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# Epistemology of Metaculture Metaphorization

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**Abstract:** The purpose of the paper was to substantiate the essence of metaculture as a way of recognizing yourself as a person in the maze of free will and action; determination of the structure, morphology and functional typology of metacultural metaphors and epistemological conditions for their contemplation. The introduction of this typology into the theory and practice of contemporary cultural pedagogy makes it expedient: 1) to avoid the practice of “imposing” and “adjusting” the process of metaphorizing the cultural artifact to a “ready” model of classical or non-classical rationality; reduction of the cultural metaphor to the semiotic interpretation of the sign; 2) to organize the “co-creation” of historical forms of the “I” and “you” dialogue in the metaphorical modeling of cultural artifacts on the basis of social and cultural pluralism and relativism. The systematic mentality methodology of the presented research implemented phenomenological-hermeneutic and semiotic approaches, methods of coherent modeling and expert evaluation of conceptual integration theory, connective theory of metaphorical interpretation, concept of nonlinear epistemology, principles of antinomy, verification, complexity, disjunctive synthesis. The scientific novelty of the material is to discover the peculiarities of the metacultural metaphor and determine epistemological strategies for contemplating its essential meaning. Conclusions. Epistemic metaculture implies a reflective use of the cultural experience of the Other One for creative self-development. The performance of its semiotic subject is effectively realized in the process of metaphorical cognitive science. The metamodern epistemological strategy overcomes the elenctic cognitive irony by applying a methodology of nonlinear thinking.

**Keywords:** *metaculture; metacultural metaphor; epistemic belief; epistemological contemplation strategies; performative potential; principles of metaphorization.*

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## 1. Introduction

The daily numerous examples of destabilization of life within a nonlinear system indicate that there is an epoch when the responsibility for the creation of the coexisting world is not taken up by the politicians and economists, but a sphere of culture that reflects our entire “disenchanted” being. However, this inevitability can only be accepted by refusing to understand the culture as a local organism, the unconscious objectivity formed by the spatio – temporal environment. This inevitability is unacceptable despite the universality of the united power of the Spirit and the ontologically (embedded in the person) post-arbitrary motivation for its understanding. On the basis of the conceptual triad, culture – meaning – consciousness, the subject field of the proposed receptions is culture as a way of person’s recognizing himself as a personality in the maze of free will and action.

## 2. Setting of the problem

Until recently, it has been a “**Kafkaian**” man (Mamardashvili, 2004), who is in the mass of similar, lonely and alienated phantom models – “atoms”, having lost their creative initiative and ceased to be authors of their own lives. **Postmodern** “fatigue” of culture (Hassan, 2017; Jameson, 1991; Lyotard, 1993; Wallace, 2015) provokes the wanderings of the semiotic subject in the labyrinth of Baudrillard simulacra (Baudrillard, 2006) and the pressure of contrapassionate infernal impulse devaluation of the main categories of mind: reality, truth, human, history, knowledge, philosophy, language. *Reality* is reduced to a textual model that is considered to be the product of time and chance, and is therefore subject to endless interpretations. Each level of reality corresponds a logic of its own. The existence of levels of reality makes it necessary to introduce the concept of complexity (Sandu & Uşurelu, 2012). *The objectivity of truth*, as merely a “linguistic, historical, or social construction”, is denied, since the fundamental fluidity of criteria and values is affirmed. *Man* is decentered and “opens” himself in the “objectil” of the anthropological traject – as starfall of “I”. *History* is interpreted as an infinite path (*dao*) of unfinished changes and, from time to time, recurring events, phenomena. *Philosophy* is seen as a process of endless pluralistic game and search for paradoxical conclusions. *Language* comes down to a general textualisation of reality and innumerable repetitions-substitutions-additions on the principle of intentional narrative chaos.

The causal tracking of the ontogeny of such an ironic-sarcastic journey leads to the reflection of culture as humanization of our sinful reality. After all, any cultural text (inter-, para-, meta-, hyper-, arch-) is first and foremost a coded human experience of acquisition and catastrophic errors; it is a real money-box of recipes for the treatment of spiritual and mental illnesses of man; it is a happy occasion for everyone to try to look at his (so desirable!) uniqueness, not as the end result, but only as a condition of spiritual transformation in the modern non-linear space of facts and truth.

This chance has not been lost yet. However, it is necessary to understand that the expediency of apostolic counsel should be thought about: “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God“ (Rom. 12.2), the ability to go beyond everyday perception and experience the “experience of liminality” necessary for internal change, “be not ye the servants of men” (1 Cor. 7:23). However, because of the mutual non-translatibility of meaning and sense; that is, the impossibility of including semantic entities in the activity (created by them), the declared eschatological changes (origin, correction, transformation of semantic attitudes) are related solely to epistemic **contemplation** as a “relentless inversion” between “the reality of the subject” and “the reality of the object” (Kondratska, 2012). Due to such contemplation, one can create and destroy semantic typologies, classifications, compositions, and deconstructions of a wide variety of objects, phenomena, entities, processes, states, in a word, any a-topical metaxis (Abramson, 2015; Turner, 2015). That is why, it is the algorithm for conceptualizing **the metaculture**, which is now called upon to comfort and unite the souls of disparate sinners in order to realize the contemporary’s irrational expectations of the epiphany of the transcendental cognition and the readiness for this meeting.

### 3. Research purpose

Soteriological activity of such oscillation (from the Latin *oscillatium* – “swing, swing between, over”) gives rise to the hope of realizing the prospect of eliminating the contradictions between culture and nature, finite and infinite, ordinary and sublime, formal structure and bureaucratic uncertainty (as an alternative to deconstruction). Moreover, it is not spoken about the meaning of the postmodern metaphor of the world as a text, but about the metaphor of the world as a multiple performative act (Domanska, 2011; Grady, 2007; Ryzhakova & Sirotkina, 2018) – the cultural-creative reaction of the semiotic subject to events, phenomena in their totality, which

compensates for postmodern deconstruction, diatropics, and scattering (Tarasov, 2002). Thus, the **purpose** of the proposed paper is the epistemological reasoning for metaphorization of metaculture.

#### 4. Methodology

The main problem of conversation about metamodernism is that its understanding as a structure of feelings by any known cultural and philosophical methods immediately destroys the feeling of oscillation, transforming it into “ideology” or “worldview”. That is, any attempt to theorize the metamodern is transformed into a theory of theory. There is a need to search for new methods for the study of culture, and a systematic mentality **methodology** offers a suitable vector of such search. It implements phenomenological-hermeneutic and semiotic approaches, methods of coherent modeling and expert evaluation of conceptual integration theory, connective theory of metaphorical interpretation, concept of nonlinear epistemology, principles of antinomy, verification, complexity. The basis of this realization is the disjunctive synthesis of science and art, not only in the sense of art & science but also art & studies. That is why, in the seventh paragraph of the Manifesto of the Metamodernist, Luke Turner (2015) (in creative collaboration with Shia La Beouf) states:

“Aphoristic and metaphorical information is a cognitive basis for us. We offer a scientific-poetic synthesis of naive magical realism and non-ideologized pragmatic romanticism.” (Turner, 2015).

The metaphorical definitions of such an experience by the method of linguistic deconstruction are merely “emptiness of void” (Sanskrit: shunyata), “figures of sand”, provoking a new void around them. That is why, in our study, visual-optical metaphors-illumination emerged as manifestations of operable visualization of the ideas of infinite formation and incompleteness of modern social and cultural processes (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003):



Source of picture: *Its OK*, by Ellis Nadler, 2007, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/ellis-nadler/2107200534/> Public domain copyright

**Fig.1.** Its OK. From

This picture is an example of visual-optical metaphors of metaculture.

## 5. Academic capacity of research

Their motivating nature is realized by means of a two-domain model of four mental spaces: two initial ones, common and mixed space or blend. According to the theory of conceptual metaphor (Cameron, 2010; Deignan, 2008), this model expresses the paradox of the metaphorical notion of truth. The paradox is that there is no other way to pay tribute to the notion of metaphorical truth except the inclusion of the critical edge “not be” (literally) in the ontological interruption “be” (metaphorically). Such an ontological statement is subject to the law of “stereoscopic vision”. This metaphorical model convincingly demonstrates the antinomic combination of *mythological and iconic aspects*.

*The mythological aspect* is a kind of substrate for the metaphor of metaculture. Its reflection is anthropomorphic and therefore sensually emotional. It is, at the same time, existentially concrete and infinitely abstract, and therefore organized on the “everything-in-everything” basis. Therefore, myth is not an explanation of phenomena, a theory, but a form of ontologically expressed “fiction-meaning” that is always accepted and experienced as a real event. The myth, in the words of H. Ortega y Gasset, “only feels the warmth of the sun, but does not see the sun” (Ortega y Gasset, 2016). That is, the essential priority of mythological aspect is given to the

name – as law, the internal regular orderliness of the objective phenomenon, event given in the form of the general principle of the semantic construction of their model; it is the ultimate generalization of all possible symbols of these things, demonstrating and manifesting them to us and requiring from us to acknowledge them.

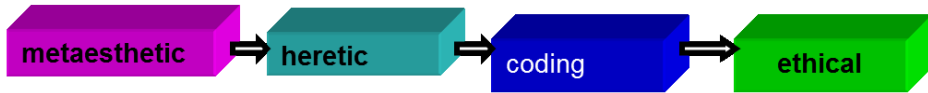
However, genetic primacy in the metaphor of metaculture belongs to *the iconic aspect* (its epiphoric and diaphoric types), which differs from the mythological one by epistemological strategy of reflecting the facts of the present reality. Unlike myth, a symbol (from ancient Greek *σύμβολον* – a signal, a sign, a peculiarity, a pledge, a password, an emblem) does not simply describe impressions received from the world of objects and events, but “writes” life itself on the principle of mimesis, since its modeling structure, as the system of semantic relations, merges much more with the sensual and material techniques of the referent (addressant – addressee); it promotes symbolic subjectivity and even agitates for it, using its imagery in an emphatically meaningful sense. That is, the meaning of the symbol is based on the exact copying of its denotation form (the substantive meaning of the object thought), and the uniqueness of its relation to the marked objectivity is that it does not merely point to the object, but becomes the sole source of the corresponding substantive meaning. In addition, the interpretation of the symbol does not allow for both definitive and unambiguous decoding and unpredictable arbitrariness of interpretation.

Such interpenetration of the idea and image of the thing, as well as the resulting presence of the illocutionary force of designation and parable, brings the symbol closer to the metaphor, but does not identify them. The fundamental, generic difference of the both ones lies in their different essence: the symbol is the word, the letter of the text, and the metaphor is emotional “phraseological reversal”, a trope. That is, the symbol merely points to an object unknown to us, but the metaphor itself is an object, self-sufficient and deep in content, a conceptual “game” of the dual meanings of the compared objects (on the basis of their common feature).

## 6. Luxtaporation of the project: strategic model

This basic morphological specificity of metaculture metaphor is described at the level of metonymy related links: individual – whole, cause – consequence, inventor – invention, attribute of person – person himself. However, our understanding of the essence of the phenomenon under study is aimed at **realizing its multifunctional performative potential**. Among

the **typologies** of the performative functions of the metaculture metaphor are the following:



Source: Own elaboration

**Figure 2.** *Typologies of the performative functions of the metaculture metaphor.*

**Metaaesthetics** or **New Aesthetic** is a bold attempt to comprehend the affective state (“sense structure”) of being in the atmosphere “here and now” (Böhme, 1993). It continues to stimulate a huge range of discussion. So, Rhizome's editor, Joanne McNeil, discusses the history, perspectives and technologies of New Aesthetics (McNeil, 2012). Designer Ben Terrett explores New Aesthetics in a commercial visual culture. Russell Davis reflects on New Aesthetics and Writing. Bruce Sterling (Sterling, 2012) analyzes New Aesthetic, subjecting it to profound criticism and thus giving the subject a new level of attention. British artist, writer and publisher James Bridle has been the main voice for New Aesthetic. According to his concept, New Aesthetics is dedicated to the transition of the digital network into a physical, autonomous one, and the process of perception is considered in the new status of emotional affective (subject – subject and subject – object) spiritual physical interaction (Bridle, 2018). That is, the recipient is not affected by the forms, but by the atmosphere of the “meeting” of the semiotic subject and the phenomenon of perception. Moreover, the authenticity of the experience (the “new sincerity”) and the internal psychological truth are proclaimed as the key to the successful result of such a “meeting” as an autopoietic actualization of the mental experience of archetype entrapment. After all, the metamodernist, unlike his post-predecessor, is focused on the revival of lost values (transcendental narratives and archetypes). Metaaesthetics is thus built around the relationship between environmental qualities and human states. From this viewpoint, art becomes the sphere that creates the atmospheres for the sake of acquiring the [shared] experience of being in it, because “not only the work of art but also any other object possesses an individual atmosphere” (Bourriaud, 2002). That is why, the researcher's main task is to construct atmospheres, that is, to create the conditions for living a certain sensory experience bypassing linguistic constructions that are considered insufficient to comprehend the world (Rabb et al., 2018).

**The heretic typology** of the performative functions of metaculture metaphor involves the formation of design thinking based on the logic of double bind of delusional disjunctive synthesis, which is based on the principles of radical anti-essentialism, radical pluralism and contingency and allows to think of more than two alternatives.

**The coding type** of performative functions of the metaculture metaphor is aimed at disclosing the metaphor (as a code, the concept of the essence of the phenomena and events under consideration), which is manifested not only in euphemisms, but also by the digital formula “metaphor + metonymy”.

**The ethical typology** of the performative functions of the metaculture metaphor implies the actualization of the semiotic subject in the value-semantic sphere by correlation of the processes of mind entrapment and the exorcism of archetypes (collective, individual) as factor in the upbringing of human virtues.

Thanks to such functioning, metaphors of metaculture phenomena induce the semiotic subject to replace elenctic rhizomatic intertextuality for interactivity, in particular in the live techno image as self-reflecting digital copy (Kirby, 2009). In such a situation the performative tricks of meta-epistemology are aimed at taking into account all the perspectives of Maieutic contemplation – immediately and situationally, requiring the permanent stay of the semiotic subject in the state of erotemic interrogation of mystery as a relentless ascent to Truth.

Such modeling of the metaphorical essential meaning of the metaculture phenomena is based on the following *principles*:

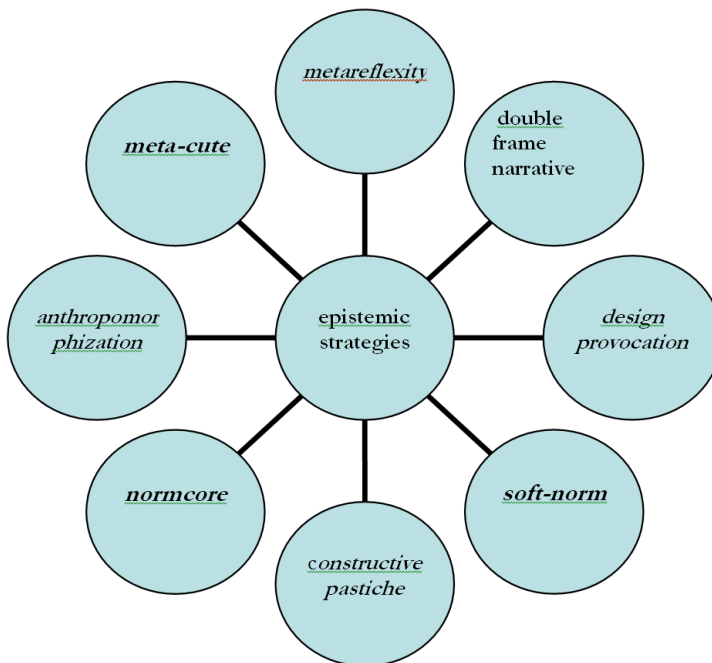
- the spiritualization of the cultural space;
- realization of the freedom of choice of epistemological trajectory and personal responsibility for its verification;
- creating a situation of “hanging out” experience of interrogation as contemplation of the subjective nature of the metaphor (when its knowledge emerges in the mode of its existence, that is, the structures of the consciousness of the addressee – addressee are inseparable from real subject matter).

Therefore, epistemological contemplation implies an understanding of the information received on the basis of fundamental *epistemic belief* and its corresponding *epistemic norms*. Outside the system “basic faith – epistemic norm – experience”, none of the aspects of the problem of contemplation of metaphorized essence is solved: neither the demarcation between faith and knowledge, knowledge and ignorance is done; nor the problem of the correlation of ways and the ultimate purpose of contemplation is decided.



It focuses on the revival of the attitude to creativity as a spiritual practice, the ability to interpret the paradox effectively; the ability to cooperate in love with the alternative position (in time and space) and its carriers (as carriers of the value of the image of God) – perhaps by the time of “pressed on every side, yet not straitened; perplexed, not yet despair; pursued, not yet forsaken; smitten down, not yet destroyed” (2 Cor. 4: 8-9) – for the sake of the prospect of affirming the Truth; finally, the ability to go beyond the ordinary perceptions and experience the “experience of liminality” for the sake of *internal change*.

The epistemic **strategies of metaculture metaphorization** include:



Source: Own elaboration

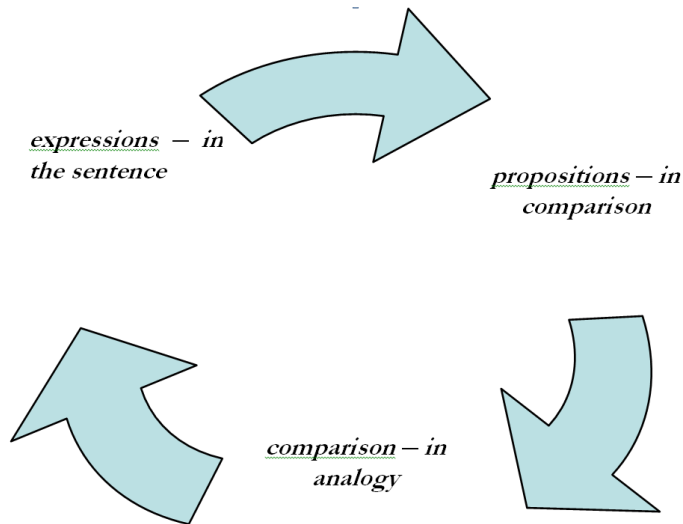
**Figure 3.** *Epistemic strategies of metaculture metaphorization*

## 7. Method of project implementation

As one of the methods of implementing the proposed strategies, we propose the author's methodology (Kondratska, 2018). Its algorithm includes the stages of focusing the metacultural phenomenon, the metaphorization of its idea, the subjects of associative comparison and the disjunctive synthesis of the relevant domains during *allegorical, tropological and eschatological contemplation*.

**Step 1. Determining the metaphorical focus.**

This stage involves the identification of metaphorically colored units in text / discourse (as focus, vehicle, or source domain in the terminology of different variations of cognitive metaphor theory). They have the ability to activate such concepts that cannot be referred to as text references in the direct sense. If all elements of the metaphor are presented in full, the identification process can be completed. However, in most cases, the elements of the metaphor are hidden, and the detection of focus in the first stage facilitates their detection during further analysis. It provides for a sequence of transformations:



Source: Own elaboration

**Figure 4.** *The sequence of metaphor transformation.*

That is, there is a need to apply *the existential quantifier* "∃" to relate the arguments of the concept, bypassing their substantive values.

**Step 2. Associative comparison of metaphor arguments.**

This stage corresponds to the first step of the propositional analysis necessary to move from the separated (in discrete) expression of subjectivity (verbal, acoustic, visual, etc.) to its conceptual sense (Gentner & Jeziorski, 1993; Gibbs, 1993; Paivio & Walsh, 1993). Structured in a series of propositions, conceptual domains of metaphor, in accordance with the principles of cognitive theory, acquire associative connections in the process of comparison (Kulchytska, 2012). This allows the author of the technique to proceed to the reconstruction of implicit meanings.

**Step 3. Interpretation of indexed definitions of metaphoric analogy.**

At this stage of semantic metaphor modeling, all the propositions of the previous stage should be converted into a direct comparison of two incomplete propositions, elements of which belong to different domains. We developed and put into practice a number of logical formulas that allow to regulate the main cases of metaphorical synthesis of concepts.

The whole diversity of the identified synthesis was determined by the metaphor *identification module* (**M1**), which reflected the relations of the arguments ( $x, y$ ) of the referent (**A**) and the relate (**B**) of the two metaphor domains.

The formula of the metaphor identification module is presented by the author as follows:

$(\exists) \{MI [A(x, y), B(x, y)]\}$ , where  $\exists$  is the existential quantifier of metaphor domains;

**M1** is actually the module of relation of concepts of each domain of metaphor;

**A** ( $x, y$ ) and **B** ( $x, y$ ) are a general outline of both concepts, in which **A** and **B** are functions (**A** is a referent, **B** is a relate), and  $x, y$  are their arguments, which point to some properties which are characteristic for each concept.

This formula illustrates an option where two independent concepts share the same properties. This principle is regarded as normative for a large part of metaphors. In practice, the application of this formula makes it possible to apply to the renewal of the conceptual framework of “empty” semantic slots, at least in metaphors of three types:

- *nominal* in which the noun concept “y” is metaphorically expressed in the nominal (subject) group:

**M1. Name** ( $x, y$ )  $\rightarrow (\exists A) (\exists B) \{MI [A(x), B(y)]\}$

- *predicate* in which the predicate concept of **G** is metaphorically expressed in the predicate group:

**M2. B** ( $x$ )  $\rightarrow (\exists A) (\exists y) \{MI [A(x), B(y)]\}$

- *sentential*, in which the archetypal characteristic is applied in an inappropriate context:

**M3. In** ( $y$ )  $\rightarrow (\exists A) (\exists x) \{MI [A(x), B(y)]\}$ .

**Step 4. Verification of icon of target domain of metaphor.**

At this stage, the transformation of the comparison into a complete analogy is performed due to the filling information in the missing semantic slots. Since all elements are represented in full by analogy, it is possible to

assemble two parallel propositional series that perform similar (analogical) functions in two conceptual domains, into one. This stage, in fact, is a verification of the reliability of the realized interpretation of the metaphor's associative (vehicle) interaction. It is superfluous to insist that the final understanding of the metaphor is somehow dependent on general knowledge. However, despite the claim that truth is relevant, we *must (at all costs) hold on to the presumption of veracity.*

**Step 5. Determination of the essential meaning (episteme) of metaphor domain synthesis.**

The last step of metaphorical modeling is related to the process of decoding the selected concepts and regularities of their semantic intersection. Obtained in the previous stages, special markers and diagrams should be transformed into a series of correspondences and presented as a result – the essential meaning of the metaphor.

Experience has shown that such immersion in atopic oscillation in the environment of beneficial coexistence in epistemic faith realizes the hope of engaging in the dialogue of *the ironic-narcissist* and so-called *traveler of conscience.*

## **8. Conclusions**

Not taking (in any case) on the position of controlled chaos as factor in a new order and new creativity, we argue that metaculture is a breakthrough to the very “bosom of being”, that imaginary state of mind called the Light of Perfect Joy; it is a call to epistemic journeys into the realm of metaphorized Truth, in a unique way for everybody (however, with the experience of their absolute unity and identity in the process of equal dialogue). Does it have a limitation, in the way that claimed for other epistemes? Probably, but we will not know yet, because we are not yet at a point in history where this episteme has played itself out! Representative artists / artworks include: music by Sufjan Stevens and Jenny Lewis; television shows such as *Community* and *Modern Family*; the architecture of Freddy Mamani Silvestre; films of Wes Anderson and Miranda July; authors such as Dave Eggers, Elif Batuman and Jennifer Egan (Dember, 2018). Even if we are always caught in an oscillation between separateness and unity, the metamodernist of sci-fi gives us hope that one does not necessarily negate the other.

In order to get a chance to realize the creative gift of metaphorical performance of metacultural nonlinearity, it is necessary to “include

interpretation of contemplation” (Pomerants, 2013, p. 108), and therefore to implement strategies for modifying metaphorical mirrors. It does not only give “innocent entertainment” during spiritual relaxation, but brings the soul to the eschatological source, which activates the creativity of true values not in the cultural divination “through dim glass”, but in its completeness.

As important about the metamodern perspective is that it comes from a place of hope and confidence. A hope that as human beings we can do more than we expect in a modern setting. A confidence that human development does not have to come to a halt with reaching adulthood, but that it might continue throughout the life-span.

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