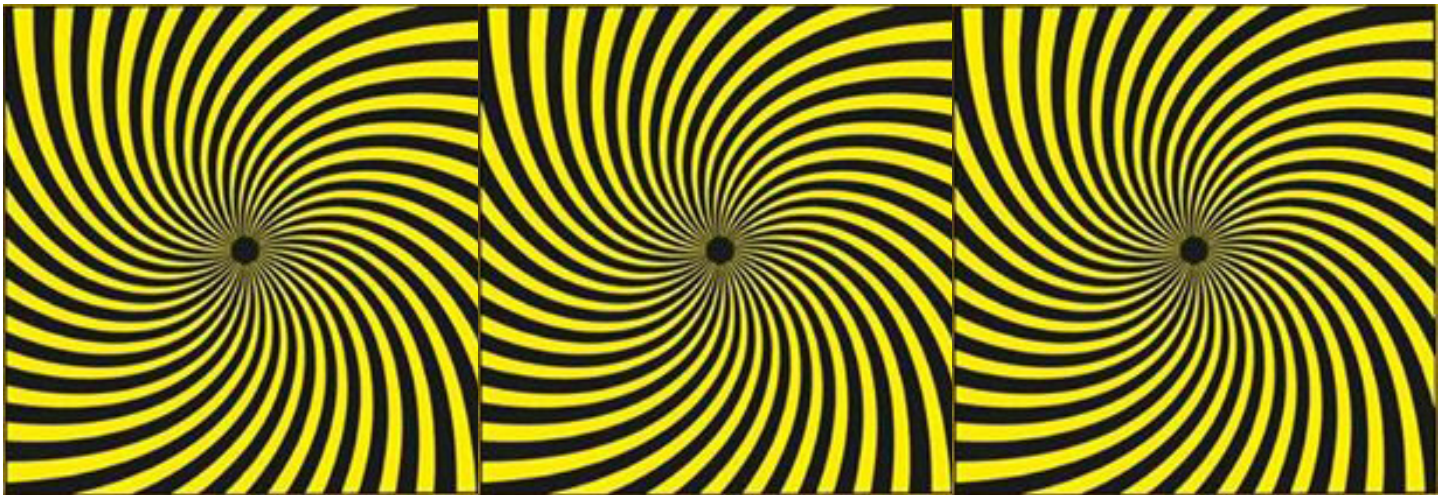
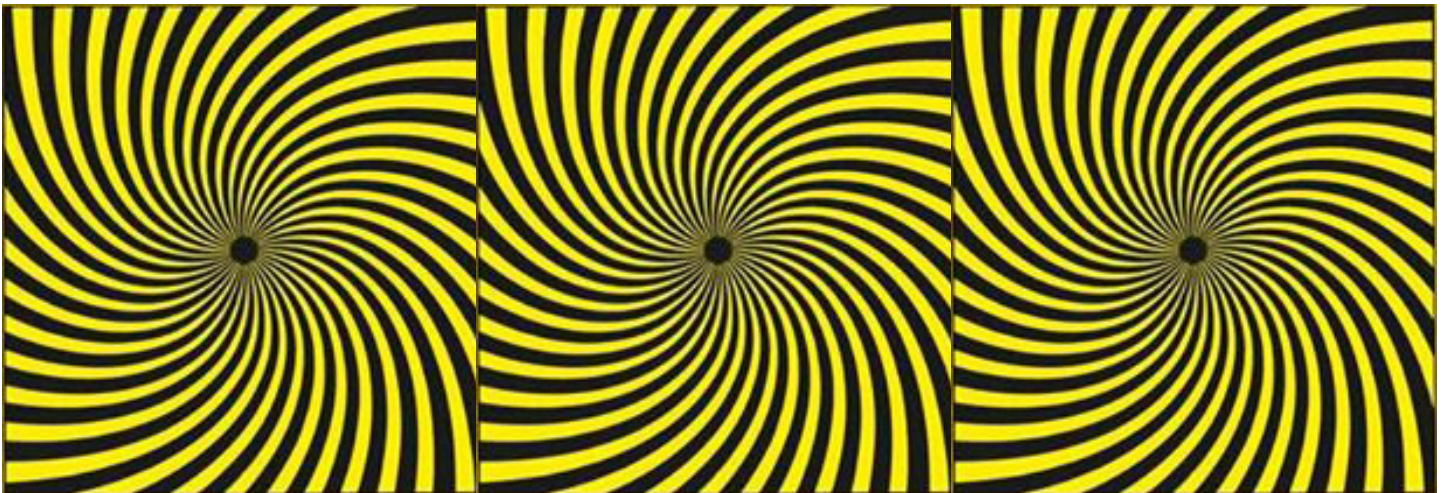


# ON ACTIVISM



**A PROJECT FROM  
THE BOOMTIME CABAL**

*in which a bunch of Discordians  
run their mouths, like we do.*



# ON POWER

by Cramulus

Politics is about power. Power is not itself evil, it is a tool used to accomplish a goal. When a marginalized group seeks to correct societal injustice, what they are really trying to do is re-balance power so it will be in their favor. Justice is the cover story. It's a social construct used in service of a political end.

Justice and morality are cousins, but they live independently. What is good is not always just, and what is just is not always good.

The organs of "public discipline" (discipline here meaning obedience) have changed greatly in the last few centuries. We used to throw people in dungeons, now they go to prisons. We used to torture people to death in public, now we do it in private.

What changed?

It's not that we became more moral. It's that those old systems (the dungeon, torture chamber, auto-da-fe) were ineffective. They were ineffective because they churned up resistance. People rebelled against justice systems which seemed arbitrary and out of control. The judge and jury and public trial was invented so that the victims of these systems would be confused about who to lynch. [1]

[1]

*Foucault, Discipline & Punish*

Today we are still confused. Most of our discussions about justice and politics are aimed at dead ends because we do not have a coherent theory of activism. It is very hard to see where to throw your weight so that it will actually move something in the way you'd like. Every system that can change the world for the better is continually mis-framed or co-opted.

This can lead to a cynical headspace where it seems like getting involved with anything is a waste of time. This complacency serves those who benefit from the current power balance.

We are overwhelmed by competing ideas of how to help this fucked up world get better. Should I write a letter to a politician? Attend a protest? Leave a nasty Youtube comment? Donate money to something? How do you compare the values of these things?

We are like consumers standing in a supermarket aisle, overwhelmed and paralyzed by 23 different kinds of sauce. When there's too much information to process, the decision criteria gets narrowed down to the price and the label design. The people who set the price and design the label have the real power here. Recognizing this power makes you a bit less vulnerable to it, but only if you resist your initial gut impulse and make an informed decision instead.



**IF YOU CAN'T MANAGE TO DO  
THE DISHES, DON'T TALK TO ME  
ABOUT DOING REVOLUTION.**

**-- JOHNNY BRAINWASH**

# FORGET ACTIVISM

*by Johnny Brainwash*

Forget activism. Activism is for the ego. Organizing is for making change.

All your life, politics has been presented to you as a clash of ideas. Don't be fooled. Politics is about power.

Worry less about theory and more about practice. Study less philosophy and more history. Given a choice between studying and doing, do.

Learn the difference between goals and objectives, and between strategy and tactics.

When you join a group that claims to have no leaders, pay close attention. You'll find out who the leaders are.

Pay attention to how your group reproduces the social structures it claims to oppose. It almost certainly does. You can change some of these, but don't expect to undo centuries (or millennia) of culture overnight.

Remember that we've all got a piece of the truth. Another group that disagrees with you on strategy may still be doing their part. Or maybe not- just because they have a piece of the truth doesn't mean they know what to do with it. Remember that last sentence could also apply to you.

Never trust someone who's got all the answers, especially if it's yourself.

Never trust someone who rejects short-term change because it doesn't look like their revolution. Waiting for the revolution is like waiting for the messiah- you'll eat pie in the sky when you die (that's a lie).

Cultivate humility.

# I THINK WE CAN HELP

*from david*

I think that politics and culture are fucked up and I think that we can help. I think that activism is helpful but activism is work and work is usually boring.

If you don't want to do activist work because it's boring, that's totally OK and I get that it's mostly boring.

If you say that you don't want to do activist work because it's not effective or you don't know where to start/what to do, or you have constructed a really solid arguments, [1] then I think you're a liar. I mean, you might not even know that you're lying; you may believe well your own BS - but those reasons are stories that you tell yourself to excuse your laziness.

[1]

*1 or 2 e.g. in this document*

**If you do want to do work, figure out what you want to work on.**

It is possible to get sucked into the trap of being a True Believer (and you might end up accidentally working against your stated aims). Part of doing work is messing up and learning to work better!

To get started doing work:

Figure out who is doing the work that you believe in, show up where that work is happening, offer to help.

*It's usually really helpful to make snacks, take some notes, and take out the trash.*

*Giving money to people and work that you believe in is helpful. The jerks are ridiculously well funded.*

If you can't find any work that you admire, look harder and try to be less of a hater. There is so much good and useful and exciting work that is happening RIGHT NOW and it needs your help.

*Remember that you'll be wrong sometimes and when you're wrong it's important to know how to say you're sorry (for real) and do better (because that's important).*

*Listen more. Listen better.  
Do more. Do better.*

Find people you trust and do something with them.

*But if everyone looks like you, the problem is with the way your group works (not with the people who don't look like you and who aren't showing up).*

*Build coalitions; if the coalition feels comfortable, it probably isn't big enough.*

But that's just to start! There are so many folks doing so much great work! Go help them, they need you!



## **METAPHOR BREAK:**

*Signing an online petition, showing up to a rally, writing a comment online, or writing a letter to a politician are sometimes helpful! They support activism in the same way that going to a baseball game supports baseball. But we need more folks to figure out how to keep the stadium running, clean the uniforms, and friggin play the game. I'm happy to go watch games but I'm looking for people to play with me.*

*?!*

*...*

**INACTION IS A CHOICE.**

# TOWARDS A DISCOPOLITIK

*By Niccolo The Wholly Fooled*

Discordianism is pretty unique in that while it, like the rest of the counterculture, grew out of a reaction to the empty promises of one-size-fits-all white-picket-fence modern living, it has a built-in immunity to the various traps that counterculture fell into.

Discordianism isn't something that you can stick on a lunchbox and sell as Rebellion™. You certainly can try, but unlike the hippies and the punks, Discordianism tends to attract people of many different walks of life, and as such there's 01,001 versions of Discordia. For every Discordian, there is a version of Discordianism. My Discordia is not YOUR Discordia, but they can inform each other. The fact that we've got a whole ecosystem of ideas to work with is our greatest defense against being turned into yet another prepackaged lifestyle-for-sale.

Therefore, I'd argue that a Discopolitik could be a useful tool for breaking down the barriers between ideologies and between subcultures. I might surmise that Eris has taken on a new role as Goddess of Information Overload. Not as nauseating insanity, but as a deep knowing that lets us mash-up and remix our ideas of what society should (or could) look like.

This Information Overload has taught us, by way of letting us peek into the lives of thousands of Average Joes across the globe, that most of us just want to get those things we need to get by, have some companions, and basically have a good time. Once you strip away the particulars of our worldviews, we're all just trying to figure out What's Going On and enjoy our lives.

The real downsides to IO are the overwhelming sense that everything is terribly uncertain, and the professional info-engineers taking advantage of all the noise, to get you to buy shiny things. This is the nuclear arms race of information. If those of us who want to keep the Eristic vibes a-flowin' can take the tools that the engineers have built, turn them towards liberation and calm in the face of Confusion, we'll really be getting somewhere.

# ON IMMUNE SYSTEMS

by Cramulus

*It is disgusting to have to spend one's life jetting dirt in the face of the British public in the hope that in washing it they may wash off the acrid grease of their commercialism, the saline streaks of their hypocritical tears, the putrid perspiration of their morality, the dribbling slobber of their sentimentality and their religion. And they don't wash it! ...*

*--Aleister Crowley, The Soldier and the Hunchback*

One of the things which disenfranchises people from just causes is that they often come with a lot of baggage. People will dismiss your point because some of its defenders are crazy. Some of the people who agree with you on a macro level also believe totally fucked up things on a micro level. When you support freedom of speech, you are also defending the freedom of racists and fascists. Some of the people protesting government corruption also believe the the moon landing was a hoax. PETA wants to stop animal abuse, and also to end of the lives of all domestic animals. Some actual racists and sexists disguise their points behind a bid for equality.

In Zenarchy, Kerry Thornley (aka Lord Omar) wrote about the spiritual awakening of the 1960s as it flowered in San Francisco -- so many people were gathering in public parks to resist the dominant religious paradigm, and explore where spirituality could take them. But the movement also included a lot of crackpots, such as multiple people who thought they were the reincarnation of Cleopatra. These people's ideas weren't challenged or refined, they were embraced alongside everything else.

Discordianism was in some ways intended as a sort of vaccine. The early Discordians thought that if they presented a religion which was clearly too absurd and shoddily constructed to be a real religion, then the neo-pagan movement would have to reject them - and in doing so, would have developed an immune system against patent bullshit and be stronger for it. In essence, Discordianism's challenge to neo-paganism was merely to hold up a mirror.

Sometimes a cause really needs an immune system, a force within it that filters out the bad ideas, dead ends, and rough edges that keep people away from it. But also, you can't get too hung up on that, or all you will end up doing is alienating people who agree with you. Discordianism flipped off the neo-pagan movement, but the overall point was to help fix it. It was a middle finger of love.

Advocates of any cause need to develop an immune system: collective self-criticism. But know that this will never be complete. Too much ideological purity will kill momentum too, as cleaning house can become a major distraction. Any good idea comes bundled with bad ideas, so you can't let yourself get turned off to a whole movement by the actions of a few morons or shills.

# ON ONLINE ACTIVISM

By Simon Pook

Online activism is everywhere. We live in the golden age of crowdsourced politics. From change.org petitions to Tumblr tag communities - the Internet is fantastic for activism. And this is awesome, right? We live in an age abundant with information and people creating and sharing it.

But here's the thing about online activism; it's really easy. You just have to type comments into whatever internet box is in front of your face. This super low effort barrier is great for inclusion - so many more people have platforms to say things and do things than ever before, and that's super cool - but it means that there's probably a whole load more people saying things that you don't agree with than ever before, too. And it's really tempting just to write all this negative stuff off as only existing in cyberspace, to say that it doesn't really *matter*.

But I think that's a trap. In 2015 the distinction between cyberspace and meatspace doesn't really hold up anymore. The networks that we use to talk and make decisions, to change the world, to love and make love, are as real as the physical space around us — and we can't just say that things don't matter because they're on the Internet.

If we just ignore things we don't like online, it lets politicians write-off online views and petitions too. Online activism is as real as RL activism.

So what does this mean? For me, anyway, it means not just burying my head in the digital sand when I see something I don't agree with. Try and remember that there's (usually) a real person typing those words. You don't have to engage in a huge argument with some asshat, but remember that you cultivate your network. The world is existing more and more on the Internet, which means you have more power to change it!



# FOR THE CAUSE. YOU DUMBASS.

by the Good Reverend Roger

I am constantly told that as a Discordian™, I am required to support disorder over order, or some Cause or another. Well, let me tell you something about Causes.

Every Cause is a system of some kind, and to support that system you are required to not question that system... And the moment you can't question ANY system, then the world has jammed a steering wheel up your arse, and it's gonna drive you around the block for a while.

*Example: Social Justice Warriors, Tumblr style, of any flavor.*

*Let's say you're out to crush "thin privilege." You are not permitted to allow for common sense. You are not permitted to display intelligence. You are in fact required to insist that there are no health issues related to being morbidly obese. Reality cannot be acknowledged, or the other members of the Cause will turn on you like a pack of rabid shrews.*

*Another example: Tea Party Members.*

*To gain any traction in the Cause, you have to repeat incredibly stupid things, despite these things having been proven false any number of times (Obama's birth certificate, Benghazi as a sole result of Obama's actions, the notion that all your friends aren't actually racist, etc). If you voice any doubt at all, then you are a filthy communist liberal atheist hippie, and they throw you out of the American Legion.*

In short, joining a Cause means no longer thinking for yourself.

Even the Discordian Cause, if you're foolish enough to view Discordianism that way. No, instead you have become a quadruped, and your job is to carry the Cause on your back, like Juan Valdez was your boss.

This is not to say that there isn't strength in numbers, or that you shouldn't organize to demand redress or just to kick a motherfucker in the 'nads... But the moment you start thinking of your activity as a Cause, then any potential good you may have accomplished is outweighed by the moral blind spot that you have just created.

Also, you don't get invited to parties anymore, because Causes are boring to people who haven't crawled under the same fart blanket as yourself.

Conspiracy theorists think people avoid them because people are afraid of The Truth, but they're wrong. People avoid conspiracy theorists because they can't talk about anything else and it's boring as hell.

**So the moment you join a Cause, you have become that which you despise most: A DUMBASS.**

Well done.

# WHO'S AT THE PROTEST AND HOW DOES IT WIN?

by Pope Olboyfloats

I've worked as a labor organizer and a political organizer. If you don't know what that job entails, allow me to explain. Basically, I was one of the people coordinating 'astro-turf' protests. Instead of explaining the boring aspects of my job, that mainly consisted of "paperless paperwork," I'd like to paint a picture of what actually makes up your average protest.

**At every protest where you will find two groups on either side of a polarizing issue you will find this breakdown:**

One of the biggest portion of the attendees are **organizers**.

These are paid employees on either side, [1] who's job is to "fill seats," and coach the preselected press spokespeople. This can be political, labor, or community organizers. They all basically do the same job. Working the healthcare debate I would frequently see all three types of organizers at the same events.

The next biggest portion of the attendees are **people with some relationship to an organizer**. These people usually don't even care about the issue, but care about the organizer. This can be anything ranging from friends, acquaintances, lovers, and literally homeless people the organizer paid to show up. [2]

[1]  
*yes, both sides do this*

[2] *happens more than you'd think*

These people are usually the press spokespeople because they are most likely to stay on talking points and are less energetic than the true believers.

A slightly smaller portion of the attendees are **true believers**. These are the people the organizers have made contact with either through canvassing, phone-banking, or holding open events. They are easy to spot and are the best volunteers, yet are usually passionate to a fault and will cause trouble if the organizers don't keep them on a short leash. Any good organizer who's been at the job for a while has a small Rolodex of many true believers about many different issues. I knew climate believers, healthcare believers, anti-war believers, anarchists, etc, and I kept notes on all of them. A big part of my job was to pamper these people and make them feel special enough that they'd be willing to do any task I assigned them without compensation.

An even smaller portion of the attendees are what we call **'hit men'**. These are usually ex-military operatives who decided to take on a safer, more lucrative job. These people do 'opposition research,' and usually have at least one or two moles on the opposition side digging up dirt for them. Their job at the protest is usually to either cause or contain trouble, and sometimes both if you can believe that.

Finally, the smallest portion of attendees are either **trolls or onlookers**. These people have no interest in the issue, have no connection to organizers, and are either there to just watch or cause trouble. All novice organizers waste lots of time trying to activate this group into the true believer group, while veteran organizers simply herd their crowd away from them.

Now that you know what makes up a protest, allow me to illustrate what is considered a 'victory protest.' **There are three key things that all organizers want to happen at a protest.** These are:

*1- Positive, prime time press coverage that focuses on prepared talking points. This is a messaging win.*

*2- Positive feelings of true believers. Making the true believers feel they accomplished something is the best way to activate them into doing more free work for you.*

*3- Opposition shame. If the opposition is made to look bad in literally ANY way, it's considered a win.*

**Good organizers can get all 3 victory conditions in most protests. Notice that "making actual change" is not a victory condition.**

# SYSTEMS VS THE SYSTEM

*By Placid Dingo*

One of the most common expressions of frustration against the general trend of extremely horrible people doing extremely horrible things and making extremely large amounts of money as a result, is to rail against 'the system', often with phrases such as 'the system is corrupt', 'crush the system', 'f- the system' and so on. I have a feeling that this language, and the thought that accompanies it is tragically misguided, and I'm going to try to explain why here.

A good metaphor evokes images that help to make it easy to understand a concept. One metaphor used in the Discordian work 'Black Iron Prison' makes liberal use of the metaphor 'the machine.' In this metaphor we are all part of the machine; one cannot 'fight' the machine because we are the very cogs and gears that make it. Any attempt at change antagonistic to the machine will either be eliminated, subverted or accommodated cleanly.

For some reason, the metaphor of 'the system' doesn't hold the same nuance. We talk of the system almost as though it were on one side of the world and we were on the other, when of course, that is not true. Political hegemony is upheld by people WE vote for. The BP disaster saw the spill of oil WE needed for our cars, and globalization is fueled by our participation in the global economy; at any level.

Let's stretch the system metaphor. 'The system' is a name given to a collection (occultists might say 'an EGREGORE') of smaller systems that link up together. These systems are in constant flux. We are a component of the system, and the system is a part of us (we both influence and are influenced by Microsystems that make up The System).

We're not really going to deal with The System any more. We're going to talk about systems in general.

I personally have grown to dislike the idea of Random acts of kindness.

Why?

Because the things that are making the world worse, generally, are not random, but systematic. Exploitation of the world's poor is possible BECAUSE it's done in the same way, day after day. Successes that cannot be made systematic are not meaningful.

What I'm suggesting is a way of thinking of 'systems' as the tools for change, rather than 'fighting The System' as a method of change.

What sort of systems can or have produced change?

Vegetarianism or Veganism present one example. World Heritage, Environmental Regulations, Animal Welfare and changes in marriage law are good examples for the same reason above; they are systematic changes, they have had an effect yesterday, are effective today, and will meet with success tomorrow.



Compare this to any of the attempts by Adbusters to subvert or destroy Capitalism. A mighty struggle may be an exciting narrative, but it is not generally likely to get results. Again, if metaphors can shape the thinking behind our action, maybe we need to lose the idea of 'fighting a battle' and expand on the concept of 'building a village'.

Counter-culture belongs to the first category, the battle allegory. It is parasitic, a reaction against the 'mainstream'. Instead of a focus on counterculture we should focus on 'culture,' building alternatives instead of struggling against the existing culture or system.

If you just skimmed it, here's the main idea;

**The System is actually a collection of interrelated competing systems. If we want to cause change we should focus on supporting or building systems that can thrive within The System, thereby causing positive change.**

## ON HALOS.

*When someone we like puts forth an idea, we are more likely to agree with it. We put a halo around their head, imagine them standing on your right shoulder whispering what could only be a good idea into your ear. Even halos have holes, find them, see where they lead.*

# TWO-HANDED ACTIVISM

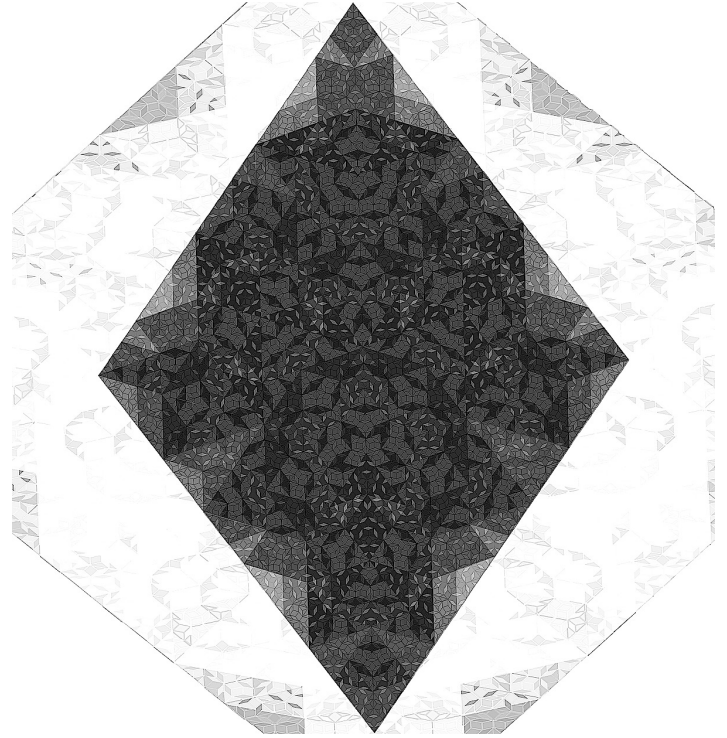
*By Plastik and Discordian*

The right hand path is a hard form  
Two sides shouting: her her her; der der der  
Conflict!  
Opposition!  
Proposed solution: Organize! (implied hierarchy)  
Leaders to lead and volunteers to volunteer.  
Noble and grandiose, it aims for the Big Change

The left hand path is a soft form  
Two people sitting, talking and listening  
As the words flow freely and are received  
Two people become one Discourse.  
Nothing really changes  
Except a softening of edges:  
Gentle observation and a wider perspective

The right hand path may lead to war.

The left hand path may result in sex.



*A Flower/Fate/Flame of Heraclitus*

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