



Madurese Mantras as Local Wisdom, Spiritual Values, and Outlook on Life: An Ethnolinguistic Study

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Abstract Protection Mantras in Madurese culture are symbols of spiritual power that are proven to provide protection and overcome various problems in Madurese society. This research aims to provide an in-depth insight into the local wisdom, spiritual values, and outlook on life in these Mantras. In collecting the data, we interacted with the Mantra practitioners through the ritual of Mantra recitation, which was performed with great sincerity. The data obtained were then analyzed using descriptive qualitative methods and ethnolinguistic approaches. The results demonstrated that Mantra reflects local wisdom based on the principle of avoiding disturbances to others while remaining prepared to act when confronted with threats. It embodies essential spiritual values, including the courage to confront challenges, acceptance of fate, and sincerity, all underpinning a worldview that emphasizes harmony and balance. This research showed the great potential of protection Mantras to strengthen and maintain Madurese cultural wisdom. It is important to preserve them as part of a valuable cultural identity for future generations.

Keywords: *Madurese Mantras, Local wisdom, Spiritual values, Outlook on life, Ethnolinguistic study*

1. Introduction

Mantra is a form of literary work that existed long before thinking about the nature, value, and meaning of literature. In the Madurese community, Mantras are also known as spells (Rohaniyah & Rijal, 2020). They come in many forms and are very numerous, and all are considered to have their own magical powers. There are Mantras that are recited, and there are Mantras that are read in the heart. Mantras are not something new in the life of Madurese people. In fact, they have been an important part of Madurese's life for centuries. In modern life, it is not uncommon for Mantras to show their existence in certain situations. Not a few Madurese people hold (amulets) to face danger or other unexpected circumstances, especially Madurese, who migrate outside Madura island. Mantras are used in various types of religious rituals and also in daily activities (Fuchs, 2016; Rosie, 2020). Religious people's response to disasters is also present in rituals to ward off disasters.

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Certain communities believe that some rituals have a role in warding off disease or disaster, such as cleansing the village to protect the village from disease or disaster (McCormick & White, 2011; Qodim & Hernawan, 2023). However, along with the times, the use of the Madurese Mantra among the Madurese people began to be displaced by the influence of outside culture. This was influenced by the shifting habits of people who began to think realistically by eliminating things that did not make sense. In fact, if we look at the perfection of Mantras, this oral literature really has unique functions and meanings (Kumbalonah, 2013; Miharja et al., 2022). Therefore, this local wisdom needs to be preserved and developed so that it is not lost amidst the growing flow of modernization.

The importance of this research lies in the need to preserve local wisdom (Sunarti et al., 2023), which is an integral part of Madurese culture. Although the Madurese Mantra has been known and used by the Madurese community for centuries, its existence is now increasingly threatened by the increasingly strong influence of outside culture. After all, educating the younger generation is the main factor that makes the future strong (Elmira et al., 2021). The purpose of this research is to provide a deeper understanding of the role and meaning of the Madurese Mantra oral literature as local wisdom, spiritual values, and outlook on life.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Mantra Oral Literature

The origins of the Madurese Mantra are difficult to trace as there is no written record of the origin of this practice (Hanapi et al., 2017; Isnaini, 2022). However, its history has long been recognized by the Madurese community. Most Madurese Mantras originate from the spiritual experiences of their ancestors and are passed down from generation to generation. These Mantras are used in various situations, such as in religious rituals, disease healing, self-protection, and so on (Burke et al., 2017). Mantra is one of the products of a culture that once colored the people of the archipelago (Irwansyah, 2018). Mantra is a method or idea as an affirmation of a certain purpose expressed in words and considered to contain supernatural powers. It was created as a breakthrough in overcoming social problems (Mulyanto & Suwatno, 2018; Selove, 2020). Mantras in the form of written, spoken, and partially spoken languages are evidence of the existence of mythological-mystical cultures whose existence is spread throughout the world (Burchett, 2008). In the process of their journey through time, Mantras are able to become artifacts of cultural behavior that can be accessed through various media, both print and electronic (Agusman & Mahyudi, 2021).

Mantras, in general, are groups of words, phrases, or sounds that are chanted repeatedly for magical or spiritual purposes in various religious traditions and spiritual activities (Arofat & Indrastuti, 2022). Mantras are used in various meditation techniques and religious rituals to achieve specific goals. A linguistic or literary approach can explain the “mantra structure”, referring to the composition or components that make up the Mantra. In a religious setting, the repetition of certain words with a predetermined rhythm and intonation may form the structure of a mantra to induce meditation or an altered state of consciousness. Returning to its origin, the Mantra is poetry, so the structure of the Mantra can be examined using the analysis of the structure of poetry.

Etymologically, Mantra comes from the words man/manas and tra/tri, which means ‘to think or protect, spell, protect the mind from evil interference (Sapina et al., 2022). So, Mantras will not always be negative, let alone black magic. In simple terms, a mantra is defined as a word or utterance that has magical powers (Norvia, 2019). Mantra is a variety of free-form oral poetry (Rasna et al., 2018). Mantras contain high meanings, but they also contain lower meanings (Walker, 2006). In the view of spiritualists, Mantras have a very deep meaning. A mantra is generally defined as a word, syllable, or combination of words that is very powerful, is heard by a sage, and can take the one who utters it across the sea of rebirth. This is the highest meaning of the term Mantra.

2.2. Local Wisdom of Madurese Community

Local wisdom refers to indigenous knowledge and practices that are considered wise, prudent, and highly valued within a particular community, leading to widespread adoption and adherence (Bouziane et al., 2023; Sunarti et al., 2023). In the field of Anthropology, the idea of local wisdom is also referred

to as local intelligence or local knowledge, which is commonly known as indigenous knowledge (Masruddin et al., 2023). This body of information serves as the foundation of cultural identity. Indigenous knowledge, sometimes referred to as local knowledge, encompasses a form of information held and transmitted from generation to generation within a given community (Zainal et al., 2022). The term “local knowledge” can be seen as a conceptual framework that encompasses the observed phenomena, cognitions, emotions, experiences, and formations that emerge from the collective patterns and cognitive processes of a particular community. Local knowledge, also known as indigenous knowledge, is defined as knowledge that has significance and is adhered to by all members of a particular ethnic community (Saadah & Falikhatun, 2021). This knowledge is passed from one generation to the next through inheritance and developed by individuals of indigenous communities through experiential learning (Abidin et al., 2023). Local knowledge derives from a community’s capacity to utilize personal life experiences (Gupta & Sukamto, 2020; Kusumasari & Alam, 2012). In this case scenario, it is certain that the acquisition of local knowledge occurred over a short period of time. The presence of local knowledge today is a significant cultural heritage of the ancestors that has great intrinsic value.

Madura is known as the Santri Island because there are many Islamic boarding schools, from Bangkalan to Sumenep (Susandi, 2020). Even on the islands within it, there are also many Islamic boarding schools (Dzulkarnain et al., 2020). Because of this, the majority of the Madurese population is Muslim (Sopyan & Nidzami, 2018). The Islam embraced by the Madurese community is generally traditional Islam as practiced in salaf Islamic boarding schools and Jam’iyyah Nahdlatul Ulama. However, other Islamic groups, including the so-called modernist Islam, also exist in Madura (Julijanti et al., 2020). Madura also has noble teachings worthy of attention. These teachings are recorded in short expressions that reflect the thinking and philosophy of the Madurese community (Hidayah & Ramli, 2017; Pribadi, 2013). These teachings become the guidelines and principles of the life of the Madurese community. The brief teachings contain moral, religious, social, and cultural values of the community. Therefore, if language is a mirror of the character of a nation, then these verbal expressions also show the character and personality of the Madurese community. What should be done, honored, and obeyed, and what should be avoided and shunned by the Madurese community?

3. Methodology

The method used for this study involves the use of content analysis, specifically using the hermeneutic paradigm. The purpose of this analysis is to explain the underlying meanings conveyed in a literary work. The main purpose of content analysis is to draw conclusions regarding diverse linguistic phenomena in human life (Archibald et al., 2015; Krippendorff, 2022; Vass et al., 2017). Due to the nature of this research, content analysis is conducive to this study, which includes the following sequential stages: first, transcription of the recordings of mantra recitation, categorization of each type of data according to the classification of the problem, interpretation of the data, verification, and drawing conclusions based on the collected data.

3.1. Participants

The researcher conducted interviews with Madurese spell practitioners, specifically selected individuals identified as SL, RM, AG, HS, SA, DW, MH, NA, MT, and HA.

Table 1

Source of Respondent Data

No	Respondents	Age	Gender	Date of interview
1	SL	53	Male	15 February 2023
2	RM	61	Male	28 February 2023
3	AG	72	Male	2 May 2023
4	HS	56	Male	14 May 2023
5	SA	63	Male	19 May 2023
6	DW	66	Male	4 June 2023
7	MH	64	Male	13 June 2023
8	NA	58	Male	17 June 2023

9	MT	71	Male	5 July 2023
10	HA	67	Male	24 July 2023
Total : 10 Respondents				

The respondents were selected based on several criteria, namely (1) those who are actively involved in the practice of Mantras, (2) community leaders over the age of 50, and (3) individuals identified as indigenous Madurese. In order to gain a complete and in-depth understanding of the Mantras, it is crucial to gather knowledge from individuals who have extensive experience and expertise in the practice and use of these protection Mantras. Before selecting the interviewees, the researcher conducted a comprehensive literature review and had discussions with various cultural and religious experts in Madura. The purpose of this consultation was to obtain recommendations from individuals who are widely recognized as experts in the field of Mantras. After obtaining a list of individuals, the researcher initiated initial contact to determine their readiness to participate as respondents and verify their possession of relevant information and experiences pertaining to the focus of the study.

3.2. Material

This research uses a descriptive qualitative methodology, adopting an ethnolinguistic perspective that emphasizes language style (Sukirman et al., 2022; Suprpto et al., 2023; Thomas & Harden, 2008). This study aims to explain the author’s concepts through the analysis of data relating to words or phrases generated from “protection spells”. The analysis uses an inductive approach, utilizing the research data as a means to understand and draw conclusions about existing facts. This research focuses on the object of research, namely “Mantras” originating from Madura Island, East Java (Creswell, 2015; Köhler et al., 2019; Mertens, 2013). These Mantras served as the main source of data for this study. The methodology used for data collection involved observing objects obtained from recordings of ritual actions involving mantra practitioners.

3.3. Procedure

This research used a descriptive qualitative approach based on ethnolinguistics with the main objective of describing the ideas contained in the “madura protection mantra” through language style. The primary data in this research were words or terms contained in the “madura protection mantra” originating from the Madura Island of East Java. The data source used in this research was the ritual of mantra recitation originating from the island of Madura, East Java. The data source used in this research was the event of the madura mantra casting ritual conducted with the mantra practitioners. Data analysis was conducted using an inductive approach. The data that were collected were analyzed with the aim of identifying patterns, themes, and main ideas contained therein. Furthermore, the data were translated and analyzed in more depth in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding and conclude the facts contained in the data. The stages of the research conducted include:

3.3.1. Data Collection

The researchers began the investigation by conducting a comprehensive review of scholarly works related to ethnolinguistic issues, language patterns used in “Madurese protection Mantras”, and the cultural environment of Madurese society. They used a systematic approach in the selection of participants, following pre-defined criteria. This involved consulting with experts in the field of Madurese art and culture, as well as conducting an initial review of relevant literature. In addition, a preliminary inquiry was conducted to ascertain the respondents’ inclination to engage in the study. The researchers observed the ritual casting activities by reciting Mantras to gain insight into the language styles used and the appropriate terminology used. Furthermore, the researchers conducted comprehensive interviews with the selected respondents according to the predetermined schedule. The data obtained from the interviews were documented for future study.

3.3.4. Data Analysis

Once data collection was complete, the researchers proceeded to evaluate the data using inductive methodology. The research process involved identifying patterns and themes that emerged from the

collected data, followed by systematically organizing and interpreting the data to understand the core concepts represented in the “Madurese protection mantra”. Once the analysis was complete, the researchers proceeded to compile a comprehensive research report that included the methodology, findings, analyses, and conclusions. Through the application of this methodology, it was expected that this research would result in a comprehensive understanding of the linguistic patterns used in “Madurese protection Mantras” and the realization of their metaphysical potential in Madurese indigenous communities.

4. Results

Protection Mantras in oral literature can be interpreted in the frame of local wisdom and spiritual values and have social functions in society. Protection Mantras function as a reflection of the local wisdom of the people of Madura.

4.1. Local Wisdom

Mantra is a type of oral literature that is related to the traditions of the local community. As oral literature, Mantras are a form of regional culture that is passed down as an oral tradition (Mulyanto & Suwatno, 2018; Sapina et al., 2022). A mantra is not simply translated as a prayer, a sacred phrase, a sacred chant, or a wish. A Mantra, then, is a Mantra, which is an expression of words born of the “being” of the self-assembled by enlightened consciousness and chanted, either audibly or silently, whose purpose is not only to wish or honor but also to create something (Cohen, 2020).

Table 2

Symbol of Oral Literature of Protection Mantra Functions as a Form of Local Wisdom of Madurese Society

Data	Madurese protection spells	Meaning
10	Bismillahirrohmanirrohim	In the name of Allah, the most merciful and the most compassionate
	Tèkos jhuling	Squinting rat
	Tèkos thong-thong	Thong-thong rat
	Ling-jhuling	Sambal Glance
	Thong tapenthong	Got hit
	Maksa maso'	Forced to enter
	Tabhrusok	Fall in
	Ka songay saghârâ	Into the river of the ocean
	Laila haâillallah Muhammadur Rosulullah	There is no god but Allah, Muhammad Rasulallah

The symbols in the Madura mantra reflect the local wisdom of the Madura people. The symbols used in this context are in the form of metaphors, which function as poetic devices used by the poet to enhance the depiction of concepts and emotions experienced by the reader of the Mantra (Firoozalizadeh et al., 2020; Harahap & Hamka, 2023). This phenomenon is closely related to the poet’s sensory perception of the thing referred to or described in the Mantra. Poets usually convey their symbols through the use of implicit or explicit language. The use of these symbols in the Mantra has the purpose of accentuating the intention of the poet.

Symbols in Mantras are conveyed by describing and expressing them with words that are imaginative. Symbols usually consist of two outlines, namely depiction and the use of metaphors to represent a situation. The symbols used by the mantra caster can sense what is happening in their environment. Table 1 implies the condition of the Madurese people who do not like to disturb, but if disturbed or their environmental life is threatened, they will take the necessary actions and surrender in accordance with Islamic religious guidance.

4.2. Spiritual Value

Madurese Mantras are spiritual practices originating from the Madurese community in East Java. These Mantras consist of words or sentences that are chanted repeatedly in order to achieve a specific goal. The Mantra described here would serve to remind such people that they are not the center of the universe (Selove, 2020). This practice has been part of Madurese life since ancient times and is believed to

provide spiritual power for those who use it. The magic in Mantras is based on words and, more specifically, comes from the belief in the inherent efficacy of the words (Sadovski, 2012; Zaidman-Mauer & Gottlieb, 2022).

Table 3
Spiritual Values in Mantra Oral Literature

Data	Madura Protection Mantra	Meaning
3	Allahumma moter ghiling Aghiling segoro dayu Sun waringin sungsang Allahumma moter ghiling Aghiling segoro langit sun waringin sungsang	God is the return of all things turning the seas of heaven, I am the upside-down banyan God who returns all things Turning the sea of heaven I am the upside-down banyan

The data above illustrates the spiritual aspect of the protection mantra. The Mantras implies that with the pleasure of Allah, all kinds of problems, dangers, and difficulties can be returned to the creator. Protection Mantras have a very strong spiritual power and have become an important part of Madurese life. Based on information extracted from sources, this Mantras is believed to provide strength, protection, and prosperity for those who use it. Psychologically, the function of Mantras is a means of increasing mental strength. This means that the Mantras is able to provide self-confidence with one note of “full trust”. Protection Mantras contain suggestions that raise the ethos, spirit, and self-confidence of the owner. According to informant HS, the way a person tells the Mantra is inseparable from the belief in magical elements or power beyond human reasoning. If the Mantras is uttered, the state of the person addressed by the Mantras will change.

Protection Mantras also have spiritual power in terms of boosting self-confidence and concentration. In these practices, individuals are taught to focus on a goal and concentrate on achieving that goal. This can help improve confidence and concentration in daily life. The spiritual power in Madurese Mantras is very important in maintaining Madurese local cultural identity. In terms of the meaning of Mantras, there are associative meanings that indicate the existence of meanings towards other creatures, mystical symbols, and even Islamic symbols that lead to aspects of belief in faith. This practice has been an important part of Madurese local tradition and culture for many years and helps maintain cultural sustainability and diversity.

Mantras are related to human religious attitudes. In order to ask God for something, it is necessary to choose words with supernatural powers that the creator sees as facilitating the relationship with God (Zabirko, 2020). Mantras are nothing but a sign that humans have a transcendental consciousness. They believe that outside of humans, there is another being or something that has great power that can destroy their existence (Eko et al., 2020). Human awareness of the mysterious power of nature is enchanting yet frightening: awareness of the mysterious power of nature brings equally strong feelings of fascination and fear, creating a profound emotional paradox in the human experience of nature. (Tilton, 2015).

In the Madurese Mantra practice, especially in protection Mantras, there are various words or sentences that are spoken repeatedly with the aim of achieving certain goals. Each Mantra has different spiritual powers and is believed to have different effects as well as protection Mantras. Utterances that contain magical powers (Mantras) can cause changes in the body, emotions, and mind. They sense the energy around and within. The success of the utilization of a sentence occurs for various reasons, including (1) visualization of the inner will along with the sound of the sentence, (2) the essence (meaning) of the sentences, (3) the power behind the letters (the science of letters), and (4) the element of the will of the Almighty if it turns out that the sentences contain prayers to Him.

4.3. Outlook on Life

Madurese Mantras have an important role in the lives of Madurese people. These Mantras are not only understood as prayers or words of honor but also as a means to achieve certain goals and maintain

spiritual balance in daily life. Neither Mantras nor rituals are applied sciences in the narrow sense (Burke et al., 2017; Tambiah, 2017). However, the process of inheriting Mantras from generation to generation makes the values in the Mantra a way of life for the Madurese people to be passed down to the next generation because, in the inheritance process, it is accompanied by advice, commands, and prohibitions that are in line with Islamic teachings.

Table 4*Symbols of Protection Mantra as an Outlook on Life*

Data	Madura Protection Mantra	Meaning
7	Setyo budy dur angkoro Ngaben welas anging Allah sombher kakowadhân liliani Sayyidina Ali Nyaresep ka bhâdhân ingsun Lailahâillallah Muhammadurrosulullah	Strong ethics defeats the lust of haughtiness, With God's compassion Source of strength, With the name of Sayyidina Ali Permeate my body, There is no God but Allah Prophet Muhammad, Messenger of Allah

The above data implies the outlook on life contained in the Madura protection mantra. The Mantra in the data shows the outlook on life that is advised that the love of God can defeat human lust. The outlook on life shows that if humans still hold on to faith in Islam and hold on to the shahada, they will always be safe. This is reflected in the Islamic character of the people of Madura, with all aspects of their lives not separated from the guidance and teachings of Islam.

The role of Madurese Mantras in the lives of Madurese people is very important. These Mantras are not just words or prayers but also a means to achieve certain goals and maintain spiritual balance. Therefore, a sufficient introduction and understanding of the Madurese Mantras is essential for anyone who wants to study the culture and life of the Madurese people. One of the important views of the Madurese Mantras is as a tool to overcome problems in life, such as human relationships. Madurese people believe that Madurese Mantras have spiritual powers that can bring positive changes in their lives. Therefore, Madurese Mantras are often used as a means of alternative solutions in dealing with daily life problems. In addition, Madurese Mantras such as rain charms and protection Mantras are often utilized as a means of helping the smooth running of traditional ceremonies, weddings, and religious events such as tahlilan and recitation. In daily life, Madurese Mantras are also used as a means to maintain spiritual balance. Madurese people believe that every human being has different energies, and Madurese Mantras are used to maintain the balance of these energies to remain positive and harmonious.

5. Discussion

Oral literature develops following the changes in traditional society in utilizing the functions contained in it (Elmira et al., 2021; Sukirman et al., 2022). People, as actors, can also be spectators, listeners, observers, and appreciators to absorb values according to their needs, both socially and individually (Arofat & Indrastuti, 2022; Majid & Sugiarto, 2022). Knowledge can be known based on six parts: sensing, logical thinking, intuition, authority, revelation, and belief. The knowledge that exists in society can include all of these parts according to the understanding of the community in understanding the applicable knowledge. Knowledge that is divided based on its era is understood as traditional knowledge and modern knowledge (Metcalf & Moulin-Stožek, 2021; Oliveira, 2012). Mantra, as one of the oral literature is the result of culture in traditional societies whose contents can be aligned with modern written literature, and Mantra is one of the oral literature that is passed down orally, such as pantun, folk songs, and folklore. Mantra, as a type of oral literature, has benefits, namely as documentation and as an extensive and very important source of information. Mantras that are scattered throughout Indonesia, if the contents are understood, will be useful and able to contribute to strengthening the nation's identity (Ihueze, 2015; Mostert et al., 2017; Sugiyartati et al., 2020).

Madurese Mantra is one of the local wisdoms that is very rich and plays an important role in Madurese culture. Madurese Mantras are a collection of words or prayers recited together for a specific purpose,

such as to overcome health, family, or work problems. In every spiritual endeavor or practice, Mantra is always an important instrument that is also believed to help transform a person, as the meaning and purpose of why the Mantra is chanted is related to the intended result of creation (Humaeni, 2014). As an integral part of nature, humans' endeavor to maintain harmony, order, and balance with nature (Jamaluddin et al., 2022; Sukmawan, 2018). The local wisdom in Madurese Mantras contains deep philosophical and spiritual meanings. The use of Madurese language in Madurese Mantras illustrates the richness of language and culture owned by the Madurese community. In addition, the local wisdom in the Madurese Mantras also reflects the social values and customs held firmly by the Madurese community, such as religious attitudes, humility, confidence, and mutual help. In practice, Madurese Mantras are used by the Madurese community to help strengthen their spiritual power. They believe that by reciting the Madurese Mantras correctly and regularly, they can gain strength and protection from the Almighty (Norvia, 2019; Wijayanto & Suparta, 2022). It also reflects the Madurese people's belief in spiritual power and its influence on daily life. In addition, local wisdom in Madurese Mantras also has an important role in maintaining harmony and balance in the lives of Madurese people. They believe that reciting the Madurese Mantras can create positive power and strengthen social bonds between community members. Local wisdom in Madurese Mantras also plays an important role in the preservation of Madurese culture and identity (Burke et al., 2017; Rasna et al., 2021). In practice, Madurese mantra recitation is often performed in traditional rituals and religious activities. This shows that the local wisdom in Madurese Mantras not only has spiritual value but also plays an important role in daily life and traditional events of the Madurese community. Overall, the local wisdom in Madurese Mantras is very important to be learned and preserved as part of the cultural heritage of the Madurese community. Its existence reflects important spiritual and social values in the lives of Madurese people, as well as being an important part of efforts to preserve local culture and identity.

The outlook on life in Madurese Mantra oral literature illustrates the diversity and complexity of Madurese culture, which has been intertwined with this oral tradition for many years. These deep philosophies and values become an integral part of the Madurese culture and local wisdom, creating an outlook on life that is rich in meaning (Hakim & Kulsum, 2020). One of the key aspects of this outlook on life is the emphasis on harmony and balance in daily life (Gumilang & Nurcholiz, 2018). This is reflected in the concepts of "pasrah" and "ikhlas" expressed in the Mantra, teaching that accepting one's fate and living life with serenity is the way to achieve harmony (Pribadi, 2013). This outlook on life also emphasizes the importance of courage and assertiveness in the face of challenges and threats. Although the principle is to not interfere, the Mantra also teaches that if threatened, one must be ready to defend oneself in accordance with religious guidance. Thus, the outlook on life in the oral literature of Madurese Mantras is not only a valuable cultural heritage but also offers a relevant and valuable outlook on life, spirituality, and harmony for the Madurese community and society at large. It becomes a reflection of local wisdom that enriches Indonesia's cultural diversity and provides valuable insights for further research and cultural preservation.

Some suggestions that can be considered for further research are comparing Madurese Mantras with similar practices in other cultures, which can provide a broader understanding of local wisdom and an exploration of how these Mantras can be integrated into the context of Madurese education and cultural preservation to promote understanding and respect for this cultural heritage.

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