

Introduction to Concurrent Programming

The study of systems of interacting computer programs which share resources and run concurrently (i.e. at the same time). Concurrency, and hence process synchronization, is useful only when processes interact with each other.

Parallelism: Occurring physically at the same time

Concurrency: Occurring logically at the same time, but could be implemented without real parallelism

Competitive Processes

Deadlock: each thread takes a resource and waits indefinitely until the other one has freed that resource.

Livelock: each thread takes a resource, sees that the other thread has the other resource and returns it (this repeats indefinitely).

Starvation: one of the threads always takes the resources before the other one.

Communication mechanisms are necessary for cooperation to be possible.

Modeling Program Execution

Number of interleavings is exponential in the number of instructions. If P has m instructions and Q has n instructions, then there are

$$\binom{m+n}{m} = \frac{(m+n)!}{m!n!}$$

A Transition System A is a tuple (S, \rightarrow, i) where S is the set of states, $\rightarrow \subseteq S \times S$ is a transition relation, and $i \subseteq S$ is the set of initial states.

A is said to be finite if S is finite.

We write $s \rightarrow s'$ for $(s, s') \in \rightarrow$

Mutual Exclusion

Atomicity Assumption on Statements

An instruction such as $x = x+1$ is actually compiled into simpler sets of assembly instructions. This could cause undesired interleavings at the assembly level.

Atomic Operation

An operation is atomic if it cannot be interleaved at a lower level of abstraction.

- Atomic operations are the smallest units in terms of which a path can be constituted
- In order to reason about concurrency at the source level, we need to know what is assumed atomic at the source level
 - We assume throughout this course that all (single-line) statements are atomic
 - In particular, assignments such as $counter = counter + 1$ are assumed to be atomic

We occasionally simulate lack of atomicity of assignment (at the source level) by decomposing it into several simple instructions.

For example:

```
counter = counter + 1;
```

can be decomposed into:

```
temp = counter + 1;  
counter = temp;
```

An occurrence of variable v in P is a critical reference if

- 1. It is assigned in P and occurs in another process Q , or
- 2. It is read in P and is assigned in another process Q .

A program satisfies the Limited Critical Reference (LCR) property if every statement contains at most one critical reference

Concurrent programs that satisfy the LCR restriction yield the same set of behaviors whether the statements are considered atomic or are compiled to a machine architecture with atomic load and store.

Attempting to present programs that satisfy the LCR restriction is thus convenient

Race Condition

Once thread T1 starts doing something, it needs to "race" to finish it because if thread T2 looks at the shared variable before T1 is done, it may see something inconsistent

Race Condition

Arises if two or more threads access the same variables or objects concurrently and at least one does updates

This is hard to detect and there can be race conditions in programs that satisfy LCR.

Critical Section

Critical Section
A part of the program that accesses shared memory and which we wish to execute atomically

```
Thread.start {  
    while(true) {  
        // non-critical section  
        entry to critical section;  
        // CRITICAL SECTION  
        exit from critical section;  
        // non-critical section  
    }  
}
```

The Mutual Exclusion Problem

1. Mutex: At any point in time, there is at most one thread in the critical section
2. Absence of livelock: if various threads try to enter the critical section, at least one of them will succeed
3. Free from starvation: A thread trying to enter its critical section will eventually be able to do so

Reasonable Assumptions of MEP

- There are no shared variables between the critical section and the non-critical section (nor with the entry/exit protocol).
- The critical section always terminates.
- The scheduler is fair (a process that is waiting to run, will be able to do so eventually)

General Scheme to Address the MEP

```
while (cond) { } // is called a busy-wait loop  
while (cond) { } - await | cond
```

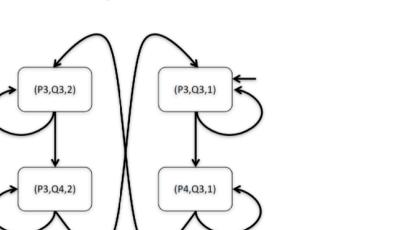
We will assume that `await` is atomic, for this an all subsequent programs. For most of our examples this makes no difference since it satisfies the LCR property.

Attempt I

```
int turn = 1;  
Thread.start { // P  
    while (true) {  
        Thread.start { // Q  
            while (true) {  
                // non-critical section  
                entry to critical section;  
                // CRITICAL SECTION  
                exit from critical section;  
                // non-critical section  
            }  
        }  
    }  
}
```

In this case, mutual exclusion does not hold since both threads can enter the critical section, but not freedom from starvation.

Attempt I: Transition System



This is because if thread P goes into an infinite loop/throws an exception it will never complete and set the value of turn to 2 causing thread Q to never run.

Attempt III

```
boolean wantP = false;  
boolean wantQ = false;  
Thread.start { // P  
    Thread.start { // Q  
        while (true) {  
            // non-critical section  
            entry to critical section;  
            wantP = true;  
            // CRITICAL SECTION  
            exit from critical section;  
            wantQ = false;  
            // non-critical section  
        }  
    }  
}
```

Thread.start { // P
 while (true) {
 // non-critical section
 entry to critical section;
 wantQ = true;
 // CRITICAL SECTION
 exit from critical section;
 wantP = false;
 // non-critical section
 }
}

Consider the program:

```
int x = 0;  
Thread.start { // P  
    Thread.start { // Q  
        while (true) {  
            x = x + 1;  
            print(x);  
        }  
    }  
}
```

Construct the transition system for this algorithm.

State format: (P_P, P_Q, Q_P, Q_Q, x)

This solution enjoys mutual exclusion and freedom from starvation, however it does not avoid livelock.

Contention

- Naive back-out: either back out if they discover they are contending with the other
- Dekker's algorithm: take turns
- Peterson's algorithm: give priority to the first one that wanted access

Attempt IV - Naive back-out

```
boolean wantP = false;  
boolean wantQ = false;  
Thread.start { // P  
    Thread.start { // Q  
        while (true) {  
            // non-critical section  
            entry to critical section;  
            wantP = true;  
            // CRITICAL SECTION  
            exit from critical section;  
            wantQ = false;  
            // non-critical section  
        }  
    }  
}
```

This solution enjoys mutual exclusion and absence of livelock; however, it is not free from starvation since there is an interleaving where P can enter and exit the critical section but Q will repeatedly try and fail.

Dekker's algorithm (1965) - Combines attempts I & IV

Right to insist on entering is passed between the two processes.

```
int turn = 1;  
boolean wantP = false;  
boolean wantQ = false;  
Thread.start { // P  
    Thread.start { // Q  
        while (true) {  
            // non-critical section  
            entry to critical section;  
            wantP = true;  
            // CRITICAL SECTION  
            if (turn == 2) {  
                wantQ = true;  
            }  
            exit from critical section;  
            wantP = false;  
            // non-critical section  
        }  
    }  
}
```

Peterson's algorithm - (1981)

Similar to Dekker except that if both want access, priority is given to the first one that wanted to access.

```
int last = 1;  
boolean wantP = false;  
boolean wantQ = false;  
Thread.start { // P  
    Thread.start { // Q  
        while (true) {  
            // non-critical section  
            entry to critical section;  
            last = 1;  
            if (last == 1 || last == 2) {  
                wantP = true;  
            }  
            // CRITICAL SECTION  
            turn = 2;  
            turn = 1;  
            turn = 2;  
            turn = 1;  
            // non-critical section  
        }  
    }  
}
```

Complex Atomic Options

Solving the MEP using atomic load and store is not an easy problem to solve. This difficulty disappears if we allow more complicated atomic operations.

Also known as read-modify-write (RMW) operations.

Specific atomic operations are provided by hardware to allow a fixed number of instructions to be executed atomically.

Test and Set

```
atomic boolean TestAndSet();  
result = ref.value; // read the value before it changes  
if (result == ref.value) {  
    ref.value = newValue; // write the new value  
    return result; // return the previously read value  
}
```

Revisiting our example:

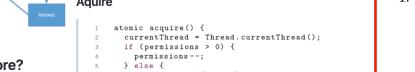
```
: Ref shared = one Ref();  
: Shared ref = Ref();  
: Thread start { // P  
    : while (true) {  
        : // non-critical section  
        : entry to critical section;  
        : ref.set(1);  
        : // CRITICAL SECTION  
        : turn++;  
        : exit from critical section;  
        : ref.set(turn);  
        : // non-critical section  
    }  
}: Thread start { // Q  
    : while (true) {  
        : // non-critical section  
        : entry to critical section;  
        : ref.set(2);  
        : // CRITICAL SECTION  
        : turn++;  
        : exit from critical section;  
        : ref.set(turn);  
        : // non-critical section  
    }  
}
```

Semaphores I

States of a process

- Inactive
- Ready: Code is not running but it is in a 'queue' of ready processes. From here the scheduler chooses code and runs it.
- Running: Code is being executed.
- Completed: Execution is finished.

Blocked: A process needs access to some resource that is not currently available.



What is a semaphore?

A semaphore is an Abstract Data Type with:

- Atomic operations:
 - acquire (or wait)
 - release (or signal)
- Data fields:
 - permissions: non-negative integer
 - processes: a set of processes

-

Mutual Exclusion Using Semaphores

The MEP for two processes becomes trivial if we use a mutex.

- Entry protocol: mutex.acquire();
- Exit protocol: mutex.release();

```
: Semaphore mutex = new Semaphore(1);  
: Thread.start { // P  
    : Thread.start { // Q  
        while (true) {  
            // non-critical section  
            entry to critical section;  
            mutex.acquire();  
            // CRITICAL SECTION  
            exit from critical section;  
            mutex.release();  
            // non-critical section  
        }  
    }  
}
```

This solution does not use busy waiting: a process that blocks in the acquire goes into the BLOCKED state and only returns to the READY state once it is given permission to do so.

Semaphores in Java

Class Semaphore in java.util.concurrent

```
import java.util.concurrent.Semaphore;
```

```
/* Creates a semaphore with the given number of permits */  
Semaphore(int permits)
```

```
/* Acquires a permit from this Semaphore, blocking until one is available */  
void acquire()
```

```
/* Releases a permit, returning it to the semaphore */  
void release()
```

Semaphore Invariants

Let k be the initial value of the permissions field of a semaphore s.

1. permissions ≥ 0
2. permissions = k + releases - #acquires

where:

- #releases is the number of s.release() statements executed
- #acquires is the number of s.acquire() statements executed
- A blocked process is considered not to have executed an acquire operation.

Semaphores II

Patterns based on semaphores

A semaphore is an abstract data type with two operations (acquire and release). It can be used to solve the mutual exclusion problem and to synchronize cooperative threads.

Producers/consumers

This is a common pattern of interaction which must cater for a difference in speed between each party.

Unbounded Buffer

The producer can work freely and the consumer must wait for the producer to produce.

Bounded Buffer

The producer must wait when the buffer is full and the consumer must wait for the producer to produce.

Readers/writers

There are shared resources between two types of threads.

- Readers: access the resources without modifying it (can access simultaneously)
- Writers: access the resource and may modify it (at most one at any given time)

Properties a Solution Should Possess

- Each read/write operation should occur inside the critical region
- Must guarantee mutual exclusion between the writers
- Must allow multiple readers to execute inside the critical region simultaneously

First Solution: Priority Readers

- One semaphore for controlling write access
- Before writing, the permission must be obtained and then released when done
- The first reader must "steal" the permission to write and the last one must return it
 - We must count the number of readers inside the critical section
 - This must be done inside its own critical section

Second Solution: Priority Writers

- The readers can potentially lock out all the writers
 - We need to count the number of writers that are waiting
 - Also, this counter requires its own critical section
- Before reading the readers must obtain a permission to do so

Monitors

We've seen that semaphores are efficient tool to solve synchronization problems. Semaphores are elegant and efficient for solving problems in concurrent programs however, they are low-level constructs since they are not structured. Monitors will provide synchronization by encapsulation.

A monitor contains a set of operations encapsulated in modules and unique lock that ensures mutual exclusion to all operations in the monitor. Additionally special variables called condition variables, that are used to program conditional synchronization.

Counter Example

With Semaphores:

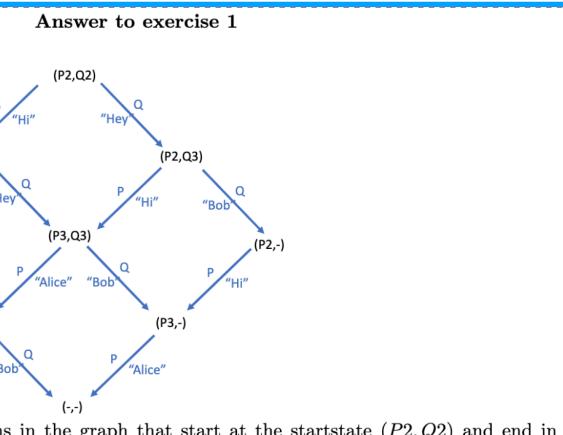
```
class Counter {  
    private cnt = 0;  
    private Semaphore mutex = new Semaphore(1);  
  
    public void inc() {  
        mutex.acquire();  
        cnt++;  
        mutex.release();  
    }  
  
   
```

Exercise Booklet 1: Paths

Note: For this booklet you must assume that assignment is atomic and that the scheduler is fair. Also, you may use “`~`” for the value of uninitialized variables. Solutions to selected exercises (\diamond) are provided at the end of this document. Important: You should first try solving them before looking at the solutions. You will otherwise learn **nothing**.

Exercise 1. (\diamond) Assume that the `print` command is atomic. Build the transition system and then exhibit all possible paths of execution of the following program:

```
1 Thread.start { //P Thread.start { // Q
2   print("Hi");
3   print("Hey");
4   print("Alice");
5   print("Bob");
6 }
```



The execution paths are all the paths in the graph that start at the startstate (P_2, Q_2) and end in the endstate (\sim, \sim) .

Exercise 2. Draw the transition system for the following programs. What values can x take at the end of the execution?

```
1 int x = 0;
2 Thread.start { //P Thread.start { //Q
3   int local = x;
4   local = local + 1; local = local + 1;
5   x = local;
6 }
```



```
1 int x = 0;
2 Thread.start { //P Thread.start { //Q
3   x = x + 1; x = x + 1;
4 }
```

Exercise 3. (\diamond) Given the following program:

```
1 int x = 0;
2 int y = 0;
3 Thread.start { //P Thread.start { //Q
4   y = x + 1; x = y + 1;
5 }
```

1. Show an execution path such that at the end $x = 2$ and $y = 1$.
2. Is there a path s.t. $x = y = 1$? Justify your answer. What would happen if the assumption on atomicity of assignment is dropped?

ANSWER TO EXERCISE 3

1. State format (IP_P, IP_Q, x, y) . Path: $(P_2, Q_2, 0, 0) \rightarrow (\sim, \sim, 2, 1)$
2. There are not paths that result in x and y both holding one. If the assumption on atomicity of assignment is dropped, then there would be such a path.

Exercise 7. (\diamond) Consider the following two threads:

```
1 Thread.start { // P : Thread.start { // Q
2   while (true) {
3     print("A");
4     print("B");
5   }
6 }
```

1. Use semaphores to guarantee that at all times the number of A's and B's differs at most in 1.
2. Modify the solution so that the only possible output is ABABABABAB...

ANSWER OF EXERCISE 7

```
Item 1.
1 Semaphore allowA = new Semaphore (1);
2 Semaphore allowB = new Semaphore (1);
3
4 Thread.start { // P
5   while (true) {
6     allowA.acquire();
7     print("A");
8     allowB.release();
9   }
10 }
11 Thread.start { // Q
12   while (true) {
13     allowB.acquire();
14     print("B");
15     allowA.release();
16   }
17 }
```

What happens if we initialize both semaphores any $k > 0$?

Item 2. Have `allowB` be initialized with 0 permits.

Exercise 1. (\diamond) On Fridays the bar is usually full of men, therefore the owners would like to implement an access control mechanism in which one man can enter for every two women.

```
Semaphore ticket = new Semaphore(0);
Semaphore mutex = new Semaphore(1);

thread Men: {
  mutex.acquire();
  ticket.acquire();
  ticket.acquire();
  mutex.release();
}

thread woman {
  ticket.release();
}
```

Exercise 4. (\diamond) We wish to implement a three-way sequencer using monitors in order to coordinate N threads. A three-way sequencer provides the following operations `first`, `second`, `third`. The idea is that each of the threads can invoke any of these operations. The sequencer will alternate cyclically the execution of `first`, then `second`, and finally `third`.

Answer to exercise 4

```
monitor TWS{
  int state = 1;
  condition first, second, third;

  void first() {
    while (state != 1)
      first.wait();
    state = 2;
    second.signal();
  }

  void second() {
    while (state != 2)
      second.wait();
    state = 3;
    third.signal();
  }

  void third() {
    while (state != 3)
      third.wait();
    state = 1;
    first.signal();
  }
}
```

Exercise 8. (\diamond) Model a vehicle crossing between two endpoints. Since the crossing is narrow, it does not allow for vehicles to travel in opposite directions. You solution must allow multiple vehicles to use the crossing so long as they are travelling in the same direction. Use a thread `Vehicle(myEndpoint)` to model a vehicle located at endpoint `myEndpoint` (either 0 or 1).

Answer to exercise 8

```
global Semaphore useCrossing = new Semaphore(1); //mutex
global Semaphore[] endpointMutex = new Semaphore[2];
endpointMutex[0] = new Semaphore(1, true); // Strong: vehicles cross
endpointMutex[1] = new Semaphore(1, true); // on FCFS order
global int[] noOfCarsCrossing = {0,0};

thread Auto(myEndpoint) : {
  endpointMutex[myEndpoint].acquire();
  if (noOfCarsCrossing[myEndpoint] == 0)
    useCrossing.acquire();
  noOfCarsCrossing[myEndpoint]++;
  endpointMutex[myEndpoint].release();

  // Cross crossing

  endpointMutex[myEndpoint].acquire();
  noOfCarsCrossing[myEndpoint]--;
  if (noOfCarsCrossing[myEndpoint] == 0)
    useCrossing.release();
  endpointMutex[myEndpoint].release();
}

// Cross crossing
```

The Mutual Exclusion Problem

Guarantee that:

1. **Mutex:** At any point in time, there is at most one thread in the critical section
2. **Absence of livelock:** If various threads try to enter the critical section, at least one of them will succeed
3. **Free from starvation:** A thread trying to enter its critical section will eventually be able to do so

Processes should:

1. either back out if they discover they are contending with the other (Naive back-out);
2. take turns (Dekker's algorithm);
3. give priority to the first one that wanted access (Peterson's algorithm).

Exercise Booklet 5: Semaphores (cont)

Solutions to selected exercises (\diamond) are provided at the end of this document. Important: You should first try solving them before looking at the solutions. You will otherwise learn **nothing**.

Exercise 1. (\diamond) On Fridays the bar is usually full of Jets fans. Since the owners are Patriots fans they would like to implement an access control mechanism in which one Jets fan can enter for every two Patriots fans.

1. Implement such a mechanism, assuming that Jets fans will have to wait indefinitely if no Patriots fans arrive. You may assume, to simplify matters, that once fans go in, they never leave the bar.
2. Modify the solution assuming that, after a certain hour, everybody is allowed to enter (those who are waiting outside and those that yet to arrive). For that there is a thread that will invoke, when the time comes, the operation `itGotLate`. You may assume that the code for this thread is already given for you, the only thing that you must do is define the behavior of `itGotLate` and modify the threads that model the Jets and Patriots fans.

Answer to exercise 1

```
Groovy
1 import java.util.concurrent.Semaphore;
2
3 Semaphore ticket = new Semaphore(0);
4 Semaphore mutex = new Semaphore(1);
5
6 20.times{
7   Thread.start { // Patriots
8     ticket.release();
9   }
10}
11 20.times {
12   Thread.start { // Jets
13     mutex.acquire();
14     ticket.acquire();
15     ticket.acquire();
16     mutex.release();
17 }
18}
19
1 import java.util.concurrent.Semaphore;
2
3 Semaphore ticket = new Semaphore(0);
4 Semaphore mutex = new Semaphore(1);
5 boolean itGotLate = false;
6
7 Thread.start { // Jets
8   mutex.acquire();
9   if (!itGotLate) {
10     ticket.acquire();
11     ticket.acquire();
12   }
13   mutex.release();
14 }
15
16 Thread.start { // Patriots
17   ticket.release();
18 }
19
20 def itGotLate() {
21   itGotLate=true;
22   ticket.release();
23   ticket.release();
24 }
25
26 return
```

Peterson's Algorithm (1981)

```
global int last = 1;
global boolean wantP = false;
global boolean wantQ = false;

thread P: {
  while (true) {
    // non-critical section
    wantP = true;
    last = 1;
    await !wantQ || last==2;
    // CRITICAL SECTION
    wantP = false;
    wantQ = false;
    // non-critical section
  }
}

thread Q: {
  while (true) {
    // non-critical section
    wantQ = true;
    last = 2;
    await !wantP || last==1;
    // CRITICAL SECTION
    wantP = false;
    wantQ = false;
    // non-critical section
  }
}
```

Similar to Dekker except that if both want access, priority is given to the first one that wanted to access

Dekker's Algorithm (I + IV)

```
global int turn = 1;
global boolean wantP = false;
global boolean wantQ = false;

thread P: {
  while (true) {
    // non-critical section
    wantP = true;
    while (wantQ) {
      if (turn == 2) {
        wantP = false;
        await (turn==1);
        wantQ = true;
      }
      // CRITICAL SECTION
      turn = 2;
      wantP = false;
      wantQ = false;
      // non-critical section
    }
  }
}

thread Q: {
  while (true) {
    // non-critical section
    wantQ = true;
    while (wantP) {
      if (turn == 1) {
        wantQ = false;
        await (turn==2);
        wantP = true;
      }
      // CRITICAL SECTION
      turn = 1;
      wantP = false;
      wantQ = false;
      // non-critical section
    }
  }
}
```

Right to insist on entering is passed between the two processes

```
1 monitor PizzaShop {
2   int smallPizza = 0;
3   int largePizza = 0;
4   condition waitForSmallPizza;
5   condition waitForLargePizza;
6   buttons.acquire();
7   buttons.release();
8   bakeSmallPizza() {
9     smallPizza++;
10    waitForSmallPizza.signal();
11   }
12   thread Employee{
13     while(true){
14       mutex.acquire();
15       repeat(2){ buttons.acquire(); }
16       mutex.release();
17       //refill
18       repeat(2){ buttons.release(); }
19     }
20   }
21   buySmallPizza(){
22     while(smallPizza==0){
23       waitForSmallPizza.wait();
24     }
25     smallPizza--;
26   }
27   buyLargePizza(){
28     while(largePizza==0 && smallPizza>=2){
29       waitForLargePizza.wait();
30     }
31     if(largePizza>0){
32       largePizza--;
33     }
34   }
35   orderSmallPizza(){
36     while(smallPizza == 0){
37       waitForSmallPizza.wait();
38     }
39     smallPizza--;
40   }
41   orderLargePizza(){
42     while(largePizza == 0 && smallPizza>=2){
43       waitForLargePizza.wait();
44     }
45     if(largePizza>0){
46       largePizza--;
47     }
48   }
49 }
```

```
1 monitor barrierMonitor {
2
3   monitor PizzaTime {
4     Condition con;
5     int count = 0;
6     /N
7     wait(){
8       count++;
9       while(count < N){
10         con.wait();
11       }
12       con.signalAll();
13     }
14
15   }
16
17   barrierMonitor {
18     Condition con;
19     int count = 0;
20     /N
21     wait(){
22       count++;
23       while(count < N){
24         con.wait();
25       }
26       con.signalAll();
27     }
28
29   }
30
31   barrierMonitor {
32     Condition con;
33     int count = 0;
34     /N
35     wait(){
36       count++;
37       while(count < N){
38         con.wait();
39       }
40       con.signalAll();
41     }
42
43   }
44
45   barrierMonitor {
46     Condition con;
47     int count = 0;
48     /N
49     wait(){
50       count++;
51       while(count < N){
52         con.wait();
53       }
54       con.signalAll();
55     }
56
57   }
58
59   barrierMonitor {
60     Condition con;
61     int count = 0;
62     /N
63     wait(){
64       count++;
65       while(count < N){
66         con.wait();
67       }
68       con.signalAll();
69     }
70
71   }
72
73   barrierMonitor {
74     Condition con;
75     int count = 0;
76     /N
77     wait(){
78       count++;
79       while(count < N){
80         con.wait();
81       }
82       con.signalAll();
83     }
84
85   }
86
87   barrierMonitor {
88     Condition con;
89     int count = 0;
90     /N
91     wait(){
92       count++;
93       while(count < N){
94         con.wait();
95       }
96       con.signalAll();
97     }
98
99   }
100
101   barrierMonitor {
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103     int count = 0;
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