A Case for the Bijection of the Trinity and the Tri-Omni

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Abstract

The topic of the Christian Trinity and its correlation with the omni-qualities of God has been explored by numerous theologians throughout history. Advocates of the Trinity commence with the claim that each member of the Trinity is entirely divine, thereby possessing all attributes of God. The anti-trinitarians, on the other hand, point to biblical evidence that implies the members of the Trinity lack certain omni-qualities and subsequently conclude that the Trinity is not divine. To do so, we shall use both a deductive approach and the evidence from the scripture. The truth of the assertion that only the Father is omniscient and only the Holy Spirit is omnipresent is presented using specific Bible verses that point to the exclusivity of the quality in the respective members. The truth of the assertion that only the Son is omnipotent is obtained by a deductive approach.

Keywords: Trinitarianism, Omni-qualities, God of Classical theism, Biblical interpretation

1. Introduction

To begin with, we shall delve into the theological concept of the Christian Trinity and its tripartite nature. Furthermore, we will explicate the presuppositions underlying the contention that the Christian Trinity bears one-to-one correspondence with the three omni-qualities of the God of classical theism.

1.1. Aim

Aim: To explore the possibility that there exists a bijective relation between the Trinity and the three omni-qualities of God.

In this paper, I shall argue that when the three omni-qualities of the God of classical theism are considered, they bear a one-to-one correspondence with the members of the Trinity.

1.1.1. Doctrine of the Trinity

One of the foundations of the Christian faith is the doctrine of the Trinity. The doctrine states that God exists eternally in one essence but three distinct persons, i.e. the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. [8] The three central ideas can be stated as:

1. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are distinct persons.
2. Each person of God is equally and fully God.
3. There is only one God in essence.

1.1.2. Tri-omni

In this paper, we will consider the three major omni-qualities of the God of classical theism, but the arguments can be extrapolated and imposed onto other qualities as well.

The god of classical theism or the Christian God of scripture is described as an omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent being. Omni, as a prefix, means all universality; as such, God is said to be all-powerful, all-knowing, and present everywhere. [3]

1.1.3. Bijective relation

It is the mathematical concept that describes a one-to-one corresponding function be- tween two sets of phenomena. Simply put, each element of the domain has a distinct element in the co-domain, and each element of the co-domain corresponds to a distinct element of the domain. [4]

In this context, a bijective relation between the Trinity and the omni qualities would mean that each member of the Trinity corresponds to a distinct omni-quality such that the other members of the Trinity do not possess that distinct quality.

1.2. Assumptions

Before we proceed with the arguments, we must state the necessary assumptions.

1. Abrahamic God or the God of classical theism exists.
2. Existence and divinity of the Trinity, i.e., the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. The Bible is a reliable source of knowledge.

Within the context of Christian theology, the aforementioned first and third assertions are considered to be indisputable. This is due to the fact that the veracity of Christian theology is predicated upon the existence of either the Abrahamic God or the classical theistic God. Furthermore, it is essential to acknowledge the third assertion to ensure that Christian theology adheres to some epistemological standard. [5]

The second assertion can be and is contended within the Christian faith. Seeing that we are assuming the truth of this assertion, arguments for its validity do not need to be presented, but I shall do so in brief.

The Bible describes the Father as God (Philippians 1:2), Jesus as God (Titus 2:13), and the Holy Spirit as God (Acts 5:3-4). Additionally, we can say that these are not mere descriptions of God in three ways but God in three persons. This is because the Father sent the Son into the world (John 3:16), and thus they cannot be the same person. The Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit into the world (John 14:26, Acts 2:33); as such, they must be distinct as well.

2. Background

In this section, we will discuss the manifestation of the omni qualities within the context of the Abrahamic God and the scriptural context of the Trinity.

2.1. God and the Omni-qualities

As discussed earlier, we shall consider the three omni-qualities of omnipotence, omni- science, and omnipresence.

1. God is omnipotent

Omnipotent means to be all-powerful. God is described as almighty (Gen 17:1, Rev 19:6). The fact that God has all power can be inferred from many passages. "Nothing is too hard for the lord," for instance, can be read throughout the scriptures (Jeremiah 32:17, Genesis 18:14, Jeremiah 32:27).

2. God is omniscient

Omniscient means to be all-knowing. We know God knows everything (1 John 3:20). God knows everything that has happened and will happen (Isaiah 46:9-10). He knows our thoughts, our hearts, and our speech before it is spoken (Psalm 139:1-4).

3. God is omnipresent

Omnipresent means to be present everywhere. God is described in ubiquity (Psalm 139:7-9): "Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea".

The first two assertions should not see much objection. Abrahamic God, or better yet, the God of classical theism, is proposed to be, at the very least, all-powerful and all-knowing. The final assertion may be deemed contentious. It is true that God is not physically or tangibly present in every location, yet his essence permeates every spatial dimension and temporal moment. The difference in interpretations of omnipresence can be drawn between the potentiality of ubiquitous presence and its actualization. Meaning that God has the ability to be present anywhere and either chooses to be omnipresent or chooses not to be omnipresent. The implication to consider is that, while not physically present, God has the ability to reveal himself in any given place or moment. [2]

For the purposes of this discourse, we can proceed with the conclusion that God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent.

2.2. Trinity and the Omni-qualities

The main point of contention in this discourse is that although God possesses the three omni-qualities, members of the Trinity do not. To prove the truth of this contention, we shall look at Biblical evidence.

Proponents of the belief that the Trinity fully embodies the characteristics of God often commit a definitive error in the form of hasty generalization. They frequently employ verses that showcase a divine power of a member of the Trinity to infer that the member possesses all-encompassing power. However, this inference is flawed. All-encompassing power can only be substantiated by either explicitly stating so or, better yet, by disproving its complementary proposition. For example, if one could demonstrate that Jesus is capable of any act, then it logically follows that Jesus is omnipotent. Nevertheless, simply asserting that Jesus can perform a divine act, such as judging souls, does not prove Jesus's omnipotence. When confronted with two contradictory pieces of evidence, such that one suggests that the Son is incapable of something and the other implies that the Son can do all things, the former should be preferred.

One may deduce that a member of the Trinity lacks an omni-quality if they do not exhibit a comparable ability to that of God or any other member of the Trinity. To illustrate, if one could establish that solely Jesus possesses a particular capability, it would suggest that neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit possesses said capacity, thereby signifying their non- omnipotence. Utilizing this logical approach, we shall substantiate that the members of the Trinity do not possess the omni-qualities to an equivalent degree as that of God.

2.2.1. Trinity and Omniscience

As discussed earlier, I shall make the case here that some members of the Trinity do not possess omniscience.

The biblical evidence that we must consider is the knowledge of the final day. "But of that day, no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (Matthew 24:36).

The statement articulated by Jesus himself elucidates with lucidity that the Son does not possess the same level of knowledge as the Father. Ergo, the Son cannot be characterized as omniscient. Moreover, the inclusion of the phrase "no one knows" enables us to derive the inference that the Holy Spirit does not know of the final day and hence cannot be considered omniscient.

In considering the Christological claim that Jesus is both divine and human, one can find an opposition to this claim. It can be argued that the human part of Jesus does not have the knowledge of the final day, but the divine part does. However, this argument has a flaw. It is important to note that the evidence in question mentions 'the Son' and not 'Jesus of Nazareth' or some other nominative referring to 'Jesus: the man'. Meaning it is not intended to refer to the human part of Jesus but rather his entire essence, which also includes the divinity.

Another opposition to this idea can be found elsewhere in the scripture, for instance, "Lord, you know all things; You know that I love you" (John 21:17b). The observation that the Son knows all things is explicitly made here. Nevertheless, in accordance with our previous discussion, when confronted with conflicting evidence, we must give precedence to that which points out the lack of capacity. Additionally, the narrators of the statements are Jesus and Peter, respectively. The admission of Jesus's non-omniscience by Jesus himself should be held to be more significant than Peter's words. Also, the subject matter under scrutiny pertains to the Son's comprehension of divine metaphysical verities. Indeed, knowledge concerning the final day carries more weight than the level of knowledge that pertains to Peter's affection for Jesus.

As for the Holy Spirit and omniscience, proponents will likely cite: "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you." (John 14:26). The central concept posits that the Holy Spirit can serve as a means of recollection for all that Jesus has spoken. Nevertheless, the inference that this necessarily denotes the Holy Spirit's omniscience is unsound. As previously expounded, a mere display of a divine trait does not provide adequate grounds to infer that the individual under consideration possesses complete universality in that trait.

Thus, we conclude that only the Father is omniscient.

2.2.2. Trinity and omnipresence

The concept of omnipresence is subject to divergent interpretations, which can be categorized into two main approaches. The crux of the matter lies in determining whether omnipresence denotes the state of being present in all places and at all times or possessing the potential to be present anywhere. In my view, the former interpretation is more accurate, akin to the understanding that omniscience implies possessing knowledge of all things as opposed to merely having the ability to acquire such knowledge. [6]

With the aforementioned consideration, comprehending the rationale as to why the Father or the Son cannot be omnipresent does not pose a formidable challenge. This is due to the fact that both the Father and Son have been allocated a spatial location. To illustrate, the Father is situated on the celestial throne, whereas the Son materializes himself on Earth as Jesus.

The proponents of the contrary proposition will have to defend a lot of absurd conclusions that come with their position. For instance, the overlapping of the persons of God is a problem. If some part of the Holy Spirit resides within the Son, why does it need to descend upon him? (Luke 3:22, Matthew 3:16). If the Father is present everywhere, why proclaim him to be residing in heaven? (Matthew 6:9, Hebrews 9:24).

Additionally, the only verse that can be used to express God's omnipresence talks not of the Father or the Son but only of the Holy Spirit. To wit, "Where shall I go from your Spirit?" (Psalm 139:7). One can claim that the Spirit in contention here is not the Holy Spirit but rather a metaphor for God. However, if one can conclude that the Father or the Son is not omnipresent and God is omnipresent, it logically follows that at least the Holy Spirit must be omnipresent.

Thus, we can conclude that only the Holy Spirit is omnipresent.

2.2.3. Trinity and omnipotence

To conclude a bijective relation between the Trinity and the three omni-qualities, with our previous conclusions in mind, we would have to assert that only the Son is omnipotent. However, substantiation for this assertion cannot be procured from the Bible. The scriptures illustrate an equal manifestation of divine potency from both the Father and the Son. This is logical as the Bible is not a systematic theological composition, hence it would advance more disputed declarations. The contentious declaration during the life of Jesus was the affirmation of Jesus's divinity. Considering this, we can observe numerous endeavors by diverse authors to equate the divine potency of Jesus, the Son, with that of the Father.

Although we cannot obtain evidence for the assertion that the Father and the Holy Spirit are not omnipotent biblically, there are many verses throughout the Bible that positively claim Jesus, the Son's, omnipotence.

Jesus is the creator of all things: (John 1:3, Colossians 1:16, Hebrews 1:10). Additionally, Jesus upholds the Universe by the word of his power (Philippians 3:20-21). Also, Jesus commands all authority over everything in heaven and on earth. (Matthew 28:18).

Because our claim is a further extension of Jesus's divine capacity, we will not be able to find evidence for it within the Bible. The truth of this assertion, hence, must be obtained using abductive reasoning, which I shall do so in the next section.

3. Thesis

In this section, we will discuss the abductive reason to conclude the bijection of the Trinity and the omni-qualities. The core concepts are the justification for the existence of the Trinity, the incompatibility of three omnipotent persons, and the positive case for the Son's omnipotence.

3.1. Justification for the existence of the Trinity

To begin exploring the characteristics of the Trinity, we must first ask why a Trinity exists at all. Essentially, the question pertains to the justification for the existence of the Trinity.

One explanation is to simply assert that the Trinity is a construct of human minds. That is to say that there is only one God that appears as three persons to man, and that the persons do not exist in reality but only as a perception of God in the minds of people. [7]

Although this theory could become popular among the opponents of the Christian Trinity, most Christian theologians will dismiss it because they grant an ontological existence to the Trinity.

Another explanation suggests an action-based existence. The proponents of this theory suggest that the persons of God were separated because they had to perform different and/or unique actions. For instance, the Son was separated from the Father because God wanted to manifest himself as a man on Earth. An analogous model of the Government is often cited: Legislative, Executive, and Judiciary, each with a different role but the same essence as government.

However, this explanation fails because we know that the Trinity has existed from the beginning (John 1:1-3). This means that the separation of the persons of God took place before the action, or any intention of the action that supposedly could have required the separation of the persons of God took place.

The only sound explanation for a Trinity is that members of the Trinity must possess some distinct qualities. This is because, if the members of the Trinity were exactly identical, not only in essence but also qualities, then there would simply be no reason for their existence in and since the beginning.

3.2. Incompatibility of simultaneous omnipotence

Let us first see the argument for why two omnipotent beings with differing wills cannot co-exist.

As Richard Swinburne [1] points out, two omnipotent beings cannot exist if they have differing wills. Omnipotence necessitates that the outcome of an action undertaken by an omnipotent being is exactly as intended by his will. It is fairly intuitive that the interference of the acts undertaken for different wills will provide a result not intended by either of the two beings. Hence, we can conclude that two beings with differing wills cannot be omnipotent simultaneously.

However, one could argue that this conclusion is not applicable to the persons of God, because they do not possess different wills.

3.2.1. Incompatibility of omnipotent persons with the same will

Before we proceed with the argument for the incompatibility, we must first look at the different interpretations of knowledge of an omniscient being. One interpretation propounds that an omniscient being possesses knowledge of all the future. In this case, the actions of the being will be determined. The other, in light of the free will of the being, interprets omniscience as knowledge of everything of the future not affectable by his will. [1] We shall look at both these cases.

Let us assume that only the Father is omniscient, as concluded earlier, and consider the knowledge of the final day. "But of that day, no one knows, but only the Father" (Matthew 24:36).

Consider the first case, i.e., omniscience includes all knowledge of the future. In this case, the action that causes and brings forth the final day must be determined. Because in this case, knowledge extends to the domain of the future and one's will, if the Son or the Holy Spirit willed for the cause of the final day and had the capacity to cause it, they would necessarily have the knowledge of it. This is because their actions, in this case, must be determined as well.

Because they do not possess the knowledge of the final day, either they differ in will from the Father, or only the Father has the capacity to cause the final hour. Thus, the members of the Trinity are not omnipotent simultaneously.

Consider the second case, i.e., omniscience as knowledge of the future not affectable by one's own will or action. If, in this case, we assumed that the Father is omnipotent and hence able to cause the final day, the knowledge of the final day would exist under the domain of his will and/or action. Consequently, the

Father would not possess the knowledge of the final day, he would simply will for the final day. Because we know that the Father possesses the knowledge of the final day, the cause of the final day must not lie under his will. In other words, the Father cannot possess the capacity to cause the final day. Hence, we have the conclusion that the Father is not omnipotent.

For the present discourse, we shall ignore the first case. This is because the determined nature of the actions of God implies the non-existence of God's free will. Assuming that God possesses free will, as is done so for the Abrahamic God, the first case can be rejected on this basis. We shall proceed with the conclusion that the Father is not omnipotent.

3.3. Bijection of the Trinity and Tri-omni

To prove that a bijective relation exists between the Trinity and Tri-omni, we would first have to prove that only the Son is omnipotent.

We have seen that members of the Trinity must possess some distinct qualities in order to justify their existence. This means that if two members of the Trinity demonstrate possession and non-possession of some quality respectively, we can say that the quality in question is a differentiating quality. The possessor of the differentiating quality can be ascribed as solely possessing that quality as distinction, in that quality is a necessity.

We have also seen the positive case for Jesus, the Son, possessing omnipotence. Additionally, we concluded that the Father does not possess omnipotence. With our line of reasoning, we can infer that Jesus, the Son, therefore, solely possesses omnipotence. In other words, the Holy Spirit is not omnipotent, and only the Son is omnipotent.

In the previous section, we concluded that only the Father is omniscient and only the Holy Spirit is omnipresent. If the assertion that only the Son is omnipotent is admitted, as we concluded earlier, then we can conclude the bijection. Thus, there exists a one-to-one correspondence between the Trinity and the Tri-omni.

3.4. Comparative Theological Models

Several alternative models of Trinitarian theology exist, each attempting to explain the nature of divine persons and their attributes. Among these are the Latin and Social models of the Trinity, as well as more recent systematic approaches.

3.4.1.   Latin Trinitarianism

The Latin model, primarily associated with Augustine (De Trinitate), emphasizes the unity of God's essence over the distinctiveness of the persons. Divine attributes are considered wholly shared rather than distributed. Augustine's psychological analogy of memory, intellect, and will attempts to mirror the Triune nature of God within the human soul (Augustine, De Trinitate IX-XV). However, this model does not explicitly assign particular omni-qualities to specific persons of the Trinity, making it susceptible to interpretive flexibility regarding how divine attributes manifest. This lack of distinct attribution raises issues regarding how the persons are meaningfully distinct while still being fully God.

3.4.2.   Social Trinitarianism

Social Trinitarianism, advocated by figures like Jürgen Moltmann (The Trinity and the Kingdom of God) and John Zizioulas (Being as Communion), stresses the relational distinction among the divine persons. In this model, the Trinity is likened to a perfect community, with divine attributes emerging from interrelation rather than discrete association. While this approach highlights divine love and communion, it does not

inherently necessitate a bijective correspondence between the omni-qualities and the persons. A potential flaw in this model is that it risks emphasizing relationality at the expense of metaphysical coherence, leading to an overly socialized understanding of God that might obscure the unique divine roles.

3.4.3. Analytic Trinitarianism

More recently, analytic theologians such as William Lane Craig and Richard Swinburne have explored logical formulations of the Trinity. Swinburne's model (The Christian God) posits a functional hierarchy, where the Father's existence is necessary while the Son and Spirit derive their being from Him. This perspective aligns somewhat with the bijective model in that each person may be understood as possessing unique roles, but it stops short of explicitly correlating them to the three omni-qualities. One critique of this approach is that it introduces a hierarchy that may contradict the co-equality of the persons, an essential aspect of Trinitarian doctrine.

3.4.4. Counterarguments Against Non-Bijective Models

The primary issue with Trinitarian models that do not include a bijective correspondence between the persons and the omni-qualities is that they either obscure the distinctions between the persons or fail to explain their full divinity in a structured manner.

Latin Trinitarianism risks reducing the persons to mere modes of one divine essence, which verges on modalism, a historically rejected heresy.

Social Trinitarianism overemphasizes relationality, which can lead to tri-theism, wherein the persons are seen as too distinct and lacking unity.

Analytic Trinitarianism often implies a hierarchy within the Godhead, which conflicts with orthodox teachings of co-equality.

Rejecting the bijective model forces one to either dilute the distinctions between the persons (leading to modalism) or separate them too distinctly (leading to tritheism). By contrast, the bijective framework maintains balance: each person has a unique identity while preserving divine unity.

4. Conclusion

4.1. Reasoning and Rationale

I shall now summarize the arguments of the paper.

4.1.1. Only the Father is omniscient

To prove this assertion, we used biblical evidence: "But of that day, no one knows, but only the Father" (Mathew 24:36). We discarded the evidence for the omniscience of the Son and the Holy Spirit such as (John 21:17, 14:26) on the basis that evidence of negative is more significant than the evidence of positive, because omni-qualities are based on exclusion of the negative. Therefore, the existence of the negative will prove the non-existence of the omni-quality.

4.1.2. Only the Holy Spirit is omnipresent

We use reduction to prove that the omnipresence of the Son and the Father leads to absurd conclusions. Such as the need to proclaim the Father as residing in heaven (Matthew 6:9) and the overlapping of the persons of God, means the Holy Spirit need not descend upon Jesus (Matthew 3:16).

4.1.3. Persons of God must possess distinct qualities

We use deontic reasoning to prove that the Trinity needs a justification for its existence, based on the fact that the existence of the Trinity is not necessary.

If the members of the Trinity were exactly similar in both essence and qualities, then the Trinity would lack a motive for its existence. Thus, they must be different in either essence or qualities. We know that the

members of the Trinity share the same essence as that of God, thus, they must differ in quality and possess distinct qualities.

4.1.4. Incompatibility of two omnipotent beings with different wills

We prove that the co-existence of two omnipotent beings is contradictory to the assumption of their omnipotence. An omnipotent being should necessarily be able to carry out an action and obtain the intended result of his will. If two omnipotent beings held differing wills, then the subsequent actions would not yield the intended results. Hence, two beings cannot co-exist if they possess differing wills.

4.1.5. The Father is not omnipotent

We explored an interpretation of omniscience such that omniscient knowledge of the future must not be affectable by one's will or action. This implies that if one knows some future event, that event must be out of one's domain of action/will.

Premise: Knowledge of a future event implies that the event is out of one's domain of action/will.

Premise: The Father has knowledge of the final day.

Conclusion: The final day is out of the Father's domain of action/will.

This implies that the Father is incapable of causing the final day, and hence not omnipotent.

4.1.6. Only the Son is omnipotent

We have seen that the members of the Trinity must possess differentiating and distinct qualities. If two members of the Trinity demonstrate possession and non-possession of a quality respectively, it can be inferred that the possessor of the quality possesses that quality solely. This is because differentiating qualities must necessarily be distinct to the possessor.

Additionally, we have seen the positive case for the omnipotence of Jesus, the Son.

Premise: The Son possesses omnipotence.

Premise: The Father does not possess omnipotence.

Conclusion: Only the Son possesses omnipotence.

4.1.7. Bijection of the Trinity and Tri-omni

The conclusion of the bijection is simply based on previous conclusions.

Premise: Only the Father is omniscient.

Premise: Only the Son is omnipotent.

Premise: Only the Holy Spirit is omnipresent.

Conclusion: There exists a one-to-one correspondence between the Trinity and the three omni-qualities of God.

4.2. Theological objections

The two questions that arise when accepting the assertion that the members of the Trinity do not possess some omni qualities that God possesses are:

Are members of the Trinity equal?

Are members of the Trinity fully God?

The answer to the first question is an affirmation. This is because the equality of any two elements does not depend upon the similarity in their attributes. Thus, the difference in the qualities of the members should not affect the equality that they share. This assertion is a given because if the separation of the persons of the Godhead is assumed, distinctions and differences between them are implied. One cannot distinguish between two identical elements of the same essence.

If one can distinguish two elements of the same essence, they must necessarily possess some distinct

qualities. Hence, it is a given that the members of the Trinity are distinct, yet still equal. The equality of the Trinity, therefore is not dependent on whether they possess all the omni-qualities or not.

The second question is perhaps one that has some potential to bring about a doctrinal change within the common Trinitarian view. However, that should not be the case when one understands that the claim that the Father is fully God does not necessitate that God is fully the Father. When one claims **A is fully B**, it is similar to the claim that **All A is B**. The deontic inference is that **Some B is A**, meaning **B is not necessarily fully A**. Additionally, if we claim **All C is B** and **Some C is not A**, we can conclude that **Some B is not A** i.e., **B is not fully A**.

In the case of the Trinity, for example, let the Father be **A**, the Son be **C**, and God be **B**. Then we can conclude with the previous line of logic that **God is not fully the Father**. This implies that there are certain facets of God that are not shared with the Father. There is no reason to believe that the non-shared attributes of God and the Father are not some omni-qualities. Hence, the bijective relation of the Trinity and Tri-omni does not violate the principle that the Father is fully God, given that God is not fully the Father.

4.3. Conclusion

The primary conclusion that can be derived from this paper is the bijective relationship between the Trinity and the three omni-qualities. However, this conclusion is more useful when used as a part of a reductive argument. Specifically, assuming that the bijection of the Trinity and the three omni qualities does not exist, one can reject the implied assumptions. The level at which this rejection can take place varies. The primary takeaway of this paper is that models of the Trinity that do not involve this bijection are wrong, in the sense that they violate certain fundamental assumptions.

The primary assumption they violate is the veracity of the Bible as a theological text. The notion that biblical verses cannot be used as standalone statements of truth leads us to doubt whether the New Testament contains any statements of fact.

The most apparent assumption that is violated in rejecting the bijection is the ontological existence of the Trinity itself. Lastly, the assumption that the Trinity, if it exists, is fully and equally God is violated.

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