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THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF TOURISM SPACE

Abstract: Although it is among the most frequently used notions in the study of tourism, the concept of tourism space is understood in a variety of ways. Similar to the term 'geographical space', it is often used intuitively, often in quite dissimilar contexts. This paper provides an analysis of the concept of 'tourism space' from the perspective of geography, based on a phenomenological approach.

Key words: space, tourism, tourism space, phenomenology.

1. INTRODUCTION

Space is often regarded as one of the crucial attributes of geography that singles it out from other natural and social sciences. Even though according to some scholars "the notion of geographical space is as ambiguous as most 'geographic' concepts, and similar to those concepts it mythologises the notion of geography" (RYKIEL & PIRVELI 2005, 134), for clarity of argument a definition of space used by geographers should be proposed. Since several publications discussing opinions on this subject have been recently published in Poland (LI-SOWSKI 2003, KACZMAREK 2005), in this paper geographical space will be used in the sense attributed to it by WŁODARCZYK (2009, p. 19), to whom "geographical space is a measureable space comprising the natural components of the earth, i.e. the atmosphere, hydrosphere, biosphere and lithosphere, as well as its permanent development generated by human activity".

2. TOURISM SPACE AS A COMPONENT OF GEOGRAPHICAL SPACE

According to J. STACHOWSKI (1993), tourism space can be treated as a derivative of real geographical space, as abstract space or as mental space. Although in geographical research tourism space should above all be considered as one of the subspaces of real geographical space (KOWALCZYK 2011, p. 31), other possible ways of understanding geographical space, especially as space subjectively perceived, the anthropological space of M. MERLEAU-PONTY (2001, pp. 312, 318), should also be taken into account in order to get a better grasp of the processes making up tourism space.

In Poland, the issue of how tourism space should be defined has been extensively examined by B. Włodarczyk. According to him, "tourism space is the part of geographical space where the phenomenon of tourism occurs. Tourism regardless of its volume or nature is the necessary and sufficient prerequisite for a part of geographical space to be classified as tourism space. An additional precondition for its delimitation is the presence of tourism development, the size and nature of which make it possible to identify the type of tourism space" (WŁODARCZYK 2007, p. 149, 2009, pp. 74-75). This definition can also be found in later publications by this author, although in his paper from 2011 he emphasised even more strongly that tourism was the key feature of tourism space, adding (between second and third sentences) that "it can be claimed that tourism is its only attribute" (WŁODARCZYK 2011, p. 17).

The theory of tourism space proposed by B. Włodarczyk prominently discusses the issue of its perception. Drawing on the views expressed by J. STACHOW-SKI (1993) and S. LISZEWSKI (2005), he distinguishes four ways in which the term 'tourism space' can be understood: as real (actual) space; as perceived-mental (experienced) space; as virtual (unreal); and as spiritual (symbolic) space (WŁODARCZYK 2009, pp. 82-85; 2011, pp. 23-24). The way tourism space is understood by B. Włodarczyk means that he is among those authors who see in it a close relationship between geographical space and anthropological space as defined by M. Merleau-Ponty.

An interesting opinion on the study of tourism space was expressed by L. Mazurkiewicz who, initially stating that such space "reflects the world of real tourism phenomena on a macro scale" (MAZURKIE-WICZ 2011, p. 107), later proposed an approach combining the concept of tourism space with the theory of van R. DER DUIM (2007); he proposed a concept of tourism space combined with network theory, which allows the process of tourism space development in micro-scale terms to be described.

To conclude this part of the paper, it should be noted that the concept of 'tourist-scapes' partly ties in with the concept of tourism space which in recent years has been discussed by an increasing number of researchers (EDENSOR 2007, JANSEN-VERBEKE 2008, 2009, 2010, METRO-ROLAND 2011, MANSFELDT 2013, YARDE no date). According to R. VAN DER DUIM (2007, 967), "tourist-scapes consist of relations between people and things dispersed in time-space-specific patterns". R. van der Duim assumes that tourist-scapes can comprise different spaces (one of the subchapters is entitled: 'The spaces of tourist-scapes'), whose essential attributes include different scales, sizes and constituents (VAN DER DUIM 2007, pp. 968-969). An interesting view on the mutual relationships between city-scape and touristscape1 was proposed by Metro-Roland, who wrote that tourists are also interested "in the spaces between the 'important' must sees, the banal objects of the everyday play a larger role in the creation of a sense of place than has been surmised in the tourism literature" (METRO-ROLAND 2011, 40). It should be noted that such an opinion largely coincides with the views expressed by A. STASIAK (2011) and M. DURY-DIWKA & K. DUDA-GROMADA (2011) who described a tourism trend whereby facilities and events, which were earlier regarded as insufficiently interesting, begin to be regarded as tourism attractions (an approach which draws on the concept of augmented reality).

The above considerations invite the conclusion that the traditional treatment of tourism space, as a component of geographical space different to its other components, is now becoming problematic, as in some cases it is not possible to draw the line between what is 'tourism' and 'non-tourism'.

3. TOURISM SPACE IN A PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH

The above reflections suggest that the term 'tourism space' has so many meanings in geography that it can be regarded as a kind of metaphor.

In the writer's opinion, differences in defining the notion of 'tourism space' are partly (or maybe predominantly) due to differences in understanding the phenomenon of tourism. Although K. PRZECŁAWSKI (1994, p. 9) defines tourism as "...all spatial mobility phenomena associated with voluntary, and temporary, change of place of residence, rhythm and environment of individual life, and entering into a personal encounter with the visited environment (be it natural, cultural or social)", other authors propose other definitions. This means that the term 'tourism' can also be regarded as a kind of metaphor, a view which is expressed for example by M. MACCANNELL (2002) and J. URRY (2007). The perception of tourism as a metaphor is reflected in the views of many authors, who try to describe tourism using the simple metaphors such as '3S', '4S' '3E', '4E', '4H', '4L', or '5A'. It should be observed that these metaphors typically use expressions describing those components of tourism space that are of key importance for a given group of tourists. The diversity of these attributes describing tourism space is the best answer to the question why there is no single, universal definition of tourism space.

Therefore, it should not be found surprising that such a different understanding of the notion of 'tourism' is reflected in the dissimilar perceptions of the term 'tourism space'. For this reason, due to such dissimilar views about what tourism is or is not, and also due to dissimilar definitions of the term 'tourism space', it may be expedient to look at tourism space using a phenomenological approach, as this method seems to be particularly well suited to analysing concepts and phenomena that are ambiguous in themselves and whose understanding varies not only from author to author but also from one discipline to another.

It should be noted at this point that the phenomenological approach is increasingly frequently used for studying tourism-related issues, not only by those representing sociology or cultural anthropology (ANDRIOTIS 2009), but also by those specialising in the spatial aspects of tourism, such as tourism in one Sydney district (HAYLLAR & GRIFFIN 2005). We should also quote the view of M. Merleau-Ponty (an author often cited) that "probably the chief gain from phenomenology is to have united extreme subjectivism and extreme objectivism in its notion of the world or of rationality. Rationality is precisely proportioned to the experiences in which it is disclosed. To say that there exists rationality is to say that perspectives blend, perceptions confirm each other, a meaning emerges." (MERLEAU-PONTY 2005, p. xxii).

These considerations also suggest that it is possible to have doubts whether there exists one tourism space which objectively exists and is unambiguously defined, if only in the discipline of geography. Such doubts would be fully justified as many studies show that during travel people (who are not always tourists) perceive the surrounding landscape or the residents of a visited area in different ways. This means that for people in general (including researchers), the tourism space that they perceive has different attributes. It should be noted that these differences arise not only from travellers' individual features, but also from many cultural determinants (WANG 2006). This in turn means that, when dealing with the issue of tourism space, at least four different forms, or aspects, can be identified:

1) individual tourist space (tourist's space);

2) collective tourist space (tourists' space);

3) space where tourists are the main component other than tourism assets (KOWALCZYK 2011, p. 30)², which – as B. Włodarczyk writes in his works – is identified by the occurrence of tourism or in some cases tourism development (tourism space *sensu stricto*);

4) space whose attributes include not only tourism assets, tourists and tourism development (understood as facilities and services), but also all phenomena that occur as a consequence of tourism (tourism space sensu largo).

The first two categories of tourism space are embedded in the ideas and experiences concerning the world surrounding the tourist (or the potential tourist). Therefore, they are mostly sensations and assume an immaterial form. The remaining two categories of tourism space are objective in nature as they are 'materialised' and form an integral part of geographical space.

Before moving on to other considerations, preliminary assumptions should be presented. Firstly, the notion of 'tourism assets' is understood in the way J. WARSZYŃSKA & A. JACKOWSKI see it (1978, p. 28), that is as "...a set of the components of the natural environment and other than natural components which, together or separately, are objects of tourist interest". They are the components of the triad: tourism assets \rightarrow tourism value \rightarrow tourism attractiveness (KO-WALCZYK 2013, p. 38).

Secondly, in the phenomenological approach concerning what the subject literature calls tourism experience, an observation that, in the vein of Heidegger, is closely intertwined with intentionality and defined by Husserl as "...being object-oriented" (ZAHAVI 2012, p. 21, footnote 10), is of particular importance. Observation and intentionality, as well as awareness and perception, play a key role in the development of ideas harboured by tourists and of tourist behaviours (KOWALCZYK 2012). This is highlighted by de Botton, in whose opinion "the pleasure we derive from journeys is perhaps dependent more on the mindset with which we travel than on the destination we travel to" (DE BOTTON 2003, 246). In contrast, M. Merleau-Ponty expressed a view (after Lagneau) that "perception is an interpretation of the primitive intuition, an interpretation apparently immediate, but in reality gained from habit corrected by reasoning" (MERLEAU-PONTY 2005, 39, footnote 20).

Thirdly, further discussion is informed by the assumption of the existence of the sequence: tourist's space \rightarrow tourists' space \rightarrow tourism space (*sensu stricto*) \rightarrow tourism space (*sensu largo*).

4. TOURIST'S SPACE

According to J. URRY (2007, p. 14), "there is no single, model tourism experience. The way of looking at the world depends on the society, social group and historic era". In another fragment from his major work, J. Urry (referring to the views expressed by Walter) mentioned the "...subjective quality of the tourism experience" (URRY 2007, p. 77). If we confront these two positions, we should conclude that the way people perceive space with a view to undertaking tourism depends both on the social context in which they happen to live and on their personal traits.

Tourists' behaviour results from the motives that inspired them while choosing a form and place of leisure, and the latter in turn are consequences of their conceptions or ideas and earlier experiences. Since this topic has been discussed by eminent sociologists and cultural anthropologists specialising in tourism (COHEN 1979, MACCANNELL 2002, URRY 2007), including Polish (WINIARSKI & ZDEBSKI 2008, WIECZORKIE-WICZ 2012), there is no need to develop it further. It should be noted, however, that the issue of authenticity or its absence is among the key topics tackled by these authors. One of the researchers who believes that authenticity is the basic factor for a tourism experience to be satisfactory is D. MACCANNELL (2002, pp. 3, 143-159), although E. COHEN (1988, p. 375), for instance, has doubts since in his opinion the notion of 'authenticity' has many meanings and is difficult to define. This view is shared by A. Wieczorkiewicz who, referring to Cohen, pointed out that "when we speak about the authenticity of tourism or travel experience, we should take into account the motivations and expectations related to embarking upon a journey, in addition to broader social and biographical contexts" (WIE-CZORKIEWICZ 2012, p. 79). In the Polish geographical literature, the issue of authenticity is tackled in the works of B. LISOCKA-JAEGERMANN (2011) and S. KUL-CZYK (2013) among others.

Another topic discussed in works on tourist's ideas, experiences and behaviours is the issue of their instability or volatility in time and space. According to Wieczorkiewicz "...at different moments of one's

biography specific travel patterns tend to be chosen. What is more, the way they are experienced may change during a single journey" (WIECZORKIEWICZ 2012, p. 83). The second statement is important from a geographical perspective as it means that when they travel, quite obviously, tourists will encounter (or will form a part of) the various 'spaces' (which could be considered landscapes). However, another problem indicated by that author seems to be of special significance. In the part analysing in depth a description of a tour of California published in an American magazine, A. Wieczorkiewicz noted that "Californian space is (...) a picturesque landscape, an area of aesthetic sensations and existential awe" (WIECZORKIE-WICZ 2012, p. 85). Let us look at this sentence more thoroughly as it proves that the notion of 'space' may simultaneously have a strictly material meaning, as a landscape seen with the sense of sight, and an immaterial one, since it leads to experiencing specific aesthetic sensations and spiritual feelings. Such a view on this issue is concordant with the opinion expressed by A. de Botton, who wrote that "among all the places we go to but don't look at properly, which leave us indifferent, a few occasionally stand out with an impact that overwhelms us and forces us to take heed. They possess a quality that might clumsily be called beauty. This may not involve prettiness or any of the obvious features that guidebooks associate with beauty spots. Recourse to the word might just be another way of saying that we like a place" (de BOTTON 2003, p. 217). Further, he observed that "...beauty is fugitive, it is frequently found in places to which we may never return or else it results from a rare conjunction of season, light and weather" (DE BOTTON 2003, p. 218). This second statement by A. de Botton is particularly important because it implies that the way a given place is perceived may vary even in the case of one and the same person, depending on the circumstances when the act of perception takes place.

As mentioned above, tourists' behaviours are largely results of their experiences and the ideas they are based on. When considering this issue and using the term 'tourism imagination', A. WIECZORKIEWICZ (2012, p. 169) defined it as "...a propensity for a certain manner of visualising areas situated beyond the spaces of treadmill existence, for associating those visions with specific sets of meanings, and then relating them to one's own biography – the one currently experienced, a past one or one that is being projected".

The following conclusion should most likely be drawn from the above: tourists, or potential tourists, manifest different shades of 'tourism imagination', which in turn can significantly impact the final decisions that they make before embarking on what is known as tourism behaviour. The term 'tourism imagination', which is close to the approach represented by cultural anthropology or psychology, when replaced by a more 'geographical' term, i.e. tourist's space, implies an objectively existing part, or component, of geographical space which, due to its assets, is (subjectively) perceived as attractive in terms of tourism³. A question could be posed here: what makes some components of geographical space become tourism assets? In line with M. MERLEAU-PONTY'S view (2005, pp. 4-5), it can be stated that a given item becomes an asset only when it is distinguished (or 'discerned') from among its surroundings. Why does that happen? In the phenomenological approach, the perception of a part of geographical space as an asset is influenced not only by the attributes of geographical space (features of tourism assets) and the attributes of the perceiving entity (human being), but above all by the act of perception itself (which is confirmed for instance in the position expressed by A. de Botton). Therefore, those tourism resources that tourists will perceive as being distinguished in particular from other resources, and which can satisfy their emotional needs felt in a given situation, can be regarded as tourism assets (KO-WALCZYK 2012, p. 29).

5. TOURISTS' SPACE

It can be inferred from the above reflections that since the space in which phenomena defined as 'tourism' occur are perceived differently by those experiencing it, no universal 'tourist's space' can exist; only 'tourists' spaces' are possible. However, do these two differ significantly from each other? Or perhaps these individually perceived 'images' (like the landscapes, mentioned above, the ideas based on them have so many features in common that one can put forward a hypothesis that, in some contexts, it is justified to use the notion of 'tourists' space' as a consequence of a collective 'tourism imagination'.

The notion of 'tourists' space' is closely related to the term 'tourism attractiveness', which should be understood as the properties of an area or place arising from the set of features of the natural and cultural (anthropogenic) environment that arouse interest and attract tourists (KOWALCZYK 2013, p. 38). It is tourism assets that determine the attractiveness of a given place or area. The question of how they arise and what impact they have on the decisions made by tourists is discussed extensively by J. Urry, D. MacCannell, A. Wieczorkiewicz, and also A. de Botton who wrote that: "...so far as we travel in search of beauty, works of art may in small ways start to influence where we would like to travel" (DE BOTTON 2003, p. 187). However, not only works of art influence tourists' behaviour. This indeed was the case in the 18th or 19th c. in the time of the *Grand Tour*. Currently, marketing campaigns prepared both by commercial companies and public institutions (including state and local government institutions) play a much greater role.

A. Wieczorkiewicz, in reference to D. MacCannell, argues that "bringing tourism attractions to life is done on a supra-individual plane. Tourists enter the ready-made world of semiotic relationships, i.e. linkages between attractions and their markers. Furnished with adequate information, they are supposed to recognise⁴ the views'" (WIECZORKIEWICZ 2012, p. 136). D. MacCannell illustrated this issue with two dissimilar formulas which record the relationships taking place between four components: 'tourists', 'views', 'markers' and 'attractions'. In the first case, he proposed the formula "... [tourist / view / marker] attraction..." (MACCANNELL 2002, p. 64), which can suggest that a tourism attraction appears when the element of reality perceived by tourists (tourism asset) is addition-ally reflected in the relevant excerpt of the guidebook, in the form of an information poster, etc. In the second case, D. MacCannell proposed the formula: "... [marker / view / tourism] attraction..." (MACCANNELL 2002, p. 172), which can be understood to mean that a given element of reality becomes an attraction because it has earlier been named as such. de Botton discussed this issue quite extensively. When describing his trip to Barbados, he recalled that "Nothing was as I had imagined - surprising only if one considers what I had imagined. In the preceding weeks, the thought of the island had circled exclusively around three immobile mental images, assembled during the reading of a brochure and an airline timetable. The first was of a beach with a palm tree against the setting sun. The second was of a hotel bungalow with a view through French doors into a room decorated with wooden floors and white bedlinen. And the third was of an azure sky. If pressed, I would naturally have recognized that the island had to include other elements, but I had not needed them in order to build an impression of it" (DE BOTTON 2003, p. 12). In this fragment, not without reason did he mention 'a brochure and an airline timetable' which he had consulted before setting off for Barbados, since promotional materials (brochures, press, TV and radio ads, billboards at the roads, internet cookies, etc.), as well as guidebooks, books and films are the main sources of information for tourists (and potential tourists) about the places and areas worth visiting for their tourism attractiveness. According to de Botton, "Where guidebooks praised a site, they pressured a visitor to match their authoritative enthusiasm, where they were silent, pleasure or interest seemed unwarranted" (DE BOTTON 2003, pp. 113-114). Nonetheless, not always did the information provided in

brochures or guidebooks have a 'restricting' impact on tourists visiting new places. Recalling his trip to Provence, de Botton wrote that "though the landscape was not ugly, I could not - after a few moments of scrutiny - detect the charm so often ascribed to it" (DE BOTTON 2003, p. 186). However, when confronting his initial impressions with the description of the Provençal landscape in the guidebooks, he wrote "we overlook certain places because nothing has ever prompted us to conceive them as worthy of appreciation, or because some unfortunate but stray association has turned us against them. Our relationship to olive trees [which, as he wrote earlier... looked stunted, more like bushes than trees... A.K.] can be improved by being directed towards the silver in their leaves or the structure of their branches" (DE BOTTON 2003, pp. 186-187). This example demonstrates the positive impact of promotional materials, books, guidebooks, etc., on the way tourists 'take in' the place that they visit. However, in the literature of the subject, one can also encounter views that indicate that, in many cases, the attractions often pointed out by tourism agents are a result of the phenomenon described by P. ALBERS & W. JAMES (1988), which they summarise as the process of homogenisation, decontextualisation and mystification. Although these two authors, and also A. WIECZORKIEWICZ (2012, pp. 181-183), relate it to how representatives of other cultures are shown in photographs (intended for tourists), we can speak of homogenisation, decontextualisation and mystification for example in the context of tourism development, particularly in reference to the architecture of hotel facilities which, in very many cases, and regardless of whether they are found in Egypt, Tunisia or Morocco (or in Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia or Vietnam; Dominican Republic, Cuba, Jamaica or Guadalupe - further examples could be given), have been designed in nearly the same manner so as to comply with the model of tourism encapsulated in the '3S' or '4S' metaphors.

To sum up these reflections, it should be concluded that, in the Polish literature, a broader discussion of the presentation of space in promotional materials for tourists can be found in a study by A. WIECZORKIEWICZ (2012, pp. 244-252). Without going into much detail, let us just note that the author treats tourism advertisements as promoting a dream world that requires from would-be tourists "...a propensity for a certain mode of experiencing the world". Here, the word certain is understood by A. Wieczorkiewicz to mean a drive towards 'truthfulness', 'authenticity', 'originality' and 'naturalness' (WIECZORKIEWICZ 2012, p. 252), since adjectives in this vein are frequently used in marketing campaigns, even though a given 'tourism product' (yet another term tirelessly over-used in tourism promotion), can be far from authentic, natural, etc.

It can be suggested by the above that what has been called 'tourists' space' is in many cases a result of the deliberate actions of companies offering tourism services, sometimes public institutions. Nevertheless and luckily so (especially in the case of tourist behaviour known as mass tourism) - there are many exceptions to this rule, which means that tourism perceptions and the resultant tourism behaviour may be similar for different tourists, but on each occasion they result from personal experiences, and not only the socio-technical tricks employed by tourist agents, hotel systems or airlines. For this reason, without separating 'independent' tourism ideas and behaviours from 'non-independent' ones, it can be assumed that tourists' space is an objectively existing part of geographical space, which - due to its assets - is (subjectively) perceived as attractive in terms of tourism.

6. TOURISM SPACE (SENSU STRICTO)

The notion of 'tourism space' is not a new term in Polish literature on the subject. B. Włodarczyk is one of the authors who discussed the mutual relationships between the terms 'tourism space' (sensu stricto) and 'tourism space' (sensu largo); he defined tourism space (sensu stricto) on the basis of its functions and the prevalent nature of tourism (WŁODARCZYK 2011, p. 19). In the same work (Fig. 2 on the same page), he wrote that tourism space is defined on the basis of the features of the area where the phenomenon of tourism can be found. It can be said therefore, that in B. Włodarczyk's opinion, tourist space is associated with the motives that tourists are inspired by when undertaking a given activity, whilst tourism space refers to the geographical features of the area visited by tourists. Finally, it should be mentioned that B. Włodarczyk (drawing on S. Liszewski's views expressed in his publication from 1995) also commented on the term 'tourism activity space' which to him means the way space is appropriated, managed and used, and which is a process comprising five stages (exploration, penetration, assimilation, colonisation and urbanisation) (WŁODARCZYK 2011, p. 19).

The author of this paper agrees in principle with the view espoused by B. Włodarczyk regarding the essence of tourism space and is of the opinion that, in identifying such space, the motives of tourists visiting a given place (or area) should primarily be taken into account. For this reason, the definition proposed here is that tourism space (*sensu stricto*) is the objectively existing part of geographical space which, due to its assets, is (subjectively) perceived by tourists as attractive and is u s e d by them for tourism purposes.

7. TOURISM SPACE (SENSU LARGO)

In view of what has been written above, it is necessary to define tourism space (sensu largo) in a way that allows it to be distinguished from tourist's space, tourists' space and tourism space (sensu stricto). As mentioned above, unlike tourism space (sensu stricto), whose main components other than tourism assets include tourists and tourism development, the attributes of tourism space (sensu largo) are not only its assets, development and tourists, but all phenomena that occur as a consequence of tourism, be they positive or negative, that can be observed in the natural environment and those related to the changes in the socio-economic context and in the sphere of culture, both temporary and more permanent in nature. This means that tourism space (sensu largo) is an objectively existing part of geographical space and simultaneously a part of social space (as broadly understood comprising cultural, economic and political subspaces) which, due to its assets, is (subjectively) perceived by tourists and potential tourists as attractive and is used for tourism purposes, leading to changes in the natural and socio-economic (human) environments.

8. CONCLUSIONS

The above reflections indicate that the notion of 'tourism space' (*sensu largo*) can be understood in a variety of ways, and most such definitions assume that tourism space is the result of the 'overlapping' of geographical space (in its most accepted definition) and anthropological space in the meaning used by Merleau-Ponty. This means that tourism space is at one and the same time an objective and a subjective category. Since this can give rise to certain doubts (as even Kant attempted to separate space as a form of external 'experience' from what was contained within internal experience), this paper set out to identify four aspects of tourism space as traditionally understood, namely: tourist's space, tourists' space, tourism space (*sensu stricto*) and tourism space (*sensu largo*).

FOOTNOTES

¹ In the Polish subject literature, the term 'tourist-scape' is also used by S. KULCZYK (2013), who however defines it differently than is the case in works inspired by cultural anthropology.

³ This definition differs from the one formulated by B. WŁO-DARCZYK (2011, 23), who by 'human tourism space' means "...individual tourism space, a sum of the places/areas visited by a given tourist (or group of tourists)".

⁴ Put in bold after A. WIECZORKIEWICZ (2012).

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