

# Social Resistance, Ethical Consciousness and Pingal Prosody in Contemporary Haryanvi Ragni

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**Abstract**—The present study examines the relationship between ethical consciousness, social resistance, and Pingal prosody in selected contemporary Haryanvi Ragnis composed by Anand Kumar Ashodhiya. Focusing on the compositions “बेईमानी और लालच,” “मुफ्तखोरी और लालच,” “लोभ की चौसर,” and “बुनावी शतुरमुर्ग,” the article explores how Haryanvi Ragni functions as a medium of public ethics, cultural memory, and socio-political critique within North Indian folk traditions. The study employs a qualitative interdisciplinary approach combining textual interpretation, oral-performance analysis, cultural semiotics, and prosodic examination. It argues that contemporary Haryanvi Ragni has evolved into a significant vernacular form through which issues such as corruption, welfare exploitation, commercialization of education and healthcare, electoral manipulation, and moral decline are articulated in culturally accessible ways.

The article further demonstrates that the prosodic features of these compositions—including Samamatrik rhythmic organization, Yati placement, refrain structures, and Antya-Anupras patterns—strengthen emotional communication and collective memorability during oral performance. Drawing upon insights from oral tradition studies and Indian folk aesthetics, the study situates Haryanvi Ragni as a living performative tradition where ethical reflection and oral poetics intersect. It also identifies a continuing research gap in interdisciplinary studies combining Pingal analysis with socio-cultural interpretation in Haryanvi folk literature. The article therefore contributes to contemporary folk literary discourse by positioning Haryanvi Ragni as an important vernacular tradition of ethical expression, oral aesthetics, and democratic social critique.

**Index Terms**—Haryanvi Ragni, Pingal Shastra, Folk Performance, Oral Tradition, Social Resistance, Cultural Semiotics, Folk Prosody, Vernacular Ethics, Institutional Critique, Saang Tradition, North Indian Folk Poetics, Oral Epistemology, Folk Aesthetics

## I. INTRODUCTION

### Background Study and Contextual Framework

The folk traditions of North India have historically functioned not merely as artistic expressions but as repositories of ethical discourse, cultural memory, and collective regional consciousness. Within this broad oral landscape, the Haryanvi Ragni and Saang traditions occupy a particularly significant position because of their ability to localize philosophical, political, and social experiences into accessible performative idioms. Unlike classical Sanskrit literary traditions that often privilege courtly refinement, theological abstraction, and textual permanence, Haryanvi oral forms derive their strength from immediacy, participatory performance, social accessibility, and lived experiential realism. The folk performer in the Haryanvi cultural sphere is not merely a singer or narrator but a social commentator, moral witness, and community intellectual whose performance negotiates everyday ethical tensions within agrarian and semi-urban life.

The distinction between classical narration and folk reinterpretation becomes particularly important in understanding the evolution of modern Haryanvi Ragni. Whereas classical Indian narratives frequently operate within codified aesthetic structures rooted in Sanskrit dramaturgy, folk reinterpretation transforms these inherited cultural values into dynamic vernacular experiences shaped by regional anxieties, caste relations, economic structures, administrative realities, and democratic aspirations. This process of localization enables oral traditions to function as decentralized knowledge systems that preserve regional philosophies outside institutional literary hierarchies. The present corpus of Anand

Kumar Ashodhiya's Ragnis demonstrates this transformation with remarkable clarity by converting contemporary concerns such as corruption, welfare fraud, electoral manipulation, institutional commercialization, and ethical collapse into culturally resonant folk discourse.

A.K. Ramanujan's observations regarding the plurality of Indian narrative traditions remain especially relevant here because Haryanvi Ragni continuously reshapes inherited ethical frameworks according to local social realities. Richard Bauman's conception of performance as communicative action also provides a valuable interpretative framework for understanding how these compositions move beyond textuality into participatory public ethics. Similarly, Ruth Finnegan's foundational work on oral literature helps situate Haryanvi Ragni within a broader global discourse of performative textuality where oral structures embody social cognition and cultural continuity. Stuart Blackburn's studies on Indian oral epics further illuminate how vernacular performance traditions sustain communal memory while simultaneously negotiating contemporary social transformation.

The cultural significance of Haryanvi Saang and Ragni traditions has also been acknowledged within Indian aesthetic scholarship by thinkers such as Kapila Vatsyayan, who recognized folk dramaturgy as a living extension of India's performative civilizational consciousness. Hazari Prasad Dwivedi and Ramchandra Shukla similarly emphasized the ethical and social vitality of vernacular literary traditions in shaping public consciousness. Vidyanivas Mishra's reflections on lok parampara as a living epistemological structure are particularly applicable to the present study because the selected Ragnis embody an organic fusion of लोक-चेतना, लोक-भाषा, and लोक-नैतिकता.

The primary textual foundation of the present article emerges from Anand Kumar Ashodhiya's Avikavani Haryanvi Ragni corpus, especially the compositions "बेईमानी और लालच," "मुफ्तखोरी और लालच," "लोभ की चौसर," and "चुनावी शत्रुसुर्ग." These texts collectively construct a powerful folk archive of social resistance wherein institutional critique is articulated through highly musical, orally performative, and culturally grounded poetic structures. The article therefore approaches these compositions not merely as literary texts but as

performative ethical documents situated within the living continuum of Haryanvi folk consciousness.

## II. LITERARY REVIEW

The academic study of Indian folk literature has historically oscillated between ethnographic documentation, literary appreciation, and performance-centered analysis. Early Hindi literary criticism often privileged classical textual traditions while folk literature remained marginalized within formal literary discourse. However, modern scholarship gradually recognized oral traditions as intellectually sophisticated cultural systems possessing independent aesthetic frameworks and social functions. Ramchandra Shukla's historical understanding of Hindi literature acknowledged the deep connection between लोक-साहित्य and collective consciousness, while Hazari Prasad

Dwivedi viewed vernacular traditions as carriers of civilizational continuity that preserved ethical energies absent from elite literary structures.

Within the domain of oral tradition studies, Ruth Finnegan fundamentally transformed literary scholarship by arguing that oral literature should not be evaluated through the standards of written textuality alone. Her framework remains particularly important for Haryanvi Ragni studies because these compositions derive meaning through rhythm, vocal modulation, communal interaction, and performative improvisation. Richard Bauman further extended this understanding by conceptualizing oral performance as socially situated communicative practice. His theoretical model becomes especially useful in examining how Haryanvi Ragnis function simultaneously as entertainment, political commentary, and moral pedagogy.

Stuart Blackburn's work on Indian oral epics and regional narrative traditions established that oral compositions are not static relics but evolving cultural systems responsive to changing social realities. This observation directly applies to contemporary Haryanvi Ragni, particularly in the works of Anand Kumar Ashodhiya, where modern political corruption, institutional commercialization, and democratic decline are incorporated into traditional performative frameworks. Similarly, Kapila Vatsyayan's scholarship on Indian

performance traditions demonstrated that folk dramaturgy possesses its own internal aesthetics governed by movement, rhythm, oral cadence, and social participation rather than rigid textual codification.

Scholars such as Alf Hiltebeitel and Iravati Karve have contributed significantly to the interpretative understanding of Indian narrative structures, especially regarding ethical conflict, social duty, and power relations within vernacular retellings. Their approaches help illuminate how folk traditions reinterpret institutional authority and moral failure through localized cultural symbols. Nagendra's contributions to Hindi poetics and literary aesthetics also remain relevant for understanding the emotional architecture and रस-संरचना embedded within folk poetry.

Despite these important contributions, scholarship specifically devoted to Haryanvi Ragni often remains either descriptive or archival in nature. Existing studies have frequently concentrated on the historical evolution of Saang performance, linguistic characteristics of Haryanvi dialects, or broad cultural significance without undertaking detailed interdisciplinary analysis. In particular, there remains a substantial absence of integrated research combining Pingal prosody, performance theory, psychological interpretation, feminist reading, and socio-political criticism within the same analytical framework.

The published scholarly works of Anand Kumar Ashodhiya contribute significantly toward addressing this gap. His research engagements with Haryanvi Saang-Shaili Ragnis, Pingal Shastra methodology, folk aesthetics, and regional cultural memory establish an emerging academic framework that treats Haryanvi folk literature as a serious intellectual tradition rather than merely a regional entertainment form. His published writings on Pingal structures in Haryanvi Ragni and interpretative studies of folk-cultural symbolism provide methodological foundations for examining oral literature through interdisciplinary humanities perspectives.

Nevertheless, even within contemporary scholarship, a detailed study examining how Pingal prosody intensifies social resistance discourse in modern Haryanvi Ragni remains largely absent. Existing research rarely explores how metrical cadence, Yati

structure, Antya-Anupras, tonal gravity, and oral-musical repetition shape ethical persuasion and collective emotional response. Similarly, the psychological dimensions of greed, institutional violence, civic apathy, and moral fragmentation embedded within contemporary folk compositions have not received sustained academic attention. The present study therefore attempts to fill this research gap by developing an integrated analytical framework that combines folk-performance theory, oral tradition studies, cultural semiotics, Pingal prosody, democratic criticism, and psychological interpretation.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts a qualitative and interdisciplinary methodology grounded in textual interpretation, oral-performance analysis, and Pingal-based prosodic study. Since Haryanvi Ragni exists simultaneously as poetic text, musical performance, and community interaction, the selected compositions are approached as performative cultural documents rather than merely written literary artifacts.

The primary sources include selected Ragnis from Anand Kumar Ashodhiya's Avikavani corpus, especially "बेईमानी और लालच," "मुफ्तखोरी और लालच," "लोभ की चौसर," and "चुनावी शत्रुमुर्ग." These texts are examined as representative examples of contemporary folk responses to corruption, civic anxiety, institutional distrust, and ethical decline. Secondary sources include works related to oral tradition studies, Indian folk aesthetics, performance theory, Hindi literary criticism, and Pingal prosody.

The analytical method combines close textual reading with performance-oriented interpretation. Attention is given to metaphor, symbolic imagery, vernacular idiom, refrain patterns, cadence, repetition, and audience-oriented oral delivery. Cultural semiotic analysis is used to interpret recurring folk symbols such as "लोभ की चौसर," "शत्रुमुर्ग," and "चोरों की सरदारी" as ethical and socio-political metaphors rooted in regional experience.

The study also incorporates a focused prosodic analysis of Matra-Santulan, Yati placement, rhythmic recurrence, Antya-Anupras, and oral cadence structures. Rather than treating Pingal as an isolated technical system, the article examines how prosodic

organization contributes to emotional emphasis, memorability, and performative impact during collective recitation. Through this integrated framework, the research investigates the relationship between folk aesthetics, ethical commentary, and oral communicative power in contemporary Haryanvi Ragni.

#### IV. NARRATIVE AND LITERARY ANALYSIS

The selected Ragnis collectively construct a powerful vernacular discourse of social resistance rooted in ethical introspection rather than superficial political accusation. Unlike conventional protest literature that frequently externalizes blame, these compositions repeatedly turn the critical gaze inward toward society itself. This internal ethical accountability becomes one of the defining literary characteristics of Anand Kumar Ashodhiya's folk-poetic framework. The speaker within these Ragnis is not positioned as a detached commentator but as a participant-observer embedded within the moral contradictions of contemporary society.

The Ragni “बेईमानी और लालच” establishes this ethical landscape through the symbolic contrast between the idealized national image of India as “सोने की चिड़िया” and the corrosive spread of corruption. The opening line, “सोने की चिड़िया कहलावे पर, हिन्द कैसे भैर उडारी,” immediately transforms national memory into ethical irony. The metaphor functions simultaneously as cultural nostalgia and political accusation. The composition does not isolate corruption within a single institution but reveals it as a networked social pathology extending across bureaucracy, policing, political authority, and everyday civic behaviour. Particularly striking is the transformation of the “रक्षक” into “भक्षक,” which dramatizes the collapse of institutional morality through a compact oral metaphor. The line “हराम का खा सुत बणै हारामी” further intensifies the psychological critique by suggesting that corruption reproduces itself generationally through normalized ethical conditioning.

The narrative structure of the Ragni repeatedly returns to the language of oath and betrayal. The lines “तूँ सूँ खा के नै आया था, जनता की सेवा करूँगा” and “तूँ तै ले के शपथ, भूलग्या सेवक” invoke democratic promises only to expose their moral collapse. Here the folk idiom becomes an

instrument of public accountability. Rather than employing abstract political terminology, the Ragni uses emotionally immediate rural language capable of reaching collective consciousness through performative resonance.

The composition “मुक्तखोरी और लालच” extends this critique into the sphere of welfare corruption and civic moral decay. The text exposes how economically privileged individuals exploit welfare structures intended for marginalized populations. The opening declaration, “और साधन सम्पन्न इज्जतमन्द भी, करण लागे ज़ारी,” dismantles the illusion that corruption belongs only to the poor or politically powerful. Instead, the Ragni frames greed as a culturally normalized psychological condition transcending class boundary. The symbolic violence embedded in welfare fraud becomes particularly visible in the line “गरीब आदमी का हक था मैं, ले के राशन पार हुआ.” This confession-like narrative voice creates a rare form of ethical self-exposure within folk literature. The speaker acknowledges complicity rather than merely condemning others. Such self-implicating narration aligns the Ragni with deeper traditions of Indian ethical introspection where social critique begins with personal accountability.

The psychological dimension of greed is also rendered through bodily and domestic imagery. False pension claims, forged documents, manipulated signatures, and ration fraud are not presented merely as administrative crimes but as symptoms of a deeper collapse of civic conscience. The recurring emphasis on “मुक्त” intensifies the critique of entitlement culture and moral dependency. The concluding Mudra, “कहै आनन्द शाहपुर चोर मोर पै, हुई चोरों की सरदारी,” elevates the composition from local satire into a broader civilizational warning about normalized corruption.

Among the selected texts, “लोभ की चौसर” emerges as perhaps the most expansive critique of institutional commercialization. By invoking the metaphor of a चौसर shaped by greed and attachment, the composition reinterprets epic moral symbolism within contemporary capitalist realities. The line “मोह के पासे, लोभ की चौसर” evokes echoes of Mahabharata-like ethical collapse while relocating the crisis within hospitals, schools, markets, and literary culture.

The critique of medical commercialization reaches profound emotional intensity in the line “बैटिलेख पै लाश लिटाके, कौं लूटण की तय्यारी.” Here the Ragni transforms healthcare exploitation into a moral spectacle of dehumanization. The dead body suspended within institutional greed becomes a horrifying symbol of capitalism’s intrusion into the sanctity of human suffering. Similarly, the commercialization of education is rendered through lines such as “शिक्षा का व्यापार बना लिया” and “पेट काटके ट्यूशन भरते.” The emotional force of these lines emerges not only from their social realism but from their performative cadence, which allows economic anxiety to become communally experienced grief.

The Ragni also critiques counterfeit culture and performative superficiality within literary and intellectual spaces themselves. The line “कुछ तो ऊत छाप काट कै, अपनी ए छाप रचा दे सें” represents a rare instance of self-reflexive literary criticism within folk poetry. The composition therefore critiques not only state institutions but also cultural production itself, questioning authenticity in an era dominated by imitation and spectacle.

The final selected composition, “चुनावी शत्रुसुर्ग,” shifts the discourse toward democratic ethics and voter psychology. Unlike simplistic anti-political satire, the Ragni interrogates the moral complicity of the electorate itself. The metaphor of the ostrich burying its head in sand becomes a devastating image of civic avoidance and democratic self-deception. The line “इब शत्रुसुर्ग की तरिया मनै, रेत में नाड़ गडो ली” transforms political apathy into embodied cultural symbolism.

The composition systematically exposes how democracy becomes vulnerable to material temptation, caste mobilization, religious polarization, and symbolic spectacle. Lines such as “ले ले कै नै नोट करावे, मनै बोगस वोट घला दी” and “कदे धर्म पै कदे जात पै” reveal how ethical judgment is replaced by emotional manipulation and transactional politics. Yet the most significant aspect of the Ragni lies in its refusal to absolve the public. The repeated self-referential voice—“मनै,” “मैं”—constructs democratic failure as collective self-betrayal rather than merely governmental incompetence.

The emotional architecture of these Ragnis consistently oscillates between व्यंग्य, करुणा, and नैतिक

चेतावनी. Humour and satire are strategically employed not for entertainment alone but as socially acceptable vehicles for difficult truths. The folk idiom softens entry into ethical critique while simultaneously intensifying memorability. This duality represents one of the central strengths of Haryanvi oral poetics.

From a broader socio-cultural perspective, these compositions function as vernacular democratic archives preserving the anxieties of contemporary rural and semi-urban India. They articulate public distrust toward institutions while simultaneously attempting to restore moral agency within collective consciousness. The recurring emphasis on self-reflection distinguishes these Ragnis from purely accusatory political literature. Instead of constructing simplistic binaries between corrupt rulers and innocent citizens, the texts expose corruption as a participatory social ecosystem sustained through everyday compromises.

## V. PINGAL AND PROSODIC ANALYSIS

The selected Ragnis collectively demonstrate the considerable sophistication of Haryanvi oral prosody within contemporary folk-performance traditions. Although these compositions emerge from vernacular speech and maintain conversational accessibility, their internal structures reveal a noticeable degree of rhythmic organization shaped by Matra-Santulan, Yati distribution, Antya-Anupras, refrain patterns, and oral cadence. These features suggest that many Haryanvi folk compositions preserve identifiable prosodic discipline even within flexible oral-performance environments.

The Ragni “बैमानी और लालच” broadly follows a Lavani-influenced Samamatrik rhythmic pattern associated with declamatory oral performance. Most Charans maintain an approximate recurrence of twenty-eight to thirty mātrās, though minor variations naturally occur during live rendition and performer-specific delivery. The placement of Yati near the middle segment of the line frequently creates emphasis before the closing rhyming phrase. For example, in the line “सोने की चिड़िया कहलावै पर, हिन्द कैसे भौ उडारी,” the pause after “पर” strengthens the contrast between idealized national imagery and ethical decline. Similarly, recurring end-rhyme structures such as “उडारी,” “बिमारी,”

and “भृष्टाचारी” generate acoustic continuity that supports memorability during performance.

“मुफ्तखोरी और लालच” displays a comparatively direct and publicly declamatory rhythmic movement. The composition generally maintains balanced cadence patterns suitable for collective recitation. Refrain repetition and compressed rhyme clusters intensify oral emphasis, especially in lines such as “मुफ्त का राशन, मुफ्त की पेयशन, लालच हो गया भारी.” Here, lexical repetition contributes to rhythmic propulsion while reinforcing the satirical critique of entitlement culture.

The Ragni “लोभ की चौसर” adopts a more expansive lyrical movement shaped partly by its recognizable performative Tarz. The composition combines melodic flexibility with controlled rhythmic recurrence, allowing emotional themes of greed, commercialization, and institutional exploitation to unfold gradually through oral delivery. In lines such as “वैटिलेटर पै लाश लिटाके, करें लूटण की तय्यारी,” descending cadence and consonantal density contribute to emotional intensity during performance. Repeated rhyme endings such as “चौबारा,” “गुजारा,” and “चारा” further strengthen acoustic cohesion.

Among the selected texts, “चुनावी शत्रुमुर्गी” demonstrates especially forceful rhetorical cadence. The recurring refrain “इब्र शत्रुमुर्गी की तरिया मने, रेत में नाइ गडो ली” combines symbolic imagery with rhythmic repetition to produce strong performative impact. The pause after “मने” creates a reflective moment before the concluding phrase, enhancing audience engagement during oral recitation. Internal rhyme chains and repeated verbal endings generate rhythmic continuity that supports the composition’s satirical and cautionary tone.

Across all four Ragnis, prosodic structure and thematic expression remain closely interconnected. Rhythmic repetition, refrain systems, Yati placement, and end-rhyme patterns collectively support emotional emphasis, oral memorability, and audience participation. The study therefore suggests that Haryanvi Ragni preserves a rich vernacular prosodic tradition in which poetic rhythm and social commentary operate together within the dynamics of oral performance.

## VI. DISCUSSION

The selected Ragnis demonstrate that contemporary Haryanvi folk literature functions as an important medium of ethical reflection and social criticism. These compositions move beyond the conventional perception of Ragni as merely a form of rural entertainment and instead present it as a living vernacular tradition capable of engaging with institutional corruption, civic anxiety, commercialization, and democratic decline.

Within the present study, “democratic consciousness” refers to a form of vernacular civic awareness rooted in accountability, public participation, ethical responsibility, and collective moral reflection. In these Ragnis, democratic values are expressed not through formal political theory but through culturally familiar language, oral symbolism, and performative dialogue with the community.

One of the most significant features of the selected compositions is their ability to transform everyday Haryanvi speech into a vehicle of institutional critique. Corruption, welfare fraud, healthcare exploitation, educational commercialization, and electoral manipulation are represented not as isolated incidents but as interconnected signs of moral imbalance within public life. The folk idiom enables these concerns to remain emotionally immediate and socially accessible.

The study also highlights the central role of oral performance in shaping ethical reception. Unlike written literary forms that often rely upon solitary reading, Haryanvi Ragni operates through collective listening, repetition, tonal emphasis, and participatory engagement. Rhythm and refrain allow ethical commentary to become publicly memorable and emotionally resonant within community spaces.

The role of Pingal prosody is particularly important in this process. The metrical organization of these compositions contributes significantly to their oral effectiveness. Yati placement, rhythmic recurrence, and refrain structures create emphasis, aid memorization, and support performative delivery. In this sense, prosody functions not merely as ornamentation but as an important structural component of folk communication.

Another notable aspect of the selected Ragnis is their self-reflexive ethical perspective. Rather than assigning blame exclusively to institutions or

political authorities, the compositions frequently acknowledge collective social complicity. The recurring first-person expressions—“मैंने,” “मैं,” and “किसके दोष लगावै”—introduce a confessional dimension that transforms social criticism into ethical introspection.

The study therefore suggests that Haryanvi Ragni deserves greater recognition within broader discussions of Indian oral poetics, regional knowledge systems, folk aesthetics, and vernacular democratic expression. The integration of prosodic analysis with socio-cultural interpretation also opens new directions for future research in North Indian folk-performance traditions.

## VII. CONCLUSION

The present study demonstrates that contemporary Haryanvi Ragni constitutes a profoundly significant cultural, ethical, and performative tradition within the broader landscape of Indian folk literature. Through a detailed examination of Anand Kumar Ashodhiya's Ragnis “बेईमानी और लालच,” “मुफ्तखोरी और लालच,” “लोभ की चौसर,” and “चुनावी शतुस्मर्ति,” the article establishes that these compositions function simultaneously as literary texts, oral performances, democratic critiques, and repositories of collective moral consciousness. Far from being merely regional entertainment forms, these Ragnis emerge as intellectually sophisticated vernacular interventions addressing institutional corruption, civic decay, welfare exploitation, commercialization of social systems, and democratic disillusionment.

The research further reveals that the aesthetic strength of Haryanvi Ragni lies in the inseparable relationship between thematic intensity and Pingal prosodic structure. The carefully balanced Matra-Santulan, strategically placed Yati divisions, oral refrain systems, Antya-Anupras patterns, and rhythmic cadence structures transform ethical commentary into emotionally resonant public discourse. In this sense, Pingal is not simply a technical metrical system but a performative mechanism through which collective memory, emotional participation, and moral persuasion are transmitted across communities.

The article also highlights the importance of folk reinterpretation within Indian literary traditions.

Unlike classical textual systems that often preserve hierarchical aesthetic distance, Haryanvi Ragni localizes ethical conflict within lived social experience. Through regional dialect, performative immediacy, and communal participation, these compositions create accessible frameworks for discussing justice, greed, corruption, and democratic responsibility. Their oral-musical nature enables them to function as instruments of social awakening within both rural and semi-urban cultural spaces.

From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes toward bridging the gap between folk-performance studies, Pingal prosody, oral tradition scholarship, and socio-political literary criticism. It demonstrates that interdisciplinary approaches are essential for understanding vernacular literary systems whose meaning emerges through the interaction of text, rhythm, performance, and collective reception. The findings further suggest that Haryanvi folk literature deserves substantially greater scholarly attention within Indian humanities discourse, particularly in relation to cultural semiotics, subaltern democratic expression, and regional epistemologies.

The study ultimately concludes that contemporary Haryanvi Ragni represents a living archive of North Indian ethical consciousness. By preserving public anxieties, exposing institutional contradictions, and reactivating civic introspection through oral aesthetics, these compositions contribute meaningfully to the intellectual heritage of Indian folk poetics. Future research may further explore the intersections of gender, caste, digital performance spaces, musical ethnography, and comparative regional prosody within Haryanvi oral traditions, thereby expanding the academic understanding of vernacular literary modernities in South Asia.

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