

READING ISLAMOPHOBIC MINORITY IN *THE DISGUISE* (2019) : A

READER RECEPTION ANALYSIS

A GRADUATING PAPER

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Gaining the Bachelor

Degree in English Department



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A FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT

A FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT

I certify that this graduate paper is definitely my own work. I am completely responsible for the content of this graduating paper. Other researcher's opinion or finding included in this research is quoted or cited in accordance with ethical standards.

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kami menyatakan bahwa skripsi tersebut sudah dapat diajukan pada sidang Munaqosyah untuk memenuhi salah satu syarat memperoleh gelar Sarjana Sastra Inggris.

Atas perhatiannya, kami mengucapkan terima kasih.

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**READING ISLAMOPHOBIC MINORITY IN *THE DISGUISE* (2019) : A
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ABSTRACT

This research aims at investigating a short movie, *The Disguise* (2019), on how minority lives their life in the middle of the majority. The various perspectives from the readers' point of view about why the majority express Islamophobic behaviour towards minorities are of importance because the readers' interpretations and constructions of the islamophobia portrayed in the movie reflect the collective structure of how islamophobia is produced and reproduced. This research employs the ethnographic method (qualitative interview) as the primary data collection as a reader response approach. The encoding-decoding theory of Stuart Hall supports this research. Three respondents were chosen based on their differences in nationalities (Germans, French, and Indonesian), but they shared one value in common; Islam. Therefore, the differences in socio-cultural values are considered crucial in viewing islamophobia. The researchers found that despite the image construction of Islam in the Western media, the respondents share a similar belief that the phenomena of islamophobia occur in a vast majority of non-muslim societies. In addition, from the interviews, the respondents believe that, like the story in the movie, the majority have very little understanding of Islam, which is perceived as odd or unrecognized because the identity of Muslims has the opposite character from the majority of people in their countries. Furthermore, the respondents believe that the hatred that causes islamophobia comes from a pre-knowledge which causes a collective trauma. Last but not least, all respondents agree that islamophobia in their society is not a fear of Islam as a religion or Muslim as their adherents, but it is a fear of terrorists or radical or extreme right groups.

Keywords: *minority; majority; islamophobia; perception; meaning*

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menginvestigasi sebuah film pendek, *The Disguise* (2019), tentang bagaimana kaum minoritas menjalani kehidupannya di tengah kaum mayoritas. Berbagai perspektif dari sudut pandang pembaca tentang mengapa mayoritas mengekspresikan perilaku Islamofobia terhadap minoritas menjadi penting karena interpretasi pembaca dan konstruksi Islamofobia yang digambarkan dalam film mencerminkan struktur kolektif bagaimana Islamofobia diproduksi dan direproduksi. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode etnografi (wawancara kualitatif) sebagai pengumpulan data primer dengan pendekatan respon pembaca. Teori encoding-decoding dari Stuart Hall mendukung penelitian ini. Tiga responden dipilih berdasarkan perbedaan kebangsaan mereka (Jerman, Prancis, dan Indonesia), tetapi mereka memiliki satu nilai yang sama; Islam. Oleh karena itu, perbedaan nilai sosial budaya dianggap krusial dalam memandang islamofobia. Para peneliti menemukan bahwa terlepas dari konstruksi citra Islam di media Barat, para responden memiliki keyakinan yang sama bahwa fenomena islamofobia terjadi di sebagian besar masyarakat non-muslim. Selain itu, dari hasil wawancara, responden berpendapat bahwa seperti cerita dalam film, mayoritas memiliki pemahaman Islam yang sangat sedikit, yang dianggap aneh atau tidak dikenal karena identitas umat Islam memiliki karakter yang berlawanan dengan mayoritas orang pada umumnya. negara mereka. Selain itu, responden percaya bahwa kebencian yang menyebabkan islamophobia berasal dari pra-pengetahuan yang menyebabkan trauma kolektif. Last but not least, semua responden setuju bahwa islamofobia di masyarakat mereka bukanlah ketakutan terhadap Islam sebagai agama atau Muslim sebagai penganutnya, tetapi ketakutan terhadap teroris atau kelompok radikal atau ekstremis..

Kata kunci: *minoritas; mayoritas; islamofobia; persepsi; arti*

MOTTO

There is nothing in a caterpillar that tells you its going to be a butterfly.

-R.Buckminster Fuller-



DEDICATION

My beloved parents, Giyono Hardjosuwito and Ida Rosela who supports me on my highs and lows.

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Yogyakarta, 12 October 2022

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Study

Minority and majority conflict become the familiar issue in our daily life even until now. Especially, conflicts between minority Muslim vs majority people in Europe that's getting higher recently. This statement showed by multiple statistic data which was managed by some different kind of organizations that have concern about Islamophobia in Europe. The conflicts about Islamophobia in real life also being reflected in some films that inspired by real life minority issue. Some of those films have certain topics such as the discrimination/hatred against Muslim (Islamophobia). One of the movie that bring out the topic about these issues is *The Disguise*.

The story of *The Disguise* is about two women who have the same belief (Islam), Rabia and Lena. They both meet each other accidentally. Rabia is such a woman who shows her Lebanese conservative Muslim identity. Meanwhile, Lena is shutting off her identity and appears like a local Londoner. One day Lena sees the strangers looking at Rabia hatefully because she is dressed in *niqabi*. Lena defends Rabia because she's also a Muslim. This incident changes both of them. Lena started to appear in *niqabi* as her real identity and see who her true friends are. Meanwhile, Rabia takes off her *niqabi* and her *hijab*, hoping that she won't receive any Islamophobic acts again.

This film shows the viewer the view of two different kinds of women who became victims of hate acts as well as minority discrimination in the middle of the non-

muslim majority. The problem in this short movie is about the intolerant behavior being done by non-muslim Europeans against the other main characters, who have different beliefs. The intolerance is shown in many scenes that demonstrate islamophobia and discrimination.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, islamophobia is unreasonable dislike or fear of, and prejudice against, Muslims or Islam(<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/islamophobia?q=Islamophobia> Accessed 17/9/2022).

One of the scenes that contained Islamophobia in *The Disguise* is when there was a mom who freaked out and said rude things to Rabia because her kids running toward Rabia (a Muslim woman who dressed as niqabi). She and her kids mentioned that they should be careful of strangers, and she looks at Rabia rudely.

This movie also shows discrimination acts in its scenes. According to Cambridge Dictionary, the discrimination is treating a person or particular group of people differently, especially in a worse way from the way in which you treat other people because of their skin colour, sex, sexuality, etc(<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/discrimination> Accessed 17/9/2022) One of the cases of discrimination in this movie is when Rabia wants to sit next to a non-Muslim western girl. She put her purse next to her so Rabia won't sit there and have to sit on the back. Meanwhile, she allows a non-Muslim stranger sits next to her.

The gap between majority and minority in this movie becomes the main conflict. This short movie inspired the researchers to discover how intolerance issues are being made. Beside that the researcher wants to investigate the reason of meaning about why Islamophobia being portrayed that way in a movie.

The researcher will use reader reception theory by Stuart Hall. This theory isn't just focus about the symbol, the discourse or the portrayed of Islamophobia and discrimination in that movie. But also this theory tend to focus on how the audience decode the message that was being encoded by the movie maker, depend on their different personal background. As a result, the researchers will break down the analysis based on various perspectives from the readers about why the majority express Islamophobic behavior towards minorities.

These things are essential because the readers' interpretations and constructions of the islamophobia portrayed in the movie reflect the collective construction of how islamophobia is produced and reproduced through symbols, practices, myths, and discourses in this movie.

The Researcher choose 3 respondents from different countries to participate in this interview which based on ethnographic approach and qualitative research. They are from France, German, and Indonesia.

The researcher chose France because France is one of the countries in Europe which being attacked multiple times by terrorists compared to other countries. France has been more closely engaged with the Muslim world than other Western countries due to an extensive history of colonialism and war.

According to the personal background, the first respondent was going through Islamophobia because he's a revert Muslim. He knows how it feels to be the part of the majority and now he became the minority. Beside that, the researcher choose this person because he's young and his knowledge about Islamophobia in his country is up to date.

Besides that, the researcher chose Germany because this country is one of the most multicultural countries compared to other countries in Europe. But what's unusual is that this country is being perceived as failing to be multicultural. Those Muslim communities have managed to live in certain places with their people, and some of them can't blend in or speak German. The researcher choose this reader because her background shows that she has similar way of thinking like one of the character in this movie (Rabia). Even though she's Muslim revert. She never experienced Islamophobia because she hides away her real identity from people around her. She's young and she often get in touch with Islamophobic people in her family. That's why the Researcher thinks that this reader's point of view is interesting.

Last but not least, the researcher also brings up Indonesian as a respondent. In Indonesia, Islamic denominations are formed based on how they interpret the Islamic teaching of Qur'an. Some made radical religious organizations based on their interpretations of the Qur'an. Sometimes their belief which does not align with any other majority Muslim's belief can trigger conflicts. Even though Indonesia already has Bhineka Tunggal Ika, which means unity in diversity. These people believe that their belief is the best ideology

compared to Pancasila (five pillars of principles of political philosophies in Indonesia). The last respondent is a young guy who was in touch with minority Muslim branch such as HTI and Salafi. He mentioned that, these people that he met was share their idea about what they like about khilafah sistem. The researcher will ask him more about his point of view as a majority.

Based on Stuart Hall's theory it is also very important for the Researcher to analyse the encoder's sosio culture. The encoder's sosio culture in this movie is in UK, and UK is the part of Europeaan Continent. That's why the researcher wants to figure out both parties in order to match reality/the background of movie with the actions of Islamophobia and discrimination in this movie.

The statistics data shows that the majority of the community who experience religious discrimination in Europe are Muslim immigrants. The intolerance of the majority against minorities is also being shown and even normalized in European media.

Discrimination is often experienced by some people who show their identity. Muslim women usually wear hijabs or niqabs to show that they are Muslim. The discrimination towards Muslims is shared by some men with very dominant ethnic faces such as Arabian, Pakistani or any other south African face. Muslim woman who wears a hijab has less chance of finding a job unless she takes her scarf off. Moreover, Muslim men have bigger chance of being rejected on their application if they have beards. The contradiction and conflict about this belief are actually against EU law. EU legislation prohibiting discrimination on

the ground of religion or belief in the area of employment seems to be toothless across Europe, as the other researchers observe a higher rate of unemployment among Muslims.

The difference of hidden perception between minority and majority became an identity clash. It leads to negative prejudice against Muslims. In addition, the terrorists made their contribution by triggering how the majority perceived Muslims as a threat.

In Europe, the hatred has centred significantly on Muslims because it was fueled by Islamic extremists'/terrorist who bring Islamic symbol.

What these extremist Muslims did was a perfect recipe to divide the minority and majority and turn them into hatred and dominated by fears. When they repeatedly bring the symbol of Islam, and if it continues to happen for so long, people will take it as true that Muslims are a threat to them.

The repetition of the bad image of Muslims has become one of the reasons why Muslims in Europe are going through discrimination.

In this research, the researcher do not only analyze the discrimination/Islamophobia in Europe, but the researchers add another perspective on how the majority of Muslims perceive the minority branch of Muslim in Indonesia. As we can see in the main message in *The Disguise*, some minorities try to hide their identity in order to feel accepted by society. The representation of the character in this movie is Rabia. On the other hand, some

people hold on through the discrimination as long as they choose their beliefs and just be themselves as Leena in this movie.

It's obvious that there's a link between minorities and discrimination toward Muslims in Europe. This research aims to portray the different meanings of perception of the minority in *The Disguise*. The researcher will question the readers about their experiences which correlated with discrimination toward the minority. The Researcher will interview two revert Muslims who live in Europe (France and Germany) and one person representing the majority of Indonesian Muslims (NU) who was once met a member of a religiously radical organization.

The researcher will analyze the relationship between their construction of meanings of *The Disguise* and their background. Consequently, not only will the researcher examine the encoder's construction of meaning, but also the decoders' construction of the meaning by confirming their European religious experiences.

1.2 Research Question

According to the background of the study, this research is intended to find out the answer of this following questions:

1. How the readers decode the message in *The Disguise*?
2. What is the construction behind the portrayal of Islamophobia in *The Disguise*?

1.3 Objective of Study

Based on the problem statements, the researcher focuses on the reader's perception and their point of view based on their background which will affected

how they create the meaning in *The Disguise* which talks about minority discrimination and intolerance actions.

1.4 Significance of Study

The researcher hopes that this paper is helpful for the development of the literary study, especially for those who use this Reader-reception theory approach. The researcher also hopes this paper will be a good reference for those who want to analyze a similar topic as in *The Disguise*, which contains issues about minority discrimination/intolerance. Especially for those who live in western countries as Muslims or some people who believe in different branch of Islam but they live in the majority of Muslim moderate such as Indonesia.

The research certainly hopes that using this topic as research will reveal another side of minority discrimination and also encourage people to treat differences equally and respectfully.

1.5 Literature Review

The researcher does not find any researches that use *The Disguise* short movie using the theory of reader reception using the theory of representation approach by Stuart Hall. However, the researcher finds a thesis that's created by Universitas Negeri Sunan Kalijaga student in order to fulfill the requirements of Bachelor degree. This thesis titled "You'll never walk alone song : Reader Response Analysis" (2018) by Satria Wibowo. This researcher was using reader response analysis by Wolfgang Iser to analyzed the Listeners/Liverpool fan's point of view.

The second thesis of Universitas Islam Sunan Kalijaga's English Literature student is "The Interpretation of "God" in Kingdom of Heaven(2005) : Reader Response Analysis"(2020) by Fati Rahmi. In this thesis, the Researcher use Wolfgang Isser's theory to analyze the different interpretation of God.

The third one, the researcher found a journal about Minority and majority discrimination: When and why (2001), by Geoffrey J Leonardelli, Marilynn B Brewer. This research using the similar topic about the minority and majority discrimination. The difference are the researchers more focused on experimental social psychology and this research isn 't literature-based category.

The fourth one is Black or Black-ish: Decoding Black-ish and Its Place in the Conversation of Diversity, by Vickers,Jasmine 2018. This thesis has the same theory and it has the same minority topic. But this thesis more focused on the minority race issue, in the middle of America's diversity.

The last one is "Pemaknaan Khalayak dan Hegemoni Media Mengenai Nasionalisme dalam Iklan 2016" (The Imposition of Audiences and Media Hegemony Regarding Nationalism in Advertising) which still use the same theory to discover the response of audience toward the certain kind of advertisement that contain globalization. The researcher of this journal found out that the audience agree with the message that the media has created but also, they have their own alternative way to accept the message. In this paper, the researcher focusses on the audience reception who went through minority discrimination and the majority's reception of the readers towards the minority/discrimination actions.

1.6 Theoretical Approach

1.6.1 Theory Stuart Hall of Reader Response

In this research the Researcher uses the theory of Reader response constructed by Stuart Hall. The Theory of encoding and decoding assume that every message or meaning which being delivered is a construction of natural social experience that contained ideology behind it. Stuart Hall thought in this theory there are three different processes. First there is encoding, second is decoding and the last one is the interpretation and the understanding point from the analysis of audience's reaction.

Stuart Hall described his encoding and decoding theory as two different things, encoding can be defined as the process of analyzing the socio-political context (occurs when content is produced), while decoding is the process of consuming media content. Hall considers that sometimes individuals have their own paradoxes in capturing messages. The process of receiving messages will not occur if individuals do not have the ability to receive messages. This theory works by using the model of communication by focused on the meaning and message that are being organized through codes.

During the process, there are 2 determination moments. There are encoding and decoding, which are connected by the embedded meaning in discursive from (constructed within discourse). So, in the process of encoding, there are different aspects that support what kind of meaning that they want to deliver. These aspects are (Frame of knowledge, relation of production, technical infrastructure). Then, they'll comprise the discourse within a particular message

which is encoded. After they released the meaning/ the message that they created, the decoding will receive the discourse that the encoding has created before. But their perception depends on three factors also, such as (Frame of knowledge, relation of production, technical infrastructure), these three factors would have affected the receiver or the decoder in 3 different level. There are dominant, neutral, and opposition.

1.6.2 Encoding

Encoding is one of the determinate moments in the model of this theory. At this moment, the meaning embedded in a message is in discursive form (it is being constructed within a discourse). There are three aspects that'll effect the discourse of the encoding to create the meaning. (Frame of knowledge, relation of production, technical infrastructure).

Who's the encoder? The encoder are the broadcaster, media company, or the content creator himself. These production team have to find the same alignment in order to create the agreement of what kind of message that they want to deliver.

1.6.3 Meaning Structure

Meaning in this theory is constructed within a discourse in both moments, at encoding and decoding. Meaning that being constructed by the discourse of the encoder named "meaning structures 1" In this part the encoder created the message with a meaning which is being constructed by their idea as a form of realization. The process of interpreting messages carried out by individuals cannot directly receive the "meaning structure 1" from the producer. So, when this

message is broadcast, the meaning of the message content can be varied and depends on the audience as the recipient of the message (receiver).

On the other hand, meaning that are being perceived by the discourse of the decoder defined as “meaning structure 2” In this part the encoder perceives the meaning by the encoder based on their internal or external perception on things.

At this stage the audience tries to disassemble the code from the show for later interpretation (decoding). This process is so influenced by the audience’s background. Messages that have been interpreted by the audience are referred to as “meaning structures 2”.

1.6.4 Decoding

Decoding is one of the determinate moments in the model of this theory. At this moment, the meaning embedded in a message is in discursive form (it is being constructed within a discourse). There are three aspects that’ll effect the discourse of the decoding perceives the creation of meaning. (Frame of knowledge, relation of production, technical infrastructure). Who’s the decoder? The decoder is the audience, the viewer, the reader or the consumer. The different background among the audience might affect their interpretation of the meaning itself.

1.6.5 Interpretation

Interpretation is the form of output that the decoder has been created based on their background and personal idea or thought. There are three types of output that are described by Stuart Hall in this theory.

First is dominant interpretation, in this type of process the decoder agrees with the message or meaning that the encoder was made. In this type the readers do the dominant reading which means the readers most feel relatable with the point of the movie and openly accepted the interpretation of the movie. This type of reader manifest the dominant beliefs and the value in a culture or position the reader to choose that interpretation.

Second one is negotiation interpretation, in this type of process the decoder tolerates the message or meaning that the encoder was made (they're not completely agree but also not completely disagree) The last one is opposition interpretation in this type of process the decoder strongly disagree with the message or meaning that the encoder was made. The readers didn't find value which has the same alignment with their own beliefs system/their own culture. The message usually being perceived as the opposite interpretation.

1.7 Method of Research

1.7.1 Type of Research

The type of research is qualitative research. Qualitative research begins with questions. In order to inform the questions, the researcher collects data first. Qualitative methods involve collecting and analysing non-numerical data to answer research questions that are seeking to explain what, how, and why something happens (Hamilton & Finley, 2019). This method is very relevant and crucial for the reader reception research. Despite the format, data must be prepared before it can be analysed. Qualitative research aims to explain phenomena as profoundly by collecting extensive and in-depth data.

1.7.2 Data Source

The primary data source in this research is the results of interviews from the respondents. The secondary data is supported by the events in the short movie “The Disguise”.

1.7.3 Data Collection Technique

First and foremost, the researcher reads the movie. So, the Researcher can understand the movie (the secondary unit data) by identifying the theme, character and characterization, plot, important scenes, and essential dialogue. Then, the researcher uses an individual interview technique to compile (the primary unit data) about the answer of the readers based on the questions which are related with Islamophobia. The Respondents of this research has three different kinds of background, 2 persons as the representation of European and 1 person as the representation of Indonesian.

First one is a person who identify himself who was the part of majority in France and now become the minority in France. The second one is a person who lives in Germany who was the part of majority and now become minority in Germany. The third one is a person who lives in Indonesia as a part of majority who was in touched with Islam minority. The next step, the Researcher will collect the encoding part of the movie (Frame of knowledge, relation of production, technical infrastructure) which combined together and being known as discourse that contained certain kind of meaning that the producer wanted to deliver to the readers.

1.7.4 Data Analysis Technique

The researcher uses several steps to analyze the data. First, the researcher identifies the data about the movie. The second one, the Researcher categorize the data about the scene that contained islamophobia action in this movie. The next one the researcher will create question based on the important scene of the movie. The fourth one, the researcher will interview the respondents about the scenes that have been implied by some questions related to Islamophobia. Next the Researcher will collect the answers of the readers. And the last step the Researcher will analyze the data in order to find out how the readers decode the message and how the producer encode the message in this movie. Moreover, the Researcher will interpret the meaning that the readers created by their perception about this movie.

1.8 Paper Organization

The researcher divided the paper into four chapters. The first one contains the background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, the significance of the study, literature review, theoretical approach, method of research, and paper organization.

The second chapter explains about analysis of the reader's reception of the movie (encoding & decoding part). The third chapter analyses the identification of the reader's point of view about the events in *The Disguise* using a theoretical framework, and the last chapter is the conclusion.

CHAPTER IV

4.1 Conclusion

Based on the interview above, The Researchers conclude that the first respondent from France is the dominant reader because he agrees that the islamophobia portrayed in *The Disguise* is similar to what he has experienced. The first respondent fully considers that Islamophobia in France normally happened. Means there are some people like the first respondent who start to accept/get used to Islamophobia in Europe. The first respondent also highlighted his word that islamophobia isn't okay but its normal as a part of life in France as a Muslim.

The second respondent is also a dominant reader because the people around her are going through discrimination and islamophobia same as in *The Disguise*. Nevertheless, she chooses to be private about her religion to protect herself from the conflict caused by discrimination/Islamophobia as a Muslim. The fear of judgement as being a Muslim is become one of the contributions of her decision-making on having private life. Based on the interview with two European respondents. The researcher concludes that Muslims in Europe already know about the consequences that they'll face if they show people their identity. There are two options on how they handle prejudice. First, they show their identity as Muslims and accept the judgment. Or they can hide their identity as Muslim and

feel free from bias. The message in *The Disguise* clearly shows the issues of islamophobic acts or discrimination hurt the Muslims in Europe.

The third respondent from Indonesia is considered himself as an oppositional reader because he thinks what's in the movie is different than in real life based on the place he lives in/Indonesia. However, as a Muslim majority, he's not even interested in discriminating against the minority Muslim denomination. All he did just protect his principles and beliefs from the inside. Based on his explanation, the researcher concludes that islamophobia is never found in Indonesia. There is only radicalist-phobia because most Muslims in Indonesia are against the Khilafah system for the sake of *Bhineka Tunnggal Ika* or Unity in Diversity.

As the closing statements, the researchers believe that islamophobia only happened in Europe because of radicalism or a wrong representation of Muslims. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, most people have radicalist-phobia because they know its not about Islam or the Muslims. It's about misleading beliefs.

However, The researcher also believe that Islamophobia happened because of the trauma/pain that certain kind of person feel. And Islamophobia is the projection of the pain that they feel about the wrong representation of Muslim. People who's doing the action of Islamophobia doesn't really know about what's Islam is. In their prespektif when they saw Muslim they don't see the face of Islam in it. Instead they see the face of Bombers/terrorist/radicalist. The researcher believe that if we show the real face of Islam and they show courage to understand what's

Islam is while they're healing their trauma / trust issue in Muslim. The perspective will change. And Islamophobia would be minimized.

What we can do as a Muslim is, keep showing the face of the authenticity of Islam. Instead of judge them why they act that way. Weather they'll change their presepective or no, it's not our responsibility. That way, if people have curiosity because we're different than what they thought about who Muslim is. They will know that, the one who caused the pain isn't the real Muslim. But they're just some extremist who hijacked the image of Islam. As a Muslim we must treat them with compassion and love, just like how Islam told us to be. Because the real face of Islam is "PEACEFULNESS" not a domination of forceness.



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