different physical features including colour (Dikkoter 2008).

However, Canada is not the only Country that was colonized by Europeans and can be compared in many ways to America, Australia and New Zealand. First Nation's people in all these countries were racialised during colonization, so Goldberg's (2009) 'relational' account of racism, in opposition to Dikkoter, could be a more appropriate way to view how racism is present globally. Goldberg argues that colonialism was the start of the construction of racism through advantage, of those alleged as culturally dominant. This framework of racism was achieved through discriminatory practices and marginalisation (Goldberg 2009). Canada has all the characteristics of a Nation that historically racialised people who were already present and appears to have been influenced by its close neighbour America. Even in the twenty first century Canada compares itself to America over issues of racism. Mensah (2002) also suggests that under colonialism racial stereotypes were formed which remain in Canada's modern society. In order to substantiate this theory contemporary Canada will now be examined to assess if racialisation has influenced racism in the twenty first century.

## **'First Nations' people and their subjugation from the 1900's to present day**

“our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department” (Campbell-Scott 1920 cited in Neu 2000:17).

The above Statement, made by the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs in 1920, elucidates the States objective to continue to assimilate the first native peoples of Canada, which existed visibly until the early 1970's. Moreover, the Indian Department and the Indian Act of 1927 continued to deny first nation's people the right to speak in their own language and carry out religious rituals. The Act also stopped them from forming any political organisations and first native people were frequently imprisoned for doing so, in their fight against racism and oppression (Assembly of First Nations, The Story). Canada's first native people were also prohibited from attending University under the Indian Act of 1927 unless they willingly renounced their status as an Indian, a legacy of the colonial education system, which only ceased in 1951 (Canadian Race Relations Council 2012). Consequently, first nation's people set up their own primary and secondary schools but they were not recognised by the government, lacked financial support and were unable to grant degrees and diplomas.

First nation's people had tried to mobilize themselves politically from the 1920's but never successfully until that is, the proposed 1969 Government White Paper, which laid out a plan for the immediate and compulsory enfranchisement of all Indians became public (Neu 2000 and Miller 1989). Consequently, from the 1970's first native people became politically mobilised and sought to challenge long held discriminatory beliefs, legislation and land rights disputes. The 1969 White Paper was successfully defeated and the first nation's people sought to influence their post colonial future (Cairns 2004) and change long held institutionally racist social structures. It would appear, on the surface that contemporary Canada has become a nation of equality but Saizewich (1998) suggests that understated racism is neither evident nor articulated as hatred. During colonization, the education of first nation's people is well documented as racialisation, which has persisted into the twenty first century. Gosh (1996) argues “it disables minority students, socialises them into failure and condemns them to permanent marginality in the labour market” (Gosh 1996 cited in Saizewich 1998:133).

Canada's non racist stance (Mensah 2002) has done little to improve education for native peoples with only eight percent of first nation's people in 2006 holding a degree compared to twenty three percent for non native people. Additionally, the most common trade certificate acquired by first nations was in construction (Statistics Canada 2006). Employment prospects are also unequal with sixty five percent of first native people employed compared to eighty two percent of non aboriginal persons between the ages of twenty five and fifty four (Statistics Canada 2006). Racialized Canadians, earn on average seven thousand pounds less per year than other Canadians placing them three times more likely to be living in poverty compared to other Canadians (Galabuzi et al 2012). Whilst, Canada produces statistics on education and employment, the Criminal Justice System

(CJS) statistics are not released but evidence suggests that it is here that first nations are especially over-represented (Gorelick 2007). Specifically, according to the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, aboriginals make up nineteen percent of federal prisoners compared to their number of three percent of the general public. During 1994 and 2004, the imprisonment of first nations increased by twenty two percent whilst the general prison population dropped by twelve percent (Gorelick 2007). It is suggested Courts are more likely to refuse bail for native peoples and impose longer sentences for the same offence (McKnight 2012).

Although institutional racism continues to be a residual consequence of racialisation, the first nation's people's fight for their territories has become a noteworthy conflict with the Canadian Government. Neu (2000) suggests that although the Government proclaim to be willing to settle land claims, little action is taken in this endeavour and confrontations between the Canadian army, the police and native people over land claims continue. Recently, Shoshone native territory belonging to first nations was encroached upon by transnational corporations, agreed by the Canadian government for commercial gain. The reserve is the third largest gold mining area in the world, which native peoples maintain is used for spiritual services and cultural functions. They also claimed that toxic chemicals, released during the mining process, were affecting the health of their tribe. The United Nations found Canada guilty of the wrongdoing;

"The wider public must understand indigenous peoples' rights and concerns," he said. "They must act to protect them because as the most marginalised group in this world, it spells out how the rest of us will be treated, and is also the surest way to protect our last remaining ecosystems" (Rizvi, Centre for World Indigenous Studies).

Additionally, the Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group (HTG) charges Canada with not defending the civil liberties of the indigenous people by authorizing extensive clear-cutting, deforestation and ecological disparaging developments right the way through their territories (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, 2011). Multicultural Canada? For the first nation's people it appears to have failed whilst social structures set in place during colonialism have remained.

### **Black Canadians: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Equality or Racism?**

Canada professes to be a liberal society; it argues that every Canadian no matter what their ethnicity has an equivalent chance of succeeding. The majority of Canadians accept racism was present in the past but believe it no longer exists within their country in the twenty first century (Oliver 2007). The above 'myths' according to Oliver are responsible for the continued discrimination, racism and racial profiling of black people and he suggests, rather than diminishing they are increasing (Oliver 2007). Discussed throughout this paper is the correlation between the social structures of Canada and racism. In order to verify Oliver's (2007) suggestion that black Canadians are marginalised in Canadian society, the education system, CJS and their employment prospects will be scrutinized alongside the increased number of hate crimes against black people compared to any other ethnic groups,

"black students – race alone is probably sufficient to place them at risk of negative school outcomes" (Taylor 1991 cited in Codjoe 2001:344).

Canadian black students are underachieving and face significant barriers within the education system. Codjoe (2001) suggests their lower academic attainment is due to systematic racism by teachers and other students. Specifically, he argues that intimidating school surroundings, harmful cultural labelling, and the expectations of teachers is lower for black students, the depiction of historical black people is lacking and they are dealt with in a different way due to their race. This results in black students viewing the education system as 'white' (D'Sauza 1995 cited in Codjoe 2001:346). Black students are also inexplicably over represented on low level educational courses, which indicate they are more likely to be employed in low paid, low skilled jobs and ultimately more likely to be impoverished compared to white Canadians (McKague 1991). Statistically, black male Canadians have a twenty four percent wage shortcoming measured against white male Canadians (Oliver 2007).

Black Canadians are not only more prone to be in low paid jobs but are discriminated against whilst looking for employment and whilst employed. In 2003, Statistics Canada reported one fifth of all visible minorities had acknowledged unfair treatment in relation to employment in the past five years. Moreover, (Oliver 2007) suggests there are implicit systems within workplaces where white people are the majority. These include the need for black people to dress more formally than their cohorts in order to be accepted, change how they speak and act to thwart the black stereotypical image of aggression and menace. Many of these sexual and masculine type casted biases have been fostered from the past during slavery and segregation in America, which adds weight to Goldberg's (2009) 'relational' theory of racialisation. The CJS is also a good indicator of racism within a country and includes the police, the courts, and sentencing and prison terms.

The Ontario CJS appears to be systematically racist through its differential decision making and unequal treatment of black Canadians within its province. Ontario is one of the largest areas where black people reside in Canada, so is relevant when discussing institutional racism. In Ontario prisons, black men have a rate of imprisonment five times higher than white men, for black women the rate is seven times higher than white women (Commission on Systematic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System, 1995). Additionally, the Commission on racism in the CJS in Ontario found that the number of black people who were jailed prior to trial was just over two thousand per one hundred thousand. When compared with white people whose number was just over three hundred per one hundred thousand, an explanation without a racial factor would be hard to substantiate. The report concluded that racialisation appeared to have predisposed black people to decisions resulting in racial inequality. Many black people are subjected to racist intolerance even before they get to court from the Canadian Police.

Although, it is difficult to obtain exact up to date statistical evidence from the Government as the compilation and release of all race-crime statistics is prohibited. Much of the evidence provided hereafter is based on research and is of a qualitative nature, although it has been scorned by government officials as being 'junk science' (Wortley and Owusu-Bempah 2011). A research programme was undertaken by The University of Toronto in 2007 which included one thousand five hundred and twenty two respondents with five hundred and thirteen black males, five hundred and five white males and five hundred and four Chinese male respondents. Comparisons will

be made between the responses of black and white males which are appropriate to this paper. Overall, black males were unfairly treated by the police with fifty seven percent seeing racial profiling as a problem compared to twenty one percent for white males. Stop and search by the police showed large differences as black males were most likely to be stopped at twenty three percent compared to eight percent for white males and twelve percent of black males were physically searched compared to three percent for white males. Finally, forty seven percent of black males felt the last time they were stopped and searched was unjustified compared to twelve percent of white males (Wortley and Owusu-Bempah 2011).

It is suggested by numerous academics in Canada that the influence of race in the CJS is principally due to structured practices of racialisation (Wortley and Owusu-Bempah 2011). An alternative way of establishing whether racism exists in a society is to look at the driving force behind hate crimes. A report published in 2006 by the Canadian government using statistical evidence of police and victim reported hate crimes showed that sixty one percent of all hate crimes reported by the police were against ethnic minorities which suggests people are being targeted based on their ethnicity and colour. Additionally, in order to clarify the position of black people in Canadian society as the most marginalised group, forty eight percent of all hate crimes were against black Canadians with only three percent against first nation's people (Statistics Canada 2008). Walcott (2003) argues that demands for social justice and the eradication of racial profiling of black people are being ignored by the Canadian Government, which in turn places blackness externally within the country.

### **The Legacy of Racialisation in Canada**

“Later forms of resistance include anti-colonial, national liberation and anti-racist movements. The construction of black identities across the globe revolve around three forms of thinking and reflection or reflexivity” (Law 2010:15)

Reflecting and assessing the influence of colonialism in Canada in the twenty first century, is complex and remains incomplete. Many of the racist practices both within social institutions and society were forged under British rule around the globe and have become embedded in the United Kingdom. They may seem to have materialized internally but as Goldberg (2009) suggests they very rarely do. Canada is a country where culturally different people are segregated, first nations on reserves and ethnic minority groups in inner city metropolitan areas (Attwell et al 2010). Institutional racism persists in education, employment and the Criminal Justice System, the very fabric of society. Racist hate crimes continue but the Canadian white population consider that Canada is multicultural, tolerant of all races and a global leader in multicultural strategies. A nation where cultural traditions are deemed important and part of Canada's State practices (Attwell et al 2010). There are many similarities between Canada and the United Kingdom, with segregated areas around industrial towns and cities, inequality in education and employment and substantiated institutional racism.

In Canada, Barratt (1987) suggests right wing extremist groups are on the increase. They often voice their party line at rallies inciting hatred but the difference now is that white citizens are starting to mobilise against racism, as was reported recently by Dykstra (2012) in the Canadian news. In fact, anti racist protesters outnumbered

members of the extremist group Blood and Honour. Similarly, right wing groups in the United Kingdom provoke racial loathing and march through areas with a high population of ethnic minority people deliberately taunting and stirring racial hatred (Gilroy 1987) but again these are being challenged. It would appear, Hesse's (1999) anti-racist reflexivity notion in which racial inequality is confronted when political and material circumstances in western cultures are mobilised could be at work (Hesse 1999 cited in Law 2010:15). Canada and the United Kingdom do not stand alone when it comes to racist belief systems, as the majority of the world was at one time or another invaded and colonized by Europeans, racialisation practices are a global phenomenon.

Ultimately, for numerous ethnic minority groups in contemporary societies including migrants, absolute community inclusion will only be experienced when its reliance on a multitude of indistinct and outwardly unachievable objectives are removed (Lentin 2008) and when the philosophy of governmental institutions adjust and adapt to a society based on equal rights for all citizens, not one rule for the white man and many rules for the 'other'.

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