Walt Whitman: A Current Bibliography, Fall 2006

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Auclair, Tracy. “The Language of Drug Use in Whitman’s ‘Calamus’ Poems.” *Papers on Language and Literature* 40 (Summer 2004), 227-259. [Examines “the ways in which Whitman links the calamus root in his poetry to literary representations of drugged consciousness,” arguing that the hallucinogenic qualities of the calamus root were familiar to Whitman and “he chose it to be a major trope in his poetic sequence based on this knowledge”; goes on to “explore how the rhetoric of drugged consciousness, which is typified in Fitz Hugh Ludlow’s *The Hasheesh Eater*, informs Whitman’s ‘Calamus’ poems,” allowing Whitman to “depict the hashish-like effects of the calamus root as a means of collapsing personal and public space,” of dissolving “the classic American tension between the individual and the mass.”]

Axelrod, Steven Gould. “Jeffers’s ‘Hungerfield.’” *Explicator* 62 (Winter 2004), 106-107. [Suggests that “Jeffers’s Whitmanian metalepsis” in his late poem ‘Hungerfield’ shows that “his antithetical posture toward his precursor wore away in his later years, revealing an underlying synthesis.”]


Belasco, Susan. “From the Field: Walt Whitman’s Periodical Poetry.” *American Periodicals* 14 (2004), 247-259. [Points out that Whitman “published about 150 first printings of poems in about 45 periodicals” and goes on to investigate Whitman’s periodical publication of his poetry as a way of understanding “how he negotiated and used magazines and newspapers to construct his image and develop his reputation,” looking at how such publication was part of his “strategy of promoting *Leaves of Grass*.”]

Benton, Thomas H. “A Professor and a Pilgrim.” *Chronicle of Higher Education* 52 (August 11, 2006), C1. [Personal essay about academic pilgrimages, including the author’s own pilgrimage to Whitman’s home in Camden and his encounter at Harvard University with Whitman’s death mask.]

Black, Samuel. “Orchestra layers the power of strings in focused concert.” *Duluth* [Minnesota] *News Tribune* (July 13, 2006). [Review of concert by the Lake Superior Chamber Orchestra, which premiered a new composition by Michele Gillman based on two poems by Whitman, sung by soprano Rachel Inselman.]

Blake, David Haven. *Walt Whitman and the Culture of American Celebrity*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006. [Examines how Whitman “immersed himself in the culture of celebrity that was then emerging in the United States” in the hope that “the poet would become the center of American civic life” and that “the story of celebrity would become the story of democracy,” and investigates how “Whitman’s ideas of celebrity helped shape *Leaves of Grass*, how the meanings he granted to fame influenced the relationship he established with his readers.”]
Bohan, Ruth L. *Looking into Walt Whitman: American Art, 1850-1920*. University Park: Penn State University Press, 2006. [Part One discusses Whitman’s engagement with the visual arts, examines the tradition of portraiture of Whitman (with numerous illustrations), and investigates his influence on Thomas Eakins; Part Two surveys Whitman’s impact on modernist artists, especially Marsden Hartley, Robert Coady, and Joseph Stella.]

Boruch, Marianne. “Poets in Cars.” *Massachusetts Review* 43 (2002), 521-540. [Muses on the nature of movement in poetry, examining the way Whitman begins his poetry by walking but then speeds up and flies: “That he started with the walk to pace and even shape his poems makes sense in the most natural and even democratic way . . . but something other was coming into the mix, turning it faster, more chaotic, something that had less and less to do with being human.”]

Boyer, Patricio Edgardo. “Empire and American Visions of the Humane.” Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 2006. [Examines Whitman and Melville in relation to the writings of Barolomé de las Casas (1484-1566) and El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega (1539-1616), viewing them as writers who “seek to forge a New World understanding of intercultural contact” during a period of conquest and “historical crisis.”]

Brookhiser, Richard. “Upstate Burgeoning.” *National Review* 57 (August 29, 2005), 52. [Muses on how his garden reminds him of literary classics, including the mullein weeds reminding him of “Song of Myself.”]

Buch, Bart. “Ode to Walt Whitman.” [Puppet show, assembled and performed by Bart Buch, pairing Walt Whitman and Federico Garcia Lorca in an online chat room debating various aspects of American culture, sexuality, and capitalism; premiered July 13-15, 2006, at Intermedia Arts in Minneapolis.]

Carman, Joseph. “Fresh Moves.” *Advocate* no. 961 (April 25, 2006), 58-59. [About Rufus Wainwright’s musical score “Bloom,” based on Whitman’s “Unseen Buds” and “One’s Self I Sing” and a poem by Emily Dickinson; the score was used to accompany a dance piece by Stephen Petronio performed at the Joyce Theatre in New York City.]

Cohen, Michael. “E. C. Stedman and the Invention of Victorian Poetry.” *Victorian Poetry* 43 (2005), 165-188. [Proposes that Stedman’s *Victorian Poets and Poets of America* “serve as foundational works not only for their respective poetic fields of study, but for the modern practice of literary criticism itself,” and argues that Stedman’s critical work “stands at a central point in the emergence of both modern literary criticism and the twentieth- and twenty-first-century understanding of the nineteenth century”; suggests “the sympathy that existed” between Stedman and Whitman in their shared “fantasy of poems being nations.”]

States Review review of the 1855 Leaves of Grass; an unsigned “Short Introduction to Whitman’s Mysticism” (15), arguing that “his spirituality was aimed at uniting himself as much as possible, in spirit and body, with his neighbors” and proposing that he wrote Leaves in order to “reinvigorate” Transcendentalism; and a selection of excerpts from Whitman’s poems and prose writings (29-164).]


Dunkelman, Mark H. War’s Relentless Hand: Twelve Tales of Civil War Soldiers. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006. [Chapter 12, “Private Oscar F. Wilber, Company G” (225-240), uses Wilber’s seventeen surviving wartime letters and other archival materials to tell the story of Wilber’s experiences in the Civil War, including his friendship with Whitman.]


Finch, Caleb E. “Aging, Inflammation and the Body Electric.” Daedalus 135 (Winter 2006), 68-76. [Discusses the role of inflammation in the aging process and uses Whitman’s medical history as a case study: “the ‘Whitman case’ points us to more general principles in aging.”]

Folsom, Ed. “The Sesquicentennial of the 1856 Leaves of Grass: A Daguerreotype of a Woman Reader.” Walt Whitman Quarterly Review 24 (Summer 2006), 33-34. [Discusses a daguerreotype of an unidentified young woman holding a copy of the 1856 Leaves of Grass; the daguerreotype is reproduced on the back cover of this issue of WWQR.]


Gilbert, Sandra M. Death’s Door: Modern Dying and the Way We Grieve. New York: Norton, 2006. [Chapter 12, “Was the Nineteenth Century Different, and Luckier?” (332-365), examines Whitman’s and Dickinson’s poetry about death against the backdrop of “the majority views of death and dying” and considers how Whitman’s and Dickinson’s poetry challenged those views, arguing that they “engendered visions of death and dying” and “often depicted dying as an encounter with a magically powerful member of the opposite sex,” though Whitman’s “Death as a ‘strong deliveress’ certainly seems like a more welcome figure than [Dickinson’s] Death as a Lord of the Flies or a skeletal suitor”; concludes by comparing Whitman’s and Dickinson’s funerals and graves.]

Gilmore, Paul. “Romantic Electricity, or the Materiality of Aesthetics.” American Literature 76 (September 2004), 467-494. [Examines how a number of nineteenth-century authors, including Whitman, use “allusions to electrical science and technology and . . . hypotheses about the nervous system and thought itself as electric” to imagine “an aesthetic moment experienced on
a material, bodily level,” and points out that “Whitman’s ‘body electric’ provides the best known, and perhaps most fully developed, use of electricity to suggest the collective materiality of aesthetic experience,” and that “the sexual and aesthetic connection that Whitman imagines as electric in ‘Song of Myself’ becomes materialized in technologies like the telegraph, and his aesthetic dream becomes rooted in the material and social forces that might actually allow cross-cultural interaction and foster a sense of the self’s connection to others.”

Glasser, Jeff. “No Small Plans.” U.S. News & World Report 134 (March 10, 2003), 51. [Reports on architect Daniel Liebeskind’s design for Ground Zero in Manhattan, noting how his plan was inspired by Whitman’s “Man-nahatta.”]

Goodby, John. “Whitman’s Influence on Dylan Thomas and the Use of ‘Sidle’ as a Noun.” Notes & Queries 52 (March 2005), 105-107. [Reviews Whitman’s influence on Thomas and examines two letters (written in 1934 and 1940) in which Thomas mentions his associations with Whitman.]

Gould, Mitchell Santine. “Whitman’s Sailors and Other Friends.” Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide 11 (March/April 2004), 19-22. [Examines the “quaker paradox” in Whitman, suggesting that “Whitman viewed Quaker values of peace, tolerance, and the higher authority of human conscience (the ‘inner light’) as the foundation for his view that manly love leads not away from God but rather toward God,” and postulating a “sailor-lover-quaker triangle,” in which Whitman’s love of old quaker sailors was the origin of his “institution of manly love,” a love that developed when “sailors were isolated together on the high seas.”]

Hallengren, Anders. “A Hermeneutic Key to the Title Leaves of Grass.” In Stephen McNeilly, ed., In Search of the Absolute: Essays on Swedenborg and Literature (London: Journal of the Swedenborg Society, 2004), 45-59. [Examines “the trinomial Swedenborg-Emerson-Whitman connection . . . and especially the more direct Swedenborg-Whitman relation,” tracking Whitman’s comments on Swedenborg and suggesting that Whitman’s title Leaves of Grass may have come from “the comprehensive English dictionaries of Correspondences compiled from Swedenborg’s writings” by George Nicholson in 1800, a revised edition of which was published in Boston in 1841 and listed “grass” as signifying “what is alive in man,” and listed “leaves” as “truths,” suggesting that Whitman’s title may mean “Truths of What is Alive in Man.”]


union” and because it is, “for him, a formal structure incompatible with equality,” leading him (for example) to reply “to Emerson’s private letter with a mass mailing,” leading him to suggest “that letter-writing ineffectually confers intimacy, corporeality, presence, or familiarity, while at the same time failing to depict intercourse that is sufficiently anonymous, transcendent, proleptic, or universal,” and thus leading him to celebrate telegraphy over letter-writing, since the telegraph “allows for the ‘face to face’ that is both immediate and anonymous . . . an intimate encounter with absolutely unparticular persons.”


Holm, Janis Butler. “A Magazine of Bare, Naked Ladies.” *Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide* 12 (March/April 2005), 42. [Poem composed entirely of words and phrases from “I Sing the Body Electric.”]

Ikeda, Daisaku, Ronald Bosco, and Joel Myerson. “Seimei runesansu to shigokoro no hikari: tetsujin Sorou to Emason wo kataru” [“Renaissance of Life and the Light of Poetry: A Discussion of Philosophers Thoreau and Emerson”]. *Todai* no. 539 (August 2005), 52-62. [The thirteenth installment of a discussion on Thoreau and Emerson, this one called “Encounter with Whitman,” covering Emerson’s and Thoreau’s interrelationship with Whitman, Whitman’s sensitivity toward Eastern philosophy and religion, the significance of “Song of Myself,” Whitman’s visit to Concord, the role of the poet, and other topics; in Japanese.]


Jowett, Deborah. “Sticking with It.” *Village Voice* (May 30, 2006). [About a performance by the Wendy Osserman Dance Company, featuring dancer Victoria Lundell; one dance is “In vain the speeding or shyness . . . ,” based on a line from “Song of Myself” and set to music by Corelli.]

his work—“his changing focus from language to racial superiority and then to the postbellum negation of that superiority demonstrates the complexity of Whitman’s politics”—and leading him after 1860 to employ “both new vocabulary and new ideas which actively contradict the familiar strains of Anglo-Saxonism.”]

Lawson, Andrew. “'Song of Myself' and the Class Struggle in Language.” *Textual Practice* 18 (Autumn 2004), 377-394. [Examines Whitman’s “class location” and analyzes the “mixed diction” in “Song of Myself,” arguing that Whitman employs “the dialogic strategy of pushing signifiers from opposite poles of the social divide together into a combustible intimacy, a strategy that is critical and satirical in intent,” provoking “social conflict” while at the same time “facilitat[ing] a harmonious exchange of cultural capital between classes.”]

Levinson, Julian. “Walt Whitman among the Yiddish Poets.” *Tikkun* 18 (September/October 2003), 57-60. [Examines how “a surprising number of Yiddish poets discovered a guiding inspiration in the work and personal example of Walt Whitman,” and discusses several Yiddish poems that respond to Whitman, including work by I. J. Schwartz and Reuben Ludwig.]

Lisk, Thomas David. “Walt Whitman’s Attic.” *Massachusetts Review* 47 (Spring 2006), 154-167. [Short story, about Whitman getting his hair washed by Mary Davis, with musings about phrenology and Whitman’s associations with phrenologists.]


Maas, David F. “Reflections on Self-Reflexiveness in Literature.” *TEC: A Review of General Semantics* 60 (Fall 2003), 313-321. [Examines “self-reflexiveness” in several authors, including Whitman, who, in “Song of Myself,” reveals a “kaleidoscopically shifting point of view” that “allows us to see the process of the mapper mapping his mapping.”]

Meyers, Jeffrey. “Whitman’s Lives.” *Antioch Review* 63 (Fall 2005), 755-787, 803. [Offers a detailed overview of the history of Whitman biography, from John Burroughs through Jerome Loving, judging almost all the efforts of “the po-faced biographers” as unsuccessful.]

Moon, Michael. “Solitude, Singularity, Seriality: Whitman vis-à-vis Fourier.” *ELH* 73 (Summer 2006), 303-323. [Argues that Whitman’s poetry “demands to be understood in general and in detail as part of the complex web of discourses of the sex-radical movements from the 1850s to the 1880s” and that Whitman’s work is grounded in the writings of Charles Fourier, “the most highly elaborated theory of sexual attraction available in his time”; goes on to consider “the meaning of Whitman’s sublimely shifting perception of himself from ‘solitary singer’ to specimen of some new type of mass-be ing,” suggesting that what Whitman came to realize in the early 1850s was that “erotic desires and activities between and among men were
just beginning to become the subject of public discourses in which they might conceivably come to be understood by increasingly larger numbers of people as constituting potentially world-making, life-affirming practices, rather than the so-called filthy abominations they had widely been considered to be,” a shift in public perception that allowed Whitman to create a poetry that, “like Fourier’s social and economic theories, draws on and contributes to a stream of anarchic political and erotic aspirations in which sexual variance in its myriad forms has not been a marginal or tolerated feature, but a central and fundamental value.”

Moores, D. J. “‘Gangs of Kosmos and Prophets En Masse’: The Cosmic Poetics of Wordsworth and Whitman.” Romanticism 10 (2004), 95-112. [Argues for the importance of Wordsworth’s influence on Whitman, examining “their jointly-held belief in the locomotive power of poetry as a vehicle for expanding consciousness, as well as the reader’s active role in this process,” and proposing that their desire to “morally awaken” the reader’s “cosmic awareness” and “jolt the reader out of the bondage of automated perception” is the key factor in each poet’s aspiration to become “the poet-prophet” with “a cosmically empowered voice uttering the mysteries of the universe.”]

Mulvihill, Geoff. “For the Poet of the People, Tour Aims To Get People into Camden.” Times-Leader [Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania] (May 27, 2006). [About the “Walt Whitman & His Invincible City” bus tour of Camden, New Jersey, being offered in the summer of 2006, taking visitors to Whitman’s Mickle Street home and to his grave at Harleigh cemetery; Associated Press story published in several newspapers nationwide.]


Myerson, Joel. “Walt Whitman and the Trimbles: New Zealand, the First Concordance of Leaves of Grass, and the Dunedin Public Library.” Walt Whitman Quarterly Review 24 (Summer 2006), 20-32. [Recounts the history of the Trimble family (William, his wife Henrietta, his daughter Dorothy, and his second wife Annie) in New Zealand and their involvement in collecting Whitman books and undertaking (in 1903 or 1904) the first concordance of Whitman’s work; tracks how the Trimble Whitman collection came to be housed at the Dunedin Public Library.]


Ochse, Roger. The Civic Literature of Walt Whitman. Rapid City, SD: Chiesman Foundation For Democracy, 2004. [Positions Whitman’s writings as the source for “a highly relevant instructional program in civic education in the public schools,” arguing that they “belong in the civics curriculum with those of Jefferson, Lincoln, and Kennedy”; eight brief chapters consider Whitman as a citizen (1-6), offer an overview of his life and career (9-17), and offer readings of “Song of Myself” (19-26), the 1855 Preface (29-34),
“The Wound-Dresser” (37-43), Memories of President Lincoln (45-48), Democratic Vistas (51-56), and conclude by considering how Whitman sets about “creating a civil society” (59-62); followed by a selection of Whitman poems and prose (65-147), with study questions appended.

Ochse, Roger. Walt Whitman: A Study in American Democratic Thought. Rapid City, SD: Chiesman Foundation For Democracy, 2001. [Offers a “study of Walt Whitman’s democratic thought and ideals,” with brief chapters on the roots of his democratic thought, the influence of Jefferson, the effects of Emerson and the Transcendentalists, the “expanding nation,” Lincoln and the Civil War, Reconstruction, and Democratic Vistas as “Whitman's analysis of American democracy.”]


Paryz, Marek. “Passage to (more than) India: The Poetics and Politics of Walt Whitman’s Textualization of the Orient.” In Agata Preis-Smith and Marek Paryz, eds., The Poetics of America (Warsaw: English Institute, University of Warsaw, 2004), 25-44. [Examines “the rhetorical construction of the Orient in Walt Whitman’s 1871 poem ‘Passage to India,’” analyzing “the ambiguous interrelationship between the structure, the rhetoric and politics” in the poem and arguing that “Whitman constructs a subtext of Western imperialism, and yet he eventually casts doubt on the political priorities of the imperial project he himself endorses” producing “the ultimate paradox that he searches for the final sanction and a permanent foundation for an imperial project, possibly a flawed one, whose completion, however, he increasingly fears.”]


Rubinstein, Rachel. “Going Native, Becoming Modern: American Indians, Walt Whitman, and the Yiddish Poet.” American Quarterly 58 (June 2006), 431-453. [Compares the New York-based Yiddish journal Shriftn with Harriet Monroe’s and Ezra Pound’s Chicago-based Poetry, and examines their respective attempts to define modernism, with both journals evoking Whitman and American Indians as signs of American authenticity and as precursors of modernism (signaling “at once, nativeness and cosmopolitanism”), but with Shriftn adapting and transforming these sources so as to “trouble any clear demarcations between native and alien, East and West, Yiddish and ‘American.’”]

Ryan, Kay. “Walt Whitman.” Poetry 185 (October 2004), 50-51. [Examines why the author doesn’t read Whitman (“because I don’t need Whitman’s big stride, his wide, encompassing arms, his hug”), given her preference for “skinny-bodied poets.”]


Selby, Nick. “Prometheus Unbound: Touching Books in Jorie Graham’s Swarm and Susan Howe’s ‘Scattering as Behaviour Toward Risk.’” In Michael Hinds and Stephen Matterson, eds., Rebound: The American Poetry Book (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004), 183-196. [Examines Jorie Graham’s engagement with Whitman in her book Swarm (2000) and Susan Howe’s engagement with Emily Dickinson in her poem-sequence “Scattering as Behaviour Toward Risk”; argues that “Swarm is suspicious of Whitman’s poetic touch” and that “Graham’s strangled and scattered text . . . asks us to reformulate Whitman’s poetics as a question about what we do touch when we touch a poem, when a poem touches us.”]

Serrai, Roberto. “Landscapes of Destruction: Reading Kurt Vonnegut’s Breakfast of Champions with an Eye to Walt Whitman.” RSA: Rivista di Studi Nord Americani 13 (2002), 21-37. [ Reads Vonnegut’s novel Breakfast of Champions (1973) as a response to Whitman, focusing on “what [Whitman’s] ‘results to come’ have been, and on which kind of ‘literatus’ now sings America”; points out that Whitman is directly evoked in the novel when the character Kilgore Trout enters Philadelphia across the Walt Whitman Bridge, veiled in smoke; and concludes that, while there are muted moments in the novel of “an almost Whitmanesque magnitude,” more generally the novel provides a “nihilistic and destructive context,” in which “we’re led to believe that from the very beginning America’s promise was a kind of a fraud, and, why not, that Whitman’s work, too, was just a long redundant piece of advertisement ante litteram.”]
Shinoe, Rokuro. *Hoittoman to Mahan kara yomu Amerika no Minshushugi to Haken shugi* [American Democracy and Hegemonism: Reading through Whitman and Mahan]. Tokyo: Shinfu-sha, 2006. [Examines American democracy and hegemonism through Whitman and naval historian and geo-strategist Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840-1914), comparing their influence on American domestic and international policy, and concluding that Whitman’s “ideal resonates with that of UNESCO. The root still exists in the America’s soil. When the roots reconnect with the ideal of UNESCO, America will go back to Whitman’s America; then she can cast off Mahanism and transform America into the country of freedom, symbiosis, and tolerance. It will be a transformation from militarism into affinity”; in Japanese.]


Skwara, Marta Anna. “Some Aspects of Cross-Cultural Intertextuality as Seen through the Polish ‘Rewriting’ of Emerson and Whitman.” *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* (March 2004), 67-76. [Examines “the long-lasting presence” of Emerson’s and Whitman’s writings in Polish literature and the ways their works “were creatively incorporated by Polish writers and poets into their own texts as a voice of ‘another culture’ that could redefine and reshape ‘our culture’; focuses particularly Whitman’s presence in Stefan Zeromski’s novel *Dzieje grzechu* (The History of Sin, 1908) and in the poetry of Julian Tuwim and Czeslaw Milosz.]


Stacy, Jason Edward. “Containing Multitudes: Walt Whitman’s Three Personas in the New Market Economy.” Ph.D. Dissertation, Loyola University Chicago, 2006. [Examines the “three distinct personas”—teacher, editor, poet—that Whitman took on in order “to ‘teach’ Americans about their inherent equality” by uniting “the ideologies of radical labor reformers . . . and conservative reformers . . . in order to maintain the artisan republicanism of his father’s generation,” seeking “to convince his readers that affectation and hubris, rather than economic forces, were the origin of injustice.”]


music by composers Ned Rorem, Lee Hoiby, Leonard Bernstein, Charles Ives, Celius Dougherty, and James Rolfe.]

Tessitore, John E. “Whitmania: The Poetics of Free Religion.” Ph.D. Dissertation, Boston University, 2006. [Examines the “pseudo-religious movement known as Whitmanism” from the 1860s to the early 1900s, surveying the “transatlantic community of religious radicals” including “American Free Religionists and British Free Thinkers” who embraced Whitman’s poetry as “one of the most important expressions of the age’s religious humanism”; DAI 67 (July 2006)].


Whitman, Walt. “When I Heard the Learn’d Astronomer.” Times Higher Education Supplement no. 1696 (June 17, 2005), 20. [Reprints “When I Heard the Learn’d Astronomer.”]

Wisniewski, Mikolaj. “Walt Whitman: The Co(s)mic Poet: Unfixing Nature in the Song of Myself.” In Agata Preis-Smith and Marek Paryz, eds., The Poetics of America (Warsaw: English Institute, University of Warsaw, 2004), 81-100. [Examines “the orphic myth” in “Song of Myself,” arguing that Whitman is “an ironist who questions and in a sense toys with the rudimentary function of the notion of Nature in Romantic aesthetic ideology” and that “Nature in Whitman’s poetry is an utter Artifact—or worse: a journalistic claptrap,” drawn not from experience but from columns and reports in New York newspapers; concludes that “Song of Myself” “may be viewed as both a hubristic attempt to reclaim [Adamic language] and an ironic recognition of failure.”]

Worthen, John. “‘Wild Turkeys’: Some Versions of America by D. H. Lawrence.” European Journal of American Culture 24 (2005), 91-103. [Examines Lawrence’s relationship with American literature, especially the “satirical version of Whitman” Lawrence created in his essay on the poet.]


 Unsigned. “Editorial: My Soldiers, My Veterans.” *Capital Times* [Madison, Wisconsin] (May 28, 2006). [Editorial about the significance of Memorial Day, reprinting Whitman’s “Dirge for Two Veterans” as “an apt reminder that, when the fighting is done, it is not unheard of for those who warred against one another to find themselves buried side by side.”]


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