

## СООБЩЕНИЯ

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### ANTHROPOLOGICAL THEORY OF CULTURE – RESEARCH REPORT

The present article presents an expanded report on epistemological research referring to the canonical work of Alfred L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn entitled *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (1952). Theoretical efforts were directed towards the elaboration of a functional classification of the concept of culture (Kroeber–Kluckhohn Culture Classification, hereafter KKCC), which could be used to capture paradigm shifts in the understanding of the concept of culture in the twentieth century. To this end, the symbolic notation that separates types of pseudo-definitions of culture from their semantic representations has been improved, enabling the transfer of analysis to the meta-theoretical level.

**Key words:** *Theoretical anthropology, social anthropology, theory of culture, scientific report.*

#### Introduction

The present article presents an expanded report on epistemological research referring to the canonical work of Alfred L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn entitled *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (1952).<sup>1</sup> Theoretical efforts were directed towards the elaboration of a functional classification of the concept of culture (Kroeber–Kluckhohn Culture Classification, hereafter KKCC) which could be used to capture paradigm shifts in the understanding of the concept of culture in the twentieth century. To this end, the symbolic notation that separates types of pseudo-definitions of culture from their semantic representations has been improved, enabling the transfer of analysis to the meta-theoretical level. The research consists of two thematically consistent publications. One is a monograph entitled *Kultura w systematyce Alfreda L. Kroebera i Clyde’a Kluckhohna* [Culture in the Classification of Alfred L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn]<sup>2</sup>, the other an article in English entitled ‘A Formal Concept of Culture in the Classification of Alfred L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn’<sup>3</sup>, which constitutes an extension of the theoretical assumptions presented in the monograph.

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<sup>1</sup> Kroeber Alfred L., Kluckhohn Clyde, *Culture. A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*. Assistance of Wayne Untereiner. Appendices by Alfred G. Meyer. Papers of the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University. Cambridge; Massachusetts, 1952. – Vol. XLVII, № 1. It should be kept in mind that the availability of this monograph (in Poland) was (and still is) very limited. I was able to determine that the national libraries possess only two copies, one of which is a photocopy. The original is located in the Library of the Archaeological Museum in Poznań under the number 4657; a photocopy made of the Poznań original is located in the Library of the Institute of Polish Philology at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń under the number 36643. As of January 2012, Kroeber and Kluckhohn’s book *Culture: A Critical Review...* was recorded in the Horizon system, and since 23 October 2012 in the NUKAT system. Despite such serious limitations, *Culture: A Critical Review...* has often been referred to by researchers as the basis for considerations of the definitions of culture, a subject to which I will return. Thus, Kroeber and Kluckhohn book was digitalised by Internet Archives Team in 2008: <https://archive.org/details/papersofpeabodymvol47no1peab>.

<sup>2</sup> Boroch R., *Kultura w systematyce Alfreda L. Kroebera i Clyde’a Kluckhohna*. – Warszawa, 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Boroch R. *A Formal Concept of Culture in the Classification of Alfred L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn*. – *Analecta: Studia i Materiały z Dziejów Nauki*, 2016. – T. XXV, z. 2. – S. 61–101.

### Justification of the topic

Cultural studies can be divided (generally) into three areas of study: (I) anthropological-ethnographic; (II) philosophical-philological; (III) epistemological.<sup>4</sup> It is accepted, excluding the syncretism of these considerations, that approaches (I) and (II) supply empirical material which has been subjected to classifications facilitating the formulation of general conclusions. Approaches (I)–(III) also require metatheoretical elaboration. The importance of the metatheoretical approach in cultural research became particularly important during the so-called epistemological crisis of the humanities, which affected many academic disciplines, both established and emerging.

The number of theoretical discussions on the nature of cultural phenomena increased during the period 1990–2010. Among the many issues discussed at this time with particular relevance to this discourse, it is worth recalling the following: (1) identification of the object of cognition (ontology of cultural studies); (2) development of rational cognitive methods (epistemology of cultural studies); (3) the potential for the development of axiomatics (axiomatics of cultural studies); (4) the question of the independence of epistemological cultural studies as an academic discipline; (5) assessment of the usefulness of established knowledge (axiology of cultural studies); (6) the potential for integrating cultural studies with other disciplines (interdisciplinarity of cultural studies). Hereafter, I will refer to these collectively as discussions of cultural studies.

The discussions of cultural studies conducted in 1990–2004 were disseminated in specialist publications.<sup>5</sup> The ensuing years, i.e. 2005–2010, brought about a substantial qualitative change in the form of the publication of three monographs discussing the issues mentioned in the preceding paragraph in points (1)–(6). In 2005, a collective work appeared, entitled *O statusie kulturoznawstwa jako odrębnej dyscypliny naukowej* [On the status of cultural studies as a separate scientific discipline]; this was followed in 2008 by *Tożsamość kulturoznawstwa* [The identity of cultural studies], and in 2010, by *Kulturo-znawstwo. Dyscyplina bez dyscypliny?* [Cultural studies: a discipline without discipline?].<sup>6</sup> After reviewing the literature on the subject, I observed the need for a turn towards epistemological considerations, especially in terms of defining concepts essential to cultural studies. Therefore, in my project, I concentrated on the definition of these concepts and the potential for developing axiomatics. Consideration of the semantic representation of the concept of culture became the basis of my research. To avoid being charged with hypostatisation of the term culture, it was necessary, in my opinion, to indicate a reference value (i.e. basis of reasoning) which would provide exemplary material sufficient to enable the elaboration of classifications and general conclusions.

Defining the concept of culture was not (and is not) a simple task, given the diversity and complexity of the cultural phenomena to which this concept refers. Any attempt to develop a logical definition of this concept was doomed to failure in the face of strong arguments regarding its scope. The only way to weaken these arguments was to indicate how cultural studies experts in fact understood this concept and how it was used in the description of phenomena. This approach required the development of contexts for the use of the term culture, as well as a definition within these contexts of its semantics. Bibliometric analysis unambiguously indicated that Polish scholars most often referred to a work by Alfred L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts*

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Boroch R., 'Projekt ICS – Kulturoznawstwo zintegrowane – rozważania wstępne' [ICS Project – integrated cultural studies – preliminary considerations]. *Roczniki Kulturoznawcze* [Cultural studies yearbooks]. – 2015. – Vol. VI, № 4. – P. 53–66. I omit the problem of the syncretism of the approaches mentioned in (I)–(III).

<sup>5</sup> The exceptions include selected publications from disciplines such as the sociology of culture (e.g. the work of A. Kloskowska) or social anthropology (e.g. the work of A. Nowicka).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *O statusie kulturoznawstwa jako odrębnej dyscypliny naukowej* [About the status of cultural studies as a separate scientific discipline]. Ed. J. Mozrzyk. – Wrocław, 2005; *Tożsamość kulturoznawstwa* [The identity of cultural studies], eds. A. Pankowicz, Jarosław Rokicki, Paweł Plicht, Cracow 2008; *Kulturo-znawstwo. Dyscyplina bez dyscypliny?* [Cultural studies: a discipline without discipline?]. Eds. W. J. Burszta, M. Januszkiewicz. – Warsaw, 2010.

and Definitions. It should be recalled here that this book was the result of the work of a team of thirteen researchers directed by Kroeber and Kluckhohn.<sup>7</sup>

Until 2013, when my monograph was published, Kroeber and Kluckhohn's discussion of systems had not been even partially translated into Polish; moreover, information on the topic of the theoretical assumptions presented therein concerning the concept of 'culture' was presented in an incomplete way.<sup>8</sup> This influenced the dissemination in the Polish literature of inaccuracies, such as those resulting from the lack of consistent terminology, which greatly limited the potential for undertaking analytical research.

The work of Kroeber and Kluckhohn was acknowledged by most researchers (not only in Poland) as fundamental, despite the availability of other, newer studies, which, however, were neither comprehensive nor satisfactorily justified in empirical or analytical terms.<sup>9</sup> In recalling the first paragraph of this section, it can be seen that the work of Kroeber and Kluckhohn dominated philosophical-philological (approach II) and epistemological (approach III) discussions. The reasons for this domination are, in my opinion, related to the partial popularisation of *Culture: A Critical Review...* by Antonina Kłoskowska,<sup>10</sup> Władysław Tatarkiewicz,<sup>11</sup> and Ewa Nowicka,<sup>12</sup> who cited the work of Kroeber and Kluckhohn as an example illustrating the actual impossibility of formulating a coherent or logically correct definition of the term culture, thus leaving the discussion wide open. This assessment was due to the overly high expectations of the research community regarding Kroeber and Kluckhohn's work, which had been assumed to constitute a set of ostensible definitions (i.e. pseudodefinitions).

## Theoretical assumptions and methodology

### Preliminary objectives

It should be remembered that the monograph by Kroeber and Kluckhohn was developed by a team,<sup>13</sup> and thus required methodological planning; in other words, the Kroeber and Kluckhohn project was of a designed, not an empirical, character. When the ideological involvement of Kluckhohn

<sup>7</sup> The team of Kroeber and Kluckhohn comprised: a) collection of bibliographic materials, preparation of the manuscript, corrections, technical assistance: Hermia Kaplan, Mildred Geiger, Lois Walk, Muriel Levin, Kathryn Gore, Carol Trosch; b) substantive development: Wayne Untereiner and Alfred G. Meyer, along with Clifford Geertz, Jr., Charles Griffith, and Ralph Patrick. The team of Kroeber and Kluckhohn developed a text corpus and typology of the contexts of the expression culture covering the years 1872–1952 which referred, with minor exceptions, to British-American material.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Kłoskowska A., *Socjologia kultury* [The sociology of culture]. – Warsaw, 1981. – P. 20; *Encyklopedia kultury polskiej XX wieku. Pojęcia i problemy wiedzy o kulturze* [Encyclopaedia of Polish culture of the 20th century. Concepts and problems of knowledge about culture]. Ed. A. Kłoskowska. – Wrocław, 1991. – P. 20; *Powszechna Encyklopedia Filozofii* [Universal encyclopaedia of philosophy]. Ed. A. Maryniarczyk et al. – Lublin, 2005. – Vol. 6. – P. 132–140.

<sup>9</sup> Ethnoscience approaches: Ward Goodenough and Steven Tyler, 1960s and 70s. Cf. Werner O., 'Ethnoscience', *Annual Review of Anthropology*. – 1972. – Vol. 1. P. 271–308. A more recent discussion on the definition, study and description of culture was presented in 2002 in a monograph entitled *Anthropology Beyond Culture*, ed. Richard G. Fox, Barbara J. King. – Oxford; New York: Berg, 2002.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Kłoskowska A., *Kultura masowa. Krytyka i obrona* [Mass culture: criticism and defence]. – Warsaw, 1964 (subsequent editions 1980, 1983, 2005); Kłoskowska A., *Socjologia kultury* [The sociology of culture]. – Warsaw, 1981 (subsequent editions 1983, 2007).

<sup>11</sup> Tatarkiewicz W., 'Kultura i cywilizacja. Sztuka i nauka o sztuce' [Culture and civilisation. Art and the science of art], *Nauka Polska* [Polish science]. – 1976. – nos. 9–10. – P. 42–50. Another version of this article: idem, 'Cywilizacja i kultura' [Civilisation and culture]. [in:] idem, *Parerga*; – Warsaw, 1978. – P. 74–92.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Nowicka E., *Świat człowieka – świat kultury. Systematyczny wykład problemów antropologii kulturowej* [The world of humankind – the world of culture: a systematic lecture on the problems of cultural anthropology]. – Warsaw, 1997 (subsequent editions 1998, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009).

<sup>13</sup> See footnote 6.

himself<sup>14</sup> is taken into account, it can also be supposed that the material produced by the team reflects the ideological views of those directing the entire project. For this reason, as well, it was necessary to set preliminary objectives which would clearly illuminate the problem of ideologisation. Thus it was necessary to develop archives regarding Kluckhohn's activities. I included the results of research documentation available in the archives of the Culver Military Academy (USA), Harvard University Archives (USA), and Pusey Library (USA) in my monograph entitled *Kultura w systematyce Alfreda L. Kroebera i Clyde'a Kluckhohna* [Culture in the Classification of Alfred L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn] (annex, part G), in which critical commentary is included as well, in Chapter 5.

An important problem encountered during my preparatory work involved the widespread substantive inaccuracies in the Polish literature concerning the content of the classification of Kroeber and Kluckhohn. Correcting these inaccuracies demanded comparative substantiation; the results are presented in Chapter 4 of the monograph.

The elaboration of these issues finally permitted the realisation of the main objective, which was the elaboration of the classification of Kroeber and Kluckhohn with the use of modern analytical tools.

To summarise, I set the following preliminary objectives:

- the necessity of developing archival materials related to Kluckhohn's activities in the years 1940–1952 in order to demonstrate the design of the classification;
- methodological elimination of errors related to the classification of Kroeber and Kluckhohn from the Polish literature on the subject.

These preliminary objectives were subordinated to the main objective:

- elaboration of the classification of Kroeber and Kluckhohn so as to make it as functional as possible, in order to serve as a material and theoretical basis conducive to further development.

## **Methodology**

Standardisation of terminology. Introduction of abbreviations. An outline of the applied methods

The team led by Kroeber and Kluckhohn indicated about 300 works in which attempts had been made to define the term culture. From such extensive research material, Kroeber and Kluckhohn singled out 164 contexts for the use of the lexical unit culture, then proposed a classification that I called the Kroeber-Kluckhohn Culture Classification (hereafter KKCC).

KKCC consists of 164 contexts for the use of the lexical unit culture, divided into the following main groups: (1) descriptive, (2) historical, (3) normative, (4) psychological, (5) structural, (6) genetic, and (7) incomplete definitions.

Proceeding to the elaboration of KKCC, I updated my symbolic entries with the aim of making the KKCC easier to navigate. The main groups are identified by upper-case letters of the Latin alphabet, subgroups of a main group (where present) by Arabic numerals; chronological order according to release date is given, after a break, in Arabic numerals; in addition, for orientation purposes, the author's name, year of publication, and page were given; full bibliographic references to the cited works can be found in Part A of the annex. In KKCC the following designations of main groups (corresponding to the groups mentioned above) are used: (1) descriptive group: A; (2) historic group: B; (3) normative group: C; (4) psychological group: D; (5) structural group: E; (6) genetic group: F; (7) incomplete definitions group: G. Here are some examples of abbreviated entries: C1–1 Wissler; full version: C1–1 Wissler 1929:15, 341, to be read (using the bibliographic addresses contained in part A of the annex): 'Group C1, normative definitions, emphasis on rules, definition by Wissler from (An Introduction to Social Anthropology. – New York, 1929. – P. 15)'.

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. Kowalski M. W., *Antropolodzy na wojnie. O "brudnej" użyteczności nauk społecznych* [Anthropologists at war: on the 'dirty' utility of the social sciences]. – Warsaw, 2015.

Proceeding to the next stage of elaboration of KKCC, I made the assumption that I was dealing with a coherent paradigmatic structure, which, in terms of linguistic representation, could be analysed using the following methods: component analysis, frequency analysis, graph theory (GT), and Formal Concept Analysis (FCA). The use of component analysis was related to the significance within KKCC of the following concepts: social, behavioural, patterns (in culture), habits, activities, heritage, beliefs, customs, symbols, systems, attitudes towards certain solutions, knowledge, language, transmission of information, industry (i.e. production of artefacts). This method was modified so as to eliminate its weak points, e.g. definitions of minimal semantic value or the reciprocal relationships of components. For that purpose, it was necessary to distinguish a category to which I will return to on page 8. I present *more* important semantic problems in parts C and D of the annex. The use of frequency analysis enabled the introduction of quantitative restrictions and thus limited the inventory of analysed concepts, which in turn enabled me to propose the analytical categories mentioned above. The use of graph theory (GT) and formal conceptual analysis (FCA) enabled me on one hand (GT) to marginalise the role of sentence language (the organic role of linguistic representation) and the mapping of structural relationships between objects in graphic form which, in turn, also facilitates the definition and formulation of auxiliary relationships. FCA, on the other hand, enables the elaboration of formal concepts and their attributes. In the case of KKCC, this was the formal concept of culture.

### Theoretical assumptions

The choice of the above methods was dictated by the following assumptions:

- KKCC maps changes in the meaning of the term culture, 1871–1952;
- KKCC synthetically presents a coherent (in semantic terms) structure;
- semantic coherence enables the application of the methods of component analysis, frequency analysis, and GT and FCA analysis.

These assumptions were helpful in formulating the principal objective of this work, which was the justification of the thesis that KKCC represents a consistent paradigm and therefore must be regarded as a comprehensive semantic representation of the term culture. This thesis has been confirmed by component analysis, frequency analysis, and GT and FCA.

In my work I focus on the potential for a new analysis of the material gathered by the team of Kroeber and Kluckhohn. I show that the KKCC material is a consistent conceptual and theoretical paradigm. As mentioned above, I subject this paradigm to component, frequency, and GT and FCA analyses. The results of the research enabled me to elaborate the formal concept of culture of KKCC, which can be used as a model for further epistemological analysis. Subsequently, based on the results of the research, I formulated the following theses: (1) the concept of culture can be defined only within the limits of a conceptually consistent paradigm; (2) a material repository (i.e. text corpus) is required to define this paradigm; (3) context and frequency analyses enable the indexing of such a repository in order to define the framework categories which will be used to elaborate the formal concept; (4) the formal concept of culture of KKCC designates a framework for all potential theoretical analyses of the meaning of the term culture in social anthropology, or, more broadly, cultural studies; (5) KCCC is a semantic representation of one anthropological theory of culture.

### Research results

KKCC was subjected to frequency analysis according to the following procedures: major categories were established and extended to include so-called ‘auxiliary concepts’ (Chapter 3). Subsequently, KKCC was indexed for the quantitative occurrence of ‘auxiliary concepts’ reflecting the hierarchy of the category. The results are as follows (Arabic numbers signify the number of occur-

rences): (a) SOCIAL, 68; (b) BEHAVIOUR, 59; (c) (cultural) PATTERNS, 32; (d) HABITS, 29; (e) ACTIVITIES, 25; (f) HERITAGE, 21; (g) BELIEFS, 20; (h) CUSTOMS, 20; (i) SYMBOLS, 18; (j) SYSTEMS, 15; (k) ATTITUDE, 12; (l) ADJUSTMENT, 10; (m) KNOWLEDGE, 8; (n) LANGUAGE, 7; (o) TRANSMISSION, 4; (p) INDUSTRY, (3); (q) TO DO/TO ACT, 1.

Rejection of extremes (i.e. maximum values over 30 and minimum under 10) determined the conceptual scope of the paradigm – points (d) through (k) – of the meaning of the concept of culture. The exclusion of the extremes from further analytical procedures was dictated by the results of the frequency analysis of the work (individually) of Kroeber (A19, B19; sequence according to year of publication) and Kluckhohn (B16, D2–4, B21, F1–19, C1–21, F1–21, A16, A17, C1–11, C1–12, C1–13, E7, F2–7, F4–6, C1–14, D1–12; sequence according to year of publication; full research results in Chapter 3). Thus the results confirmed that KKCC represents the following structure: points (d) through (k) define a rigid thematic core with a stable terminological corpus. Thus I defined the KKCC system with the signature anthropology:  $KKCC_{\text{anthropology}}$ .

The FCA method indicated the relationship between categories (d)–(k) and their attributes (see Chapter 3). As a result of subsequent FCA procedures, I constructed a formal cultural concept for Kroeber (A19, B19); for Kluckhohn (B16, D2–4, B21, F1–19, C1–21, F1–21, A16, A17, C1–11, C1–12, C1–13, E7, F2–7, F4–6, C1–14, D1–12); and for KKCC.

## **Conclusions**

The applied analytical methods enabled formulation of the following conclusions: (1) the definitions of culture proposed by KKCC constitute one conceptual definition; (2) the term culture is defined in terms of a consistent conceptual and theoretical paradigm; (3) for KKCC the anthropological ethnographic paradigm is a consistent conceptual paradigm; (4) visualisation of the framework of the formal concept of culture of  $KKCC_{\text{anthropology}}$  reveals the direction of its potential development; (5) the KKCC framework clarifies how the semantic representation of the concept of culture within the paradigm of  $KKCC_{\text{anthropology}}$  is constructed; (6) the KKCC framework highlights the apparent deficiencies of KKCC in the area of anthropological philosophy.

## **Future uses for this research**

Analysis of the classification of Kroeber and Kluckhohn demonstrated a correlation between the stability (or lack thereof) of the terminological corpus and the direction of paradigmatic changes. The stability of the terminological corpus is characterised by the maintenance (to a certain extent) of a fixed number and degree of occurrences (saturation) of terms acknowledged as essential in academic communication. In 1940–1952 a decline was observed in the occurrence of terms typical of anthropology, e.g. SOCIAL, BEHAVIOUR, (cultural) PATTERNS, HABITS, etc., in favour of the terms SYMBOL, SYSTEM, KNOWLEDGE, and LANGUAGE; this signalled the occurrence of a paradigmatic change: a shift towards structuralism (Claude Lévi-Strauss), culturology (Leslie White), psychology (Ralph Linton), cultural semiotics (Yuri Lotman), and anthropological semiotics (Clifford James Geertz). These considerations ultimately made it possible to formulate the following thesis: the lack of a stable terminological corpus is a symptom of a failure to develop the specialised language necessary for the functioning of an academic discipline. Analysis of the textual corpus of a given discipline shows both growth tendencies as well as downward trends associated with the saturation of bases of word-formation, neologisms or neosemantics. A downward trend testifies to the disappearance of a given research direction in favour of another direction.

The analysis I proposed has resulted in the elaboration of a formal concept of culture, indicating a ‘continuum’ of the semantic representation of the concept of culture. It turns out that the semiotic, psychological, or structural definitions of culture in KKCC are related de facto to anthropological definitions, making them more specific, as is visible in later years, e.g. in the 1950s, the structural

approach; in the 60s, the psychological approach; in the 70s, the semiotic approach, in the 80s, the evolutionary approach; and so on. This elaboration of KKCC confirms the veracity of the thesis formulated by Thomas Kuhn regarding the periodic changes in the paradigms of academic disciplines, through the maintenance of an ontic tangent to the theoretical core, which, in the case of KKCC, is an anthropological understanding of culture.

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### АНТРОПОЛОГИЧЕСКАЯ ТЕОРИЯ КУЛЬТУРЫ – ОБЗОР ИССЛЕДОВАНИЙ

В 1952 г. Альфред Л. Кробер и Клайд Клюкхон опубликовали монографию «Культура критический обзор концепций и определений», сыгравшую определяющую роль в исследованиях культуры. В упомянутой книге Кробер и Клюкхон с группой ученых предприняли попытку систематизировать значения понятия «культура» в английской антропологической литературе за период 1871–1951 гг. В данной статье представлена разработка функциональной классификации концепции культуры (Классификация культуры Кройбер–Клюкхона, ККСС). С этой целью улучшена символическая нотация, которая отделяет типы псевдоопределений культуры от их семантических репрезентаций, что позволяет переносить анализ на метатеоретический уровень. Несмотря на то, что прошло более 60-ти лет с момента публикации «Культуры...», данное исследование необходимо переосмыслить по нескольким причинам: 1. ККСС структурирует дискурс о культуре за период 1871–1951 гг. в области антропологических англоязычных исследований; 2. ККСС стала толчком для теоретических дискуссий о возможностях определения понятия «культура»; 3. Данная монография предлагает новые аналитические методы, используемые для анализа ККСС, такие как теория графов, формальный концептуальный анализ и компонентный анализ.

**Ключевые слова:** *теоретическая антропология, социальная антропология, теория культуры, научный доклад.*

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