

Puro Mangkunegaran Building as a Representation of the Javanese Palace, Indonesia

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Abstract

It is understood that architecture is a representation of ideas. Often, they can also represent meanings embedded in other buildings. The Puro Mangkunegaran building is often seen as a representation of the Javanese Palace in Indonesia.

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method with an interpretive analysis. It critically sees the Puro Mangkunegaran building from cultural studies paradigm as a text in the form of a constructed representation. The study used Stuart Hall's Representation theory.

The study found that the elements used in the Puro Mangkunegaran building are represented as a conceptual construction of textual meaning through agreed upon terms. The links between concepts and language that transforms real objects of spatial layout in the Puro Mangkunegaran building elements such as *Bale kencur*, *Bale peni*, *Bale warni*, *Dalem ageng*, *Gedhong wireng*, *Karti pura*, and *Kasatriyan* etc., have manifested philosophical or meaningful terms for the Javanese Palace and its supporting community. Representation in the Puro Mangkunegaran building are based on ideas in the minds of Javanese communities expressed through agreed-upon cultural terms embedded in the concepts of *Tri Ugering Ngaurip* including *Wiry*a (care), *Arto* (welfare), and *Winasis* (science).

The representation of the concept confirmed two principles: first, to interpret something in the sense of explaining it in the mind using imagination, and second, to place this equation before in the Javanese people's thoughts or feelings. The words used to describe the elements of the building were designed to establish harmony between the occupants and their surroundings for Mangkunegaran IV.

Keywords: building, Javanese, Puro Mangkunegara, spatial layout, representation

Introduction

Mangkunegaran was once a duchy in Surakarta. In accordance with the Prince's position as a duchy, the shape of the Puro Mangkunegaran building naturally follows the pattern of the Kapangeranan residence. However, the reality shows that the Puro Mangkunegaran building has its uniqueness. Often the Puro Mangkunegaran building is called a small kingdom. Physically, what distinguishes it from other Karangangeran buildings is that in the Puro Mangkunegaran building, there is a Pamedan. This Pamedan served as a training ground for the war legions. A prince, of course, has no army, but in Mangkunegaran, he has legions/army. The appointment of the palace for the Puro Mangkunegaran can also be seen in the Decree of the Mayor of Solo No. 646/116/1/1997 (revised 2013), related to the list of names of ancient buildings and historical areas in Solo. Mangkunegaran is referred to as the Puro Mangkunegaran Palace (quoted from Solopos.com, Monday, 12/8/2014).

The Puro Mangkunegaran building is currently a cultural heritage area. Its position as a cultural heritage however is very problematic. Preserved by maintaining it without changing its function means that it must have the willingness of funds to maintain and position the building as it originally functioned, which is no longer relevant. Conservation by changing the function means having the courage to sacrifice a shift in value. With its position as a cultural heritage, the Puro Mangkunegaran building experienced a significant shift in the function in the global era.

The Mangkuegaran Temple building has become a tourist destination in Surakarta. This can be seen in the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 10 of 2009 concerning Tourism. Furthermore, it is regulated in the Regional Regulation of Central Java Province Number 10 of 2012 concerning the Master Plan of Tourism Development of Central Java Province in 2012-2027.

The shifts in the function of the Puro Mangkunegaran building in the global era invite questions, such as why this is done, and what is the true meaning of the Puro Mangkunegaran building for the community and Mangkunegaran. Therefore, it is necessary to study the meaning of the Mangkunegaran building.

The study is expected to reveal the values contained in the Puro Mangkunegaran Surakarta building and its current position in the global era. To answer the questions, it is necessary to limit the focus on studying the meaning of the Puro Mangkunegaran in Surakarta. The study needs to explain the concepts used. The concepts that need to be discussed are grouped into two units: philosophical meanings and the Puro Mangkunegaran building.

The aim of this study is to understand the critical thinking framework for the realization of the Puro Mangkunegaran building until now. The study objective is to trace the nature of the realization of the Puro Mangkunegaran building based on logic, epistemology, and aesthetics. Logically, it is used with the ability to reason and think straight from the realization of the temple building with the events of the era. Epistemology is used to understand the realization of the temple building as a series of houses of the Mangkunegaran Duchy. Aesthetics is used to understand the values contained behind the visual form.

When we discuss the spatial layout of a historical and traditional building, we are inadvertently referring to cultural studies because the building itself is a text in the form of a constructed representation. Cultural studies, in particular, is concerned with the issue of representation, or how the world is socially formed and represented by and to us. Cultural studies are the study of culture and the practice of interpreting representations. Culture's representation and meaning are tied to sounds, inscriptions, objects, images, TV shows, magazines, and films (Barker, 2006).

The representation process is the focus of this study. Stuart Hall explains representation as the formation of the concept of meaning in the mind through language. This is the relationship between concepts and language used to describe objects, people, and physical objects (Hall, 1997:15). This representational study is carried out by interpreting existing visual materials. The type and material of the Puro Mangkunegaran structure, as well as its spatial layout provide visual

text about its shape and the residing philosophical meanings. The paper analyzes the visual elements in the shape of this skyscraper using a research method known as semiotics. Semiotics is the science of signs that can develop a means to interpret the signs found in the spatial layout and shape of the Puro Mangkunegaran building.

Review of Literature

There have been numerous studies conducted about the Puro Mangkunegaran building. Identifying applications of traditional Javanese architecture, a case study of Pendhapa Pura Mangkunegaran Surakarta arte among them. Yusron & Raidi (2020) and Kristianto (2016) have studied the symbols in the temples of Mangkunegaran and Pakualaman, as well as the reasons for their use. Indeed, Samsudi et al., (2020) have studied aspects of Dutch colonial architecture in the Pendopo Puri Mangkunegaran Surakarta. Murti (n.d.) studied Javanese-European acculturation in the Mangkunegaran legion in Surakarta while (Afriadi and Pratama, 2019) have studied the zodiac symbols in Puro Mangkunegaran's Kumudawati motifs. Furthermore, Yunianti, (2015) has studied the aesthetics of the architectural elements of the Surakarta Masjid building, which has visual characteristics similar to traditional Javanese houses, namely the Joglo House, and each building element also reflects the values of local wisdom in the form of truth, moral values, aesthetics, and religious values; that the Surakarta Masjid Agung is inextricably linked to Javanese architectural wisdom, both architecturally and symbolically (Adityaningrum, 2022). Herlambang *et al.*, (2019) has studied the digital promotion strategy in Dutch heritage buildings in Surakarta City using a timelapse video. Muhadiyatiningasih and Fathonah, (2020) has explored the dimensions of aesthetics and cultural identity in the Javanese Palace building of Surakarta and has discovered that the structure of the buildings in Kasunanan Palace of Surakarta represent a symbolic meaning of human purification to become *insan kamil* 'a perfect human being' through several paths in the Sufi teachings of *tariqah*. Winata and Astrina, (2022) have analysed the concept of centrality in the Surakarta Hadiningrat palace and has discovered that the palace order has a single main hierarchy to the Kedhaton, which is the core of the Surakarta Hadiningrat Palace, and that the role of each small center emphasizes the Kedhaton's primacy while strengthening the centrality quality.

The objective of this study is to understand the critical thinking framework used in the construction of the Puro Mangkunegaran, with the main objective is tracing the nature of the Puro Mangkunegaran building's manifestation using logic, epistemology, and aesthetics. In addition, it also aims to unravel the meanings in the phenomena of Puro Mangkunegaran representation and to serve as a foundation for future academics interested in the embedded meanings of buildings in the context of cultural studies.

Research Methodology

In this study, Stuart Hall's Representation theory is used. This procedure refers to Stuart Hall's concept of meaning building in the mind by the use of language to represent fictitious objects, people or events. According to Stuart Hall (Hall, 2020), meaning is constructed by a representational system and produced by a language system whose phenomena occur not only verbally but also visually. The representation system is made of techniques of organizing, infiltrating, and classifying concepts and various complexities of relationships, instead of individual concepts. Because the act of producing meaning is not neutral, ideology influences its formation.

Ideology arrives before the process of representation. The representation theory in this study is intended to unravel what has been constructed so far about the meaning of the Puro Mangkunegaran building as a traditional Javanese building and an artistic work. It seeks to find new meanings between the gaps in the text by delaying the previous meaning. The desire of all *Pengageng* to be independent of Kasunanan and Company expressed with various abilities in art and culture is a reality that cannot be denied in terms of the meaning of the building.

To be able to review or analyze the object of the study in this study in the form of spatial layouts and building types in Puro Mangkunegara with cultural terms, all of these elements were read as text. The text in question includes not only text and writing, but also all forms of communication expressions, images, sights, sounds, motions, and so on. Afterwards, semiotics was used to analyze it. Semiotics is the study of signs as presented by Roland Barthes, which has a two-stage process of signification (Barthes *et al.*, 1972).

Findings and the Discussion

Demographic Analysis of Great Mosque of Surakarta

The first Puro Mangkunegaran to be built was Raden Mas Said. Raden Mas Said is the son of Prince Arya Mangkunegara, the eldest son of Susuhunan Amangkurat IV from *Pangrêmbé's wife. Garwa pangrêmbé* is the name of the wife of the King who is not the empress, *garwa pangrêmbé* is also called *garwa ampéan, garwa sêlir, priyantun dalêm* (Soeratman, 1989).

KGPAA Mangkunegaran I is the foundation stone of the Puro Mangkunegaran building. KGPAA Mangkunegaran I instilled the concept of "Tri Dharma" leadership, three services. The three dharmas are "(1) *mulat sarira hangrasa wani*, (2) *rumangsa melu handarbeni*, (3) *melu hangrungkebi*". *Mulat sasrira hangrasawani* is the first principle, which means understanding oneself while doing self-introspection to overcome all obstacles that hinder personal improvement. Through introspection, there will be awareness of solidarity and camaraderie among comrades-in-arms who later form the "*Trah Mangkunegaran*" or "*Wong Mangkunegaran*" (Wasino, 2016). The second principle of Mangkunegaran political culture is that *Rumangsa Melu Handarbeni* is the principle of democratic culture for Mangkunegaran. Mangkunegaran is a common property, a place to get a source of life, between the rulers and the people. The synergy comes from the old values, namely "*manunggaling kawula gusti*" with a new interpretation after the struggle. The third principle is "*wajib melu anggondheli*". The king and the people are jointly obliged to defend the Mangkunegaran state (Kartodirjo, 1994).

KGPAA Mangkunegaran I, first built a *Pendapa* in the form of a Joglo with four large *sakagurus* and a *Dalem Ageng* in the shape of a pyramid with eight *sakaguru* (Budiwiyanto, 2009). The *sakaguru* is made using teak wood from the Danalaya forest, Wonogiri Regency. There are many mystical stories about the Donoloyo Wonogiri Teak Forest. Until now, the Donoloyo Wonogiri Teak Forest is protected as a Central Java Natural Resources Conservation Center (BKSDA), covering approximately 9.2 hectares.

The building that uses wood from Donoloyo occupies a unique position for the Javanese people. Since the beginning of the development of Islam in Java, the Wali built a mosque as a centre for religious symbols, namely in Demak. Sunan Kalijaga built the Demak mosque using wood for the central pillar taken from the Donoloyo Forest.

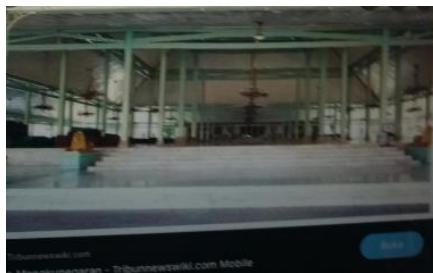


Fig. 1: Mangkunegaran *Pendapa* using wood
Source: Author

Donoloyo Forest has a story from the Majapahit era. To be precise, Ki Ageng Donoloyo, a warrior of Majapahit, deliberately planted teak trees in a forest called Donoloyo Forest. This

teak forest is for the supply of palace building materials. The Kasunanan Palace also mentioned the four main pillars of the palace made of teak wood taken from the Donoloyo Forest (Widagdo, 2011). Nur Rohmi Aida said that the Great Mosque of Surakarta was built in 1763 by Pakubuwana II, the pillar was made of Donoloyo Forest Teak wood (Aida, 2021).

Teak wood for the Javanese people has a significant value. Teak wood as knowledge is contained in the fibres of Centini (1814-1824) *Anggitan Pujangga* of the Kasunanan Solo Palace. Wonogiri is part of the Mangkunegaran region, where there are still many teak woods that are often dubbed “truning wood” (Priyatmoko, 2019). For the Javanese people, teak wood has a true meaning of *urip*, and that’s why for the Javanese people, some think that it is not said to have a house when the house is not made of teak wood. Teak wood material for the Puro Mangkunegaran building is to show that, in the temple building, there is a message about *Sejatining Urip*.

Pendapa Ageng was built in 1815. Furthermore, during the Mangkunegara III KGPAА which ruled in 1835-1853, the Puro Mangkunegaran was equipped with *prangwedanan, pracima sana, purwa sana, bale peni, bale warni, bale kencur, bangsal tosan, mandra sana, langen praja, reksa wahana, reksa pradipta* (Dalyono, 1939). *Pendapa* Mangkunegaran was built with a large size until now no one has matched its size.

During the Mangkunegara IV KGPAА in 1853-1881, Pura Mangkunegaran was equipped with solid walls around it and added furniture to the buildings of Puro Mangkunegaran (Dalyana, 1939). KGPAА Mangkunegaran IV had advanced thinking compared to other Kings in Java. According to KGPAА Mangkunegara IV, being a king and an entrepreneur will not reduce the degree of nobility. According to Mangkunegara IV, in this life, humans will get nobility if they can carry out the *Tri Ugering Ngaurip: wirya/care, arto/welfare, winasis/science* (Birsyada *et al.*, 2016).

Wirya is personality, caring for others, generous, selfless, obedient to obligations, and creative expression. *Arto* means having abundant wealth to become financially strong and not dependent on others. *Winasis* is clever in knowledge, and thinking intelligence sees his potential, opportunities and opportunities because he can think for now and far into the future. In this sense, representation is the production of meaning from concepts in the Javanese communities’ minds through agreed upon cultural terms as explained, *Wirya, Arto* and *Winasis*. The representation by these terms confirmed two suggested principles: firstly, to interpret something in the sense of analyzing or explaining it in the mind with an imagination, and secondly, to place this equation before in our thoughts or feelings. The representation applied to explain (construct) the meaning of a symbol is the second principle. As a result, we can communicate the meaning of objects to individuals who understand and use the same language's conventions (Hall, 1997). In the representation system, the spatial layouts of the Mangkunegaran Temple are labeled with Javanese cultural terms where in this language, they are not always written or deliberately spoken, but are constructed to communicate an idea or concept as a sign that requires meaning. The terms used name the building's elements were intended to foster harmony between the occupants and their surroundings for Mangkunegaran IV (the Javanese King).

Implementation of the *Tri Ugering Ngaurip* concept, Mangkunegara IV strengthened the economy with a policy of modernizing plantation management mechanisms marked by Mangkunegaran establishing large-scale sugar plantation companies. Mangkunegaran IV's entrepreneurial spirit was followed by Mangkunegara VI and Mangkunegara VII. This can be seen when during the reign of MN VI-VII, they did not rely on the traditional agricultural sector but also built agricultural companies or industries, including coffee plantations, sugar cane, rice, catering and sugar factories.

Mangkunegaran has a spirit of concern for the common welfare. The profits from all Mangkunegaran businesses are managed to be used for the necessities of life, service, people's welfare, and business improvement, including the ability to build temples. The temple was a residence for *Pengageng*, the centre of government and cultural activities. The temple was built

by presenting the character of Mangkunegaran. Economic strength affects the ability to add temple buildings. During the reign of KGPA A Mangkunegara V in 1881-1896, he built parks such as *Ujung Puri and Pracimayasa*. Meanwhile, KGPA A Mangkunegara VI, which ruled in 1896-1916, built the Pamarasan Panti and added parks such as Nguntarayasa and Pracimayasa (Dalyono, 1939). The result of the construction of the entire Mangkunegaran *Pengageng* is the Puro Mangkunegaran building, which is still visible today.

The data above shows that the golden economy during the Mangkunegara IV and VII periods experienced a very significant restoration of the Mangkunegaran Temple. The strong spirit of the Mangkunegaran *Pengageng* in maintaining the integrity and strength of the Mangkunegaran places the economic sector by developing plantation companies as an option. The ability of the entrepreneurial spirit to build a plantation company delivers the economic strength of Mangkunegaran, which impacts the ability to realize a magnificent temple building.

The Puro Mangkunegaran building was built to achieve harmony between the occupants and their environment and to strengthen their position. The meaning of harmony for Mangkunegaran is described in the concept of the Puro Mangkunegaran building from the layout and shape of the building. His open-mindedness with various advances positioned Javanese culture as a dynamic noble culture so that art and culture were realized. The Puro Mangkunegaran building is laid out with spaces like the layout of a traditional Javanese house. The core building is located in the middle, while the supporting buildings surround the core building (Sunarmi, 2005; Sunarmi *et al.*, 2017).



Fig. 2: Puro Mangkunegaran Building in the Puro Mangkunegaran Area
Source: Author

Before entering the main building, a large courtyard is decorated with a pond. In the core building, a *Topengan* building is integrated with the *Pendapa* located at the front.



Fig. 2: *Topengan* and *Pendapa* as the Front Building at the Mangkunegaran Core Building
Source: Author

After the wide *Pendapa*, in the core building of Pura Mangkunegaran, there is *Paringgitan*. *Paringgitan* is decorated with various statues from abroad. *Paringgitan* serves as a

place for shadow puppet shows.



Fig. 3: Paringgitan of Puro Mangkunegaran Building

Source: Author

The construction of the Puro Mangkunegaran is almost, in general, without using nails. In *Pendapa*, *Veranda Bale Warni*, and *Pracimayasa* Building, stake construction is evident. Such construction is a general characteristic of traditional Javanese and Nusantara house construction. In Japan, construction without nails has also been developed. Thus, it can be said that the Mangkunegaran Building is not only of a European influence.



Fig. 4: Purus Construction on the Bale Warni Porch of Puro Mangkunegaran Building

Source: Author

The shape of the facade, and the architecture used, is an adaptation of Javanese and Dutch culture. In fact, the form of Pura Mangkunegaran is more dominated by Javanese culture. The form of the pavilion structure is *joglo* and *limasan* as the main form. *Joglo* forms for *Pendapa* and *Limasan* forms for *Dalem Ageng* and *Pracimayasa* with *tajung* roofs. The usual *tajug* for the roof of a place of worship/mosque in Mangkunegaran is the roof of the *Pracimayasa* building. *Pracimayasa* is a private building, a family place.



Fig. 5: The Shape of the Tajug Roof of the Pracimayasa Building at Mangkunegaran Temple
Source: Author

Having analyzed from the type of building, the Mangkunegaran Building consists of: *Bale kencur* [bale kəncʊr], *Bale peni* [bale pəni], *Bale warni* [bale warni], *Dalem ageng* [daləm agəŋ], *Gedhong wireng* [gəDŋ wɪrɛŋ], *Karti pura* [karti purə], *Kasatriyan* [kasatriyan], *Langen praja* [laŋɛn prəjə], *Mandra pura* [mɔndrə], *Pacaosan* [pacəɔsan], *Pakretan* [pakretan], *Pamedan* [pamədan], *Panti putra* [panti putrə], *Panti putri* [panti putri], *Pendhapa ageng* [pəndɔpə agəŋ], *Petanen* [pətanɛn], *Pracima sana* [pracimə sənə], *Prangwedanan* [prəŋwədanan], *Pringgitan* [prɪŋgitan], *Purwa sana* [pʊrwə sənə], *Reksa busana* [rəksə busənə], *Reksa hastana* [rəksə hastənə], *Reksa pradipta* [rəksə pradiptə], *Reksa pura* [rəksə purə], *Reksa pustaka* [rəksə pustəkə], *Reksa sunggata* [rəksə sunɡətə], *Reksa wahana* [rəksə wahənə], *Reksa warastra* [rəksə warastrə], *Reksa wilapa* [rəksə wiləpə], *Senthong* [səntɔŋ].

As seen from the spatial layout, the Puro Mangkunegaran building follows the layout pattern of the Javanese Traditional House. From the beginning, the temple was built to resemble a minor work in Java, adapting the concept of a traditional Javanese house. It can be seen that the core building consists of *Pendapa*, *Paringgitan*, and *Dalem Ageng* located in the middle, surrounded by supporting buildings. Solid walls surround the entire building. The form of the traditional house as a Duchy is still adhered to, but on the other hand, the Mangkunegaran Temple is realized in a different form compared to other Kapangeranan buildings. In the Puro Mangkunegaran Building, there is a *Pamedan* in front of the entire series of Puro Mangkunegaran buildings and the *Alun-Alun* in front of the Kasunanan palace. This *Pamedan* serves as a place to practice the Mangkunegaran Legion. Meanwhile, the *Alun-Alun* in the Kasunanan Palace served as a rehearsal place for Kasunanan soldiers.

The interior of the Puro Mangkunegaran comprises of imported raw materials from all over the world, such as from Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and China. The pavilion floor is made of marble from Italy. The statues adorn the front of the pavilion, two golden lion statues from Berlin, Germany. The statue was an exchange of goods between Mangkunegara VII when he went to Germany. The Mangkunegara VII exchanged a *jarit* cloth and then exchanged it for a lion statue made of golden bronze. Two statues from China and two from Greece are on the front of *Paringgitan*. Various interior decorations in Pracimayasa buildings from Japan, China, the Netherlands, and several regions in the archipelago. The atmosphere of Bali, Java, is used as an object in the window and wall paintings in the Pracimayasa Dining Room. Pracimayasa is a building with a *tajug* roof decorated with various decorations from outside and within the country.



Fig. 6: Interior of the Mangkunegaran Temple
Source: Author

The construction of the Puro Mangkunegaran is a cultural activity, the result of the imagination of the *Pengageng*, intended to satisfy several instinctual needs of every *Pengageng* who plays a role related to his life. The spirit of *rumongso melu handarbeni*, *rumongso melu hangrungkebi* from each *pengeng* made each *pengeng* take part in completing the building into the Puro Mangkunegaran building, which can be seen until now, the concept of *tri ugering aurip* Mangkunegara IV encourages the entrepreneurial spirit to strengthen the economy in Mangkunegaran so that Mangkunegaran can build a magnificent temple. Referring to Stuart Hall (Hall, 1989), representation is the mental construction of the concept of textual meaning through language, in this study is the spatial layout and elements of Puro Mangkunegaran building. This is the link between concepts and language that transforms real objects of spatial layout in the Puro Mangkunegaran building locally termed as *Pendapa*, *Paringgitan*, and *Dalem Ageng*, and *tajug* as confirmed by Hall that representation is the use of words to say something meaningful or to convey the world meaningfully to others. For Stuart Hall (Hall, 1989), meaning is formed by a representational system and is produced by a language system whose phenomena occur not only verbally but also visually as we refer to cultural terms embedded in the items. The representation system is made up of various complexities of relationships rather than individual concepts (Hall, 2020). Similarly, the Puro Mangkunegaran building is an artistic work where Javanese culture is present following the times. Advances in knowledge about interiors and buildings from various countries have been adapted, combined and matched with Javanese culture. There is a diversity of decorative elements in the interior from various countries. It is not always true if Europe entirely influences the Puro Mangkunegaran. The beauty of various countries that are considered to coexist with Javanese culture is combined into a Mangkunegaran interior style with high artistic value.

Conclusions

Forward-thinking by Javanese Mataram dynasty encouraged by the *Pengageng* had resulted in a constructed majestic and traditional palace building; the so-called Puro Mangkunegaran. This study shows that the elements of the Puro Mangkunegaran building are represented as a conceptual construction of the concept of textual meaning through agreed upon terms. The link between concepts and language that transforms real objects of spatial layout in the Puro Mangkunegaran building elements such as *Bale kencur*, *Bale peni*, *Bale warni*, *Dalem ageng*, *Gedhong wireng*, *Karti pura*, and *Kasatriyan* etc., believed to have manifested philosophical or meaningful terms for the Javanese Palace and its supporting community.

Representation in the Puro Mangkunegaran building is also based on ideas in the minds of Javanese communities expressed through agreed-upon cultural terms embedded in the concept of Tri Ugering Ngaurip including *Wirya* (care), *Arto* (welfare), and *Winasis*. The representation of

the concept confirmed two proposed principles: first, to interpret something in the sense of explaining it in the mind using imagination, and second, to place this equation before in the Javanese people's thoughts or feelings. The words used to describe the elements of the building were designed to establish harmony between the occupants and their surroundings for Mangkunegaran IV.

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