



Gender Identity, Multiculturalism, and Environmental Issue in Indonesian Urban Literature

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Abstract. In the reform era, there was an opportunity to get out of the shadow of a frozen Indonesian identity. Environmental exploration should be diminished and diversity or multiculturalism could be celebrated. Both multiculturalism and environmental issues were portrayed in urban literature. This research aimed to analyze multiculturalism and environmental issue portrayed in urban literature. By referring to the cultural studies approach, this research tried to open the possibility that identity is never fixed and final, but always evolves, interwoven with social context. It was also possible to talk about the intersectionality between environmental issue, gender identity, ethnicity, and multiculturalism. It was found in urban literature that identity categories are never separated from each other, but are liquid and intertwined, have reciprocal relationships, and are opposed to each other. The urban literature also depicted that inequality relation between human and nature resulted environmental damage.

Keywords: Urban Literature · Multiculturalism · Environmental Issue · Authoritarianism

1 Introduction

There was an opportunity to get out of the shadow of a frozen Indonesian identity and environmental degradation in the reform era. Diversity or multiculturalism is celebrated so that minority groups silenced during the New Order era have the agreement to articulate their culture. On the other hand, environmental damage such as logging or exploiting nature also occurred in this era. For example, many Chinese people awakened their identity reflected in a non-governmental organization, language, and culture. It is in line with state policies that try to accommodate minority groups even though multiculturalism in *the Reformasi* era is still primarily controlled by the hegemonic groups of power holders as racial discrimination in Indonesia is far from over [1]. However, it was the opposite when talking about the issue of environmental damage. According to Agustino and Yusuf, after the New Order collapsed, logging and exploitation of nature became increasingly in several areas [2].

Pluralism and environmental issues are social facts in Indonesia. The discussion about pluralism in Indonesia is about identity. Talking about identity means also need to talk about ethnicity differences. It can become a problem in Indonesia because majorities often have control over minorities. Environmental issues are allegedly getting worse after the new order since the implementation of decentralization. It is the actors behind exploitation that are more complex, ranging from bureaucrats, politicians, police, brokers, thugs to NGOs in each region. The conditions have happened to a literary work. The connection among the discourses in society, especially on cultural identity, around gender, ethnicity, class, nationality, and environmental issues in Indonesia, is an engaging theme in Indonesian literature.

Urban literature is a literary genre that discusses the themes of multiculturalism, Indonesian identity, and environmental issues in everyday life. *Republika* (09/11/2008) explained that urban literature is a literary work that seeks to portray the daily life of urban communities [3]. For example, Dewi Lestari, Ayu Utami, and Djenar Maesa Ayu are female authors that are very close to the reality and daily experience of the urban community, especially women.

Environment exploitation, naming, labeling, stereotyping for ethnicity, religion appear in literary works. Green literature or ecocriticism portrayed the relation between humans and the environment [4]. In order to become a reflection of human life, the literary works put in writing the activities carried out by humans on nature and the impact. The naming problem refers more to biological characteristics, which in turn gives rise to stereotyping in the shadow of certain ethnic dominations. The issue of center-periphery appears in Indonesian identity. Instead of making Indonesian identity more open, it even makes narrowing the meaning of identity-based on physical characteristics increasingly confined to a frozen identity trap. From this perspective, the study aimed to analyze the relationship between humans and nature, as well as multiculturalism, are depicted in urban literature.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Multiculture, National Identity, and Environmental Issue

The identity in Stuart Hall's view does not refer to the essentialist view given but is always in the process of being. Identity is never single, fragmented, intersecting, and discourse. Identity is inside, not outside representation [5]. Identity in *A New Politics of Identity: Political Principles for Interdependent World* is not sufficiently understood from differences, but requires a more in-depth understanding of the way that identity is in constitutive features [6]. The politics of collective identity are indirect states that the groups are freed from the strength of other groups, to define their identity as psychological consequences and the moral burden they bear as a result of oppressive norms or tyranny they experience. While positive, through the concept of "pride," this is related to articulation as self-liberation from the dominant group's power and as an attempt to proclaim pride in their identity. This pride arises because of reject inferiority and appreciation as people [6].

A national identity is a form of imaginative identification of symbols and discourses of nation-states. The nation is something imagined (imagined communities) because

even the smallest members of the nation may not know and do not know most of the other members, will not meet with them, and never hear about them [7]. The nation is not just a political formation but also a system of cultural representation in which national identity is continuously reproduced as discursive action. Being an Indonesia should be understood about the concept of Indonesian identity. The identity of Indonesia has developed in variety as the formation of this nation has existed from *Nusantara's* thought, highlighting harmony and diversity [8]. The process of being Indonesia was from a historical investigation of *Nusantara's* thought, which showed that older and foreign cultures existed before has also influenced ethnic cultures. For example, India has influenced the Javanese culture, and Minangkabau has also adopted India's culture but has abolished it afterward. The naming proses perhaps could mark this identity. Stuart Mill stated that the naming process has denotation to describe things [9]. This naming process describes the attributes of nature or an object's quality with these names [10].

In a multicultural society, equality can involve the power, welfare, and necessary abilities needed for human development. Equality in the life of the State involves the arrangement as a policy of a government. If government regulations create inequality, a patriarchal system becomes the primary cause. Indonesia is closely related to patriarchy culture or known as the "fatherly" system. It believes that the law of descent, according to the father's line. Names, property, and power of the head of the family (father) are on to boys. Patriarchy is the cause of women's oppression, and the people who adhere to the patriarchal system place men in dominant positions and powers compared to women. Biological differences between men and women become the beginning of the formation of patriarchal culture [11]. In another definition:

"Patriarchy (from Greek: Patria meaning father and arche' meaning rule) is the anthropological term used to define the sociological condition were male members of a society tend to predominate in the position of power; with the more powerful the position, the more likely it is that a male will hold that position." [12].

Indonesian law had been tightening the patriarchy culture in 1974—Law of the marriage No.1 year of 1974 authorized to civilize patriarchy in the next generation [13]. The law stated that the husband has a role as the head of a family ad responsible for protecting his wife and fulfill the living expense while wife as a housewife, while wife as a housewife responsible for managing the house chores. From the law, it was that the government had used their authority to live in the domestic field while man has to go public sphere. Not only the government but also religious values have taken a role to perpetuate patriarchy in Indonesian people. For example, there is an expression about how to be a noble mother "heaven is under mother's sole of feet" which meant that the domestic field is the right place for women as wives and mothers to take good care for their children so that their children can grow well and success. If the mothers do not become such a noble mother, society can judge them. Furthermore, how society represented women as a maternal and domestic human has also been considered by Blackwood, who stated that literature historical writings such as Minangkabau *adat* written in early 1970 defined power and authority as masculine meanwhile women's action was excluded from

everything outside domestic domain [14]. Thus, it was that society, religious values, and the Indonesian government essential in constructing patriarchy.

Natural and environmental conditions affect the quality of human life. Nowadays, it has been declining due to global climate change. Human Development Report stated that in 2000–2004 there were around 262 million victims of climate disasters, with 98% of them being third-party citizens [15]. Thus, Indonesia overcomes these natural disasters. It was an extreme climate that caused Floods and landslides in various regions in Indonesia. The damage is affected by human actions. The literary works can act as a medium to carry the message of interrelation between humans and nature to prevent the effects of widespread damage. In the 2000s, a green literary movement emerged, pioneered by novelist Naning Pranoto [16]. According to Pranoto, green literature must play a role in changing the destructive people's lifestyle into preserving the earth. This type of literature contains ecological diction, expressing a sense of pain in the earth's destruction, resistance to the exploitation of the earth and its contents, and freeing the earth from destruction.

2.2 Urban Literature

Urban literature characterizes the development of cities, where the development then gives birth to a system in a society that is structurally and culturally different from the structure and culture of rural communities. Based on the results of the study, there is indeed no strict and precise categorization of the criteria of urban literature. It makes the researcher have to make a sort of categorization, considering that urban literature is not a genre. Of course, the categorization will be possible to be criticized and modified. Some statements as references in determining categorization are as follows:

1. Urban literature focuses on contemporary urban issues even though it does not negate what is in the countryside. The dualism of the city and the village in the globalization era is blurred, given the people's mobility so fast.
2. The expression displayed in urban literature tries to portray the problems that often occur and dominate the urban community, including social, economic, political, and cultural problems and the capitalization of the city itself.
3. Urban communities face the problem of capitalism, which makes them have to survive with a lifestyle that is different from rural communities. Departing from this urban literature will function as a source of reflection, which can play an active role in formulating reality, proclaiming the State of the civilized nation where the land, fields, and fields have changed, building factories. Planting habits have long changed to being forced to buy. A large design intentionally conditions this internal conflict for the benefit of capital. As a result, a trap was created to capture and accommodate human beings, then was eliminated without humanity: being chased, captured, and annihilated. However, the writers always try to find space because of the demands of conscience. They are making literature as a media that is always being independent. Summarizes the problems of life, which are born from human authenticity: like a poem that portrays the real tragic life.
4. Urbanization is a term to describe the mobility of people moving from village to city. Heterogenisation in society is a particular concern in urban literature. Various

Table 1. Categorization of Urban Literature

No.	Writer Profile	Title
1	<p>Ayu Utami, an Indonesian writer who wrote 2000, Prince Claus Nobel Prize. Her works have expanded the Indonesian literary horizon. <i>Saman</i>, the debut novel, the first champion of the Jakarta Arts Council in 1998, became a best seller and has been translated into eight languages. During the Indonesian military regime, he was a journalist and freedom activist. He was one of the founders of the Alliance of Independent Journalists, an organization that was later banned by Suharto. After the political change, he focused on writing novels. The stories he created reflect the Indonesian society and the political situation in the country at that time. Ayu Utami also works at Salihara Community, an independent art center in Jakarta. (Ubud Writers Festival, 2013)</p>	<p>a. Novel <i>Saman</i>, KPG, Jakarta, 1998 b. Novel <i>Larung</i>, KPG, Jakarta, 2001 c. Kumpulan Esai “Si Parasit Lajang,” Gagas Media, Jakarta, 2003 d. Novel <i>Bilangan Fu</i>, KPG, Jakarta, 2008 e. Novel <i>Manjali dan Cakrabirawa (Seri Bilangan Fu)</i>, KPG, Jakarta, 2010 f. Novel <i>Cerita Cinta Enrico</i>, KPG, Jakarta, 2012 g. Novel <i>Soegija: 100% Indonesia</i>, KPG, Jakarta, 2012 h. Novel <i>Lalita (Seri Bilangan Fu)</i>, KPG, Jakarta, 2012 i. Novel <i>Si Parasit Lajang</i>, KPG, Jakarta, 2013 j. Novel <i>Pengakuan: Eks Parasit Lajang</i>, KPG, Jakarta, 2013</p>
2	<p>Djenar Maesa Ayu is a woman born in Jakarta, January 10, 1970, son of Sjumandjaya and Toety Kirana. The widow from Edi Wijaya, and has two children, Banyu Bening and Batari Maharani. Djenar Maesa Ayu Indonesian female writer who is quite prominent. Her feminine short stories make her name known and taken into account. Her name soared when she entered the world of film.</p>	<p>a. 2002 <i>Mereka Bilang, Saya Monyet!</i>, kumpulan cerpen b. 2003 <i>Jangan Main-main Dengan Kelaminmu</i>, Kumpulan cerpen c. 2005 <i>Naila</i>, novel d. 2006 <i>Cerita Pendek tentang Cerita yang Pendek</i>, Kumpulan cerpen e. 2008 <i>Ranjang</i>, novel</p>
3	<p>Dewi Lestari. Novel “Supernova Satu”: <i>Ksatria, Puteri, and Bintang Jatuh</i> were on February 16, 2001, at Taman Komponis Ismail Marzuki, Jakarta. A novel that sold 12,000 copies within 35 days and sold up to approximately 75,000 copies using a lot of scientific terms and love stories. Dee was born in Bandung, January 20, 1976, as the fourth of five children of Yohan Simangunsong and Turlan br Siagian. His father was a member of the TNI who taught the piano self-taught while his brothers were violinists, piano teachers, professionals. Dee’s family is the same as most families who live modestly and must be good at managing finances.</p>	<p>a. Novel <i>Supernova 1: Ksatria, Puteri dan Bintang Jatuh</i>, 2001 b. Novel <i>Supernova 2: Akar</i>, 2002 c. Kumpulan Prosa dan Puisi “Filosofi Kopi” 2003 d. Novel <i>Supernova 3: Petir</i>, 2004 e. Kumpulan <i>Cerita Rectoverso</i>, 2008 f. Novel <i>Perahu Kertas</i>, 2009 g. Kumpulan <i>Cerita Madre</i>, 2011 h. Novel <i>Supernova 4: Partikel</i>, 2012 i. Novel <i>Supernova 5: Gelombang</i>, 2014</p>

communities often face various problems, from the issue of sexual orientation to the issue of spiritualism, such as the emergence of the LGBT community and the urban religious model.

Some of the descriptions above try to make categorization to get more natural for the researcher to analyze the study material. The researcher realized that the above categories are debatable, but with the above categories will help the reader to get an idea of what urban literature is.

Based on the observation, several literary works which include the categorization of urban literature are shown in Table 1.

3 Result and Discussion

3.1 Urban Literature and Multiculturalism: Moving from Authoritarianism

Multiculturalism, as an understanding, is capable of creating harmony in the life of the nation and State. The terminology of multiculturalism is likely to only become an academic discussion in Indonesia after Suharto resigned from his reign in 1998 ago [17]. It might also reflect the assumption that cultural diversity is an issue continuously discussed and defended after there are theories of multiculturalism that give legitimacy about it. When compared with similar themes in other places in the world, Indonesian people, as usual, are delayed by several decades in the map of the debate. However, It does not always have to be wrong because an issue relevant and widely discussed in a place is not necessarily relevant and crowded as well as discussed elsewhere. The issue of multiculturalism can be an expression of society's release from the role of an authoritarian state. Authoritarianism produces discrimination. Each era develops its epistemology, a discursive form that controls how the era or community groups perceive and experience reality [9]. Likewise, in the context of literature, as an aging product must come into contact with these conditions.

The link between regime and literature and the effort to limit a work based on the ruler's taste has occurred in the era of colonialism. Colonial policy tends to endure change. The concept was the aesthetic concept of universal humanism, which gripped its powerful influence on Indonesian literature [9]. As a result, Indonesian literary critics and society believe that literature must be apolitical and should not have a practical purpose. Literary works that have political objectives tend to be considered dirty and unclean. It might assume that Indonesian literature became alienated from the social and political life of the Indonesian people. The description above shows the close relationship between the regime in power and literature as a work.

In addition to the colonial era, the new order as an era also has almost the same historicity. In 1971–1980, the ruler of the new order succeeded in entering the cultural production space. The dominance of power has entered the stage of cultural hegemony. Resistance through literary work became very weak. In this era, alternative creativity and thinking skills are not possible. Literature must be subject to the new order policy lines. Compared to the previous period (1966–1970), Indonesian literature showed significant resistance to arbitrariness, so in the period (1971–1980), the resistance reached

the pulse point. However, that does not mean there is no resistance. After Soeharto collapsed, conditions of freedom in Indonesia underwent a drastic change, includes in the case of literary works. Themes that were once considered taboo began to be discussed and written. Urban literature is a spread from the experience of freedom trying to discuss themes that are contemporary typical of urban society, one of which is about multiculturalism. Some things that exist in urban literary works are usually talking about themes that are relatively taboo in the new order. Suppose it is not a taboo thing; the discussion is not as free as the present era. Some of the themes of multiculturalism discussed in several literary works above are related: Politics of power, ethnicity, sexuality, and other things.

Some of the themes discussed in the study of urban literature will be briefly reviewed and taken a few snippets of stories that represent in the hope of giving a brief overview and illustrations. The word moves from authoritarianism as a marker to understand what distinguishes the context of urban literature from the era of authoritarianism. The review based on the theme is as follow:

a. *Ethnicity*

One of the stories in urban literature discusses the theme of multiculturalism in ethnic and regional contexts, one of which is the *Filosofi Kopi* tells about coffee enjoyment; the story of *Filosofi Kopi* is a metaphor for diverse ethnicities through coffee. In the story, it was that one day a wealthy businessman looks for coffee, and Ben serves a cup of coffee, and it has the most delicious coffee. Ben is a businessman who is familiar with his customers. Ben asks about the enjoyment of the coffee made to customers. However, the customer challenged Ben to make the perfect coffee with 50 million in return if Ben managed to make it. For weeks Ben did the trial. The store has become a laboratory.

Moreover, finally, Ben managed to find the coffee mix. The coffee won the bet. The businessman is amazed while giving a check for 50 million. The coffee is named Ben's Perfecto. Success is a form of perfection in life since Ben's Perfecto has come to a coffee shop to be crowded with customers.

One day, someone who tasted Ben's Perfecto and the new visitor still had coffee that was far more delicious than the best coffee in the basket. To prove this, Ben went to Klaten to meet a simple coffee shop with the coffee name "Tiwus." When Ben enjoyed the coffee, it turned out that the Tiwus coffee had a taste more delicious than his coffee. Ben realized that what he has done so far does not boast that we get the more we pursue perfection. Finally Ben handed check worth 50 million over Mr. Seno, the owner of Tiwus coffee, but when after being given a check, he just keep it because he thinks it is not money, but only a piece of paper as a memento, because Mr. Seno is a rural person who does not know about the check and also pay cash. Ben and Jody finally get the meaning of life from Tiwus coffee. The description of tiwus coffee is a metaphor for the entity. Ethnicity was the way we talk about group identity and identify ourselves with signs and symbols.

Tiwus coffee receives recognition of its enjoyment through power relations between various groups. It marks the relations of marginality, center, and periphery, in the context of changing the shape and situation of history. Discourse about the centrality and

marginality of ethnicity is generally articulated with nationality. In a multicultural society, equality is a matter of concern. Equality is several interrelated levels. Equality involves respect and rights at a basic level, then the opportunity to the next level, as well as self-confidence, self-esteem, and others. At a higher level, equality involves the power, welfare, and necessary abilities needed for human development [6].

b. *Gender and Sexuality*

Many sexual themes are present in Djenar Maesa Ayu and Ayu Utami's novels. Both of them are writers who mostly discuss sexual themes. One example is the story entitled *Lalita*. The story illustrates a brief introduction that leaves a selfish impression on Yuda in Lalita's eyes. The relationship between the two continues, even one night in a villa, Lalita, located far away from the frenzied city of Jakarta Yuda and Lalita having bed relations. The bed relations are so intimate until axis Mundi opium appears. It is a term introduced by Lalita to Yuda, turbulence from sexual activity that genuinely brings the penis and vagina to become so harmonious. A world axis is at a unique point, like a lid and bottle of champagne, axis Mundi is a sexual relationship between men and women that will not be obtained from rape of a man or lying resigned to a woman, but the axis Mundi precisely lies in the graceful dance of men and their savage women like animals.

That night is a night that is so intoxicating Yuda, and on that night, Yuda finds a used book with a brown cover, an ancient book with a handwritten saying that Lalita is a descendant of Dracula. It is ridiculous. Since the axis Mundi flared up, his jealousy has shackled Yuda; even Yuda cannot get the axis Mundi in his intercourse with his girlfriend, Marja, the girl whom Yuda loved but fall in love with her angel-eyed friend named Parang Jati. Unfortunately, Parang Jati has the same feelings towards Marja. Back to the relationship between Yuda and Lalita, the arrival of Janaka or Jataka figures who claims to be twin brothers Lalita makes Yuda confused. He was confused with his feeling to Lalita, who is known to be a woman to watch out. However, axis Mundi opium causes Yuda to have intercourse with Lalita one night when he and his best friend Parang Jati stayed at Lalita's villa. Finally, a tragic incident occurred in Lalita, a terrifying robbery and rape, where Lalita had been resolute charismatic, arrogant in misery lying naked with his real face wrinkled. Without full makeup, he could never take off his indigo face. Furthermore, Yuda witness the incident.

The story in *Lalita* describes a vulgar relationship between men and women, a story that attempts to review naughtily and openly about something that is considered taboo. Body relation, which is in the context of Indonesian cultures, is privacy and specialized discussions in the personal area, one of them in terms of literary work. Themes that were once taboo began to be discussed and written. Urban literature is a spread from the experience of freedom. Trying to discuss themes that are contemporary typical of urban society, one of them is about sexuality. Freedom is closely related to how the State's role is so significant to regulate the body and its relations. The bodies of women and men are regulated and disciplined. In addition to the taboo assumption of sex, the story tries to fight patriarchal culture where biological differences between men and women are the beginning of the formation of patriarchal culture. Society views the biological differences between the two as unequal status. Women who do not have muscles are the

reason why society puts women in inferior positions. The patriarchal tradition became lasting in the Soeharto era in power because of the significant role in regulating it.

c. *Politic, Nation, and Environmental Issue*

Political themes in urban literature are very different from the discussion of literature in the New Order and before. In the new order era, the ruler had succeeded in entering the cultural production space. The dominance of power has entered the stage of cultural hegemony. Resistance through literary work became very weak. Literature must be subject to the new order policy lines. When compared to the previous period (1966–1970), Indonesian literature showed significant resistance to arbitrariness, so in the period (1971–1980), the resistance reaches the pulse point. However, it does not mean there is no resistance in some stories in urban literature. Post-reform new themes dare to be lifted. One of them is in the novel *Saman* by Ayu Utami.

In the story, only Wis adult men stay to look after women and young children who gather in the dormitory, accompanied by several young men who are still teenagers. Wis asks the women to continue praying and praying because he feels something terrible will happen. Then arrive several jeeps, with well-built troops. Wis suspects that they are representatives of the palm oil company. Burn the entire house of citizens and kidnap Wis prison exile. There Wis is tortured and forced to admit what he did not do. He was forced to fabricate stories to reduce torture that he was a communist who wants to Christianize the Lubukrantau farmers, make Heaven on earth, and want to replace the president. He continues to do it until one day, where the burned confinement. He felt trapped by fire, but after hearing his childhood voices from a different world, he survives the fire without knowing how. When he survives, he meets the residents who burned the factory. He is taken to the hospital and then cared for by the church nuns in their homes. At that time, there was much bad news about him. He was accused of many things. Furthermore, finally, he is forced to replace his identity card until the event was completed in court two years later to become *Saman*.

Another Ayu Utami novel with a New Order background is *Bilangan Fu*. The impact of the destruction of nature by the New Order was the destruction of the Sewugunung ecosystem. Parang Jati's figure in the novel *Bilangan Fu*, described by Ayu Utami, was a male feminist who cares for nature. This figure was inspired by Sandy Febrijanto, a rock climber who loved nature by doing Clean Climbing. Parang Jati had concerned for nature since he was a baby. He had grown intimate with Sewugunung because he lived with two figures who care for nature, Nyi Manyar and Suhubudi. Nyi Manyar was the gatekeeper of the thirteenth spring, while Suhubudi was a spiritual advocate of human and natural behavior that wanted humans to live in harmony with nature. The relationship between humans and nature in this novel was illustrated by how the villagers of Sewugunung treat nature. Before the mining company came, they were also carrying out mining activities. However, it was traditionally and did not use dynamite or heavy equipment. Mining was only for their own needs, and it used small *tobong*, without being exploitative towards nature. After the mining company arrived, the villagers felt alienated from nature that had been living alongside them. Parang Jati figures took the fight by formulating a Cultural Strategy, a strategy to maintain the Sewugung ecosystem by using the Culture medium. The struggle for the preservation of the nature of Parang

Jati finally gained its light since the change of power of the New Order. Although the bright spot began to appear after his death, the government decided to review mining company permits, prohibit all forms of industrial actions that destroy nature, and the conservation of Sewugunung began to get approval.

Unlike Ayu Utami's novel, Dee Lestari defends nature in her work *Particles in a post-New Order context*. "Partikel" showed that the exploitation of nature does not stop even after the new order ends. This novel tells about Zarah's struggle as a wildlife photographer to save the natural damage that occurred in Tanjung Putting National Park. This novel also criticized the natural damage that occurred in the Sekoyer River. The defense of nature from Zarah's character showed empathy for nature and awareness to be friendly with nature.

4 Conclusion

This study explained how urban literature spread freedom after the authoritarianism regime. A literary work that reviews freely about current themes: one interesting theme discussed is about multiculturalism and environmental issues. Those new themes became an academic discussion in Indonesia after Suharto resigned from his reign in 1998. The issue of multiculturalism could be an expression of the society release from the role of an authoritarian state. However, the environmental issues did not diminish even after the regime over. It was because decentralization caused complex authority which showed local officials, brokers, and NGO's are behind that environmental damage. Authoritarianism produces discrimination and environmental damage that manifested through the work of urban literature.

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