



FULBRIGHTERS DURING THE PANDEMIC

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This newsletter includes curated stories of Fulbright Visiting Scholars 2019-2020 about their experiences during COVID-19 pandemic. Over the past months, scholars had been taking action and developing ideas to face these challenging times, whether by finding innovative learning ways, keeping a positive spirit, taking care of their accompanying family members, and much much more.

We express our sincere thanks to Fulbright Visiting Scholars 2019-2020 for their contributions to this publication and for the gracious use of their photographs.



Fulbright Visiting Scholars 2019-2020



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CHRONICLES OF THE QUARANTINE.
University of Pennsylvania.
Philadelphia Children's Hospital.



Today is the 56th day of quarantine...
And it all started like this: on Friday the 13th (!!!), on a normal day, looking forward to the weekend and with a lot of plans for the next week, I got to my house. After some housework, I looked in all my e-mail boxes (personal, university, hospital) and saw a number of almost identical messages, which I reread, refusing to understand the meaning! They were about the dangerous situation associated with the global coronavirus pandemic and the beginning of quarantine...

I was really convinced that the situation was not so serious, and even called my manager and other employees of the office with the question: well, can I come??? But I was told again with American directness: this is the law! And life began in another reality...

At the beginning of these events, I had been here for only two months, a third of my term. I moved closer to the university and clinic, because all activities here start from 7-7:30 a.m. and it was difficult for me to keep up in the beginning. Conferences, meetings, my research work, and an interim report were scheduled for April and May, so it was a real disaster to be in a situation of complete isolation and to realize that plans and hopes were being destroyed. But life must continue in other forms and this situation has become a real challenge.

So. With my hyperactive lifestyle, it was almost incomprehensible to limit myself to staying home and visiting stores or just walking... It should be noted that my roommate, in connection with the quarantine and the possibility of working remotely, moved to another state, so I was all alone... in a three-story building.

I began to collect my thoughts and reminded myself that I had a lot of plans – to read literature, write articles that require deep analysis and, accordingly, time. That is, this is the moment of glory!

My day starts the same way every day: getting up at 7 a.m. (a habit that I don't want to change!), mandatory exercise (about half an hour, and in the evening too!), breakfast, and work until about lunch (up to 2-3 hours), and then a walk. And so, schematically. But in fact, every day I listen to news from Ukraine and the world, discuss it with friends and acquaintances... there are also calls from patients from Ukraine who are in a panicked state, so almost every day I calm someone down, consult, and simply explain to them...

During this time, I gave several interviews about the situation and the severity of the problem of coronavirus infection here in the United States: for the site Gordon, twice on the channel TRKUA. I held a webinar for pediatricians about the impact of COVID-19 on the condition of the newborn and outpatient follow-up of children with coronavirus infection; wrote and submitted



for publication two articles, again related to the latest recommendations and tactics for suspected or confirmed coronavirus infection during pregnancy, childbirth, and in newborns. I also took part a in series of discussions with the Fulbright Program in Ukraine, "Health and Public Health during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Lessons and Predictions for Ukraine", which was held with the support of the U.S. Embassy in Ukraine and in partnership with America House in Kyiv.

All this time, my supervisor, Professor Diana Spetz, did not forget me: I took part in an online class that she conducted for her students as a listener, and sometimes as a co-speaker. I also regularly participate in online clinical discussions, and of course, I am working on my own project,

which I have expanded: enriching breast milk, including donor breast milk, for preterm and sick children. So there is no time to be bored. But I really miss the live "human" communication, I want to go to the clinic... because there are still a lot of unrealized plans, and time is running out...

Philadelphia, May 10, 2020



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Anthropology | *Religion as a tool of memory and identity*

(re) constructions: Ukraine and Poland in a comparative cross-section

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The quarantine at my university, Penn State University, and in the small town of State College in central Pennsylvania, in the Appalachian Mountain Valley, began immediately after spring break, on March 13. First, the university buildings, sports complexes, and library were closed, then one by one the hairdressers, stores, shops, cafés, and restaurants in the center of the town began to close. Next, churches and religious communities closed, of which there are many. The two churches that continued to open their doors once a week to the faithful – without holding services, but for individual prayers – were the Orthodox and Roman Catholic parishes. Without students and teachers, the already small and sparsely populated town became completely deserted and began to give the impression of being abandoned. Even the squirrels on campus began to jump fearlessly at any random passer-by who happened to be on the road, apparently in search of food. Students used to feed and tease them, and now the squirrels began to miss them. The isolation affected them as well.

At first, I could observe an unexpected panic: basic items disappeared from major chain supermarkets (Target, Walmart, Giant): toilet paper (the first manifestation of quarantine panic), napkins, paper towels, soap, and disinfectants. A few days later, I couldn't find any rice, salt, or any oil. However, it was not the first time for me, a resident of Ukraine, to see empty shelves and panic, because I remember empty shelves from my childhood in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It seems to me that our Ukrainian experience of constant instability, revolutions, economic and political crises, and finally war, has hardened us so much that even this new and unpredictable turn of history in the form of a global pandemic and quarantine has not become something for us to panic about. But my neighbor, a local university student who rented another room in our house, so deeply experienced the beginning of this quarantine, the new reality in the form of online learning

and, most of all, empty shelves in supermarkets, packed up and went home to be with his parents. So I was left alone. However, often loneliness in crisis situations helps to crystallize thoughts, look at the real you, put aside unnecessary things, understand what you really want and focus on it. I think now we have a unique opportunity to read, keep a diary, and reflect in peace and quiet – because there is always not enough time for this in our hectic and busy life.

Of course, all my plans for conferences and master classes, guest lectures, other public scientific events, and even volunteer activities that should have taken place during the middle of March and the end of June at various universities and cities in the United States were automatically canceled. Every day, like my colleagues, I received letter after letter with the cancellation of an event. Before the quarantine, I attended an interdisciplinary seminar on empathy research for graduate students in the Department of Psychology, and was glad to see that the folder with materials for the seminar and discussions can be accessed online. This, however, looks very different than in person. Still, I miss the real presence in an audience and the sense of people with whom I communicate and discuss. The library has extended all the books I borrowed until the end of July, which is very convenient. In addition, a lot of online resources have opened up – how and where you can read books and articles in the public domain, where they can be downloaded, where to watch educational films on anthropology, etc. In addition, the librarians at the university are extremely friendly and happy when you turn to them for help in finding a particular work that interests you. After a few of my emails, my email address was included in the automatic library mailing list, which gives weekly links to new open resources and tips on how to use them. Some events, such as lectures and open discussions, have also moved to online mode and you can listen to them, which I do from time to time. For example, there is a discussion about different ethical challenges, which is organized by the interdisciplinary Rock Ethics



Institute at the university. In general, I focus more on my own project, since all the library resources are available for this purpose. I must say, I am extremely lucky with a professor that takes care of me and my project, without her attention, advice – scientific and everyday – support and our constant communication, isolation would be much more difficult.

Now the situation with panic has leveled off, and the shelves in supermarkets are again filled with goods. Toilet paper has also been renewed as an indicator of calm. The streets are slowly filling up again with people, mostly in masks, and everyone is trying to keep their distance. The weather in Pennsylvania is very cold for this time of year (for example, it is snowing today), but even these weather conditions do not stop people, including me, from at least short walks. Walking and contemplating nature helps us organize our thoughts and breathe more deeply, as well as noticing important details, such as rainbows in the windows of houses, or colorful prints of children's hands on the glass, or toys that seem to remind us that hope helped humanity in the darkest times of its history.

Not far from where I live, there is a food bank, and all this time I could see a string of older people who stood in line in any weather and waited for help – bags of food. It reminded me painfully of home and the ration lines. In a situation of pandemics and global quarantine, when the once open borders have been closed again and we all felt in a new way what loneliness is, the meaning of old age is revealed in a completely different light. We all have recently had the opportunity to "include" the experience of being old – those who find it difficult to leave home, who do not have relationships with loved ones, who are rarely called by children because they have their own lives, and who have to come to terms with various difficult thoughts, and, above all, the idea that death is somewhere nearby and that every next day might be the last. Perhaps this experience of being alone in isolation will give all of us a little more empathy for others, a little more humanity, and will lead us to learn to give more to the world than to take from it.

State College, PA, May 9, 2020



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I combined the Fulbright research with a thematically related grant project for my organization "Permaculture in Ukraine." This had its pros and cons. Both projects started at the same time, so it was quite difficult to combine them at the beginning. However, the grant project partially funded a joint conference with the American side, and also made it possible to attract an assistant to search for respondents for a Fulbright study. Holding the conference also, on the one hand, allowed me to establish contact with key American and foreign researchers in my industry; on the other hand, it required time, which had to be divided between research and networking. COVID-19 forced the cancellation of trips to farms and the transfer of focus groups to online interviews, which again required more time. I also had to return to Ukraine a month earlier and finish my research at home.

The host university was impressive with the well-organized transition to distance learning in response to the quarantine, both by the teachers and the university administration. I received permission to attend a course on agroecology, which I plan to introduce in Ukraine. It was attended by very interesting lecturers: scientists and farmers. Despite the online format, the training was very interactive, and students were willing to join in the discussions. There were even video recordings of laboratory work performed by teachers.

Therefore, despite the lack of time and quarantine, my stay in the U.S. was very bright, productive and allowed me to establish numerous professional contacts.







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Even before the start of the quarantine, I was in Chicago, doing research in the library of the Ukrainian National Museum and met with senior members of the Ukrainian National Women's League (my host institute). After Chicago, I had planned work at the Ukrainian Museum Archive in Cleveland and to attend the Midwest Slavic Conference in Columbus... And then, in the last few days, everything changed very quickly, they began to introduce quarantine measures and cancel events. So I went back to New York. And then I was attacked by panic – the first half of the year was very active, and then suddenly – you can't leave the house, the media says nothing optimistic. It was anxious and uneasy. What helped? I wrote emails and called, arranged for the transfer of materials, telephone interviews, and just asked "how are things" with people I met or who I "didn't get to." And when you talk to someone who is probably just as anxious, is it worth showing your anxiety? So – smile and write, smile and call, sometimes a simple smiley face in an SMS will lift someone's spirits.

So now I'm in NY, working with the resources that I gathered and organizing the project that I came up with and launched – <http://seedsandroots.net/>. Seeds&Roots is a project about Ukrainians and the process of migration, preservation, modification, and development of gastronomic traditions. It is still in its infancy, but I hope that I will be able to develop it... I deliberately do not write "finish", because such projects must continue.

At the same time, I am sincerely convinced that it is an exceptional experience to be in the "capital of the world" at this time and, in a certain sense, in the center of the epidemic. It is very interesting to observe how the population is informed by SMS (no panic, friendly informative reminders), how various initiatives like Emergency Food Programs work. Very touching nightly acts of gratitude to all essential workers, it is interesting to watch how street graffiti reacts to this disturbing time – the series You Are Essential is my favorite. Ah and the main guilty pleasure – to



go out in the morning "as if to run" (actually not) and look at NY as you seldom see it. These are actually the daily tasks that keep me busy. I hope everyone has found their own and will complete the program in good health and return home full of experience and ideas.



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My last few months in California probably don't differ much from the same time, but in other regions and performed by other people. All the same reading, consumption of online content (lectures, seminars, TV) and short walks around the block.

But still, staying in California has its own characteristics. First, since the beginning of spring, I was surrounded by wonderful and often green nature. This could not but affect the mood and inspire. Second, the lectures I listen to online come from Stanford and are therefore always high-quality and intellectually provocative. Third, I gave several lectures myself. One for my university in Kyiv, about why you should choose a career as a scientist. The other

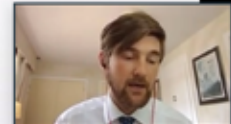
at Stanford was for the Center for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies. This last one is about Courts as History Narrators. I have several photos (or screenshots, which today are equated to photos) from this event.

And finally, isolation in the house with several other people could not help but contribute to a closeness with them. We have our own quarantine routine, which consists of watching the intellectual competition show Jeopardy in the evening and studying American culture through it.

Given all this, I can't say that I won't remember the warmth of my few months of isolation on the U.S. West Coast. :)

Why historiography literature consider courts a valuable source of information?

- the courts are unique recorders of everyday life and micro-management decisions of the authorities
- the courts produce mountains of quantifiable information about the social dynamics and day-to-day life



When the court's records were first utilized to tell history?

- Probably with the first attempts to tell the history either orally or in writing
- The interest to the courts' records certainly existed even before the explicative theory began to mount
- Think about Socrates trial



Jacques Louis David,
 "The Death of Socrates"



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COVID-19 AND FULBRIGHT 2020.

The pandemic was destined to meet in one of the world's epicenters – in New York. Soon COVID forced the city to wear a medical mask. With it, New York has lost many unique features.

The popular belief that "during a crisis, what was once unthinkable may suddenly become inevitable" has come true in New York as much as possible. The megalopolis that had the world-famous reputation of a city that never sleeps suddenly fell asleep. The subway stopped for a night's rest and disinfection for the first time in more than a hundred years. The streets were falsely empty. Television horrors turned out to be reliable facts. The memory of the dead lit an alarm at the Empire State Building.

I had to accept it. Awareness of new realities in my Fulbright practice has passed several stages. In the beginning, like everyone else, I naively expected that the quarantine was a matter of several weeks. Optimism was added by the

statements of the President of America about the opening of the United States before Catholic Easter (April 12). Over time, we came to realize the uncertainty of everything that is happening around us. The real has become virtual.

After a while, "adaptation" became a slogan of salvation. The new circumstances had not only to be accepted, but also to be able to live with them. Will it get any worse? COVID, in an alliance with the protests that usually begin under an arch in nearby Washington Square, suddenly formed a public tunnel.

The research project with the remnants of life finally moved to the Internet. Planned spring and summer scientific trips have been transformed into online activities. Not only in the USA, but also in Canada and Europe (France, Belarus). But physically, the geography of research has narrowed to the limits of New York and the surrounding area. Working visits to other places feel more like outings.



Photo by Marianna Dushar



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I first realized that life had changed because of the coronavirus when I returned from a Fulbright seminar in Kansas City on March 7, 2020, and watched a scene at the New York airport: a young couple in masks and rubber gloves were busy trying unsuccessfully to put a mask on a young baby. The child screamed and struggled, the mask was clearly too big... Then I thought: isn't the fate of this little one waiting for us all?

I completely agree with the opinion that Ukrainians have the ability to overcome difficulties and survive, this could be envied by participants of many reality shows like "Survivor" (another thing is that "survive" is not a synonym for "develop", "build", and "live with dignity", but that's a different story). That's why the coronacrisis, even far from home, became stressful for me and my family, but not so much that I grabbed my head and shouted, "Boss, everything is lost!" Yes, life has undergone drastic changes, Yes, "a few" did not count on it, Yes, "a few" plans have changed... But this is life, we are trying to build it in our own way, but there are also objective processes that you do not want to, but you need to adjust to.

I will immediately note that I worked a lot from home even before coronacrisis, the profession of an international political scientist contributes to this. Remote access to libraries does the trick. Of course, many things remained unrealized, most of the seminars organized by the Harriman Institute were not moved online, but canceled (including with my participation, I had to present the results of the annual "management" of the ZE-power at the end of April). It's a pity, but what can you do? And I will note, in my opinion, this coronacrisis proves in practice what everyone tried to say before: well, education as such cannot completely go 100% online! Well, Zoom or Google Meet cannot replace full-fledged work in the classroom or auditorium!

My son goes to the 3rd grade at two schools: the International Ukrainian School and Public School #28 in New York. Sometimes friends say that my son is "on Fulbright", given his workload. The IUS immediately worked on the principles of distance education, so nothing has changed dramatically, absolutely. And in the regular local school, there were fundamental changes: the transition to distance learning did not take place immediately.

However, at my son's local school not everyone immediately understood everything right away. First, they issued worksheets for 2 weeks, then offered to take tablets (for those who didn't have one), and connect to the Internet at home (for free for those who don't have it and who have school-age children). Gradually, there were daily meetings in Google Meet at 9:45 with teachers. There are a lot of apps children need to work with instead of notebooks. Constant support (informational), even on weekends. In New York, it has long been known that the children of this school year will not return to their desks... It's a pity that my son just started mumbling something in English, taking part in lessons not only as a listener. So I will stick with my opinion: online education is not able to 100% replace classroom education. We ask friends: what is in Chernivtsi, how is our old class, how is distance education?... I'd rather not say what they said to me. It's a pity for the children, it's a pity for the state, because I personally believe that the overall situation and solution to problems in education and culture as a residual is a tragedy that I equate to the Chernobyl tragedy. It poisons society, prevents development, breeds generation after generation like, "What difference does it make?" and "Well, at least let's laugh"... but this is also a different topic.

It's difficult to perceive the inability to walk around the city. New York is a city where you can find something new every day. Even if you've lived here all your life. Now we open "something new" within 10-15 streets from the apartment, we very rarely go to Central Park. The city authorities don't prohibit walking and breathing fresh air, which differs favorably from the realities of



Chernivtsi. However, you can't go far without transportation. And somehow you don't want to use it, you understand your contribution to the non-proliferation of the virus. "Stay home. Stay safe. Save lives», as they say.

I don't know about the others, but I personally believe that in every situation, even if it is not very pleasant, you should try to look for the positive sides and draw conclusions for the future. Many nuances of the work of local and federal authorities in the United States became clearer to me during the coronacrisis and my stay in this country. And this would not be possible in the 'normal" course of life. Responding to a deadly danger, tug-of-war in power offices "at the top", and the essence of the federal political system as such – this is

very visible and even tangible now. New York Governor Cuomo has become the frontman for the resistance of "blue" democratic states to the demonstrative indifference of the White House (and D. Trump personally) to the problems associated with the coronacrisis. The organization of work in a crisis of self-government bodies, the role of authorities and government institutions at the local and federal levels in strategic planning of overcoming the consequences of the coronacrisis... God, yes, there is a dissertation to write. Or a memoir.



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FULBRIGHT DURING THE PANDEMIC.

COVID-19 significantly changed daily activity after the introduction of the «Stay at home order» and «The President's Coronavirus Guidelines for America» by the U.S. government. In fact, since mid-March, I have stopped daily visits to my host university, since

the university decided to completely switch teaching to online and organize remote work, except for critical functions on campus. During the coronavirus pandemic, events affect each of us in different ways, but for Fulbright Scholars 2019-2020, this is a valuable experience in life: everyday life in normal mode and global quarantine mode.



Despite COVID-19, my scientific work continues by conducting weekly online discussions with American colleagues about my research and writing joint research papers.

My project is based on conducting surveys of U.S. residents, which provides for direct contact between the researcher and the respondent. So everything went according to plan before the quarantine, but since mid-March, the COVID-19 outbreak has changed the course of our daily lives. And that didn't change my mind. The main thing is a properly set goal, and the means to achieve it will always be found. The entire survey methodology, information collection, and questionnaire templates (more than 50 copies) were adapted to an online mode and an active Internet campaign was launched. This involved all the contacts I had made during the first three months of my internship. Under these conditions, a large number of letters had to be written and many negotiations conducted. But this only allowed for a better study of the features of the «American» mentality.

I had the opportunity to see two radically different rhythms of life. Lack of free time is very typical for Americans, but most of them will always find time to communicate and even help. When conducting research during the COVID-19 period, I asked many people to participate in my survey. And even people who I did not personally meet in the U.S., but only knew their friends or relatives, came to help. So, «Sorry, I'm busy» is not about U.S.-born Americans, it's one of the main conclusions I made during my online research. Support and assistance from my Fulbright brothers and sisters, both from Ukraine and other countries of the world, was also very important.

Regarding household changes, COVID-19 also led to significant adjustments in our daily activity. Social distancing measures do not prohibit you, for example, from shopping every day. This is your choice. But after watching the daily two-hour press conferences of the

American President with information about the disease by state and measures that are taken to reduce the number of infections, you quickly gain awareness of responsibility for your own actions. And putting on a mask when you leave the house does not become compulsory for you.

Buying food is a separate issue... to minimize trips by public transportation and since we don't have a car, e-Commerce and home delivery option came to our aid, which was the focus of my Fulbright project. So, online food purchases are not exotic during COVID-19, they only received new development in the U.S. You need to spend only 30 minutes of your time to make a delivery order. Since demand exceeds supply in COVID-19 conditions, sometimes you have to «hunt» for free places in the delivery schedule, but this is not a problem, you only need to do it at night once a week...

The option of the Fulbright Visiting Scholar program, which allows not only you, but also your family to come to the United States and learn about American culture, is extremely important. In the context of COVID-19, this has become even more important for the Scholars. My wife is actively involved in my research, she attended scientific seminars with my presentations and had the opportunity to personally meet my colleagues from my host university.

In any case, during the quarantine, you need to make adjustments to your daily activities, but in no case should you abandon your goals and plans.



Oksana Remeniaka

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**Art History | *Fine arts of the interwar and postwar diaspora:
a holistic view of Ukrainian art***

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Marianna Dushar, Oksana Remeniaka, and Sofika Zielyk
(U.S. Fulbright scholar 2014-2015 in Ukraine)

A week after returning from [a trip to] Houston,
a long isolation began – an experience of
lockdown in the greatest city in the world, the
city “that never sleeps”, with its massive libraries,

museums, theaters, galleries, bars, cafés, the
Columbia University campus, live communication
with incredibly interesting people, again, the
subject of a separate, rather complex essay.
Montaigne’s words that all the problems of
humanity are due to the inability to being
alone with oneself, as if they began to manifest
themselves in a very specific way...

The Fulbright Program in Ukraine, supported by
the U.S. Embassy in Ukraine and in partnership
with America House in Kyiv, conducted a
series of discussions on EDUCATION AND
CULTURE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.
As a Fulbright scholar, I discussed with Natalia
Moussienko, Ihor Poshyvailo, Serhiy Kvit, and
Andriy Kurkov what new artistic forms are
emerging as a response to the coronavirus
pandemic, whether Ukrainian culture is ready for
new challenges, whether it will find ways out of
the cultural crisis, and what the future of higher
education and science in Ukraine looks like.



The initial confusion and fright were replaced by new virtual projects. My friend and colleague, Professor Małgorzata Wrześniak from Stefan Wyszyński Catholic University, and I started a virtual project "ART IN THE TIME of PLAGUE / L'ARTE NEI TEMPI DELL'EPIDEMIA / МИСТЕЦТВО В ЧАСИ ПОШЕСТИ."

The project originated with the goal of organizing a virtual exhibition of works of art created by artists during the 2020 pandemic. The exhibition will be presented on the websites of the Stefan Wyszyński Catholic University, Warsaw and (UKSW), Modern Arts Research Institute of the National Academy of Arts of Ukraine, and several other art institutions. We strive to show that high art is not only a means to overcoming traumatic experiences and tragic events, but also a better reflection of reality, visualizing a wide range of feelings that arise in a person in difficult moments of life. We hope that the project ART IN THE TIME of PLAGUE will show a multi-colored palette of artists' experiences in a new unknown reality, and will also have its own material manifestation after the end of the pandemic.



Marian Luniv. Kyiv, Ukraine. *Arkan-Crucifix*. Oil on canvas



Aram Manukyan. Tbilisi, Georgia. *Untitled*. Oil on canvas



Roberto Scala. Milan, Italy. *Untitled*. Collage on paper plate



"In the field of art...
artistic expression is a means of
communication between people of
diverse national and cultural backgrounds.
In an age when some of the more prosaic
means of communication seem to
be breaking down in the conflicts of
opposing political and ideological opinion,
artistic expression and communication
become more important. For the
language of the artist transcends
political and cultural barriers."

— Senator J. William Fulbright



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