

OTHERING, STEREOTYPING, HYBRIDITY IN ‘HUJAN BULAN JUNI’: A POSTCOLONIAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This study tries to examine the nature of Indonesian identity. Even though the term ‘Indonesia’ has been used since 1900 to cultivate the sense of nationalism among nationalist young people who came from various cultures across different islands of Indonesia, it is still complicated to define. One of the reasons is Indonesia was colonized for hundreds of years, and the colonialism had a great impact in defining what being Indonesian means. This issue is captured in Sapardi Djoko Darmono’s novel titled ‘Hujan Bulan Juni’ which became the object of this qualitative study. The main characters, Sarwono and Pingkan, are narrated to come from different Indonesian ethnicities with different set of cultures. Using the postcolonial theories of othering, stereotyping, and hybridity postulated by Homi K. Bhabha, this study found that othering and stereotyping are still perpetuated in post-colonial era and therefore problematic. The reality of hybridity could therefore become an answer to negotiate Indonesian identity.

Keywords: othering, stereotyping, hybridity, post-colonial

INTRODUCTION

The term ‘Indonesia’ was first introduced by an English ethnologist, George Samuel Windsor Earl in 1847 in his writing titled “On the Leading Characteristics of the Papuan, Australian, and Malay-Polynesian Nations” to name the native inhabitants of Indian archipelago or Malayan archipelago as ‘Indunesians’ or ‘Malayunesians’ although he preferred the second term. In 1850, Richardson Logan also mentioned the term ‘Indonesia’ to refer to ‘Indian archipelago’. Seventy-four years later, in 1924, a German anthropologist, Adolf Bastian used the term ‘Indonesian’ to call the people who lived in East Indies. It is obvious that the early usage of the term ‘Indonesian’ by the three people forementioned is limited to a mere geographical purpose (Danang, 2020). However, since

1900, the term 'Indonesia' became more widely used especially among young nationalist Indonesian groups. The term was in fact coined as a symbol of unity and cultural concord between diverse ethnicities in Indonesia, and expression of political freedom from the colonizer, and in later development was used to substitute the Dutch given term to Indonesians 'inlander' which was somehow considered degrading. The nationalism value laden term 'Indonesia' made the Dutch as colonizers object the use of the term 'Indonesian' in any of its official decrees and proceedings, and in Dutch circles, the use of the term was seen as an act of treason against Dutch sovereignty (Kroef, 1951, p. 168). Despite Dutch's disapproval, the term 'Indonesia' became the name of a new independent republic which gained its independence in 1945, and its people are called 'Indonesian'.

Indonesian identity, however, is difficult to define. It is because Indonesia is an archipelago country, so Indonesian people live in different topography, and therefore develop diverse 'tradition, language and behaviour'. Hence, there is an opinion that what can be truly 'Indonesian' is everything developed before foreign colonizers came to Indonesia (Kroef, 1951, p. 170). However, the Dutch claimed 'Indonesian' is a by-product of colonizers and merely a rallying cry from Indonesian nationalist leaders to strengthen the notion of unity rather than the actual linguistic, cultural and political unity between different islands' inhabitants in Indonesia (Kroef, 1951, pp. 170–171). In brief, the construction of Indonesian identity cannot be separated from the Dutch colonization. This ambiguous nature of Indonesian identity is perhaps what Sapardi Djoko Darmono, a famous Indonesian poet, tried to capture in his novel 'Hujan Bulan Juni' (2015). This novel is an adaptation from a collection of poetry 'Hujan Bulan Juni' which was first published in 1994 and the novel was then adapted to a film with the same title 'Hujan Bulan Juni' in 2017 (Astuti, 2022). This contemporary novel introduced two main characters, Sarwono and Pinkan, who love each other, but come from different ethnic and religious background, so doubts and disapproval from their family members and relatives surround their love story. Even though the plot of the novel 'Hujan Bulan Juni' seems falling into a mere cliché romantic genre, this novel is much more than that. In fact, there have been many studies that used the novel as the object of research, and mostly focus on For instance, Aliefta, Mulyono and Andalas in 2018 examined the style of language used in the novel 'Hujan Bulan Juni' (Aliefta, Mulyono, & IRP, 2019) while Suseno (2018) studied the transformation journey of the novel 'Hujan Bulan Juni' from poetry, and further ahead to a film (Suseno, 2018). However, besides those aspects, there are a lot of narrations through the characters' personal thought and conversation which showed how Indonesian identity is being questioned by the characters in the novel. It is also interesting to notice

that the author of the novel, Sapardi Djoko Darmono, brought up the idea of colonialism's influence on the construction of Indonesian identity. Therefore, in this study, I aim to use a postcolonial approach to discuss Indonesian identity in the novel 'Hujan Bulan Juni'. In doing so, I use Homi K Bhabha's theories on othering, stereotyping, and hybridity as tools to examine the impact of those colonial discourses on how the characters in the novel perceive and negotiate their ethnicities in relation to Indonesian identity.

CONCEPT AND THEORIES

Post-colonialism/Postcolonialism

Post-colonialism or Postcolonialism is a study about colonization effects on societies and their cultures. The prefix 'post' in the term has been a subject of contentious debate amongst critics because of an oversimplified understanding of 'post' as 'after' colonialism. However, the most recent elaboration of postcolonialism "has been primarily concerned with to examine the processes and effects of, and reactions to, European colonialism from the sixteenth century up to the neo-colonialism of the present day" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2007, pp. 168–169). The processes and effects of colonialism has indeed not limited to economic, military or political aspects, but it also radically affected the culture and identity of those previously colonized people (Fay & Haydon, 2017).

Homi K. Bhabha's Othering, Stereotyping, and Hybridity

Homi K. Bhabha is one of well-known postcolonial theorists who argued that the influence of colonialism is not yet over; instead its influences on the complexities of resistance, negotiation and cultural translation associated with identities are still ongoing in contemporary developments (Huddart, 2018). Among many theories in postcolonial study, Homi K. Bhabha's 'othering', 'stereotyping' and hybridity are "series of challenges to the concept of identity" (Fay & Haydon, 2017, p. 10), and those three key concepts are elaborated below.

Othering

In his book, 'The Location of Culture', Homi K. Bhabha started his argument by highlighting the binary relationship between "Self" which refer to 'West' or colonizer, and "Other" which refer to the "East" or colonized inspired by Edward Said's 'Orientalism' concept on how the 'West' always see itself as "cultured, civilized, and industrious" while the 'East' is described as "lazy and uncivilized" (Fay & Haydon, 2017, p. 10). Homi K. Bhabha explained this further by borrowing Frantz Fanon's example of White

Supremacy's effect on the black self-image as stated below:

"I had to meet the white man's eyes. An unfamiliar weight burdened me. In the white world the man of colour encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema I was battered down by tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetishism, racial defects I took myself far off from my own presence What else could it be for me but an amputation, an excision, a haemorrhage that spattered my whole body with black blood?" (Bhabha, 2004, p. 60)

It is obvious that the process of 'othering' is a production of identity for the colonized seen from the eyes of the colonizers. Although the 'Other' identity created by the colonizer might never be affirmed true, the colonizers still need 'othering' the colonized people, so that they have reasons to impose their values them, and unfortunately, this colonialism culture of 'Self' versus 'Other' has been widely used until today as a "framework to conceive human diversity" especially in ex-colonized countries (Staszak, 2009).

Stereotyping

The second concept 'stereotyping' is closely related to 'othering'. While 'othering' focuses on the process of alienation between 'Self' and 'Other', stereotyping is defined as "a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always 'in place', already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated" (Bhabha, 2004, p. 95). This concept stems from 'fixity' where the 'Other' is fixed as unchangeable, known, and predictable (Mushtaq, 2010, p. 25) and those fixities are built on "political and cultural ideologies that are prejudiced, discriminatory, vestigial, archaic, and "mythical" (Huddart, 2018, p. 26). In brief, stereotyping is problematic because it creates certain hierarchy where colonizers are always in a higher position than the colonized, and it reduces the multiple heterogonous identities of the colonized people with a fixated identity created by the colonizer. The fixated identity or the created stereotypes in reality are always lack, and to certain extent defective.

Hybridity

The 'Othering' and 'Stereotyping' might give an idea that identities of the colonizer and colonized are stable. However, Bhabha argued that identities of both the colonizer and the colonized are fluid and changing. This ambivalent condition then gave rise to hybridity. Taken from horticulture field in which 'hybridity' means the cross- pollination to produce a 'hybrid' species, hybridity in Homi K. Bhabha's context refers to "the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization" (Ashcroft et al., 2007, p. 108). The cross-cultural identity is formed in what Bhabha called as 'Third Space' (Mushtaq, 2010, p. 25). In this 'Third Space', the colonizer and the colonized who come

from different cultures meet and they are forced to adapt and change their identities politically, culturally, or psychologically, hence, the division such as 'Self' versus 'Others' or 'West' versus 'East' is simply impossible (Fay & Haydon, 2017, p. 11).

RESEARCH METHODS

In this study, the writer uses qualitative approach. According to (Creswell & Creswell, 2108, p. 287), qualitative method "rely on text and image data, have unique steps in data analysis, and draw on diverse design to educate readers." Harry Wolcott further elaborated three components of qualitative work. The first one is description which presents the original data in a narrative followed by analysis which goes beyond the descriptive analysis, and rather explains 'the key factors and relationships among the data'. The last one is interpretation which requires the researcher to give meaning to the data by producing insights creatively (Gibson & Brown, 2009, p. 5). This study fulfills all the criteria aforementioned. This study uses the text in 'Hujan Bulan Juni' and analyzed the ideology of colonialism discourse of othering, stereotyping, and hybridity by interpreting the utterances produced by the characters in the novel 'Hujan Bulan Juni'.

DISCUSSION

Othering, Stereotyping and Hybridity in 'Hujan Bulan Juni'

It is intriguing that Indonesian identity in the novel 'Hujan Bulan Juni' is fragmented with the presentation of the continuation of colonial discourse of 'othering' and 'stereotyping' in a setting that takes place in a modern era (2015), the time when the novel was published. In order to elaborate how 'othering' and 'stereotyping' affect Indonesian identity, the author created a dichotomy between two ethnicities, Javanese and Manado represented by the characters in the novel. The story which revolves around Sarwono who is a Javanese and Pingkan who is half Javanese and half Manado, shows how these two characters are 'othering' and 'stereotyping' because of their different ethnicities and the set of cultures attached to their ethnicities such as religion and cultures. It is then compelling to see how identities of the characters were traced back to colonization era and compared to the more recent development up to the year when the novel was published in 2015. The notion of hybrid identity as Indonesian identity was then put forward.

Javanese versus Manado: The Colonial Discourse of 'Othering' and 'Stereotyping'

The trace of colonialism in regards to ethnicity in Indonesia was introduced in the novel through Sarwono's respond to Pingkan's opinion about his Javanese-ness, and his

assumption about Manado when he was about to go to Manado for the first time as representative of the University of Indonesia where he worked at:

“...gadis itu tidak pernah menyebutnya pengung -paling banter menyebutnya Jawa zadul. Tidak pernah didengarnya ada yang menyebut Menado zadul sebab konon masyarakat di sana lebih dulu menerima pendidikan Belanda tinimbang di Jawa. Dan pendidikan tidak hanya berarti rumah sekolah, tetapi juga Rumah Tuhan-agama. Juga makanan. Juga pakaian. Itu sebabnya ketika pertama kali ke Menado Sarwono siap-siap menerima pengalaman yang tidak akan pernah didapatnya di Jawa” (Damono, 2015, p. 21).

From this excerpt, Pingkan and Sarwono are ‘othering’ and ‘stereotyping’ each other. Pingkan labelled Sarwono negatively as ‘*zadul*’ which means old-fashioned and outdated, and attached it to Sarwono’s Javanese identity as ‘*Jawa zadul*’. Sarwono, on the other hand, though that Manado is more developed than Java because Manado was educated in Dutch way, so that people in Manado adopted Dutch lifestyle, including its religion, food and clothes. What Sarwono thought is also ‘othering’ and ‘stereotyping’ Manado considering that in the context, Sarwono has never been to Manado, and he expected to experience things that he would never experience in Java. In brief, there are certain ‘fixation’ that Pingkan applied to Sarwono, and vice versa, and therefore, caused a distinction between these two ethnicities.

The process of ‘Self’ versus ‘Other’ and the set of prejudice attached to Javanese and Manado illustrated above can be related to the position of these two ethnicities in the Dutch colonization era in Indonesia. As reported by J.C. Baud, there was a clear division between Javanese and Dutch ‘races’ in the terms of language, colour, religion, morals, and historical memories, which made Dutch sovereign at that time considered ‘the Javanese’ as having problematic characteristics and therefore the process of ‘othering’ between Dutch as rulers, and ‘Javanese’ as the ruled was made clear and Dutch ‘stereotyped’ the Javanese as having ‘defects’ in their characters, so that disciplinary and reformation from the Dutch will be beneficial for them (Philpott, 2000, p. 40). On the other hand, in July 1, 1919, Manado became the city of *Gementee* (municipal government during Dutch East Indies’ occupation in Indonesia), and had its own city council (Marzuki, 2020, p. 53). This indicated how important Manado for Dutch East Indies was, and Milone (1996) explained that Manado was even considered identical to European enclave regarding its commercial activities, its lifestyle, the existence of social institution, and its rights to manage its own finance, social facilities (e.g., road, market, housing, clean water), and the city’s border (Marzuki, 2020, p. 53)

From the elaboration of Javanese and Manado’s positions during Dutch

colonization era, it is clear that there is a remarkable difference between Manado and Dutch. Manado seemed to readily embrace Dutch's culture in almost every aspect of their lives; thus, obtained trust from the Dutch East Indies government, and developed into a municipal city. In other words, Manado was the face of Dutch in Indonesia. In contrast, Javanese held their cultures tightly, and jeopardized their relationship with the Dutch government. The 'othering' and 'stereotyping' that Pingkan and Sarwono did to each other could then be understood by putting them in this context. That context was supported by another example in the novel in which Manado is seen as 'Self' or face of the colonizer versus Javanese as 'Other'

"Waktu masih di SD, Pingkan disuruh ibunya belajar menari Jawa; yang mengajarnya seorang Bei. Namun, setiap kali ia berbuat kesalahan atau gerak yang kaku, Pak Bei bilang, Ndak apa-apa Non. Kamu kan Menado. Pingkan sebenarnya lebih sreg dipanggil Ndhuk atau Wuk daripada Non. (Damono, 2015, p. 22).

This example indicated Pak Bei's 'othering' toward Pingkan, by calling her 'Non' that imitate how Dutch young girl was addressed in the Dutch colonization era instead of addressing Pingkan with 'Ndhuk' or 'Wuk' which are Javanese terms for a young girl. Pak Bei also 'stereotyped' Pingkan as being unable to master the art of Javanese dancing because of her being Manado who adopted Dutch way of living, unlike Javanese who hold tight to their root culture.

'Stereotyping': A Problematic Colonial Discourse

Homi K Bhabha postulated that "the stereotype is not a simplification because it is a false representation of a given reality. It is a simplification because it is an arrested, fixated form of representation that, in denying the play of difference (which the negation through the other permits), constitutes a problem for the representation of the subject in significations of psychic and social relations." In (Huddart, 2018, p. 28). The problem of 'stereotyping' was narrated in the novel "Hujan Bulan Juni" through the changing definition and attitude towards the term 'priayi' in Javanese context.

Buku pakem yang menjadikan penulisnya seorang jendral ilmu Bangsa-bangsa menguraikan apa yang disebutnya 'Agama Jawa'. Waktu pertama kali membaca buku itu, Sarwono berusaha sebaik-baiknya untuk menggambar kotak-kotak dalam benaknya, tiga kotak jumlahnya, dan dengan sangat hati-hati menyusupkan dirinya ke dalam salah satu kotak itu: priayi, abangan, santri. Dan gagal. Pikirnya, kesulitan yang sekarang dialaminya tentu berbeda dengan yang dialami jenderal Antropologi itu ketika dulu masuk ke sebuah kota dalam usahanya membuat penelitian tentang bangsa Jawa. Sebuah kota, hanya sebuah kota. Dan Jawa bukan sebuah kota, jauh lebih luas dan rumit daripada kota. Sarwono sejak itu menganggap kota yang dalam buku 'disembunyikan' namanya itu maya adanya." (Damono, 2015, p. 24)

The book that Sarwono talked about refers to a book titled '*Agama Jawa*' [*The Religion of Java*] written by an American anthropologist, Clifford Geertz. In the book, Geertz reported the results of his research in a small city called Mojokuto located in East Java, and concluded that religion and culture are tied to each other. He furthermore classified the people in Mojokuto into three groups: 'priayi', 'abangan', and 'santri' who showed different sets of behaviour and political ideology (Riady, 2021, p. 18). Sarwono, however, argued, that this classification is problematic as it is invalid to use only one small city, Mojokuto, and its small population to make generalization about all Javanese people. It is also impossible to fit Javanese into certain frame because even Javanese people still divide their Java-ness into different layers of strata or circles with the ones closer to *Keraton* [*kingdom in Central Java*] such as 'priayi' as true Javanese and ones farther as not truly Javanese people (Damono, 2015, p. 100). More interestingly, the word 'priayi' which was used by Clifford Geertz was also used by the Dutch East Indies government. In Dutch colonization era, 'priyayi' who previously known as Javanese royalty or nobles became *volkschoufden* whose main job was to be a mediator between the Dutch as colonizer and Indonesian people in general (Arimi, 2008, p. 8). As a result, there was a change in the 'stereotyping' on Javanese 'priayi', from respected high position to Dutch colonizer's ally who try to adopt colonial education, lifestyle and even the language so that they are considered to resemble the Dutch colonizer in many ways including less religious and very loyal to the Dutch colonizer (ibid, p.8). Furthermore, Dutch colonizer also appointed new 'priayi' who came from commoners, and it gave hope for commoners to have more power and wealth (Arimi, 2008, p. 9). The negative image that Indonesian people have about 'priayi/priyayi' is still in effect until modern era, and this change of 'stereotyping' towards 'priayi' was smartly captured in the novel:

"Gerombolan paman dan bibi Sarwono dari garis ayahnya yang datang ke perjamuan itu hamper semua banting stir dan langung tancap gas menjadi pengusaha, tidak mau menjadi priayi yang menganggap pekerjaan semacam itu merendahkan derajat. Lha itu kan kerjaan kaum pidak pedarakan", kata mereka. Dan mereka pun jelas menjadi lebih kaya dari ayahnya yang bangga dan bersyukur mengabdikan sebagai PNS." (Damono, 2015, p. 19)

Being government's officers for Sarwono's uncles and aunts is not prestige, but a shame and belongs to low class people. It is a proof that new stereotypes might appear but it is not entirely new as it is influenced by the previous stereotype of how being a 'priayi' in Dutch colonization era means being a servant to the colonizer, and in modern Indonesia, a servant to the country or the society. The value of being 'priayi' is no longer valuable for the Javanese ethnicity as it no longer gives them power, wealth and prestige (Hariyanto,

2012, p. 112) as it was in the past, but being a businessman does. A closer look at this phenomenon, however, results in an implication that becoming a businessman is an effort to become 'priayi', but with a different name. It is because being a businessman will enable someone to earn a fortune, but more importantly obtains other things including power, wealth, and prestige.

Hybridity: Negotiating Indonesian Identity

The colonial discourse of 'othering' and 'stereotyping' have been proven to be problematic because the identities of the "Self" or "Other" keep changing, and what will naturally happen is hybridity- the creation of new cultures. In "Hujan Bulan Juni", the concept of 'hybridity' is simply manifested through the main lead female character, Pingkan, who was born half Manado, and half Javanese, and therefore should adopt both cultures. Pingkan is also pictured as a Japanese lecturer who Hybridity in Pingkan's case, however, did not make her proud, but confused, and eventually led her to negotiate her identity. It is undeniable that sometimes Pingkan still showed her Manado-ness as narrated in the following occasions:

"Gendang telinga Manado tidak pernah keliru bergetar", katanya. "Kuping Jawa itu yang suka ngeloyor ke sana kemari dan kalau nyanyi tidak jelas itu macapat atau Sonata, hahaha." (Damono, 2015, p. 33)
Sambil melepaskan jambakannya, Pingkan setengah menjerit, "Jawa cuma tahu Srimpi, ya. Kata Ayah, di Minahasa ada Tari Perang Cakalele – dan kamu pasti gak bisa nari itu, tubuhmu yang kerempeng itu dak laku di Manado. (Damono, 2015, p. 35)

From the two excerpts above, Pingkan defended Manado in the face of Sarwono, a 'real' Javanese who keeps teasing her hybrid genetics. Pingkan did that by emphasizing how Manado is superior to Javanese in their taste in music and capability to differentiate one music genre from another. She also pointed out that not only Javanese has popular traditional dance, but Manado also has a traditional dance which a Javanese like Sarwono does not know and might not be able to master as well. However, in more occasions, Pingkan frankly negotiated her identity as a Javanese rather than being Manado:

Pingkan jelas lebih Solo dari ibunya, jadi malah jadi sering bahan pembicaraan, wong namanya Pingkan kok Jawanya mlipis (Damono, 2015, p. 18)
Namun mengherankan juga bahwa gadis itu ternyata merasa menjadi liyan juga ketika bertemu dengan kerabatnya di Manado waktu itu, meskipun ia mengenal Tinutuan. Kata 'pulang' tidak begitu tepat rasanya sebab Sarwono menyaksikan bahwa gadis itu jelas-jelas merasa kikuk di antara kerabatnya. (Damono, 2015, p. 22)
"Aku ini Jawa, hidupku di Jawa, Ben." (Damono, 2015, p. 51)
"Aku kan Jawa. Yang Manado kan Bapakku. (Damono, 2015, p. 70)

These excerpts showed that despite Pingkan's hybrid parents, Pingkan wanted to perceive herself as Javanese rather than Manado. She felt uncomfortable whenever she was amongst her Manado relatives, and she repeatedly declared that she is Javanese, not Manado. It is not surprising because Pingkan stayed in Solo, a city with thick Javanese culture, during her childhood and teenagerhood, and moved to Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia which is also located in Java Island when she was about to enter university (Damono, 2015, p. 16). She also fell in love with Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia, which is also located in Java island, and called Jakarta as love (Damono, 2015, p. 125). Despite repetitive claim from Pingkan herself that she is Javanese, her hybrid identity still confused her.

Di Solo la jadi Manado, di Manado la dibilang Jawa... Yang menjadi label itu nama atau darah? Tentu saja dulu ayahnya tidak tertarik memberinya nama Bawuk atau Tumbu, misalnya. Itu semua nama Jawa; ayahnya seorang Pelenkahu (Damono, 2015, p. 22).

Pingkan tidak tahu lagi kampungnya yang mana, Solo apa Manado? (Damono, 2015, p. 56)

Pingkan somehow could not say whether she is Javanese, or she is Manado. The question that Pingkan raised was quite critical to the notion of Indonesian identity because both name and blood in Pingkan's case could not really embody her identity as Indonesian. Her name, Pingkan, obviously indicated that she is Manado just like her dad who is a Manado, but her blood is a combination of her father's Manado blood and her mother's Javanese blood. Thus, Pingkan's question is a rhetorical question that is impossible to answer and it is also an attempt to negotiate her identity as Indonesian which should not be fragmented into names or blood. In this case, Sarwono's answer is probably the best, "*Ya jangan bingung, kalian berdua itu Indonesia Raya (Astuti, 2022).*" Sarwono argued that Pingkan and her brother are simply Indonesians.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the effects of Dutch colonial discourse 'othering', 'stereotyping', and 'hybridity' could still be felt in post-colonial era, several decades after Indonesia gained its independence in 1945, and this phenomenon is brought up in a contemporary novel 'Hujan Bulan Juni' (2015). The novel in fact revealed how problematic the colonial discourse of 'othering' and 'stereotyping' are because they rely on certain fixation which most of time proved to be wrong. It is futile to consider other people as 'others' by 'stereotyping' them because even in one ethnicity, there are many 'stereotypes' that change from time to time, and there will always be a certain point where different

ethnicities meet in the 'Third Space', and create a new hybrid identity which cannot be simply defined by name or blood. Therefore, the author of the novel proposed a solution to these complicated multiple identities, and substitute it with one and only identity, 'Indonesia Raya' [Great Indonesia] which embodies and embraces all the differences.

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