

# CSWS *Review*

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## WOMEN'S VOICES SHAPE NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENT

OAXACA, MEXICO



UPCOMING—Empires Conference: Gender as Political Currency to Sustain Hegemony, May 17–18, 2007



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

# CSWS Director's Message

**BY LINDA FULLER,**  
**Interim Director**

Fall has been an eventful season at CSWS. I expect the first thing on many peoples' minds is the search for a permanent director of CSWS. The position was defined as a joint appointment with the Department of Sociology. The majority of the person's time will be spent directing CSWS. She or he will also be a tenured faculty member in sociology, though she or he is not required to hold a degree in that discipline. A joint CSWS-Sociology Search Committee made a formal recommendation of four candidates



to bring to campus for interviews to both the CSWS Executive Committee and the Department of Sociology. While the CSWS Executive Committee approved the list, the Department of Sociology vote was mixed. So, as of this writing, CSWS is considering options for proceeding with the search.

On a more upbeat note, the CSWS staff hosted a "block party" for our new neighbors, the Center on Diversity and Community (CODAC) and the Center for Race, Ethnicity, and Sexuality Studies (CRESS), with whom CSWS and the Women's and Gender Studies Program now inhabit the third floor of Hendricks Hall. We shared food, drink, and tall tales. It feels great to have so many kindred

souls working in close proximity. Mia Tuan, director of CODAC, and Michael Hames-García, director of CRESS, also serve on our Executive Committee.

December also marked the first round of Agnes and David Curland Grants for Language and Gender Scholarship, a joint project of CSWS and the Yamada Language Center (see article, page 3). We are excited to collaborate more closely with Yamada to internationalize gender scholarship and creative work on campus, and we hope soon to engage in more joint projects with our new neighbors CODAC and CRESS, as well as with organizations in the wider community.

*Linda*

## In Memoriam: Rob Proudfoot and Steve Swenson

CSWS lost two friends and supporters last fall—Rob Proudfoot and Steve Swenson. Together they succeeded in building valuable programs at the University of Oregon and at CSWS, which deserve to be cherished and strengthened to honor their memories. Rob Proudfoot—as the director of both the University of Oregon–Vietnam National University Sister University Project and the Center for Indigenous Cultural Survival—worked closely with colleagues in CSWS and other UO programs to pioneer one of the first sustained scholarly exchanges and institutional partnerships between a United States institution of higher education and Vietnam National University. He began the effort of building the personal and scholarly connections that allowed a very unique and important project to flower even before the economic reform policies that paved the way for more open relations between the U.S. and Vietnam. Once relations were fully normalized, Rob provided outstanding leadership to this project, one result of which was the development of strong ties among



*Rob Proudfoot*

CSWS, Vietnam National University, and the Vietnam Women's Union.

But Rob's legacy at CSWS and the university went far beyond this very visible work. As an indigenous scholar, Rob was committed to providing support and intellectual guidance to countless Native American UO students, including some of the native women who formed the Native Women's and Native Communities Research Interest Groups. Rob had a razor-sharp critique of how institutions of higher education, including the UO, fail to recognize the value of the knowledge



*Steve Swenson*

and knowledge-production processes created and sustained by communities outside dominant Western intellectual traditions. Rob's vision of institutional change went far beyond calls for inclusiveness and diversity; he worked toward a university that honored these multiple intellectual traditions, and in so doing he offered students rare and valuable educational experiences. We were both privileged to work closely with him over many years as he held fast to his ideals and offered incalculable gifts to colleagues, students, administrators, and friends.

*Continued on next page*



## Did You Know?

A \$100 donation to CSWS would fund one Agnes and David Curland Grant for a faculty member, or two such grants for graduate students (see story below). Curland awardees will use these grants to study a language they need to use, but which is not regularly taught at the University of Oregon, in order to carry out a research or creative project on gender.

Please consider becoming a member of CSWS! In addition to the Curland Grants, your membership dollars support critical programs at the center, including travel grants for scholars, research support grants, and the Road Scholars program. Just pull out the envelope enclosed and send your check, payable to "University of Oregon Foundation-CSWS."

We thank you very much!

## New Research Grant Available

The Center for the Study of Women in Society and the Yamada Language Center are jointly sponsoring the **2006 AGNES AND DAVID CURLAND GRANTS FOR LANGUAGE AND GENDER STUDIES**. The purpose of these grants is to encourage the internationalization of gender scholarship and creative work by promoting the study of languages for which instruction is not offered in the regular UO curriculum. For example, Curland grants can be used to cover tuition for the study of Portuguese, Arabic, Swahili, Korean, or any other language taught through the World Languages Academy or the Yamada self-study language program. The grant deadline for this term just passed, and awardees will be announced soon.

### In Memoriam *continued*

The outpouring of respect and love for Rob at the service held at the Many Nations Longhouse in October was a sign that the seeds he planted in the heads and hearts of so many of us will thrive despite his absence. He is sorely missed.

Rob's teaching extended to his colleagues and to institutional leaders at the University of Oregon. He was generous with his wisdom and steadfast in his commitments to social justice, collaboration, and to his research and teaching. One of his most treasured collaborations was with his longtime friend Steve Swenson, who worked closely with Rob on both the Vietnam project and the founding of the Center for Indigenous Cultural Survival. That we have now lost both these committed scholars and leaders is tragic. It means a great many of us will have to work very hard to ensure that what these fine men built at the University of Oregon will thrive. We at CSWS intend

to contribute to this effort to honor the many gifts Rob and Steve gave CSWS and the university. And for some of us, this effort honors not only valued colleagues but also treasured friends able to envision a more inclusive, more just, more spiritual, more democratic, and more life-affirming world.

—Sandi Morgen and Linda Fuller

## CSWS Research Grant Deadlines

### CSWS RESEARCH SUPPORT GRANTS

#### CSWS LAUREL AWARD

#### JANE GRANT DISSERTATION FELLOWSHIP

(see eligibility guidelines online)

**Deadline: Monday, February 5, 2007, by 5:00 p.m.** For grant application forms, stop by CSWS at 340 Hendricks Hall; request a copy by campus mail, [csws@uoregon.edu](mailto:csws@uoregon.edu); telephone (541) 346-5015; or download and print from our website, [csws.uoregon.edu/grants/index.shtml](http://csws.uoregon.edu/grants/index.shtml).

## KUDOS

This column reports significant accomplishments by UO faculty members, graduate students, and community members. See the entire list by visiting [csws.uoregon.edu](http://csws.uoregon.edu).



**MONIQUE R. BALBUENA**, assistant professor, Clark Honors College, had her essay, "Sepharad in Brazil: Between the Metaphorical and the Literal," accepted for publication in *Modern Jewish Studies* (Winter 2006). Also forthcoming is her text "Is There a Jewish Brazilian poetry?" in *Noaj: Revista Literaria* (published in Israel by the International Association of Jewish Writers in the Spanish and Portuguese Languages). Her chapter, titled "*Spanyolit* in Latin America: An Old Language in the New World," has been accepted for the book *Sephardic Identity in the Americas: A Handbook of History and Literature*, edited by Edna Aizenberg and Margalit Bejarano, forthcoming from the Avraham Harman Institute for the Study of Contemporary Jewry and Magnes Press in Jerusalem.

**CHERIS KRAMARAE**, visiting professor, CSWS, presented "Minding Our Bodies" at the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language, and Gender (St. Louis, October 2006). She also has three publications in press: "Cyberfeminist Practice: An Afterword Leading to the Future" in *Webbing Cyberfeminist Practice: Communities, Pedagogies, and Social Action* (Kristine Blair, Radhika Gajjala, and Christine Tulley, editors), Hampton Press; "Gender Matters in Online Learning" in *Handbook of Distance Education* (Michael G. Moore and William G. Anderson, editors); and "Gender Equity in the Use of Educational Technologies" in *Handbook for Achieving Gender Equity through Education* (Susan Klein, editor).

# WOMEN'S VOICES AND THE COLLECTIVE DECLARATION OF PROTEST IN OAXACA



*Analisa Taylor*



*Gabriela Martinez*



*Lynn Stephen*



*Stephanie Wood*

**M**otivated by their goal of promoting interdisciplinary research in Latin American gender studies, a group of four UO researchers funded by CSWS traveled to Oaxaca this past August. Each educator—Stephanie Wood, Analisa Taylor, Lynn Stephen, and Gabriela Martínez—has a unique set of academic objectives linked to this fertile cultural and educational center, the historic home of the Zapotec and Mixtec peoples of Mexico.

The research trip developed from plans to build strong cooperative relationships with several Oaxacan institutions and to generate cross-cultural research teams and projects in ethnohistory, archaeology, cultural studies, media studies, literature, and cultural anthropology.

The four members of the Americas Research Interest Group (RIG) arrived in this normally placid and picturesque city on August 7 to find themselves in the midst of a social rebellion aimed at removing Governor Ulises Ruiz Ortiz from office and achieving economic and social justice. The protest has since escalated into a major political and social conflict resulting in street battles, murders, arrests, and a violent crackdown from federal riot police.

“Having the chance to observe this new social movement actually

galvanized and forged strong bonds between CSWS and the local women,” said Lynn Stephen, professor of anthropology. “We are so impressed with the women we met; they are teachers and intellectuals who, in a time of need, became grassroots social activists.”

The arrival of the UO faculty in Mexico at a time of social unrest opened up exciting and unexpected opportunities to study the role of women at the heart of a burgeoning protest movement. The majority were indigenous women speaking native Zapotec and Mixtec languages from dozens of rural villages, where they work as elementary school teachers. Due to the lack of government support for educational programs in rural areas, teachers make a yearly pilgrimage to the capital city of Oaxaca to negotiate for better conditions, from bricks and mortar to fix school walls to breakfasts for children.

When the governor ignored their demands, the teachers and their families responded by occupying the plaza with their tents and sleeping mats. What began as a demonstration to demand higher salaries for teachers and better funding for rural education evolved into a political referendum on the legitimacy of the Oaxacan state government.

Stephanie Wood, senior research

associate at CSWS and co-coordinator of the Americas RIG, and other RIG members are pursuing formalized relationships between the University of Oregon and academic institutions in Oaxaca. She and Judith Musick, CSWS associate director, are developing a relationship with the Burgoa Library and the City Museum of Oaxaca with the hope of further advancing their manuscript studies. While the unsettled situation in Oaxaca meant that some key collaborators had left town for safer communities, they were still able to make progress toward securing academic connections with key institutions and scholars.

“These connections are serving to cross-fertilize our research by increasing contact with like-minded scholars and practitioners in Oaxaca,” Wood said. “We also formed closer ties with La Casa de la Mujer, the first women’s organization in Oaxaca with a twenty-six year history of providing scholarships to young women who otherwise wouldn’t have a chance to continue their high school education. Our Americas RIG is proposing that La Casa become a sister institution to CSWS. We can then send UO faculty members and graduate students to study how women are creating the social platform to address preventive health care, maternal death, domestic violence, the lack of educational opportunities, and other topics relevant to women in society.”

Oaxaca figures prominently in the research writings of Analisa Taylor, assistant professor of Romance languages. She believes that witnessing the teachers’ protest movement will prove extremely

important for her research on how gendered indigenous movements for political and economic self-governance are reshaping contemporary Latin American art and literature.

"Indigenous women's power materialized right on the streets of Oaxaca," said Taylor. "Oaxaca is a blister that popped, but is indicative of a larger national fester. Why? Women and indigenous people want more say in how they are represented politically and culturally."

Oaxacan women have been a fundamental presence in this opposition movement, working barricades, organizing marches, and, most importantly, leading the peaceful takeover of the government radio station. Their solidarity and strength parallels what Taylor described in her recent article, "Malinche and Matriarchal Utopia: Gendered Visions of Indigeneity in Mexico," which juxtaposed the national myth viewing indigenous women as submissive and lacking legitimate identity with the contribution they made to the 1994 Zapatista protest in the rural highlands of Chiapas.

Taylor sees the current teachers' protest as challenging conditions where women's lives are undervalued in the context of ongoing cultural and political misrepresentation. "I see the protest in Oaxaca growing out of women connecting their own local struggles with national strife and globalization," Taylor said. "They're asking for answers as to why Oaxaca ranks first place in Mexico for maternal deaths, and second in femicide."

Assistant professor of journalism Gabriela Martínez, an award-winning documentary filmmaker, was able to shoot footage of the Oaxacan street marches and the women's occupation of the radio stations. "Everything about the 'revolution' had to do with women

taking over the media," she said.

This particular trip to Oaxaca gave Martínez a fresh understanding of the critical role of the media at the birth of an urban social movement in which women play a key role. She hints that the parallels to media trends in the United States were hard to miss. "It would be like people here taking over Fox News—these [Oaxacan] women had no experience in media to run a news station and its equipment. And yet, they were able to challenge the power of the government." Martínez plans to use her experience in Oaxaca to publish an article on the role of the media in relationship to women's political struggles in Latin America. She and Lynn Stephen also plan to work together on a documentary film about the Oaxaca social rebellion.

"One very memorable experience occurred when we were able to get permission to enter the government radio station that was taken over by women activists," Martínez said. "We witnessed the creation of Radio Cacerola, ironically dubbed 'Sauce Pan Radio' for the pots and pans women were banging in their protest march. Radio Cacerola became an outlet for women to talk about the right of women to initiate social change."

The fact that women orchestrated the takeover of Oaxaca's media outlets gives weight to Lynn Stephen's assertion about the central role of "being able to speak" and gaining a public space to be heard (*Zapotec Women: Gender, Class, and Ethnicity in Globalized Oaxaca*, Duke University, 2005). Stephen, who has been conducting research in Oaxaca for the past twenty-three years, observed that women, the primary organizers of protest gatherings, often insist that indigenous languages be spoken as a way to capture the lived experience of being both a woman and an indigenous member of Mexican society. Formalizing the legitimacy of their native language is a way "to

be heard, respected and to stake their claims to cultural citizenship."

"The women behind the radio station [takeover] do not appear to be militant fighters, but are often longtime residents who have finally gotten fed up with their invisibility and bad treatment by successive state governments, which have been promising to improve their lives for decades," Stephen said. "What these women and other leaders are really doing is attempting to put into motion an alternative model of government. The faculty members on this CSWS-sponsored research trip got to see this new vision of government from the ground level."

A primary force behind this alternative programming was outspoken activist Concepción Núñez Miranda. The Americas RIG is planning to bring Núñez, a Oaxacan sociologist and teacher, and two other scholars and activists to Oregon for a CSWS spring symposium.

The CSWS affiliates agree that the presence of three invited Oaxacan women leaders so intimately involved in shaping change in Mexico will be a watershed event for Latin American and gender studies at the UO.

It is striking that international news coverage makes no mention of the central role of women in the uprising, their successful takeover of the media, or the arrest and incarceration of hundreds of mothers, wives, and daughters for demanding better conditions and equal opportunities for children, woman, and indigenous peoples. To understand the extraordinary transformation of indigenous women from teachers and librarians into rebels and radio hosts, plan to attend Oaxaca Week, April 16–20, an event that will truly benefit students and scholars from two societies (see article, page 7).



# Greetings from Women's and Gender Studies

By **Ellen Scott**,  
Program Director

The Women's and Gender Studies faculty is off to a busy start this year. We are delighted to welcome our new colleague and



*Ellen Scott*

friend, Ernesto Martinez, joint faculty member with the Ethnic Studies Program. Ernesto has already proven a fabulous addition to our small faculty, bringing new intellectual interests and expertise as well as a lot of energy and enthusiasm for our collective work of teaching and researching. We are thrilled to have him as part of our faculty. I am also new to the Women's and Gender Studies Program (WGS), coming from sociology to direct the program. My initial focus has been on outreach efforts to expand the graduate certificate program and the number of affiliated faculty members.

On November 2, we sponsored an afternoon tea and information session for graduate students interested in earning the WGS certificate. The graduate certificate may be pursued as an enhancement to a graduate degree in another discipline or as a complement to an interdisciplinary master's degree with a focus on women's and gender studies. We were excited to see more than twenty students attend and more than ten others write to request more information about the certificate. They come from across the disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. Unfortunately the sciences were not well-represented, and we hope to encourage graduate students taking a feminist or gender studies approach to their work in the sciences to join us.

After reaching out to both new and established faculty, the number of WGS-affiliated faculty members has expanded substantially. Among these are Scott Pratt, Jenifer Presto, Mark Unno, Mary Jaeger, Sangita Gopal,



*Ernesto Martinez*

offer diverse, first-rate courses, and guide our program as we grow and transform in response to a changing intellectual and demographic context. I hope to find more ways of soliciting your insights and expertise in the

Tania Triana, and Beata Stawarska. We are glad to have you on the list of faculty members we can count on to mentor students in the certificate program,

development of the Women's and Gender Studies Program.

Soon our affiliates will be asked to submit a list of the courses they teach that might be considered for cross-listing with WGS. We plan to create a central list of commonly taught courses that will demonstrate to students what is already evident to us: the University of Oregon offers an extraordinary, interdisciplinary course of study in gender and sexuality for both undergraduate and graduate students, thanks to the Women's and Gender Studies program and its affiliated faculty. Thank you for the work all of you do.

## CSWS Receives \$100,000 NEH Grant

The CSWS Wired Humanities Project, coordinated by Stephanie Wood and Judith Musick, received a two-year Collaborative Research Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The project title is "The Kislak Techialoyans at the Library of Congress: Preparing Digital Facsimiles with English Translations." *Techialoyan* refers to a genre of town histories written in Nahuatl, the language of the Aztecs, and painted on native fig-bark paper in the late seventeenth century.

The Wired Humanities Project (WHP) received the grant to develop electronic publications of four *Techialoyan* manuscripts. Until recently, the manuscripts had been held in private collections, unknown to the scholarly community. These manuscripts will help illuminate the role of women in Nahua society as indigenous communities responded to Spanish colonization.

The gender content of the Kislak *Techialoyan* manuscripts feeds into the "Gender in Early Mesoamerica" online searchable database that WHP is constructing. The manuscripts will be indexed in the WHP online portal site ("Virtual Mesoamerican Archive"), [whp.uoregon.edu/projects.html](http://whp.uoregon.edu/projects.html).



*Kislak Techialoyan manuscript.*

### CSWS FACULTY AND STAFF

**Linda Fuller**  
interim director

**Judith Musick**  
associate director

**Shirley Marc**  
office coordinator

**Peggy McConnell**  
accountant

# Empires Conference

MAY 17–18, 2007

The Empires Conference theme addresses empires from the perspectives of Euro-American global domination as well as the emerging empires of India and China. Participants focus on investigating the extent to which these emerging empires of the twenty-first century collude with and insert themselves as “players” into the existing imperial formation. Attention will also be given to discovering the new strategies and tactics emergent empires are bringing into being, especially in regional and peripheral contexts. Invited speakers include scholars from Purdue, Stanford, and UC Berkeley, among other academic institutions.

Working titles for the three panels are

- “Theorizing Empires,” emphasizing how gender and race are mobilized not only in the traffic between existing and emerging empires but also between centers and peripheries
- “Cultural Mediations of Empire(s),” examining how empires use gendered and racialized images to institute and sustain hegemony over political, economic, military, and cultural forms of power
- “Contesting Empires,” exploring how imperial formations are locally and regionally contested

CSWS and the conference planning committee—Sangita Gopal, Lamia Karim, and Sandi Morgen—wish to thank the Carlton Raymond and Wilberta Ripley Savage Professorship in International Relations and Peace for its support of this event.

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## Oaxaca Week

APRIL 16–20, 2007

The Americas RIG is hosting three Oaxacan women who are creating media projects on gender, sexuality, and feminism, and how they intersect with key political processes, power structures, and cultural narratives in Mexico, past and present. CSWS will screen some of their documentaries, host a multimedia installation, schedule a poetry reading, and organize a number of other events during Oaxaca Week. For information, contact Stephanie Wood (swood@uoregon.edu). Oaxacan guests include the following:



**CONCEPCIÓN NÚÑEZ MIRANDA**, a leader in the social change movement in Oaxaca who was involved in the recent women’s takeover of radio and TV. She created a documentary about the inhumane treatment of indigenous women in Oaxacan prisons, which won a national award and led to the release of some of these women.

**MARGARITA DALTON**, who received her doctorate in history from the University of Barcelona, is a poet and historian who has written various books about women in Oaxaca.

**JULIA BARCO**, who received her B.A. in communications from Cornell University and M.A. in visual studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, moves between Mexico City and Oaxaca, creating documentaries, fictional films, and experimental media. Barco’s films have been exhibited internationally, and she is the recipient of scholarships in film, video, and multimedia projects from the MacArthur and Rockefeller foundations.

## Winter Term Events

**Lecture: One-and-a-half Generation Mexican Youth in Oregon: Pursuing the Mobility Dream**

**February 8, 2007, 2:00 p.m.**

**Browsing Room, Knight Library, University of Oregon**

Speaker Erlinda Gonzales-Berry is professor of Chicano and Latino studies and chair of the Department of Ethnic Studies at Oregon State University. Professor Gonzales-Berry has published extensively on Chicano and *nuevomexicano* literature and culture. Her current research interest is immigration from Mexico to the United States.

## Lecture Series

**Wednesdays, noon**

**330 Hendricks Hall, University of Oregon**

**JANUARY 17:** *Divine Heresy: Feminist Revisions of Sacred Texts*, Mandolin Brassaw, graduate student, English

**JANUARY 31:** *Urban Catastrophes and Racial Anxieties: Los Angeles and the Politics of Disaster*, Hee-Jung Serenity Joo, graduate student, comparative literature

**FEBRUARY 21:** *Queering the Quarrel: Contexts and Conflicts in the Sapphic Poetry of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz*, Amanda Powell, senior instructor, Department of Romance Languages

**FEBRUARY 28:** *Community Engagement and Independent Publishing: Zines and Gender Activism*, Julie Voelker-Morris, instructor, Arts and Administration Program, and coeditor, *CultureWork* (published by the Center for Community Arts and Cultural Policy); and Robert Voelker-Morris, adjunct instructor, Arts and Administration Program, and project coordinator, Don Hunter Archive, UO Museum of Natural and Cultural History

**MARCH 14:** *Women’s Hip-Hop in Brazil*, Lillian Lea Darwin Lopez, graduate student, comparative literature

For updated information visit [csws.uoregon.edu](http://csws.uoregon.edu), or call (541) 346-5015.

# **Thresholds of Belonging** by Analisa Taylor

*Thresholds of Belonging: Indigeneity in the Mexican Cultural Imagination* is about changing notions of what it means to produce knowledge about indigenous peoples in the context of wider political and economic shifts in contemporary Mexico. I aim to show that recent indigenous self-determination movements are not only a response to marginalization from national political processes but also to the persistent manipulation and denigration of indigenous identity within dominant cultural realms. I critique the confluence of racial and gender ideologies that have objectified indigenous peoples as cultural icons of national identity, yet marginalized them from political processes affecting their well-being. For example, when Comandante Esther of the Zapatista Army for National Liberation addressed the National Congress in 2001, she stated that she was not coming to the political process as a Zapatista but as an indigenous

woman, an identity that, for her, was synonymous with the poorest of the poor. Her portrait of indigenous women's place in national society is painfully stark: "The mestizos and the wealthy mock us indigenous women because of our way of dressing, of speaking, our language, our way of praying and of curing, and for our color, which is the color of the earth we work. . . . We, in addition to being women, are indigenous, and as such, we are not recognized."

I believe that to understand the obstacles indigenous activists such as Comandante Esther now face—as well as the gains they have made—demands a closer look at the images and ideas created about them throughout the twentieth century. Drawing from literary and artistic sources, I argue that government policies aimed at controlling indigenous peoples' land, labor, and political loyalty have fed upon and into the gendered, sexualized, and infantilized images of the Indian in

different types of cultural production.

I also explore how the state dramatizes its self-scripted role as revolutionary benefactor. Between the 1930s and the 1970s, state-sponsored cultural and intellectual production has cast indigenous peasants as helpless refugees in need of rescue from colonial and nineteenth-century systems of debt-peonage. Today, however, within the context of the current economic crisis and neoliberal privatization policies, the state has abandoned its carefully crafted narratives of revolutionary justice and national belonging for the country's land-poor indigenous peasants.

These problems are significant because the political ritual of manipulating indigenous cultural identity has created a political culture in which racism and serious social inequalities are seldom addressed in official government forums. I hope my book will contribute to a better understanding of how social identities have been shaped through art and literature in postrevolutionary and postnationalist Mexico.



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