

The Portraits of Bataknese and Sundanese Cultural Identity towards Marriage Custom in *Lamaran* Movie

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ABSTRACT

Indonesia adalah negara yang majemuk, rumah bagi sekian banyak suku, agama, bahasa, dan tradisi. Setiap daerah di Indonesia memiliki tradisinya tersendiri. Salah satu adat yang menarik untuk diteliti adalah hukum pernikahan adat, lebih spesifik lagi adat Batak dan Sunda. Kedua suku memiliki aturan sendiri ketika berbicara mengenai pasangan. Keduanya mewarisi pernikahan adat demi mempertahankan identitas budaya. Kedua peraturan pernikahan adat tersebut direpresentasikan di dalam film *Lamaran*. Dalam studi ini, penulis bertujuan untuk menganalisis identitas budaya Batak dan Sunda melalui pernikahan adat mereka yang digambarkan dalam film *Lamaran*. Untuk membantu penulis dalam melakukan analisisnya, pendekatan *Mise En Scene* dari Manon de Reeper dan teori identitas budaya dari Stuart Hall digunakan dalam studi ini. Hasil dari penelitian mengindikasikan bahwa baik Batak maupun Sunda berusaha untuk mewariskan pernikahan adat mereka sebagaimana hal tersebut mempengaruhi identitas mereka dimasa mendatang.

Abstract

*Indonesia is a diverse country, home to numerous tribes, religions, languages, and traditions. Each region of Indonesia has its own set of traditions. One of the most intriguing customs to observe is the customary marriage law, especially for Bataknese and Sundanese. They both have certain rules when they have to find their couple. They inherit their marriage custom for the sake of cultural identity. Thus, those marriage rules are represented in the Lamaran movie. In this scientific study, the author aims to analyze the portraits of Bataknese and Sundanese cultural identity towards their marriage custom in the Lamaran Movie. In order to help the author doing this analysis, *Mise En Scene* approach from Manon de Reeper and the theory of Cultural Identity from Stuart Hall are used for this study. The result of this study indicates that either Bataknese or Sundanese attempts to pass down their marriage custom as it influences their identity in the future.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Culture comprises various facets of life, including attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs about a subject. In other words, culture is the combination of habits configured in a particular way. Then society's members accept and continue to spread the behavior (Tafonao, et al., 2015). Tafonao also argued that culture serves as a medium of communication and identity preservation for society. Furthermore, Koentjaraningrat (1997) stated that culture is the accumulation of life aspects, thoughts, behaviors, and products within society that serves as education.

Indonesia is culturally diverse, home to hundreds of tribes, and this diversity serves as an appeal (Murhadi, 2017). Batak and Sunda are two examples of Indonesian tribes. They both have

differences, especially in the way how they have to find their companion. Marriage customary law is the issue that makes the author interested to analyze. In general, the way traditional ceremonies are carried out in Indonesia is influenced by the structure and form of local customary marriages with a kinship structure that strengthens the community. Similarly, the Batak people are influenced by Batak culture, despite marrying someone from another tribe (Evalina, 2007). *Dalihan Na Tolu*, generally referred to as "Tungku Nan Tiga," is Batak's life philosophy. We must comprehend three facets of the kinship system to comprehend *Dalihan Na Tolu* (Partuturan). Dongan Tubu (clan-based family), Hula hula (wife's clan), and Boru (family from our son-in-law). They represent the three components of the family relationship. *Dalihan Na Tolu*'s work establishes a person's status, rights, and obligations or organizes and controls one's behavior or the social interaction of groups in traditional life. Furthermore, it serves as a foundation for thought, consideration, and agreement within Toba Batak society (Naibaho, 2019). In addition, in Batak tradition, they are also depicted as the tribe that respects each other, especially family relationships. According to Sonya (2018), those who possess great wealth do not acquire an honorable and exalted predicate if they are only selfish. Among other characteristics, the value of togetherness can be defined as the following: the nature of wisdom, charisma, and good character, so that he becomes a respected person in the social environment.

In Batak custom, Batak people idealistically should marry the uncle's daughter, called *pariban* (Saragih, 2015). In Batak Toba tradition, the men or women who marry outside Batak people must first or after marriage be given a clan to enter ethnic kinship Batak. It is related to his position in traditional events. The ratified person first is determined through *mangelek* or pleading with the individual who provided his surname. Giving the clan a surname enables it to be accepted as a relative. The granting of a clan has a broader scope because it encompasses the affairs of the chosen clan relatives and their implementation through a comprehensive traditional ceremony incorporating all *Dalihan Na Tolu* elements. Giving the clan to a couple marrying between tribes is done before or during the marriage ceremony, but with the development of Toba Batak customs, marriages can be given after the family has children through the "mangadati" ritual (Evalina, 2007). She also added that giving the clan in the implementation of marriage is an integral part of the customary rules of marriage itself. By accepting the clan following Batak customs, women or men who are not Batak tribe members become citizens of the indigenous Batak community and the clan alliance they choose.

Meanwhile, in Sundanese culture, they have different stereotypes when Sundanese men or women want to get married. There are several stages when Sundanese men or women want to get married. First, propose. Proposing is a step in which you demonstrate (declare) a desire for matchmaking between a man and a woman through an intermediary. If male parents decide to marry off one's youth, they must visit the home of the woman's parents of their son's choice. This matter must be fixed in order to acquire more precise information about the personal data of women, including what that woman was like, whether she had a boyfriend or not, and other information deemed necessary for a more in-depth understanding of candidates, a couple who will be lifelong friends with their children. If the woman does not have a boyfriend or fiancé and her parents agree with the man who submitted, a deliberation, termed the Neundeun talk, takes place. Since this event, both parties' families have begun visiting one another, and occasionally, with luck, exchanging food or other items in order to foster a strong bond between them. Second, *Ngeuyeuk Seureuh*. This *Ngeuyeuk Seureuh* ceremony is typically held the night before the bride's parents' home wedding ceremony. Implementation led by someone truly knowledgeable about this ceremony is referred to as a pangeuyeuk (Gunawan, 2019). Third, Seseheran ceremony. Seseheran means giving. This ceremony usually takes place before the wedding ceremony is implemented. According to Hilman Hadi (1990), during this ceremony, the groom presents his son to the bride's parents for marriage while carrying the items for the bride, including money, woman's clothing, and jewelry bracelets and necklaces woman's beauty products.

The portraits of Sundanese and Batakese customary law are depicted in the *Lamaran* movie. The film is about a Batak lawyer named Tiar Sarigar. Tiar Sarigar is in charge of defending

Basuki, a corrupt official. Tiar's courage only adds to her popularity. Tiar receives a threat and wishes to be killed by a mafia boss named Arif Rupawan, who constantly attempts to conceal his involvement. Due to the threat to Tiar's safety posed by Arif Rupawan, two of Ari's agents and Sasha made every effort to keep her safe from the threat. Ari and Sasha used various techniques to protect Tiar, including bringing a handsome, innocent, and innocent Sundanese man named Aan. Aan is assigned to act as a spy and a soulmate for Tiar. Tiar's family objected and refused to accept that Tiar was dating Aan, not the original Batak ethnic group. However, Ari and Sasha continue to motivate and encourage Aan to win the Sarigar family's heart by acquiring the Batak clan. However, the situation is not going smoothly because Tiar's cousin's desk has flipped and manipulated the situation in order to benefit personally from clan offers by Aan. Mrs. Sarigar devises elaborate schemes to keep Tiar and Aan apart. In numerous ways, she attempted to pair Tiar with a man of Batak ethnicity named Raymond. Mrs. Sarigar's efforts were pointless. It is because Tiar has a preference for the sweet and innocent Aan. The escalating conflict trumps Tiar's decision to choose Aan. Seeing Tiar's decision to continue choosing Aan convinced Mrs. Sarigar and Mrs. Euis that their relationship was acceptable despite the cultural differences between Sundanese and Batak customs.

To support the analysis, the author used *Mise en Scene* approach from Manon de Reeper to see how the camera works and the dialogue contributes to this film and the theory of Cultural Identity from Stuart Hall to analyze the representation of Batak and Sundanese marriage custom in the *Lamaran* movie. *Mise en Scene* is one of the important components of cinematic elements in the film. It is essential to note that the film production can convey a sense of drama in each storyline (Alfathoni, 2016). According to Manon de Reeper (2016), everything in a film or television show is crafted to fit on the screen. The creators carefully consider every element in the scene; nothing is coincidental. The term "Mise en Scène" refers to the director's vision for the scene and film. The author can influence the audience's cognition by determining what is presented within the confines of that screen. The *Mise en Scène* can be used almost as effectively as conversation and story to convey meaning to the spectator. It is critical for media and film studies analysis because it explains how to recognize pertinent visual codes and how some may have been used to generate meaning (The Media Insider, 2020). Moreover, Reeper (2016) stated that in order to aid in the study and interpretation of a scene, we must consider not only who and what is present, but also their relative locations—we must also consider makeup, expressions, costume, setting, look, visuals, sounds, and lighting. Numerous factors can be incorporated into an analysis of the film. They are divided into three categories: editing, camera, and lighting.

First, editing. Editing is a process that condenses time and location into a logical sequence of photographs. It is predominantly seamless. It entails segmenting and reassembling captured film segments (shots) in order to maintain the film's continuity and coherence. Typically, photographs are edited to create the illusion of a timeline (Reeper, 2016). Next is the camera. When analyzing a film, the camera is one of the most critical elements to consider. It includes details about the shots taken and the camera angles employed. A shot is made up of one take. It can be used to establish a scene or mood and completely immerse the viewer. Meanwhile, the camera angle has a substantial impact on the tone of the film and almost always conveys meaning.

Lighting is the final step. Lighting plays a critical role in establishing a film's tone and setting. Interestingly, even lighting can contribute to a film's meaning construction. Full-facial lighting draws the viewer's attention to the subject's face and may impart an air of candor and sincerity. Shadow and low contrast are frequently associated with unpleasant emotions such as fear, wrath, and distrust (Reeper, 2016). These variables may aid the author in conducting the analysis.

Additionally, as The Media Insider (2017) notes, there are additional approaches to understanding cinematography. Among them is to set the scene for the photograph. By affixed meaning to a shot, we can determine how the film intends to communicate a concept, a message, or a meaning through the lens.

In accordance with Pratista (2008), the elements of *Mise en Scene* can also be seen from

the table below.

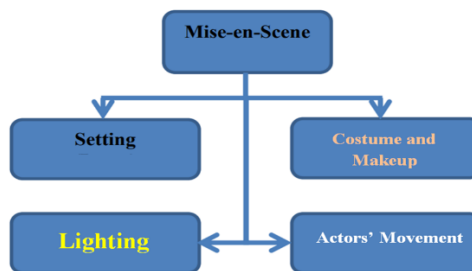


Fig 1. *Mise en Scene* elements

Source : Pratista, 2008

The setting (background) in the *Mise en Scene* structure is connected to all the film's properties. A property can be a house, a door, a chair, a guitar, or a lamp. The settings used in the film are always as authentic as possible to fit the context of the film's storyline. The film is comprised and utilized by actors during the acting process at the time of filmmaking and all of the accessories. Actors wore stunning costumes and make-up to reflect the context of the film's plot (Alfathoni, 2016)

According to Pratista (2008), costumes in a film serve as a visual indicator of space and time, social status, and the actors' personalities, while the color of costumes serves as a visual indicator of the actors' personalities. The actors' characters represent the story's symbols and intentions. Lighting is a fundamental element that contributes significantly to the production of a film. Without light, all of the elements used in filmmaking will appear to be non-existent. In filmmaking, light manipulates the quality, direction, source, and color of each image contained within a scene. Lighting is critical in filmmaking because it helps create the atmosphere and mood of the film. Additionally, a filmmaker must pay attention to the actors' movements. These elements will motivate each narrative element in a film's story. An actor must be able to make movements that contribute to the dramatic aspect of each storyline in order for the messages to be conveyed effectively.

To analyze the portraits of Batak and Sundanese marriage custom in the *Lamaran* movie, the author applied the theory of Cultural Identity from Stuart Hall. According to Hall (1991:21) puts it: 'Identity is a structured representation which only achieves its positive through the narrow eye of the negative. It has to go through the eye of the needle of the other before it can construct itself.' Identity is always a temporary and unstable effect of relations that defines identities by marking differences. Thus, the emphasis here is on the multiplicity of identities and differences rather than on a singular identity and on the connections or articulations between the fragments or differences. Agency, like identity, is primarily about the spatial relationships between places and areas and the distribution of people inside them. The articulations of subject positions and identities into specific places and areas - fields of activity - characterize agency as a human dilemma (Grossberg).

Individual identity is formed due to the individual's 'interaction' with society. While the subject retains an inner core or essence that is "true to me," this is constantly shaped and modified by 'outside' cultural environments and the identities they recognize (Hall et al., 1996). Identity, according to Hall, is divided into three distinct concepts. The following are the subjects: Sociology, Enlightenment, and Post-modernism. The Enlightenment subject was based on a conception of the human person as an entirely centered, unified individual endowed with capacities for reason, consciousness, and action, whose 'center' was an inner core that emerged with the subject at birth and continued to unfold with it throughout the individual's existence while remaining essentially the same - continuous or 'identical' with itself. The identity of a person was the fundamental axis of the self. The sociological subject then reflected the increasing complexity of the modern world and the recognition that the subject's inner care was not self-contained and autonomous but was formed in collaboration with significant others' who mediated to the subject the values, meanings,

and symbols - the culture - of the worlds he or she inhabited. According to this sociological perspective, identity connects the 'inside' and 'outside' - the private and public worlds. By projecting 'ourselves' into these cultural identities and internalizing their meanings and values, thereby making them 'part of us,' we can better align our subjective emotions with the objective 'places' we hold in the social and cultural world.

Meanwhile, the postmodern subject is conceptualized as lacking a stable, irreversible, or essential identity. Identity is transformed into a movable feast: it is constantly produced and modified in response to how we are represented or addressed in the cultural systems in which we live (Hall, 1987). The subject assumes various identities that are not centered on a coherent self at various times. 'Within us, competing identities tug in opposite directions, resulting in constant fluctuation of our identifications. If we believe we have a consistent identity from birth to death, it is because we create a reassuring story about ourselves, or self-narrative' (Hall, 1990). A dream is the ideal of a fully integrated, complete, secure, and coherent identity.

When two groups of people from very different natural landscapes and cultures come together to work together, conflicts inevitably arise due to miscommunications and controversies. The situation can disintegrate further if the conflicts are rooted in the conflicting personalities of the individuals. Indeed, individual personalities could be the turning point for the perplexing and complicated communication pattern (Budianta et al., 2017).

Moreover, Hall (1990) argued for two distinct perspectives on cultural identity. On the surface, cultural identity is defined as the shared culture of people who share a common history and heritage. Cultural identity is defined in this context by historical experience and adherence to a relatively stable and unchanging cultural code. While the second concept asserts that identity culture is not entirely irreversible (permanent), it can change in response to how positioning and being the subject of on-going history, culture, and power have played out. In other words, the first argument asserts the existence of cultural identity, whereas the second argument asserts the development of cultural identity. Cultural identity is a process of continuous identification within a historical and cultural context (Hall, 1990).

Hall concludes his argument by introducing three hypothetical decoding perspectives. It is partly to 'deconstruct the everyday definition of "miscommunication" (Procter, 2004). The hegemonic-dominant position is when the viewer decodes the message using the codes established by the encoding process and the dominant cultural order. Hegemony is not a static entity but a collection of evolving discourses and practices that are inextricably linked to social power (Barker, 2004). The negotiated position is a contradictory one in which the viewer can either embrace or reject the dominant televisual codes. 'It accords precedence to dominant event definitions while reserving the right to apply additional negotiated definitions to "local circumstances" (Procter, 2004). Finally, there is resistance. It occurs when a dominant culture attempts to impose itself on subordinate cultures without their consent. As a result, resources for opposition must be positioned outside the dominant culture (Barker, 2004).

2. METHOD

This research analyzed the portraits of Batak and Sundanese cultural identity towards their marriage custom in the *Mursala* movie. *Mise En Scene* approach from Manon de Reeper and the theory of Cultural Identity from Stuart Hall were used for this study. To figure out how the portraits of their cultural identity in their marriage custom, the author analyzed it by applying several stages.

First, the author analyzed *Lamaran* movie using the film elements, *Mise En Scene* from Manon de Reeper and supported source from The Media Insider. The author analyzed the scenes, angles, camera, and editing of the movie.

Second, the author connected the movie elements with the interpretation of Batak and Sundanese cultural context.

The last, the author concluded the whole observation of the portraits of Batak and Sundanese cultural identity towards their marriage custom in the *Lamaran* movie.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

To fully comprehend the outcome of this research, the author first observed the film's elements, such as angles, shots, lighting, and editing, in the *Lamaran* scenes. This observation would be beneficial as it could help the author know how the portraits of Batak and Sundanese cultural identity towards their marriage custom.

First, to see the portrait of Batak marriage custom, I started my observation from a scene on minutes 22:15 to 22:35 (Figure 1).



Fig 2. Tiar's father asked Aan's clan (*marga*)

In this scene, we will see many characters that are having a party in Tiar's house. Tiar's parents hold a party as Tiar is believed by her boss to take over the case. However, the camera suddenly focuses on an uninvited man that just comes to her party. His name is Aan. Aan is a receptionist that also works in the same company like Tiar. Knowing someone uninvited comes, Tiar's father got shocked and wanted to know who he was. Tiar said that Aan was Tiar's boyfriend. Everybody at the party was shocked. Then, her father asked, "What is your clan?" Aan just kept silent as he didn't have any clans. Then, an old man that is usually called *ompung* by Tiar asked the same, "What is your clan?". Aan answered, "I am Aan and I am Sundanese." Everybody was shocked as they believe that Batak people should have a relationship with Batak people. They are not allowed to have a relationship with other tribes. In my opinion, the dialog uttered by Tiar's father can be understood that clan (*marga*) is important for Batak people. They see someone's relationship through their clan as it is their identity. According to Hermanto Naibaho (2019), *Marga* or clan is the collective name for a group of brothers, blood relatives, and descendants of the father. The family serves as the basis for the clan, consisting of husband, wife, sons, and daughters who live close and share common experiences such as happiness, hardship, ownership of property, and responsibility for continuing descendants' lives. Hermanto also added that to be able to see the clan lineage's ancestry is called *tarombo*. Toba Batak ethnicity believes that clan and *tarombo* are critical to locate and define as all Batak people believe they share a womb. The Toba Batak people follow the *Dalihan Natolu* ideology of family and kinship. This ideology teaches them the importance of having a well-defined kinship system from birth to death.

In a closer context, a clan is important for Batak people. Thus, in this movie, we are shown that Batak family resist Sundanese family to be part of them. Batak custom is portrayed as a dominant culture while Sundanese is depicted as subordinate culture. Due to this difference, we are shown how they inherit their identity.

The next observation goes to the scene on minutes 29:32 to 30:27 (Figure 2).



Fig 3. The detectives asked Tiar's friend how to get a Batak clan

In this scene, we will see two characters that work as detectives come to a workshop. They work for Tiar and their coming is to ask Tiar's friend about getting the clan or *marga*. He said, "It's not easy to get the clan. There are so many requirements." He mentioned the words *tumpak* and *Arsik*. In a closer context after external research, *tumpak* is giving money. *Arsik* is a traditional Toba dish that is abundant in herbs and spices. According to Vita Datau Messakh, chairman of the Indonesian Gastronomy Academy, *Ikan Arsik* is a Batak traditional cuisine with a story spanning from birth to marriage to death. *Ikan Arsik* also typically adorns the Batak people's kitchens at family gatherings. When Batak children express an interest in traveling overseas, their parents typically serve them *Ikan Arsik*. Furthermore, *Ikan Arsik* is a way for families to pray to God for their children's success in their future endeavors. It is also primarily focused on the bride and groom. The bride and groom, their parents, and the *hula-hula* (wife clan group) hold the tray's end together and then pray to God in gratitude. *Ikan Arsik* is elevated to the status of a sign of prayer and blessing in the Batak wedding procession ritual.

After some external research, when a Batak is going to marry someone who is not a Batak person, they have to do *Mangain marga*. *Mangain marga* is the process by which a clan is given through a series of traditional ceremonies in order to be accepted into the family and become part of the Batak community. Once a person obtains a clan, he is validly admitted to the Batak community, receives familial recognition, and assumes his role and obligations to *Dalihan Natolu*. Without a clan, he will be rejected by the Batak community and will be denied the position of rights and obligations in custom. *Dalihan Na Tolu* is the Batak people's way of life. The *Na Tolu* argument is predicated on three points; namely, *Somba Marhula hula* means respecting the wife's family, *Mardongan Tubu Manat* means respecting relatives, and *Marboru Elek* means respecting a Boru, a woman's group clan (Windi, 2021). In my opinion, this scene attempts to show the stereotype of how non-Batak people get married to the Batak people. To be able to marry Batak people, non-Batak people must follow the custom Batak people have which is conducting *Mangain*, a process of getting a clan. In this context, I see that cultural identity for someone's tribe especially Batak is important.

The next analysis goes to the scene on minutes 42:06 to 42:15 (Figure 3).



Fig 4. Aan's mother and Tiar's mother with some dialogues

In this scene, the camera focuses on Tiar's mother and Aan's mother with some dialogues. Tiar's mother comes to Aan's house with her big family to give Aan a clan, resulting in chaos. The camera focuses on Tiar's mother and Aan's mother about the food. Tiar's mother disagrees with Aan's mother as she said that they have prepared the meal so that they do not need Aan's mother's food. Aan's mother's food is Sundanes and it doesn't fit Tiar's family, Batak. Tiar's mother also said that pork is a must for Batak culture. Meanwhile, Sundanese culture does not serve pork on any occasion.

In further observation, it could be understood that food is also seen as one of the most important elements in showing someone's identity. To show Tiar's family identity, they need to have pork in the occasion they hold. Meanwhile, Sundanese tribe has some beef or chicken for the special occasion they have. Pork is not allowed to be eaten by Sundanese people as they are mostly Muslim and Muslims do not eat pork. Due to this diversity, we can see that all tribes attempt to show their own identity.

Another further analysis is to the scene on minutes 1:26:41 to 1:26:52 (Figure 4).



Fig 5. Aan, a Sundanese man and Tiar, a Batak woman prepares to get married

In this scene, we are shown the main characters, Aan and Tiar were dressing up to prepare their marriage. Aan looked having a trouble wearing his Batak wedding outfit. However, he was kindly helped by Tiar's family. The camera also focuses on Tiar's father that looked happy looking at Tiar and Aan. In my point of view, I think this scene tries to depict that the difference between Batak and Sundanese tribe is not something that they must argue. They can live happily even though they come from different tribes. Batak people are depicted as the ones who strictly respect and follow their custom especially in finding a partner. They have their own stereotype about it. They are highly recommended to have a relationship with the same tribe, Batak. However, in this scene we can see that they tolerate and accept the difference. Batak people are able to marry other tribes as long as the process of ceremony follows Batak custom.

In my point of view, this scene attempts to show the negotiation of Batak custom towards Sundanese tradition. Batak people who have strictly believed in their custom could also accept the difference. Batak people often get married to other Batak people. However, in this scene, we are shown that Batak people can also get married to non-Batak people as long as non Batak people follow Batak custom. Thus, in the process of constructing cultural identity, not all tribes always resist, they could negotiate and accept the difference as is shown in this movie.

The last observation is to the scene on minutes 1:27:01 to 1:28:00 (Figure 5).



Fig 6. The marriage of Tiar and Aan

In this scene, the camera focuses on the groom and the bride. Tiar, a Batak woman got married to Aan, a Sundanese man. We will also see the groom's and the bride's family greeting and shaking their hands to the guests. Mostly, the guests were from Tiar's family. We could see many guests going back and forth. They enjoyed the food and music well.

In my point of view, this scene attempts to show how the difference in tradition blends each other. Batak culture that dominates this movie attempts to depict that they are open to differences. Batak people strongly believed in their culture that they have to marry someone with Batak tribe, too. However, in this modern era, the characters in the movie also show that they are more open-minded. They negotiate and they accept the difference.

4. CONCLUSION

To summarize, several scenes and dialogues illustrated how strictly the Batak people adhere to their marriage customs. They highly suggest Batak people marry Batak people. They are opposed to marrying members of other tribes. However, this film demonstrates that being different is acceptable as long as the person seeking to marry a Batak man or woman adheres to Batak custom. In sum, when it comes to constructing a cultural identity, members of particular tribes do not always resist; they can also negotiate and accept differences.

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