On The Road Jack Kerouac

On The Road Jack Kerouac On the road Jack Kerouac is more than just a phrase; it is a symbol of a movement, a literary revolution, and a quest for freedom that defined a generation. Jack Kerouac's seminal novel, On the Road, published in 1957, captures the restless spirit of post-war America and continues to inspire readers worldwide. This article explores the origins, themes, impact, and lasting legacy of Jack Kerouac's On the Road, providing a comprehensive understanding of why this book remains a cornerstone of American literature and counterculture. The Origins of On the Road Jack Kerouac: The Man Behind the Book Jack Kerouac (1922–1969) was a French-Canadian-American novelist and poet, often considered a pioneer of the Beat Generation. His life was characterized by a relentless pursuit of experience, spontaneity, and a rejection of conventional societal norms. Kerouac's own travels and encounters heavily influenced On the Road, which is semi-autobiographical. Inspiration and Writing Process Kerouac conceived On the Road during a period of intense creativity and personal exploration. The novel was written in a three-week burst in 1951, on a continuous scroll of paper over 120 feet long, to emulate the spontaneous flow of thought and narration. This method, known as "the spontaneous prose," aimed to capture the raw, unfiltered essence of experience. The Cultural Context Published during the post-World War II era, On the Road emerged amidst a backdrop of conformity, Cold War tensions, and the burgeoning youth culture seeking authenticity and freedom. The book became a manifesto for a generation eager to break free from societal constraints. Themes and Motifs in On the Road The Search for Freedom and Self-Discovery At its core, On the Road is about the relentless quest for personal freedom. The characters, primarily Sal Paradise and Dean Moriarty, embody the desire to explore, experience, and transcend societal expectations. The Spirit of Adventure Kerouac's narrative celebrates the thrill of the open road, spontaneous encounters, and the unpredictability of life. The road becomes a metaphor for life's journey and the pursuit of meaning beyond materialism. Friendship and Companionship The novel emphasizes deep bonds formed through shared adventures, highlighting the importance of community, loyalty, and understanding in the face of life's uncertainties. The Contradictions of American Society Kerouac's work often critiques the superficiality, materialism, and conformity of 1950s America, contrasting it with the authentic, soulful experiences sought by the characters. The Literary Style of Kerouac Spontaneous Prose Kerouac's hallmark was his spontaneous prose style—fast, energetic, and improvisational. This method aimed to mimic jazz improvisation, capturing the immediacy of experience. Use of Vernacular and Jazz Influence The language reflects the slang, rhythms, and improvisations of jazz music, which heavily influenced Kerouac's writing style and the Beat movement. Narrative Structure On the Road employs a loosely connected, episodic structure, emphasizing 2 fluidity over linear storytelling. This mirrors the characters' restless journeys and the improvisational nature of their lives. Impact and Reception of On the Road Literary Significance On the Road is considered a seminal work that helped define the Beat Generation and inspired countless writers and artists. It challenged traditional narrative forms and introduced a new, energetic voice to American literature. Cultural Impact The novel became a cultural phenomenon, symbolizing youth rebellion, counterculture, and the desire for authenticity. It influenced music, art, and lifestyle movements of the 1960s. Controversies and Criticisms Despite its acclaim, On the Road faced criticism for its portrayal of drug use, sexuality, and non-conformity. Some viewed it as glorifying reckless behavior, while others celebrated its honesty and rawness. The Legacy of On the Road Influence on Literature and Art Kerouac's spontaneous style and themes influenced a generation of writers like Allen Ginsberg, William S. Burroughs, and later authors exploring similar themes of rebellion and self-discovery. The Road as a Cultural Icon The image of the

open road, depicted vividly in the novel, has become a symbol of freedom in American culture. It has inspired countless road trips, films, and music. Adaptations and Continued Relevance On the Road has been adapted into films (notably the 2012 movie directed by Walter Salles) and remains a staple in high school and college curricula, exemplifying the enduring appeal of Kerouac's vision. Key Locations in On the Road San Francisco A hub of the Beat movement, San Francisco appears as a place of artistic experimentation and countercultural gatherings. New York City The city that never sleeps, New York, serves as a backdrop for many of the novel's episodes, symbolizing vibrancy and urban adventure. The American West From Denver to Mexico, the expansive landscapes embody the freedom and wild spirit that Kerouac celebrated. The Influence of Jazz and Beat Culture Jazz as a Musical and Cultural Influence Kerouac's admiration for jazz is evident in his rhythmic prose and improvisational style. The improvisational nature of jazz mirrors his writing approach. Beat Generation's Core Values The Beat movement emphasized: - Spontaneity - Rejection of materialism -Exploration of altered states through drugs and spirituality - Emphasis on personal experience On the Road encapsulates these values, making it a blueprint for a rebellious, free-spirited lifestyle. How to Read On the Road Today Appreciating its Historical Context Understanding the social and cultural backdrop of 1950s America enhances appreciation of the novel's themes. Embracing its Spontaneous Style Readers can approach the book with an open mind, appreciating its improvisational prose and episodic narrative. Connecting with its Universal Themes The longing for freedom, self-discovery, and authentic connection remain relevant, making On the Road a timeless read. Conclusion On the Road by Jack Kerouac is more than a story about travel—it is a profound exploration of the human desire for meaning, connection, and freedom. Its influence transcends literature, shaping cultural attitudes toward rebellion, authenticity, and the pursuit of happiness. For anyone interested in the spirit of adventure, the history of American counterculture, or the evolution of modern literature, 3 On the Road remains an essential and inspiring read. Whether you're planning your own road trip or seeking a deeper understanding of post-war America, Kerouac's masterpiece invites you to embrace the

journey and discover where the road leads. QuestionAnswer What is the main theme of Jack Kerouac's 'On the Road'? The main theme of 'On the Road' is the quest for freedom, self-discovery, and the exploration of the American landscape through the lens of youthful rebellion and the desire for adventure. How did 'On the Road' influence the Beat Generation and American literature? 'On the Road' became a defining work of the Beat Generation, inspiring a culture of non-conformity, spontaneity, and experimentation in literature, and influencing countless writers and artists to pursue authentic, unfiltered expressions. What autobiographical elements are present in 'On the Road'? The novel is largely based on Jack Kerouac's own experiences traveling across America with friends like Neal Cassady, capturing real events and personalities that reflect his own life and the Beat movement. Why is 'On the Road' considered a seminal work in American counterculture? Because it encapsulates the spirit of rebellion, freedom, and exploration that challenged mainstream societal norms during the 1950s, inspiring generations to seek alternative lifestyles and artistic expression. What is the significance of the road in 'On the Road'? The road symbolizes freedom, the pursuit of adventure, and the search for meaning beyond conventional societal expectations, serving as a metaphor for personal and spiritual journeying. On the Road by Jack Kerouac stands as a seminal work in American literature, capturing the restless spirit of a generation eager to break free from societal constraints and explore the depths of personal freedom. Published in 1957, the novel is often heralded as the quintessential Beat Generation text, embodying themes of spontaneity, rebellion, and the search for meaning amidst chaos. Kerouac's vivid prose, improvisational style, and raw honesty make On the Road not just a story about travel but a reflection of a cultural upheaval that still resonates today. --- Introduction to On the Road On the Road is more than just a road trip narrative; it is a lyrical chronicle of youthful exuberance and a quest for authenticity. Drawing heavily from Kerouac's own experiences, the novel follows Sal Paradise, a young writer, as he journeys across the United States with friends like Dean Moriarty, embodying the unrestrained American spirit. The book encapsulates the spirit of exploration — both external and internal — making it an enduring piece for readers interested in

American culture, counterculture movements, and the timeless allure of adventure. --- On The Road Jack Kerouac 4 Plot Overview The narrative is loosely structured, mirroring the improvisational jazz that heavily influences Kerouac's writing style. Sal's travels take him from New York City to San Francisco, then across the Midwest and down to Mexico, capturing a tapestry of American life. At the heart of the story is Dean Moriarty, a charismatic and impulsive figure whose insatiable desire for experience propels the plot forward. Their encounters with various characters, from other travelers to city dwellers, paint a vivid picture of post-war America. While the plot may seem episodic, it effectively captures the essence of a generation seeking meaning through movement and experience. Kerouac's spontaneous prose style—characterized by long, flowing sentences—serves to immerse the reader into the frenetic energy of the road. --- Thematic Analysis Freedom and Rebellion On the Road epitomizes the desire for freedom—emotional, spiritual, and physical. The characters' relentless pursuit of new experiences symbolizes a rejection of conventional societal norms. The novel champions individualism and celebrates spontaneity, often contrasting the constraints of mainstream society with the liberating chaos of the open road. Pros: - Inspires a sense of adventure and breaking free from societal expectations. - Highlights the importance of personal authenticity. Cons: – Sometimes romanticizes recklessness without considering consequences. – Can be perceived as glorifying transient lifestyles over stability. Search for Identity The characters' journeys mirror an internal quest for selfunderstanding. Dean Moriarty, in particular, embodies the restless spirit seeking to define himself beyond societal labels. The novel explores themes of self-discovery, the fluidity of identity, and the pursuit of meaning in a rapidly changing world. Counterculture and Post-War America Kerouac captures the burgeoning countercultural movement of the 1950s, emphasizing non-conformity, artistic expression, and spiritual exploration. The book also reflects the disillusionment of post-war America, highlighting a generation questioning materialism and societal expectations. --- On The Road Jack Kerouac 5 Literary Style and Technique Spontaneous Prose Kerouac's hallmark is his spontaneous, improvisational writing style, often described as "stream of consciousness." This technique

lends an energetic, almost improvisational tone to the novel, mimicking jazz improvisation and the unrestrained flow of thought. Features: - Long, flowing sentences that mimic speech. - Minimal punctuation, emphasizing rhythm and momentum. - A focus on immediacy and visceral experience. Pros: – Creates an immersive reading experience. – Captures the spontaneity of the characters' lives. Cons: - Can be challenging to follow for some readers. - Lacks traditional narrative structure, which may hinder comprehension. Influence of Jazz and Poetry The novel's style is heavily influenced by jazz music, particularly bebop, which emphasizes improvisation and rhythm. Kerouac often references jazz musicians and techniques, blending literary and musical improvisation to craft a uniquely American voice. --- Characters and Character Development - Sal Paradise: The narrator, based on Kerouac himself, represents an introspective and observant voice. His journey is both physical and philosophical, seeking meaning beyond the superficial. - Dean Moriarty: Charismatic, impulsive, and energetic, Dean embodies the restless spirit of the Beat Generation. His pursuit of experience often leads to chaos but also moments of profound insight. - Marylou: Dean's wife, representing youthful sexuality and freedom. – Carlo Marx: A poet and intellectual, representing artistic aspirations and the search for deeper meaning. Character Dynamics: The relationships among these characters highlight themes of friendship, love, and the tension between societal expectations and personal desires. Dean's influence on Sal underscores the allure and danger of unbridled freedom. --- Critical Reception and Cultural Impact On the Road initially faced mixed reviews but gained recognition over time, becoming a cornerstone of American counterculture. Its influence extends beyond literature into music, film, and fashion, inspiring generations to embrace non-conformity. Pros: - Revolutionized American literature with its style and themes. - Became a symbol of youth rebellion and artistic freedom. Cons: - Some critics argue the novel romanticizes drug use, promiscuity, and reckless behavior. - Its portrayal of women has been critiqued as superficial and objectifying. Legacy: Kerouac's work laid the groundwork for the Beat On The Road Jack Kerouac 6 Movement and inspired later movements like the hippies and the broader counterculture of the 1960s. --- Adaptations

and Legacy The most notable adaptation is the 2012 film On the Road, directed by Walter Salles. While it captures the spirit of Kerouac's novel, critics have noted that translating the novel's improvisational style to film is challenging. Nevertheless, the film introduced Kerouac's work to a new generation. Kerouac's influence persists in contemporary literature, music, and pop culture. His depiction of the open road as a metaphor for freedom continues to resonate, inspiring writers like Hunter S. Thompson, and musicians across genres. --- Conclusion: Is On the Road Still Relevant? On the Road remains a vital work that encapsulates a pivotal moment in American history and culture. Its themes of rebellion, freedom, and self-discovery remain relevant today, especially in a world that often values conformity over individuality. While its style may challenge some readers, its raw honesty and lyrical prose make it a timeless exploration of what it means to seek one's own path. Pros: - Celebrates the human spirit's quest for authenticity. -Innovative literary style that continues to influence writers. Cons: - May romanticize behaviors that are harmful or unsustainable. -Lacks a linear plot, which might deter traditional readers. In sum, Jack Kerouac's On the Road is not just a novel but a cultural phenomenon that captures the essence of a generation's desire to live fully and authentically. Its enduring legacy lies in its ability to inspire individuals to explore the unknown, both outwardly and inwardly, making it a must-read for anyone interested in the American experience or the art of storytelling itself, beat generation, jazz, spontaneous prose, American literature, 1950s, nomad, adventure, counterculture, autobiographical, stream of consciousness

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jack kerouac s classic american novel of freedom and the search for originality that defined a generation an authentic work of art the new york times inspired by jack kerouac s adventures with neal cassady on the road tells the story of two friends whose cross country road trips are a quest for meaning and true experience written with a mixture of sad eyed naïveté and wild abandon and imbued with kerouac s love of america his compassion for humanity and his sense of language as jazz on the road is the quintessential american vision of freedom and hope a book that changed american literature and changed anyone who has ever picked it up

presents ten critical essays published between 1973 and 2001 on jack kerouac s on the road and includes a chronology a

bibliography and an introduction by harold bloom

this is a summary study guide of the book on the road is a novel by american writer jack kerouac based on the travels of kerouac and his friends across the united states it is considered a defining work of the postwar beat and counterculture generations with its protagonists living life against a backdrop of jazz poetry and drug use the novel published in 1957 is a roman à clef with many key figures in the beat movement such as william s burroughs old bull lee allen ginsberg carlo marx and neal cassady dean moriarty represented by characters in the book including kerouac himself as the narrator sal paradise the idea for on the road kerouac s second novel was formed during the late 1940s in a series of notebooks and then typed out on a continuous reel of paper during three weeks in april 1951 it was first published by viking press in 1957 when the book was originally released the new york times hailed it as the most beautifully executed the clearest and the most important utterance yet made by the generation kerouac himself named years ago as beat and whose principal avatar he is in 1998 the modern library ranked on the road 55th on its list of the 100 best english language novels of the 20th century the novel was chosen by time magazine as one of the 100 best english language novels from 1923 to 2005

the ten essays in this groundbreaking compilation cover a broad range of topics employing a variety of approaches including theoretical interpretations and textual and comparative analysis to investigate such issues as race class gender and sexuality as well as the novel s historical and literary contexts what s your road man critical essays on jack kerouac s on the road illustrates the richness of the critical work currently being undertaken on this vital american narrative combining essays from renowned kerouac experts and emerging scholars what s your road man draws on an enormous amount of research into the literary social cultural

biographical and historical contexts of kerouac s canonical novel since its publication in 1957 on the road has remained in print and has continued to be one of the most widely read twentieth century american novels several essays enhance understanding of the book by comparing it with alternative versions of the text like the original 1951 scroll manuscript and some of kerouac s other novels and with works by kerouac s contemporaries such as sylvia plath s the bell jar further studies explore ethnicity identity and the novel s place in american literature as well as its relevance to twenty first century readers on the road has inspired readers for more than fifty years and the new research included in what s your road man introduces fresh perspectives on this classic work of american literature editors hilary holladay and robert holton have successfully woven little known material with new understandings of familiar topics that will enlighten current and future generations of kerouac enthusiasts and scholars for years to come

fueled by coffee and pea soup jack kerouac speed typed on the road in just three weeks in april 1951 he d been traveling america for the past ten years and now at last the furious energy of his experiences flowed through his fingertips in a mad rush pealing forth on a makeshift scroll that he laboriously taped together the on the road scroll has since become literary legend and now burning furiously beautiful sets the record straight uncovering among other things the true story behind one of america s greatest novels burning furiously beautiful explores the real lives of the key characters of the novel ride along on the real life adventures through 1940s america that inspired on the road by tracing the evolution of kerouac s literary development and revealing his startlingly original writing style this book explains how it took years not weeks to ultimately write the seemingly sporadic 1957 novel on the road

we had finally found the magic land at the end of the road and we never dreamed the extent of the magic mexico an escape route

inspiration and ecstatic terminus of the celebrated novel on the road was crucial to jack kerouac s creative development in this dramatic and highly compelling account jorge garcía robles leading authority on the beats in mexico re creates both the actual events and the literary imaginings of kerouac in what became the writer s revelatory terrain providing kerouac an immediate spiritual freshness that contrasted with the staid society of the united states mexico was perhaps the single most important country in his life sourcing material from the beat author s vast output and revealing correspondence garcía robles vividly describes the milieu and people that influenced him while sojourning there and the circumstances between his myriad arrivals and departures from the writer s initial euphoria upon encountering mexico and its fascinating tableau of humanity to his tortured relationship with a mexican prostitute who inspired his novella tristessa this volume chronicles kerouac s often illusory view of the country while realistically detailing the incidents and individuals that found their way into his poetry and prose in juxtaposing kerouac s idyllic image of mexico with his actual experiences of being extorted assaulted and harassed garcía robles offers the essential mexican perspective finding there the spiritual nourishment he was starved for in the united states kerouac held fast to his idealized notion of the country even as the stories he recounts were as much literary as real

noted writer jay atkinson recreates jack kerouac s legendary on the road journeys in contemporary north america jack kerouac s iconic 1950s novel on the road is a beat generation classic chronicling the adventures and misadventures of kerouac s travels crisscrossing north america with neal cassady william burroughs allen ginsberg and other colorful companions now gifted writer jay atkinson hits the road to retrace kerouac s legendary journey today the author s experiences offer fascinating insights on american culture and society then and now and illuminate his own quest for self understanding and discovery contrasts the life and landscape of kerouac s 1940s and 1950s america with the realities today filled with unexpected adventures and strangers encountered on

atkinson s trips to new york new orleans chicago denver mexico city and the california coast reveals atkinson s engaging reflections on the search for personal identity and self other titles by jay atkinson ice time a publishers weekly notable book of the year and legends of winter hill a boston globe bestseller as well as the novels city in amber and caveman politics absorbing and beautifully written paradise road is essential reading for kerouac fans as well as lovers of engaging travel memoirs and anyone interested in american life and culture

turn your story time into a fantastic road trip with this illustrated learning guide to kerouac s cornerstone of the beat generation with sal paradise at the helm visit the most epic places in the u s and beyond and meet a cast of unforgettable characters our simplified kid friendly summary and analysis of this timeless classic highlights the freedom and humanity of kerouac s masterpiece while our character and author bios will light an adventurous spark in everyone more than picture books kinderguides offer an interactive story time for adult literature fans and children or as we like to call them future lit fans our illustrated guides introduce the greatest literary works to children everywhere and lay the foundation for a lifelong appreciation of literacy and our most beloved classics winner of the 2016 moonbeam award for best children's picture book series

explores the counter cultural movement known as the beat generation gives a detailed overview of the movement both in the us and internationally includes chapters on significant women writers such as diane di prima joanne kyger and anne waldmancovers readings from john clellon holmes lawrence ferlinghetti and gregory corso to herbert huncke neal cassady michael mcclure and gary snyderfocuses on african american writers like leroi jones amiri baraka ted joans and bob kaufmanthis book pairs close readings with a strong overview of the movement and ranges from women s beat writing to african american beats to the canonical texts

including howl on the road and naked lunch a closing chapter maps post beat writing and the ways beat has morphed into new even postmodern forms

the raucous exuberant often wildly funny account of a journey through america and mexico jack kerouac s on the road instantly defined a generation on its publication in 1957 it was in the words of a new york times reviewer the clearest and most important utterance yet made by the generation kerouac himself named years ago as beat written in the mode of ecstatic improvisation that allen ginsberg described as spontaneous bop prosody kerouac s novel remains electrifying in its thirst for experience and its defiant rebuke of american conformity in his portrayal of the fervent relationship between the writer sal paradise and his outrageous exasperating and inimitable friend dean moriarty kerouac created one of the great friendships in american literature and his rendering of the cities and highways and wildernesses that his characters restlessly explore is a hallucinatory traveloque of a nation he both mourns and celebrates now the library of america collects on the road together with four other autobiographical road books published during a remarkable four year period the dharma bums 1958 at once an exploration of buddhist spirituality and an account of the bay area poetry scene is notable for its thinly veiled portraits of kerouac s acquaintances including ginsberg gary snyder and kenneth rexroth the subterraneans 1958 recounts a love affair set amid the bars and bohemian haunts of san francisco tristessa 1960 is a melancholy novella describing a relationship with a prostitute in mexico city lonesome traveler 1960 collects travel essays that evoke journeys in mexico and europe and concludes with an elegiac lament for the lost world of the american hobo also included in road novels are selections from kerouac s journal which provide a fascinating perspective on his early impressions of material eventually incorporated into on the road library of america is an independent nonprofit cultural organization founded in 1979 to preserve our nation s literary heritage by publishing and keeping permanently in print america s best and most significant writing the

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jack kerouacs on the road was a touchstone for a generation and the centerpiece of the beat movement in literature and art this text by isaac gewirtz examines kerouacs life and career his counter culture vision and his relationships with allen ginsberg william s burroughs and other beats scala publishers

the legendary 1951 scroll draft of on the road published word for word as kerouac originally composed it though jack kerouac began thinking about the novel that was to become on the road as early as 1947 it was not until three weeks in april 1951 in an apartment on west twentieth street in manhattan that he wrote the first full draft that was satisfactory to him typed out as one long single spaced paragraph on eight long sheets of tracing paper that he later taped together to form a 120 foot scroll this document is among the most significant celebrated and provocative artifacts in contemporary american literary history it represents the first full expression of kerouac s revolutionary aesthetic the identifiable point at which his thematic vision and narrative voice came together in a sustained burst of creative energy it was also part of a wider vital experimentation in the american literary musical and visual arts in the post world war ii period it was not until more than six years later and several new drafts that viking published in 1957 the novel known to us today on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of on the road viking will publish the 1951 scroll in a standard book format the differences between the two versions are principally ones of significant detail and altered emphasis the scroll is slightly longer and has a heightened linguistic virtuosity and a more sexually frenetic tone it also uses the real names of kerouac s friends instead of the fictional names he later invented for them the transcription of the scroll was done by howard cunnell who along

with joshua kupetz george mouratidis and penny vlagopoulos provides a critical introduction that explains the fascinating compositional and publication history of on the road and anchors the text in its historical political and social context

scientific essay from the year 2007 in the subject english language and literature studies literature language english abstract the novel on the road by jack kerouac is often characterised as a travelogue to a certain degree this might work since the author made some travels around the united states before working on the novel even the routes of his trips resemble to some degree the routes within on the road in 1947 kerouac travelled from new york to illinois wyoming colorado utah california and back to new york in 1950 he took another long trip which led him from new york to denver texas and mexico nevertheless on the road is more than a description of autobiographic experiences on the road other critics underline the autobiographic role of balancing accounts with his friendship to neal cassidy who serves in the alias of dean within the novel others criticized the novel as being no more than a manifest for the beat culture a puff piece for a life as tramp consuming drugs and departure from a normal life this work will try to point out some of the meanings and allusions hidden in the novel chapter 1 will set on the road in connection with earlier hobo literature to elucidate kerouac s ideals of a life as a tramp as a kind of travelogue on the road is about movement and thus about space chapter 2 will show what space or the change of space means for the novel and how it constitutes the matter of time within the novel chapter 3 focusses the dynamics of friendship the development of the protagonist's friendship the last chapter deals with the quest for experience which is one of the most prominent intertextual ingredients in the novel on the road was frequently referred to as novel of initiation or description of a spiritual pilgrimage

through careful analysis of jack kerouac s on the road omar swartz argues that kerouac s influence on american society is largely

rhetorical kerouac s significance as a cultural icon can be best understood swartz asserts in terms of traditional rhetorical practices and principles to swartz kerouac is a rhetor who symbolically reconstructs his world and offers arguments and encouragements for others to follow swartz proposes that on the road constitutes a rhetorical vision a reality defining discourse suggesting alternative possibilities for growth and change swartz asserts that the reader of kerouac s on theroadbecomes capable of responding to the larger confusing culture in a strategic manner kerouac s rhetorical vision of an alternative social and cultural reality contributes to the identity of localized cultures within the united states

a critical analysis of kerouac s fiction from his early traditional novel the town and the city to his posthumously published pic visions of cody and old angel midnight

in this new edition what was already an expansive work has been updated and further enlarged to include information not only on american and british novelists but also on writers in english from around the world

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