

New Proof of the Ostapenko–Tarasov Theorem*

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Abstract—We give a new proof of the Ostapenko–Tarasov unicellularity theorem for the classical Volterra integration operator on the space $C^{(n)}[0, 1]$.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Let X be a Banach space, and let $B(X)$ be the Banach algebra of bounded linear operators $A: X \rightarrow X$. A closed subspace $E \subset X$ is called an *invariant subspace* of A if $AE \subset E$, i.e., $Ax \in E$ for all $x \in E$. An operator $A \in B(X)$ is said to be *unicellular* if its lattice $\text{Lat}(A)$ of invariant subspaces is linearly ordered, i.e., for any two A -invariant subspaces E and M one has either $E \subset M$ or $M \subset E$. A subspace $E \subset X$ is called a *hyperinvariant* subspace of A if $BE \subset E$ for each operator B such that $BA = AB$. The lattice of hyperinvariant subspaces of A is denoted by $\text{Hyplat}(A)$.

It is well known [1], [2] that the classical indefinite integration operator V defined on the Lebesgue space $L^p[0, 1]$ by

$$Vf(x) = \int_0^x f(t) dt$$

is unicellular for $p \in [1, \infty)$ and the lattice of invariant subspaces of V is anti-isomorphic to the interval $[0, 1]$. The same is true (see [1], [3]) for the Riemann and Liouville fractional integration operators

$$J^\alpha f(x) = \frac{1}{\Gamma(\alpha)} \int_0^x (x-t)^{\alpha-1} f(t) dt, \quad \text{Re } \alpha > 0,$$

which are complex powers of J . Namely,

$$\text{Lat}(J^\alpha) = \text{Hyplat}(J^\alpha) = \{E_a = \mathfrak{r}_{[0,a]}L^p[0, 1] : 0 \leq a \leq 1\}$$

(see [1], [4]). The results about the unicellularity of the operator V on $L^p[0, 1]$ (see Donoghue [5]) was extended to the Sobolev spaces $W_2^{(k)}[0, 1]$ (see Tsekanovskii [6]), $W_p^{(k)}[0, 1]$ and $C^{(n)}[0, 1]$ (see Ostapenko–Tarasov [7] and also [3], [8]). For the results on some double integration operators

$$Wf(x, y) = \int_0^x \int_0^y f(t, \tau) d\tau dt,$$

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we refer the reader to [9]. The Volterra integral operator

$$Vf(x) = \int_0^x f(t) dt \tag{1.1}$$

is well defined for functions f in the space $C^{(n)}[0, 1]$ of n times continuously differentiable functions on the unit interval $[0, 1]$ of the real axis $\mathbb{R} = (-\infty, \infty)$. A closed subspace $E \subset C^{(n)}[0, 1]$ is said to be V -invariant if $VE \subset E$, i.e., $Vf \in E$ for every $f \in E$. The present paper is motivated by the papers of Ostapenko–Tarasov [7] and Tapdigoglu [8], where the unicellularity of the integration operator V on the space $C^{(n)}[0, 1]$ is proved. Here we propose a new proof of the Ostapenko–Tarasov theorem by using some of the ideas in the papers [8], [10], and [11]. Namely, we prove that

$$\text{Lat}(V) = \{E_\lambda, E^{(k)} : 0 < \lambda < 1, \quad k = 1, \dots, n + 1\},$$

where

$$E_\lambda = \{f \in C^{(n)}[0, 1] : f(x) \equiv 0 \text{ on } [0, \lambda]\} \tag{1.2}$$

and

$$E^{(k)} = \{f \in C^{(n)}[0, 1] : f(0) = f'(0) = \dots = f^{(k-1)}(0) = 0\}. \tag{1.3}$$

Clearly,

$$\{0\} \subset E_\lambda \subset E_\mu \subset E^{(n+1)} \subset E^{(n)} \subset \dots \subset E^{(1)} \subset C^{(n)}[0, 1] \quad (\lambda > \mu), \tag{1.4}$$

and hence V is a unicellular operator on $C^{(n)}[0, 1]$.

2. LATTICE OF V -INVARIANT SUBSPACES

In this section, we describe the lattice of invariant subspaces of the operator V on the space $C^{(n)}[0, 1]$ and prove its unicellularity. Our discussion is based on the Duhamel product of functions defined by

$$(f \otimes g)(x) := \frac{d}{dx} \int_0^x f(x-t)g(t) dt = \int_0^x f'(x-t)g(t) dt + f(0)g(x) \tag{2.1}$$

(see Wigley [12]).

Recall that the norm on $C^{(n)}[0, 1]$ is defined by

$$\|f\|_n = \max_{0 \leq i \leq n} \|f^{(i)}\|_\infty, \tag{2.2}$$

where

$$\|f^{(i)}\|_\infty := \|f^{(i)}\|_{C^{(n)}[0,1]} = \max_{0 \leq x \leq 1} |f^{(i)}(x)|.$$

Theorem 1. *Let V be the Volterra integration operator defined by (1.1) on the space $C^{(n)}[0, 1]$. Then*

$$\text{Lat}(V) = \{E_\lambda, E^{(k)} : \alpha < \lambda < 1, \quad k = 1, \dots, n + 1\},$$

where E_λ and $E^{(k)}$ are the nontrivial V -invariant subspaces defined by formulas (1.2) and (1.3), and V is unicellular in $C^{(n)}[0, 1]$.

Proof. The proof is based on some of the arguments in the papers [3], [10], and [11]. Using (2.1), one can readily see that

$$(f \otimes g)^{(k)}(x) = \int_0^x f^{(k)}(x-t)g'(t) dt + \sum_{m=0}^{k-1} f^{(m)}(0)g^{(k-m)}(x) + g(0)f^{(k)}(x) \tag{2.3}$$

for all $f, g \in C^{(n)}[0, 1]$ and $1 \leq k \leq n$. Thus, it is an easy consequence of (2.3) that $f \otimes g$ belongs to $C^{(n)}[0, 1]$ as well, and $(C^{(n)}[0, 1], \otimes)$ becomes an algebra. One can use the results of operational

calculus to show that $(C^n[0, 1], \otimes)$ is a commutative and associative algebra with unit element $f(z) = \mathbf{1}$. Moreover, one can readily prove that $(C^{(n)}[0, 1], \otimes)$ is a Banach algebra. Indeed, for all $f, g \in C^{(n)}[0, 1]$, from (2.1)–(2.3) we have

$$|(f \otimes g)(x)| \leq \max |f'| \max |g| + \max |f| \max |g|$$

and

$$\begin{aligned} |(f \otimes g)^{(k)}(x)| &\leq \max |f^{(k)}| \max |g'| + \sum_{m=0}^{k-1} \max |f^{(m)}| \max |g^{(k-m)}| + \max |f^{(k)}| \max |g| \\ &\leq \|f\|_n \|g\|_n + k \|f\|_n \|g\|_n + \|f\|_n \|g\|_n \\ &= (k+2) \|f\|_n \|g\|_n \leq (n+2) \|f\|_n \|g\|_n \end{aligned}$$

for each $k \in \{1, 2, \dots, n\}$. Thus,

$$\|f \otimes g\|_n \leq (n+2) \|f\|_n \|g\|_n, \quad (2.4)$$

and by setting $M = n+2$ in (2.4), we obtain

$$\|f \otimes g\|_n \leq M \|f\|_n \|g\|_n. \quad (2.5)$$

By passing to an equivalent norm on $C^{(n)}[0, 1]$, from (2.5) we obtain the desired multiplicative inequality

$$\|f \otimes g\|_n \leq \|f\|_n \|g\|_n,$$

which shows that $(C^{(n)}[0, 1], \otimes)$ is a Banach algebra.

The set of V -cyclic vectors is denoted by $\text{Cyc}(V)$; in other words,

$$\text{Cyc}(V) = \{f \in C^{(n)}[0, 1] : \text{span}\{V^m f : m = 0, 1, \dots\} = C^{(n)}[0, 1]\}.$$

Lemma 1. *One has $f \in \text{Cyc}(V)$ if and only if $f(0) \neq 0$.*

Proof. Indeed, it follows from (2.1) that $x \otimes f(x) = Vf(x)$ for all $f \in C^{(n)}[0, 1]$. More generally,

$$V^m f(x) = \frac{x^m}{m!} \otimes f, \quad m \geq 0. \quad (2.6)$$

Then we have

$$\begin{aligned} \text{span}\{V^m f : m \geq 0\} &= \text{span}\left\{f \otimes \frac{x^m}{m!} : m \geq 0\right\} \\ &= \text{span}\left\{D_f\left(\frac{x^m}{m!}\right) : m \geq 0\right\} \\ &= \text{clos } D_f \text{span}\{x^m : m \geq 0\} \\ &= \text{clos } D_f [\text{span}\{z\mathbf{1} : z \in \mathbb{C}\} \oplus \text{span}\{x^m : m \geq 1\}] \\ &= \text{clos } D_f C^{(n)}[0, 1], \end{aligned}$$

where D_f and \oplus stand for the Duhamel operator and the direct sum of subspaces, respectively. Thus,

$$\text{span}\{V^m f : m \geq 0\} = \overline{D_f C^{(n)}[0, 1]}, \quad (2.7)$$

which implies that $f \in \text{Cyc}(V)$ if and only if the range of the Duhamel operator D_f is dense, i.e.,

$$\overline{D_f C^{(n)}[0, 1]} = C^{(n)}[0, 1]. \quad (2.8)$$

Now if $f \in \text{Cyc}(V)$, then it follows from (2.8) that there exists a sequence

$$\{g_m\}_{m \geq 1} \subset C^{(n)}[0, 1]$$

such that

$$\lim_{m \rightarrow \infty} f \otimes g_m = \mathbf{1} \quad \text{in } C^{(n)}[0, 1].$$

Therefore, $(f \circledast g_m)(0) \rightarrow 1$ as $m \rightarrow \infty$, or, equivalently, $f(0)g_m(0) \rightarrow 1$ as $m \rightarrow \infty$, which shows that $f(0) \neq 0$. Now it remains to prove that if $f \in C^{(n)}[0, 1]$ and $f(0) \neq 0$, then $f \in \text{Cyc}(V)$. To this end, in view of (2.8), we must show that the range of the operator D_f is dense under the condition $f(0) \neq 0$. However, in the following Statement we prove even more than we actually need.

Statement. *If $f(0) \neq 0$, then D_f is invertible on $C^{(n)}[0, 1]$.*

Indeed, for $F = f - f(0)$ we have $D_f = f(0)I_n + D_F$, where I_n is the identity operator on $C^{(n)}[0, 1]$. To prove that D_f is invertible, it suffices to show that D_F is a quasinilpotent operator on $C^{(n)}[0, 1]$, i.e., $\sigma(D_F) = \{0\}$, or, equivalently, the spectral radius $r(D_F)$ of the operator D_F is zero. In fact, by the well-known Gelfand formula (e.g., see Dunford–Schwartz [13]),

$$r(D_F) = \lim_{m \rightarrow \infty} \|D_F^m\|^{\frac{1}{m}},$$

and so we will estimate $\|D_F^m\|$. For every $g \in C^{(n)}[0, 1]$, we have

$$\begin{aligned} D_F g(x) &= \frac{d}{dx} \int_0^x F(x-t)g(t) dt = \int_0^x F'(x-t)g(t) dt \\ &\stackrel{\text{def}}{=} (F' * g)(x) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} (K_{F'}g)(x). \end{aligned}$$

Hence we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} |(K_{F'}g)(x)| &= \left| \int_0^x F'(x-t)g(t) dt \right| \leq \int_0^x |F'(x-t)||g(t)| dt \leq \int_0^x \|F'\|_\infty \|g\|_\infty dt \\ &\leq \|F\|_n \|g\|_n(x), \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} |(K_{F'}^2g)(x)| &= \left(\int_0^x F'(x-t)(K_g)(t) dt \right) = \left| \int_0^x F'(x-t) \left(\int_0^t F'(t-\tau)g(\tau) d\tau \right) dt \right| \\ &\leq \int_0^x |F'(x-t)| \left(\left| \int_0^t F'(t-\tau)g(\tau) d\tau \right| \right) dt \\ &\leq \|F\|_n^2 \|g\|_n \frac{x^2}{2!}. \end{aligned}$$

Thus, by induction,

$$|(K_{F'}^m g)(x)| \leq \|F\|_n^m \|g\|_n \frac{x^m}{m!}$$

for each integer $m \geq 0$. Further, we can prove that

$$|(K_{F'}^m g)'(x)| \leq \|F\|_n^m \|g\|_n \frac{(x+1)^m}{m!}$$

for all $x \in [0, 1]$ and $m \geq 0$. The proof is similar to that in the paper [11] and hence is omitted. In a similar way, one can also prove by induction (we omit the proof) that

$$|(K_{F'}^m g)^{(j)}(x)| \leq \|F\|_n^m \|g\|_n \frac{(x+j)^m}{m!}, \quad j = 0, 1, \dots, n. \tag{2.9}$$

It follows from (2.9) that

$$\|K_{F'}^m g\|_n \leq \|F\|_n^m \|g\|_n \frac{(n+1)^m}{m!},$$

and hence

$$\|K_{F'}^m\|^{\frac{1}{m}} \leq \|F\|_n \frac{n+1}{(m!)^{\frac{1}{m}}} \rightarrow 0 \quad \text{as } m \rightarrow \infty.$$

Consequently, $r(K_{\alpha, F'}) = 0$, i.e., $K_{\alpha, F'}$ is quasinilpotent, and hence $D_{\alpha, f}$ is an invertible operator on $C^{(n)}[0, 1]$, which proves the Statement. The proof of the lemma is complete. \square

Lemma 2. Let $f \in C^{(n)}[0, 1]$.

(i) If $f \in E^{(k)}$, $1 \leq k \leq n$, then $f \in \text{Cyc}(V | E^{(k)})$ if and only if $f \in E^k \setminus E^{k+1}$, i.e., if

$$f(0) = f'(0) = \dots = f^{k-1}(0) = 0, \quad f^{(k)}(0) \neq 0.$$

(ii) If $f \in E^{(n+1)}$, then $f \in \text{Cyc}(V | E^{(n+1)})$ if only if $f \in E^{(n+1)} \setminus E_\lambda$ for every $\lambda \in (0, 1)$.

(iii) If $f \in E_\lambda$, then $f \in \text{Cyc}(V | E_\lambda)$ if and only if $f \in X_\lambda \setminus X_\mu$ for all $\mu > \lambda$.

Proof. Let us define the following convolution products on the subspaces $E^{(k)}$, $1 \leq k \leq n+1$:

$$(f \overset{k}{\circledast} g)(x) = \frac{d}{dx} \int_0^x \frac{f(x-t)}{(x-t)^k} g(t) dt, \quad f, g \in E^{(k)}. \quad (2.10)$$

(i) Let $f \in E^{(k)}$ and $f \notin E^{(k+1)}$, where $1 \leq k \leq n$. It is easily seen from (2.10) that

$$\frac{x^{k+m}}{m!} \overset{k}{\circledast} g = V^m g, \quad g \in E^{(k)}, \quad (2.11)$$

for all $m \geq 0$. The Maclaurin series expansion of f gives

$$f(x) = \frac{f^{(k)}(0)}{k!} x^k + \frac{f^{(k+1)}(0)}{(k+1)!} x^{k+1} + \dots + \frac{f^{(n)}(0)}{n!} x^n + q(x),$$

whence it follows that

$$f(x) = \frac{f^{(k)}(0)}{k!} x^k + \tilde{q}(x), \quad (2.12)$$

where $f^{(k)}(0) \neq 0$ and

$$\tilde{q}(x) = \frac{f^{(k+1)}(0)}{(k+1)!} x^{k+1} + \dots + \frac{f^{(n)}(0)}{n!} x^n + q(x) \in E^{(k)}.$$

We define the k -Duhamel operator $D_{k,f}$ on the subspace $E^{(k)}$ by the formula

$$D_{k,f} g = f \overset{k}{\circledast} g, \quad g \in E^{(k)}.$$

It is obvious from (2.11) and (2.12) that

$$D_{k,f} = f^{(k)}(0) I_{E^{(k)}} + D_{k,\tilde{q}}.$$

Since $f^{(k)}(0) \neq 0$, it can be proved by the same argument as in the papers [3, Lemma 2] and [10, Lemma 1] that $D_{k,f}$ is invertible on $E^{(k)}$ (we omit the proof). On the other hand,

$$\text{span}\{x^{k+m} : m \geq 0\} = E^{(k)}.$$

In view of the representation (2.11), we have

$$\begin{aligned} E_f(V | E_n^{(k)}) &:= \text{span}\{V^m f : m \geq 0\} = \text{span}\left\{\frac{x^{k+m}}{m!} \overset{k}{\circledast} f : m \geq 0\right\} \\ &= \text{span}\left\{D_{k,f} \frac{x^{k+m}}{m!} : m \geq 0\right\} \\ &= \text{clos } D_{k,f} \text{span}\{x^{k+m} : m \geq 0\} \\ &= \text{clos } D_{k,f} E^{(k)} = E^{(k)}; \end{aligned}$$

i.e., if $f \in E^{(k)} \setminus E^{(k+1)}$, then $f \in \text{Cyc}(V | E^{(k)})$.

Conversely, the equality $E_f(V) = E^{(k)}$ readily implies that $f^{(k)}(0) \neq 0$, whence $f \notin E^{(k+1)}$. Thus, if $f \in E^{(k)}$ and $f \in \text{Cyc}(V | E^{(k)})$, then $f^{(k)}(0) \neq 0$, which proves (i).

The proof of (ii) is very similar to that of (i).

Indeed, the Maclaurin formula for the function $f \in E^{(n+1)}$ has the integral representation

$$\begin{aligned} f(x) &= \frac{1}{(n-1)!} \int_0^x f^{(n)}(t)(x-t)^{n-1} dt \\ &= \frac{x^n}{n!} + \left(\frac{1}{(n-1)!} \int_0^x f^{(n)}(t)(x-t)^{n-1} dt - \frac{x^n}{n!} \right) \\ &= \frac{x^n}{n!} + q_1(x). \end{aligned}$$

Clearly, $q_1 \in E^{(n)}$ and $f \overset{n}{\otimes} g \in E^{(n+1)}$ for every $g \in E^{(n)}$. Since $f \notin E_\lambda$ for all $0 < \lambda < 1$, we have $\ker(D_{n,f}) = \{0\}$ by the Titchmarsh convolution theorem. Further, the condition $q_1 \in E^{(n)}$ implies that D_{n,q_1} is a compact operator on the space $E^{(n+1)}$ (see [3, Lemma 2]). Since

$$D_{n,f} = D_{n, \frac{x^n}{n!} + q_1(x)} = D_{n, \frac{x^n}{n!}} + D_{n,q_1(x)} = \frac{1}{n!} I_{E^{(n+1)}} + D_{n,q_1(x)}$$

and $D_{n,f}$ is invertible on $E^{(n+1)}$, we have

$$D_{n,f} E^{(n+1)} = E^{(n+1)}.$$

Now

$$\begin{aligned} E_f(V | E^{(n)}) &= \text{span}\{V^m f : m \geq 0\} = \text{span}\left\{ \frac{x^{n+m}}{m!} \overset{n}{\otimes} f : m \geq 0 \right\} \\ &= \text{span}\left\{ D_{n,f} \frac{x^{n+m}}{m!} : m \geq 0 \right\} \supset \text{span}\left\{ D_{n,f} \frac{x^{n+1+m}}{(m+1)!} : m \geq 0 \right\} \\ &= \text{clos } D_{n,f} \text{span}\left\{ \frac{x^{n+1+m}}{(m+1)!} : m \geq 0 \right\} = \text{clos } D_{n,f} E^{(n+1)} = E^{(n+1)}. \end{aligned}$$

Hence $E_f(V | E^{(n)}) \supset E^{(n+1)}$. On the other hand, $VE^{(n+1)} \subset E^{(n+1)}$, and so $E_f(V | E^{(n)}) \subset E^{(n+1)}$. Thus, $E_f(V | E^{(n)}) = E^{(n+1)}$, whence $f \in \text{Cyc}(V | E^{(n+1)})$. Conversely, if $f \in \text{Cyc}(V | E^{(n+1)})$, then $f \in E^{(n+1)} \setminus E_\lambda$ for all $\lambda \in (0, 1)$, which proves (ii).

The proof of (iii) can be obtained from Lemma 1 by a standard argument based on a simple change of variables (e.g., see Ostapenko–Tarasov [7], Kalisch [14], and Gohberg–Krein [1]) and hence it is omitted. The proof of Lemma 2 is complete. □

Now let us return to the proof of Theorem 1. We will show that there exist no V -invariant subspaces other than those in the chain (1.4) and hence

$$\text{Lat}(V) = \{E_\lambda, E^{(k)} : 0 < \lambda < 1; \quad k = 1, 2, \dots, n + 1\}.$$

Indeed, assume the contrary: there exists a nontrivial V -invariant subspace $E \subset C^{(n)}[0, 1]$ different from the invariant subspaces in (1.4). It is clear that

$$E = \bigcup_{g \in E} E_g(V | E),$$

where, as before,

$$E_g(V | E) = \text{span}\{V^m g : m = 0, 1, \dots\}.$$

Then it is clear by Lemma 1 that there exists a function $f \in E$ such that $f(0) \neq 0$. Consequently, by Lemma 1, we conclude that $E = C^{(n)}[0, 1]$, which contradicts our assumption that E is a nontrivial subspace. Since the set of subspaces in (1.4) is linearly ordered, it follows that the operator V is unicellular. The proof of the theorem is complete. □

Recall that the commutant of an operator A on a Banach space X is the set

$$\{A\}' = \{B \in B(X) : BA = AB\},$$

where $B(X)$ is the Banach algebra of all bounded linear operators on X . Set

$$\text{Hyplat}(B) := \{E \subset X : AE \subset E \text{ for each } A \in \{B\}'\}.$$

Corollary 1. $\text{Hyplat}(V) = \{E_\lambda, E^{(k)} : 0 < \lambda < 1; \quad k = 1, \dots, n + 1\}$.

The proof is immediate by the well-known general theorem stating that the lattice of hyperinvariant subspaces of any unicellular operator A coincides with the lattice of nontrivial A -invariant subspaces (e.g., see Radjavi–Rosenthal [2]).

The following corollary describes the commutant of the operator V .

Corollary 2. $\{V\}' = \{D_f : f \in C^{(n)}[0, 1]\}$.

Proof. Indeed, it is clear from the formula

$$Vf(x) = x \otimes f \quad \forall f \in C^{(n)}[0, 1]$$

that $D_f V = V D_f$ for all $f \in C^{(n)}[0, 1]$ and hence

$$\{D_f : f \in C^{(n)}[0, 1]\} \subset \{V\}'. \quad (2.13)$$

Let $T \in \{V\}'$. Then $TV = VT$, and hence $TV^m = V^m T$ for all $m \geq 0$. Applying formula (2.6) to the identity function $f = \mathbf{1}$, we obtain

$$TV^m \mathbf{1} = \frac{x^m}{m!} \otimes T \mathbf{1}, \quad m \geq 0,$$

i.e.,

$$T\left(\frac{x}{m!} \otimes \mathbf{1}\right) = D_{T \mathbf{1}}\left(\frac{x^m}{m!}\right), \quad m \geq 0.$$

Since

$$\frac{x^m}{m!} \otimes \mathbf{1} = \frac{x^m}{m!}, \quad m \geq 0,$$

we have

$$T\left(\frac{x^m}{m!}\right) = D_{T \mathbf{1}}\left(\frac{x^m}{m!}\right),$$

or, equivalently,

$$T(x^m) = D_{T \mathbf{1}}(x^m), \quad m \geq 0.$$

Since

$$\text{span}\{x^m : m \geq 0\} = \text{span}\{z \mathbf{1} : z \in \mathbb{C}\} \oplus \text{span}\{x^m : m \geq 1\} = C^{(n)}[0, 1],$$

it follows from the last equalities that $Tf(x) = D_{T \mathbf{1}}f(x)$ for all $f \in C^{(n)}[0, 1]$ and hence $T = D_{T \mathbf{1}}$. Thus, $\{V\}' \subset \{D_f : f \in C^{(n)}[0, 1]\}$, which, together with (2.13), proves the corollary. \square

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors of this work declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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