

# WILLIAM FAULKNER'S NARRATIVE MODE IN "THE SOUND AND THE FURY"A STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS TECHNIQUE OR INTERIOR MONOLOGUE USED IN BENJY'S SECTION

## Tatiana Vepkhvadze

International Black Sea University, Georgia

The present research analyzes William Faulkner's writing style in "The Sound and Fury", it refers to the stream of consciousness technique called interior monologue. The term is borrowed from drama, where 'monologue' refers to the part in a play where an actor expresses his inner thoughts aloud to the audience. The interior monologue represents an attempt to transcribe a character's thoughts, sensations and emotions. In order to faithfully represent the rhythm and flow of consciousness, the writer often disregards traditional syntax, punctuation and logical connections. He does not intervene to guide the reader or to impose narrative order on the often confused, and confusing, mental processes. Stream of consciousness is now widely used in modern fiction as a narrative method to reveal the character's unspoken thoughts and feelings without having recourse to dialogue or description. Faulkner's handling of stream of consciousness technique allows the FID narrator to shape a particular version of the character's consciousness in terms of images, which need not be actual words or thoughts as the character expressed them. The use of interior monologue is common narrative mode of Benjy's section that makes the text absolutely ambiguous for the reader. Benjy can't speak and being a narrator of the first section ,we have an access to the plot of the story through his perceptions and feelings.

Keywords: Stream of consciousness technique, Interior monologue, Linguistic devices.

### Introduction

The Present research analyzes William Faulkner's narrative mode in "The Sound and the Fury." It deals with stylistic devices used by the author in the first section of the novel. Stream of consciousness technique or Interior monologue is the main focus of the research, as it is widely used in Benjy's section. Our aim is to reveal the depth of Benjy's speech that lies beyond his rudimentary speech. Firstly, we might suggest that Faulkner presents symbols as substitutes for rationally formulated ideas.

Moreover, kernel sentences in the text create the impression of simplicity and illiteracy, though we can submit an idea that the author utilizes a few phrasal motifs, and a number of unusual lexical combinations to enrich the stark uniformity of the text.

Upon further analysis, we conclude that direct presentation of utterances and attitudinal phrases are one of the linguistic devices used by the narrator. The stream of consciousness technique or interior monologue is used in the section with complete or near -complete interference of the narrator.

In the paper we analyze William Faulkner's narrative method in The Sound and the Fury and suggest stylistic analysis of the first section of the text.

The term stream of consciousness was first used by the psychologist William James in 1890 to refer to the unbroken flow of thought and awareness in the human mind. The public fascination with the "stream of consciousness" was part of the widespread interest in psychology—particularly the psychology of self-control. Stream of consciousness literature is psychological literature,but it must be studied at the level on which psychology mingles with epsitomology. [12p1stə'mɔlə&1].

As a literary term, "stream of consciousness" refers to any attempt by a writer to represent the conscious and subconscious thoughts and impressions in the mind of a character. This technique takes the reader inside the narrating character's mind, where he sees the world of the story through the thoughts and senses of the focal character.

## **Literature Review**

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"The mind is a stream," Harry Dexter Kitson explains in the opening chapter of his 1921 monograph. The stream, he continues, consists "of the sum-total of mental processes going on within the individual: ideas, sensations, feelings, volitions and actions," and his "task" in this book is "to describe this stream; to slow it up and examine its contents". One might assume to find such a definition of the "stream of consciousness" in a book about Jamesian philosophy or in a psychology text.

As a literary term, "stream of consciousness" refers to any attempt by a writer to represent the conscious and subconscious thoughts and impressions in the mind of a character. This technique takes the reader inside the narrating character's mind, where he sees the world of the story through the thoughts and senses of the focal character. Robert Humphrey concludes that the realm of life with which stream-of-consciousness literature is concerned is mental and spiritual experience-both the whatness and the howness of it. The whatness includes the categories of mental experiences: sensations, memories, imaginations, conceptions, and intuitions. The howness includes the symbolizations, the feelings, and the processes of association. It is often impossible to separate the what from the how.

According to Frederick R. Karl, the stream of consciousness "is the epitome of Modernism" (239). This method has become synonymous with "high" modernism. It appealed to a large audience because it invited identification with a variety of subjective perspectives (or "consciousnesses").

Robert Humphrey offers two levels of consciousness which can be rather simply distinguished: the "speech level" and the "prespeech level". The prespeech level involves no communicative basis as does the speech level. In short, the prespeech levels of consciousness are not censored, rationally controlled or logically ordered. We may define stream-of -consciousness fiction as a type of fiction in which the basic emphasis is placed on exploration of the prespeech levels of consciousness for the purpose, primarily of revealing the psychic being of the characters.

The most prominent subjective fictions of the 20th century are Ulysses, Mrs Dalloway, To the lighthouse and The Sound and The Fury. As the stylistic method of Joyce, Woolf, and Faulkner, the "stream of consciousness" has become synonymous with textual "difficulty," with a "high" modernism separate from mass or popular culture. The stream-of-consciousness novelists were like the naturalists, the life they were concerned with was the individual's psychic life trying to depict life accurately; but unlike the naturalists.

In examining the chief stream-of-consciousness writers in order to discover their diverse evaluations of inner awareness Robert Humphrey suggests two important questions.

- 1. What can be accomplished by presenting character as it exists psychically?
- 2. How is fictional art enriched by the depiction of inner states?

Dorothy Richardson, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and William Faulkner are the most prominent stream-of-consciousness writers. Stream-of-consciousness is not technique for its own sake. It is based on a realization of the force of the drama that takes place in the mind of human beings. Faulkner saw one aspect of the drama as a tragedy of blood. These come to the reader most forcibly in that writer's stream-of consciousness novels, where the scene can be the one in which the tragedy actually takes place. The only writer who utilizes effectively this natural advantage for satire in depiction of psyche is William Faulkner. Faulkner as a stream-ofconsciousness writer combines the views of life of Woolf with those of Joyce. His characters search for insight, and their search is fundamentally ironic.

Some critics agree on the basic proposition that all Faulkner's work can be interpreted on a basis of broad myth and related symbolism. The principal of this interpretation is that Faulkner's entire work is dramatization, in terms of myth, of the social conflict between the sense of ethical responsibilities in traditional humanism and the amorality of modern naturalism (animalism) in Faulkner, in the south, and universally.

John T. Matthews describes William Faulkner's narrative mode in the following words" Faulkner does construct the narrative as leading up to and away from these incidents, but the events or thoughts themselves do not appear in the text. His paradoxical descriptions are not pointy less riddles but rather terse formulae to describe the subversion of resolved meaning, closed form, and full representation by the language that aspires to those very achievements" (John T. Matthews).

Not to go afield we will try to focus on William Faulkner's narrative mode in "The Sound and Fury", a stream of consciousness technique or interior monologue in Benji's section is the topic for our discussion. The Sound and the Fury, Faulkner's fourth novel, is his first true masterpiece, and many consider it to be his finest work. It was Faulkner's own favorite novel, primarily, he says, because it is his "most splendid failure." Depicting the decline of the oncearistocratic Compson family, the novel is divided into four parts, each told by a different narrator.

Nearly all critics consider it a technical masterpiece for the way Faulkner incorporates four distinct narrative modes in telling the story of a little girl with muddy drawers.

## Stylistic analysis of the text

William Faulkner describes his writing style in the following words: "There is always a moment in experience a thought an incident that's there. Then all I do is work up to that moment. I figure what must have happened before to lead people to that particular moment, and I work away from it, finding out how people act after that moment."

Indeed, it is his narrative mode, in which a character's unadorned thoughts are conveyed in a manner roughly equivalent to the way our minds actually work. And nearly all critics consider it a technical masterpiece for the way Faulkner incorporates four distinct narrative modes in telling the story of a little girl with muddy drawers.

We suggest the stylistic analysis of the first section; a writer applies a stream of consciousness technique, where a reader reveals the character's unspoken thoughts and feelings without having recourse to dialogue or description. In particular, Faulkner's handling of stream of consciousness technique allows the FID narrator to shape a particular version of the character's consciousness in terms of images, which need not be actual words or thoughts as the character expressed them.

The first section in The Sound and the Fury is told from the point of view of Benjy Compson, a thirty-three-year-old "idiot", and recounts via flashbacks the earliest events in the novel. As an idiot, Benjy is the key to the novel's title, which alludes to Shakespeare's tragedy Macbeth. For the most part, his language is simple-sentences are short, vocabulary basic. Every reader recognizes the simplicity of Benji's manner of speech, it ( the simplicity) is strengthened by the repetitiveness of the diction and by the systematic flattening out of the relationships between clause units, most of which are either asyndentic ( mere juxtaposition) or paratactical (mere coordination). L. Moffitt Cecil (1970) provides statistical confirmation: he finds that Benji's working vocabulary amounts to only five hundred words, most of them verbs and nouns. Benji's grammatical patterns are as simple as his vocabulary; though not all of his sentences are subject-verb-object kernels, he can manage only about seventy complex ones ( those with subordinate clauses).

Reading this section is profoundly difficult, however, because the" idiot" has no concept of time or place- sensory stimuli in the present bring him back to another time and place in the past. Most of his memories concern his sister, Caddy, who is in some ways the central character in the novel. Key memories regarding Caddy include a time when she uses perfume, when she loses her virginity, and her wedding. Banjy also recalls his name change ,( from Maury to Benjamin) his brother Quentin's suicide in 1910 and the sequence of events at the gate which lead to his being castrated, also in 1910.

Section one has Benjy as the centre of things. The reason for this is that Benjy, with an idiot's mind, is able to present the necessary exposition in not only its simplest tragic terms, but also in terms of symbols, which because they're from an idiot's mind are conveniently general in their meaning and are therefore flexible. Benjy is dumb, and yet he speaks; he is deaf and yet he can hear. "Which is to say that he belongs with the idiots of literature, not with those of the asylum." Faulkner saw idiocy as a possible way for a Sartoris-Compson to escape the ethical rigor of a code that depends on exertion of intellect and will. Benjy's role, then, is both to reflect an aspect of Compson degeneracy and to introduce the terms of the main conflict with the simple, forceful symbols available to an idiot.

It's almost enough for us to submit that the advantages of the stream-of-consciousness method for this novel are explained by the central role consciousness itself plays in it. Benjy's discourse is essentially symbolic and it is absolutely suitable for this section, as symbols come from simple perceptions and feelings; We might suggest that Faulkner presents symbols as substitutes for rationally formulated ideas. This can be illustrated in both Benjy and Quentin sections of the novel. The two kinds of mental aberration represented reveal themselves naturally in terms of images and symbols. Because they are represented as coming directly from a premeditative stage of conscious activity, they carry a convincingness and a fuller impact than they otherwise would. We have identified three symbols that signify everything for Benjy, e.g. firelight, the pasture and Candace. E.g." Here, Caddie." He hit. They went away across the <u>pasture.</u> I held to the fence and watched them going away.

They were hitting little, across the pasture. I went back along the fence to where the flag was. It flapped on the bright grass and trees.

It was red, flapping on the pasture. Then there was a bird slanting and tilting on it.

Luster threw. The flag flapped on the bright grass and the trees. I held to the fence.

The words (firelight, the pasture and Candace) are used so frequently that they come to dominate not only Benjy's consciousness, but the reader's also. Yet, such repetition has a naturalness about it because it comes from a mind as simple as Benjy's is.

In our research, Benjy's speech is categorized as interior monologue. Its overall effect is one of inflexible rigidity and ceaseless fragmentation rather than free, spontaneous flux. Taking into consideration that Benjy can't speak and he is a narrator of the first section ,we have an access to the plot of the story through his perceptions and feelings. The author uses the first-person narration in Benjy's section that assumes participant role within the fictional context and so adopt a subjective perspective on the events. There is no central I through whose agency his speech might be ordered and made meaningful; in like manner, there is no sense of identity to make his experience his. The severe restrictions imposed on his linguistic abilities reveal the extent of his mental deficiencies. Benjy's monologue sends us back to the confusions of the presubjective, pre-logic, animistic, world of infancy. Since there is no distinction between I and non-I, there can be no boundary between inner and outer space, and nothing to focalize what Benjy does, perceives or suffers.

We will try to strengthen our arguments with some examples from the text.

Benji's section begins at an almost leisurely pace with extended narrative units devoted to relatively minor incidents. So the section comprises several episodes that are not logically connected with each other and there is no coherence between them.

It begins with the following passage:

"Through the fence, between the curling flower spaces, I could see them hitting. They were coming towards where the flag was and I went along the fence. Luster was hunting in the grass by the flower tree and we went along the fence and they stopped and we stopped and I looked through the fence while Luster was hunting in the grass."

"Here caddy." He hit. They went away across the pasture.

I held to the fence and watched them going away.

"Listen at you, now .... Ain't you something, thirty-three years old, going on that way".

The puzzling opening scene of the sound and the Furry initiates the reader into the preoccupation of Benjy's mind as it shows "the mind child" and his black caretaker, Luster, "hunting" for a lost quarter. Benjy and Luster look for the quarter along a fence that borders a golf course. Benjy describes the players " hitting" and replacing the flag in the hole. As they play, golfers periodically call for their caddies. After Benjy first records what he hears, he seems to begin making a noise and Luster scolds him, " Listen at you, now .... Ain't you something, thirty-three years old, going on that way", the word caddy reminds him of his sister Caddy. In this passage, we can clearly spot the presence of the narrator showing the flow of the events at that moment. "I could see them hitting", They were coming towards where the flag was", I went along the fence, they stopped and we stopped." Narrative mode involves us in the course of action and we follow the flow of thoughts and feelings of the character; moreover, non-introduced people, "They, them, Luster" mentioned in the passage suggest that we are in his

consciousness. In the passage we can spot the example of free association, when Benjy associates the word caddy with his sister Caddy. Free association is widely used in stream-of-consciousness fiction in order to determine the movement of the psychic processes of their characters. The narrator doesn't give any guidance or exposition suggesting that caddy reminds him of his sister, moreover, nothing is mentioned regarding the noise; we conclude it from Luster's reaction: "Listen at you, now .... Ain't you something, thirty-three years old, going on that way."

We can say that Benjy thinks with images and his world is different from ordinary people's world. His perception of the environment is colourful and a bit exaggerated and of course, far from realistic. So attitudinal phrases used by Banjy are the direct reflection of his world. The narrator often uses evaluative words and phrases and conveys the subjective nature of his perceptions and observations using the words that describe the environment, people and the events from his point of view, e.g. "Rattling leaves", "bright grass", "flower rasped and rattled against us", between the curling flower spaces", "rattling flowers", it flapped on the bright grass", "shining wind", "bright cold", "spinning yellow."

We should also note that smell is the most important stimuli for Benjy; in most cases, it has the positive meaning for him as it is associated with his sister.

E.g. "The room went black. Caddy smelled like trees", "Caddy smelled like trees in the rain", he feels the smell of his sister, it is something familiar and very warm for him." Caddy smelled like trees and like when she says we were asleep." To sum up, a narrator uses a few phrasal motifs (Caddy smelled like trees,) and a number of unusual lexical combinations (e.g. "my hands saw it") to enrich the stark uniformity of the text.

Benjy's monologue presents difficulty for any reader because the information we need to interpret doesn't appear until later in Benjy's section. Faulkner delays us as we try to make sense of Benjy's mind, in part to create the sensation of an idiot's world. Benjy cannot reason abstractly, his experience seems a flood of chaotically unrelated sensations and images. Therefore, fragmentation of narrative line into nonchronological segments is one of the leading techniques used by the narrator throughout the Benjy's section.

- "My poor baby." mother said. She let me go. "You and Versh take good care of him, honey." "Yessum." Caddy said. We went out Caddy said, "You needn" go, Versh. I'll keep him for a while." He went on and we stopped in the hall an Caddy knelt and put her arms around me and her cold bright face against mine. She smelled like trees. "You aren't a poor boy. Are you. Are you. You have got your Caddy. Haven't you got your Caddy."
- 2. Can't you shut up that moaning and slobbering, Luster said. Ain't you shamed of yourself, making all this racket. We passed the carriage house, where the carriage was. It had a new wheel.
- 3. "Git in, now, and set still until your maw come." Dilsey said. She shoved me into the carriage. T.P. held the reins. "Clare I don't see how come Jason wont get a new surrey." Dilsey said. "This thing going to fall to pieces under you all some day. Look at them wheels.

Three different episodes are told one after another without any coherent link between them, because the idiot has no concept of time or place- sensory stimuli in the present bring him back to another time and place in the past, instantly and without warning, except for a change in typeface from Roman to italic. In our example, we can get some sense of the time by noting who is taking care of Benjy. Three black servants look after him at different times: Versh when Benjy is a small child, T.P. when Benjy is approximately 15 years old, and Luster in the present, when

Benjy is 33. The episodes in the example refer to different times. In the first one ,Benjy is with his family members in the house, mother expresses sympathy for Benjy and calls him "my poor baby", Caddy is trying to correct her mother's mistake explaining that he is not a "poor boy". "You aren't a poor boy. Are you. Are you. You have got your Caddy. Haven't you got your Caddy." Caddy's warm rudimentary speech reminds Benjy of Luster's scolding and memory image appears instantly. The last episode is also thematically different from the previous ones.

The technique of shifting from one of Benjy's remembered time zones to another-without warning or transition of any sort-constitutes Faulkner's strategy for showing how Benjy remains innocent of the abstraction of passing time. Benjy has no consciousness of time, but his consciousness is in time. The utilized narrative mode suggests the functioning of an abnormally limited consciousness. Lexical variations and syntactic modulations are kept within extremely narrow bounds; language is stripped to its barest essentials, generating a discourse from the looser patterns of living speech. Each sentence hardens into a discrete unit, standing by itself in utter isolation. The severe restrictions imposed on his linguistic abilities, that is effectively expressed in direct speech or interior monologue, reveal the extent of his mental deficiencies, and negligible author interference gives a reader a chance to travel through Benjy's kaleidoscopic mind.

As we have already mentioned, the use of interior monologue/ Direct Speech is common narrative mode of Benjy's section that makes the text absolutely ambiguous for the reader.( At the beginning of the twentieth century some authors developed a stream of consciousness technique called interior monologue.) The term interior monologue is borrowed from drama, where 'monologue' refers to the part in a play where an actor expresses his inner thoughts aloud to the audience. The interior monologue represents an attempt to transcribe a character's thoughts, sensations and emotions. In order to faithfully represent the rhythm and flow of consciousness, the writer often disregards traditional syntax, punctuation and logical connections. He does not intervene to guide the reader or to impose narrative order on the often confused, and confusing, mental processes.

We'll suggest a few more examples of interior monologue with close analysis.

The organic use of punctuation to control movement of stream of consciousness is one of the leading techniques used by the narrator in The Sound and the Fury. Direct interior monologue is always indicated at its beginning by italics. The italics have further function as we have already mentioned: they signal to the reader that there is a shift in time. It is a shift which is usually sudden. Unless the reader is aware of this important function of the italics, he is likely to be confused. One illustration will suffice. Benjy, the idiot, is being guided along a fence overlooking a golf course by Luster, his keeper.

The excerpt begins with Luster speaking aloud to Benjy.

- 1. "You snagged on that nail again. Cant you never crawl through here without snagging on that nail."
- 2. Caddy uncaught me and we crawled through. Uncle Maury said to not let anybody see us, so we better stoop over, Caddy said. Stoop over, Benjy. Like this, see. We stooped over and crossed the garden, where the flowers rasped and rattled against us. The ground was hard. We climbed the fence, where the pigs were grunting and snuffing. I expect they're sorry because one of them got killed today, Caddy said. The ground was hard, churned and knotted.

Keep your hands in your pockets, Caddy said. Or they'll get froze. You don't want your hands froze on Christmas, do you.

3. "It's too cold out there. "Versh said. "You don't want to go out doors" "What is it now". mother said.

What has happened is that Benjy's snagging himself reminds him of another time eighteen years before when he snagged himself while he was with his sister, Caddy. This memory is presented in the italics. However, the resumption of straight dialogue after the italicized section doesn't represent a continuation of the dialogue that had preceded the italics; it is a continuation of Benji's stream of memory of the past. When italics do appear again ( two pages later), they indicate a shift of time to the present. The use of italics in the novel maintains the fluidity in the depiction of consciousness, seldom have other writers been able to disappear from their narrative as completely as Faulkner does here.

One of the puzzling scenes that preceded Benjy's castration has become the focus of our attention. After Caddy's marriage, Benjy developed a habit of standing at the gate and watching schoolchildren. By standing at the gate Benjy hoped eternally that someday Caddy would walk back. On one fateful day, Benjy chased one of the passing girls in order to substitute the little Burgess girl for Caddy he may never have again. Since Benjy was mentally retarded, the neighbors interpret the event as a sexual assault and as a result he was castrated.

The extract from the text:

It was open when I touched it, and I held to it in the twilight. I wasn't crying, and I tried to stop, watching the girls coming along in the twilight. I wasn't crying.

"There he is."

They stopped.

"He can't get out. He won't hurt anybody, anyway. Come. on."

"I'm scared to. I'm scared. I'm going to cross the street."

"He can't get out. He won't hurt anybody, anyway. Come on."

"I'm scared to." I'm scared. I'm going to cross the street."

"He can't get out."

I wasn't crying.

"Don't be a 'fraid cat. Come on."

They came on the twilight. I wasn't crying, and I held to the gate. They came slow.

"I'm scared."

"He wont hurt you. I pass here every day. He just runs along the fence."

They came on. I opened the gate and they stopped, turning. I was trying to say, and I caught her, trying to say, and she screamed and I was trying to say and trying and the bright shapes began stop and I tried to get out. I tried to get it off of my face, but the bright shapes were going again. They were going up the hill to where it fell away and I tried to cry. But when I breathed in, I couldn't breathe out again to cry, and I tried to keep from falling off the hill and I fell off the hill into the bright, whirling shapes

This is Benjy's retelling of the Burgess girl episode, the close repetition of ''trying to say'' stresses the urgency of his desire: to seize the unexpected opportunity of communication and so break the isolation in which Caddy's departure has left him. In order to determine why this is direct interior monologue, we must answer the following question: What role does the author play in the passage? As it is represented he plays none. The author has disappeared entirely. Narration is in first person, the tense is willy-nilly ( past, future, present) as Benjy's mind dictates, and in most cases, there are no commentaries, no stage directions from the author. The dialogue between the girls is put in brackets, the brackets and the preposition they are the only indicators showing that other characters appear; the punctuation in the example helps us to guess

who is speaking. The elements of fluidity and incoherence are emphasized by the frequent interruption of one idea by another. It should be emphasized that in the last passage the character is not speaking to anyone within the fictional scene; he is not also represented as speaking to the reader or even for his benefit.

We can also suggest that the direct presentation of utterances is one of the linguistic devices used by the narrator. Directness of the dialogue creates a kind of vacuum which the reader is drawn in to fill: e.g. "What trance you been in", "they aint nothing over yonder", "Where bouts you lose in", "Aint in sight yet," "ain't in sight yet", "you shut your mouth," "You sho done it now," "Hush," "You mind Dilsey now," "You all done."

The narrator talks to the second-person addressee with a marked familiar tendency. In all the exclamations, we apparently hear the character's inner voice. The very absence of narratorial intervention has significant effects on the reader that positions him in Benjy's consciousness.

#### Conclusion

In conclusion, I will quote the author's words "He was a prologue," said Faulkner of Benjy," like the grave-digger in the Elithabethan dramas. He serves his purpose and is gone." He really serves his purpose with admirable efficiency. The choice of an idiots point of view was obviously a gamble from the author. As Benjy is unable to order his memories and perceptions in a consistent temporal perspective, his point of view is actually no point of view at all, and his telling of the Compson story is the very negation of narrative.

The narrator presents life from an abnormal person's point of view using different stylistic devices.

In our research, we analyze the author's narrative method; particularly, stream of consciousness technique or Interior monologue that enables the narrator to reveal the character's unspoken thoughts and feelings without having recourse to dialogue or description.

The research refers to stylistic devices such as direct interior monologue, free associations, direct presentation of utterances and attitudinal phrases. The stream of consciousness technique, interior monologue is used in the section with complete or near -complete interference of the author. We also suggest that Faulkner presents symbols as substitutes for rationally formulated ideas.

Benjy's monologue might be defined as information shorn of explanation and undistorted by subjectivity, or as a narrative held in timeless suspension, waiting for the reader to give it form and meaning: it does not tell a story but creates within us the possibility of telling one or several. Used narrative mode( stream of consciousness) made it possible for Faulkner to create the idiot's world and put the reader into his consciousness.

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#### 202 Tatiana Vepkhvadze

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