

REFLECTING THE METAPHORICAL USE OF RAPE IN KUNLE AFOLAYAN'S OCTOBER 1ST FILM

**OMOLOLA TOSAN AKINWOLE, PhD. &
MAUREEN NGOZIKA NDU, PhD.**

Abstract

Accounts of trauma date back as early as 2000 BC. Trauma can manifest in different ways depending on one's psychological makeup, cultural background, and the nature of the traumatic event. Before Nigeria's independence, the nation was ripped of personality, culture, and pride by the invasion of the colonial masters. Giving an account of such trauma experienced by people who were deceptively ripped of their values and cultures by the coming of the colonial Europeans to the country requires the use of strong and heart-rendering images that can vividly present the experiences to create the emotions and an in-depth understanding of the effect of the loss and violation of the people in the mind of the audience. This is what Kunle Afolayan did by adopting the use of rape as a metaphor to drive home the unsuspected act of the violation of peace, culture, and dignity perpetrated by colonialism in the country especially the Yoruba race before independence on October 1st. This work answers the questions of the true intentions of the colonial masters' invasion and the effects of the invasion on the colonized by reflecting on the use of rape in the film as a method of narrating the people's story. The traversals between 'male' and 'female' to discourse the stories of colonialism and the valences

of traumatic sexual symbolism of colonialism is indubitably implied in Afolayan's Nigeria independence story in his October 1st (2014) film written by Tunde Babalola. This paper adopts George Lakoff's conceptual metaphor theory to reflect on the metaphorical use of rape in narrating the effect of colonialism in Nigeria as represented by Akote a Yoruba race as an act of violation of the country before independence.

Keywords: Nigerian films, Kunle Afolayan, Rape

Introduction

Film as a medium is unique. it captures life in a way that cannot be captured through other forms of art, like painting or photography. As a cultural product and medium, film could be viewed as an important medium for meaning-making. Cinema and film are embedded within the culture and therefore a complex and interesting relationship exists between film, culture, ideology, and the audience. Film is regarded as an art that is pervasive and powerful, while film stars are often seen as 'cultural icons' (Browne 1997:9). Corrigan and White (2004) corroborate by describing film as a work of art, richly layered with cultural practices. Voskopoulou(2015) supports this notion and is of the opinion that this form of art is further described as creative, and hybrid embedded in a matrix that moves between 'realism' and 'fantasy'; 'art' and 'entertainment'. Film as a medium of communication and expression, combines three powerful elements, namely image, story, and sounds to give context and meaning to the story being told. Film tells us stories about themes of everyday

experiences like love, hope, death, good, evil, violence, and peace. Therefore, film is attractive to people of different age groups, because it tells stories with which we could associate. Largely it also tells our personal stories, that of the community and the world we are living in. Film takes viewers on a journey, where the narrative is the 'engine' that drives it (Browne 1997:16). Film communicates with the audience through the creative combination of music, sound, images, and text. All these different elements are experienced at once and communicate the (a) story. One of the film's important and outstanding features is the possible experience it could create.

Watching a film, therefore, calls on the viewer's imagination to participate in what he or she is seeing, hearing, and feeling. Watching films draws people temporarily into an alternative world. Therefore, film is so much more than just a cognitive exercise because it has the potential of creating an experience of which meaning making could be a part. Although watching films is associated with leisure time, it is assumed that people can escape to experience pleasure and be playful. However, it is also considered a productive time where information can be gathered and interpreted. The combination of entertainment and serious life issues is therefore an interesting characteristic of film. This could be the reason Kunle Afolayan adopted the use of film to communicate Tunde Babalola and his perception of colonialism and the colonialists' invasion of their fatherland in the film *October 1*. The film is an adaptation of Tunde Babalola's novel by Kunle Afolayan engaging the act of rape as a metaphorical instrument of

expressions of pain, betrayal, and trauma experienced during the transitional period to independence.

This paper is a critical exploration of rape in Kunle Afolayan's *October 1* (2014). Authors like Aniyo (2015), Oyeyebi (2017), Sesan (2017), Bature-Uzor (2018), Endong (2019), Ezepele (2022), and Ezepele and Nwafor (2023) have engaged with studies of the film, but none has discussed the trauma of colonialism in the film. While Ezepele and Nwafor (2023) discussed the trauma of colonialism in general, this paper is focused on the use of rape as a metaphorical expression of trauma and the significance of each rape in the film.

Watching a film therefore calls on the viewers to engage with the film's content and its implications. Colonialism in Nigeria has both positive and negative impacts on the country's development. On one hand, colonialism introduced some modern infrastructure, education, health care, and legal systems to Nigeria. It also fostered a sense of national identity and unity among Nigerians who resisted colonial oppression and exploitation. On the other hand, colonialism also undermined Nigeria's indigenous institutions, cultures, and values. It also exploited Nigeria's natural resources and human capital for Britain's benefit. It also sowed seeds of division and conflict among Nigerians along ethnic, religious, and regional lines. The conflicts and division were expressed in the acts of rape in the film *October 1*.

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Rape As Defined...:

Rape is a particularly harmful victimization experience in terms of negative consequences for health and post-assault functioning (Resnick, Kilpatrick, Dansky,

Saunders, & Best, 1993). The word rape derives from the Latin verb *rapere*, which means 'to seize or take by force'. It is a forced, unwanted sexual intercourse; it is sometimes also called sexual assault, which can happen to both men and women of any age (Medhelp, 2008). The act of rape is not inflicted on the female sex alone, the male sex is not exempted. This is buttressed by the contribution of Groth and Burgess (1977) cited by Clayton M. B and Mace B. (2011) in their work *Male Victims of Sexual Assault: Phenomenology, Psychology, Physiology* when they wrote that assertion of power rather than sexual gratification is the motive in most rapes, including cases of males sexually assaulting other males.

The Theory of Metaphorical
The foundation of this theory lies in the idea that metaphor influences a person's "conceptual system" (thought processes), as shown through a person's language, actions, and understanding (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, 2003, p. 6). George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in their book *Metaphors We Live By* (1980) suggest that metaphor is a tool that enables people to use what they know about their direct physical and social experiences to understand more abstract things like work, time, mental activity, and feelings. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory is a theory of what (abstract) concepts are, how they are structured, and how this structure is acquired which according to them is by mapping of structure from one more concrete or sensory-motor specific domain to another more abstract domain. Conceptual metaphors, is, therefore, rest on "cross-

domain mappings.” It claims that the effect that our abstract concepts are metaphorically structured and that cross-domain mappings constitute one of the fundamental cognitive meaning-making processes.

Colonial Administration in Brief.

In 1900, the British Government assumed control of the Southern and Northern Protectorates, both of which were ultimately governed by the Colonial Office at Whitehall. Colonial Nigeria was ruled by the British Empire from 1900 until 1960 when Nigeria attained independence. The British targeted Nigeria because of its resources. The British wanted products like palm oil and palm kernel and export trade in tin, cotton, cocoa, groundnuts, palm oil, and so on (Graham, 2009). The British accomplished the colonization by using its military. Although there was strong resistance from natives against the British, it was all crushed by the British. As a result, the trading post at the Niger River is created and the British economic rule is maintained over the colonies, exploiting Nigerians (Graham, 2009). Approximately, Nigeria was colonized for 60 years before independence. *October 1* is a film expected to reflect the journey to independence of Nigeria, which it did subtly but focused more on the pain, anguish, loss, deprivation, and violation that the country experienced before independence. To better understand the journey before independence, it is important to have a little knowledge of colonial administration.

An overview of the film *October 1* (2014)

A prologue precedes the film opening with the chase of a girl in the wood by an assailant who catches up with her,

forces himself on her, rapes her, kills her, and brands her body with a sign X which is later revealed as the sign of a crucifix. The film opens with the preparation for October 1, 1960, the day set for the country will be granted Independence by the United Kingdom, but the festive air was marred by the rape and murder cases which prompts the captain to invite Inspector Waziri to Akote for investigation of these cases. Prince Aderopo (Demola Adedoyin) arrived from the University of Ibadan on the same day Inspector Waziri (Sadiq Dada) arrived in Akote. Waziri demands to see Captain Winterbottom (Nick Rhys), who in turn summons Tomkins (Collin David Resse) and Ackerman (David Bailie) to his office upstairs. He introduces Inspector Waziri to the duo; they demand a detailed account of the investigation Waziri has done so far. Waziri tells the story with the flashback narrative technique. He tells them how he arrived at Akote market, on the 6th of September 1960 and met with Sergeant Afonja who took him to the police station and showed him his lodge. On that same day, the prince arrived in Akote on horseback from Ibadan where he had bagged a degree from the University of Ibadan, the premier university, and was being welcomed by the people as he rode on horseback.

From the marketplace, Sergeant Afonja takes Waziri to the morgue where two dead bodies are kept. He examines corpses and discovers that the rape victims are branded with the same symbol of the cross on their chests. He concluded that they were victims of one and the same culprit. Afonja then takes him to the farmland where the body was found. The owner of the farmland Adekoya (Kunle Afolayan) claims not to know anything

other than finding the body on his farmland. Investigation of the series of rape and murder is not left to Waziri alone, the king and his cabinet try to solve the mysterious killing through the of Ifa. The king summons the ifa priest to his palace to consult the ifa oracle for a solution and sacrificial objects for the cleansing of the land of the abomination of the murder of virgins. While the priest is in consultation with the oracle, the prince comes out to notify the king of his outing, and the king insists he goes with palace guards because of the existing danger in the land. That night the killer strikes again as predicted by the ifa priest during the consultation with the oracle in the palace, another virgin Bisi is raped and murdered by the stream. Bisi had waited to see her lover Sumonu one of the palace guards after filling her pot from the stream. (Ibrahim Chatta). After much investigation, Sumonu becomes a suspect and is apprehended for the rape and murder of Bisi and the other two virgins.

While Afonja is still in detention in the cell, the assailant rapes and kills another 17 years virgin who was sent to buy kerosene for her mother not too far from her home. This cleared Sumonu and he was released. Determined to apprehend the assailant, Waziri asks Afonja to arrest the Ifa priest. Afonja vehemently kicks against this according to him, it is an abomination to arrest the god's spokesperson. The visit for questioning is done by Omolodun (Fabian Adeoye Lojede), who visits the ifa priest's home with Waziri and questions him there even though the priest cannot provide them with the name or who the assailant is. Other members of the police force embarked on the reinstatement of Afonja. Waziri

reinstated Afonja and shortly after, Chidima, the only daughter of an Igbo man, Okafor (Kanayo O. Kanayo) went missing. Search parties including villagers and the police went out. Her body was found with the same mark branded on her.

While the search was on, Omolodun heard footsteps of someone running and went after the person alone without notifying Waziri or Afonja. He catches up with the who turns out to be Aderopo the prince. Aderopo succeeded in slitting Omolodun's throat, killing him, and escaping before others came in search of him. The party searches the bush for Omolodun's killer and apprehends a Hausa traveler Usman Dangari with Chidinma's necklace in his hands. Usman's story at the station was that he was lost and couldn't find his way because it was dark. He said he met a man who gave him the necklace even though he did give him any direction but walked off humming the song he was humming. He could not see the man's face because of the darkness. Though Waziri believed him, every other person believed that Usman was the serial killer and Waziri was biased because they were of the same tribe. This resulted in a slight form of inter-tribal unrest in Akote. Winterbottom ordered that Usman be sent to the Agodi prison at Ibadan. Usman was murdered by Okafor using his hunter's skill to hack him down from a close distance, on the day he was to be transferred.

At the thought that the assailant has been caught and murdered, Waziri is instructed to submit his report and go back to his station. Afonja in a bid to appreciate Waziri's effort before he leaves even though he is

persuading him to stay back and be a part of the independence invites Waziri out for a drink. At the bar Waziri, after a few drinks gets tipsy and goes out to ease himself at a corner outside the bar. While urinating, he hears someone humming the queen's song and goes in search of the person who attacks him with a walking stick. Waziri passes out only to wake up at Afonja's house, after he was attended to with local herbs from his catarrh by Afonja's wife, he regains the memory of the attack on him outside the bar. He remembers who attacked him and who the serial rapist and murderer is. He sets out to gather evidence and apprehend the assailant before he leaves for the United Kingdom after October 1 to further his education. Waziri got the lead from Miss Tawa (Kehinde Bankole), who told him about the prince and Agbekoya education scholarship to Lagos from Father Dowling (Lawrence Stubbings) six years ago. Rev. Dowling took the boys to Lagos, but Koya didn't stay back to complete his education for a reason no one knows.

After much interrogation, Koya finally told their story of how Rev. Father Dowling every Thursday evening prayers rapes each one of them, one after the other. After six months, he could not endure it anymore and escaped back to the village to start farming. The experience was responsible for his refusal to give his children a Western education. He confessed that he killed Rev. Dowling during his last visit to Akote. He assisted Waziri in apprehending Prince Aderopo on his attempted sixth virgin rape and murder of Miss Tawa on independence day evening. Waziri had to shoot him to save Koya from being murdered by Aderopo who refused to let him go after appeal and persuasion.

While Akote is still basking in the Independence Day euphoria, Winterbottom closes the rape case and insists that the Hausa man remains the assailant who killed the virgins after ascertaining that only a few people know the truth. This shocks Waziri but Winterbottom explains that revealing the truth is not good for the new Nigerian nation. An Igbo woman was killed; a Hausa man was apprehended, and the Igbo father killed the Hausa man it turns out the Hausa man was innocent and that a Yoruba man was the killer, what matters most is that the culprit has been caught therefore the case remains closed, he asks Waziri to return to Benin his base.

Reading the film

October 1 (2014) was produced and directed by Kunle Afolayan; the film was written by Tunde Babalola. For a country that is on the verge of attaining independence, an atmosphere of joy and jubilation is expected to be felt in Akote (Akote is the village adopted by the writer and producer of the film as the country about to attain independence). While a few in the country, especially the literate ones are expectant and getting ready for the Day to come, although in fear, the rest of the village is covered in a dark cloud, gloom, and fear due to incidents of rape and murder that started a month into independence.

At the second incident of rape and murder of the victim, Inspector Danladi Waziri comes to Akote to help in apprehending the culprit. After the third rape occurred and it seems the assailant has been apprehended the fourth victim was reported, and the suspect was released. The fifth rape and murder case occurrence are recorded after again the act is pinned on a Hausa businessman who was murdered in cold blood by the

Igbo victim's father. At the attempt of the sixth rape, the assailant, Prince Aderopo, meets a brick wall and is apprehended but got killed while attempting to escape.

Significance of the Rape in October 1

Rape is often seen as an act carried out by the culprit to release sexual pressure, but it has also been seen as means of expression of anger and revenge. However, Aderopo's act of rape was not for sexual gratification but can be seen as an anger rape as explained by Groth and Burgess (1977) in Rape: a sexual deviation, as a rape in which the offender expresses anger, rage, contempt and hatred for his victim by beating her, sexually assaulting her, and forcing her to perform or submit to additional degrading acts. He uses more force than would be necessary simply to subdue his victim. He derives his pleasure from degrading and humiliating his victim. This explains why Aderopo mutilated his victims. This paper investigates the rapes in the film and their significance in the transition from colonialism to independence in Nigeria.

The Trigger: The incident that triggers the serial rape was revealed to the audience via a flashback technique, and this was the rape of Aderopo and Agbekoya by Rev. Father Dowling. This rape is known as the power rape as Groth and Burgess (1977) described:

In cases where the primary motivation is power, the aim of the assault usually is to effect sexual intercourse as evidence of conquest; to accomplish this, often the victim is kidnapped, tied

up, or otherwise rendered helpless. Rape is the way in which this type of person asserts his identity, potency, mastery, strength, and dominance and denies his feelings of worthlessness, rejection, helplessness, inadequacy, and vulnerability. (Groth and Burgess, 1977:1240)

Aderopo endured the dehumanization and rape for six years and came back with pain, deep hurt, psychological and personality disorder, and in search of vengeance and healing. He became the assailant.

The assailant: The prince is always dressed in a white shirt, coat, trousers, and shoes which is a representation of the skin colour of the colonialists; the Western world that invaded the land, ravaging it of its values, virtues, honor, and resources.

The First Rape: The first rape was not revealed to the audience. Viewers got to know about it during Inspector Waziri's investigation. He was led by Afonja to the morgue where he assessed the two bodies before being taken to the venue of the incidents.

The second rape: This is the first rape revealed to the audience in the film. While the victim tried her best to escape, her assailant caught up with her in Agbekoya's cocoa farm, raped her, strangulated her, and inscribed the crucifixion on her chest just as was done to the first victim. The spilling of blood on farmland signifies the snatching of the land's produce, source of wealth, and livelihood.

The third rape: Bisi who had her education up to standard three in a secret relationship with a palace guard by the village stream. Bisi could not reveal her relationship with Sunmonu whom she loves dearly and looks forward to marrying because her mother wanted her to marry an educated man. This reveals the stolen freedom of choice of the people in exchange for education. The rape and murder of Bisi by the stream and the shattering of her water pot is a signification of the shattering of the existing love, unity, and peace among the people. Her blood contaminating the stream which is the village's source of water signifies the drought and hardship in the land caused by colonization.

The fourth rape: The rape of the 17 years old girl who went to buy kerosene just a stone's throw away from her parents' house opens the eyes of the people to the fact that the rapist is still out there and independence day is just in a few days. However, before now, the Inspector already has a clue of who the rapist is. This fifth rape signifies the murder of the land's access to a means of supply of light.

The fifth rape: When the village thinks that the assailant has been rid of the fourth rape occurred, the rape of 19 years old Chidinma, a hunter's only child who hawks orange caused a lot of unrest. Her body was found in the forest with the same crucifixion sign. Her rape and death ignited inter-tribal chaos in the land, the Igbo people against the Hausa, and the death of an innocent Hausa trader. This is a rape that signifies the end of trust and peaceful cohabitation, a disruption of the village's commerce, and perhaps an end of it.

The sixth rape: This would have been the rape and destruction of everything that Western education represents, however, this rape did not occur because of the timely intervention of Inspector Waziri with the assistance of Agbekoya who led the inspector and his team to the secret hut in the bush. This prevented rape would have signified the total loss of what Western education represented and its purpose.

According to Aderopo, his plan was to rape and murder six virgins, each one representing the six years he was sexually traumatized through rape by Father Dowling. On the other hand, the reading of the crucifixion as X meaning ten in the Roman numeral can be read as one virgin representing ten years of the colonial rules which ran up to sixty years as well as each raped and murdered virgin representing each year Ropo endured violation. Why the use of rape?

Prof. Ebenezer Oluntope Akin, a Professor of Clinical Psychology, Department of Behavioural Studies, Redeemer's University, Ede, Ogun state in the University's 3rd inaugural lecture titled "The Masquerade of a Sweet Poison". He was of the opinion that rape is an extreme case of psychological sexual behaviour, he claimed that the behaviour might likely be precipitated by the lingering economic crisis and the country's eroded value system" (Guardian, Monday, February 20, 2017) Though psychological, it is assumed to grant the perpetrator a form of sexual satisfaction and release from sexual orgies while the victim is inflicted with pain that could lead to death or emotional damage. Rape as a concept has a cultural connotation that gives

impetus to the way it is socially perceived. In most Nigerian traditional cultures, sexual infidelity is viewed as a serious infraction against the established community norm of morality, Akinwale, O.T & Osakwe, O.S. (2014). The Prince would have had a knowledge of his community's perception of rape hence his adoption of this act to express his state of insanity, bondage, deprivation, violation, discomfort, anger, and dishonour he was suffering because of the invasion of the white people (colonialists) that came with education and religion that in violent subtlety stole from him his virtues and humanity.

Although Agbekoya was of the understanding that Prince Aderopo wanted Western education more than he did, his young mind might not be able to comprehend the responsibility placed on the crowned prince to endure and wade through any circumstances no matter how tough. A ruler of the nation cannot and must not chicken out. Aderopo might have still had his sanity in place if it had been the case of enduring what might seem like the negative effect of his land's culture and tradition and not the sexually violated by a stranger to whom he was made the sacrificial lamb. No wonder Inspector Waziri was keen on knowing what could have driven him to such 'insanity'?

In his quest for freedom and expression of the effect of the invasion and violation of his soul and body by colonization. The prince had to adopt the most traumatic act of virgin rage just as he was raped, mutilating their body just as his soul was mutilated, and strangling them just as virtues and values were strangulated out of him

by Father Dowling. Aderopo's traumatic status is seen in Stanko's (1984) description of rape. According to Stanko, forcible rape is traumatically painful, it is the most physically painful ordeal that an individual can undergo and still live afterward.

Aderopo did not have an inkling of what getting a Western education would cost him, he expressed his disappointment and hurt in a chat with Miss Tawa, Prince Aderopo believed the country's independence had come too early, and that the country did not know what colonization did to it. He said, 'Not until you strike the water with the bucket that you truly know how deep the water well is.' Not until he accepted the Western education which took him to Lagos where he had his first strike of the bucket did, he realize that the water well of colonization was very deep. The act of violent rape of virgins was the only metaphor that could explain the vengeance he was out for and the trauma he was suffering from.

From Aderopo's conversation with Miss Tawa, it was obvious that he was angry with the land for selecting only male children to go through the trauma. For him, male children were made sacrificial lambs, this could also be the reason for going after the female gender which represents the land from which every good thing be it in the form of humanity, commerce, and economy emerges. It is only the spilling of virgin blood and their death that can explain the depth of the loss of the land suffered in colonialism.

Conclusion

As described by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory is a theory of what (abstract) concepts are, how they are structured, and how this structure is acquired which according to them is by mapping of structure from one more concrete or sensory-motor specific domain to another more abstract domain. The abstract pain, denial, trauma, violation, and anger in the Prince were structured and brought to a concrete domain in the physical evidence of the dead virgins. It also presented the subtle damage that colonialism had done to our nation Nigeria through the subtle violent invasion that silently took away our honour as a country, values, virtues, beliefs, and who we are. The damage done during the colonial era transcends the colonial era to the post-colonial era, so also does the act rape metaphorically in diverse forms persists. Remi Dairo explains his rape experiences in the Nigeria post-colonial era in his poem posted on his Facebook page titled I have been raped:

I HAVE BEEN RAPED!!!

>>>Yes I have been raped....

Without any blood stain on my house couch
Or running to the street or Supreme Court
Painful heart yet the bleeding I can't contain
I decide to talk, they said "Why complain"

.....

>>>Yes I have been raped....

When I lost my father to desperately waiting
For doctor who cared not for our wailing!
They said General Hospital; a place of rescue
But place to buy 'everything' or be pursued

Yet no one carried a placard
No one blocks the road-pass!

.....

>>>Yes I have been raped....

When taking postgraduate lectures with my phone light
When 'NEPA' decided to take the campus light
They said having a second degree was right
When getting my desired job became so tight
Yet no one carried a placard
No one blocks the road-pass!

.....

>>>Yes I have been raped....

Lost my Tires to pothole plying Lagos-Ibadan express
Escaped death several times on Ogbomosho-Ilorin
without impress
Yet the roads contracts were awarded and re-awarded
Only few are feasting on the 'uncompleted' reward
Yet no one carried a placard
No one blocks the road-pass!

.....

>>>Yes I have been raped....

When raided by the 'men with the cows'
On Kaduna road; Police, much later asking 'How's'!
When the government openly promised me; Maximum
security!
But I did not have any political immunity
Yet no one carried a placard
No one blocks the road-pass!

.....

>>>Yes we are all raped!

We must all stand to defend all injustice
Now, it goes beyond religious or political offices
It's time to keep our placards very close

Let us help to revive our dying folks

Irrespective of background, region or sex without animosity

The resuscitation of this country is our responsibility!

.....

This poem further reveals that rape, either sexual or otherwise, metaphorically expresses traumatic experiences.

Filmography:

- Sadiq Daba as Inspector Danladi Waziri
- Kayode Aderupoko as Inspector Sunday Afonja
- Demola Adedoyin as Prince Aderopo
- Kehinde Bankole as Miss Tawa
- Kunle Afolayan as Agbekoya
- Fabian Adeoye Lojede as Corporal Omolodun
- Kanayo O. Kanayo as Okafor
- Ibrahim Chatta as Sumonu
- Bimbo Manuel as Canon Kuforiji
- Femi Adebayo as Banji
- Abiodun Aleja as Olaitan
- Nick Rhys as Winterbottom
- Deola Sagoe as Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti
- David Bailie as Ackerman
- Colin David Reese as Reverend Dowling
- Lawrence Stubbings as Tomkins
- Ifayemi Elebuibon as Baba Ifa
- Meg Otanwa as Yejide

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