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JOURNEYS BEYOND PAGES: THE USE OF FICTION IN TOURISM

Abstract: *The paper aims at looking into the examples of most popular literary induced tours on the European continent in order to establish interconnectivity between works of fiction as created cultural forms and their impact on tourism industry and consumer society. Accordingly, not only does the human urge to travel refer to the phenomenon of escapism and escapism into fictional, but it is also intrinsically linked to the fact of recreating oneself, i.e. finding one's own destiny/destination. Therefore, the focus is on the acknowledgement that fictional is employed in the non-fictional setting so as to produce man-made tourist attractions. Thus, the illusion of the fictional is perpetuated into the actual*

places used as attractions for avid readers and cinephiles. For instance, 221b Baker Street in London known as the Sherlock Holmes's home is recreated in reality and made into a museum for those intrigued by the mystery of Conan Doyle's fiction. The tourist is thus perceived both as a consumer and homo ludens in the postmodern contemporary context. The same way as a reader immerses into the text, the tourist embarks on a journey. Thus, various literary tours represent a twofold experience of the fictional world.

Key words: *literary tours, chronotope, fictional world, consumer, reader*

Introduction

‘To read and to journey are one
 and the same act’
Michel Serres, (quoted in Soja, 1996)

The intricate connection between literature and tourism has had a long history, most notably in the successful story of how Penguin paperback editions started in 1934 as Allen Lane was standing on a platform in Exeter after paying a visit to Agatha Christie, and discovered there were no good titles on offer for the journey. Since then, studies have shown that travellers at airports, railway stations and bus terminals tend to buy newspapers but also novels, or bring books from home on their journey. In addition,

tourists most often consult guide books and maps to discover more facts about the city they will visit. However, Michel de Certeau states: “What the map cuts up, the story cuts across. In Greek, narration is called ‘diegesis’: it establishes an itinerary (it ‘guides’) and it passes through (it ‘transgresses’)” (De Certeau, 1984: 129). Therefore, it can be said that it never suffices to use a map to navigate one’s way through the city, as the city will remain merely in one dimension. The ultimate way to fully comprehend a place is to know it also through literature that is set there, and by imagining characters and events they participate in, the reader constructs a place as well. The dialectics of space is explained by Henri Lefebvre in his seminal study *The Production of Space* (1991), where he dif-



ferentiates between the following: *espace perçu* (perceived space), *espace conçu* (conceived space) and *espace vécu* (lived space). The *espace vécu* is the most relevant as the space of representation, that can contain all real and imagined spaces simultaneously, where the imagination overlays the physical space. Thus, when visiting a city after reading about it in a novel, readers can merge the mindscape they based on the books and the cityscape before them into one unique experience, the literary tourism.

The urge to get away, to travel, blends the phenomenon of *escapism* into the world of fiction. For literary tourists the primal source of escapism comes from the novels they read, inciting the desire to visit the place mentioned in the books. Thus, the 'derived escapism' transcends from literature into tourism. The illusion of the fictional world is perpetuated into the real locations used to attract avid readers and cinema buffs alike. Their escapism is based on the *chronotope* (Bakhtin, 1981) that is used in books and films, when they visit cities described in fiction. After having read a book, the reader is inspired to visit the locations in a city where the events in the book took place. Thus the locations of the city described in the works of literature have palimpsestic features. If the *flâneur* experiences the city, its streets and inhabitants wanders aimlessly and translates afterwards all this into words in the urban narrative (Benjamin, 1968), then the reader acts as a *flâneur*, while he/she walks the city and observes it in search of the places portrayed in his/her favourite works of literature. Furthermore, this paper will consider literary tourists as "*flâneur ranversé*" as they wish to perceive the city they are visiting in the way it was described in the text.

Literary tourism within the scope of thematic tourism

Within the definition of cultural tourism as "forms of tourism that highlight the cultural, heritage or artistic aspects of a destination or experiences and activities for the tourist" (Douglas, N. et al, 2001: 114), fiction induced tourism and literary tourism can be regarded as a part of cultural tourism since tourists base their visits on the literature as a cultural product. It is also to be stressed that both fiction induced tourism and literary tourism represent a relatively recent field of study in thematic tourism. Although the definitions vary and there are still views denying the very phenomenon of *literary tourism*, we can refer to Jafari's explication from the *Encyclopedia of Tourism*, because in his interpretation he rightly incorporates the idea of travelling through *time and space*, a fusion of mythical, historical and fictional:

Literary tourism is a form of tourism in which the primary **motivation** for visiting specific locations is related to an interest in literature. This may include visiting past and present homes of authors (living and dead), real and mythical places described in literature, and locations affiliated with characters and events in literature. Regions strongly associated with an author may be marketed in that vein, such as "Shakespeare Country". (Jafari 2000: 360)

However, the phenomenon of the term "literary tourism" includes ambiguity in itself, as Nicole Watson remarked that: "The embarrassment of literary tourism is encapsulated in the very phrase, which yokes 'literature' – with its longstanding claims to high, national culture, and its current aura of high-brow difficulty and professionalism – with 'tourism', trailing its pejorative connotations of mass popular culture, mass travel, unthinking and unrefined consumption of

debased consumables, amateurishness and inauthenticity” (Watson, 2009: 5). Nonetheless, the contested term withstood and literary tourism will be used in this paper to denote the type of thematic tourism when tourists visit places described in literature or used as locations in films that are based on novels.

Regarding the chronotope literary tourists tend to visit, Yvonne Smith states that they visit places that were accurately portrayed in books, and those that were used as an inspiration for fantastical settings in literature (Smith, 2012: 12). When it comes to places that exist but could not have been used by the characters due to anachronism, for the reader-tourists they are real in a special way. Thus, the castle described in *Hamlet* is still regarded as fortification but also associated with the play (ibid). Therefore, it can be said that places in literary tourism have a twofold function, on the one hand there are real places available to all tourists and, on the other, imagined places attracting reader-tourists. Fictional places may be based on real locations, but they are not necessarily accurate reconstructions of existing places, but “disguised places” (Robinson, 2002), an imaginary location that is constructed on a real one, in a way the setting and scenery are re-invented and re-created in the work of fiction.

Yvonne Smith compares the theories analysing what tourists expect, as some authors claim that tourists prefer staying in the “environmental bubble” thus choosing “pseudo-events”, whereas other hold that tourist would rather go for “staged authenticity” (Smith, 2012: 15). In line with this division, it can be assumed that literary tourists are content to visit places described in novels and plays, even though they are aware of the fact that the chronotope used in the works of literature is not always supported in reality. Smith states that “the conditions of inventiveness and believability also extend to the settings in which a writer places a story or

poem, thereby figuratively transporting the reader to these places, whether real or fictitious” (Smith, 2013: 26). Literary tourists may be further distinguished as those who visit places related to their favourite writers, such as birthplaces, monuments, writers’ houses where they wrote their *oeuvre*, or cemeteries where they were buried. The other category of literary tourists would then be those who visit places linked to the chronotope itself, as the location used as the backdrop of events described in novels. The latter places are thus seen as *lieux d’imagination* (Smith, 2013: 31). This paper will look into the way those *lieux d’imagination* are used as tourist attractions.

As mentioned above, literary tourism has not yet received its due attention, and it might be said that literary tourist literally are *flâneurs*, wandering aimlessly in bookshops, searching for references in vain. Apart from city guide books that may occasionally include descriptions of recommended places of interests for book-lovers, there are just few guide books available that target literary tourists exclusively: *Novel Destinations: Literary Landmarks from Jane Austen’s Bath to Ernest Hemingway’s Key West* by Shannon McKenna Schmidt and ; another fine example is *The Oxford Guide to Literary Britain and Ireland* by Daniel Hahn and Nicolas Robins. More information is to be found on web pages that offer guided trails for the literati, for example: [www http://britmovietours.com/](http://britmovietours.com/), http://www.walks.com/London_Walks_Home/. One site even offers instructions for a self-guided tour with all useful information and complete itinerary for downloading free-of-charge: www.themagician.co.uk/.

Despite the fact that literary tourism takes different forms and can be analysed through different types from event-based tourism, creative writing courses or ‘pilgrimage’ to places where writers lived or died, in this paper we would like to give overview and focus on the role of fictional in creating tour-



ist attractions through the examples of four tours in the European continent related to four literary works Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, Arthur Conan Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes* and J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter*. These examples are employed to look into more intangible aspects of heritage tourism and the ways these aspects play the role in attracting the increasing number of readers/tourists. Thus, themed trails in London, Verona and Transylvania blend the sites featured in books and films with guides' commentaries that include quotations from literary texts, all together into one tourist product and some examples of these literary tours will be examined in the paper.

Shakespeare in Via Capello 23:

*There is no World without Verona Walls*¹

Situated on Adige River, the capital city of Veneto region, Verona, annually records the influx of more than half a million tourists². The city itself is featured by great many tourist attractions such as Roman Amphitheatre, Piazza delle Erbe, Palazzo Barberi, Lamberti Tower and Porta Borsari creating enchanting atmosphere with its winding narrow little streets, welcoming cafés, colorful Renaissance façades, medieval fountains and squares. Interestingly enough, for years the staggering numbers of tourists have concentrated around *the Juliet's House (La Casa di Guilietta)*, Juliet's statue in the courtyard of the house or Juliet's tomb. Hence, the so-called *Shakespeare's Verona* is the inevitable segment of guided sightseeing tours. Even though, the city itself boasts rich cultural

and historical heritage, the tragic story depicting forbidden love and the fight between the Montagues and Capulets transfused into a legend, plays the significant part in the contemporary tourist offer of the city³. It is thus reconstructed and transformed into the peculiar phenomenon of our postmodernist world. As stated both by Graham (2002) and Reijnders (2011) popular culture lives side by side with the high brow, the above-mentioned concept of *lieux d'imagination*⁴ needs to be reconstructed on the spot.

Accordingly, *Italy* has been considered more as a *destination* or the most desirable destination for centuries rather than another country and this fact was extensively used in English literature⁵, the perfect setting for early modern stage⁶. The practice of fictionalizing Italy continued in the wake of the Renaissance period with Grand Tours and the era of Romanticism and has continued up to this very day. It is due to the impression reflected upon the 'recipients' and the association with *la dolce vita*, the warm, sunny, luscious, liberated or serene as opposed to rainy, cold and restricted. Italy has been perceived as a place where anything is possible.

Naturally, text corpus for Shakespeare's plays is based on oral tradition, legends, dif-

¹ William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Act III, Scene 3, *The Works of William Shakespeare Gathered in One Volume*. 1938, Oxford University Press: New York, p. 264.

² Facts and the statistical data about the City of Verona are retrieved from <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/797> and <http://www.veronissima.com/eng.html>

³ The story itself can be exploited in different ways to create a tourist product: festivals, carnivals, workshops etc.

⁴ See page 2.

⁵ In this sense, the authors such as Byron, Shelley, Keats, E. M. Forster, Sterne etc. can all be related to Italy.

⁶ The reason why Shakespeare chose Venetian Republic as a perfect place to set his plays, e.g. *Othello*, *Two Gentleman of Verona*, *the Merchant of Venice* cannot be only ascribed to the Renaissance character of his Elizabethan era, but to the fact that he wanted to stay subversive about the political situation in his native country and could not show his criticism overtly. For further information refer to Anthony Burgess' *Shakespeare*.

ferent Italian versions of the story, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* or perhaps even Dante's *Divine Comedy* as well as factual and historical data, which is why it was not so difficult for travellers/readers to recreate spaces in real-time and easily plunge into fantasy when they reach the actual city sites reminiscent of Shakespeare's tragedy.

However, in her recent essay *Form Follows Fiction: Redefining Urban Identity in Fascist Verona through the Lens of Hollywood's Romeo and Juliet* (2013) Maria D'Anniballe claims that the long-neglected sites themselves did not spontaneously spur visitors to seek the stage where Shakespeare set his drama. Actually, she argues that it was only after the release of George Cukor's films in 1936 and 1941, that Verona was turned into a fantasy for the hopes and aspiration of the tourists and local residents. She argues: "In Verona, the regime did not oppose and in many cases openly favored local initiatives aimed at recreating simplified versions of architectural past" (D'Anniballe 2013: 229).

The tourist attraction in Verona, *Casa di Guilietta* at 23 Via Capello, dates back from the 13th century where allegedly the Capulets lived and one can still see the traces of their coat of arms. The balcony itself, overlooking the courtyard was attached to the building in the 20th century, the time D'Anniballe claims the reshaping of the urban sites took place for lucrative purposes. Inside the house is a small museum and there is a bronze embodiment of Juliette in the courtyard. The tourist/consumer and *homo ludens* is willingly involved in ritualisation: reenacting the balcony scene, groups of teenagers flocking to the tiny courtyard to take photographs, girls writing letters, teenagers superstitiously rubbing the bronze breast for good luck with thousands and thousands of love notes labeled on the walls and doors in the entrance to the courtyard.

The phenomenon raises many intriguing questions. Are the tourists enticed to these "literary attractions" because of the writer and his work? Are these guided tours

an example of unorthodox ways of saving cultural heritage? Does it merely illustrate degradation and deconstruction of cultural and historical sites? In the academic literature we can find opposing views on the issue. However, we indisputably witness the Postmodern *Zeitgeist*, where entertaining and educational, artistic and consumerist, culture and pop culture are fused. Thus, storytelling continues in thousands of fleeting labels attached to the Verona walls.⁷

**Bram Stoker and Dracula Tour:
We seem to be drifting into unknown
places and unknown ways⁸**

As for the increasingly popular *Dracula tour* to Transylvania and mysterious Carpathian mountains, the itinerary entails visiting several different places of tourist interest, i.e. Sighișoara, the most preserved medieval place in Romania where *Vlad Țepeș*⁹, alleged *Dracula* was born in 1431, then the *Brașov* centre and the *Bran Castle* where *Vlad Țepeș* was imprisoned. Thematically, it is examined within the scope of dark tourism and interestingly enough, Transylvania tours are mostly organized in the fall and the time of Halloween. All these facts once again indicate to complete postmodernist reconstruction/deconstruction of existing places, they are as Robinson (2002) pointed out 'disguised places', where again and again the factual and fictional intertwine. Most possibly,

⁷ The recent news is that the local authorities banned tourists from posting amorous letters and consuming food and drinks in order not to damage the façade. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2230962/Casa-di-Guilietta-Romantics-banned-posting-love-letters-famous-Romeo-Juliet-home-Verona.html>

⁸ Stoker, B. *Dracula*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (1998) p. 357

⁹ Vlad Țepeș Vlad III Dracul or Vlad the Impaler (1431-1476), Prince of Wallachia. See <http://www.bran-castle.com/history.html>



fantastical geographies of the remote places with bizarre characters spur the imagination of the avid travellers.

In *Places of the Imagination* Reijnders (2011: 243) stated that many Dracula tourists were drawn to the story “because of its dark-romantic mix of eroticism and violence” – their “inner experience”. Naturally, the feeling has been evoked ever since Romanticism, the idea that ugliness and beauty create one perfect whole.¹⁰ It is also associated with *the Gothic* characterized by twilight, horror, haunted castles, decay, strange creatures and overpowering landscape. Therefore, the inspiration for modern-day travellers to Transylvania can be traced back to the romantic work of Abraham ‘Bram’ Stoker – *Dracula*. Stoker’s Gothic novel itself is a perfect example of reinventing the spaces because even though he travelled immensely, he never visited Eastern Europe, the setting for his masterpiece.

Consequently, romanticism is characterized by another important trait, Western perception and imagery of the East as exotic, wild, irrational or unrestrained.¹¹ Additionally, the Romanticism introduced legends, myths and folkloristic elements into the tales despite the fact that frequently these elements were not necessarily authentic, but frequently invented and false¹². Such is the story cre-

ated by Stoker who relied on Ármin Vámbéry’s¹³ knowledge on Transylvanian culture and studied European folklore, mythological stories of vampires as well as Romanian history where he encountered the name of *Vlad Țepeș*, unjustly associated with the character of Dracula. This fact only emphasized the problem of reconciling the fictional with the factual as well as links between time and places, Vlad the Impaler being the prince of Wallachia and fictional Dracula associated with Transylvania.

Furthermore, the character that suffers from the curse of immortality and sucks human blood was not only built on legends and Stoker’s novel it was again recreated in popular culture¹⁴, one of the most famous is certainly Francis Coppola’s adaptation of *Dracula* in 1992.

Regarding the mass tourism, it can be perceived that prevailing atmosphere around rudimentary Bran Castle is far from creating the effect of dread and horror. Contrary to the ingrained idea, the atmosphere is rather *Disneylandesque*.¹⁵ In the foothills of the castle, there is a market selling kitschy souvenirs and products all inspired with the legend about Dracula, e.g. exquisite wines are better sold as *Trueblood*, *Dracula*, *Vampire*, *Chateau du Vampire Midnight Rendezvous* etc. Along with this, there were initiatives to create Dracula theme park hoping to stimulate inbound tourism in Romania (Jamal and Menzel, 2009: 238).

¹⁰ The idea is clearly depicted in the works of Mary Shelley (*Frankenstein*), Emily Brontë (*Wuthering Heights*), Edgar Allan Poe (*The Fall of House of Usher*), Horace Walpole (*The Castle of Otranto*) etc. For further research on the concept of beauty and ugliness in literature, arts and popular culture refer to Umberto Eco’s *On Ugliness*.

¹¹ For instance, detailed references to the idea of Western fictionalization of the East can be found in Vesna Goldsworthy’s *Inventing Ruritania: The Imperialism of the Imagination*.

¹² Another good example is Coleridge’s depiction of Xanadu in his unfinished poem *Kubla Khan* (1816).

¹³ Hungarian writer and traveller, there are a few allusions to him throughout the novel in a character of Professor Van Helsing.

¹⁴ There were numerous film and stage adaptations, short stories, cartoons for children, comics, video games, TV series all associated with the legend on Dracula.

¹⁵ See http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g295394-d318167-r131504102-Bran_Castle_Dracula_s_Castle-Brasov_Brasov_County_Central_Romania_Transylvania.html

*It is a hobby of mine, said Holmes,
to have an exact knowledge of London*¹⁶

Literary tourists in London are undoubtedly drawn to the William Shakespeare tour comprising a visit to the Globe and the Charles Dickens walk, but Sherlock Holmes attracts a substantial number of readers-tourists as well. Sherlock Holmes is a world-known character penned by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930) towards the end of the nineteenth century. The detective is famous for his extraordinary deduction capacity and disguising skills that helped him solve complex mysteries in four novels and around sixty stories. The detective's immense popularity has been maintained in numerous TV and films adaptations of Doyle's work, including parodies and musicals, even cartoons, but also in some more recent screen and series based on the motif of the Sherlock Holmes in modern-day London.

In 1951, the detective's living room was reconstructed for Sherlock Holmes Exhibition and afterwards it was transferred to Sherlock Holmes Pub in London, including all the memorabilia. That the interest for the crime-solving literary character never wanes is obvious as the Museum of London has planned to open a special exhibition dedicated to Sherlock Holmes in autumn 2014. The Sherlock Holmes Museum opened in 1990 at Baker Street, the address frequented by people in distress. Anna Quindlen describes her visit as unsatisfactory since "the Baker Street location is probably the most disappointing in the city [...] Somehow, between numbers 237 and 241 [...] a 221b has sprung up" (Quindlen, 2004: 76-77). In the language of postmodernism, it resembles a version of Jean Baudrillard's simulacrum, the overproduction of replicas that substitute for the vanishing in a real city, so that only surfaces and artifice remain (1994). Howev-

er, literary tourists are aware of the fact that the place described in their favourite work of fiction does not necessarily relate to the actual place in a city and thus they should willingly participate in the illusion of visiting a real location described in literature. Commodification of culture has led to theories such as 'production of space' (Lefebvre, 1991) and discussions about 'authenticity' (Huggan, 2001), and the wrong location of Sherlock Holmes Museum creates a place that had never existed in the place where it should not even be, just by marketing the fictional residence of the famous detective to his fans.

Apart from the museum, the fans of the super sleuth, his colleague and his arch-enemy, are offered the thematic trail on several web sites specialized in walking tours of London. Organized by the blue-badge guides, the tours last around two hours and take literary tourists to various places of interest related to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's life in London and Sherlock Holmes and his adventures. The great detective trail includes the place where the writer used to live and work; the location of the Strand Magazine offices which hugely contributed to the success of the stories, the place where Holmes first met Dr Watson and the Charing Cross railway station where they would catch trains to start the mystery-solving journeys. The experience is deepened by the guide quoting lines from some of the most popular stories. Therefore, the *lieux d'imagination* for literary tourists is maintained throughout the guided walk.

¹⁶ Conan Doyle, A. (1951). The Red-Headed League. In *Sherlock Holmes: Selected Stories*. Oxford: Oxford University Press p. 347

Harry Potter:
“Can we find all this in London?”
Hagrid: “If yeh know where to go”¹⁷

According to the map *Writing London* that features seventy places linked to writers from Daniel Defoe and William Blake to Sam Selvon and Will Self, London is a city full of stories and spots on the Harry Potter literary tour can be regarded as a well-deserved latest addition to it. Harry Potter is the main character from the international best-seller about a young wizard by J. K. Rowling. The seven books were published over the span of ten years from 1997-2007, with the last book in the series becoming the fastest-selling book in the world. Harry Potter book series have been translated in nearly seventy languages. Mainly targeting young teenagers, the books follow magical adventures of Harry Potter, his best friends Ron and Hermione in the school of sorcery. The world-wide popularity was even more underlined by eight films based on the J. K. Rowling's characters.

The incredible success of Harry Potter has even inspired the installing of the Platform 9 and $\frac{3}{4}$ during the refurbishment of the Kings Cross Station in London, where Harry and his friends take a special train to their college in the books. Potter fans can have their photo taken while pushing the trolley that is half embedded in the wall. Right next to the photo opportunity, there is a specialized bookshop for the fans of the young wizard with replicas of magic wands can be bought among other souvenirs. Regarding the link between literature and tourists beyond the written word, Mike Robinson claims that all books are subject to cultural processes of “trans-valuation” and “transmutation”. Robinson offers the example of Winnie the Pooh, the popular character of a series of children's books, who came to exist in various products, including games, cartoons

and films, toys, pens and pencils, clothes and bed linen, even packaging of Happy Meals (2002: 41), which can be also applied here to the merchandizing items on sale in the Harry Potter shop, in which the text serves as a source of further commodification. Literary theme parks could be defined as further commodification of the cultural production, as they use the representation of places and characters portrayed in the works of fiction, especially fertile ground for development in the case of novel-based blockbusters. The Warner Bros opened a special themed studio near London in 2011 with the capacity of 5000 visitors per day. It is called *The Making of Harry Potter* and it houses film sets, props and costumes used in the films about Harry Potter.

The guided tour of fantastical geographies in London used as a backdrop for the amazing adventures of Harry Potter is offered in two forms online. One option is a completely free, DIY tour with a downloadable map with the description of activities where the literary tourists choose their own pace, whereas the other themed trail is an organized walking tour visiting the location which was used as Diagon Alley in filming the scenes when Harry Potter is buying things for his school, also the bridge where the wizard and his friends were attacked by dangerous creatures. The literary tour is highlighted by the guides' impersonation of some characters from the Harry Potter series.

Conclusion

The reconstruction of spaces through time and literary imagination is evidently reflected in tourist experience and various tourist practices and products. Literary tourism as such can be differentiated at so many levels, in terms of links with the authors and their works of fiction, as a pilgrimage, as event-based tourism or educational tourism.

¹⁷ Rowling, J.K. (1999) *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. New York: Scholastic Inc, p.67

The basic motive for travelling beyond pages can be explained through a desire for escapism or simply a frivolous materialistic and consumerist pleasure. The postmodern traveller/reader flocks to the places of interest that were first imaginatively constructed as archetypes of love, death, life, wisdom, good and evil and they are consequently sought and found in reality independently from the factual or historical truth. In this paper, we exemplified the paradigm of perceived, conceived and lived spaces as well as the dialectic relations with high-brow and popular culture. We wanted to emphasize the fact that spaces should be regarded as unfixed, extended and transformed. As Herbert rightly suggested “there is a merging of the real and the imagined that gives such places special meaning” (Herbert, 2001: 314), that can be employed to instil the impulse to pursue our fantasies.

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