Notes

Introduction

1. See *The Gay Science* (283, 304, 340, 380), *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Prologue: 3; I: 3; II: 7; II: 12; II: 13; II: 22; III: 3; III: 12; III: 4; IV: 8) and *Beyond Good and Evil* (19, 61, 65, 117, 241).

2. Translation modified. *Selbtsaufhebung* is often translated as self-sublimation. Nietzsche also uses the term *Sublimierung*, however, (D 202, GM II: 7), and I have chosen to translate *selbtsaufhebung* as self-sublation to distinguish it from *sublimieren* and indicate the connection with *Aufhebung* and its meaning in the context of the history of German philosophy.


4. We find references in Nietzsche to Hegel himself (for example: D Preface: 3, 190, 193; GS 99, 357; BGE 204, 244, 252, 254; GM III: 7, CW 10; EH Why I write such good books: 39; KSA 11: 152, 262), to Johann Gottlieb Fichte (KSA 7: 739; KSA 11: 152, 262; KSA 12: 220; D 353; EH Why I write such good books: 39), and the Young Hegelian Ludwig Feuerbach (KSA 11: 152, 262). In addition, he dedicated an essay in the *Untimely Meditations* to a critical attack on David Strauss. Nietzsche was also acquainted with at least some of Bruno Bauer's work, as well as finding a reader in him (EH Why I write such good books: 12), and his good friend Franz Overbeck testified to Nietzsche's awareness of Max Stirner (Karl Löwith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche*, trans. David E. Green [New York: Columbia University Press, 1964], 186–87).

5. Translation modified.


29. Nietzsche’s use of the term breeding, while giving us good reason to think that the Übermensch is a future goal that must be gradually ‘bred’ or created over generations, need not be taken to imply selective sexual breeding. Nietzsche’s idea of ‘breeding’ should not be conflated with Francis Galton’s eugenic project. Galton, the founder of the British Eugenic Society, hoped to create superior human types through measures that would encourage those of good stock to propagate, and would counteract what he saw as the fecundity of the inferior working classes (Francis Galton, *Hereditary Genius, an Inquiry into its Laws and Consequences* (London: Watts, 1892); Inquiries into *Human Faculty* (London: J.M. Dent & co; New York: E.P. Dutton & co, 1908); *Natural Inheritance* (London: Macmillan, 1889); *Essays in Eugenics*. (London: The Eugenics Education Society, 1909)). Evidence that Nietzsche uses the notion of “breeding” more broadly can be found in *On the Genealogy of Morality*. When Nietzsche describes modern man as the animal that has been ‘bred’ to promise, he is referring to a process of spiritualisation and taming which, for example, cultivates memory through pain, and in no way refers to reproductive breeding. In the context of Nietzsche’s understanding of the human as made up of practices, habits, and drives, the change that can be ‘bred’ or, as Nietzsche also puts it, ‘cultivated’ in us gradually, can be seen to be physiological, not merely cultural, without the association of breeding traits through selective reproduction.
31. For instance, thinking the thought of the eternal return might be understood as practice which contributes to this transformative process, the goal of which, the Übermensch, is a being able to think the “most extreme form of nihilism” (KSA 12: 213/ WP 55), the thought that everything will return, and
yet affirm it. A reading of the eternal return as a thought contributing to the process of overcoming nihilism is very much compatible with a role of the pursuit of a new method of truth in overcoming nihilism. Indeed, both may be considered to connect through the concept of a deepening of nihilism. On the one hand, a greater understanding of nihilism being achieved through the method of truth, which I will elaborate on in this book. On the other, the most extreme expression and imagination of it achieved through the thought of the eternal return, as part of the overcoming of nihilism. This allows an agnosticism regarding the level on which the eternal return is meant as a theory. If it is meant as a claim about the way the world is, then the pursuit and incorporation of truth includes the incorporation of the knowledge that everything really does recur eternally. If it is meant to contribute to a practice of transformation, thinking this thought may contribute to this process without needing to show that everything actually recurs eternally.

32. Reginster, *The Affirmation of Life*.
38. Unlike Havas, Strong defends, as I do, the view of Nietzsche as a philosopher of transformation. Further, he recognises the role of cultural practices in effecting a gradual transformation and cultivating the Übermensch. Strong discusses the destructive function of genealogy but does not develop a complete understanding of Nietzsche’s practice truth, which, I argue, contrasts to Nietzsche’s analysis of truth as that which cannot be questioned, and which makes a positive contribution towards transformation. The possibilities of truth as a means to transformation are thus not fully explored in Strong’s book.

### 1 The Problem of Truth

1. Thomas H Brobjer chronicles Nietzsche’s positive relationship with both Kant and Schopenhauer (*Nietzsche’s Philosophical Context* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 28–40).
2. Nietzsche writes in an incomplete essay of 1868: “we are compelled to protest against the predicates Schopenhauer assigns to his will, which sound much too determinate for something ‘unthinkable as such’, and are obtained simply by opposition to the world of representation”. (“On Schopenhauer”, trans.

3. I am interested in how Kantian themes influenced the direction of Nietzsche’s thoughts on truth, and in bringing to light the shape that these thoughts began to take. I am not concerned here with whether Nietzsche correctly understood and critiqued the notion of the thing-in-itself as it appears in Kant, nor do I directly address the question of how Kantian Nietzsche’s ultimate position is. For an interesting discussion of the extent to which Nietzsche’s position bears an affinity to Kant, see Tsarina Doyle, “Nietzsche’s Appropriation of Kant”, *Nietzsche Studien* 33 (2004): 180–204. As Doyle points out, the Kantian aspects of Nietzsche’s positive position are to found elsewhere than in his explicit engagement with the concept of the thing-in-itself. I hold, however, that Nietzsche’s critique of this notion is important to how he understood the problem of truth, as a cultural, and evaluative problem. This evaluative dimension is something that I wish to highlight as central to Nietzsche’s understanding of truth and which Doyle does not discuss.


8. That is knowledge that is not contained within a concept (synthetic), as opposed to something like ‘All bachelors are unmarried’, which is analytic knowledge, and which is known apart from any experience (*a priori*) as opposed to empirical knowledge gained from experience (*a posteriori*).

9. Later Nietzsche will represent the capacity to endure doubt and be sceptical more positively, though it is a particular form of scepticism that he praises, and he remains critical of a scepticism that emerges from an inability to engage.


15. Nietzsche expresses this explicitly in *Beyond Good and Evil* 16.

17. The importance of this question is emphasised in The Nietzsche Reader, eds, Keith Ansell-Pearson and Duncan Large (Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 258.

2 **Perspectivism**

1. For a detailed discussion of the role of drives throughout Nietzsche’s thought, see Graham Parkes, Composing the Soul (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994).


5. John Richardson, Nietzsche’s System, 280.

6. John Richardson, Nietzsche’s System, 270.


12. Christoph Cox Nietzsche Naturalism and Interpretation (Berkely; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1999), 120.


14. This point is emphasised by Raymond Geuss in his discussion of Nietzsche’s genealogy (Morality, Culture and History; Essays on German Philosophy [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999], 4).

15. Raymond Geuss, Morality, Culture and History, 177.

3 **The Will to Truth**


3. Translation modified.


8. Martin Heidegger *Nietzsche*, 204.
9. Königsberg being Kant’s home, we can take Königsbergian as a clear reference to Kantian philosophy.
17. Translation modified.
18. I will argue that the genuine free spirits, as they are figured in Nietzsche’s mature works, are not only associated with truthfulness, but are those who take up a new practice of truth that allows the will to truth to overcome its association with the ascetic ideal, in Chapter 6.

4 The Practice of Truth

2. “In the early 1870s Nietzsche was deeply involved in reading Plato and preparing lectures about him and his thinking. He discussed and summarised all of the Platonic dialogues for his students and discussed Plato’s life and thinking in detail”. Thomas H. Brobjær. *Nietzsche’s Philosophical Context* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 27.
3. The association of death and knowledge in the works of Plato relates both to the unreliability and distraction of the senses in life, as referenced above, and also to the idea that the acquisition of knowledge is a process of recollection. This theory claims that the soul possessed knowledge when it was free from the body, prior to life, which is then forgotten in life. Plato argues for this in the *Phaedo* in his discussion of the immortality of the soul (Phaedo 73–77).
4. Nietzsche’s critique of Plato, is selective, and connects most with *The Republic*, in which the emotions are excluded entirely from knowledge.
5. The exact meaning of dialectic, which has a history prior to Socrates, is not transparent in Plato’s work. His notion of dialectic is not limited to the simple procedure of *elenchus*. Whether or not it remains fundamentally negative is more problematic. Hegel sees Plato as moving beyond the negative use of dialectic, which exposes supposed knowledge as false preconceptions, to a speculative dialectic that involves a recognition of a higher unity entailed in the objective contradictions of being and not-being and difference and non difference. The legitimacy of this reading of Plato is discussed by Gadamer (Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Hegel’s Dialectic*, trans. P. Christopher Smith (New
Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1976)), but its resolution is not important in relation to the discussion at hand. Nietzsche’s reaction to dialectic is to a dialectic understood as the elimination of beliefs on the basis of contradiction, and thus as essentially negative.


8. In the Phaedo, Socrates discusses the fate of those who have sinned and of those who have lived a life of holiness, and claims that “such as have purified themselves sufficiently by philosophy live thereafter altogether without bodies, and reach habitations even more beautiful” (Phaedo 114c).

9. Plato and Socrates should be recognised to be separate figures, but in their philosophy are often conflated given that our representations of Socrates’ thought are predominately those presented by Plato, and that our knowledge of Plato’s philosophy comes via this presentation. Nietzsche clearly recognises that they are separate characters, and treats both at times as distinct caricatures, suggesting in Beyond Good and Evil that Plato was corrupted by Socrates, and that his philosophy contained a “Socratism he was really too noble for” (BGE 190). Nietzsche is not, however, interested, when attacking what Platonism stands for, with the historical question of separating the two. In discussing the substance of Nietzsche’s rejection of Plato’s method of truth, as illustrated in Plato’s dialogues of Socrates, I therefore make use of material from Nietzsche’s texts that refers to both Plato and Socrates. I also speak of Plato’s opinions, although it is Socrates who voices them. While there is a distinction drawn in Nietzsche between the character of Socrates and the interpretation Plato gave him, both figures are seen to represent the establishment of the dominance of the rational dialectic method. As I am considering Nietzsche’s opposition to this method, I do not think that the differences he draws between the two figures impinge on this discussion, and I have chosen not to undertake an analysis of these differences here.


11. “whoever comes into close contact with Socrates and has any talk with him face to face, is bound to be drawn round and round by him in the course of the argument – though it may have started at first on a quite different theme – and cannot stop until he is led into giving an account of himself, of the manner in which he now spends his days, and of the kind of life he has lived hitherto; and when once he has been led into that, Socrates will never let him go until he has thoroughly and properly put all his ways to the test.” (Laches 187e) Foucault studies this passage in his fourth lecture in the seminar series ‘Discourse and Truth; the Problematisation of Parrhesia’, delivered at Berkley between October and November 1983, the transcripts of which are published as Fearless Speech (ed. Joseph Pearson, [Los Angeles: MIT Press, 2001]).


13. Jürgen Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, 299.
14. In emphasising that truth plays an ethical role for both Nietzsche and Plato, I agree with David Simpson who argues for the similarity in their concepts of truth. Simpson claims “they view the measure and value of truth and truthfulness as a matter of the contribution truthfulness and our truth judgements make to health and life” (“Truth, Truthfulness and Philosophy in Plato and Nietzsche”, *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 15(2) (2007): 340). This captures how Nietzsche views the value of truth. It does not, however, accurately capture what the measure of truth is for Nietzsche, which, as I argued in Chapter 2, remains independent of its value. Simpson’s paper draws out some important parallels between Plato and Nietzsche, but his purpose is different from mine; he aims to claim that neither thinker held to an absolutist view of truth. I do not wish to engage with this debate in relation to Plato. I am interested in how Nietzsche used Plato in an intentionally selective way to set his own practice of truth in relief, and in Platonic themes which seem to have influenced Nietzsche, in order to better understand Nietzsche’s concept of truth. Further, in doing so, I highlight the transformative potential of truth, which is a theme Simpson neglects.


16. For this reason, Foucault argues that Socrates is interested in what he terms ‘spirituality’: “I think we could call ‘spirituality’ the search, practice, and experience through which the subject carries out the necessary transformations on himself in order to have access to the truth. We will call ‘spirituality’ then the set of these researches, practices, and experiences, which may be purifications, ascetic exercises, renunciations, conversions of looking, modifications of existence, etc., which are, not for knowledge but for the subject, for the subject’s very being, the price to be paid for access to the truth.” (Michel Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject, Lectures at the Collège de France 1981–1982*, trans. by Graham Burchell, ed. by Frédéric Gros. [New York: Picador, 2005], 15)

17. The relation of the free spirits to Nietzsche’s practice of truth, and transformation, is discussed in detail in Chapter 6.


19. Socrates offering a cock to the demi-god of healing can by no means be assumed to mean that he was declaring life to be a sickness. This quote, however expresses Nietzsche’s reading of Socrates as anti-life, which Socrates’ apparent welcoming of death in the *Apology* and the *Phaedo* lends credence to in general, regardless of the intentions in his dying words.

20. This point is made by John Richardson, *Nietzsche’s System* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 257.

5 The Will to Power

1. Maudemarie Clark suggests that the claim that the whole of existence is will to power should not be taken to be intended by Nietzsche as a true claim but as an expression of his values. She claims that BGE 36 cannot be read as
Nietzsche’s argument that the world is will to power (Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990): 212–27). I argue below that BGE 36 does argue for the will to power as the best interpretation, not simply in evaluative terms but in the context of the practice of truth.


7. In so far as we understand monism to be the claim that everything in the world is of the same type, or character, as opposed to dualisms that posit that the mind and body are different in nature, Nietzsche can be described as a monist. His criticisms of monism, therefore, should be taken as a rejection of ‘ethical monism’: the belief in a unified whole.


10. The mechanism of the evolutionary process in Lamarck’s theory is the inheritance of acquired characteristics. Gradual adaptations to environmental factors are understood to cause physiological changes in organisms that are passed on to the next generation. The theory of hereditarily acquired characteristics is neither fully representative of Lamarck’s work nor original to it but has come to be referred to as Lamarckian evolution. The key distinction in Darwin’s work, though he continued to believe in the inheritance of acquired characteristics, and see it as part of the explanation of evolutionary change, is his proposal of natural selection. On this understanding, the current characteristics of species initially came about as chance variations, rather than through individual organisms striving to adapt, and persisted because they were more advantageous to survival, given the environmental conditions. Modern Darwinists came to reject the possibility of hereditary acquired characteristics and to posit natural and sexual selections as the sole mechanisms of evolutionary change.


12. Translation modified.


14. Both Christoph Cox and Sarah Kofman stress that the will to power is an interpretation. Kofman emphasises further that it is an interpretation which presents itself as such. (Christoph Cox, Nietzsche Naturalism and Interpretation (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1999) 242; Nietzsche and Metaphor, trans. Duncan Large (London: The Athlone Press, 1993) 94, 194).
15. This *command* of the conscience of method to think through the principle of the will to power works against Maudemarie Clark's reading, which suggests the hypothetical character of BGE 36 allows us to dismiss it as an argument that seeks to establish the interpretation that the world is will to power. She suggests that it is only if we accept certain premises, which Nietzsche does not accept, that we would reach this conclusion. The first premise, which she claims Nietzsche does not hold to, is that “we can rise or sink to no other ‘reality’ than the reality of our drives” but, as I argued in Chapter 2, this is exactly what perspectivism claims, that we can know the world through inhabiting various drives, and that a meaningful understanding of the world can only be from our own perspective, the “reality of our drives”. For Clark, this “seems to mean that we have knowledge of the existence and nature of our drives, but not regarding anything else” (*Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*, 213). If, however, there is nothing meaningful to contrast knowledge according to the reality of our drives to, then the fact that we know the world through the interpretative activity of our drives does not mean that we only know our drives. Rather, we know their interpretation of the world. Nietzsche clearly states in BGE 36 that such an understanding is not “a deception, an ‘appearance’, an ‘idea’”. Nietzsche is claiming, in the second premise which Clark rejects, exactly what she claims he cannot be, namely that: “because the will is the only thing we really know, we must make the experiment of explaining the rest of the world in terms of its type of causality” (*Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*, 214). Nietzsche’s criticisms of our understanding of causality are targeted against the incomplete causal explanations of mechanism, a lack of awareness that it is an understanding from the human perspective and, in GS 127, which Clark cites, instances where it involves a reduction of the will to something simple and transparent to introspection. What is required by Nietzsche is a new understanding of the causality of will as will acting on will. The passage is not an argument that proves the will to power but one which demands we take on the experiment of thinking the world as will to power, which Nietzsche believes will serve to support this interpretation.

16. Ken Gemes emphasises the significance of this opening to the genealogy. He goes as far as to suggest that “On the Genealogy of Morals is primarily aimed at gradually bringing us, his readers, to a potentially shattering realization that in a deep and fundamental sense we do not know ourselves.” Gemes argues “that Nietzsche’s initial assertion in the preface of the *Genealogy* that his aim is to expose the historical origins of our morality is intentionally misleading” (“We Remain of Necessity Strangers to Ourselves” The Key Message of Nietzsche's Genealogy”, in *Nietzsche’s On the Genealogy of Morals; Critical Essays*, ed. Christa Davis Acampora [Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2006], 191). Gemes is correct to draw attention to the importance of the theme of self-knowledge and the sense in which an engagement with Nietzsche's writing serves to expose us to ourselves. I would, however, temper Gemes claim that Nietzsche’s professed aim of exposing the origins of our values, is a “subterfuge”, though it may play this role to some extent. This exposure remains one of the aims of the work and is part of the aim of self-knowledge. Exposing the origins of our values serves self-knowledge both
because our values and our understanding of our ancestry are integral to our identity, and because in revealing the origins of our values in terms of the will to power Nietzsche establishes the interpretation of the will to power, which then challenges not only the identity of the moral man but the very notion of the subject. Further, it operates as an illustration of his method from which we can learn to practice truth in such a way that leads to self-knowledge.

17. In GS 349 and TI Expeditions of an Untimely Man: 14, when attacking the claim that life is directed towards survival Nietzsche attributes this position to Darwin. (John Richardson, *Nietzsche’s New Darwinism*, 16–20). Nietzsche seems to incorrectly read Darwin as representing the position that organisms are fundamentally motivated towards self-preservation. Darwin’s thesis is rather that the result of preservation within a given environment explains the features or behaviour of the organism.

18. As Nietzsche’s practice of truth, which employs and reinforces the principle of the will to power, is concerned with human experience and not the attempt to go beyond it, but challenges our unreflective understanding of human experience, he can be seen as a forerunner of the phenomenological tradition. For a discussion of Nietzsche’s relevance to this tradition, see Peter Poellner, “Phenomenology and Science in Nietzsche,” in *A Companion to Nietzsche*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson (Malden, Mass.; Oxford; Carlton, Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 297–313.

### 6 Becoming the Free Spirit

1. While Nietzsche indicates that only a minority have this innate strength, it remains an open empirical question whether or not this is the case. To take up his method of transformation does not imply accepting that only a few can do so.

2. Examples of the spirit of the people can be found in, but are not limited to, BGE 251, 253 and TI Maxims and Arrows: 23. One example of the spirit of music is in the complete title *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music*. The spirit of the priests is discussed in GM I: 7.

3. In this sense, its application is comparable to that of the will to power, which can be within an individual or beyond individuals, forming cultural and social practices, but which is not a supernatural force that exists without the individuals who take part in these practices.

4. Tyler T. Roberts emphasises that Nietzsche does not endorse a simple dichotomy between the religious and secular (*Contesting Spirit: Nietzsche, Affirmation, Religion* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998) 5–6). Further, we cannot take Nietzsche’s philosophy to be in straightforward opposition to Christian practice and thought. Roberts explores the affinities between Christian ascetic practices of transfiguration and Nietzsche’s understanding of philosophy as a practice “of transfiguration in which one continually refines and beautifies body and mind” (*Contesting Spirit*, 17). He does not, however, sufficiently explore the status and role of truth within this practice or see it as a process of breeding and cultivating a higher type.
5. Translation modified.
6. Nietzsche's mature concept of the free spirit shows continuities with his concerns in the earlier free spirit trilogy in so far as it offers us a figure opposed to metaphysical and religious idealism. His understanding of what is required for this, however, deepens as his own thought progresses. Hence, the declaration in 1886 that his earlier dedication of *Human, All Too Human* had been to a non-existent group. Nietzsche's mature formulation of the free spirit, therefore, gives us a more complete understanding of the practice of truth that is necessary to overcome the ascetic ideal and is my focus here.


12. There are, nonetheless, affinities in Guyau’s and Nietzsche’s accounts of morality, for instance, both attempt to account for it in terms of their conceptions of life. Keith Ansell-Pearson provides an analysis of their points of convergence and divergence (“Free Spirits and Free Thinkers: Nietzsche and Guyau on the Future of Morality,” in *Nietzsche, Nihilism and the Philosophy of the Future*, ed. Jeffrey Metzger [New York; London: Continuum, 2009]).


18. In *Human, All Too Human*, open horizons are a positive contrast to religious doctrine: “All influential books try to leave behind this kind of impression: the impression that the widest spiritual and physical horizon has here been circumscribed and that every star visible now or in the future will have to revolve around the sun that shines here.” (HH II VM,98) Later, in the fifth book of *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche picks up the earlier metaphor of open seas (GS 124) and celebrates how “we philosophers and ‘free spirits’ feel illuminated by a new dawn; our heart overflows with gratitude, amazement, forebodings, expectation – finally the horizon seems, clear again, even if not bright; finally our ships may set out again, set out to face any danger; every daring of the lover of knowledge is allowed again; the sea, our sea, lies open again” (GS 343).


20. Ken Gemes notes that Nietzsche praises Goethe’s unity and suggests that this unity involves an active engagement with the world in contrast to a passive

21. In addition to his knowledge of scripture, Nietzsche read accounts of the life of Jesus in Ernst Renan’s *Vie de Jésus*, referred to critically in AC 29, 31 and 32, and David Strauss *Leben Jesus* as early as 1865 (Thomas H. Brobjer, *Nietzsche’s Philosophical Context* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 44, 104). His discussion of Christ in *The Anti-Christ*, however, is not focused on questions of historical fact, but, as Tyler T. Roberts notes, on understanding the psychological type of Jesus (*Contesting Spirit*, 63). Significant for Nietzsche is “Not the truth about what he did, what he said, how he really died: but the question whether his type is still conceivable at all” (AC 29).


23. Tamsin Shaw claims that Nietzsche’s scepticism towards ideals or dogmas underscores a political scepticism. He cannot, then, be read as proposing any kind of political project, and certainly his concern for individuality would militate against any despotic projects (*Nietzsche’s Political Skepticism* [Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007]). This does not mean, however, that Nietzsche’s model of transformation, with its emphasis on distance from the herd, would not have political implications or confront political problems, the assessment of which lies beyond the scope of this book.

24. Ure argues that solitude is, in fact, a pre-requisite for successful friendship. The basis for a respectful relationship is to be able to process or digest one’s affects rather than force them onto others. Thus, it is by cultivating a capacity to endure solitude that one is better able to have true companionship without dependency. What Ure overlooks is that interaction itself can have a limiting effect that for Nietzsche constrains the practice of truth. (Michael Ure, *Nietzsche’s Therapy: Self-Cultivation in the Middle Works* [Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2008], 215).

7 Conclusion


On the Will In Nature: A Discussion of the Corroborations from the Empirical Sciences that the Author's Philosophy has Received Since its First Appearance. Translated by David E. Cartwright. New York; Oxford: Berg, 1992.


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