

The population
density of Essex
Massachusetts
is one person
every two acres

We stand distributed in our respective fields.
We communicate by semaphore.

My friend who lives around Cancun returned from a long journey through thickets of family and illness to find all his material possessions piled into one corner of one room. All around the house in spaces with which his possessions once interacted, wads of chewed gum had been affixed to every surface. In the course of the hours which followed his encounter with this rearrangement, he gathered the gum into a formation the size of a softball, which he placed in a bowl.

Meta

This is a map of Doxa, an electronic county in a state of confusion that could be anywhere in the United States except for the socio-economic particularities which determine the array of

psycho-spatial relations to the notion crisis that one encounters. But because the socio-economic particularities as such are determinate everywhere in the same kind of way, noting them without specificity makes of this map of a backwater a map of anywhere.

This map of Doxa is not made on the basis of a geometrical projection: no device is in place that transposes sphere to flat surface. Perspectives are pre-linear: the aspects of others which face you the reader because they face me who mediates your relation remain facing you even as other aspects of the context of encounter may twist or turn or change.

This is a map of a very local slices of meanings associated by a particular duration (roughly January 2009-January 2010). Like any map, what is represented is weighted toward the point of its assembly, so the performances of relations to economic crisis which I take to be performance of an ideological crisis connected to the beginning phases of the collapse of the American Empire are weighted toward the end of this period. The explanatory narrative is also staged as an exploration of Doxa. A map is a collage of appearances.

Story

The Crisis Hunter sets out on repeated explorations of the same immediate environment looking for specimens of crisis to trap in a jar smother & mount each one caught on a corkboard after running a pin through its thorax. The Crisis Hunter would like to gather a cross-section of crisis types in order to enable Linnaeus or Buffon or other colleagues to fashion a typology; in the detailing of the specific surface features which distinguish this genus from another a distance can be established. In the Crisis Hunter am now looking down into a cabinet of crisis curiosities I can admire the colors of the wings and the delicacy of the antennae & tell stories about the hunting. I caught this one in the area behind the outhouse at the Shipbuilding Museum late at night bathed in yellow light that reminded me of the outhouse behind the cabin where I would spend summers as a child so much that the physical environment around which I stumbled holding my fine mesh net and peanut butter jar seemed to flicker between dimensions and perhaps this is what crisis is the experience of the capture, the ways experience complicates in the hypnotic space of beating wings & blurring colors. That is what capturing the crisis mounted second from the right in the top row produced in me. It seemed most itself when it was evading me, most clearly itself when I could only take it in as aspects of motion and the play of lights.

Another one, this one, bottom row same column, this one I found at the peripheries of stories I gathered from a financial advisor over dinner in the North End of Boston who after glasses of wine began to talk about the segments of his clientele which were burning and other segments which were not burning, talking in a way that indicated that perhaps the whole situation would be easier if either all segments were on fire or none were on fire but this shifting mosaic of pieces burning not burning this riot of movement without obvious direction & it was there around those sentences that I saw the moth-like crisis come but I was constrained by antipasti on a small table and open bottles of wine and did not have my fine-meshed net or my peanut butter jar in any event so I captured it with my hands, smothered it in my mouth & placed it in the pocket of my shirt and perhaps that is what later drew the cameras to me at the basketball game I looked up to see myself enormous looking up to see myself small looking up hovering over center court in Boston Garden and the crowd began to cheer & after the game walking through the corridors people tried to touch the hem of my garments like I could heal them but the whole time I was trying to protect the corpse of the moth-like crisis I held carefully in my pocket that I had smothered in my mouth after capturing it with my hands. Perhaps they sensed that in my pocket was a kind of solution.

Meta: Looking at a Cabinet of Crisis Curiosities.

The notion of crisis: a singular noun, a spatio-temporal specificity.

In the crisis-days prior to the war. **1929** Commenting on the Wall Street crash of yesterday, the German press unanimously agrees that Germany has no reason to mourn. They'll feel the Pulses of the Stars, To find out Agues, Coughs, Catarrhs; And tell what Crisis does Divine The Rot in Sheep, or Mange in Swine & Then shall the sicke..by the vertue and power of a happy Crisis, saile forth into the hauen of health. The Crises here are excellent good; the proportion of the chin good; the wart above it most exceeding good.

In principle crisis is a something a pattern of distortion distributed across waveforms regular enough to allow for commonalities to be attributed for example here when we see these moths we see the veering to the right characteristic of petit bourgeois organisms and their responses to certain types of real or imagined environmental perturbations and based on information we have from elsewhere we could reconstruct the symbolic environment of these petit bourgeois organisms, catalogue routine activities recurrent perturbations and responses and in that way catalogue and know the ecosystem into which these particular moths will fly. But I admit that it is confusing to have to think in terms of moths and systems and relations or effects to talk about crisis which should be condensed in these moths. But look at them. At the same time, a crisis should have a location. It should have boundaries. Because you can refer to it using a noun, one should be able to move into and out of crisis. Crisis should start somewhere so it can end.

1933 To escape a crisis so full of terror and despair the Federal Reserve Banks can hardly be blamed for their policy of credit restriction up to the moment of Wall Street Consciences *Synteresis*, and *Syneidesis* which can warrant her to passe her Crisis or conclusive judgement so exact that will with greatest scorne reiect the slump or depression of the 1930s which began with the Wall Street crash of 1929 in America.

It is curiously difficult to locate crisis. The words that define it that elaborate it float about. In the stories people tell crisis lands in a dizzying array of spaces. Depending on one's situation, one might be in crisis if unemployed or go visit crisis when reorganizing one's business through the instruments of commercial debt or see crisis on television. One might be related to people who are in it to the side of it who float above it who skim along beneath it.

Story

The Courtier is not bothered by the economic situation. O sure he reads the newspapers

and knows the narratives. But that's in order to make conversation. It is important to make conversation. Conversation is the mirroring back to another of what the other just said. It is flattering & he is good at it that is at its prerequisite that is at appearing to be interested without engaging. Engagement risks loss of control & loss of control risks exposure. He does not call himself The Courtier. The continual avoidance of exposure sharpens the self-awareness. A sharpened self-awareness is a polished surface for mirroring back to the other what the other just said. This self-awareness has its edges like any surface its points of dropping off sloughing away caving in. Very American, he imagines himself the froth atop an espresso. He imagines himself light in any situation. Like a bird. Like a bird overhead. He imagines himself the froth atop an espresso that he sits lightly in situations, smoothing the way, servile but unobtrusive, his self-awareness a polished surface that mirrors back whatever you just said. What you just said is very important I devote my full attention to that very important thing.

He says: When I think of economic crisis I do not think of anything. The newspapers say we've recovered.

Meta

Rule One: an ideological crisis is many things but one thing it is not is an ideological crisis.

1. Ask any Regulation School theorist and they'd have told you that crisis is the most pervasive and consistent phenomenon produced by capitalism. Crisis is everywhere continually emerging through geographical change consolidations automations obsolescences planned and unplanned emerging continually everywhere through the ordinary workings of the system of systems. Crisis is the air that capitalism produces for itself to breathe; it is the medium through which capitalism grows and contracts, seizes up and lurches. But if this is the case and crisis is everywhere emerging continually through

the ordinary operations of the capitalist system of systems, then crisis is not crisis at all. It is entirely banal, the smell of cigarette smoke that clings to your clothing.

2. Hegemony is an ideological practice or is a way of referring to what the practice of ideology is that is to the what that is being done through the circulation adaptation recirculation adaptation of ideology through the dominant relay systems. Hegemony is the continuous implicit argument for the legitimacy of the existing order through the continuous normalization of its effects. Ordinary crisis is continuous so not crisis at all. Ordinary crisis which is not crisis at all is more a stream of disruptions which could issue into actual crisis but for the fact that the stream of disruptions is contained in regularly moving streams of disruptions. Movement within these streams is the everyday practice of ideology circulation adaptation recirculation adaptation.

2.1 Crisis would emerge as a discrete category so as crisis something sensed or felt as crisis across a seizing up of this normalization function, so a disruption of repetition not so much at the level of statements or images as at the level of the regularity with which disruptions emerge and fall away.

2.1.1. This regularity of emergence and falling away renders as neutral the medium which enables the regularity of these flows of disruptions in the way that the overall system of commodity circulation is legitimated across the continuous transformation and stratification of the commodities that circulate within it.

2.1.1.1 This follows from the tendency to see in each element of ordinary disruption a discrete event or thing, self-contained self-referential.

2.1.2 Events or things succeed one another with remarkable regularity each one self-contained and self-referential to the extent that each refers to dense contexts in the immediate spatio-temporal vicinity of the Event or thing, dense contexts which are referenced but excluded by the mode of presentation of the local at the level of the aggregate.

2.2 The medium across which the aggregate flashes, so the fact of the aggregate, is neutral to the extent that it is the space of regular appearance. Regular appearance enables or constitutes meta-narratives and cross-referencing. The medium which enables these is a neutral space of control.

Benign control like GPS or the locating chips that are in your cellphone. It's for your own good you see. In case you end up one of the missing children.

3. What disrupts the normalization is the emergence of the medium in its artificiality.

At the end of the 2000 presidential election in the US all the television networks called Florida in the same mistaken way because all were buying exit poll results from the same consultancy: the grinding attrition of legitimacy entailed by enthusiastic collaborations in selling the war in Iraq; Hurricane Katrina opening onto a reveal of racialized class war; the unraveling of the descriptive power of neoliberal categories in a context that did not allow for their adaptation only their repetition.

Rule One: an ideological crisis is many things but one thing it is not is an ideological crisis.

In a sense the strictly economic register of "crisis" is an abstraction an index a chain reaction entailed by the stalling out of traffic in derivatives. As signifiers, as objects of exchange, derivatives are expressions of a system-level attempt to use debt as a mechanism to maintain exchange velocities across a period of fundamental reorganization in capitalist manufacturing sectors. They were predicated on an assumption that real estate values would continue rising endlessly such that risk would be minimized.

Story

Are you asking me? I can tell you. Changed lending practices opened up real estate for a lot of people who may or may not have been qualified so may or may not have been able to make the payments. Had the mortgage writers opted to extend the terms over 40 or 50 years this wouldn't have been the same kind of problem. But they didn't. Anyway one of the changes was that you could finance a house up to 100%. Nothing down. You might decide to keep your liquidity and just use someone else's money. And you probably would have assumed like a lot of people did that real estate values would endlessly go up. So being into a loan for a million say if you couldn't actually afford it wasn't so irrational because in the end you assumed that you'd be able to flip the property. You know, unload it. People think: you look at a house you look at a property and it's a real thing, you know, something solid. It's value would be something solid too, like the trees or the dirt. But values are set through transaction patterns. The solid ground is subordinated to systems of mirrors and ways of looking into and through them. People know this and they don't it seems like. Anyway, when the derivatives thing hit creative lending practices dried up and when the lending dried up the demand dried up and when demand dried up prices starting dropping. So you had people who had financed a mortgage for a million bucks at 100% who find that the property's now worth 600,000 and there's nothing they can do. Sometimes people just walk away, call it a bad investment. In some areas of the country there's little choice because property values have fallen by 30 or 40 percent. It's not so bad around here. But still, if you're in that position of owing a million on a place that's now worth about half that, you're fucked. Upside down. Under water. Well and truly.

Meta

Derivatives as objects of exchange are symptomatic of a change in the meaning of autonomous flows of capital.

Derivatives as objects of exchange expose the extent and speed of the semi-visible networks through which these objects circulate; they expose the interconnectedness of financial centers, banking insurance and currencies. They expose the powerlessness of nation-states to regulate much less control autonomous capital flows.

1938 Whereas the others beauty and lustiness is a Crysis of their youth, not their idleness, the crisis-minded always maintain that the problems of their particular decade are unique and insuperable.

The powerlessness of nation-states to act coherently within or on the spaces of flows that the ideology of neoliberalism enabled exposes the incoherence of the political arrangement in the image of which neoliberalism operated. Neoliberalism promised a self-regulating market world in which everything would be open to change while at the same time nothing fundamental would change. If a system tends toward equilibrium, elements within it may be scrambled but a single coherent viewpoint would nonetheless be possible as a transposition of the notion of equilibrium. In this way an imaginary American nation-state was superimposed atop a lattice of bi- and multilateral agreements, institutional and legal infrastructures, supply chains and shipping arrangements, an expression of an imaginary natural tendency toward equilibrium within imaginary bounded systems.

1938 How many people are crisis-conscious? **1940** The point is to join up the crisis-feeling to what can be felt all the time in normal life.

The marketing of neoliberalism in the states as an ideology so dominant it did not have a name was of a piece with the construction and consolidation of a discursive empire particular to conservative politics. If conservatives were to support unregulated capitalist activity and not see in it a danger to their own political worldview, there had to be a mediating term which enabled tendencies logically contradictory to hold together.

For example, American dominance of the global capitalist order might have been as natural as the tendency to equilibrium in imaginary bounded systems if the Bretton Woods arrangement was understood not an expression of the balance of military and economic power after Word War II but merely a beneficent something fashioned in order to make reconstruction easier and facilitate political stability by stabilizing currencies. Neocolonialism might not be colonialism at all if your view of it is predicated on voyages between shelving units in retails outlets marooned in parking lots.

Story

First come the traffic barriers. Then come the action figures & their walkie talkies which bring conversations about license plates and stochastics.

The hole is dug by elaborate antiquated machinery all spindly arms and cables. The material is hauled away.

Once the void is determinate, a committee convenes around its edges. Each time they array and linger, silent, looking.

Then material arrives not the same but if the same then scrambled. Insectoid machines fill in the hole. The walkie talkies go silent. The action figures depart. The traffic barriers disappear.

The next day it begins again a few inches further along.

I monitor the Wandering Hole of the Causalityway. As happens with everyone who lives here, The Hole has migrated into my mind.

These days I think about the Silent Committee. I understand the compulsion to empty a space hollow it out look at the emptiness again and again. There's an environment that arises in the space where continuity and rupture intertwine. It is a place full of parasites. Carriers rain down like ticks & parasites transfer & pass through their life cycles indifferent to the host environment self-contained and feeding with no effects on the host system only a silent eating until there's a mutation. Mutation catches the host system unawares. The parasite system begins to express its characteristics which are shaped by its origin between continuity and rupture as a rationality inside a rationality. A disconnect between them. Thinking its his or her idea, the host repeats the parasite's characteristics digging holes, looking into the emptiness, filling them back in.

Repetition becomes inertia. Continuities destroy themselves.

Meta

1965 Crisis-management problems.

Some people saw in the Reagan administration a thousand points of light. Others saw supporters of Liberation Theology being thrown out of helicopters into the Nicaraguan forest. Sometimes it is difficult to comprehend how different are the realities that coexist in the same geographic space much less how they are coordinated. Maybe there isn't anything about space that is ever the same that is ever identical with itself.

It would be difficult to say exactly what the connections might be between the sense of imploding empire and the ideological problem that accompanies it that expresses it that is it, the seizing up of autonomous capital flows and the debacle in Iraq. But it is not at all difficult to see that there are connections. When the Bush Administration decided to invade Iraq they draped a war on ghosts over the neoconservative fantasy of a new American century in which the United States was a military hegemon that stood outside of that presided over networks of bi-and-multi-lateral agreements and institutions and patterns of capital and commodity flows. In this imaginary world the United States would ground a system the logic of which tended to dissolve nation-states in an image of nation-state and because without the nation-state conservatism has nothing to talk about the ideological rationale for the nation-state as ground was to be American conservative politics.

The Project for a New American Century was a conservative policy group formed in the 1990s the primary function of which was to write letters requesting that another war be launched against Iraq. Please start another war against Iraq they would say. We do not at all like the way in which the last one turned out. From their collective viewpoint the problem with the first war followed from the unseemly involvement of the United Nations which prevented the manly American military from motoring into Baghdad and finishing the job. The UN was a castrating multiplicity. The new and improved Iraq war would erase the memory of symbolic castration. The Wolfowitz Plan was the perfect encapsulation of this way of thinking. Iraq was to be a two-week theatrical run on a very large stage, an abstract space into which American forces would march to be greeted by Happy Natives welcoming

their Liberators. Flowers would be strewn everywhere like August 1944 Paris except with live television coverage brought to you by the Pooled Press.

But things didn't quite work out.

Story

Dave the Other Guy sits on a bar stool belted into a chair fighting the fish, pulling back & being pulled forward by the fish, watching the line run back and forth across the giant reel guiding it with his hand.

The invisible rod slips out of its holder: jerking around behind the mobile weight of the memory tuna the shadow of the rod traces complex patterns over the surface of the bar.

Dave the Other Guy's arms shake from the fight then & now. Exhausted, he tries to hand off the rod to Tim the Lead Man who refuses in both times saying: "The first time you had sex did you try to hand off?" In order to prevent permanent damage to the man's reputation, he says. Out here everybody remembers everything.

He says: The rule is that you have to boat the tuna within twenty minutes before it starts to cook itself in the energy expended by fighting you.

Now in a second stool Tim the Lead Man looks for a gaffing hook pulls one up from beneath the surface of the bar & at that moment realizes the hook is too small. Nonetheless he grabs the lead & guides the memory tuna through the ocean of liquor bottles as the boat we are on jerks forward & reverses circling confusing the fish boxing it in. When the head of the fish breaks the surface of the water Tim arcs the too small gaffing hook over my macaroni & cheese and into the head and continuing the gesture pulls the 250 pound memory fish bleeding across my pint of ale and into the boat the far side of the bar.

And now the commercial fisherman who had been floating the whole time on other boats nearby are emerging from cabins appearing on decks breaking into applause sounding boat horns & shouting Now that's how you boat a tuna.

Mirror

Outside my window the tide is low the tree branches bare the air Sunday morning silent in a fading imperial power the inflexible stories that the empire tells are distributed about the grasses like tickertape like white lace like frost the stories that are empire an empire of stories in a frozen space where movement is realignment is loss of position is a sense of something moving that should not be some ineffable change affecting objects and spaces.

Beyond the story of assemblages of stories a horizontal band of brown grasses framed by a model of collapse of empire, one without events, something on the order of the Hapsburgs in which collapse is a tightening around routines a moving into the regular a motivated avoidance a flight into the stable into nothing too demanding into a map of the world like a phonebook a list of objects their proper locations and co-ordinates that allow you to reach them in the low tide mud past the tree branches bare in the Sunday morning silence the sun fading through pink the tide filling the gullies by degrees the stories evaporating something ineffable in the air something is changing.

Story

3 Each television monitor is the Cathedral at Aachen. Like Charlemagne, each television image of the Leader is faced by an audience and the image of the Leader faces the altar faces God. In this way the Leader mediates the relations between the audience and Order. The gazes of all converge in the Gaze of the Leader. The actions of the Leader are the Actions of all.

3.1 Judged by a royalist logic that seems to require symmetry of inside and outside, virtue and what befalls, the second Bush administration was Illegitimate and the disasters its actions have brought down an expression of its Illegitimacy.

3.1.1 The role of the polity in such a situation is not obvious.

3.1.1.1 Within the revolutionary tradition the actions of the Authorized Subject/Object of History position were hedged around by potential revolts. But we are past all that now.

3.2 The crisis of empire is a spectacle. We watch it unfold as a cheap tragedy with an idiot anti-hero. The space of action is contained within the monitor. It unfolds at a temporal remove from us. In that dimension, the chorus already knows the story. A spatially and temporally inverted image of the chorus, outside the space of action, the audience assembles.

3.2.1 The anti-hero disappears to build himself a library in some wasteland locale.

There is no release. There is no catharsis. As a spectacle it is terribly unsatisfying.

3.2.2 Perhaps it is the lack of catharsis that inspires we the audience to pay expiation ourselves.

3.2.2.1 And what is expiation? A long march through thickets of pain & phantom purple mountains on the edge of the sunrise where no purple mountains should be the evacuation of the present it's placement under the sign of a version of the past a placement which defines the present as an extension of a version of the past the loop this puts into a sort of motion and the accompanying self-immolation without end.

3.2.2.1.1 But we do not act.

3.3 We watch and wait then watch some more.

Meta

When you have a child you want the stream of disruptions to be contained and containable the medium across which disruptions stream to remain neutral a space of meta-narratives of patterns and control you do not want it to surge into the foreground and ordinary disruptions to wobble into crisis not for yourself but for the future that has to array itself around the child. But there is nothing you can do to influence it.

So you collapse into a fiction of the ordinary find an ordinary boy make an ordinary space of ordinary objects arranged in ordinary ways. Maybe then the wobble and spray will pass over like a tidal wave will curl over certain spaces or overlook you like crisis is the Khymer Rouge sweeping into a city rounding up people who wear glasses to send to die in the countryside & maybe you can survive if you look as though you can see.

Story

They hold each other as they sit on the couch. His eyes look in two directions. He is very sweet. He is hard to talk to. She is counting on her fingers.

He says: If you ask her any number she can tell you. She remembers everything about numbers. Other things not so much.

Not so much other things. One time her daughter was going downtown with a lady from the city. As they passed a building, she pointed and said that is where the man holds me down on a bed. Then lots of people from the city on the telephone. How could you not know about the man who was doing things to your daughter? I know eggs and how many there are. My health is not good. There are so many numbers to remember.

He who is holding her he looks out for her. When you knock on the window he comes downstairs to let you in. He helps you through the back room full of boxes and restaurant equipment to the stairs. He says going up: The only way secret entrance like a fort.

He makes her eggs and she knows how many there are. She counts the things in her cupboard. Unless she's not feeling well again. Again lately she has not been feeling well again. Again. He says to her: How many trips to the emergency room this year? She says: 206. Loud. Definite. She knows everything about numbers.

He says on the phone with people from the city: Her health is getting worse things are going wrong I cannot protect her. He says: I ask the people from the city on the phone can't you help her? And each says I can't but I will find the person who can. Then someone else calls. Over and over the same conversation. So many people who will not help us. She just needs some care. I think they want us to die.

They hold each other as they sit on the couch. His eyes look in two directions. He is very sweet. He is hard to talk to. She is counting on her fingers.

Meta

I was playing a video driving game in which my car would only crash.

The impact of the crash extended indefinitely, shaking the wheel, the animated viewpoint tumbling end over end, the sound quite loud the crashing continuous end over end the wheel rattling the animated viewpoint.

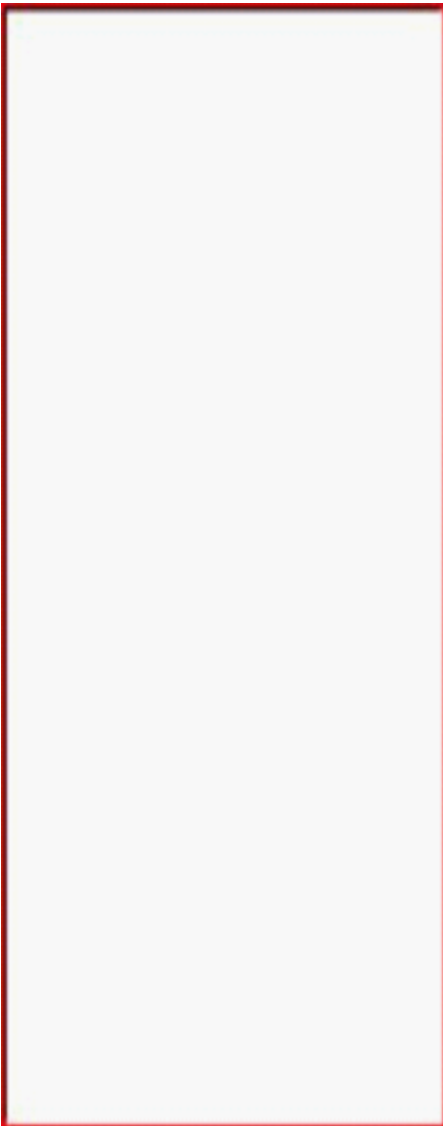
Each time I lean past the edge of the low cube within which the game unfolds I see a large room that is dark and empty and silent.

I think about the drop-off, the boundary between inside and outside.

Mirror

Imagine you are in a room opposite. Between the two a space of passage that is overlaid with transparent versions of itself again and again each version slightly misaligned with respect to the layer before or after it depending on your viewpoint where you start from what motion is.

Draw a thin red square around the assemblage of spaces of passage with the tip of a pen that tears the flesh of the world



Climb through the opening.

A thin line of bodies is moving across the water through the amplified sound shower of the
rivermouth disappearing reappearing

 disappearing again on the slacktide blue planar surfaces
buckle & fold around thin wavering multi-colored vertical lines a lattice of attentions the
light within against the water and sky breaks into beams & nodes then patterns maybe
cracks or a honeycomb a scrim behind the recurrent appearance
disappearance configuration of multicolored vertical folds that hover
within above the black line that marks that is the edge the surface the water in the
amplified sound shower of the rivermouth.

Data Mining in Post-Reality

Stephen Hastings-King

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