Qualitative Analysis in the Making

Edited by Daniella Kuzmanovic and Andreas Bandak
How do scholars transform qualitative data into analysis? What does making analysis imply? What happens in the space in-between data and finalized analysis is notoriously difficult to talk about. In other parts of the research process, scholars and students are aided by method books that describe the technicalities of generating, processing, and sorting through data, handbooks that teach academic writing, and scholarly works that offer meta-level, theoretical perspectives. Yet the path from qualitative data to analysis remains ‘a black box’. *Qualitative Analysis in the Making* ventures into this black box. The volume provides a means of speaking about how analyses emerge in the Humanities. Contributors from disciplines such as anthropology, history, and sociology of religion all employ an analytical double take. They revisit one of their analyses, analyzing how this particular analysis came into being. Such analyses of an analysis are neither confessions nor step-by-step recounts of what happened. Rather, the volume argues that speaking of the space in-between requires analytical displacement and the employment of fresh analytical takes. This approach contributes to demystifying the path from qualitative data to finalized analysis. It invites novel epistemological reflections among scholars and assists students in improving their analytical skills.

Daniella Kuzmanovic is associate professor in Modern Turkey Studies, University of Copenhagen.

Andreas Bandak is assistant professor at Centre for Comparative Cultural Studies, University of Copenhagen.
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This book grew out of a course given at the Department for Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies, University of Copenhagen. The idea for the course was first conceived by the two editors in the autumn of 2007 as a response to a pertinent question on part of our students, namely, what is analysis and how do you make it, and more importantly how do you make a good analysis? The idea was to invite different scholars to present and analyze one of their previously published analyses in a lecture series. Before each lecture several key texts, chosen by the invited scholar due to their significance for his or her analytical work, were circulated and discussed by the students and one of the editors of this book. Hereupon followed the lecture where the scholar engaged with the stakes of analysis both in the published form and in the opening up of it again with some distance in time. We are very grateful for the opportunity to have gotten a glimpse into the great many analytical laboratories and for the critical engagement from the scholars who have participated over time. Our thanks extend not only to the contributors to this edited volume, but also to those who contributed on the course without ending up being part of this book. Thanks are due to all of our students who tested the format and offered highly valuable criticism and insights during the courses. In making the transition from course to an edited volume we were generously funded by the collective research project *Alternative Spaces* chaired by Esther Fihl and Jens Dahl. We are grateful for the means both to make subsequent workshops and seminars on the theme for the contributors to this volume, as well as to have the book copy edited. Elaine Bolton provided erudite work in this latter regard. For our introduction we were offered very insightful comments by our contributors at an early stage of the process at one of our workshops. In a later stage we were much aided by highly valuable readings by Lars Højer, Birgite Schepelern Johansen, and Birgitte Possing. We also want to thank Amira Mittermaier for allowing us to use her acknowledgments in our introduction. Joel Robbins at an early stage supported the idea of the edited volume, and we are very happy that he accepted our invitation to write an afterword. It is our sincere hope that this edited volume will inspire scholars and students to develop new means to address what making analysis is.

Copenhagen, March 2013
The editors
Upon finishing his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, a young Ludwig Wittgenstein claimed that one throws away the ladder after having climbed its steps ([1922] 2002: 6.54). In other words, having understood Wittgenstein’s philosophy, one does not need to keep track of the steps that shaped it but can use it in its entirety. These optimistic and bold words came from Wittgenstein after he had concluded his first book. With an apparent lack of modesty, he believed he had solved the puzzles of philosophy and had left the solutions for the readers to discern. For most scholars in the humanities, such optimism on the part of their analytic skills and academic works is most likely on a more modest scale. The idea of having climbed a ladder only to get rid of it afterwards, however, still seems quite a telling metaphor. We scholars in the humanities that rely on qualitative methods and interpretive analytical tools climb the steps of ladders to arrive at our respective finalized analyses—be they then published in the form of papers, articles, books, or films—and, moreover, once in circulation tend to relate to our own and others’ works as if such a ladder had never existed. It seems that what steps we took and what the ladders we climbed actually looked like fall into oblivion. Instead, we apply reflexive techniques that we have been trained to include in our finalized works in order to create an idea of transparency. This is not least inspired by a widespread notion that creating transparency with regard to the entire analytical process, i.e., accounting for the path, constitutes a means of validity in the context of a reflexive turn (cf. Sanjek 1990: 400).

When we claim here that our ladders tend to fall into oblivion, it is not to say that our scholarly works do not contain reminiscences of the ladders we used on the path from data to finalized analysis. Indeed, we account for our methods, data, and how we possibly influenced the process of data generation. We construct consistent analytical-theoretical arguments and present them by way of engaging with various scholarly works that we deem significant because they have inspired our scholarly reflections. And we present or at least give glimpses into our ontological and epistemological underpinnings. In these ways, we aim to encourage people to think with us by inviting them onto our paths from data to finalized analysis. It is an invitation of a particular kind,
however, when such reflexive techniques form the basis of our invitation. As Annemarie Mol and John Law note on the academic text:

The texts that carry academic stories tend to organize phenomena bewildering in their layered complexity into clean overviews. They make smooth schemes that are more or less linear, with a demonstrative or an argumentative logic in which each event follows the one that came before. What may originally have been surprising is explained and is therefore no longer surprising or disturbing. Academic texts may talk about strange things, but their tone is almost always calm.

(Mol and Law 2002: 3, original emphasis)

An invitation in such a form, it must thus be remembered, does not simply serve to invite fellow scholars to see a path taken. It is laid out as a path of ‘smooth schemes’ and ‘linear’ progress in order to convince the readers that this particular finalized analysis and its approach is the obvious choice, that is, the most evident, telling, and illuminating one. Constructing a path is, in other words, part of our argumentative logic. It is meant to convince others and persuade them to relate to us now and in the future. Such techniques, we believe, assist us in pulling up the ladder and, in this sense, obfuscate what went into the makings of a particular qualitative analysis. The idea of transparency lives on, but the actual stakes in the particularities of the making of the very analysis are rarely touched upon.

The question is, hence, do such writing techniques, which assist us in convincing the readers to buy into our way of looking at and grasping the world, obfuscate what happened in a concrete analytical process? Several scholars have argued that the techniques various scholars apply in this regard transform the practice of making analysis into a kind of ‘black box’, a mysterious and mythical process, and that this analytical move must be seen as part of preserving the aura of intellectual work (Serres and Latour 1995: 86; cf. Bourdieu 1992). In order to counter the inclination to obfuscate rather than invite, Pierre Bourdieu, in his invitation to a reflexive sociology, encouraged students and scholars at his Paris workshop to approach making analysis as a ‘craft’ with particular identifiable features (1992: 218). By insisting on addressing what goes into making analysis, and what goes on while making analysis in a concrete manner, he took up the challenge of putting words to a central analytical concern that students and scholars all grapple with and have difficulties speaking about, not just in the social sciences, as in the case of Bourdieu, but likewise within the humanities: how do we make analysis? What goes on in between data and the finalized analysis? How can we speak of that which is clearly not the result of some kind of epiphany, but can seem like it, once a finalized analysis materializes and is sent into circulation? How does an approach emerge as the obvious choice?

The question of what goes on in between data and the finalized qualitative analysis is precisely what we aim to address in this book. That is to say,
we focus on a particular sequence in the analytical process. Unlike Bourdieu, though, we do not approach this issue by taking our point of departure in a notion that reduces making analysis to a ‘craft’ or ‘trade’ the features of which can be rendered visible, accounted for, handed down, and mastered (ibid.). It is also a craft. Yet, as the contributors to this volume, who represent various disciplines with a qualitative bend within the humanities, all show, making analysis is at the same time much more than a craft. Analytical and methodological techniques as well as the tricks of the trade can, and must, be passed on to students and fellow scholars. It is, however, equally significant to acknowledge that making analysis cannot and must not be reduced to the notion of being a craft in the narrow sense of the word. As Richard Sennett notes in his work on The Craftsman, “[c]raftsmanship is poorly understood [. . .] when it is equated only with manual skill of the carpenter’s sort” (2008: 20). There is a substantial difference between doing something and doing something well, which he aims to explore. Thus, he proposes, craftsmanship implies the mastery of a skill, something that takes time and practice. This in the end means that “technique is no longer a mechanical activity” (ibid.), but a creative enterprise of another kind that is not just about getting things to work. In the chapters of this volume a recurrent theme is the question of being satisfied with a given analysis, of sensing that an analysis is finalized, and, indeed, not in any of the chapters does this sense revolve round a notion of merely having applied something well.

In other words, mastery might be what makes the analytical endeavor into ‘a creative and critical enterprise, a messy, multidimensional, flux’, rather than claiming that the analytical endeavor is so because it resembles ‘any other human endeavor’ (Law 2004: 14). Taking point of departure in, on the one hand, a recognition of analysis as always emerging and evolving, and, on the other hand, an acknowledgment that mastering something implies a qualitative difference, opens up room to address the question of what making analysis is by way of relating to concrete analytical enterprises. This relatedness is to make ‘cuts’ into a ‘flow’ (Strathern 1996; see also [1991] 2005). As Marilyn Strathern argues with regard to the study of networks, two critical aspects of analysis are ‘flows’ and ‘cuts’, respectively. Both of these are needed as part of analysis (1996: 518–519). On the one hand, it is critical not to overlook the fluid and flux nature of the world in which all scholars regardless of discipline are working. On the other hand, the analytical move always consists of delimiting the scope and reach of a given phenomenon. The movement is thereby suspended. Not with the aim of relegating movement to the margins, though, but with the aim of arresting particular themes, features, and traits and placing them under scrutiny only to then reinsert them into the flow.

In this volume we suspend movement in order to scrutinize a particular moment of the analytical process, namely, the in-between data and finalized analysis, and thus address what making analysis is in the humanities with a qualitative bend. It does so by inviting scholars to address the question
through a specific way of thinking and writing about making analysis. More specifically, we argue for a particular analytical and methodological approach aimed at teasing out aspects of what went into the makings of a particular analysis. We have, hence, asked each contributor to this volume to revisit one of their own finalized analyses by way of employing a fresh analytical take that they believe addresses central aspects of how a particular analysis took shape, and paths were created from data to the actual finalized analysis. What we have asked them to perform can be likened to how Erving Goffman analyzed his own lecturing in ‘the lecture’ (1981: 160), although we do not ask for a particular analytical apparatus to be employed. That is to say, we have invited each contributor to perform a particular kind of analytical displacement and make an analysis of their own analysis. In this sense, we have asked them to do what they excel at, namely, making analysis, in acknowledgement of the fact that addressing what goes into making analysis is not necessarily best addressed in the dominant genre of ‘accounting for’. It must be seen as an analytical endeavor, but one that can yield insights. In the context of this book, however, the displacement is not performed with the usual aim of reflecting on the conclusions and analytical insights that an analysis has produced, thereby identifying what a given analysis has added to the world. Likewise, our joint endeavor is not to be seen as yet another attempt at fashioning a more transparent view of the methodological process, which, to some extent, will always be elusive, as these glimpses are written after the fact, so to speak. Rather, it is an analytical and methodological means of approaching the ladders that various scholars have used. Analytical displacement constitutes an attempt to get them to try to pull down, even slightly, the ladders that they have so carefully pulled up and effectively dismantled but of which there are, nevertheless, reminiscences in their finalized analyses.

Our project of analytical displacement calls for concreteness through exemplification rather than only abstract reflection upon what making analysis is. The different contributions to this book are written by various scholars from the humanities with different disciplinary backgrounds, methods, theories, and research objects. Yet, they have all responded to our invitation and taken up the challenge of revisiting one of their finalized analyses by employing the approach that we have introduced above and that we expand on in this introduction. This volume therefore offers a range of examples of what making analysis means and addresses a variety of scholarly concerns in this regard, such as maneuvering in between different constructions of lives, the use of models, the role of theoretical paradigmatic shifts and the practice of rereading, the effects of long-term engagement with the work of particular scholars, questions of visibility and audibility, the practice of juxtaposing, the significance of ideals about analytical integration, the effects of various forms of abbreviations, and the question of analytical agency through material objects. As a matter of fact, our invitation started as a series of workshops—not the Paris but the
Copenhagen workshop—that aimed to help students gain a better grasp of what making analysis means by way of exemplifications generated through the use of analytical displacement. Our contention was, and is, that instead of abstract talk about that sequence in the analytical process that is about creating paths from data to finalized analysis, concretion is urgently needed. Such concretion comes about in the work with and through examples of particular analytical processes. Opening the black box of analysis in this vein is to be seen as a series of exemplifications. At the workshops, scholars and students jointly reflected upon such particular analytical processes, and students as well as scholars thereby gained more insights into what goes on in between data and finalized analysis. Although this may seem straightforward, it turned out to be no easy task to talk about what making analysis is, neither for the various invited scholars nor for the two editors of this book, who initially organized the seminars. Turning the various presentations at the workshops into the finalized analytical works that are presented in this edited volume proved to be an equally daunting exercise. But then, “[n]othing is simple in the kingdom of analysis” as Michael Lambek recently reminded us (2007: 65).

**MAKING ANALYSIS—MASTERING ANALYSIS**

It may not be simple, but it is an important task to pursue ways of opening the black box despite the messy, character of making analysis (Serres [1982] 1995; Serres and Latour 1995; Latour 1999; Law 2004). This also goes for the humanities that have a qualitative bend, even if they often take pride in the unique character of each analytical endeavor. Analytical displacement as analysis and method allows room for taking point of departure in a notion of uniqueness because the particular analytical cuts performed in relation to a given analysis are the responsibility of the scholar him- or herself. In that sense it is a broad and loose analytical tool. However, as a cut that generates insights into what making analysis is, it insists on the need to address this crucial issue. There are two main reasons how come opening the black box is important. Firstly, it is so because we must take seriously the challenge of rendering to students what making analysis means instead of leaving it up to them to figure it all out. In this sense, Bourdieu was absolutely right when he issued an invitation to enter the analytical laboratory of the sociologist. But secondly, and more importantly, we must develop new ways of addressing the issue of making analysis because it is at the heart of what we scholars do. In the context of the approach suggested in this edited volume, we insist on calling what scholars within the humanities do ‘making analysis’. This idiom reflects our more general notion of what the analytical endeavor is about. Analysis, as we see it, is not merely conducted, it is made. Analysis is not a passive enterprise but one of activity and creativity. It is about invention rather than application and description (see also Deleuze
Analysis crafts new connections, (re-)establishes relations between different matters and thereby adds to our understanding of a given phenomenon, or even sometimes recasts a phenomenon we thought we knew (following Serres and Latour 1995: 43–76; but also Strathern [1991] 2005, 1996; Massumi 2002: 17). It may be that this then no longer appears ‘surprising’ or ‘disturbing’ once it appears in the form of academic texts due to the way in which these are structured (Mol and Law op. cit.). To use the words of Paul Stoller, one runs the risk of becoming ‘experience hardened’ in more than one sense (1989).

However, a sense of wonder or surprise is critical in the making of analysis, even if some disciplines, such as anthropology, may hail the ideal of the surprising more than others. Just think of the reverse example, with which many of us who read and evaluate students’ essays are familiar, namely, the obvious analysis. Using the framework developed by Edward Said on orientalisms ([1979] 1994) in order to analyze a speech by the French Nationalist Le Pen or any other right-wing nationalist leader in contemporary Europe will, of course, be instructive as an analytical exercise, and as a step towards craftsmanship (following Sennett 2008: 20, 295). And yet, where this may at one time have been surprising, it nowadays remains an exercise, precisely because this analytical endeavor in itself is no longer seen to offer any surprising insights. A framework with which to analyze the stereotypes and prejudices used to analyze what one already believes to be exactly that from the outset may, rather than opening up critical aspects of the very practices unleashed by a Le Pen-like figure, cement a particular outlook. It merely applies a particular theoretical take to a given empirical material and confirms a range of normative as well as analytical assumptions. Rendering such an evaluation also means implicitly recognizing a particular conceptualization of what an interesting or good analysis is, which rests on a notion that theories and their assumptions must not merely be inserted as an application. Rather, they must be used in surprising ways that challenge how we look at the world, just as Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (op. cit.) in fact managed to do with regard to how the West views the Orient and, in a broader vein, how the West constructs its Others when this book appeared in the late 1970s. After all, there are reasons why this particular work has become a classic and still constitutes part of standard course curricula across a variety of disciplines within the humanities. But what was once surprising is today obvious in the context of producing scholarly works. In a surprising analysis, the critical move is not to ‘find’ the right theory to apply to a given material. Rather, the critical move consists of training the analytical capability to become more sensitive to both the given phenomenon of analysis as well as theoretical framing. In such an analytical process, the stuff of analysis is allowed to challenge received notions, more than being tamed by a particular theoretical framing.

It is in this sense significant analyses bring something novel to the world. They try out, explore, and invent rather than (re)apply (following Deleuze...
and Guattari 1991; Massumi 2002). Indeed, we claim, bringing something novel to the world is a central driving force for most of us who make analysis. That claim may sound pompous, but when we speak of our works, do we not speak of them as contributions to something? When we make analysis, are we not preoccupied with what has not yet been described, explored, argued, or studied? Do we not take joy in adding to the world? If novelty comes about in and through invention and exploration, this is, however, to be understood as an acquired sense of mastery. Mastery is not to be equated with hasty connections but with mature reflection on given problems. Maturity takes time. Sennett has formulated the importance of such mastery eloquently:

Craftsmen take pride most in skills that mature. This is why simple imitation is not a sustaining satisfaction; the skill has to evolve. The slowness of craft time serves as a source of satisfaction; practice beds in, making the skill one’s own. Slow craft time also enables the work of reflection and imagination—which the push for quick results cannot. Mature means long; one takes lasting ownership of the skill.

(2008: 295)

Making analysis as performed in between data and finalized analysis, we argue, is the primary mode (modus operandi) through which paths are created, and novelty as well as mastery comes about over time.

The joy of the scholar may then express how various academic disciplines produce particular subjectivities, various forms of homo academicus (Bourdieu 1990), through prioritizing certain genres and conventions of what a good analysis is. Concomitantly, one should not underestimate various disciplined senses of fulfillment. As the contributions in this volume show, these senses may come about in quite diverse manners, as, for example, expressed in an aesthetic satisfaction over having produced elegant graphical models that capture relations in a given field of analysis (see Warburg, chapter two, this volume). Or such genres may be rendered in forms beyond the texts and models, through teaching and broader forms of socialization within a given discipline, where affective dimensions are an integral part of the genres taught and passed on (see Schepelern Johansen, chapter seven, this volume).

REVISITING ANALYSIS—BETWEEN ACCOUNT AND CONFESSION

In his study of scientific practices titled Pandora’s Hope, Bruno Latour vividly describes how he is taken to be one of those ‘monsters’ who is out to deconstruct science as something that deals with reality. “Do you believe in reality?” he is thus bluntly asked (1999: 1) by a scientist who clearly expects Latour’s answer to be ‘no’, and the accompanying explanation to be ‘because reality depends on whatever the mob thinks is right at
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y any given time’ (ibid.: 7). Much to the amazement of the fellow scientist, however, Latour replies to the contrary: “But of course [. . .] is reality something we have to believe in?” (ibid.: 1). The anxiety of the scientist partly stems from the rejection of absolute certainties and universal a prioriis that has become a hallmark of most disciplines within the humanities and a part of social sciences for the past decades. Here, claims of social constructivism of ‘reality’, discrepancies between words and world, multiple standpoints if not multiple ontological realities, and an accompanying shift in analytical focus from Truth to truth productions have dismantled any claim of being able to speak of constants or access reality. Moreover, it has turned the processual, always evolving, always emerging nature of multidimensional objects and shifting subject–object positions into a premise for any analytical enterprise (cf. Strathern 1996; Law 2004: 7).

Such insights have, of course, also produced a host of reflections on the sequence from data to finalized analysis. For example, within the discipline of the two editors of this book, anthropology, the so-called post-modern, reflexive turn has come to imply a preoccupation with the question of how anthropologists ‘write culture’ and how anthropological knowledge is produced (Fabian 1983; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Geertz 1988; Hastrup 1992, 1995). Other disciplines have had similar debates as discussions of representation, othering, interpretation, cultural translation, genre, dialogism, heteroglossia, discourse, and many more swept across the humanities (inspired by, for example, the works of Said [1979] 1994; Bakhtin 1982; Bhabha [1994] 2004; Derrida [1967] 2001, [1972] 2004; Foucault [1966] 2002, [1969] 2002).

Seen in this light, it should come as no surprise when we say that the first objection we were most often met with when we presented the idea of this project to our colleagues was ‘but you can never revisit an analysis, it is always evolving’, thus echoing what Heraclitus had in fact already argued when he stated that it was not possible for a man to go down the same river twice because neither man nor river would be the same (as quoted in Jackson 2002: 231). This is, of course, also why we choose to talk of analytical displacement as the method suggested in the introduction to this book and employed by the contributors in their respective chapters. Our insistence on attempting to approach how scholars create paths from data to finalized analysis, and hence make the contributors pull down their ladders slightly, at the same time, however, reflects that we have not given up on finding novel means of addressing the issue of what making analysis implies within the humanities. Rather, we maintain that there are commonalities that can be identified and addressed by letting scholars approach the artifacts they had once produced, i.e., their texts, and that speak of an analytical process that unfolded. Drawing inspiration from Latour and Strathern, we argue that it is time to re-establish and work on the basis of a notion of ‘a finalized analysis’ and the notion of the analytical process as something that can be broken down into and treated as if it consisted of sequences in order to
be able to better address what making analysis implies. Not because such sequences are real and out there, but because working as if they were, and thus being able to focus on the crucial sequence in between data and finalized analysis rather than on data generation, offers much needed insights into what making analysis is.

Our attempt to develop an analytical and methodological approach through which making analysis can be addressed thus aims to carve a path between two obvious scholarly insights with regard to qualitative analysis. On the one hand, we cannot retell our analytical endeavors en route from data to finalized analysis. On the other, we need to keep developing new methods and techniques that allow us to speak of what went on in a given analytical process, in order to be better able to address the in-between data and analysis. As students and scholars are acutely aware, this part of the analytical endeavor involves much more than methodological technicalities, academic writing skills, and abstract theories (cf. Goodall 2000: 20–23 with regard to writing ethnography). Yet, we have difficulties addressing just what this much more consists of. Such difficulty, however, must not become an argument for refraining from trying to explore the analytical process, with all the turns taken, the grappling with data of various kinds, and the role of scholarly communities in formulating new insights (following Bourdieu 1992). On the contrary, just as is the case with any other analytical endeavor, we should be encouraged and motivated by such an analytical challenge. Indeed, scholars within the humanities have made various attempts at conceptualizing and addressing the issue of how analysis emerges (cf. Latour 1999; Law 2004: 3–4). The focus on knowledge as constructed and analysis as performed has produced certain dominant genres through which making analysis is revisited. These genres are somewhat problematic, however. Or to put it in the words of John Law, “the problem is not so much lack of variety in the practice of method, as the hegemonic and dominatory pretensions of certain versions or accounts of method” (2004: 5, author’s italics).

What do such ‘accounts’, then, generally look like? Here, we can identify several dominant genres, all of which contribute and yet, we hold, are not quite sufficient to grasp what making analysis is. The first genre tends to conflate the process of generating data with the process of making analysis and to plunge into step-by-step accounts of how a particular data generation was performed, including elaborate reflections on data-generating methods, sources, and access. This genre is aided by the numerous method books on qualitative analysis that rightly emphasize the need for accountability and transparency with regard to just how data came about and by what means it was then sorted in order to perform an analysis. A second genre, which owes much to the reflexive turn within the humanities—not least the works on representation that questioned the impact of particular authoritative constellations of knowledge and power on writings about areas such as the Middle East or Africa (e.g., Said [1979] 1994; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Clifford 1988; Geertz 1988; Abu-Lughod 1993)—is the confessional
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tendency. This tendency to embody ‘a confessional animal’ that constitutes part of the modern human being (Foucault 1990, 2009) is characterized by a scrutiny of the individual scholar’s past, social identities, and motives and an accompanying reflection upon how this contributes to producing a certain analysis. At times, such scrutiny even amounts to a hyper-reflexivity with regard to the author’s choices and their influence on a given subject that leads to unduly over-focusing on these aspects to the detriment of the task of analysis (cf. Ottenberg 1990). A third genre puts emphasis on a more abstract reflexive approach whereby the role of the scholar as advocate, public intellectual or the like is reflected upon with regard to the motives behind a given knowledge production and body of scholarly works (e.g., Said [1979] 1994, [1994] 1996; Bourdieu 1990, 1992). A fourth, and nowadays prominent genre, the so-called science and technology studies, attempts an abstract re-conceptualization of the whole analytical endeavor by questioning dichotomies such as complexity versus simplicity, the quest for ordering the messy, as well as our dominant notions of method and knowledge production (Latour 1999; Mol and Law 2002; Law 2004). A fifth and invariably present genre comes in the form of tributes paid either in the first footnote of an article or in the acknowledgements section of a book.

Let us dwell for a moment on the latter genre through which the significance of the sequence in-between data and finalized analysis is perhaps best reflected, namely, the acknowledgments section in books. The acknowledgments are an interesting read that reveal things about the author not found in the texts proper. Here, it first and foremost becomes clear that the individual scholar is embedded in wider communities of other scholars and texts, placed in networks of friends and family, situated in lecturing halls and quiet offices, and nourished by personal interactions as well as endless cups of steaming coffee. Moreover, they give insights into the messy non-linear character of making analysis and reflect on how ideas come about. These pages show the intersubjective character of our scholarly endeavors, enabling analysis to be formulated, discussed, and disseminated. Finally, they bear witness of a process of maturation, of the analysis and of the analyst.

Interlude

To insist is a strong word. Nevertheless in her acknowledgements to Dreams that Matter (2011), Amira Mittermaier ‘insists’ that there are indeed people, pains, and frustrations that “should not be erased in [her] ethnography” (2011: ix). There is stuff that is seemingly vital for her to include in her book, yet she relegates it to the acknowledgments section. Here, she starts out by recollecting her experiences of the hard times of fieldwork in Cairo and how she promised not to forget or erase this in her ethnography. She continues by thanking her interlocutors in Egypt, people that left a lasting mark on her personally and, concomitantly, on her book. From the local references, Mittermaier extends her focus to the scholarly community she
has been a part of. Mentors, readers, friends, and editors are mentioned and given thanks. Lastly, Mittermaier arrives at her family and their role in nurturing this project. What is written in her acknowledgments is important, she underlines. It has a direct bearing upon the analytical product, she lets us know. As when she foregrounds the contributions of “Katie-Kilroy-Marac, Pamela Klassen, and Joshua Dubler [who] read the entire manuscript and gave me the invaluable gift of thinking through my materials with me” (2011: xi). The analysis did not necessarily come easily, she thus informs us, but it came as an enterprise that also consisted of joint scholarly reflection on Mittermaier’s work from Cairo.

But let us be honest, then. Do you read acknowledgments to books? Or do you skip over those few initial pages eager to get to all the stuff that matters, the contents of the book? If you read the few initial pages, wherein the author(s) salutes all those persons, pets, social and professional networks, institutions, foundations, coffee shops, bars, and late-night supermarkets that form some of the myriad contexts through which an analytical product has emerged, and that have facilitated its production, why do you do it? Do you know the author(s) and want to make sure that you are mentioned somewhere in there? Are you just getting warmed up, slowly adjusting yourself to the book before you immerse yourself in the good stuff from page one onwards? Or do you actually expect to learn something from those few Roman numbered pages that the rest of the book cannot tell? Maybe you are more likely to read it if it is written as a preface, which gives a little more insight into the central arguments in the book itself before it turns to the acknowledgments? Perhaps you have even grappled with this specific genre yourself on one or more occasions? Maybe even felt a bit vulgar as you wrote those lines in which you paid tribute to your family, your parents, partner, and/or children, although the recognition of without-you-nothing is most certainly sincere and heartfelt? Is it possible that you even got as far as to think whether you should just do acknowledgments or rather a preface? Some acknowledgments do indeed seem to be very last-minute, often simply starting out with the ‘I would like to thank . . .’ as if all the energy and creativeness has been put into writing the actual book. Others are elegant and elaborate, giving the reader a sense of the effort and reflection that went into producing these pages, making them a part of the book rather than set apart from it.

Come to think of it, acknowledgments or prefaces have a peculiar status in a manuscript. They are all the way up front just after the table of contents, before the analysis begins. Such a prominent position could signal their importance with regard to giving the reader information about the analytical product in question. On the other hand, they are bracketed out as not really part of the analytical product, among other things by the use of Roman numbers as opposed to the introduction, which then takes off on page one in Arabic numerals. But if they are not significant, why are they then not just appendices relegated to the back of the book with the aim
of clarifying and elaborating on aspects pertaining to the analytical product? This, we suggest, is because they have an ambiguous status. They do in fact speak of something central, namely, of just how we scholars make analysis, but they address it in a way we have deemed non-analytical and non-reflexive.

VENTURING INTO THE BLACK BOX: IDEAS AND AUTHORS

Acknowledgments and prefaces offer glimpses into what went on before we scholars pulled up the ladder. But they do not address the paths from some initial, loose ideas, over data, to finalized analytical products in an analytical mode. They thus touch upon something in relation to which there is still room to further develop analytical language and methods so that the reeling off of long lists of names and places, and the accompanying narration of analysis as a temporally structured process whereby the author progresses towards an end product, is accompanied by others forms of revisiting that can give more insights into what making analysis is. This being said, acknowledgments do reflect two central aspects of making analysis, namely, the role of ideas and the role of the author.

In the presentation of the work as found in the acknowledgments, the person writing does not merely give thanks where thanks may be due but also assumes a particular relation to the text and the analysis made. It is signed under a particular name. Perhaps also the specific location as well as month or time is mentioned. It is presumably written towards the very end of the work. The author thus assumes responsibility for the text in its totality, and the analysis stand as finalized. Although different constellations have been tried out, whereby people write and work together, the predominant way of working in the humanities is still that one works alone and takes sole responsibility for the finalized analysis. To work alone does not, however, as can be discerned, mean working in solitude, or devoid of dialogue. In the process of analyzing and writing, all sorts of dialogues, discussions, negotiations, and contestations take place. The author cannot as such be understood as the sole originator of the analysis but rather as a function that works as a force field in which different ideas and propositions are worked out (Foucault 1977). One of Foucault’s prominent contemporaries, Roland Barthes, even before Foucault proposed the death of the author, which we take to imply that the classic idea of the genius—the person as Author in a primal sense—must be re-conceptualized in order to grasp the analytical endeavor (1977). We are thus far from being the first to point to the intersubjective character of the analytical endeavor. We believe, however, that the ambition of this edited volume of shedding light on the black box of the making of analysis is critical in fashioning a better understanding of analysis, including how to grasp the role of the individual scholar who is making the analysis. The author with a capital A may very
well have died. Analysis, in contrast, is very much alive and is so in a shared set of practices.

Whereas Foucault and Barthes respectively attempted to erase a particular model of the author, in a more recent text Giorgio Agamben grapples with the necessity of the author (2007). The author function for Agamben is not tied to the death of the author as such, however. It is instead tied to the absence of an individual presence of the author in the texts and a taking over of the texts by others, i.e., by readers who give the texts a life of their own (2007: 71). Each text, in this sense, attests to the disappearance of the author as an individual presence yet functions as a site for the generation and emergence of the author by way of the absence made present in the act of reading. In different ways, the author of a text not only fashions an analysis but also fashions a persona by way of the text—two aspects that are, for example, equally important for ideas of what a life and biography is and how to render it in text (see Possing, chapter one, this volume). The analysis models particular figures of an author with variegated relations to the subject of analysis, with differential ideals of distance to the material analyzed, and with different personal stakes in the analysis made and presented, which are made present in the act of reading. Sometimes such readings are even performed by the scholar of the work. Scholars have quite different relations with their published work. Some claim never to revisit their published work, whereas others still take pride in their published work and continue to go back to it as part of their analytical endeavors. Usually, such readings are left to others, the audience, unless the aim is to further develop the analytical conclusions a work has produced. In this volume, however, the contributing scholars have been asked to become readers of their own finalized analysis in another manner. The aim of our request was not to make the contributors reflect upon the analytical conclusions they drew. Rather, the aim was one of identifying particular figures of the author, and thereby offering readers of this volume insight into the presence of these figures in a particular work and the effects of these with regard to creating paths from data to finalized analysis.

A key issue that acknowledgments and prefaces also address, and that is moreover seen as intimately linked to the question of the author, is the question of ideas. Most students, as well as many scholars, have most likely dwelled on the question of how to come up with good ideas, or at least asked themselves where particular ideas came from. Whereas the techniques of how to generate and analyze data are addressed in numerous method books, the central question of how to come up with ideas, on the other hand, remains more opaque. This should not, however, keep us from examining the analytical endeavor in order to think about how the notoriously difficult question of ideas and creativity can be addressed. A good starting point in this regard is to acknowledge that there is a relationship between labor and ideas. Ideas do not just appear out of thin air, so to speak. Yet you cannot force them into being. Max Weber humorously
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and perspicuously formulated this insight on the capricious character of the idea:

The idea is not a substitute for work; and work, in turn, cannot substitute for or compel an idea, just as little as enthusiasm can. Both, enthusiasm and work, above all both of them jointly, can entice the idea. Ideas occur to us when they please, not when it pleases us. The best ideas do indeed occur to one’s mind in the way in which Ihering describes it: when smoking a cigar on the sofa; or as Heimholtz states of himself with scientific exactitude: when taking a walk on a slowly ascending street; or in a similar way. In any case, ideas come when we do not expect them, and not when we are brooding and searching at our desks. Yet ideas would certainly not come to mind had we not brooded at our desks and searched for answers with passionate devotion.

((1918] 2004: 9)

According to Weber, what is important is not the location as such but the openness and receptiveness to ideas when they do arrive. And such openness comes about through labor. Here it is important not merely to point to the human will in the analytical labor promoted by Nietzsche and Foucault. Rather, as Mary Midgley has aptly formulated this insight: “The human will is not a mechanism for generating new thoughts out of nothing. It is a humble device for holding onto the thoughts which we have got and using them. [. . . ] What generates thoughts is the imagination” ([1981] 2003: 50). Many of the legends told about breakthroughs in scientific research in fact center on scholars who were not in their laboratories or offices when the critical insight dawned upon them. Niels Bohr was not in the laboratory when he made his major finding in nuclear physics. He was skiing in Norway. Myth has it that Sir Isaac Newton’s theory of gravity owes much to Newton’s chance observation of an apple falling from a tree in his garden. Legends are, of course, narrated with the intention of telling the extraordinary—of making something into an event or someone exceptional—and in the cases above also to set their respective discoveries off as unique. And yet would such breakthroughs have occurred were it not for the regular labor in the laboratory or at the desk? Or for the will to hold onto the thoughts generated by such imaginative minds? A general receptivity and awareness of the stuff of analysis cannot be delimited to any particular location or situation but must be nurtured along the path of the researcher through his or her concrete and continuous labor. In this way, scholars become ‘attuned’ to certain things (see Bandak, chapter ten, this volume). Indeed, one of the things we aim to provide more insight into is just what such attunement is and the role it has with regard to making analysis.

Another significant insight with regard to the idea is that although Weber’s thoughts on the idea and the prominent legends on great ideas talk
of the idea as if it came into the world in its totality and completeness, what constitutes the idea is the result of making analysis. It may be that labor precedes ideas, but it most certainly also follows upon its initial conception as it becomes clear and complete by way of our analytical endeavors (see Højer, chapter five, this volume). In a text titled ‘How to make our ideas clear’ ([1878] 1955) C. S. Peirce points to this aspect with regard to ideas. He refers to works on logic in the philosophical tradition and emphasizes how such works contain a dual set of distinctions between, on the one hand, clear and obscure conceptions and, on the other, distinct and confused conceptions ([1878] 1955: 23). To Peirce, these two sets of distinctions are important. Much to his regret, however, working on the basis of such distinctions has not yielded what is supposedly implied by prioritizing them in the analytical work. They have—often due to a form of neglect, he proposes—not assisted in actually bringing about clear and distinct ideas, despite their status in the aforementioned philosophical tradition and the expectations this creates. As Peirce himself formulates it, “[t]he very first lesson that we have a right to demand that logic shall teach us is, how to make our ideas clear; and a most important one it is, depreciated only by minds who stand in need of it” (ibid.: 25). If one should or could choose between many confused ideas or a few solid ones, Peirce informs us, he would opt for the latter. But the solidness of an idea—not to be confused with whether the idea is true or false because even clear ideas can be false (ibid.: 41)—as can be discerned from the quote, hinges on ‘how’ to make this particular idea clear. In other words, it did not come into the world as such but requires analytical labor in order to become clear. One way of framing this enterprise is to emphasize the process of working from horizontal clustering towards vertical analytical integration of what comes to stand out as the central aspects of a particular analysis. Through the conscious act of honing in on the central analytical categories, ideas can be rendered ever more forcefully to others (see Kuzmanovic, chapter four, this volume).

Although our analytical notions of how ideas come into being have most certainly undergone much analytical scrutiny since Peirce wrote his article, the ideal of clarity and the notion of analytical labor as something that yields still greater degrees of clarity (i.e., clarification) remains a central conceptualization with regard to any analytical endeavor, including within the humanities. That is unless we no longer regard texts and other analytical products as invitations to the reader. The contention is—just as in Peirce’s article—that a central concern when talking about ideas in the context of academia is the question of their purchase for others. In relation to this, clarity is seen as the crux. One way in which the central role of the metaphor of clarity in the context of analytical enterprises comes across is by way of the equally forceful metaphor of vision, sight, and insight (cf. Ong 1977; Jay 1993). We prioritize the sight as our primary sense through which making analysis is performed, for example, by deeming our endeavor one of rendering what used to be ‘invisible’ due to existing analytical preoccupation
‘visible’ by breaking away from such dominant framing of a given field and thus producing novel ‘insights’ (see Koktvedgaard Zeitzen, chapter nine, this volume). This constitutes a prominent way of conceptualizing how analysis adds to the world.

The contributions to this volume certainly reflect the dominance of an ideal of clarity of ideas and of insights, although it is not necessarily stated as such but rather refracted through other concerns. Another current that runs across the various chapters is the question of ‘getting the analysis right’ and the accompanying sense that there are moments of analytical closure. What the various chapters hence all offer insight into, through concrete exemplifications, is the emergence of these complex conjunctures where author(s), ideas, and analytical labor merge and emerge as finalized analysis. Much unlike Peirce, however, and in vein with the recognition of clarity and analytical closures as an expression of situated ‘analytical cuts’ (Strathern 1996) into fluctuating and flowing matter, we do not work on the basis that the clarity of an idea is a stable constant. The famous anthropologist Clifford Geertz, in one of his last published papers from 2005, described how he felt about his dissertation some five decades previously. He was still not quite sure on how to grapple with all the complexities encountered then, he claimed (2005: 2). For some, this could come as a surprise because Geertz was known for being a systematic thinker and erudite in his publishing. Critical for Geertz, however, were the general changes in the world and the concomitant changes in the categories used in the humanities to interpret and deal with the world itself in analytical terms. Obviously, this uncertainty did not prevent Geertz from producing finalized analysis on ‘what it was all about’. On the contrary, it seemed to spur him on and make him acutely aware of the need for ‘cuts’ and thus the significance of analytical endeavors in a world in flux. Here, we would add that the blurred boundaries between professional and scholarly enterprises, as, for example, when humanitarian relief works becomes the site for generating analytical insights (see Hastrup, chapter six, this volume), only emphasizes the need for skilled reflection on ‘what it is all about’. Terrains may change, and the world may be in constant flux, but the critical need for analysis that dares to make ‘cuts’ remains.

ANALYTICAL DISPLACEMENTS AND THE MAKING OF ANALYSIS

The flux character of analytical objects and analytical practices does not, as we have argued, provide any reason for avoiding the question of what making analysis is (following Latour 1999; Massumi 2002; Mol and Law 2002; Law 2004). But the premise of analysis as always emerging and evolving does call for reflections on how to ‘cut’ (following Strathern 1996) in order to address the issue at hand. Here, a particular playfulness and creativity is needed. Scholars have to imagine and create paths between the cuts and the
flow, more often than not in a context in which the so-called ‘right’ data is initially deemed ‘sparse’ or ‘missing’ in order to create such paths (see Fihl, chapter eight, this volume). In fact, we see the grappling that emerged from such conceptualizations of ‘data’ as a critical part of exploring what making analysis is.

Although, the approach proposed in this volume is inspired by Strathern’s notions of ‘cuts’ and ‘flows’ as a conceptualization of the analytical enterprise, we also depart from Strathern and aim for concretion with regard to addressing the issue. This point of deviation is, moreover, the primary way in which the approach proposed in this volume differs from the recent spate of studies, in particular inspired by Latour, Law, and Mol, in the tradition of science and technology studies. While such studies can rightfully be admired for their reflections on method and theory, we find a tendency for abstraction rather than concretion (Latour 1999 being a notable exception), and for developing new analytical and methodological takes with which to approach a multidimensional world in flux rather than also including a revisiting of the finalized analysis in order to explore what making analysis is. This is reflected in the following passage from Mol and Law:

As you read this, where are you? Are you sitting at a desk or on a sofa, in an aircraft, perhaps, or on a train? Or perhaps you are lying in the bath? Another question: how many versions did this text go through? What was added and deleted along the way?

The answers to these questions are among the many complexities that don’t concern us here. We leave them out not because they are irrelevant to intellectual work in general; no doubt they are relevant in various ways, but a single text cannot be everywhere at once. It cannot do everything all at the same time nor tell all.

(Mol and Law 2002: 6, original italics)

Our cuts in this volume differ. Rather than leaving such issues out because a single text cannot do everything at the same time, the aim of suggesting analytical displacement as an analytical method, which yields insight into making analysis, is to leave it up to the scholar making the analysis to perform the cuts. More importantly, this analytical method does not aim for higher degrees of abstraction but rather encourages higher degrees of concretion as a different, albeit related, way of working with analysis. In this vein, there is a curious tendency in the studies inspired by Mol and Law to talk and write about analysis, but to be rather opaque about the stakes of a particular analysis. Some of these studies end up reproducing the central ideas on different material, but they stop short of inventing new takes. The talk becomes highly jargon-ridden, but not necessarily inviting further analysis. Take the prominent example of a soccer match where Serres proposes that we analyze the game not with the two times eleven players, but the ball itself as point of orientation (1982: 224ff.; see also Latour 1993:
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50ff.; Massumi 2002: 71). Such an analytical perspective is at first interesting because it recasts the way the game is conceived. But does it keep being interesting once it turns into a template used to analyze whatever ball game from tennis over basketball to hockey? Does it not run the risk of becoming a cliché akin to the example of the analysis of speeches by Le Pen by way of orientalism, which we mentioned in a previous section of this chapter? To be sure, we do not point towards this trait to mock inspiration from intellectual predecessors. But inspired by Deleuze and Guattari (1991: 83), we find that predecessors can only be admired and honored by showing the same courage and inventiveness, albeit regarding new problems. To repeat central findings, in contrast, easily ends up fossilizing analysis and sealing off new connections.

Analysis in this sense rests both upon the capability to remember and to forget. More than merely acknowledging that there is no tabula rasa, we, following Agamben, point to the already filled blackboard, which needs to be wiped at least partly clean in order to inscribe new thoughts and make new analytical insights (1999: 244). Allowing ridiculed literary genres and persons to be reread, thereby exploring the vigor and vitality of texts, also constitutes one such way of countering one’s own past predilections (see Thisted, chapter three, this volume). This is not stated in order to reduce the approach suggested in this volume to the classic and dominant analytical practice of ‘rereading’. On the contrary, analytical displacement should be seen as an approach in which a particular kind of ‘rereading’ of one’s own finalized analysis constitutes part of the task. Rather, we conceive of the collection of chapters in this volume as a series of examples—one could be tempted to call them ‘parables’ were it not for the universalism entailed (Massumi 2002)—that speaks of what making analysis is in disciplines within the humanities that have a qualitative bend. The contributors all address the issue through various kinds of analytical displacements in which they employ new analytical takes on one of their finalized analyses in order to speak about what making analysis is by identifying some of the stakes with regard to concrete analytical enterprises.

These latter reflections on analytical displacement as method form the basis for the invitation we, as seminar organizers and then editors of this volume, issued to the ten contributors. They were asked to take their point of departure in their finalized analytical works and make a fresh analytical cut that they, with a simultaneous retrospective outlook, deemed would bring about insights into how a previously conducted analysis emerged. The task was, in this vein, akin to the historian who, in the words of Walter Benjamin, “regards it as his task to brush history against the grain” (1968: 256). We asked the contributors not to structure their texts as an account of the entire process. Instead, we urged them to focus more specifically on the sequence from data to finalized analysis and to let their analytical cuts in this regard spring from the concrete work. The aim, as stated in a previous section of this introduction, was neither to encourage a confessional approach, nor to incite a recasting of the conclusions of a given finalized analysis from
the vantage point of meta-level reflective exercises. It must be emphasized, however, that all of us, the editors included, experienced the challenge such an invitation posed. It took several attempts to reverse the standard order of covering up our respective past steps in a veil of necessities and self-evident logics and to start to make an analysis of the stakes and concerns in the finalized analysis revisited. In other words, analytical displacement did not come easily but had to be enforced in order to actually do it.

Although the contributors to this volume have various disciplinary backgrounds, and have responded to our invitation through different kinds of analytical displacements, we nevertheless make three analytical cuts in order to bundle the contributions into three sections. While all speak of the analytical endeavor as one that is about making new connections, and thus about invention rather than application, we sort the contributions by highlighting three aspects of this endeavor. The four contributions in the first section, by Birgitte Possing, Margit Warburg, Kirsten Thisted, and Daniella Kuzmanovic, respectively, all address aspects of the role of configurations, be they in the form of (role) models, analytical ideals, theoretical framings, or personified figures, with regard to making analysis. In the second section the practice of juxtaposing is explored. Here, analysis as it emerges from a web of relations and connections, including the engagement with various kinds of professional and scholarly communities over time, are key themes in the chapters by Lars Højer, Anders Hastrup, and Birgitte Schepelern Johansen. Finally, the third section speaks of how paths from data to finalized analysis emerge through the scholar's engagement with the world and the various kinds of attentiveness to the world each analytical endeavor implies. The chapters by Esther Fihl, Miriam Koktvedgaard, and Andreas Bændak more specifically illuminate how various senses, whether touching, seeing, or hearing, are an integral part of how new connections are crafted across analytical terrains.

AN INVITATION TO ANALYZE

As Wittgenstein grew older, he later acknowledged that the messy world actually affects even the most perfect philosophical systems. Having sent his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* out into circulation, Wittgenstein withdrew from academia to teach at a school. During this period, he came to understand that perfect knowledge never exists outside the social realm, where misunderstandings, misreadings, indifference, and the like are part and parcel of human interaction. He therefore felt compelled to rethink his early works, out of which grew his magnificent *Philosophical Investigations* (1973). In this work, sociality and the actuality of human interaction became a pressing concern, and the ladder he had once deemed superfluous thereby again became possible to approach as part and parcel of venturing into his works. Wittgenstein was equally courageous in both of the works mentioned in this introduction. Bold, imaginative, and creative. He furthermore dared venture into the implications
of an analysis already published and even redirect some of the critical insights. Such a venture is, of course, a critical part of any reflexive scholarly enterprise, whereby analytical conclusions and their underpinnings are constantly challenged in the act of ‘rethinking’ analysis. Yet what the older Wittgenstein also acknowledged was that there are ladders in our analytical endeavors and that re-approaching such ladders can yield further insights.

By ending this introduction with a return to the example of Wittgenstein, we wish to make a general case for continued research with a bold, imaginative, and creative attitude within the humanities, but also a particular case for including the method of analytical displacement as part of such research. The humanities are a critical part of our societies. Students and scholars alike must keep addressing the messy world with new proposals for connections to be made, concepts to be invented, and models to be examined. In the process, neither students nor scholars should be colored by a fear of not getting or doing things right, but rather be motivated by the joy and pride that spring from attempting to get things right. Let us maintain and strengthen a sense of courage on behalf of the project of the humanities. The examples presented in this volume should be seen as examples of scholars who work on the basis of such a premise and hope, both as regards their individual analytical enterprises as well as regards their response to our invitation to make an analysis of their own analysis. In this vein, each contribution is simultaneously an invitation for others to follow, and to connect, in order to take analysis in the humanities with a qualitative bend on into new terrains. Indeed, at the heart of the project of the humanities is an invitation to connect and create. By bringing new aspects into the world, the various disciplines in the humanities do not necessarily solve particular problems. They hold the potential to do something equally important, however, namely, to ask the right kind of questions and generate horizons of orientation with which to assess the problems at hand. This is an analytical endeavor that is needed now more than ever.

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