Ileto, Reynaldo Clemeña. 2017. *Knowledge and Pacification: On the U.S. Conquest and the Writing of Philippine History.* Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press. xii, 362 pp.

Immediate reviews in the press of Ileto's book were mixed. One reviewer hailed the book as "one of the best books ever written about the Philippines" (Cruz 2017). Another cursory review highlighted one thing: how President Rodrigo Duterte inspired historian Rey Ileto to bring the book to fruition. "In fact, Ileto says this book, in the works for more than 10 years, is finally out in large part after Rodrigo Duterte brought up the Philippine-American War—even displayed pictures of American atrocities—to brush aside questions about his war on drugs" (Alcuaz 2017). For the historian Ambeth Ocampo, "a glaring omission emerges from the collection: There is no essay on how he developed from criticism, how he was actually honored by his detractors. Friendly praise is never the same or as formative as unfair criticism from an enemy" (Ocampo 2017).

These mentions in the press are quite instructive if one were to read Ileto's book. The one extolling the book's excellence easily induces skepticism. The one that mentions Ileto's affinity for Duterte alerts us to the possible controversial, if not disagreeable, politics that the author subscribes to. And that last one on how Ileto handles criticisms is an insinuation that Ileto would rather not have them, though one would hope that intramurals in the academe are more than issues of ego and turf.

The book's twelve chapters are grouped into three sections: the Filipino-American war; memory, history, and politics; and knowledge and pacification. Ileto presents how the Americans, and the Filipinos complicit in their conquest and rule, controlled the writing of the history of the Philippine-American War, even as that war of colonial conquest was still being fought over. The independent Philippine republic must be denied out of existence. The resistance forces must be denigrated as cutthroats and bandits, local despots that swindled and herded and flogged to the point of death the poor, ignorant masses into waging a losing war. The colonial rule must be rewritten as the onward march of the modernizing, civilizing, great American empire. Ileto even summoned personal details of his biography and that of his father, former defense secretary, Gen. Rafael Ileto, hoping that "[t]hrough this account of father and son," he will be able "to draw out the

interplay of personal experience and regimes of knowledge that constitutes one's belonging and response to empire" (132). His history of how these "regimes of knowledge" came to be and the consequences of these distortions, propaganda, and systematized forgetting to nationalism and nationhood is Ileto's important contribution both to Philippine history and historiography.

As much as Ileto draws our attention to the silences and deliberate misapplication (or invention as in the case of cacique democracy) of concepts in the writing of history that justifies American colonial conquest and rule, Ileto can also be queried and faulted as to what his arguments dismiss, mute, or are totally silent on. But before dealing with these more substantive issues, it is also instructive to point out some minor ones that readers may encounter (nitpicking, no doubt, this is). These are passages in the book that seem to lack clarity or uncalled for asides. Take for example these sentences:

- "Relatives, neighbors, and children visited the sick or the dead without constraints. Some came to pay their respects, to join in the feast called *katapusan*; others just wanted to see what the dying and the dead looked like—and cholera victims were a horrible sight" (121). The way the sentences are strung together lends to a reading in which katapusan is made to appear as a feast with the dead still present. This was never the case. Katapusan, in both Southern Luzon and Bicol, is the last day of the pasiyam, the novena for the dead that starts after burial.

- Of the May 21, 1967 massacre in Pasay of Lapiang Malaya members led by Valentin de los Santos, Ileto wrote: "The demonstration never had a chance of success and Ka Valentin's followers were gunned down by the hundreds" (200). Gunned down means shot at. How many died? How many were injured? In current journalistic use, almost always, gunned down is taken as being shot dead. According to contemporary news accounts, thirty-three died among the Lapiang Malaya, forty-five were injured; one policeman was hacked to death (Associated Press 1967). When he wrote about this event in the opening paragraph of his book Pasyon and Revolution, at least he managed to come up with a near-precise number: "scores

of their comrades lay dead on the street" (Ileto [1979] 1997, 1). He made no mention of the policeman's death.

- "As we can see, the Congressional Records in 1956 were fully bilingual. If a member of the Senate or House spoke in Spanish, no translation was provided, for knowledge of Spanish was assumed among the politicians. And in this particular debate over Rizal's novels, a number of the privileged speeches were totally in Spanish, and all the Senators in attendance (including the Muslim senator Domocao Alonto) were expected to follow such presentations, even though they might ask questions in English" (227). Why did Ileto have to single out Senator Alonto with the qualifier "Muslim" and write it in such a way as to give the impression that he may not be as comprehending of Spanish as his other colleagues? Senator Alonto studied law at the University of the Philippines. At that time, students in law colleges studied decisions of the Philippine Supreme Court in Spanish and English. Alonto passed the bar in 1938 (Tribune 1938). The topnotcher of that bar exam, and a classmate of Alonto and a fellow Mindanaoan, was Emmanuel Pelaez. Alonto and Pelaez were senators in the Third Congress (1954-57). Ileto made no qualification of Pelaez's proficiency in Spanish and English. Why did he have to make one for Alonto?

- Ileto confused Partha Chaterjee with Prasenjit (he also misspelled his name in his bibliography as "Pasenjit") Duara. In the bibliography, the book *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* was attributed to both. It was Chaterjee's work.

Quibbling about details and interpretation will not suffice for the two key issues in Ileto's book that invite examination. The first one is on the supposed consequence of the Japanese conquest in occasioning a break from the controlling American discourse on the history of the Philippine revolution, in particular on how it marginalized and almost erased Andres Bonifacio from history. The second one is on Ileto's contentious accounting of the supposed ahistoric and colonial logic behind caciquism, cacique democracy and bossism, and his quest for the rural ilustrados that Duterte is now supposed to personify.

On the first issue, this he wrote:

> The collaboration issue has always been a vexing one in Philippine historiography. I would argue, however, that collaboration with Japan did not mean submission to a new "Mother Japan." The Japanese occupation had a positive effect, enabling those individuals who straddled empires such as Laurel, Recto, and Filipino-American war veterans Artemio Ricarte, Emilio Aguinaldo, and Servillano Aquino to make a conceptual break with Mother America and to reconnect the Philippines of 1943 with the time of Rizal—that is, with the time of the break from Mother Spain, or the Revolution of 1896. The experience of a third Empire, Japan, enabled these leaders to resurrect the Philippines of Rizal's time as the source of inspiration for the Republic of 1943 and, hopefully, for the independent republic of 1946 onwards. (212)

Ileto speaks of a "cultural renaissance under Japan," a key element of which "was the resurrection of the Filipino-American war as a key event in the national narrative" (233). He claimed to have ". . . shown how Japan, a third though short-lived empire, functioned to enable a creative tension to be established between the two major empires that figure in the Filipino historical narrative" (241). In effect, Ileto is drawing up a debt of gratitude for the Japanese imperial army that the Filipinos must repay with due recognition.

Yet how lasting is this "creative tension," this "positive effect"? Is it of consequence? Ileto argues for the affirmative. "Historical discourse was an autonomous domain that enabled Filipinos to pursue their own agenda of nation-building within the constraints of foreign occupation. Filipino historians and writers were, in fact, encouraged by their new rulers to explore the pre-Hispanic and late 19th-century nationalist roots of their identity" (172). Were it not for the Japanese imperial army, historians and scholars would not have been goaded to research the period that led to the 1896 revolution. Were it not for the Japanese imperial army, Jose P. Laurel and Claro M. Recto would not have sharpened and refined their arguments for a history that exposes the cunning and control of America, for a history that brings Bonifacio back in and valorizes the discourse of an "unfinished revolution." A discourse that both the Philippine Left and the dictator Ferdinand Marcos latched on given its potency in mobilizing people and fostering the idea of a nation.

One can reexamine Ileto's view on three grounds. First, the world of 1896 and the revolution, of Bonifacio and the Katipunan, their

history and memory were sustained, publicly memorialized, and written about all throughout the American colonial regime. It was marginalized but not in need of resurrection as Ileto implied. Second, summoning the ghosts of 1896 was not just the preserve of the Japanese imperial army during the Second World War. The American propaganda effort did as much as it could to resurrect Bonifacio for the war effort. And lastly, scholars and studies on the supposed cultural impact of the Japanese conquest on Filipino society disagree and do not sustain Ileto's argument. Ileto made no mention of them.

Actually, Ileto (2017) seems to disagree with Ileto (1998):

> "Unfinished revolution" was not a new discourse. It had flourished in the rhetoric of the labor movement from the first decade of this century, finding its way into various peasant movements in central Luzon in the 1920s and 1930s. The idea of "unfinished revolution" carries with it an interpretation of the revolution as a mass movement initiated by Andres Bonifacio. A history that gives primacy to Bonifacio invariably includes themes that go beyond mere freedom from Spanish rule; it points to the confiscation of church lands, the punishments and even execution of errant friar curates, and it carries a critique of the ilustrado betrayal of the cause.
>
> Politicians from the beginning of this century were aware of the potency of the Bonifacio/Katipunan sign. It was something to be exploited in political rallies. However, the meanings generated by the sign had to be kept under control . . . . The colonial state's sponsorship of a Bonifacio monument, and speeches like Quezon's in 1929, should thus be seen as attempts to coopt, to control, a potentially subversive historical consciousness, one that had always been there since Bonifacio's death in 1897, but which now threatened to break its boundaries. (Ileto 1998, 182-84)

What Ileto did not pursue in his 1998 book nor in the present one, was to answer and give details of what were inside the labor movement that connected it to the peasant movements during the American colonial rule for it to have preserved and empowered the discourse on Bonifacio and the 1896 revolution. The partial, though more important answer, of course, would be the socialist and communist movements (see Guillermo 2009). At the outbreak of the Second World War, these bearers of Bonifacio's legacy, the Hukbong Bayan Laban sa Hapon (Anti-Japanese People's Army), waged an effective guerilla war.

In the chapter "The Return of Bonifacio" in the current book, Ileto left out the three decades of articulations on Bonifacio and the 1896 revolution prior to the Japanese invasion. With the contribution of the socialist and communist movements muted, he can now sell his abovementioned argument. That is why when he started discussing the volatile agrarian situation in the immediate postwar period, the journalists, unionists, intellectuals, and revolutionaries that he started citing, seem to have come out of nowhere.

This is not to deny the effort by the American colonial educational system to marginalize the narratives of the 1896 revolution, but the efforts of scholars, historians, and journalists, not to mention participants to the revolution themselves, to write about Bonifacio and his generation and the revolt that they led have been going on since the 1900s, long before they were supposedly prodded or inspired into work by the Japanese imperial army. A look at the bibliography of Agoncillo's *The Revolt of the Masses* (1996) supports this point: Manuel Sastron published *La Insurreccion en Filipinas* in 1897, Emilio Aguinaldo wrote about the revolution in 1899, Isabelo de los Reyes wrote two monographs in 1899 and 1900, Manuel Artigas y Cuerva wrote on the same topic a decade later, Artemio Ricarte in 1927, Teodoro M. Kalaw have been publishing on Bonifacio and the Katipunan since the mid-1920s, Apolinario Mabini's *La Revolucion Filipina* written prior to his death in 1903 was published in 1931 by the Bureau of Printing, the father-son tandem of Epifanio de los Santos and Jose P. Santos were also writing on the same subject in the same period until the outbreak of the war. The play *Andres Bonifacio*, a Tagalog adaptation of Clifford Odet's *Waiting for Lefty*, was staged at the Manila Grand Opera House during the Commonwealth (Agoncillo [1965] 2001, 2: 557). Bonifacio's birthday, then known to be November 29, was a legal holiday "celebrated elaborately throughout the Philippines . . . Parades were held in Manila and in the provinces. Speeches extolling Bonifacio were delivered" (United Press Despatch 1933). Still, for Ileto, Agoncillo, and by extension, *The Revolt of the Masses*, "was probably influenced by the Japanese model of (and support for, during the occupation) an autonomous history of 'Oriental' civilization" (204).

Then there were the likes of Nick Joaquin, who in his writings (both in fiction and history), was protesting "against the effects of sajonismo, the 'Anglo-Saxonization' of the Filipino, a complaint raised by other Filipino intellectuals in the early twentieth century and one that gained ground during the Japanese occupation when

'Orientalization," the return to the Filipino's 'Malayan roots,' was the cultural mantra of the occupation government. It was not, however, a return to a mythicized 'ancient heritage' that Nick [Joaquin] preached but a recovery of the Spanish past that both the Americans and the Japanese had turned into a past to be excised . . . . [Joaquin] extolled a Western colonial past that in effect debunked the orientalismo that was the official policy under the Japanese occupation" (Mojares 2017, 4-5, 7).

The works of said revolutionaries, historians, and journalists as well as the discourse sustained in the socialist and communist movements are important contexts for the second point querying Ileto's favored view. The United States itself during the war resurrected Bonifacio and enlisted his iconic, revolutionary status in a propaganda fight against the Japanese. A step that the United States and her wartime propagandists could not have undertaken if Bonifacio's memory or that of the Revolution of 1896 needed reviving and was only revived by the Japanese imperial army during the war. In the war film *Back to Bataan*, John Wayne's character was featured with a character named Andres Bonifacio Jr. played by Anthony Quinn. The film was released in May 1945 before the United States forces reconquered the Philippines.

Here's Sharon Delmendo's insightful take on the topic:

> The ideological core of the film is its manipulation of the identity axis of nationalism. The film eases anxieties over the forthcoming moment of rupture between America and the Philippines by constituting Americans as ideal Filipinos. One of the film's culminating moments comes when Andres Bonifacio, the film's Filipino nationalist symbol, tells John Wayne, that quintessential American, "you're a better Filipino than I am." The film rewrites the history of the Philippines as the history of America in the Philippines—written by Americans who are better Filipinos than the Filipinos themselves . . . . the film's manipulation of Philippine revolutionary history to reinstate American political domination on the eve of official Philippine independence demonstrates . . . that U.S. and Philippine nationalisms overtly seek to create and maintain their respective political sovereignties through a covert dependence on the other. (Delmendo 2004, 87)

And while the Americans were capitalizing on Bonifacio's appeal, what was the Japanese imperial army doing? Censoring Bonifacio.

> In order to control Filipino thought, censorship became mandatory in all forms of media: newspapers and magazines, theaters, movie houses and radio. Licenses and permits were required for any publication, which was subject to prior censorship. To check the spread of information, typewriters and mimeographing machines were required to be registered, together with samples of their type styles. Mail was opened and checked. Numerous regulations governed publication of any kind of information: bookstores had to have their stocks censored before they could reopen; schools had to have their courses and syllabi approved. In order to check unbridled nationalism (which could and did work against the Japanese), the Philippine flag (which had flown under the American flag during the Commonwealth years) was banned entirely and replaced by the Japanese flag and the Philippine national anthem was likewise prohibited (it would be replaced by the "Awit sa Paglikha ng Bagong Pilipinas" in late 1942). By order of the Hodobu even Bonifacio was excised from school texts. (Jose 1992, 13)

Ileto, in his book, deplores the "[s]tudies that are geared toward proving a theory or demonstrating some novel characteristic [sic] of a social formation tend to fish out of complex documentary collections only what is needed to make their point" (300). Is he not guilty of the same?

This fact also leads us to the third and last point contending Ileto's attempt to indebt the writing of Filipino revolutionary history and its legacy to Japanese conquest. If the Japanese conquest provided the opportunity and the inspiration for the writing of a history that broke free of the controlling American discourse, save for Agoncillo's The Revolt of the Masses, what other works of history came out of this period? Ileto discusses in his book two: Laurel's *Forces that Make a Nation Great* (1944), a compilation of newspaper articles on Filipino heroes, and a book-length poem of Philippine history, *Sa Lupa ng mga Lakan* (1948) by Ignacio Facundo. For Ileto, Laurel's work "is arguably the best statement of the ideology of the 1943 Republic" (172). Facundo's work, on the other hand, "captures a minority discourse in which the Japanese occupation period is a repetition, with variation, of previous experiences of invasion and conquest," it "highlights independence under Japanese auspices in 1943 as a landmark event in an ongoing process of national liberation" (178).

Both works are propaganda masquerading as history that today time has forgotten. But for Ileto they are important articulations of a suppressed nationalist sentiment. Who the author was is of less

importance than the treasured text. Hence, Ileto can simply hedge who Facundo was: "The author . . . has no other publication in his name that I know of." Then Ileto went on to imagine what Facundo may have been like, one of the " 'rural ilustrados,' were it not for the fact that his world is Manila and not the provinces" (178). Then Facundo would simply be a Manileño ilustrado. Though Facundo, Ileto again surmised, is not "in any account or anthology of Tagalog literature" (178). Had Ileto read Faustino Aguilar's report on the Commonwealth Literary Award for 1940, then he would have known that Facundo submitted an entry in Tagalog poetry entitled "Ang Laguna't Bulakan." He lost to Amado V. Hernandez (Quezon et al. [1940] 1973, 66-72). Facundo may have been laudatory of the independence that the Japanese promised, but as the war progressed, he remembered the world of 1896 less for its heroics and more for its brutality:

> Sa "Fuerza Santiago" piniit ng mga Hapones ang mga Pilipinos pinaghinalaan nilang mga gerilya at makagerilya, at pinahirapan hanggang ang marami ay namatay, na paris din ng ginawa ng mga kastila. (Facundo 1948, 214n1)

The impact of the Japanese occupation "in terms of cultural penetration has been found to be quite transitory . . . . The Japanese thrust to re-orient Filipino culture to its pre-Western Oriental tradition, in line with the objectives of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, did not effectively transform the identity and lifeways of the Filipinos, which at the time of Japanese conquest had already been heavily influenced by almost 450 years of intense acculturative processes under the Spanish and afterwards, American domination" (Tiongson and Roxas 1992, 5). Resil Mojares noted that "[w]riters who had begun to switch to local languages under the Japanese promptly returned to English after the war" (2017, 7; a more detailed observation is in Agoncillo [1965] 2001, 2: 593-96). Hence Ikehata Setsuho's trenchant assessment of the war years and its consequences:

> The ultimate paradox of the Japanese occupation of the Philippines is how its initial intent, real or imagined, to liberate the country from U.S. colonialism was turned completely upside down, resulting in the actual strengthening of Philippine dependency on the United States. The Filipinos' hope in, and loyalty to, the United States was heightened during the Japanese occupation. For the Filipino people, it was only the U.S. reoccupation of their country that could free them from the cruelty and indignity they were suffering under the Japanese army. . . . the historical view which claims that the occupation of Southeast Asia by Japanese

> forces during the Pacific War ultimately furthered national independence in the region is untenable in the case of the Philippines. (Setsuho 1999, 20)

Ileto's insistence that the "alternative to the official narrative of Philippine history . . . was shaped and implanted during the formative years of 1943-1948" (224) amounts, charitably, to a suspect sentimentality that hides a logic justifying violence: were it not for our experience of brutal subjugation we would not have known to learn more about our past. The corollary to this sentiment is the more cynical and insidious ethos of legitimating brutal authority provided that authority enables one to pursue greater knowledge. What is also overlooked in Ileto's argument was the actual devastation that both the Japanese and the Americans have wrought in the country that led to incalculable loss of the remnants of the world of 1896, the sources and writings of the incipient, revolutionary nation that so fascinates Ileto.

The third section of Ileto's book is an expanded (more re-arranged than expanded) version of his 2001 article in the Philippine Political Science Journal (Ileto 2001) and his response to John Sidel, after the latter wrote a reaction to his article. Carl Lande (2002) and Arnold Molina Azurin (2002) also responded to Ileto's piece. Given that sixteen years have passed since Ileto's PPSJ article and the publication of the present work, one expects that Ileto by now has engaged the comments of Lande and Azurin. He chose not to. Hence the book merely repeated the key issue in the debate that Ileto started, that is, whether the scholarly work done on the Philippines by the likes of Carl Lande, Glenn May, Norman Owen, Alfred McCoy, Benedict Anderson and John Sidel, among others, is of the same Orientalist strain as Stanley Karnow's *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines* (1989). For Ileto,

> Karnow, in effect, constructs Filipinos in terms of a variant of America's classic image of their Pacific wards. Images of the Filipino elite (oppressive caciques, bosses, patrons) and masses (blindly loyal and manipulated táo, clients of the bosses) constructed by James Le Roy, Fred Atkinson, David Barrows, and many other American writers a century or so ago reappear in modern journalistic garb. But just as these older images are complicit with the colonial project to pacify and tutor the Filipinos, Karnow's portrayal of a starkly different Filipino tradition has its political implications . . . . The American national imaginary is established and continually reinforced in writings about its cultural "others," and the

> Filipinos have occupied this position since the so-called imperial "blunder" of 1899. (270)

Two sub-issues inhere in this debate. The first one is the supposed essentializing tendency of the works of the mentioned scholars, that they have reduced Philippine culture and society into set characteristics from which the Americans can measure their progress and justify their tutelage. Totally obscuring the fact that these characteristics are in part a consequence of the colonial conquest and the neocolonial relationship that the United States fostered after the Philippines gained its independence in 1946. The second one is the issue of perspective and the kind of politics espoused by the scholars.

Some of the responses to the debate bear repeating here. Azurin charged Ileto of wielding an "Orientalism shotgun blast," arguing that "the outsider's viewpoint and efforts toward earnest scholarship are, more often than not, an addition to Filipino self-knowledge, as well as a stimulus for local scholars to compete in the challenging arena of research," that "[t]he outsider's privileged vista does not negate that of the insider's . . . Far better I think to regard these contraposing privileged vistas as a dialogue in reflexivity" (Azurin 2002, 150). Caroline Hau differs with Azurin on the ease and possibility of this dialogue:

> Ileto's salvo against "Orientalism" . . . had the salutary effect of raising the thorny but relatively unexamined issue of intellectuals—whether foreign or Filipino or Filforeign or overseas Filipino—and their relationship to each other and to the Philippines in ways that go beyond the terms by which Said originally framed his main arguments. Questions of exteriority and distance can no longer be so easily mapped onto an inside-versus-outside, metropole-versus-periphery, West-versus-the-Rest, or departure-versus-return dichotomy. (Hau 2014, 52)

In this vista opened by Hau's critique, can charges of essentializing cultures and political realities against other scholars even stick as they are always traversing localities and identities, the émigré refusing to settle and the native always deferring the act of return?

Lande countered Ileto's charge of essentializing Philippine political culture in his patron-client studies by arguing that "clientelism is a function of the economic dependency of the poor, and will become less widespread as an economy becomes more productive and the poor become less dependent on personal or governmental patrons" (Lande 2002, 124). Ileto takes exception to such developmentalist view. Hence Lande's query: "What does he think, or hope, will be the future

path for his country? To true national independence, of course! . . . . But what beyond that? Government by patriotic ilustrados? The growth of a more egalitarian liberal democracy? A Marxist transformation? Both of the latter represent development, though in quite different directions." (Lande 2002, 123). Ileto is silent in this regard, except for his search for the rural ilustrado, which for him ends with the current president, Rodrigo Duterte.

Ileto speaks of rural ilustrados as the supposed foil to the rise of the caciques in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Philippines. For example, the rural ilustrados drafted complaints against the excesses of the caciques. He documented the presence of rural ilustrados and their advocacies in his research of towns in Quezon during the revolutionary period and the Philippine-American War. The point Ileto is making is related to his critique of Anderson's cacique democracy and Sidel's bossism. That the towns, the municipios, the provinces, were not solely metastasizing locales of anti-democratic forces ruled by caudillos, "municipal elites as a whole [that] came to embody an evil called caciquism, which must be stamped out by force, education, or co-optation" (310). They could also be places where the ilustrados can assert their idea for a just society. And in an odd twist of fate, Ileto heralds the election of Duterte, "a mayor-president . . . able to lecture his audiences on the forgotten war against the United States" as proof of this (310).

Marcos had scholars and intellectuals rationalizing his brutal, kleptocratic, authoritarian rule. The murderous Duterte has rabid propagandists. The question now is whether Ileto, beyond his terse endorsement of being inspired by Duterte, will be counted with the likes of Adrian Cristobal, Onofre Corpuz, Remigio Agpalo, and others—brain trust of a dictator—or will he be lined up with Dante Ang, Martin Andanar, and Mocha Uson. One may object that this is an unfair association. Perhaps. But this very method of stringing along disparate authors and texts was what made possible Ileto's critique of the supposed patina of Orientalism that slimes studies on Philippine politics and history, mostly at the hands of American scholars. If Orientalism essentializes and disfigures the "Other," then awe of brutal and oppressive power that facilitates scholarly pursuits has the same consequence, it's violence is not just epistemic, it has real body counts.—**Joel F. Ariate Jr.**, *University Researcher, Third World Studie Center, College of Social Sciences and Philosophy, University of the Philippines Diliman.*

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