

JOURNALISTIC WRITING IN ENGLISH NEWSPAPER

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1. JOURNALISTIC WRITING

(1) Journalese:

“Journalistic Writing” may be defined as a kind of writing published in newspapers and magazines. The question arises “What is the difference between journalistic writing and other kinds of English composition?”

People often talk about journalistic writing as if it were some unusual form literary gymnastic requiring special talent and different vocabulary. So it's obvious that journalistic writing is merely the use of English language to tell current events.

The most important aspect in this writing we require, is to understand the text on the incident and tell the others. To place the events to the others is another tough job, that we use a special method and style with special vocabulary. But there is no particular style or vocabulary for the sake of “Journalistic Writing” only.

(2) History of Journalism

Journalism retails a long history. But it's rather difficult to convey the beginning of it and the procedure. Anyhow it's a conception that the history of journalism links up the news of political, social and economical progress of a country. Time to time the development occurred due to the news spreading items and other aspects. Specially we can say the photography, cartoons, comics and other drawings too rendered a great deal for the development of journalistic writings.

(3) Style

One journalist may have much more style and fluency than another, but his real job is to see, to hear and to tell. His ability must show the power of transcription, narrativeness full of description over a current event. But “Style” in writing is individual. It depends on one's own style and the rapid flow of the language too helps a great deal.

(4) Media

“A journalist must become more and more intelligent consumer of the

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media” says Ivan Doig. Ivan Doig is a famous journalist in America and in the field of journalism he has rendered a great deal of service too. According to his theory one must examine the everyday important news and should understand the function of it thoroughly by avoiding *academic and professional jargon*. These avoidable aspects he had shown in his text very well, that some journalist’s ability he believes only a piece of jargon.

The news that has been taken forth should have a close relationship between media and the government audience too. Such information should be able to get the eye of readers, listeners, and viewers too.

It’s a fact that we should not forget symbiosis between the medium and the audience. This really means of its eager necessity on business and financial consideration too.

So it’s obvious that media is one of the most important aspects in journalism.

(5) Due Current Topics

This is another important side in journalistic writing. It concerns mainly with the current events which occur on time or which happen on the spot. As usual a journalist has to use his brain carefully over the opinions showing his ability, etc. Certain episodes should be expressed in narrative, descriptive or explicable manner.

So it’s clear that there are three main aspects for a journalist to go through in his orthodox field.

- (a) To know news — Peoples anticipated news.
- (b) To know how to gather the facts of the news.
- (c) To know how to write the facts.

A journalist must have the capability of collecting the news which is favourable to the people. The anticipated news that the mob desire can help to get the successfulness in every angle. As it is an art and rather a difficult step in journalism, most of the journalists become failure in this field.

The next tough aspect is to know how to gather the facts of the news. It should be in an order so that the journalist may escape from the effects that

get after the publication.

The most difficult aspect in this field is to know how to write the facts. This always depends on one's ability and it should be individual too.

(6) Practical Aspect

"Practical" approach is another essential characteristic of journalistic writing. Careful research is one of the most important steps in any writing. In English languages transmitting the facts step by step is regarded as one's practicability of writing. The well organized facts are treated as a tool in his expressions and it should provide the ability to get the attraction of the readers.

Neale Copple says "..... guides to reportry in depth through careful researching, organizing and writing step by step to a depth story" in his journal. (*An Approach To Journalism*) So this aspect gives the result of a real journalist who considers only on news and his personal ability over various matters. On the whole if we consider about this journalistic writing, it has these four essentials:

- (a) It is impersonal (The writer is not thinking of himself).
- (b) It is objective (The writer always has the reader in his mind).
- (c) Its main purpose is to inform and interest (This does not mean to preach, exhort or argue).
- (d) As it is read silently rather than aloud and has usage of oratorical devices too).

The impersonal attitude towards journalistic writing means that the writer always does not think of himself when he starts to write an article or any other material. His liberal thoughts and the ideas have a certain amount of strength to give forth that he always never considers of himself.

In a utility article the main features can be judged as first of its impersonality.

Next the most important point of view is of the thought of the writer that should be always in favour of the reader. Nothing is better than giving a human feeling and a touch to the sketch he provides. Such news attracts the reader's attention and its popularity too depends on that. In this matter ".....composing

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of the title and the news in a natural flow is a point of view.....” says Helen E. Patterson in her *Writing And Selling (3rd Ed.) of Journalism*.

A journalist must be always away from preaching, exhorting or arguing of certain incidents on any news. But the main purpose is to inform news with involving facts of interest to the reader.

It's a true fact that a journalist must consider much about “Oratorical Devices.” As the reader always sees the news to his own eyes while he absorbs the meaning and the fact to his mind, it is important that the writer's attention must be there for a certain amount.

(7) Rapidness

Rapidness in writing is a very essential aspect in journalistic writing. The limited time, space and the words must be always considered according to the situation, approaches.

In this case English journalists look into their own methods of grasping the material in a quick devices. They go through in short-hand or other rapid writing as a special qualification in their field.

Eg. (In Speed Writing)

y u w a j t e l u s .
If you want a job tell us.

(~ ¢ . < r) .
(In Pitman's shorthand)

If you want a job tell us.

This example shows the limited number of words as well as the saving of the time in rapid writing.

(8) Printing

History tells us that the good old days people inscribed on the sand, rocks or in caves what they thought. But in the latter part of the 19th century limelight for printing approached where many doors opened in various fields. In

journalistic writing persuasion of public opinion came forth in black and white.

Printing took the main purpose of it. News in dark letters, medium letters and small letters opened a new era in journalistic writing. Black printing and then to the print on white paper appeared in various. Of course, the coloured print too became a new touch in this field. So it's obvious to one that printing is one of the most essential things in this field.

(9) Legibility (Ability to see and understand)

Writing to newspapers must be done with a careful thought and a decision. As it's going to the hands of the public, when it's printing it has to be thoroughly revised. In the review of it there are several points to follow:

- (a) Legibility
- (b) The incident must be visualized in detail.
- (c) Alertness in writing
- (d) Fluency
- (e) Accuracy
- (f) Classification of ideas
- (g) Promptness
- (h) Persistency
- (i) Neatness in written work
- (j) Sense of responsibility and originality

The note put on black and white must be able to be read by each and everyone. Though it's written in one's ability of knowledge, it should be legible and the meaning or what it says must be easily understandable to the reader. So this point of view means the legibility.

The news which appears in one or two lines or sentences must be visualized in detail that it should be able to attract the readers' eye and attention on it. For the purpose the incidents must be in a descriptive manner that the flow of the words and the attemptive written force can be counted as one of the major aspects in this field. So in other words we can use that deviation of the ordinary words intended to impress an idea on one's understanding more strikingly or to touch one's feelings more effectively. The context must be able to convey

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something more than its literal meaning and must have a derived implication type of writing.

An example to show how to visualize an incident in detail :

“The horrors related by the survivors are without precedent. They vainly cried for mercy, and tried to brisk the door. The maddened prisoners then, frightening each other for places at the windows to get the little water given in cruel mockery, raved, and begged the guards to fire among them but the gaolers only laughed. Next morning the commander had opened the door, twenty-three ghostly figures straggled out. A hundred and twenty three corpses were buried on the spot.” —*A Night Of Agony—* (*The Evening Express London*)

Alertness means quickness and carefulness in writing. In journalistic writing alertness is one of the essential things required. For this purpose the writer's personality—his convictions, his likes and dislikes, his spirit influences a lot. Always the aim should be set forth for the opinions and support by cogent and discreet reasons and apt illustrations from experience.

So if the subject is of a controversial nature, diverse views, may be stated and examined in a critical way. *Get the reader persuaded* with the point of view over the text and that ability counts as one of the achieved contexts in the field of journalism.

When we talk about accuracy in journalistic writings it merely means the accuracy in writing and in figure too. The principle ideas which are arranged in a natural order according to the various topics must give the expansion on paragraphs, etc. In such a way news on prevention or omission of essentials and the intrusion of irrelevant matters must be in a very careful manner. So the news should ensure unity, balance and coherence too. Accuracy in number must be very particular on its printing.

Classification of ideas, is perhaps the most important part in journalistic writing. It should arrest the reader's attention from the outset and make him feel impelled to read on.

The consideration must rely on mainly the start with some sort of general reflection or with a reference to a received opinion or with a clear statement of

the purpose in hand or with a definition or with a quotation or with a question or with an anecdote. The type of opening varies according to the subjects and the individuality of the writer. But the script always must be on strike to the keynote of the subject as well as to capture the reader's attention.

Promptness in journalistic writing refers to the quickness in writing down the news at the same time when it occurs or appears.

The news which has taken on print must be able to persist that the reader could continue without any pain or hindrance. The appropriate facts, illustrations, arguments or reflections must be on a continuous outline with well constructed form.

The script written on purpose of printing must be in perfect manner. The neatness in type script is considered as an essential thing in this field. Avoiding mistakes in spelling and grammar, punctuation, repetition, superfluities, gross exaggerations, hackneyed expressions, slang, abbreviations and figures can be counted as major aspects in neatly written context.

The news what you take forth, there should be some sort of responsibility and originality on it. It's rather good to take it into our consideration on the script that the reader's flow of thought always must not be broken by a breach of sequence.

The writer must bear up the responsibility of the news that it should be in a manner of lucidity and conciseness, free from ambiguity, obscurity or superfluity.

(10) Time And Space Limit

The journalist should think only of what is to be said and say it in the easiest and most natural way. The principal factors that he should have in mind are these:

- (a) The conditions under which he writes—time limit, space limit, news value.
- (b) The condition under which his writing is to be read—silently, hastily, by an initiative reader.
- (c) The tastes of his reading for public.

(11) The Writer's Consideration

Among the precepts that the writer should consider in his writing are following :

(a) The structure and technique of newspaper writing are constantly changing.

(b) There is no established conception of news values.

What is news is relative, local, different in various newspapers and constantly changing.

(c) The best news writing is based on common sense and originality. This means the efforts to find out what the reader wants to know and tell him in such a way that will interest him on the fact.

(12) Abstractions Of News Reports Appeared Recently

—(Taken from *Times of Ceylon*; *Times News Magazine*; *Mainichi Daily News*; *Illustrated London News*)—

For the sake of the readers' consideration some of the abstractions of news reports are publishing here. We must read them carefully and find out the most important aspects appeared in journalistic writing taking place in various news prints. Meanwhile the writer's ability, speed, command of language, etc. must be considered and it will help to identify the difference of journalistic writing in various countries.

It is a strange and not unilluminating commentary on contemporary outlook that the return of peace should have taken the statesmen of the world as much by surprise as did the onset of war. Somebody commenting at the end of World War I remarked that the perpetrators of war were suddenly faced with an outbreak of peace. If the phrase is not exactly apposite today, it contains a disturbing germ of truth. The long-drawn wrangles of the Paris Peace Conference were as unedifying as they were discouraging. It is pleasant to reflect that both the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization and the Foreign Minister's Council promise a silver lining in the dark clouds. So encouraging indeed is the progress made at New York that we feel President G. Ford was not unduly optimistic when he spoke the other day of laying "The foundation of a durable

peace." Britain's foreign minister was in unusually mellow mood. "The sun of peace is shining," he declared.

The hope will be widely echoed by a war-weary world. Secret diplomacy is unfashionable in these days, but it may pertinently be asked whether the publicity attendant on international political gatherings is not too often an unhealthy incitement to politicians to indulge in their urge for propaganda on publicity.

Russia has been too prone to regard Peace Conferences from his standpoint.

The comprehensive agenda drawn up for the Moscow talks in March indicates a spirit of cooperation and compromise which augurs well for the future.

—(Times Of Ceylon—current topics)—

Yet the heart of Oxford—the secret inner heart—is as beautiful as ever. In its blending of man's highest achievement with nature's benison there cannot be anything in the world that surpasses or I think compares with it. One passes out of the petrol-scented, piston-banging barbarism of the twentieth century "High" unto the green serenity and quietude of college gardens and quadrangles. Around them stand buildings enriched with the patina of centuries which express the noblest aspirations of our country's greatest artists in stone, not in one age alone, but in every age of her long and quiet dust of May, to dine off ancient mahogany and silver in Hawksmoor's cool and temperate English baroque, to stand amid whispering ghosts on the long, cold of some noble library, with the darkening twilight flooding through the great traceried windows to see the dome of a camera glowing rose-like against the blue of night or the eagle-topped glory of a wren facade floodlit for a college play, to walk under the ancient wall of Oxford with a friend in darkness, with the flowers of the lime giving out their first fugitive scene.

But the joy an educated English man can take in these—and I know of no civilised happiness to compare with that of life in an Oxford or Cambridge College—is dimmed by the thought of how wantonly our age has robbed others whose love of beauty makes them crave such solace and delight, but whose fortune is no more than the common lot.

—(*Illustrated London News*)—

Communism in Russia is useful for export; it is really only a stalking horse for aggressive imperialism. Russian Socialism and Nazism are birds

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of a feather. To call one dictatorship of the Right the other a dictatorship of the Left, is mere political humbug. Both are or were police states, ruling by terror, with such cruelty as has seldom, if ever, been seen before.

The political churchman is always on the same side, the winning side, and as power is always abused it is always on the wrong side. There is not the slightest reason to expect that our new masters will behave either better or worse than the oligarchs of the 18th century and the plutocrats of the 19th.

A church which goes into politics always comes out badly smirched. All forms of government are bad and Christianity can exist under any of them. It was probably at its purest during the persecutions. There is no reason why a despotic government should be anti-religious, and it is very unlikely to remain so.

In Russia the anti-God propaganda has ceased, and the few churches which remain open are crowded. The real objections to communism is that though it suits bees and ants, whose civilisation has reached a stable equilibrium it will never suit human beings. Man is an incorrigibly competitive animal. This is why Herbert Spencer said: "Socialism will mean slavery, and the slavery will not be mild."—But communism on a larger scale almost inevitably destroys, family, which must always be the nursery of the best things in human life.—Dr. Inge

—(*Times News Magazine*)—

The Liberal-Democratic Party has consented to the presentation to the Diet of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) for ratification. In his recent visit to the U.S. Foreign Minister Miyazawa obtained reassurance from the U.S. of its obligation to defend Japan under the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty. The LDP has maintained that if Japan is to ratify the NPT it will have to rely on the powerful U.S. nuclear deterrent. Now that the U.S. has reassured Japan of its obligation to defend this nation, the first precondition proposed for the ratification of the NPT has been met. Despite this, the hawks within the LDP are demanding the Government to assume the attitude that "it may permit the U.S. to bring in nuclear weapons in case of emergency." Japan's three anti-nuclear principles mean that under no circumstances shall nuclear weapons be brought into this nation. Not to make, not to possess, and not to bring in nuclear weapons has been the LDP's basic stand. It is also one of its four nonnuclear policies. As the only atomic-bombing victim in the world, Japan has opted to rigidly adhere

to its three anti-nuclear principles. The Government ought to make efforts so as to have the U.S. fully understand this.

—(*Press Comments—Mainichi Daily News*)—

(13) Translational Approach Of News

Putting into English those foreign local news which appears in other languages is a tough job as everybody considers. In such cases there are a lot of advantages and disadvantages too.

According to the stream of language the flow, vocabulary, theme, etc. approach one's ability when news is put into black and white.

Due to the black of words and correct vocabulary the real touch and cream of the language disappear from its natural value. In such cases the original approach states in a corner and the task is to get it done with the aim of saving the natural aspects as much as possible.

For example, the following news shows the difference very clearly when you compare it with an originally written report.

(A)

In connection with the presentation of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), Japan's pronounced stand not to bring in nuclear weapons—which constitutes one of the three basic nonnuclear principle—has become a topic of discussion. Some hardliners within the Liberal-Democratic Party argue that if Japan is to ratify the NPT it is necessary as a precondition that the Japan-U.S. security treaty structure must be strengthened. To achieve this, they insist, the Japan-U.S. security treaty should be operated flexibly so as to include the issue of "bringing in nuclear weapons" among matters for advance consultation. Japan being the only atomic-bombing victim in the world, the Japanese people earnestly desire a peaceful world without nuclear arms. But, it is the equilibrium of power that maintains the peaceful coexistence between the East and the West. We cannot ignore the fact that the U.S. nuclear deterrent umbrella has been playing an important role in securing the safety of its Western allies, including Japan. There remains a question for Japan, while relying on the United States' nuclear deterrent, to refuse its bringing in nuclear weapons even in times of emergency. —(*Sankei Shimbun*)—

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(B)

The Government, in a Cabinet meeting Friday, approved a bill to revise the Anti-monopoly Law, and sent it to the Diet immediately afterward. For the past seven months, since the Fair Trade Commission (FTC) proposed its revision plan last September, the proposed legislation to revise the Anti-monopoly Law has been discussed with such vehemence as never witnessed before. The Anti-monopoly Law regulates enterprises' actions and sets forth rules for business transactions. It has a character of the basic laws for economic activities. The proposed bill contains drastic reforms, including an administrative order to force enterprises to transfer part of their business operations, or a surcharge to be imposed on illegal cartels. The regulation provided in the bill, under which an administrative order to enforce a transfer of part of business operations may be issued against not only a monopolistic act but also a monopolistic situation, is undoubtedly the most advanced anti-monopoly measure in the world, at least in form. The question is: Can the FTC, with its present staff and facilities, handle the work which is bound to increase in consequence of the revision of the Law.

—(*Nihon Keizai Shimbun*)—

The sentence structure, pattern and the natural flow in disorder but grammatically correctness are the main points that the translational journalist considers. So when you compare these two news reports above, you can see the variation clearly.

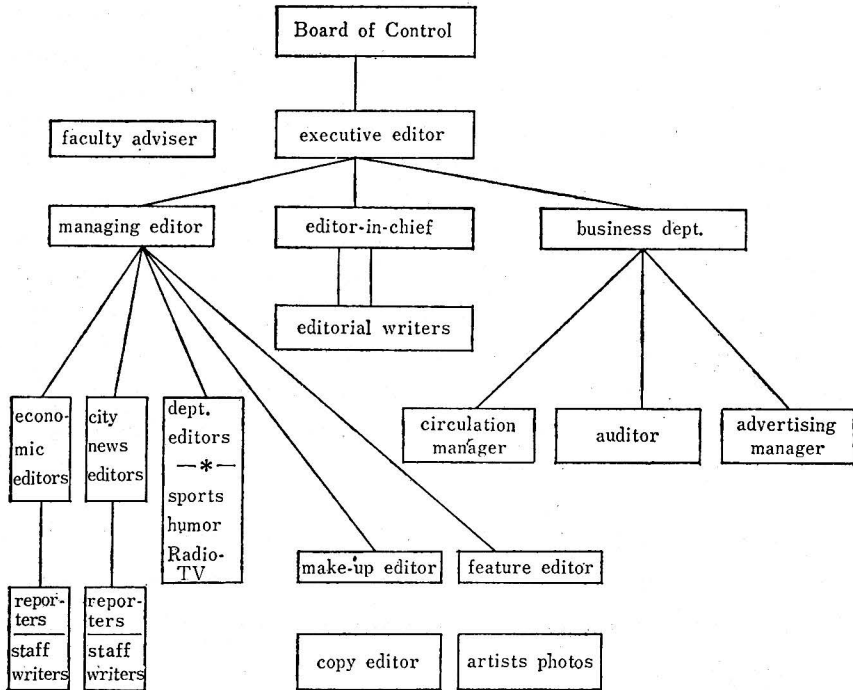
2. "STAFF DIAGRAM" IN A NEWSPAPER OFFICE

It also should be reminded that reporting, or news writing, is through the organization and its various relationships (as shown in the following figure "Staff Diagram") in a newspaper office.

- a. Newspaper executive work, reached through the copy desk and higher executive positions.
- b. Special writing, written by those either as an all-around star reporter or as a specialist in one field.
- c. Special department, such as sports, radio-TV, markets, theater guides, or some other combination of writing and editing.
- d. Feature writing, either fiction or fact articles.

- e. Publicity for banks, government bureaus, movie theaters, or other institutions.
- f. Press association bureaus, here and abroad.

This diagram shows:



3. STORY WRITING

(1) How to Interest People:

Even to tell a simple story it requires the practice. So the writer must look ahead about what he tells and it should be planned very well.

In writing a good story the whole plot must be carried out in order and the writer must consider about some other aspects too. The article appears in any account must be in an interesting manner. This interest depends on a general way but there are three elements required too.

- a. The nature of the facts or events discussed.
- b. The manner in which the facts are presented.

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c. The kind of reader.

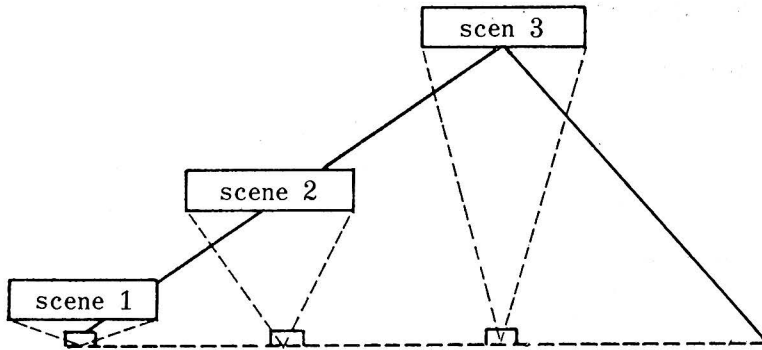


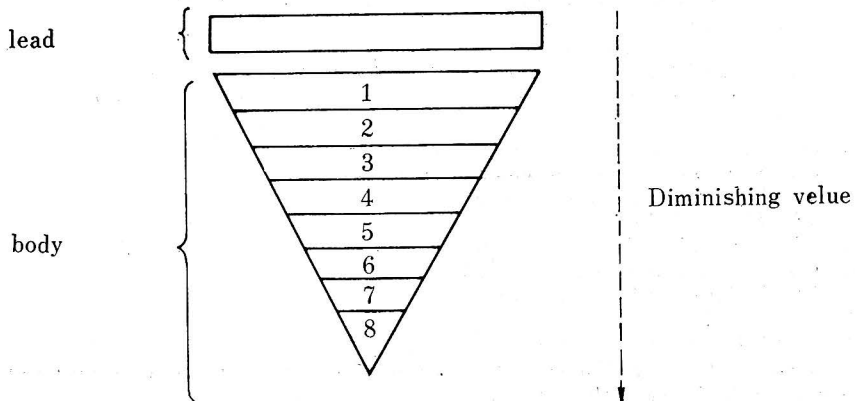
Diagram of story action

This diagram will show how modern writers cover all the essential action of a story in a short or limited space, at the same time taking advantage of the greater interest in detailed full-length narrative.

The story is divided into three scenes. Selecting three scenes as the most interesting and vital, they are told in detail, at full length, including practically all the actions and conversations that actually took place. Other scenes are condensed into synopsis form. The resulting story is interesting because it is most entirely composed of dialogues and actions.

(2) "Inverted Pyramid"

An article should begin with its climax, expressed in a summary lead, and arranges the various details and explanations of the content of the lead in the order of their interest with the most interesting item first and the least interesting item later. It forms thus an inverted pyramid of interest, as shown in the following diagram.



4. THREE ESSENTIALS IN JOURNALISTIC WRITING—CLEARNESS, CONCISENESS AND ORIGINALITY

(1) Clearness :

It is the chief characteristic of good newspaper writing. It is gained by simplicity of sentence structure and by the original arrangement and relationship of words and phrases.

(2) Conciseness :

It is a matter of economy in the use of words. If each word does its work in the sentence, if no words are wasted, if each idea is expressed in the briefest, clearest way, two ideas will grow in the space where one idea grew before. Repetition and wordiness are out of place in newspaper writing. A writer should say a thing once in the shortest way : then he should avoid at least one useless word.

(3) Originality :

It is a matter of seeking a new way of expressing ideas. Because newspaper writing is done hurriedly, there is great temptation to use the same words and phrases over and over again. Such an operation should be eliminated. Otherwise, originality should not be developed.

(たけむら ひでを 本学専任講師・英語)

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