Ecocentrism Values in the Pasang Tradition of the Kajang Ethnic Group: A Study of Literary Ecology

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ABSTRACT

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This article discusses the ecocentrism values in the Pasang tradition of the Kajang ethnic community (Pasang ri Kajang) in South Sulawesi. Garrard Greg's ecocritical approach reveals the relationship between humans and the environment in the *Pasang ri Kajang* tradition. Data were collected through interviews, literature studies, and text analysis and then analyzed qualitatively. The results of the study indicate that the Kajang ethnic community based on Pasang ri Kajang guides their lives through the principles of kamase-masea (simple living), lambusu (honesty), gettang (firmness), and sabbara na appisona (patient and sincere) in everyday life. Pasang ri Kajang regulates the management and utilization of forests in settlements. Forests by the Kajang ethnic group are divided into three areas: borong karamaka (sacred forest), borong batasayya (border forest), and borong luara' (people's forest). The ecocentric values in *Pasang ri Kajang* that were found were 1) nature as the center of human life, 2) interdependence of humans with nature, and 3) harmony between humans and nature. These three ecocentrism values emphasize that Pasang ri Kajang can be a source of environmental conservation models based on local wisdom.

Keywords: Ecocentrism, Pasang Kajang tribe, Literary ecology

INTRODUCTION

The Kajang ethnic indigenous community is located in the eastern part of Bulukumba Regency in South Sulawesi Province. The Kajang ethnic community lives in groups in the forest area in the Kajang Dalam area, so they are known as the indigenous Kajang ethnic community. The Kajang ethnic community has a unique characteristic: in their daily lives, they always wear all-black clothes and never wear footwear. In addition, the Kajang ethnic group is very well known as an ethnic group that has an oral tradition passed down from generation to generation known as *Pasang ri Kajang*. *Pasang Kajang is a* collection of teachings, advice, and guidelines for life that have been passed down orally from generation to generation.

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Pasang for the Kajang ethnic group contains the principle of life, namely kamase-masea with the value system of lambusu (honest), gattong (firm), sabbara (patient), appisona (surrender) in it (Disnawati, 2013). The values contained in the principle of kamase-masea are the guideline for the life of the Kajang ethnic group. They obediently carry out all the rules in the form of Pasang ri Kajang which contain noble values and teachings in living life together with nature.

One important aspect in *Pasang ri Kajang* are the values of ecocentrism and ecological preservation efforts (Alfira, 2024). The values of ecocentrism and ecological preservation for the Kajang ethnic group are noble values that are always upheld and maintained for the sake of the sustainability of the environment in which they live. They believe that maintaining and preserving the environment will provide peace, safety, and happiness in life. The essence of the existence of *Pasang ri Kajang* is interesting to be analyzed using an ecocentrism approach.

Ecocentrism places nature at the center and emphasizes the harmony of humannature relations, in contrast to the anthropocentric view that places humans at the center
(Garrard, 2004b). Ecocentrism sees that the position of nature or the environment is the
same as the position of humans. Nature and humans need each other. This ecocentric view
is also applied to the life of the Kajang ethnic group. In their daily lives, the Kajang ethnic
group maintains and protects the environment in which they live. Natural resources are
managed according to needs and not excessively. This is in accordance with the local
wisdom of the Kajang ethnic group contained in *Pasang ri Kajang* called *tallasa kamase-*mase. Tallasa kamase-mase emphasizes the importance of living modestly, preserving the
environment and living with simplicity (Badewi, 2018). The local wisdom of tallasa
kamase-mase in Pasang ri Kajang prohibits destroying forests, cutting down trees
carelessly, limiting the use of natural resources, and respecting nature (Gising, 2011).

The values of ecocentrism and ecological preservation efforts in *Pasang ri Kajang* are interesting to study through a literary ecocritical approach because global environmental issues, such as climate change, loss of biodiversity, environmental damage, and understanding ecological values in local culture are increasingly important. By understanding and appreciating the values of ecocentrism contained in local culture, it is hoped that the community can be more enthusiastic in maintaining and preserving their cultural and ecological heritage.

The *Pasang* ri *Kajang* tradition plays an important role in maintaining ecological balance and maintaining ecocentrism values (Gising, 2011). *Pasang ri Kajang*, as a form of narrative passed down from generation to generation, contains teachings that emphasize the harmonious relationship between humans and nature. A study of the literary ecology of this tradition allows us to understand how the Kajang ethnic indigenous community practices environmental conservation through local wisdom (Reskiani et al., 2021).

The Kajang tribe still practices the *Pasang ri Kajang oral tradition* in their daily lives (Talib et al., 2023). This tradition not only functions as a medium for conveying cultural values but also as a tool for teaching environmental conservation practices. For example, a ban on indiscriminate cutting down of trees and strict rules on the management of local natural resources within their residential areas. Pasang ri Kajang regulates the pattern of human life holistically which guides humans to do good including Kamasemasea (simple living), Lambusu (honesty), Gettang (firmness), and Sabbara na Appisona (patient and sincere) in everyday life. Pasang ri Kajang is still firmly held as a local custom and wisdom so it has the power of traditional values and very deep meaning. Therefore, based on the Pasang ri Kajang tradition for forest management and utilization in settlements, the Kajang ethnic group divides three forest areas, namely borong karamaka (sacred forest), borong batasayya (border forest), and borong luara' (people's forest), namely areas whose contents may be utilized by the community but not excessively. (Talib et al., 2023). A study conducted by the Indonesian Forum for the Environment (WALHI) in 2019 showed that areas inhabited by the Kajang ethnic group had lower levels of environmental damage compared to the surrounding areas. This shows the effectiveness of the ecocentrism values taught through the Pasang ri Kajang oral tradition in maintaining ecological sustainability (Badewi, 2018).

Furthermore, research by Tsing (2005) states that local wisdom as found in the *Pasang ri Kajang tradition* can be a model for environmental conservation efforts in various parts of the world. By understanding and applying these values, more sustainable and community-based conservation strategies can be developed. Therefore, this study is not only important to understand the values of ecocentrism in the *Pasang ri Kajang oral tradition* but also to identify environmental conservation practices that can be adopted more widely. This study applies a literary ecology approach that has not been used in the context of research on the oral tradition *of Pasang ri Kajang*. The research focuses on the values of ecocentrism, the integration of ecological preservation aspects in the study of traditional

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literature, which can demonstrate an innovative interdisciplinary approach. This research provides a new contribution to the literature on literary ecology, especially in the context of the oral culture of the Kajang ethnic community.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research employs a descriptive qualitative method. Language data is studied by describing it according to the context that occurs in the field. The research was conducted in three villages in Kajang District, Tana Toa Village, Pantama Village, and Bonto Baji Village. The three villages were chosen to describe the culture of the Ammatoa residents of the Kajang Dalam ethnic group. Data collection was carried out through recording, recording, and interviews. The phenomenon of speech forms in oral literature is described and analyzed for the meaning of life (Gay, 2016).

Data were analyzed based on diction and diction sequences in *Pasang* suku Kajang. Data analysis was conducted using the theoretical framework of literary ecocriticism, which focuses on the reciprocal relationship between humans and the natural environment (Garrard, 2013). He explains that ecocriticism is a recognized method of political analysis, as demonstrated by the comparison of feminism with Marxism. Ecocriticism concerns the analysis of culture explicitly with a moral and 'green' political agenda (Garrard, 2004a). Literary ecocriticism emphasizes the meaning of human interaction and the natural environment in all aspects of culture. In this context, humans are able to study the development of movements as well as explore various concepts regarding literary ecocriticism, such as (1) pollution, (2) forests, (3) natural disasters, (4) habitats, (5) animals, and (6) the earth. According to Easterlin (2003), the importance of the relationship between culture and nature in the study of literary ecocriticism is also given great attention. several characteristics that will be considered in the research process: (1) environmental and community conditions, (2) the role of researchers, (3) data diversity, (4) data analysis is carried out inductively, (5) participant interpretation of the research (Catrin Gersdorf and Sylvia Mayer, 2006). Diction and diction sequences are transcribed and transliterated and supplemented with notes and interviews from informants. The aim is to obtain messages, meanings, and values in the Pasang suku Kajang (Sharrad, 2012). Data analysis is carried out by (1) collecting data from informants and searching the literature, (2) reviewing or analyzing, (3) grouping the types of fundamental meanings of oral literature, and (4) presenting the results of the study and drawing conclusions (Gay, 2016).

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the study of *Pasang ri Kajang* using the literary ecology approach, ecocentric values believed by the Kajang ethnic group can be found. The ecocentric values *of Pasang ri Kajang* in question are 1) nature as the center of human life, 2) interdependence of humans with nature, and 3) harmony between humans and nature. The discussion of the three ecocentric values *of Pasang ri Kajang* is presented below.

Nature as the Center of Human Life

The oral tradition of the Kajang ethnic Pasang contains ecocentric values that place nature at the center and emphasize the harmony of human-nature relationships (Huggan & Tiffin, 2010). Humans are part of nature, not separate entities or without causal relationships (Talib et al., 2023; Yuriananta, 2018). This is reflected in one of the following Pasang quotes:

"This universe is the home of all living things. Humans, animals, plants, and all their contents are a unity that is interrelated and interdependent. We must protect and preserve nature, because if nature is damaged, then we will all suffer."

The value of ecocentrism in the Kajang ethnic group's Pasang can create a pattern of balance and harmony between humans and nature. Humans are guided and reminded to live in harmony with nature and prohibited from destroying and exploiting nature excessively (Badewi, 2018; Gising, 2011). This is reflected in the following advice from Pasang.

"Do not cut down trees carelessly, do not take forest products beyond your needs, and do not pollute rivers or seas. We must preserve nature, because nature is the source of our life."

Ecocentrism in *Pasang* teaches about respect for nature and other living things. Nature is considered a sacred entity and must be respected, not just a resource that can be exploited (J Talib & Nurhayati, N, Harlinah Sahib, 2023). This is reflected in the advice of *Pasang* the following *Kajang area*.

"Don't destroy the forest, don't disturb the animals, don't pollute the rivers and seas. Nature is where we live, where we depend. We must protect and respect it."

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Pasang ri Kajang contains ecocentrism values about the importance of maintaining environmental balance. In the context of literary ecology research, the phrase describes the importance of the relationship between humans and nature. Pasang ri Kajang ecologically prohibits destroying forests, disturbing fauna, and polluting rivers and seas. This illustrates the principle of sustainability rooted in the local culture of the Kajang ethnic group, "tallasa kamase-mase". The Kajang ethnic group believes that forests, animals, rivers, and seas are parts that have noble values and life, not just resources. The Kajang ethnic group's environmental view sees nature as something that must be respected rather than exploited excessively, which can cause environmental damage. In a broader context, the values of ecocentrism in Pasang ri Kajang can contribute significantly to the formation of ecological awareness in modern society (Sugiarti, Eggy Fajar Andalas, Ekarini S, 2019). Pasang Kajang contains ecocentric values in ecological conservation efforts (Siti Masitoh, 2017).

The ecological conservation crisis is getting worse due to human anthropocentric behavior that ignores environmental sustainability and continuity (Yanti & Hamid, 2023). Anthropocentrism ethics sees that humans and their interests are crucial in the ecosystem order. Although plant and animal ecosystems are also considered important, they are considered secondary because their position is limited to serving human life (Aristotle in (Yanti & Hamid, 2023). Therefore, the ecological conservation values of Pasang ri Kajang can be a moral and ethical guide in managing and preserving the environment. Pasang ri Kajang views that nature has the same position as humans and that they both need each other. Through this view, it is hoped that it can change the way humans view the environment, from previously exploitative to more appreciative and protective of nature (Jihad Talib et al., 2023).

In addition, the ecocentrism values in *Pasang ri Kajang* can also be applied in various environmental policies in local, provincial, and central governments in Indonesia. It can even be used as one of the options for an ecological conservation model, especially in maintaining forests in various regions in Indonesia that are threatened with severe damage. Advice not to cut down trees indiscriminately and not to take forest products beyond needs can be the basis for sustainable forest management policies in Indonesia. Policies on ecological preservation will not only protect forests from damage but also ensure that the forest resources contained therein can be protected, preserved, and not

exploited carelessly. The following is advice on the prohibition of cutting down trees in *Pasang ri Kajang*.

"Don't cut down trees carelessly, because the forest is home to many living creatures. If the forest is damaged, the entire ecosystem will be disrupted."

Respect for nature as a sacred entity can also be applied in environmental education. By teaching these values to the younger generation, we can create a generation that is more concerned and responsible for the environment. Environmental education based on ecocentric values can create deeper and more sustainable ecological awareness (Zulfa, 2021).

In a global context, the ecocentrism values in *Pasang ri Kajang* can also contribute to international efforts to address climate change and ongoing environmental degradation (Jane, 2024). Over the years, various international collaborations, starting from the Stockholm Conference in 1972, the Rio de Janeiro Conference in 1992, and the Johannesburg Conference in 2002, to the Paris Agreement in 2015, have become a manifestation of the international community's commitment to the environment (Wangke, 2021). The view that nature is home to all living things and that humans must protect and preserve nature can be a fundamental principle in various global environmental initiatives (Easterlin, 2003).

This principle can help create more effective international cooperation in addressing various environmental issues (Azis et al., 2020). As a member of the G20, Indonesia can initiate G-20 member countries to take the lead in strengthening global partnerships to design strategies and contribute to addressing global environmental and climate challenges (Wangke, 2021). Through *Pasang ri Kajang*, it can inspire environmental movements in various parts of the world (Azis et al., 2020). For example, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) movement (Wangke, 2021).

Many environmental movements are trying to change people's perspectives on nature and the values of ecocentrism. For example, the Jane Goodall Foundation and the non-profit technology company Ecosia have planted nearly two million trees in Uganda over the past five years. This is in line with the values of *Pasang ri Kajang*, which can provide strong moral and ethical guidance for these movements. By adopting these values,

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environmental movements can more effectively achieve their goals. This is reflected in the following advice from *Pasang ri Kajang*.

"Nature is where we live, where we depend. We must respect and protect nature because if nature is damaged, then we will all suffer."

Ecocentrism values can influence more pro-environmental public policies. Leaders around the world need green leadership, also known as green leadership, to address and minimize the adverse effects of human actions that carry out development (Wangke, 2021). Policymakers can use the principles of ecocentrism to formulate laws and regulations that support environmental conservation. By emphasizing the importance of maintaining the balance of nature, we can develop more effective strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase ecosystem resilience to climate change. For example, reforestation programs that focus on restoring natural ecosystems may be more successful in sequestering carbon and mitigating the impacts of climate change. Ecocentrism values can provide an ethical foundation for environmental advocacy movements (Azis et al., 2020). By adopting the view that nature has intrinsic value that must be respected, these movements can be more powerful in advocating for environmental protection. (Vasiliades et al., 2021). Pasang is not only relevant to local communities but also has the potential to provide broad positive impacts at the global level. By adopting and implementing these values, a sustainable and harmonious environment can be created. Humans and nature can live side by side in peace (Sugiarti, Eggy Fajar Andalas, Ekarini S, 2019).

Interdependence of Humans with Nature

Pasang ri Kajang contains about the relationship between humans and nature. For example, "Jagai linoa lollong bonena kammayya tompa langika siagang rupa taua siagang boronga. This means taking care of the earth and its contents as well as the sky, humans, and forests (Disnawati, 2013). This relationship is established in the form of a relationship of interdependence between humans (Kajang indigenous people) and nature in the form of harmony. Nature is considered as the macrocosm of which humans are the microcosm. The environment, especially the forest (borong), is considered as the macrocosm of the ecosystem of the Kajang customary area. The Kajang ethnic community believes that the forest must be protected because it is the center of human life. Here is the quote:

Anjo boronga yes kantaki bosiya nasaba konre mae pangairangnga iaminjo boranga nikua pangairang

/It is the forest that invites rain because there is no irrigation here, so the forest functions as irrigation because it brings rain/

All relationships supporting the environmental ecosystem must always run in harmony. No action is justified, especially those related to the balance of nature and life in the Kajang traditional area. For example, the following *Pasang ri Kajang* describes how to protect the Kajang traditional natural environment:

Wholesale injo lungnai linoa

/forests as the lungs of the world/

The word "lung" in *the Pasang ri Kajang* above, an organ of the human body used for breathing, is clearly shown in the pair above. The exchange of gases between living things (organisms) and their environment is known as breathing. The inhalation of oxygen by humans and the release of carbon dioxide for use by plants is a process of gas exchange. *The Pasang ri Kajang* above shows that the forest (*alang lompoa*) gives life to the small nature (*alang caddia*) and functions as its lungs.

Therefore, nature (forest) is very important in the network of life that surrounds the Kajang customary area. Therefore, everyone is strictly prohibited from destroying the forest (deforestation), especially those who live in the Kajang Dalam customary area (lalang embayya). Customary rituals (*abborong ada'a*) will resolve any violations by enforcing Kajang customary law (ada' tanayya ri Kajang). In the Kajang customary area, there are three types of sanctions that apply to any violation of the contents of *Pasang ri Kajang*, namely *lanigelli* (community punishment), *lanipassala* (material fines), and *lanipaopani tana* (expulsion from the Kajang customary area).

Ammatowa Kajang stated the following about *Pasang ri Kajang*.

Injo boronga ana'parunnai linowa. Pattambannatoi poeng anne linowa. Jari punna anre'mi antu boronga anre'mi antu katallassanga, saba ' anre'mi lungsuwa lanipake annapasa'. Assaja tommi antu anee linowa saba' anre'mi pattambanna.

/Forests are the lungs and the guardians of the balance of nature. When the forests are gone, then the entire chain of human life will no longer exist because the balance between nature and living things is also broken/

The Kajang ri Pasang above provides an illustration and warning for everyone, including people living in the Kajang customary area and humans in general, not to damage the forest. Destroying the forest means breaking the chain of life of living things and damaging nature's balance so that disasters can occur anytime. Therefore, the following combination shows the most significant risks:

Human Harmony with Nature

The *Pasang ri Kajang* has shown how important it is to maintain harmony between all living things, especially humans, and the surrounding nature (Alfira, 2024). As part of the ecosystem, humans who do not know will destroy themselves and even damage the life expectancy of the next generation (Sharrad, 2012). Here, the legacy is intended for the forest as a natural source of life, not economic value. One form of direct impact that humans can experience when destroying forests in Pasang is stated as follows:

Rie' serre hattu ballo bolanu nahambangngi kalennu.

/Once upon a time the beautiful houses had zinc roofs, but the air temperature was rising/

The short message above gives a warning to avoid *luxurious houses with zinc roofs*, indicating that the temperature of the environment or body can be hot. Here, the *Pasang predictions* made and ordered from generation to generation seem extraordinary. With the loss of natural balance, the global climate is currently facing the threat of destroying the world, and the contents of the above *Pasang are able to predict it*. In addition, the Kajang ethnic community believes that all man-made materials and objects (manufacturing) are prohibited from entering (*talakkulle* or *talamarring*) the Kajang Dalam customary area because they are not beneficial for their environment and tend to damage the environment.

I'm a wholesaler. Punna lanupanraki injo borongalabapanraki kalennu sanggenna tuhusannu.

/The forest is a legacy for our children and grandchildren. So don't destroy it/

The message above shows us all how important it is to maintain harmony between all living things, especially humans, and the surrounding nature. As part of the ecosystem, humans who do not know will destroy themselves and even damage the life expectancy of the next generation. Here, the legacy is meant for the forest as a natural source of life, not as a source of economic value. Even according to Puto Sule (interview; 14 June 2017), he mentioned one form of direct impact that humans can experience when they destroy their forests, as follows:

Rie' serre hattu ballo bolanu nahambangngi kalennu.

/Once upon a time the, beautiful houses had zinc roofs, but the air temperature was rising/

The short message above warns us not to damage our environment, namely the forest. This message wants to invite everyone not to destroy the forest. With the loss of natural balance, the global climate is currently facing the threat of destroying the world (Dominic & Walker, 2020). The content of *Pasang* above can predict it, even considered sacred and ordinary (profane).

The Kajang indigenous people are also able to think that all materials and objects not made from natural raw materials do not benefit human life. Therefore, all man-made materials and objects (manufacturing) are prohibited from entering (*talakkulle* or *talamarring*) into the Kajang Dalam indigenous area. The use of zinc roofs, for example, is able to reflect light containing energy into the atmosphere, which then causes leaks in the greenhouse.

The greenhouse gas leak event in human life can provide an opportunity for ultraviolet rays to penetrate to a certain ozone layer. When this is left unchecked, then one day the ultraviolet rays will penetrate the entire ozone layer, thus burning the entire ecosystem in this world. Continued ecosystem damage can accelerate the loss of biodiversity and put the future of humanity in danger. If this happens, it will be the most tragic event for humans because it will be the sixth mass extinction (Jane, 2024). *Pasang ri Kajang* which describes the maintenance of forests and their ecosystems in the Kajang customary environment as stated below.

I'm a wholesaler. Punna lanupanraki injo borongalabapanraki kalennu sanggenna tuhusannu.

/The forest is a legacy for our children and grandchildren. So don't destroy it because it will give birth to disaster for your descendants/

The forest (*alang lompoa*) gives life to the surrounding environment (*alang caddia*) and functions as its lungs (Sitti Rabiatul Wahdaniyah Herman & Supriadi Takwim, 2022), as shown by *Pasang ri Kajang* above. Therefore, nature, or forests, play an important role

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in the chain of life around the Kajang ethnic community area. Therefore, it is strictly prohibited for everyone to damage the forest and disturb animals, especially those living in the Kajang Dalam or *lalang embayya customary area*. Based on the Kajang customary ritual, enforcing Kajang customary law (ada'tanayya ri Kajang) resolves every violation. Every time *the Pasang ri Kajang* is violated, three types of fines apply in the Kajang customary area: *lanigelli* (community punishment), *lanipassala* (material fine), and *lanipaopani tanah* (expulsion from the customary area). Quotes from *the Pasang ri Kajang* relating to the ecocentrism values conveyed by Ammatowa Kajang are as follows:

Injo boronga ana'parunnai linowa. Pattambannatoi poeng anne linowa. Jari punna anre'mi antu boronga anre'mi antu katallassanga, saba ' anre'mi lungsuwa lanipake annapasa'. Assaja tommi antu anee linowa saba' anre'mi pattambanna.

/Forests are the lungs and the guardians of the balance of nature. When the forests are gone, then the entire chain of human life will no longer exist, because the balance between nature and living things is also broken/

Pasang ri Kajang above provides an illustration and warning for everyone, including people living in the Kajang customary area and humans in general, not to damage the forest. Destroying the forest means breaking the chain of life of living things and damaging the balance of nature so that disasters can befall humans at any time. Therefore, the following quote from Pasang ri Kajang shows the most significant risk:

Punna nitabbangngi kajua riborongnga, nunipoppirangitga Angngurangi bosi patanre timbusu. Nitalk Put ri tau Ma'riolo

/ If the wood in the forest is cut down without being looked after, rain will decrease and disappear so that water sources will disappear (dry up) and people will suffer or die. That's the message from previous people/

CONCLUSION

In the context of the current global environmental crisis, the principle of ecocentrism is particularly relevant in the *Pasang oral tradition*. ri *Awning*. The Kajang ethnic community believes that "Pasang" teaches them the principle of *kamase-masea life*. *Pasang ri Kajang* regulates the relationship between humans and nature, so the Kajang ethnic community is very committed to preserving the environment, especially its forests. The implementation of *Pasang ri Kajang* is an interesting phenomenon of forest management practices because it can implement conservation practices and give birth to ecocentric values 1) nature as the

center of human life, 2) interdependence of humans with nature, and 3) harmony between humans and nature. The ecocentrism values contained in *Pasang ri Kajang* can contribute to increasing public awareness of environmental conservation issues, developing sustainable policies, education on environmental issues, regional, national and international collaboration in ecological conservation movements, and developing sustainable green technology. Ecocentric values *Pasang ri Kajang* has shown how important it is to maintain harmony between all living things, especially humans, and the surrounding environment.

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