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## **COMPLEMENTARY REFLECTION AND THE HIERARCHY OF SOCIAL ORDER**

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Posted on the internet on March 3, 2005

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### **PREAMBLE**

The International corporations have evidently declared ideological war on the “antiquated” nation-state... The charge that materialism, modernization and internationalism is the new liberal creed of corporate capitalism is a valid one. The implication is clear, the nation-state as a political unit of democratic decision-making must in the interest of “progress” yield control to the new mercantile mini-powers... while the structure of the multinational corporation is a modern concept designed to meet the requirements of a modern age, the nation-state is a very old-fashioned idea and badly adopted to serve the needs of our present complex world (Gilpin, 20).

### **CHAPTER ONE**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Complementary reflection or harmonious complementarity is a philosophical ideology, which seeks to build bridges of unity between and among competing interests recognizing deeply the potentialities of each other. It is a philosophy that conscientiously and consciously seeks to

banish the tendencies of individualism, capitalism and all manner of “selfish” and personal or private “estates”.

The attempt to free society and humanity from the misuse of personal acquisition of wealth and other domineering influences as an integral dimension of complementary reflection expressed above is not an easy task, considering the human nature and psychological state of man. In this 21st century, Professor Asouzu discovers the gainful ingenuity associated with harmonious complementarism, and the need for unity among people as the only therapy for building a sound and virile society.

Accordingly, the harvest of his intellectual brilliance as he captures the glimpse of harmonious complementarism was empirically exhibited, in his two recent works: “Effective Leadership and the Ambivalence of Human Interest: The Nigerian Paradox in a complementary Perspective” and; “The Method and Principles of Complementary Reflection in and beyond African Philosophy.”

The two volumes however, seek to address the perennial problems associated with leadership in Africa linking them with the psychological dispositions towards egoism, and the inability to clearly define one’s desires. In order to draw a logical connection, Professor Asouzu argues that the campaign against individualism and its related cases in this century necessitated the glamour for globalization. According to him:

A concept that best captures this trend and some of the ideals driving it is the idea of globalization. Fundamentally, globalization seeks to express a sort of universal humanism designed to make the world a better place for all based on equal opportunities, rights and privileges. It is an attempt at eradicating all forms of injustice and at encouraging mutual support among communities, peoples and nations (2004, 27).

From the face value of the above presentation there appears to be wisdom in the expression. But does this concept capture the above meaning? Does humanity really exist in an atmosphere of equal opportunity devoid of dominance and exploitation by a perceived upper class? To what extent has this concept addressed the sinister of dominance, inequality and other social absurdities? How careful is humanity to trace the implications of this concept? Could it not be another international propaganda to further imperialise the peripheral countries?

The above questions are cardinal when interpreting and explaining the epistemic framework of globalization, especially, as it seeks to negate the sovereignty of nations, believing strongly in the spirit of new world order.

The assignment bothers principally on the need to build a strong, united and virile society using the advocacy of Professor Asouzu as an epistemological gateway to drive home the argument. As a puzzle in social phenomenon, concepts that are common occurrence in the cause of the exercise shall be explained for proper understanding and philosophical absorption.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **COMPLEMENTARISM AND INDIVIDUALISM: A SYNTHESIS**

In the introductory aspect of this exercise, I had argued that the need to remove/eradicate in our psychology, “selfism” and act of parochialism is the major reason for introducing in the vocabulary of philosophy and social phenomenon, the concept of complementarism.

In our daily affairs, we are completely saddled with the responsibility of seeking for our personal intentions and goals, disregarding the existence of others around us. We are only interested on things that would improve our personal ego, welfare, and other personal achievements. This kind of thought pattern dominates our activities, and it is the same spirit that guides our relationship with others. With the spirit of individualism scattered all over our psychology, or being our mental attitude, we tend to exhibit care-free attitude on the affairs of other humans in the society.

This implies that, in all our daily programs, we are determined to seek for our personal interests alone. This is the attitude we exhibit in politics, education, religion, economy and other aspects of life. To what extent do we intend to make progress, if we continue to work alone, and seek for personal interests?

However, progress is earmarked when humanity realizes to function cooperatively and complementarily. The dream of building a strong, united, crime free and virile society cannot be achieved neither now nor in future if humanity continues to exist individually. This is premised on the logic that progress requires collectivity of responsibility. If humanity is conscious of this obvious fact that individualism does not promote social engineering then, advancement in all spheres of human endeavour can be achieved. It is an error to completely isolate or annihilate a certain class and perhaps label them “worthless individuals in the scheme of things”. By the time we adopt this principles of individualism and isolationism, it becomes difficult to know who is what in the scheme of things. As a result of this, we are cut short of reality, as we are unable to determine the exact position of the fellow or group we have abandoned due to our self-seeking philosophy. This development is what Professor Asouzu summed up as “missing links”. According to him:

The missing links are the diverse components or entities of which any existing reality is constituted. Now if the different components that make up a system are viewed in isolation and singly, we can say that they are missing in relation to one another in a way. They are missing in the sense that, as discrete entities, each can be viewed in isolation to each and in total disregard to each other. When this happens, a unit can be unaware of the other and in this moment, the one that it is unaware of is missing (Asouzu, 2003: 58-59)

The above expression reminds us of the two principal theories of the state: The Machine theory and the organist theory. The machine theory views the state as an artifact created by man for a particular purpose, and it is useful only in the context to which it is created. While the organist theory or the contrary, views man to be the product of the state, which in collectivism with the component units makes progress. The best fitted theory in line with the above expression is the later. The logic in the later hinges on the need for cooperation and collective efforts of all members of the society. The organist theorist sees wisdom in collective efforts of individuals as a therapeutic measure for progress and even development. Through this collective progress and unism, it becomes easy to know what progress is being expected and what is happening to any member of the society. This is because, in an organic state, what affects a part, affects the whole.

To further elucidate on this, the philosophy of complementarity is a fruit-yielding ideology tactically expressed in the philosophies of “Ujamaa”, “Negritude”, “Consciencism” etc. These philosophies by African philosophers were targeted at re-awakening the “African consciousness” which is centered on brotherhood. The philosophical latitude of Africans before the invading of the colonialists was on the concept of “brotherhood”, aligning centrally with the postulation of the organic theory of the state and also in conformity with the complementarity thesis of Professor Asouzu. To justify the above claim, Nyerere argues that:

All of us have to accept the paramountcy of Africa, and Brotherhood and cooperation with Africa, over all outside relationships (13)

Actually, Africa had a consistent pattern of administration, which was unique before the colonial masters took over the land of Africa. Africa before this century was a continent with recognized administration whose centrality is on unity of purpose. The African continent before this period was a continent that recognizes the potentialities of others, a continent that seeks to abhor in its entirety all manners of individualism. It is a society that builds its foundation on the spirit of egalitarianism. For the Africans, the community exist only in the context of the individuals, and when the individuals are completely absent it no longer exist, the community also, ceases to exist. Therefore, within a complementary framework, the individuals and community need each other, and each cannot claim to be superior to the other, but needs harmonious complementation. The wisdom depicted in the above lies on the expression that the community is part of the individual, and by accepting the existence of the community, it has given the individual a self-definition.

This is necessary because, within a complementary framework, pains, joys, happiness, blames and other attendant benefits are shared in line with this spirit of complementarity as Prof. Asouzu posits:

Here we seek to draw all the consequences associated with our rights and obligations as beings that live in close complementary relationship with others similar to ourselves. In the consummation of complementary reflection in this regard, something striking becomes evident to the mind. This is the fact that every human being is beneficiary of the infinite goodness that sustains the experience of transcendent complementary unity of consciousness. The same is applicable to the obligations that derive from this (478).

African society before the colonialist was conscious of building an harmonious and peaceful community, which is based on the concept of brotherhood. For Africans, the act of individualism is an aberration. It is foreign and anti-Africa, and in the thinking of Africans, has to be ignored and pushed aside. This expression is validly articulated in Nwoko’s The Rationality of African Socialism, as he argues that:

African traditional society is a society where the individual is always considered a free, integrated member of his community, a communion person. It is a society where individualism is considered a taboo, where each member takes the interest of the community as his own. His pride is community is power. The more united he is to the community, the more he sees the community as a mere extension of the family (71-72)

This philosophy of communalism, cooperatism, brotherhood and complementarity were replicas of African civilization and socialization before the incursion of the white man. The Europeans used religion as a dangerous tool or weapon to collapse the African civilization and heritage. Africa’s value system was exploited and extinct from relevance. This stream of thought is evidently showcased in the writings of Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*. The symbolic display

of characters and events in the said book is an analyses of the traditional African Society with harmonious complementarity in all aspects of their existence before their collapse.

What Achebe displayed in the book symbolizes the complete African traditional model of administration in all facets of life in dispensing judgment, and punishing offenders. The obvious act of complementing each other's responsibility and sharing the pains of each other were not left out. To buttress this claim, Achebe presented an African way of dispensing judgment and instant punishment when tragedy fall on Okonkwo during the burial rites of Mazi Ezeudu, Okonkwo had committed female crime when he inadvertently killed the son of Mazi Ezeudu. The punishment was for him to flee from Umuofia for seven years including his family and his compound was set ablaze. This was done in order to appease the gods of the land. For the interest of the community surpasses that of the individual.

This attitude was the communalistic and complementarity spirit that characterized the Africans before the advent of colonialism. Suffice it to say that individualism which contradicts the principles of harmonious complementarity is a foreign policy that is packaged by the western countries to further exploit the African values, and further display their colonialist tendencies.

Within the length and breadth of scholastic and intellectual debates, it is a truism that individualism, no matter how one tries or attempts to defend it, does not promote social justice and equality. The spirit of individualism is accompanied by forces of domination, exploration, cheating, maiming, and other obnoxious or harsh conditions that do not allow their victims to grow.

Individualism promotes inequality and this inequality is a dangerous social phenomenon. This is because, the bulk of the problems and specter of violence in Nigeria and other third world countries are consequences of inequality. The capitalist tendencies, which promote individualism, have sown the seed of destruction and monumental violence as a result of man's parochial needs without accommodating the interest or needs of his fellow.

The implications of social inequality predated history. This is hinged on the fact that human beings by nature are equal. Rousseau assumes or constructs a pre-social original state in which there was complete equality of all, where no one was superior to anyone else in either rank or status. He (Rousseau) argues that:

Inequality came about as a result of leaving the state of nature; it is a kind of original sin, which he links with the emergence of private property... The first man who fenced in an area and said, "This is mine", and who found people simple enough to believe him was the real founder of civil society (22)

From the above expression, it is latent to believe strongly that individualism is associated with private property. And when one begins to pursue personal or private estates, he completely dissociates himself from the harmonious complementarity of the whole members of the society. The character of individualism is heavily reflected in all his activities. A question may be put in this perspective – is it possible in this century to have an harmonious society devoid of individualism? Actually, the above question may appear simpler but it has a network of complexities. To say the least, the life of every individual 'is full of emotions, psychological dispositions and separate value system. With these emotions and other peculiar circumstances being pursued, issues are viewed and assessed individually and privately basically on how they affect or influence the fellow. As a result of the above prevailing circumstances, to foster a co-operative and harmonious task becomes too cumbersome to achieve. This is because of the obvious implications of relating with a society that has a common philosophy and ideology.

The game plan of ensuring an individual – free society necessitated the formation of a radical movement of Marxism. Marxism takes up the challenge of attacking the exploitative,

explorative, domineering and the capitalist tendencies of the upper class. The capitalist as an advocate of individualism does not believe in complementary efforts of the members of the society for such attitude will not advance its profiteering measures. Rather, it believes in the act of investing its resources for the purpose of profit maximization. With this attitude, we begin to see the American campaign for globalization as both a false start and fraudulent, especially in alliance with the International financial conspirators.

As argued earlier, individualism creates a widespread gap between two classes of being. Those that are in control of the resources, who have the commanding heights of the economy and, purposely invested on it for profit maximization; and the suffered workers who had nothing, but are hired by the capitalist, whose labour and overtime the Capitalist used to create surplus value for itself. The two distinct economic and social poles are continuously in parallel, as the gap between the haves and not-haves widens daily. The haves enjoy economic monopoly and carefully invest in the core areas of economy exploiting and exploring the best of the state. Their policy of domination is being carried out by the multinationals or trans-national corporations as the case may be.

Within the economic axis, some analysts have viewed the activities of these corporations as agents of civilization and development especially in the third world countries while others have argued that the multinationals are basic tools for imperialism and underdevelopment. In the light of the above, Gilpin argues that:

Since the end of the Second World War no aspect of international political economy has generated more controversy than the global expansion of multinational corporations. Some consider these powerful corporations to be a boom to mankind. Superseding the nation-state, diffusing technology and economic growth to developing countries, and interlocking national economics into an expanding and beneficial interdependence. Others view them as imperialistic predators, exploiting all for the sake of the corporate few while creating a web of political dependence and economic underdevelopment (231)

The above extract by Gilpin in a nutshell captures the mix-feelings and different perception people have about the multinational corporations or advanced countries. From the argument, it is gathered that their activities had benefits the developmental strides of the third world countries, while in some areas, they were viewed negatively, as agents of underdevelopment. Taking a bold position, within a complementary framework, the advanced countries or the developed nations who parade high rated technologies and world-class industries could not have achieved these without the cooperation and the raw materials from the third world and African countries per se. Their deals with these less privileged and technologically backward states are prosecuted with dishonesty as they indicate interest in the core areas of the economy. They claim to be the engine of development among the third world disregarding any material benefits from the third worlds when in the actual sense, the core countries are exploring and exploiting the third world values for their own parochial gains, negating any complementary linkage.

Being mindful of the individualistic mindset of the capitalist countries and their agents, R. Caves argues that:

... an oligopolistic corporation in which ownership, management production, and sales activities extend over several national jurisdiction. It is comprised of a head office in one country, with a cluster of subsidiaries in other countries. The principal objectives of the corporation is to secure the least costly production of goods for world markets; this goal may be

achieved through acquiring the most efficient locations for production facilities or obtaining taxation concessions from host government (R. Caves cited by Bassey, 152).

Having gone far on individualism and complementarity, and also x-rayed to discover that individual's lives today is characterized by personal motives, and interest. The concept of altruism and universal complementarity as a social creed, is better imagined, as such concept may not find a place in our social vocabulary.

### **CHAPTER THREE**

#### **COMPLEMENTARISM AND HIERARCHY OF SOCIAL ORDER**

One can attempt in broad terms, to apply this comparative perspective to the American racist phenomenon. No doubt, society did not completely cease to be society, as a hierarchized whole, on the day it willed itself to be simply a collection of individuals. In particular, the tendency to make hierarchical differentials continued. In another angle, racism is more often than not, understood to be a modern phenomenon its economic causes of its emergence have sometimes been sought, while much closer and more probable ideological connections were ignored. Arguing this path, the simplest hypothesis is to assume that racism fulfils an old duty under a new form. It compels us to assume that it was representing in an equalitarian society a resurgence of what was differently and more directly and naturally expressed in a hierarchical society.

The perceived domineering tendencies and obvious claim of superiority between and among people and countries is a complete negation of the theses of harmonious complementarity. This is because, in a complementary framework, the whole and part (unit) are one and the same. The whole makes meaning in the context of the part vice versa. The above reasoning implies that an individual cannot be its complete self in all circumstances without the positive or negative influence of other(s).

We are aware of the psychological dispositions and self-seeking posture of human beings as the determining factors of their behaviour which incidentally drive people to their actions. The truth of the matter is that human beings are not completely or absolutely conscious of their existence so as to understand the complementary linkages of their being. In the event that humanity is aware of this obvious complementary linkage, it would be easier therefore, to understand that every being is a combination of beings in all ramifications. Implying that, at any time one is pursuing a self-seeking goal, the goal is targeted against oneself in a complementary understanding. TO use the exact word of Prof. Asouzu, which could be seen as the theme of this book: "Consequent self-interest is anti-self-interest". Within a complementary framework with its conscious understanding and application, hierarchy of being does not exist. This is because, people(s) are to complement each other without recourse to social stratification. What this implies is that, in a complementing understanding, equality of purpose and ideals are utmost. No individual is superior to the other, as every individual is defined in the context of other individuals, without which the complete understanding of the individual will be impossible.

Within this complementary framework and understanding, can there be a hierarchy of social order? Can there be a western hegemony? Can the west be adjudged superior to the Africans after sapping the raw materials from African, refine them, and produce them as finished goods and send them back to Africa? Can they claim supremacy in isolation with

the units? The truth is that there cannot be absolute claim to superiority and hierarchy by the west or any individual when the units complement each other.

In the light of the above complementing understanding, whatever anyone is today or any nation, is a mutual complementation of component units.

I want to believe strongly that hierarchy or hierarchical distinctions in the globe and its attendant racial discriminations are the consequences of social inequality and disorder in the universe. For instance, make distinction illegitimate and you get discrimination; suppress the former modes of distinction and you have a racist ideology. It is historically evident that societies in the past knew a hierarchy of status bringing with it privileges and disabilities among others the total juridical disability of slavery.

Dumont arguing in defense of social inequality in the United States of America posits that:

Now the history of the United States tells just this – that racial discrimination succeeded the slavery of the Negro people once the latter was abolished – one is tempted to wonder why this all-important transition has not been more systematically studied, from sociological point of view, then it seems to have been but perhaps one's ignorance is the answer (356-357)

The distinction between master and slave was replaced by the discrimination of the white against the Black. The issue of class distinction, racism, discrimination, slavery and social inequality in the society is as old as humanity. These anti-social attributes developed the moment civil society was founded. To clearly justify this claim, for the Greeks as for others, foreigners were barbarians, strangers to the civilization and society of the "we"; for that reason they could be enslaved. This accounts for why slavery played a tremendous role in the economy of the Greeks. And Aristotle ably argued that slavery is both expedient and natural".

The phenomenon of hierarchical structure of the society into upper and lower, north and south, core and periphery and other perceived institutional structures have really impaired on the peaceful co-existence of men in the society. Proliferation of arms and hi-tech, have equally made it possible for some countries to claim dominion over others. By so doing, countries that are industrially and technologically advanced view their position as an advantage to impose their selfish policies and trade pacts with other countries of less economic, industrial, political and technological powers.

Today, it is a growing belief that the African continent and her related cousins in the third world depend on the western countries for all manner of development. It is also, assumed that, trade and economic relationships between these countries are merely for the development of the third worlds without the western countries benefiting from such relationship. But we know of a truth that this kind of argument does not only lack merit but flies on the face of culture and tradition. The underdevelopment paradigm of the African continent today was as a result of her unholy romance with the west. There was during this period of economic relation, absolute absence of the sense of complementarism as it relates to western countries that consider themselves absolutely independent on others. That was why the western countries sapped the African raw materials for their own development.

With these absence of the consciousness of mutual complementation prevalent in social relations, it becomes difficult to subscribe to the western ideologies or policies of unilateralism.



For their policies would negate the principle of harmonious complementarity. Professor Asouzu making case for a worthwhile complementarity to reflect in all our programs argues:

... any form of human relationship that does not aim at comprehensiveness and universality curtails our chances of fully actualizing our potentialities and living authentically. For this reason, complementarity sensitizes us about the preceding conditions for the realization of the goals we set to ourselves as rational being. These conditions subsist in defining our interests in a way that they harmonize with the interests of others, which is concretely represented by the common good (Asouzu, 2004, 47).

How do we harmonize our interests or define them to reflect the interest of others? Do we negate completely and absolutely the existence of psychological drives and personal motives and emotions that direct our affairs? This is where the problem lies, and the difficulty in realizing global peace and order, because, our actions and behaviour are primordially and parochially situated. As a result of this phenomenon, supremacy and superiority of countries over others come into play and collapse the sovereignty of the countries. A leading example is the American hegemonic influence over other countries especially as it relates to its recent attack of Iraq. We accept concretely that harmonization of interests will definitely bring global and regional peace if this principle of complementarity is religiously implemented as a global ideology.

## **CHAPTER FOUR COMPLEMENTARISM, GLOBALIZATION AND THE 21ST CENTURY CHALLENGE**

Complementarity as a reconciliatory philosophical drive is timely in this century owing to the growing tendencies of usurpation, global conflict, and display of economic and hegemonic influences. This principle nevertheless, serves as a unifying force, which seeks to relax the excessive display of superiority over and above other parts of the world.

Complementarity thesis as a healing balm is strategically required in the homes, the states, nations and the world at large as a result of its overbearing hypotheses. . The growing and overbearing influence of human interest had given capitalism a feat over socialism and this has necessitated the campaign for the nullification and total collapse of socialism world over American cannot deny being the chief protagonist of this campaign.

In order to achieve this economic and political dreams, there is a coalition forces between the policemen of democracy (America) and the international financial agencies – IMF, World Bank who are viewed as economic predators. With the collaboration of these forces, America seeks to unite the world and impose its economic policies on the world at large. The sale of this American ideology or policy, or even the Americanization of the entire world is an arduous challenge, which is gathering momentum through the new economic regime. This American opinion is expressible through the concept of globalization.

Arguing against the strength of globalization as a homogenous concept, Professor Asouzu posits:

The mass hysteria occasioned by such conceptualizations of globalization often triggers off emotional fantasies that sediment to animosities and uneasiness among people of divergent interests. It is for this reason that globalization is easily identified with neo-imperialism and neo-colonialism and with the re-emergence of old ideologies and techniques

of colonization and exploitation in new cloaks and in new languages with the view of playing the same old games with new rules. Here some believe that such new concepts as international co-operation, privatization, deregulation, indigenization, and commercialization of public assets are mere ploys devised by a few smart individuals and countries towards political, economic, and cultural hegemony over their less fortunate neighbours. In this way, globalization has come to be equated with a despicable form of internationalization and homogenization of the world towards the loss of sovereignty and autonomy of nations, ethnic nationalities and other minority groups (Asouzu, 2004, 30-31)

The understanding here is that the capitalist states have joined hands and come up with this concept in order to continue perpetrating their obnoxious ideals on the less powerful states. By this expression, it implies that globalization is a terminology ideally used to confuse the peripheral states, as the concept still shares the characters of imperialism and colonialism.

Giving credence to the negative understanding of the concept, Giovanni Arrighi notes that: As we coin new terms, such as “globalization” to capture the novelty of emergent conditions, we compound the confusion by carelessly pouring old wine in new bottles... we must preliminarily recognize that key aspects of these transformations are either not new at all or are new in degree but not in kind (1).

Globalization is not a concept the whole world should all embrace as if it has reached the peak in all ramifications. Thus, globalization, is an economic as well as political design to further imperialize and sap the best of their victims by the world capitalists. No matter how they try to impress the world through the advancement in technology, it is another economic regime, which is not new at all as Harvey notes:

As critics of the notion have pointed out, many of the tendencies that go under that name are not new at all. The newness of the so-called information revolution is impressive but the newness of the railroad and the telegraph, the automobile, the radio, and the telephone in their day impressed equally... even the so-called actualization of economic activity is not as new as it may appear at first sight (9).

The required spirit that should guide and bind the world in this century is the spirit of harmonious complementarity. The wisdom in complementarity is that which seeks to recognize the contributions of all and sundry. It is not a spirit that dwarfs any segment of the world. It believes that we can complement one another and make progress from there. Therefore, for there to be a global peace, this philosophy of complementarity should be seen as a global sermon that ought to be preached in all areas of our endeavour. The idea of supremacy, superiority and display of hegemony cannot lead us to the path of progress and peace. The 21st century wisdom is geared towards cooperation, complementation and not excessive display of power. Promoting the concept of globalization as a virtue, implies further promotion of imperialism and neo-colonialism. The ideals enshrined in the idea of globalization can be subjected to the transforming influence of complementarity as the philosophy of the new world order.

## **CONCLUSION**

We have the misfortune of being in a world that is characterized by competition, domination, strife etc. The above characterizations do not come from the blues, but are antecedence of human nature. The obvious display and acquisition of these attributes make it

possible and convincing enough for human interests to be pursued above and beyond the public good. In a world of this kind, it becomes pretty difficult to harmonize peoples' interests so as to reflect the character of an ideal society. More worrisome is the proliferation of arms, display of hegemony, new economic regime, and consequent collapse of recognizable values.

In the face of the above anomalous situation complementary reflection as a new philosophical attitude is a packaged therapeutical weapon to address this confusing phenomenon. What we as humans desire in this 21st century is to harmonize our parochial interests so as to accommodate others in line with public good. The attitude of self-preservation, self-realization and other motives are anti-humanism.

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