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## The Development of the Concept of landscape<sup>1</sup> in Persian Poetry in the Early Hijri Centuries (3rd to 7th Hijri)

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### Abstract

The first step to understand phrases and verses in a text is to understand the meanings and combinations correctly. History of Linguistics and Anthropology of Iran suggests that the notation and understanding of landscape has always existed in this country and there is a meaningful relationship between the concept and the imagined space. Landscape is an old and common concept which was used in many primary Hijri centuries' poems with similar form and varied meanings. The most prevalent changes regarding this term is its meaning which changes from appearance to inside and from an object to a subject and different narratives of seeing are depicted like viewpoint, window, porch, scene, sky and view. The term "landscape" has a set of sublunary and spiritual meanings and contains descriptive and conceptual aspects. Descriptive aspect narrates the appearance and it is an allegory of morals and an introduction to understand the conceptual aspect.


This paper studies the concept of landscape in the poems of primary Hijri centuries (3rd to 7th) to indicate its importance and role in the past and now. In order to understand "landscape" and its themes, the old poems of that era are studied here.

**Keywords:** *Landscape, Viewpoint, Landscape, Appearance, View.*

### Introduction

Landscape is a new term to describe the environment which has been used from mid twentieth century in Europe and United States. The experts regard it as an achievement of modernity that added attention to the nature as a criterion for proper life condition. After that, environmentalist and nature loving approaches prevailed and in the 20th century,

the concept of "Sustainable Development" was introduced. As space experts tried to coin new terms, the concept of landscape, which was a term related to agriculture and gardening, became independent. Landscape, in the new definition, is a subjective-objective concept that cannot exist inside or outside of human mind individually; it is our understanding of the outside world that makes landscape. The real world that men live in is a set of landscapes that men understand. The new theorized

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concept of landscape in the West entered the East as well. In Iran there were some introductions to the concept of landscape in previous decades. Now, in many universities the concept of landscape is taught as MA and PhD majors.

The speed this major experiences in Iran implies the cultural background that has helped its development. The publications of numerous related magazines, holding many congregations and paying attention to Iranian gardens have helped to the sudden development of this concept in Iran.

Primary investigations showed that Iranians understood the concept of landscape since the first millennium B.C., since they had created Iranian gardens that despite many changes to adapt to contemporary situations still provide a powerful pattern for interactions between humans and the environment. In order to represent the familiarity of Iranian mind with the concept of landscape, we explored Farsi poems from the 3rd to 7th Hijri century (9th to 15th A.D.). The findings suggest that the concept of landscape have had many roles and meanings including objective and subjective and objective (non-mental) and subjective (mental) roles and meanings.

### Research methodology

In data gathering step, we selected the poets with the most influence in the intended era. The 3rd to 7th centuries was the period in which the contemporary Farsi was formed and its mythical concepts developed to their peak. Also, we selected this period because studying all the periods meant a great variety of selections.

We selected verses from the poems in which the term “landscape” or its combinations were used. Then we used content analysis to reveal their apparent denotations, documented interpretations and metaphors and we classified them. In the next step, we placed the attained concepts in a four-part chart containing four criteria of subjective, objective, subjective (mental) and objective (non-mental). This chart was used to establish the next step content

analysis, the result of which were 6 basic concepts all of which were shown and described in detail in the chart. This analysis implies that the Iranian mind understood the concept of landscape in a relative combination related to the background.

### Data investigation 3rd and 4th Hijri

The oldest poems that contain the term “landscape” or its roots in the studied era go back to Rousakis (244-329 Hijri) and Ferdowsi (329-416 Hijri).

Rousakis has used the term view three times in two verses. In all three examples the meaning is subjective and equivalent to looking and paying attention. In his poetry he does not use the word “landscape”.

Do not look at better people, don't be sad

Look at those beneath you, live happily

Ferdowsi used the term landscape in Shahnameh verses four times, three times of which the meaning is superficial and indicates kingly race and root.

You are the son of a famous rider

The off-spring of a king with kingly looks

You would not break your pact

Since you are a lion with kingly looks

His dynasty and army and country

His kingly height and looks

In another example landscape has been used to indicate the viewpoint across from a porch:

He had a landscape in front of his porch

Just like his shiny throne

### The 5th century

In this century, there are more poems and poets. Two great poets of this century, Farrokhi Sistani (370-429 Hijri) and Nasser Khosro (394- 481 Hijri), used this term directly in their poems; Farrokhi 19 times and Nasser Khosro 17 times. In this era the conceptual domain of the term is greater. The most important point is using the concept of landscape versus its contradictory concept “inside”. “Inside” means the world contradictory to the outside world that was understood. They are both directly used to display the world of inside parallel to the outside world. It seems like the common culture emphasized on the

genuine of the inside world, and regarded the outside world as meaningless, mean, worthless and mortal. Both inside and landscape are used to indicate that both are valuable and landscape is important. As Farrokhi says,

There are many who their insides are different from  
their outside

You have a beautiful appearance like your inside  
Who could have an appearance and not an inside?  
Great man has a nice inside and a nice appearance  
The inside of a person must be like his appearance  
The inside should be fitting the looks

And as Nasser Khosro says,  
If you wish to see his face/ and that great look and  
inside  
Do as there are three open doors/ open your looks  
and inside

Here, the poet tries to match the appearance and the inside to indicate their value. In the poetry of these two poets, landscape (appearance) is used to mean natural landscape as well.

Inside the castle there were embroidered halls  
Their doors facing a landscape (Farrokhi)  
For them to look and gather around us  
These famous candles in this green landscape  
(NasserKhosro)

These seven candles in this landscape, boy!  
They are our guides in our actions (Nasser Khosro)  
I stood and started a journey  
I remembered of my lady and gardens and landscape  
(NasserKhosro)

In another meaning, Farrokhi has combined landscape with an adjective. Here, it means the appearance and face:

A king of good face, a king of good heart  
A king of good appearance, a king of good inside  
Keep the king from the evil eye  
For he has a nice appearance

Since Nasser Khosro was born two decades after Farrokhi, it seems “landscape (appearance)” has become more complicated in his poetry. Nasser Khosro uses this term with four new meanings:

The world in:

My soul is like a landscape  
I want to fly from this to the heaven  
A big window in:  
You have opened five big windows in this room  
You are sitting like a king in front of a landscape  
Landscape here means a proper place, worthy of a king. It is an allegory of human’s five senses through which he is able to see and understand the outside world as a king.

Viewpoint in:

After all, when you are free of the view of repent  
Again, you will fall in the well of ignorance  
Appearance, looks and body in:

I have left here boy  
All that is left is my appearance  
And these enemies  
Are going to destroy his looks

### The 6th century

Sanaee (473-545) used landscape in 13 of his verses, most of which are objective and meaning face and appearance:

You ask: do you see another lover like me out there?  
What kind of question is that, O my shining sun?

If the body is polluted with sin  
Then it is unable to see your beauty  
The beginning and the safety of it is because of the  
soul

The appearance and the inside are gates to the soul  
His pen is bountiful

His appearance is better than his inside  
In this aspect, there are references to the sky and far  
landscapes as well:

In your covering rest all the stars  
Placed in seven green landscapes  
While Sanaii, uses landscape with a subjective  
meaning synonymous with window, frame and  
porch:

The landscape and the house are full of gildings and  
decorations

They have you take you there even after you die  
O nightingale, you sing and you have a high place in  
the cage

If you become a peacock we would place you in the  
porch and landscape

From the door of body enter the landscape of soul

Come and watch the garden of Quran

Khaghani (520-595) as well used landscape 22 times  
in his poetry. In most of the examples he means face  
and appearance:

This old woman speaks of my heart

To take the evil eye away from me

I am the prey of the one who his looks is like the  
human soul

I will fight alongside him in his battle

I have been away for seven months from

He who is good as a dear celebration

He has the wind of Solomon and the Zunnar of Moses

He appearance is like a bird

Also, in parts of Khaghani poems landscape is used  
to mean a high position and it is subjective:

I saw his jewelry that was like a fish

I saw him among the caravan

I am Jesus, I live in the fourth heaven

They would not let me enter the eighth door

On top of his house there is an ant house

They made a landscape out of his arch

I will serve in his scene

I will not look but to see the landscape of seven skies.  
Khaghani uses the term "observer" in a verse that  
means "demanding look" and "deep understanding":

Thought arises from fancy and rises up

From the landscape of sky to far beyond

Nezami (540-602 Hijri) used landscape 12 times  
in his poetry. His concepts are both subjective and  
objective. Most of the time he means a window or  
a watching place that overlooks the outside world.  
He used landscape, which meant windows placed on  
top of the buildings in his time, to indicate high and  
spiritual concepts.

In your way you come across the Sidrat tree (a tree  
in the heaven)

You place is in the landscape of the sky

Sixty legs of flag are his landscape

He sits up there

He takes one from the landscape to the well

Takes one from the well to the sky

The ferry sat on the arch of the landscape

Placed some of them near her seat

Nezami, used landscape in a subjective manner as  
well-meaning position and place:

It was predicted before

That you would sit here today in this landscape

He also used landscape to mean scenery and  
viewpoint in an objective fashion:

The moon came and shone through the peephole

This lighted the landscape

Heavenly Bodies in the landscape

A wind blew from the two bodies

And still objective, it means human appearance in  
another place:

There was a man called 'Mahan' in Egypt

He was more beautiful than the sun

The king looked at his appearance

Seven bodies are sacrificed for him

### The 7th century

Sheikh Farid Aldin Attar Neishabouri (540-618Hijri)  
used landscape 37 times in his poems. Like his  
contemporaries he used landscape both in subjective  
and objective senses. But most of the times he sees  
them in the subjective manner meaning window or  
frame:

There was a big view

Behind which a girl was sitting

A view that was very high

Around of which written with gold

Once you said my home and my view

Once you said my stuff and my gold

You were born to end in the soil

Then why do you build views and  
castles?

He saw the way in a crowded landscape

He saw a porch near the sky

Thousands of views and doors and walls

All ruined on top of each other

Studying the concept of landscape in the poetry  
of Attar suggests that he used the word in an  
architectural manner, so there are not many

complexities and metaphors in it. Also, the way he uses the term indicates that he might have used it to mean a “porch” that was a very important element of the architecture of that age and showed the wealth of the house owner. There was a place above the porch called the landscape with a view overlooking outside. In the objective sense, view is used to mean the face and appearance of the loved one; so it is delicate and sentimental:

As the dust hit the ground

From seven landscapes

The child unveiled the cover

To face that view

The appearance of that grave was alabaster stone

It was bright and white like the edge of a blade

So see the view of your love

Though it is not possible to actually see God

Die, to remain alive

To remain in the look of the cupbearer

When he came to the view nobody saw him

He got to what he wished

Mowlawi (604-672) used the term landscape 55 times both in subjective and objective fashion. In objective fashion it has different meanings including:

### Face and appearance

If your head is deep down

Then the sun would not shine on your view

He said where is it? He replied over your head

If you can't see it then you should turn your view up

You are the desired light and amicable in every one's eyes

that is great, respect for your view

The day when the loved one comes, the soils become gold

Even though that beauty and view is not the alchemy

It may also mean scenery and the sky:

Do not sleep tonight, do not do home

Since the hidden observer is at the landscape tonight

All eternal heavens did not become a landscape for  
the king

My heart is happy to make it his landscape

It might also mean the loved one or God:

Whoever has a landscape

Knows that this moaning is as former moanings

I serve you especially if you command

To look at your appearance

Despite these meanings, landscape is used with other meanings in the subjective manner:

It means eyes and looks through which one sees the outside world:

If you turn and your head turns

Your looks see the home turning

She said it and left like the wind

Tears came down from my view

He also uses the term to mean a big and great window to indicate a concept in his time which is neglected today. Great windows overlooking landscapes which were called “landscape”:

You took me by force from where I was

I sit in landscapes where you are

The king was waiting in the landscape

To see what was going on

And he uses the term to mean spiritual moods and meeting God:

Show up in my heart which is the landscape of love

If not, it can become the landscape

Sometimes he used the term in both subjective and objective manner simultaneously:

I will not look at anybody and even if I do

That would be an excuse since you are the landscape

The landscape of heart is the righteousness in the two  
worlds

The king sees the landscape

In the first verse, landscape might mean both the face of the loved one which is looked at with different excuses; also, it is an irony to mean a frame through which whatever you see is the face of your love. In the second verse, heart can be a place to look at God (subjective) and also a reflection of God on the heart (objective). This is the first time Mowlawi uses the term landscape like this in his poetry.

Sa'adi (606-690 Hijri) used the term 22 times in his sonnets and odes. He has used his wit to use landscape in the most profound manner possible. In all 22 examples he means the face of the loved one when he mentions landscape, which is interpreted as a love of a mystic-lover. In the best interpretation

of the concepts he describes the face of God in a description arising from the heart of the mystic:

I am so awed by your view

That I may not find an adjective to describe your face  
 He implied that an adjective is not required to understand the face of God; one just needs to look at it. The point is, in his poetry he always means the loved one's face and it is objective.

**Summarizing the meanings of landscape**

Among all the meanings found for the term in Persian poems, six were frequent and independent. They are shown in table 1 (Table 1 & Fig. 1&2).

**Face**

This one is the first and the most frequent use for landscape, which is objective and implied the

Table 1. Different meaning of the term landscape according to time and frequency of the usage.

	Face	Viewpoint	View	Sky	Loved one	Face-eyes
3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup>						
5 <sup>th</sup>						
6 <sup>th</sup>						
7 <sup>th</sup>						

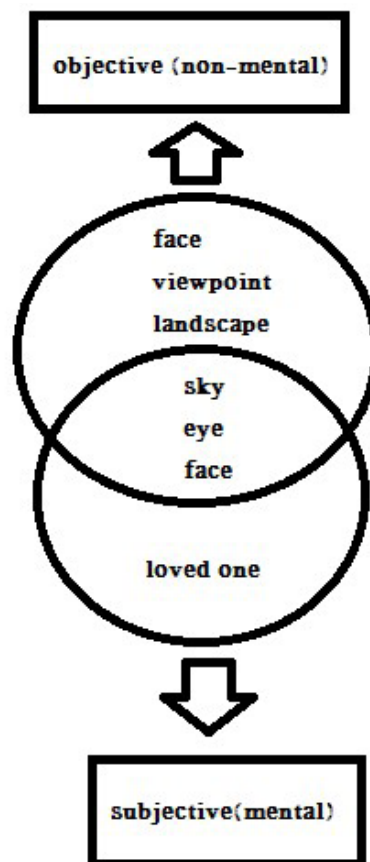


Fig.1. Classification of the concept of landscape in the poems of 3rd to 7th century based on their being objective (non-mental) or subjective (mental). Source: authors, 2017.



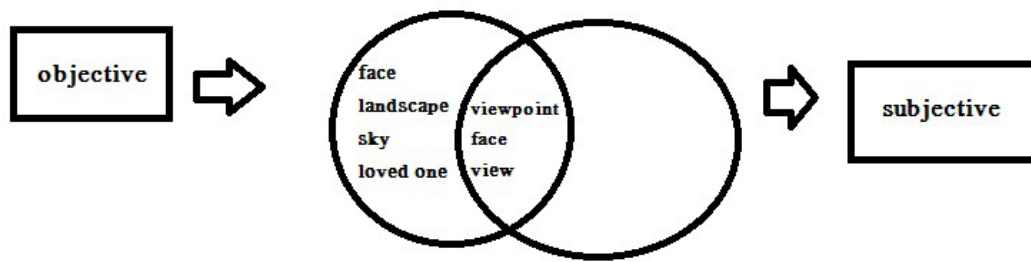


Fig.2. Classification of the concept of landscape in the poems of 3rd to 7th century based on their being objective or subjective . Source: authors, 2017.

appearance and materialistic aspect of the stuff. It was first used to mean human face in a spiritual aspect. In this era, words like looks and viewpoint are yet to be used. Landscape is used to mean the world of appearance and it does not intend to imply the inside world. Users used it to address the face of their loves(Fig.3)

### Scenery

Another concept for landscape for landscape from the early centuries was scenery and viewpoint. Viewpoint is a view of the nature in front of the eyes of the audience. Addressing the scenery in front of the porch, which is an artificial landscape, indicates an objective and earthly aspect of landscape speaking about the outside world. So far, landscape has one meaning (Fig.4).

### Viewpoint

Since the 5th century, a sudden change happens regarding the concept of landscape in Persian poetry. Now, landscape is subjective and it means a viewpoint, eyes, view or window through which we can look and see the outside. Using this new meaning for the term is contemporary with the architectural element of landscape which was a part of the porch. This was a profound change in the meaning of landscape in the mind of the Persian speakers; now landscape is subjective for the first time.

The terms, that introduce landscape in the subjective

manner, have both objective (non-mental) indications; like window and eye and subjective (mental) indications; like viewpoint. Indications of both groups of subjective and objective interpret the term as a frame through which one can see the outside world and this is an active and subjective viewpoint(Fig.5).

### Sky

In the 6th century, after the introduction of both subjective and objective meanings for landscape we see that it finds a new meaning synonymous to the sky. In this period, celestial view and attention to the sky comes to the focus of attention, and they use the term landscape to address the sky. Sky is the place in which the soul and knowledge exist. Scientists try to understand the mysteries of the sky and its relation to the Earth and mystics try to understand spiritual relationships of human being and humans' relevance to the sky. Sky is an objective concept; it both means an objective sky that we see and measure from the ground and a subjective sky that they thought was placed on the horn of a cow or with a sun turning around it (Fig.4)

### The loved one

The 7th century, that alongside the 8th century are peaks of Iranian mysticism, introduced a new concept: Love and the loved one. Though this concept used to exist before, but now it found importance and many interpretations were presented



Fig.3. Farhad carries Shirin's horse. A miniature from the 10<sup>th</sup> century Hijri - Nezami's Khamseh.

Landscape as the appearance, face and looks of the loved one is the first used concept in Persian poetry. In the picture, Farhad's power indicated his love for Shirin. Shirin stands for beauty who Farhad calls her the fragrant plant. Source: Iranian Heritage organization, 2011

about love and the loved ones.

A mystic's lover is a non-material being, described in their poetry. It is a new, deep and multi-layered concept that is described with the term "landscape" and the poet describes what he feels about the face of the lover as the loved one's "landscape".

The most beautiful interpretations of the face of the loved one exist in the poetry of the 7th century. This landscape is objective and comes from the inside of the poet, but in some rare occasions, it is used in an objective fashion (Fig.7).

### Face- eye

The 7th century is special regarding the introduction of new concepts for landscape. In this period,



Fig.4.Ferdowsi and the poets of Ghazneh- 9th century miniature. Baisanghory Shahnameh.

Here, landscape is a beautiful scenery which is independent and outside of the human. Here, it does not matter if the viewer is present or not; the landscape is still beautiful. The observer is a member who looks at the landscape. Source: Iranian Heritage organization, 2011

landscape is used in both subjective and objective fashion. It is used to mean both face and eyes. Face is what is seen, and eye is what we see through. Landscape means both in the 7th century. We can say this is an era in which the meaning gets to its peak and afterwards poets compete in giving new meanings to the concept. The concept of landscape is subjective-objective and basically mental and physical all at the same time (Fig.8)

### Conclusion

Different narrations use the term landscape with different meanings. In these poems, based on the existence of the individuals and their understanding and feelings landscape is formed. The formation of





Fig.5. Borzuyeh takes the book “Kelileh va Demneh” to king Anushirvan. Shahnameh, 9<sup>th</sup> century, Kelileh va demneh. Viewpoint is a special place to look outside. It bears a strategic meaning with numerous intentions. This could be a place to observe the nature. In this picture it is an octagonal scene in the garden, on which Anushirvan sits in his throne. “Eight paradises” concept indicates that each aspect is a door to see a heaven through it. Source: Iranian Heritage organization, 2011



Fig.6. Ascension of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) - 10<sup>th</sup> century. Nezami’s Khamsheh. Sky is a new landscape that was introduced to Persian poetry in the 6<sup>th</sup> century with a dichotomy of meanings; although it is objective and material and independent from the audience. But, it found a subjective meaning as well, which was mythological and human mind’s made. Sky in miniature and architecture implies the subjective aspect of the meaning of the word. Source: Iranian Heritage organization, 2011

the meanings of the term landscape has a ranking: Human’s face and appearance, nature, window, porch, view to the sky, the lover and a new combination called face-eye. The meaning of the term changes drastically in the poems of the poets from the appearance to inside and from object to subject and different narratives of landscape; like viewpoint, porch, window, sky, and view are created. The interactions between these aspects create a new foundation and metaphor that forms different narrations in poetry with similar appearances and different insides. Because of the influential concept of landscape in Iranian poetry and culture that led

to many changes in its meaning the concept of landscape in the present world is recreated.

The investigation of changes of the concept of landscape from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> century implies changes in two directions. The first is subjective-objective aspect of the term and the other is subjective (mental) - objective (non-mental) aspect. Five stages are identified to understand landscape in this article; every stage includes some alterations from the previous. The 5 stages are depicted in Fig. 9.

As you can see the concept experiences two different destinies. Physically or mentally speaking, it moves from objective to objective-subjective and regarding

being a subject or an object, it is an object in the beginning, a subject in the middle and subject-object at last. As it is clear the mental-physical aspect

experiences less complexity in comparison with subjective/objective role; hence, mental-objective aspect appears before the mental role of landscape.

Table 2. Investigation of conceptual changes of the term “landscape” from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> Hijri, Source: authors, 2017.

Stage	aspect		Role		example
	Subjective	Objective	Objective (physical)	Subjective (mental)	
1					Face/ scenery
2					Viewpoint
3					sky
4					lover
5					Face-eye



Fig.7. The students’ denial of the status of Hermes- 10<sup>th</sup> century- Nezami’s Khamseh.

The circle of mystics and wise men is a background the landscape of being can shine upon. This concept is closely tied to the feelings of the lover and a pure heart as a means to see the loved one. The master’s teaching circle and feeling the loved one in the heart. Source: Iranian Heritage organization, 2011.



Fig.8. A part of the miniature that depicts Joseph’s entering Zoleikha’s party. Artist: Ghasem Ali, 10<sup>th</sup> century, Jaami’s Panj Ganj. It is difficult to indicate the subjective-mental and face-eye aspect of the landscape in a painting. This painting both points to a frame in the upper part of the picture and a door through which we can see a landscape. This part of the miniature narrates the landscape in a real-cognitive manner in which the audience plays a role. Source: Iranian Heritage organization, 2011.



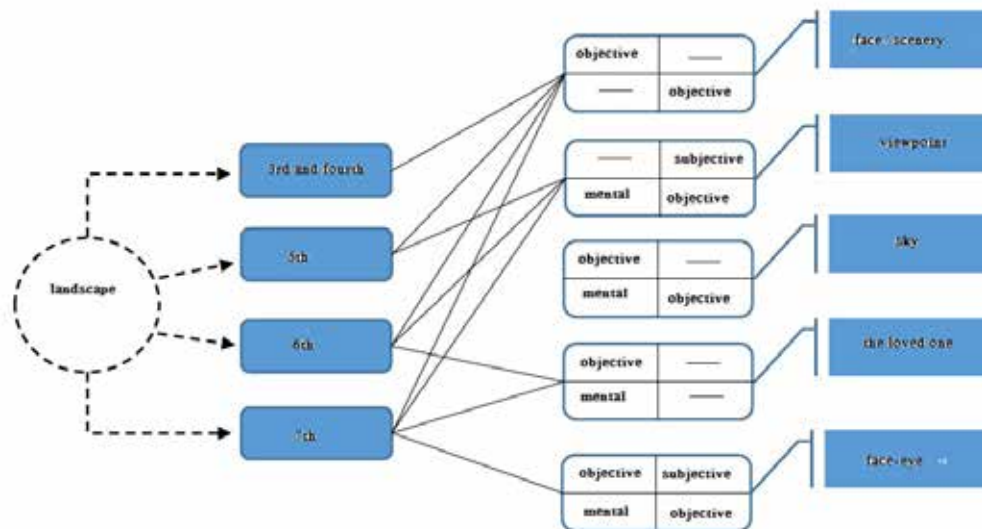


Fig. 9. Five stages of the changes of the term “landscape”, both regarding role (subjective-objective) and aspect (Subjective- objective).

Subjective-objective role appears in the last step (Table 2; Fig.9).

### Endnote

1. The Persian equivalent of this term is derived from the word “Nazar” which means see, seeing, watching, looking, etc. \_ translator.

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