



## An Analysis of Grammatical Metaphor in Folding Beijing

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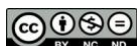
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### ABSTRACT

Folding Beijing, a science-fiction novelette written by Hao Jingfang and translated by Ken Liu, won the 2016 Hugo Award for Best Novelette, which is a success of the collaboration between the original author and translator. Science fiction is scientific, imaginative and innovative, and the use of grammatical metaphor is a powerful tool to form its characteristics. Taking Ken Liu's English translation as an example, this paper, from the perspective of grammatical metaphor in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), explores how the translator uses Ideational metaphor and Interpersonal metaphor as non-congruent metaphor to replace the congruent expressions, transforming the abstract transformation process, interpersonal communications into concreteness which can be seen or felt, thus to construct the strongly technological, objective, and concise text, present the scientific, imaginary sense of the fiction, reveal the profound humanistic connotation of the original text to achieve better communication effect then help Chinese sci-fi go global and prepare the ticket for winning global awards.

**Keywords:** Folding Beijing; Grammatical Metaphor; Ken Liu; Sci-fi.

### Introduction

Folding Beijing, Hao Jingfang's science fiction which was translated into English by Ken Liu, won the "Best Novelette Award" in Hugo Award in 2016, which attracted a lot of attention to Chinese sci-fi and stroke a strong shockwave to the science fiction community around the world. Folding Beijing, after Liu Cixin's *The Three Body Problem*, is the second Chinese sci-fi to win the "The Nobel Prize for science fiction and art". Originally, Hao just wanted to "write a history about the inequality" (Hao, 2016) based on her research in China Development Research Foundation. By depicting Laodao's adventure from Third Space to First Space, the story concerns about the social stratification and class solidification in China. Setting the story in Beijing, the biggest city in China, the harsh reality savors some kind of dystopian realism. Beneath the surface of the imaginary story, the author tried hard to explore larger themes and commentary, with satirical tone, about the equality in the society. According to Chinese scholar Xu, one of the most prominent features of Hao Jingfang's novels, which is also rare in the overall creation of science fiction, is that in addition to the presentation of reality, Hao puts the concern of reality into a level of social governance (138).

The success of Folding Beijing mainly lies in Hao Jingfang's story structure and values delivered. On the other hand, it also benefits from Ken Liu's English translation that meets the aesthetic needs of British and American readers. Generally, scientific, imaginary and novelistic are considered the main characteristics of scientific fictions. Accordingly, metaphors are abundant in sci-fi and some of them are grammatical metaphors. However, there are few essays about this perspective.

Most critics pay attention to the translation strategies (see Sun Lin & Han Caihong on ecological translation, Che Jiayuan on functional equivalence, Yang Man on translator's discrete complex and cultural identity, Luo Xinyu & Zeng Xu on teleology), realism implications (see Zeng Jun on Utopia, Lin Meng on realism, Wang Liao on the alienation of spaces in future China, Xu Gang on fantasy and realism), literary critique (see Zhang Chen on the operation of space and power, Huo Guo'an on spatial narrative), the acceptance of overseas audiences (see Liu Lili & Chen Xinru on the questionnaire) and other literary techniques. OUYANG Huiqing has summarized the studies that have been made during these years and provides helpful suggestions for the "going out" of Chinese literary works (58-62). The scattered critics from linguistic perspectives mainly highlight the corpus analysis (see Gao Dandan), three meta functions (see Zhang Shengxin on the bi-construction of ideational meaning), and conceptual metaphor (see Wang Guiyuan). According to these studies, the translator's contribution to the success of the work is highly appreciated, in addition, the use of grammatical metaphor reflects the humanistic care of the author. In view of this, this paper, from the perspective of grammatical metaphor in systemic functional linguistics, through the comparison and analysis of science fiction *Folding Beijing* between the original Chinese version and the English translation, discusses how the use of non-congruent metaphors constructs terse, scientific, and imaginary characters of sci-fi, revealing the deep cultural connotation of the original in order to achieve better communication effect.

### Theoretical Foundation

According to Halliday (343), grammatical metaphor is one of the most important theories as well as one of the most innovative contributions in Systemic Functional Grammar. "The possibility of re-setting the relationships between meanings and wordings, which is a central resource for expanding the meaning potential of language, is known as grammatical metaphor" (Thompson, 233). In *Introduction to Functional Grammar*, Halliday first formally introduced the term grammatical metaphor and divided it into Ideational metaphor, and Interpersonal metaphor, also put forward the concept of congruent. Ideational metaphors, consisting of metaphors of transitivity and logical metaphors, interpersonal metaphors, consisting of metaphors of modality and metaphors of mood, and textual metaphor, constitute the grammatical metaphor. Ideational grammatical metaphor, which can present some complex and abstract things in substantive form and vividly in front of people, is an important means of understanding the world.

According to Halliday, conceptual grammatical metaphor includes metaphors of transitivity and logical metaphor, Interpersonal grammatical metaphors include metaphors of modality, metaphors of mood, and textual metaphors. Nominalization, as pointed out by Halliday (1994), is the "single most powerful resource for creating grammatical metaphor". This paper is based on the grammatical metaphor framework, by analyzing the congruent wording and metaphorical wording, to uncover the internal cohesion, scientific characteristic achieved in the English translation of *Folding Beijing*.

### Content

#### 1. *Folding Beijing-the Supreme Metaphor*

转换开始了。这是24小时周期的分隔时刻。整个世界开始翻转。钢筋砖块合拢的声音连成一片，像出了故障的流水线。高楼收拢合并，折叠成立方体。霓虹灯、店铺招牌、阳台和附加结构都被吸收入墙体，贴成楼的肌肤。结构见缝插针，每一寸空间都被占满。

The Change began. This was a process repeated every twenty-four hours. The whole world started to turn. **The sound of steel and masonry folding, grating, colliding filled the air**, like an assembly line grinding to a halt. **The towering buildings of the city** gathered and merged into **solid blocks; neon signs, shop awnings, balconies, and other protruding fixtures** retracted into the buildings or flattened themselves into a thin layer against the walls, like skin. **Every inch of space** was utilized **as the buildings compacted themselves into the smallest space**. (ch. 1)

This paragraph pictorially depicts the situation of the Change, showing the profound imaginary character of the sci-fi. "Folding" in the title *Folding Beijing* and by using the noun phrases as the actor and the goal, it is safe to say that the whole city of Beijing is transformable. It can stretch, flatten, and retract itself with every component changing their forms into various shapes. In addition, when dealing with the folding process, Ken Liu chooses the present participant form "folding", "colliding" and "grating" instead of the verbs to describe the huge splashes and the loud harsh noise of the metal objects colliding with each other, illustrating the high-technological and logical splendor of the Change. In similar fashion, the last sentence makes some adjustment compared with the source text to present the intricate transformation of the city. The nominalization enhances the scientific, imaginary sense of the fiction, also concretizes the abstract transformation process vividly, reflecting the language of sci-fi is strongly technological, objective, and concise.

#### 2. *Lexical metaphor*

Metaphor is usually described as variation in the use of words, a word is said to be used with a transferred meaning. Lexical selection is just one aspect of lexicogrammatical selection, or "wording". A lot of examples can be

found in *Folding Beijing*.

1) 食客围着塑料桌子，埋头在酸辣粉的热气腾腾中，饿虎扑食一般，白色蒸汽遮住了脸。货摊上的酸枣和核桃堆成山，腊肉在头顶摇摆。

Customers **packed** the plastic tables at the food hawker stalls, which were **immersed in** the aroma of frying oil. They ate heartily with their faces **buried** in bowls of hot and sour rice noodles, their heads hidden by **clouds** of white steam. Other stands featured **mountains** of jujubes and walnuts, and **hunks** of cured meat swung overhead.(ch. 1)

The sentences depict the real life vividly, showing the bustling and worldly atmosphere in Third Space. Observed by He and Yang, the translator Ken Liu switched the word order and divided it into two sentences in English to make it more acceptable to the target language readers (92). "Pack" replaces "surround", narrating the scene of the customers huddled to eat. "Immersed in" shapes the whole-heartedly eating diners. "Bury" describes the scene of customers gave full attention to eating the noodles. The three verbs presents the hungry customers were busy eating their foods in a hurry. "Clouds" is used to express the pervading white steam, "mountains" to show the scene of piles of the dried fruit piling up, and "hunks" to describe the shape of the cured meat, conveying Chinese food culture.

2) 他的日子总是从胶囊起，至胶囊终，在脏兮兮的餐桌和被争吵萦绕的货摊之间穿行。这是他第一次看到世界纯粹的模样。

His days had always started with the **cocoon** and ended with the **cocoon**, and the time in between was spent at work or navigating dirty tables at hawker stalls and loudly bargaining crowds surrounding street vendors. This was the first time he had seen the world, **bare**. (ch. 1)

"Cocoon" is, originally a kind of insects, now used as an adjective to describe the crowded and narrow living space of Laodao in Third Space, more importantly, to suggest his confinement in the monotonous hard life. In constructing the realistic life scene, and the term "cocoon" also reveals its attribute of literature, thus to appeal to the reader's recognition of the confined and humble life in Third Space. "Bare", which means naked, now used to depict the most purest status of the city which Laodao saw for the first time. The selection of words reflect the translator's own sympathy emotion toward the humble people oozing.

3) [父亲.....和数千万其他建筑工一样]一个区一个区改造旧城市，像白蚁漫过木屋一样啃噬昔日的屋檐门楣，再把土地翻起，建筑全新的楼宇。

Like **termites swarming over** a wooden house, they had **chewed up** the wreckage of the past, overturned the earth, and constructed a brand new world. (ch. 2)

"Swarming" is originally used to express the bee crowd flying here and there, now used to depict the large groups of constructors digging and building new buildings. People "chew up" large chunks of food into small bites, now it is used to present the hard yet meticulous work done by the workers to bring about the earth-shaking changes. Particularly, construction workers like Laodao's father was compared to the animal "termites", which entails that the large number as well their low position, more importantly, their fate are uner the control of the upper class in First Space (Han, 64).

In using the transferred meaning of the words, Ken Liu shapes a real world whereby the people in the Third Space live humbly and diligently. Their most hard work contrast their least distribution of the waking time and space, throwing light on the class division in the mega-cities.

### 3. Nominalization

Since 1995, Halliday (1999) had used "Attic" and "Doric" to replace the term "metaphorical form" and "congruent form". Attic refers to one clause is constituted from words groups and phrases of many complex, long meanings, while Doric can be divided into more simple clauses (Hu, 92). Nominization, a key phenomenon of the use of a nominal form to express a process meaning, often used in Attic form, usually appears in scientific works, news report, interview, advertisement and formal speeches. The advantages of the Attic are that Attic overweights Doric in many sides, such as Attic states a serious fact which has been confirmed thus more authoritative and more scientific.

1) 老刀简单讲了事情的始末。从他捡到纸条瓶子，到他偷偷躲入垃圾道，到他在第二空间接到的委托，再到他的行动。他没有时间描述太多，最好马上就走。

Lao Dao gave him the bare outlines of the story: Picking up the bottle with a message inside; hiding in the trash chute; being entrusted with the errand in Second Space; making his decision and coming here for guidance. He had so little time that he had to leave right away. (ch. 1)

Doric form: Lao Dao told the story briefly. He firstly picked up the bottle, then hid in the trash chute sneakly; later he was tntrusteted with the errand in Second Space, finally he told Peng about his actions.

Compared with the present participle constructions selected, the Doric form is too simple and verbose, and no tension is found in it, either.

2) 身边卖大枣的女人高声叫卖，不时打断他的思绪，声音的洪亮刺得他头疼。

The loud chants of the woman next to him hawking her jujube interrupted his thoughts and gave him a headache. (ch. 1)

Doric: The woman next to him hawked her jujube loudly. The noise interrupted his thoughts and made him headache.

In the translation, the long noun phrase are used as the subject and the actor to affect Laodao, the unquantifiable noise can interrupt his thoughts and give him a headache. It is more terse and coherent in logic, moreover, the abstract voice is crystallized and has negative impact on people.

3) 他站在阳光里，闭上眼睛，清晨蓝天下清凛干净的空气沁入他的肺。空气给他一种冷静的安慰。

Standing in the sun, he closed his eyes. The clean, fresh air filled his lungs and provided some measure of comfort.(ch. 3)

Doric: The sky was blue in the morning, and the air, which was clean and fresh, filled his lungs. It gave him a calm comfort.

The Attic form is more formal and realistic. The fresh air is empowered to influence the participant. The expressions are more diversified and professional.

Based on the analysis above, it is surely that by using the lexical metaphor and nominalization, the separate individual events are changed into stable phenomenon, thus makes the discourse more objective and more formal.

#### 4. *Interpersonal: Metaphor of Mood*

According to Halliday, typical 'informal spoken language', e.g. in conversation, tends to be primarily interaction-oriented, and is concerned with establishing and maintaining relations with other people; and this correlates with a tendency to draw on the resources of interpersonal metaphor, which involve non-congruent ways of enacting interaction. The fact that mood choices and speech roles do not always coincide. For example, questions are most naturally (congruently) associated with interrogative mood; but we can also ask questions with a declarative mood choice (Thompson, 246). Metaphor of Mood help identify the interpersonal meaning, convey the background and social relationship of people from different classes, and express the characters personal views, attitudes and opinions. The analysis of metaphorical tones in discourse will help to explore the implied meaning of literary texts, thus to better grasp the thoughts and attitudes of writers.

1) “好自为之吧。”彭蠡最后说。

“Take care of yourself,” Peng Li said. (ch. 1)

Doric: Look out for yourself./ Please behave yourself./You'd better shape up.

In Chinese, the meaning of “好自为之吧。” is "It is up to you", which is mostly used when you are disappointed in someone. In fact, Peng Li dissuades Lao Dao from crossing the space. However, Lao Dao is willing to take risks for the sake of his daughter's kindergarten tuition. Peng, out of concern for his old friend, advises him to be careful and take good care of himself. Therefore, if translated literally, the implicit and reserved emotional intention of old friends will be lost (Sun, Han, 94). The Attic form weakens the cautionary implication, enhances the caring tone, and suggests the risk of crossing different spaces, thus better realizes the interpersonal function.

2) “你先走。我是说真的，拜托了，你先走吧好吗？”

“Please leave. Really, I'm begging you. All right?” (ch. 3)

Doric: Leave now. I am serious, please, you leave first, all right?

The conversation happened when Laodao arrived in First Space and sent the letter to the receiver Yiyi. Traditionally, in this novel, Yiyi, from First Space and in a superior position to Laodao, who is from the Third Space, could have spoken more mightily (Han, 25). However, Yiyi says “please leave”, and “I'm begging you” which are the expressions much lower than her position, which reveals her fear of being caught by her husband with a guilty conscience more or less. Furthermore, the interrogative tone of “all right” also conveys the purpose of seeking Lao Dao's approval of her dilemma.

3) “你在这儿睡一会儿。待会儿晚上我带你吃饭去。”老葛说。

“You might as well take a nap,” Lao Ge said. “I'll take you to get something to eat this evening.”(ch. 4)

Doric: You could take a nap here. / You can sleep here. /Take a nap here.

Laoge was the person in charge of the banquet and in a higher position than Laodao, he could have used the imperative sentence “You sleep for a while here”, however, Ken Liu chose to use the negotiating or suggestive mood “You might as well take a nap” to vividly suggest the easygoing, warm-hearted, and non-bureaucratic image of Laoge (Han, 27). Through the metaphorical tone in the suggested “might”, Ken Liu clearly constructs Lao Ge's sincerity, understanding, tolerance and goodwill towards Lao Dao from the third space in the English translation, helping English readers understand the idea that all Spaces may coexist harmoniously despite class differences conveyed in the novel.

4) “我这个人从不撒谎唉。你们知不知道什么是合同咧？”

Don't you dare accuse me of lying! Do you understand what a lease is?(ch. 5)

Doric: I have never lied. You do not understand what a lease is.

The two girls were renters, but the old lady, as a rent collector, thought she was superior (Zhang, 29). “Don't you dare” is a interrogative sentence and used here to show the suspicious, self-important, and defiant mood by the

old lady, while there was a tone of questioning in "do you understand" as if the girls do not know the very fact that what she did is guaranteed by the lease. This sentence shows the bitter and mean image of the old lady who collected rent.

### 5. Interpersonal: Metaphor of Modality

Taking the form of a proposition, Modality involves a projection, and projection usually has a word or proposition expressing belief, possibility, conviction. Speaker's attitude towards the likelihood or necessity of the proposition is congruently realized by modal verbs such as "I think" and "It seems that". Explicit subjective modality, explicit objective modality, implicit subjective modality, and implicit objective modality are the kinds of interpersonal metaphors, by which the attitude is experientialized. In other words, the modality is expressed in a separate clause that 'frames' the proposition that is being modalized. A double analysis can help understand the metaphor of modality (Thompson, 247-251).

1) 5a: "她很漂亮吧? "

"She **must** be beautiful." Subjective implicit, Laodao was very certain of it.

5b: "我跟你说也不怕你笑话。"秦天在屋里走来走去, "你见到她就知道什么叫清雅绝伦。"

"**I'm not afraid** that you'll laugh at me." Qin Tian paced back and forth in front of Lao Dao. "When you see her, you'll understand the meaning of 'peerless elegance.'" (ch. 2)

"She must be beautiful." is subjective implicit mood, stating that Laodao was very certain of Yiyao's beauty, which narrows the psychological distance to Qin Tian.

The subjective explicit mood in "I'm not afraid" and the subjective implicit mood in the two "will"s present that Qin expressed his confidence in Yiyao's beauty. "Beauty is the eyes of the beholder", which is not surprise to find Qin's strong feelings toward Yiyao. He also hoped to get Lao Dao's recognition of the beauty of his beloved, which clearly showed Qin Tian's position of firmly maintaining the perfect image of his beloved. The inner thoughts of the characters are fully expressed through subjective implicit affirmations, which is in sharp contrast to the development of subsequent plots: Qin loves clearly and passionately, while Yiyao loves vaguely and with reservations.

2) "你不是去过好多次吗? "

"**I thought** you had gone there multiple times." (ch. 1)

The subjective explicit mood in "I think" shows Laodao was sure that Peng Li had gone to First Space many times, so he goes to Peng ask for the route and suggestions.

3) 她说, "你帮帮我。其实我之所以不想告诉他, 也是不确定以后会怎么样。也许我有一天真的会有勇气和他在一起呢。"

She paused. "Look, the reason **I don't want** him to know is because **I'm not sure** what I'm going to do. **It's possible** that someday I'll have the courage to be with him." (ch. 3)

"I don't want", "I'm not sure" are subjective explicit mood, and the "I" sensor projected other clauses (Thompson, 2004: 247) show that she was not willing to let Qin know she has been engaged, albeit it is clearly revealed by the metaphoric mood. The objective implicit mood in "It's possible" tells that she had no confidence and courage at all. However, she expresses her wishes in subjective implicit mood in "I'll" and "I will" to let Lao Dao and readers experience her complicated inner feelings.

There are four modality expressions in just one sentence which is too condensed for the real conversation. In fact, the subjective and objective modality imply that Yiyao's attitude and modal assessment of her own words: she didn't believe what she was saying, either. It epitomizes the relationship among Qin Tian, Yiyao and Wu Wen, backs Yiyao's inner hesitation and contradiction. This eye-catching expressions, both retelling the entanglement of the three people in form and content, lure the audience to savor Yiyao's psyche and reveal the hypocrisy and greed of the First Space (Chang, 30).

### 6. Ideational: Metaphor of Transitivity

The grammatical variation between congruent and in-congruent forms also applies to transitivity configurations, which can be further refined into a number of "sub-processes". According to Halliday, each process of transitivity system can be metaphorized, that is, one process can be reflected as another process, in other words, the transliteration between processes. There are two layers of realization, i.e. congruent and in-congruent, the expressions close to people's understanding of the experienced world are consistent, while the other expressions are metaphorical in varying degrees. Such as:

Congruent form: Mary saw something wonderful. ( mental process)

In-congruent form: Mary come upon a wonderful sight. (material process)

The congruent patterns are most consistent with what we know, feel and think about the empirical world, which is embodied by behavioral processes. In terms of expression form, in-congruent expressions also conform to our understanding of the empirical world, but compared with congruent ones, it has certain metaphorical characteristics and is transformed from a psychological process to a material process.

1) 老刀又下意识闻了闻小臂，不知道身上还有没有垃圾的腥味。

Lao Dao sniffed his forearms again to be sure that the stench of garbage was **off of** him. (ch. 1)

Doric: Lao Dao sniffed his forearms again, wondering whether or not **there was** still any stench of garbage. (existential process)

The preposition “off of” and mental process replaced the existential process in Doric form, making the sentence more concise, enabling the reader have a better understanding of Lao Dao's nervous feeling of being despised and looked down upon because of his shabby clothes and the possible sour smell of garbage. The sentence outlines Lao Dao's deep sense of inferiority.

2) “靠，菜里有沙子。”

“Fuck! I just **bit into** some sand,” (ch. 1) (Material process)

Doric: **There is** sand in the dish. (Existential process)

The material process replaces the existential process expression and empowers the things with a dynamic implication.

3) 蓝天中能看见树枝的剪影。

Silhouettes of waving tree branches **broke up** the sky. (ch. 3) (Material process)

Doric: The silhouettes of tree branches **can be seen** from the blue sky. (behavioral process)

The behavioral process is replaced by the material process, and the “waving” creates a scene of the branches are swaying in the wind.

4) 周围的一切嘈杂而庸常，和每个清晨一样。

The noisy, quotidian chaos around him **assured** him with its familiarity. (ch. 1) (Mental process)

Doric: All of the noises and chaos **were** as commonplace as every morning. (relational process)

The mental process expression is more pervasive than the relational process one, and the common thing in usual life had some magical power to comfort Laodao.

5) 老刀开始明白了。

Understanding **began to dawn on** Lao Dao. (ch. 3) (Material process)

ST: **Ladao** began to **understand**. (mental process)

It is more than a material process replacing the mental process, the subject becomes different. The subject in the Doric form is a person, while it is the abstract phenomenon in psyche in the Attic form. It seems that an underlying connection comes into being between Laodao and the decision of the old man.

Material process replaces other processes because material process is the most important way to know the world, thus empower the reader know more about the character's psyche. In addition, the descriptions are also more persuasive. Based on the cultural differences between the East and the West, and taking the feasibility of cultural transmission into consideration, Ken Liu recreates the translation to a certain extent so as to better convey the theme of the novel.

### 7. Ideational: Logical Metaphor

Logical metaphor is a significant complementary to the grammatical metaphor. As Shi (75) pointed out that, the form of expressions of logical metaphor are quite diversified, including nominalization, verbalization, adjectivization, adverbialization and preposition, transforming the congruent expressions to metaphoric forms. These transformation phenomena, which make the change of theme-rheme structure of clauses according to the needs possible, connect the context, make the text more concise, and endow the text with logic and dynamic.

他在垃圾站上班，没必要穿得体的面，偶尔参加谁家小孩的婚礼，才拿出来穿在身上。

**Working at the waste processing station meant** there were few occasions that called for the outfit, save a wedding now and then for a friend's son or daughter. (Ch. 1)

Doric: **He was working at the waste station, so** there was no need to wear decently. He only put it on occasionally to attend neighbor's children's wedding.

“Working at the waste processing station” is a replacement of “He was working at the waste station”, the sentence is nominalized to a regular event. The subject of the original text is Lao Dao, but it is omitted in the translation, which further highlights Lao Dao's humble status. Furthermore, “mean”, the here equals “so” or “as a result”, implies a causal-effect logic. Thus, the static logical relationship is endowed with dynamic characteristics.

### Conclusion

Mass nominalization is the most distinctive feature of this novel, and it makes the text more terse, more professional, more scientific, and more imaginary, thus enabling the target audience to get a better reading experience. Grammatical metaphors form a more rigorous and objective style, which is more persuasive and makes the text more coherent, enabling the target audience to get a better reading experience and playing an important role in the novel's success in winning the Hugo Award.

The limitations of the paper is that the textual metaphor is omitted due to the existing debate. If textual Metaphor is adding, it is possible to make a more certain conclusion. Comparative studies and data collection are missing, too. The suggestions for further study are the attempt to combine the grammatical metaphor with the conceptual metaphor, aiming to come to a better conclusion of the functions of the metaphors in science fiction novels.

Half prediction, half satire. *Folding Beijing*, the famous dystopian realism sci-fi, does reveal the cruelties of the social divisions, just as Hao (2016) spoke, “[e]ven the most magnificent fireworks will fade after a moment, but steady strides, one step after another on solid ground, will bring hope of change”.

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