

# WOMAN STRUGGLES TO GET THE EQUALITY IN “MOTHER COURAGE AND HER CHILDREN” DRAMA BY BRECHT

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## **Abstract**

This research shows gender inequality in the drama *Mother Courage and Her Children*, feminism dominates the male role. With this domination Mother's courage lived in the nineteenth century, when patriarchal customs were still firmly held by the community. Women were still enslaved by male superior and the character of the Mother Courage opposes her domination by doing various struggles. This research uses feminist existentialism (Beauvoir S. , 1949) encourages women to step outside the boundaries and social circles that make them lose their freedom for themselves. This research is a qualitative research that produces descriptive data. This study uses content analysis techniques, starting with looking for similarities in data, combining them into a single unit in subchapters, critical and evaluative studies with the help of Beauvoir's social theory. The researcher's findings regarding the movements described in the play "Mother Courage and Her children" are as follows: In the study of women's struggles, Simone de Beauvoir's theory is highly valued because women are involved in various struggles in an effort to overcome themselves. The result show women can improve themselves in the face of gender inequality that is driven by men. This shows when women struggle to prove that women are capable of working, intellectually capable, capable of being fearless women and also able to resist public policies.

Keywords: Inequality, Feminist Existentialism, Women's Struggles.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Literature is something that is already well-known in scientific activities since it offers so many advantages to individuals and is utilized as a resource to get reliable information. Literature as work of imaginative or creative writings (Bressler, 1994). A literary work is a way to communicate one's ideas in writing that has a specific meaning and leaves the author with a message or impression. Many literary works draw inspiration from a variety of subjects in order to encourage multiple theories about a certain tale. One of the interesting things is that the female character is treated as helpless by men

who only see her as an object, which is one of the topics that is often or commonly appointed as a literary work.

Single parents are a literary phenomenon that is frequently present in modern life. People who are single parents no longer have a wife or husband who can separate due to divorce or death. There are several jobs for single parents nowadays, particularly for moms. Being a single mother requires a lot of tenacity since there are so many obstacles to overcome in order to support her life with kids and family. One of them is single parents' efforts to keep up the family

economy. Women who choose to become single mothers cannot be separated from social, economic and psychological problems (Faradina & Fajrianti, 2012). Being a single mother is challenging, which affects the mother psychologically. However, this will enable single parents to perform their job more effectively, resulting in a variety of impacts. Mothers who are raising their children alone will be more responsible, resilient, and brave in continuing their lives.

Drama is among the most well-liked literary genres. Drama is a literary genre that is frequently displayed in day-to-day life. Drama is a kind of writing that is based on the life of a specific person and is presented by staging that person's narrative, which is written as a conversation and has the same character and conduct when enacted. Drama is the literary form designed for performance in the theater, in which actors take roles of the characters, perform the indicated action, and utter the written dialogue (Abrams, 1998). Drama is in high demand in the community because it may attract art in the aesthetic talent sector and, when produced, is able to depict the emotional nature or conflict.

Brecht created "*Mother Courage and Her children*" in 1939 when he was living in exile in Sweden (Brecht, 1939). In the play "*Mother Courage and Her Children*," a lady journeys around Europe during World War II. At that time, she went by the moniker Mother Courage. Anna Fierling is her name. He was thirty years into the conflict and had three kids. Mother Courage had to accompany the army of battle in order to sell her goods to the soldiers who enlisted in the conflict. Mother Courage's fight to safeguard her three children, Eilif, Schweizerkas, and Katrin, was extremely difficult at the

time. In the drama "*Mother Courage and Her children*", there are many existentialism things that the mother courage fought for as long as she lived in war.

Many aspect of feminism can be analysed in drama "*Mother Courage and Her children*". In the midst of the woman struggles system which prioritizes the position of men in society, it will certainly be a very complicated problem for a single mother. The system structure legitimized by the patriarchal system emphasizes the privileges of men and neglects the position of women (Novarisa, 2019). This is implemented from various aspects of life, be it political, economic, social, or even the smallest things in the family. More specifically about the situation of a single mother amid the dominance of the patriarchal system in her writing (Rahayu, 2017). Women are responsible for the pressures of family life in addition to the responsibilities they undertake at home. On the one hand, single mothers' positions are extremely difficult and under a lot of strain. On the other hand, the way that women are portrayed as strong and powerful confuses the truth about the validity of dominance. Systematically, men rule the dominance structure, yet a woman's function as a single mother disproves the presumptions that women are weak. Women can form groups and stand by themselves without holding hands as a way to assert their own power and to demonstrate their toughness.

The main character in the drama "*Mother Courage and Her children*" is particularly significant because there are claims that it contains feminist concepts as articulated by Bertolt Brecht. It has to be examined and studied using the feminist literary criticism technique. As a result, the title "Woman Struggles to

get Equality in “*Mother Courage and Her children*” Drama by Brecht was chosen by the researcher. Based on this illustration, it is crucial to examine the several existentialisms that are employed in the drama “*Mother Courage and Her children*”.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Feminist Existentialism

Existentialism feminists are very pro-autonomy women's in determining the purpose of their own lives in this world. Additionally, this pattern pushes women to go from being an object to the desired subject. Existence includes not just human existence but also the particular human way of being from self-awareness. Some individuals believe that women are women with nature the stimermination of quality ghosts (Beauvoir S. , 1949). In his book "The Second Sex," Beauvoir depicts women as figures, as creatures who pass their lives happily following in the footsteps of males, doing what they are told, and taking their views of reality for granted. In addition, women are divided amongst themselves and are always vying for the attention of men. She still believes that there is no such thing as a woman's language, that men and women should think in the same way, and that language and intelligence are gender-neutral for him. The options and possibilities that feminism provides for the greatness of femininity are the power and attraction of feminism (Beauvoir S. , 1949). Women are forced to find their actuality in their immanence as human beings since they cannot satisfy themselves through their objectives and goals. Because there are no essential items that women may access in the following level, they transform themselves into important people.

Women, like men, should have ideas and approaches. It is surely not simple to ignore women's immanence, meaning the existence of limits, definitions, and roles in society, as well as the propriety that is suppressed by males. Women, on the other hand, must be able to cope with what occurs to them in the environment if they wish to cease being considered as the second sex (Beauvoir S. , 1949). Women, on the other hand, must be able to cope with what occurs to them in the environment if they wish to cease being considered as the second sex. Women, like men, should have ideas and approaches.

### 2.2.1 Women Struggles

The Struggle of Women in order to be free from the predicament of being a married woman, women must first recognize that they are oppressed, that they are "the other" in society, and that they have no life for themselves (Beauvoir S. , 1949). This knowledge, whether it comes through education or simply the recognition of the circumstance that has been thrust upon them, will be the first step in their attempt to break free from their subservient position. There are four ways totowards transcendence, that is, women canwork, women can be intellectually, women can work forachieve the socialist transformation of societyand women can refuseinternalization of the other.

#### 1. Pursuing Profesional Career

Women's job is noisy and exhausting, but it nevertheless gives variety for women, who would be utterly lost if they did not undertake it (Beauvoir S. , 1949). Women may "reclaim" transcendence by working outside alongside males. Women will naturally reaffirm his status as a subject, as someone who actively determines his fate's course. Women are capable of

working, it gives numerous opportunities for women, despite the fact that it is difficult; if they do not take use of them, they will lose them entirely. Women can achieve transcendence by working. They will formally acknowledge their identity as subjects, as individuals who actively shape their own fate.

## **2. Being intellectuall Woman**

Another point of view in the other from women working, one of the things that sustain women's existence is intellectual. Women may be intellectuals and members of a collective that will effect change for women (Beauvoir S. , 1949). It is embers of an organization dedicated to bringing about positive change for women Intellectual activity is when a person thinks, sees, and defines something; it is not when a person is the subject of thinking, observing, and defining something.

## **3. Being fearless Women**

Work to bring about change a socialist society is a viable option. Women in order for them to existin the opinion. Women's emancipation is a source of power and highlighted the importance of economicswhen he talks about women independent (Beauvoir S. , 1949). Women may contribute to society's socialist development.They might reject to accept their otherness by connecting with the doers' perspectives.Women must be free of their physical bodies.

## **4. Refusing unfair public policy.**

Women have the ability to rejectabsorb the otherness that he possesses by establishing his identity throughin the dominant group's perspective Public (Beauvoir S. , 1949). Acceptance as a new isliadopts the role of an item Reject.They may spend their time on more creative things and are more dedicated to delivering services to

the public rather than focusing on their attractiveness.

By opting to pursue further education overseas, a woman recognizes that she will be apart from her family and will be responsible for her own problems. It's a problem for women because they have to prove that they can do difficult things on their own, without relying on others, which includes males. To achieve self-actualization and develop an understanding that women's decisions should be valued equally to men's, women must fight for positive things in their lives. Women's struggles are no longer only focused on combating male domination. Women have the freedom to pursue any goals they choose.

## **2.2 Previous Research**

To support the research there are some previous of research that have done by some researchers. The first previous was done by (Nugroho, Mutiara Prameswari, & Sastri Mahadewi, Eksistensi Perempuan Mesir dalam Novel Perempuan di Titik Nol Karya Nawal El-Saadawi, 2019) from University Udayana. They analysis the outcomes of Simone de Beauvoir's existential feminist insight in the sociological framework study are included into the social definition paradigm's nature. The second previous research by (Geleuk, Gede Mulawarman, & Hanum, Perjuangan Tokoh Perempuan dalam Novel Tanah Abu Karya Anindita S. Thaif : Kajian Femisme Eksistensial, 2017) from University Mulawarman. The goal of this study was to analyze the factual structure and struggle of female characters in Anindita S. The third, the previous research is "The gender equality struggles in the novel of Perempuan Berkalung Sorban and Gadis Pantai" (Muzakka & Suyanto, 2020). This study discusses how

patriarchy exists and how it allows males to oppress women while making them accept it.

The fourth, researcher a student at the Muhammadiyah by Nidaul Khoiriyah University of Surakarta. Wrote a thesis titled "The Existence of Women Reflected in the Red Question in Laksmi Pamuntjak's Novel, (Khoiriyah & Nugroho, Woman existence reflected in Laksmi Pamuntjak's the questios of red Novel, 2016). A liberal feminist strategy A liberal feminist perspective is used in this thesis to investigate the representation of women in The Novel of Red Novel. The fifth, research journal "Feminism in Education: Historical and Contemporary Issues of Gender Inequality in Higher Education" by Shamaas Gul Khattakl, Middlesex University, England (Khatakk, Feminism in Education : Historical and Contemporary Issues of Gender Inequality in Higher Education, 2011). This journal uses a variety of feminist perspectives, including radical, liberal, Marxist, and Islamic feminism, to explore gender and issues pertaining to gender in education.

### 3. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a qualitative research that produces descriptive data, or data in the form of information, explanations, and elements that show the independence of women in the Bertolt Brecht play "Mother Courage and Her Children", as well as the roles of women and men characters in the drama. Qualitative methods are rooted in handling social problems more specifically and in depth, and the data reports are descriptive (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This study uses an impartial approach in its investigation, namely the Objective Approach. The objective approach is an approach that

focuses on the literary work as a whole. According to (Sugihastuti & Suharto, 2002).

The library research method uses primary data, namely drama. Secondary data uses articles, books, and journals about feminist existentialism. Using these methods, the following note-taking techniques can be provided: Reading the entire literature, highlighting each element of the literature that is relevant to the literature read, and classifying each data collected according to the research subject. The feminist perspective is very suitable for this method because the focus of this research is on content. Women's experiences are examined by feminists, as seen in the play Mother Courage and Her Children. This study uses content analysis techniques, starting with looking for similarities in data, combining them into a single unit in subchapters, critical and evaluative studies with the help of Beauvoir's social theory. The descriptive-narrative text approach is used in this study to present the research results.

## 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Woman Struggle

Struggle is a movement activity to alter the current quo under risky or even unilaterally restrictive situations for freedom. Women must be freed from the oppression they experience because it is unjust and damaging to them. To protect themselves, they must fight to bring down the patriarchy. The researchers divided the conflicts between women's struggles into four groups.

#### 4.1.1 Pursuing Profesional Career

Mother Courage success as an entrepreneur demonstrates how essential he was to the family's financial activities. (Beauvoir S. , 1949). There are several things that can be taken from

the strengths or habits that arise in their environment, namely the way women can work. In the drama mother courage shows that:

### Scene 1

Sergeant: (Hoarsely) you cheated me! (Brecht , 1939, p. 21)

Mother Courage: You cheated yourself the day you enlisted. And now we must drive on. There isn't a war every day in the week. (Brecht , 1939, p. 21)

Sergeant: Hell, you're not getting away with this! We're taking that bastard of yours with us! (Brecht , 1939, p. 21)

From the conversation above show that Male dominance still severely restricts women's freedom (Beauvoir S. , 1949). Women are reduced to being dependant on males and weak as a result. This is not depicted in the current image of women. Even in the most dire situations, she can rely solely on herself and not on men. As in the scenario above, women continue to demonstrate their independence in solving issues that arise. Mother Courage is in an extremely. Absolute Mother Courage allowed him to save his buns in the cart without waiting for assistance. He trusted himself to accomplish this. As someone who can rely on oneself to complete tasks, Mother Courage is characterized as autonomous. His capacity to rely on himself is also appreciated by those around him, as evidenced by the nickname Courage they have given him.

### Scene 1

Swiss Cheese: But this is Mother Courage! (Brecht , 1939, p. 19)

Sergeant: Never heard of her. Where'd she get a name like that? (Brecht , 1939, p. 19)

Mother Courage: In Riga. (Brecht , 1939, p. 19)

Eilif & Swiss Cheese: (Reciting together) They call her Mother Courage because she drove through the bombardment of Riga with fifty loaves of bread in her wagon! (Brecht , 1939, p. 19)

Mother Courage: They were going moldy, I couldn't help myself. (Brecht , 1939, p. 19)

The dialog above show that the role of women today is very important for a quality living environment. One of them is to become a woman who is able to work to help or improve the family economy. Men are placed at the center of patriarchal civilization (Beauvoir S. , 1949). Women are therefore solely utilized as a complement. Women stay at home and wait for presents from men while men go to work and make a life. They must be capable of taking up the role of males in supporting their families, especially for single moms. Men tend to believe that a woman's work is limited to being at home and taking care of the family, therefore women may be taken to mean that women do not merely sit at home. However, the primary character in Mother Courage and Her Children is a single mother who is entirely responsible for supporting her children via work.

#### 4.1.2 Being Intellectual Woman

Someone who is intellectual is someone who uses their intellect to solve an issue. (Beauvoir S. , 1949) There are several things that can be taken from the strengths or habits that arise in their environment, namely the way women can be intellectually. In this drama there are several events that show Mother Courage's intellectual nature to gain an advantage in wartime that is bargaining. This trait appears in the scene two, when she is in Feldhautman's tent to sell chickens to Cook.

## Scene 2

Cook: Sixty hellers – for that paltry piece of poultry? (Brecht , 1939, p. 24)

Mother Courage: Paltry poultry? He's the fattest fowl you ever saw. I could get sixty hellers for him – this Commander can eat! (Brecht , 1939, p. 24)

Cook: They're ten hellers a dozen on every street corner. (Brecht , 1939, p. 24)

Mother Courage: A capon like that on every street corner? With a siege going on and people all skin and bones? Maybe you can find a field rat some place. I said maybe, because we're all out of them too. All right, then, in a siege, my price for this giant capon is fifty hellers. (Brecht , 1939, p. 24)

Cook: We're doing the besieging, it's the other side that's "in a siege"! (Brecht , 1939, p. 24).

In the conversation above shows that women are often considered as the second gender after men, which is against the stigma that women do not need to understand intellectual matters. As a result of many women whose intellectual level is low so that they have a life that is far from progress and remains in a slump (Beauvoir S. , 1949). This is what the Mother Courage character tries to oppose, who tries to state that women can be intellectual. When Mother Courage is attempting to sell a chicken to a chef for a very high price in the exchange above. Cook agrees with the Mother Courage's asking price. Mother Courage is so intent on selling the chicken that he enters into a negotiation with Cook, resulting in a quarrel. Because food was scarce during the war, Mother Courage informed Cook that trouble was everywhere. Mother Courage even

attempted to persuade Cook to pay a high price by claiming that the chicken is a smart chicken because it can only eat while music is playing. He further asserts that because the chicken is able to count, it is deserving of a high price. Cook is especially terrified by Mother Courage's threat that if he does not give food to Commander, he will be hacked up.

## Scene 2

Mother Courage: Dear God, it's my Eilif! (Brecht , 1939, p. 24)

Cook: Who? (Brecht , 1939, p. 24)

Mother Courage: My eldest. It's two years since I saw him. He must be high in favor the Commander inviting him to dinner! And what do you have to eat? Nothing. The Commander 'sguest wants meat! Take my advice: buy the capon. The price is one hundred hellers. (The Commander has sat down with Eilif and the Chaplain.) (Brecht , 1939, p. 24)

Commander: (Roaring) Dinner, you pig! Or I'll have your head! (Brecht , 1939, p. 24)

Cook: This is blackmail. Give me the damn thing! (Brecht , 1939, p. 24)

In the conversation shows that if the intellectual woman will bring great benefits to herself. So that is not easily deceived by the public. This is what the Mother Courage character does when Mother Courage took advantage of the situation as soon as he realized Commander had ordered Cook to cook the meat, selling his chicken stock to Cook at a premium price. The price was first set at 60 Heller, but was later increased to 1 Guilder. Commander threatens to beat Cook to death if he does not cook soon, so Cook has no alternative except to get meat from Mother Courage. In the passage above,

Mother Courage is also depicted as an opportunist, or someone who is skilled at seizing opportunities to profit himself. Mother Courage took advantage of the occasion to get a good deal on his chickens. She is primarily concerned with making money for himself. She didn't think of Cook, who thought a Guilder was an excessive price for a chicken. In the passage above, Mother Courage is also depicted as an opportunist, or someone who is skilled at seizing opportunities to profit himself. Mother Courage took advantage of the occasion to get a good deal on his chickens. She is primarily concerned with making money for himself. She didn't think of Cook, who thought a Guilder was an excessive price for a chicken.

#### 4.1.3 Being Fearless Woman

Exploitative and women are, however, perpetuated not only in the economic domain, but also in the social, cultural, and moral norms that promote the active role-play of class society. (Beauvoir S. , 1949) They might reject to accept their otherness by connecting with the doers' perspectives. Women must be free of their physical bodies. It's an element of patriarchy, which defines social connections. Organizations, sectors, and occupational hierarchies, as well as social, political, and cultural variables within the family, society, and social reproduction itself, all contribute to this status, which is linked to other concerns such as race and class.

#### Scene 2

Sergeant: It's something else I'm looking for. These lads of yours are straight as birch-trees. What are such fine specimens doing out of the army? (Brecht , 1939, p. 20)

Mother Courage: (Quickly) The soldier's life is not for sons of mine! (Brecht , 1939, p. 20)

Recruiting Officer: Why not? It means money. It means fame. Peddling shoes is woman's work. (to Eilif:) Step this way and let's see if that's muscle or chicken fat. (Brecht , 1939, p. 20)

Mother Courage: It's chicken fat. Give him a good hard look, and he'll fall right over. (Brecht , 1939, p. 20)

From the dialog above shows women in the social sphere can show their identity in all fields. Women have the same rights as men and women don't need to feel weak because they think they don't have the opportunity to compete in social life (Beauvoir S. , 1949). Women must be able to decide what is a part of themselves without any fear. That's what mother Courage is against when the Sergeant want to turn Eilif into a soldier, but Mother Courage refuses. When Sergeant questioned why Eilif couldn't join the army, he didn't budge an inch. Mother Courage threatened Sergeant and with a knife when he was surrounded. Mother Courage hasn't lost its tenacity. With a knife in his hand, he informed Sergeant that if they took Eilif away, he would stab them. What did Mother Courage do to demonstrate his superiority to Sergeant. Mother Courage still has the final say on whether or not Eilif becomes a soldier. Sergeant are subordinate to the Mother Courage, however they have a greater rank than the Mother Courage. Mother Courage's authority over the two persons is unaffected by this. Mother Courage retains a strong presence. Mother Courage was not at all fazed by Sergeant and Werber's attitudes, and she obeyed all they said. Mother Courage stood up to Sergeant and Werber in his own special way.

#### 4.1.4 Refusing Unfair Public Policy

Adapting to other people's influences in order to maintain an unaffected mindset. Individuals will think about how others influence them. Women have the ability to reject absorb the otherness that he possesses by establishing his identity through the dominant group's perspective Public (Beauvoir S. , 1949) It will be approved if it is suitable for him if it is not, it will be refused. In drama Mother Courage and Her children scene one. Sergeant's persuasion on Mother Courage to allow Eilif to join the army was rebuffed. He remained steadfast in his refusal to allow Eilif to join the army. Sergeant's influence didn't sit well with Mother Courage, so he turned it down

##### Scene 1

Mother Courage: Officer, I'll report you to the Colonel, and he'll throw you in jail. His lieutenant is courting my daughter. (Brecht , 1939, p. 20)

Sergeant: (To OFFICER) Go easy. (To Mother Courage) What have you got against the service, wasn't his own father a soldier? Didn't you say he died a soldier's death? (Brecht , 1939, p. 20)

Mother Courage: He's dead all right. But this one's just a baby. You'll lead him like a lamb to the slaughter. I know you. You'll get five guilders for him. (Brecht , 1939, p. 20)

In conversation above, currently women have undergone many rapid changes in revealing their identities. Women must be able to reject all forms of inequality with women (Beauvoir S. , 1949). Women often experience injustice by men, where women must follow all the rules of the previous man as the highest being. If a woman commits a taking then the woman must

accept the consequences and will be considered as men. This is what the character of the brave mother is trying to oppose when Sergeant's comments had no effect on Mother Courage at all. He remained adamant in his efforts to keep Eilif from becoming a soldier. Sergeant was accused by Mother Courage of promising him a pay of 5 Guilders if Sergeant was successful in recruiting Eilif. Mother Courage was completely unconcerned by Sergeant's inquiries about Eilif's paternity. Sergeant's pleadings had failed to persuade him. Sergeant is still trying to persuade Mother Courage that war requires soldiers in the next scene. Sergeant's remarks were of no value to Mother Courage, therefore he didn't modify his mind.

##### Scene 1

Sergeant: You're peaceful all right. Your knife proves that. Now tell me, how can we have a war without soldiers? (Brecht , 1939, p. 20)

Mother Courage: Do they have to be mine. (Brecht , 1939, p. 20)

In the dialog above shows women here also reject people who are coercive (Beauvoir S. , 1949). Women are able to overcome all forms of inequality or injustice when the Sergeant's statements appear to have cornered Mother Courage, according to the quote above. Sergeant's statements will, without a doubt, be followed by those who are easily affected. Sergeant's pressure had little effect on Mother Courage's thinking. Mother Courage was unfazed by Sergeant's statements, despite his sharp response that his son should not be in the army. Eilif should not become a soldier, according to Mother Courage's principles. Sergeant was a military Sergeant. Mother Courage, on the other hand, was unconcerned about his status and did not easily accept

Sergeant's words. Sergeant kept encouraging Mother Courage to get Eilif into the army, but he didn't change his mind. Sergeant's goal in that situation was to use the stresses he was under to control the Mother Courage.

The status or gender of the adviser makes no difference to Mother Courage. All of the following counselors were men, with some even serving in the Thirty Years' War. However, none of these has an impact on Mother Courage. His main concern was the impact of the proposition on him. The idea will be accepted if it has a positive affect; otherwise, it will be rejected, regardless of who made it.

## 5. CONCLUSION

According to the investigation, the researcher's findings regarding the movements depicted in the play "Mother Courage and Her children" are as follows: In the study of women's struggles, Simone de Beauvoir's theory is highly regarded because women engage in a variety of struggles in an effort to overcome their own contradictions. so that women might better themselves in the face of male-driven gender injustice. That they are able to work, develop their intelligence, be sociable, and have the freedom to rebel against society. The change is that women can now work, woman being intellectually, woman fearless society and woman can refusing. According to Simone de Beauvoir's perspective, women can support themselves through labor independently of men. Mother Courage is a woman who wishes to fight for her rights as a woman to continue her life and her children by working on an equal basis with men during wartime. In this situation, women have the strength and chance to fight for it her life and her family because women are not permitted to

leave the house or take part in wartime activities. However, Mother courageously violently opposed anything having to do with the status of women at that period. From the events experienced by Mother Courage during the war, shows that women are able to carry out gender equality which has not been recognized by men

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