

The Intersection Between Philosophy and Literature

التقاطع بين الفلسفة والأدب

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Received: 18./05/ 2024 Accepted: 22/11/ 2024 Published:18/12/ 2024

Abstract:

This research paper presents a comparative analytical study of the fields of both philosophy and literature and the overlap that exists between them. Philosophical discourse, through its episodes, has formed a mental flash that transports humans from the impurities of the changing world in an effort to achieve the truth of truths, the origin of origins, and the cause of causes, relying on logical structure and rational argumentation that only finds its purpose through language. Heidegger considered language to be the home of being and his refuge through which he solves his existential problems. It is also the refuge of the writer, where his imaginations emerge and his emotions are embodied, based on poetic language translated by novels, poetry, and rhetoric.

However, the connection between them generated an intersection that formed an amazing unity in which logical, demonstrative discourse mixed with the emotional, poetic aspect, and the path for each of them was language. So, how did linguistic discourse form the link between philosophy and literature?

Keywords: philosophy; literature; intersectionality; language; wisdom

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ملخص: تتضمن هذه الورقة البحثية دراسة تحليلية مقارنة لمجالي كل من الفلسفة و الأدب و التداخل الموجود بينهما ، فقد شكل الخطاب الفلسفي عبر حلقاته وميضاً عقلياً ينقل الإنسان من شوائب العالم المتغير سعياً لبلوغ حقيقة الحقائق و أصل الأصول و علة العلة معتمداً في ذلك على البناء المنطقي و الحجاج العقلاني الذي لا يجد ضالته إلا اللغة التي اعتبرها هيدغر بيت الكائن و ملاذ الذي يحل من خلاله مشكلاته الوجودية ، و هي ملاذ الأديب الذي تنبجس فيه تخيلاته و تتجسد فيه عواطفه استناداً على لغة شاعرية تترجمها الرواية و الشعر و الخطابة.

غير أن الربط بينهما ولد تقاطعاً بينهما شكل وحدة مذهلة امتزج فيها الخطاب البرهاني المنطقي بالجانب العاطفي الشاعري و سبيل كل منهما هو اللغة ، فكيف شكل الخطاب اللغوي همزة الوصل بين الفلسفة و الأدب ؟

كلمات مفتاحية: الفلسفة..، الأدب ..، التقاطع..، اللغة..، الحكمة

1. INTRODUCTION :

Language is the fundamental medium through which ideas transition from the realm of concealment to the realm of expression. Through language, humans communicate with one another, forging a foundational link that renders our thoughts, feelings, and emotions intelligible to others. However, language sometimes serves the rational aspect grounded in demonstration and argumentation, which is what we call philosophy. Other times, it expresses the tumult of human emotions and fluctuating feelings, often dominated by subjectivity and the absence of logical discourse. At times, philosophical ideas are articulated through literary language or literary themes conveyed philosophically.

The intersection between philosophy and literature constitutes a fascinating and profound field for study and contemplation. Both philosophy and literature represent expressions of humanity and life deeply and comprehensively. Through studying this intersection, we find that philosophy and literature mutually influence and enrich one another, enhancing our understanding of the world and ourselves.

Philosophy seeks to explore fundamental questions about existence, truth, and knowledge, while literature endeavors to embody these questions and present them in artistic and aesthetic forms. Novels, stories, and poetry can engage with philosophical concepts in diverse ways, allowing readers to ponder philosophical issues more deeply and profoundly.

Simultaneously, philosophy can find inspiration in literary works, as authors present their philosophical ideas in creative and inspirational ways. Literary characters and narrative stories can serve as sources for philosophical contemplation and reflection on ethical and metaphysical issues.

Therefore, the intersection between philosophy and literature represents a rich space for exploring human thought and its interaction with the world around it. Understanding how philosophy and literature influence each other can help expand our intellectual horizons and deepen our understanding of humanity and its various experiences.

Our aim here is to elucidate the intersection between philosophy and literature, exploring how they have been combined despite the differences between them ?.

2. Literature According to Greek Philosophers:

Although Plato emphasized the distinction and difference between them, despite being a great writer in the field of literature as evidenced by his dialogues, we find him expressing a state of opposition between literature and philosophy. He rejected the presence of art, poetry, and poets in his city. Plato believed that literary culture, even the words of popular music, had a strong impact on the moral outlook of its consumers. In "The Republic," Plato presents a strong hostility towards the contents of the literary culture of his time and suggests strict censorship of popular literature, arguing that art in general and poetry, in particular, are based on the concept of imitation. He considered imitation to be inferior because it mimics the sensory world, and poetry, to him, is a deception of reality. In "The Republic," he says, "It seems to me that we have stronger reasons to exclude this type of poetry entirely – based on imitation. It seems to me that this type of poetry harms the minds that hear it without us having a remedy against it, which is knowing the true nature of what this poetry speaks about" (Plato, 1985, p. 529).

Moreover, in his view, poetry is associated with emotion, while philosophy is linked to knowledge. Poetry depicts the gods in an inappropriate manner, portraying them with traits that would not honor humans if attributed to them, showing gods as jealous, vengeful, mocking, playful, even lascivious at times (Fouad, Zakaria, Plato, 200, p. 165). In contrast, philosophy is associated with science, meaning truth. Hence, literature was deemed inferior

based on this concept, which influenced human thought for a long time. Plato says about poetry: beautiful poetry is not of human making nor composed by men, but divine, made by the gods. Poets are merely translators of the gods.

Comedy should be directed at mocking immoral behavior and should only feature the lower class, while the aristocracy should not be depicted in comedy. Tragedy, on the other hand, should represent noble emotions, and all its characters should belong to the aristocracy because they embody noble sentiments.

Aristotle viewed the matter from a different angle in his work "The Art of Poetry." He presented a classification of forms of thought, placing demonstration first, then dialectic, and placing sophistry and imagination last. This Aristotelian description significantly influenced medieval thought after Aristotle, and it was imitated.

Based on this classification, tragedy comes first because it imitates using language, secondly, it is a grand work because it imitates noble people and portrays them better than they are, and thirdly, it is a drama because it depicts characters actively without interference from literature. The Greek influence left a mark on Islamic philosophy, as the concept of imitation was understood by Arab critics to be synonymous with figurative language: (simile, metaphor, and metonymy). Ibn Rushd says, "Imitation in poetic discourse occurs due to three things: from matching structure, from rhythm, and from the imitation itself. Each of these can exist separately, such as the melody in flutes, rhythm in dance, and imitation in words."

However, we often sense literary touches in the Platonic imagination, which frequently showed a denial of literature. Plato wrote dialogues in which fictional characters discuss philosophical topics, and Socrates often appears as a hero in his dialogues, which are considered primary sources for our knowledge of Socratic teachings. Despite the difficulty in distinguishing between the actual positions of Socrates and those of Plato, some see a close relationship between philosophy and literature. Nietzsche, a philosopher who defended

literature, viewed the dominance of thought over emotion as dangerous in his book "The Birth of Tragedy." He argued that it is essential not to delve too deeply into thought and forget the sentiment represented by literature. He called for resolving this dilemma by returning to the primitive elements within us to draw from the wellspring of emotion, even if it leads to the destruction of analytical thought. Martin Heidegger, who opposed metaphysics and poetry, similarly considered metaphysics and poetry as "two human expressions of being." He believed that their starting point is the temporality that interacts spiritually and mentally with existence. Heidegger attempted to establish a close relationship between philosophy and poetry by creating connections between them and identifying common grounds. The common ground, in his view, is language; both poetry and philosophy establish their existence through language. Therefore, he asserts that philosophy and literature are closely linked.

3. Poet-Philosophers :

Language is the common denominator between the two fields, but not just language. There is also a cognitive relationship that brings them together; what philosophy arrives at is embodied by literature in its various genres: (poetry, story, novel, and drama). Literature has been influenced by philosophical visions throughout the ages, and philosophers have used literary genres to express their philosophical theories, as represented in Socratic dialogues with his disciples and other philosophical works that have taken literary genres as their epistemological field (Al-Tansiri, 2009, p. 15).

In contemporary studies and the context in which the term philosophy emerged in the wake of modernity and its pursuit of rationality in discourse, research attempts to uncover common points between the two fields and the forms of relationship and overlap between the world of philosophy and the world of literature. There are various forms between the two fields; some are total overlaps, while others are partial. For instance, in poetry, there is a partial overlap in poetry that relies on propositions and concepts derived from philosophy

(Al-Shammaa, 1985, p. 22).

This is evident in the poetry of Abu Tammam and Bashar ibn Burd. The broad translation movement influenced wisdom poetry; it is noted that Abbasid poets assimilated the wisdom of the Greeks and Persians and the Indian wisdom of Kalila and Dimna, which was translated into Persian and then by Ibn al-Muqaffa into Arabic. They integrated all this into their poetry, embedding some of it in their verses. As soon as they encountered the books "Adab al-Kabir" and "Adab al-Saghir," in which Ibn al-Muqaffa conveyed Persian experiences and wisdom on friendship, advice, and etiquette, they began to create poetic segments depicting them. Bashar ibn Burd says in one of his eulogies:

"If the opinion reaches the consultation, then seek the opinion of a sincere advisor or a wise counsel, And do not let the consultation be a burden upon you, The place of the covert is beneficial to the primary feathers."

It is said that there were a thousand proverbs of the Persians in the Diwan of Salih ibn Abd al-Qudus (Al-Rafi'i, 2014, p. 33).

The wisdom of previous literary ages often appeared scattered in a eulogy, satire, elegy, or even love poetry, summarizing that experience in one or two maxims within the poem. Zuhayr ibn Abi Sulma included fragments of his experience in his Mu'allafa to serve the poem's purpose. Abbasid wisdom poetry was distinguished by dedicating entire poems or segments to wisdom, where the poet transitions from the spontaneous poet's throne to the position of a didactic poet, compiling all that matched his meter and whose meaning was valued. An example is the poem (The Proverbs) by Abu al-Atahiyya, which contains many eloquent proverbs, numbering about four thousand. Among the poets who composed complete wisdom poems is Salih ibn Abd al-Qudus, who says:

"A man accumulates, but fate disperses, And he keeps patching while events tear apart. It is better for him to have a wise enemy than to have a foolish friend. A friend is trusted by a

friend. Weigh your words when you speak, for indeed the speech of the wise reveals the flaws of the mind."

(Al-Rafi'i, 2014, p. 33).

In another poem with a pessimistic tone, Salih ibn Abd al-Qudus, who lived in an era full of political turmoil and conflicts, says in two lines that Abbas Mahmoud al-Aqqad notes as the reason for his execution:

"Enemies cannot harm a fool as much as the fool harms himself. An old man does not abandon his habits until he is buried in his grave."

(Al-Aqqad, 1952, p. 28).

Abu Nuwas is considered one of the most famous poets of the Abbasid era. He is the poet of revolution and preservation of innovation, as well as the undisputed poet of wine. He extensively described wine gatherings and rituals, making him the leader of wine poetry among Arabs. The Arabs, by their customs and religion, rejected this type of poetry, and many poets and friends advised him to avoid wine. In his verses, Abu Nuwas asks his mentor not to blame him excessively, as it would only increase his deviation, and tells him that those who claim philosophy in their knowledge cannot grasp all knowledge. He says:

"Leave off blaming me, for blame is seductive, and treat me with the ailment that was the remedy. Tell him who claims philosophy in his knowledge, you have memorized something, but many things are hidden from you."

(Abu Nuwas, 1988, p. 45).

Al-Mutanabbi is considered one of the most important poets of the Abbasid era and a companion of wisdom in his poetry. His verses reflect his experiences and portray his life with honesty, bringing strength to his imagery and words. His poetry is characterized by the robustness of its expressions and the power of its meanings. He excelled and mastered description in his literary style, describing battles, wars, nature, palaces, and gatherings. One of his famous descriptions pertains to the court of Sayf al-Dawla, where he says:

"It is easy for us that our bodies be injured, if our honor and intellects are safe. Pride and boasting surpass Wa'il's daughter, For you are the best of the boastful."

(Al-Mutanabbi, 1997, p. 59).

In the recent phase, which suggests the possibility of merging genres to create new ones, modern writings have characterized this stage by allowing the literary genre to remain open to renewal and adaptation. Thus, the literary genre, as a set of characteristics governing creative practice, that combines different genres is one of the most prominent achievements of modernity, announcing the possibility of cross-genre fertilization. This calls for reconsidering the expansion of the literary genre's boundaries and adapting its parameters with each new output. Moreover, it reveals the ways texts are produced, received, and circulated in society, especially under the constant pressures of ideas related to creation, innovation, taste, and the requirements of reception, which continuously modify and develop this role (Said, 2010, p. 123).

Under these conditions, philosophical literature, which studies the relationship between literature in its three forms and philosophy, also emerged. It distinguishes between form and content, defining literature by its aesthetic form while dealing with the philosophical cultural dimension of the content (Ahmed, 2018, p. 45).

Studying literature in its three forms: (epic, dramatic, and lyrical), and its interaction with philosophy, gave rise to philosophical literature. This also appears in the study of the story, poetry, and drama, where we find philosophical themes at the thematic level accompanying the emergence and growth of these genres, especially the novel (Hassan, 2020, p. 50).

Some philosophers have used narrative as a starting point to express their ideas and propositions. The Islamic philosopher Ibn Tufail wrote a fictional Arabic novel "Hayy ibn Yaqdhan" in the twelfth century as a reaction to Al-Ghazali's "The Incoherence of the Philosophers" in an enjoyable existential narrative form. He expressed the integration

between wisdom and Sharia, emphasizing that the paths of revelation and reason are one. The novel is interspersed with many symbolic expressions laden with philosophical concepts such as life and death, nature, God, knowledge, matter, form, and spirit. Through this, he explained Avicenna's illuminationist philosophy with a mystical touch that aligns with Abu Hamid al-Ghazali's approach, refining the response. In his novel, he depicts Hayy in the higher stages of intellectual maturity, relating to states of vision, integration, and annihilation (Al-Ayashi, 2015, p.).

4. Literature According to Contemporary Philosophers :

In response to the idea of pre-established harmony proposed by Leibniz—"everything will go for the best in the best of all possible worlds"—which carried a lot of naive optimism according to Voltaire, especially after the devastating earthquake that struck Lisbon in 1755 and the Seven Years' War in Europe, Voltaire's idea of harmony and that the world would progress for the better provoked Voltaire's ridicule. He expressed this in many of his works, including the novel "Candide," which sparked widespread controversy due to its sharp criticisms in an enjoyable satirical form. Candide is the name Voltaire chose for his protagonist, who learned optimism and mastered its teachings under his teacher "Pangloss" before being expelled from the baron's castle and facing his fate on his arduous journey. This novel had philosophical dimensions directed at Leibniz's rational philosophy, which was dominated by utopian dreams of the existence of a world that is the best of worlds (Voltaire, 2000, p. 45).

The German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche often expressed his revolutionary philosophical ideas, which take strength as their guide, in literary form, most notably in his book "Thus Spoke Zarathustra." This philosophical novel consists of essays and speeches written by Nietzsche in a poetic and prose style, calling for transcending the surface to reach the depths to grasp his philosophy. Despite its easy readability, it is very difficult to understand due to the symbolic style that reveals a deep philosophy. Nietzsche describes his style as the art of

the great rhythm that reveals emotions that surpass humanity and rise above it (Nietzsche, 2005, p. 123). He summarized his philosophy in this work, describing it as "the labyrinth of his philosophy" in an epic format and poetic language, combining prose, poetry, and music, and crafting the model of the *Übermensch*, liberated from all moral and social constraints, as an expression of the will to power and the stripping of human instincts to demolish bourgeois morality and expose its reality, just as he fought utilitarian ethics and called for the will of the *Übermensch* who creates his own values and imposes them on everyone, destroying the idols of Christian morality and prevailing ethics, bringing us back to the pre-Socratic Greek era (Nietzsche, 2005, p. 157).

Jean-Paul Sartre used imagination to convey his philosophical views, which is evident in his novel "Nausea," a philosophical novel with existential dimensions that delves into the stifling absurdity of the immanent world connected to man. Sartre seeks to dismantle all the assumptions on which science is founded and all the propositions we consider as the basis of our existence, making them appear ridiculous to us. Antoine Roquentin is the protagonist of this novel, who has spent the last ten years of his life writing a book about the character of a Marquis, a French aristocratic figure. The novel revolves around Roquentin, who spends long hours in the library writing this book. He is a solitary character who often eavesdrops and listens in cafés, closely observing their actions. He is in a state of psychological conflict and anxiety in his interactions with the two main characters in his life, his lover Annie and the self-made man who spends many hours in front of books, believing he is achieving everything he desires. Our protagonist reaches a state of nausea when he discovers that he wants to revive a historical figure from the past to justify his existence, illustrating the existential anxiety and sense of absurdity he has reached while trying to find himself in the depths of history (Sartre, 2010, p. 145).

In his play "No Exit," Jean-Paul Sartre explores the significance, forms, and aims of literature,

detailed in his book "What Is Literature?" This book is divided into main sections: "What is Literature?" "Why Write?" and finally, a chapter titled "The Reader's Position," in which he also poses the question: "For Whom Do We Write?" Sartre asserts that the primary task of the writer is to express meanings and bring them from the realm of the unspoken into the realm of the spoken. He emphasizes that the domain of meanings is prose, while he categorizes poetry alongside other arts like painting, sculpture, and music. Thus, poetry does not aim to convey meaning but seeks to create a "state." Sartre states, "The distinction between literature and music or literature and painting is not only in form but also in substance. A work based on colors or sounds is not another work whose material is words. Tones, colors, and shapes are not signs with signification, as they do not refer to something outside of themselves" (Sartre, 1965, p. 102). Consequently, poetry does not achieve a specific utility, and therefore, it falls outside the realm of literary commitment. His views on commitment and freedom were fundamental to ideological criticism, prevalent in the 1950s and 1960s, making Sartre a prominent figure in both philosophy and literature worldwide during these decades (Sartre, 1965, p. 156).

The writer or author points to things, indicates them, and expresses meanings, unlike the painter. For instance, a writer can describe a hut and reveal it as a symbol of social injustice, giving it significance, whereas a painter cannot do this as the painter merely presents the hut, leaving the viewer free to interpret the painting. It will not be a symbol of misery because, to be a symbol, it must be a sign with a meaning, while in reality, it is merely an object (Harbaji, 2023, p. 24).

Prose is characterized by its inherently significant material, meaning that words are not things in themselves but indicate and refer to things, conveying intended meaning for a specific purpose and carrying particular significance. Thus, Sartre concludes that prose language, due to its utilitarian nature, extends our senses. It is not just that he chose to talk about certain things, but he chose to talk about them in a particular way. The impact of

words, their beauty, and the balance between parts of sentences all control the reader's emotions, exerting influence without their awareness, yet this does not detract from the subject, which is the starting point and foundation that drives the writer. The manner of discussing the subject is determined subsequently, and often both aspects proceed side by side (Sartre, 1965, p. 78).

Sartre criticizes Jean Giraudoux for saying about literary text: "The matter is first a matter of style, the idea comes afterward." Sartre argues that art has never been on the side of style enthusiasts. Consequently, Sartre condemns the doctrine or trend of "art for art's sake," asserting that pure art and empty art are always one and the same. He strongly criticizes critics who limit their analysis to studying the stylistic or psychological aspects of previous writers, neglecting the relationship between the literature they write and the society for which it was written, claiming that literature is solely for aesthetic pleasure. By doing so, they use the legacy of past writers as material after failing in the field of literary production, finding for themselves a quiet occupation of "guarding the tombs" (Sartre, 1965, p. 123).

Sartre suggests that art, according to some, is a means of escaping reality, while for others, it is a means of overcoming it. He questions: Isn't it possible to escape reality through monasticism, madness, or death? Why then does one choose writing over other forms? Sartre's answer is that behind the various objectives of writing lies a shared freedom of choice among writers. Human beings are the means through which things appear, and the relationships between parts of the world multiply by our presence in it. Every action we take reveals a new aspect of the world that did not exist before. If there is no human eye to witness a scene, that scene remains in the depths of the unknown, an unknown existence, until another consciousness awakens it. Thus, we add to our self-awareness as "discoverers" and also acknowledge that we are not necessary for the discovered object. One fundamental reason for artistic creation is our need to feel necessary, alongside the world. Sartre points

out that the art of writing is the truest field where this logic manifests. In any part of his work, the writer only encounters his will, projects, and knowledge. In short, he only encounters himself. The subject he creates is for another person, the reader (Sartre, 1965, p. 87).

George Santayana was also a philosopher who wrote novels and poetry; the relationship between Santayana's characters and his beliefs is more complex. Albert Camus' novel "The Stranger" delves into the realms of the rebellious and absurd human being, questioning the nature of life governed by meaninglessness. According to Camus, this life determines the meaning of life, which does not deserve more than it deserves, and thus should be approached with indifference. He writes, "I could never regret anything because I was always absorbed by what might happen... what could happen today or tomorrow." Through his works, he attempts to convey his view of reality based on futility, emphasizing that life's value emerges when we assign it none (Camus, 1942, p. 91). Similarly, Jacques Derrida's novel "The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond" (Derrida, 1980, p. 134).

Several philosophers have had significant impacts on literature. Arthur Schopenhauer may be the most influential modern philosopher in literary history, largely due to his aesthetic system. Thomas Hardy's later novels frequently allude to Schopenhauer's themes, particularly in "Jude the Obscure." Schopenhauer also had a notable impact on Joseph Conrad. Schopenhauer's influence was less defined but widespread within the European symbolist movement in literature. Lionel Johnson references Schopenhauer's aesthetics in his essay "On the Aesthetic." Jacques Derrida has had a substantial impact on what is known as continental philosophy and the understanding of the role of literature in modernity.

5. CONCLUSION

Despite the differences between philosophy and literature in terms of style, language, and purpose, this does not negate the integration and interaction between them. This interaction is clearly evident in Plato's dialogues, which he crafted in a literary style dominated by the dialectical method, making his philosophical ideas come alive and interact

with the reader in various ways. Plato did not merely seek to convey his ideas in a dry manner, but rather aimed for the reader to actively participate in the dialogue, to think, question, and argue, thereby making his texts a lively embodiment of philosophical thought in a literary form.

Similarly, we find in the plays and philosophical works of Jean-Paul Sartre a splendid blending of philosophy and literature, where he employed an engaging literary style to convey his existential statements, making his ideas more impactful and widespread. Sartre did not confine his theoretical ideas to philosophical books alone; rather, he used the stage as a means to present his philosophical issues, embodying characters and events that allow the audience to grasp his ideas directly and profoundly.

Albert Camus, through his novels, also managed to express the absurdity of existence in ways that attract the reader and provoke deep questions about the meaning of life and existence. Camus was not only a novelist but also an existential philosopher who posed fundamental questions about existence and human suffering through his literary works. Novels like "The Stranger" and "The Plague" are prominent examples of how literature can be used as a means to convey philosophical ideas.

This interaction is not limited to prose and drama but extends to poetry, where philosophical wisdom had a prominent presence among many poets and writers. Poets such as Abu al-Ala al-Ma'arri, Abu al-'Atahiya, and Zuhayr ibn Abi Sulma infused their poetry with an analytical rationalism about the necessities of life, reflecting their experiences and knowledge. These poets not only expressed their feelings and thoughts poetically but also provided philosophical analysis of life and existence through their poetry.

This rationalistic character was not merely poetic decoration but reflected a deep interplay between philosophical and poetic thought, giving their works a philosophical dimension that transcends time and place, remaining relevant for all ages. Using poetry as a

means to express philosophical ideas makes these literary works important educational and intellectual tools, aiding in a deeper understanding of philosophical and human issues.

This integration between literature and philosophy enhances our understanding of human nature, as literature provides philosophy with a means to convey its ideas effectively and attractively, while philosophy provides literature with depth and meaning beyond simple narrative. Together, literature and philosophy can form a comprehensive and profound view of the world, enabling us to comprehend its complexities and mysteries.

Through this interaction, we can reach a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of existential, ethical, and human issues that concern us all. Philosophical literature is not limited to presenting philosophical ideas in literary form but contributes to the development and expansion of these ideas. Literature and philosophy together can achieve a balance between reason and emotion, between idea and experience, making literary and philosophical texts effective tools for contemplation and reflection on life and existence.

In conclusion, the relationship between literature and philosophy is an integrative one that enriches both fields. Literature provides philosophy with form and voice, while philosophy provides literature with depth and meaning. This continuous interaction between literature and philosophy is what makes both fields vital and rejuvenating, capable of interacting with social and cultural changes and answering humanity's ongoing questions about itself and the world around it.

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