

**ANGLO-CANADIAN SHORT STORY
ANTHOLOGIES IN GERMAN(Y):
1967-2010**

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INTRODUCTION

THE conditions for the translation and publication of Canadian short stories in Germany appear to be rather favorable at first sight. After all, the German publishing industry is rather large and the translation rate is relatively high. Furthermore, publishing houses have been very internationally oriented since the end of World War II and the German short story has been particularly open for international influences from the very beginning. Publishing houses considered international (most importantly American) short stories a good investment, German authors appreciated their unromanticized and sober style, and German theorists gained inspiration from their structures and themes.

Nevertheless, Canadian literature received barely any critical attention in Germany until Walter Pache's comprehensive work *Einführung in die Kanadistik* [Introduction to Canadian Studies], which was published in 1981. A newspaper article, published in 1976 by *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, preceded Pache's book. In this article, entitled "Es gibt eine kanadische Literatur" [Canadian literature does in fact exist],¹ Pache reviewed two short story anthologies (Flotow 2008, 317). The fact that he had to open his article with the statement that Canadian literature does indeed exist illustrates how little attention Canada in general and Canadian literature in particular had received until then—despite the fact that Canadian literature was already thriving thanks to numerous funding and promotion opportunities through the Canada Council for the Arts.

1. This and all subsequent English translations of German quotations are my own.

Anthologies in general and anthologies of translated Anglo-Canadian short stories in particular are only a minute excerpt of the German literary polysystem (Even-Zohar 1990).² This paper does therefore aim at embedding these anthologies within their literary, cultural, and translational context. In order to do so, the history of Canadian literature in Germany will be traced from the beginnings to the new millennium. Furthermore, this paper will illustrate and comment on the main topics and literary forms that have been imported into German(y) to date. Lastly, this paper will try to hypothesize about the reasons for the literature imports and present possible outlets for further research.

FIRST TRANSLATIONS

The first Canadian piece of literature that was translated into German was Catherine Parr Traill's *The Backwoods of Canada* (1836), published already a year later in Germany as *Briefe aus den Wäldern Kanadas* [Letters from the Woods of Canada] and republished in 1989 and 2000. Despite the instant popularity of Traill's work, the translation and publication in 1837 was unfortunately not the beginning of a vital stream of Canadian literature being translated into German.

It was not until the early 20th century, about 100 years after the published translation of Traill's work, that "the translation of Canadian literature began [and] relatively hesitantly" at that (Flotow 2008, 321). As a matter of fact, it was English-Canadian children's and youth literature, which was translated first before adult literature moved to the center of attention in the 1970s and 1980s. According to Seifert (2007), the translation of Canadian children's literature had been firmly established in Germany well before the 1970s. The establishment of Canadian children's literature was expressed not only in quantity with over 400 titles by more than 150 different authors in about 100

2. According to Even-Zohar's polysystem theory (1990), a literary polysystem, which is itself part of a large cultural polysystem, is complex and heterogeneous. Furthermore, every literary polysystem is dynamic and the texts that make up the polysystem are interconnected and constantly changing, which implies that new texts (both from within and from outside of the cultural and linguistic system) are always added to the literary polysystem.

years, but also in the popularity of these works (Seifert 2007, 220). After all, “imports from Canada, regardless of the time period, seem to have served the needs of the target culture, providing and perpetuating exotic images on the one hand and compensating for underrepresented genres in the target system” (Seifert 2007, 220) on the other hand.

Thus, from the late 19th century on, which is when the first works by Ernest Thompson Seton and Egerton Ryerson Young were translated into German (Seifert 2007, 200), Canadian children’s literature catered to the needs of the German literary system, which called for children’s literature in general and exotic, stereotypically Canadian images in particular. These images, which have remained virtually the same for over 100 years (Seifert 2007, 221), draw from stereotypically exaggerated concepts of Canada’s “emptiness, virginity, and nordicity, its vastness and distance from civilization, its harsh climate, its wild animals . . . and its masculinity” (Seifert 2007, 221). According to Seifert (2007), these stereotypical images served the German readership as fictional entryways for adventures and journeys (pre-WWII), the glorification of heroes (National Socialist time), or escape (post-WWII), i.e. while the images remained virtually unchanged, the interpretation altered over the course of historical events.

Interestingly, Young and Seton, whose works started being imported into Germany in the 1890s, as well as Traill, the author of the very first Canadian piece of literature translated into German, were short story authors. Charles G. D. Roberts and Farley Mowat, whose works were also translated into German in the early 20th century, are well known for their short stories, too. Therefore, it was the Canadian short story (despite making a rather quiet and almost undetected entrance into the German literary system at the beginning of the 20th century) that had been firmly established long before Canadian novels made their fulminant entrance in the 1980s.³

3. For a detailed list of all Canadian literature that has been translated into German to date see the regularly updated bibliography by the Embassy of Canada in Germany “Kanadische Autoren in deutscher Übersetzung” (2012). The bibliography, launched in the 1970s, is a constantly developing testimony to the growing importance of Canadian literature in Germany: “The Bibliography of Canadian authors in German translation, begun in 1978 with only a

The problem with these early translations, however, was that translations were hardly ever reviewed as Canadian works, particularly in West Germany. "Most of the time, neither the book reviews nor the blurbs made clear that the pertaining book hailed from Canada" (Oeding and Flotow 2004, 142).⁴ Furthermore, most texts were simply marked as translated from American English, British English, or French (Oeding and Flotow 2004, 142; Flotow 2008, 324). East German publishers were more conscious of the political and social embedding of imported texts because literature was seen as much more powerful: "due to the political importance that literary imports from international, capitalist countries had in the GDR, the GDR-reception was much more calculated and conscious" (Oeding and Flotow 2004, 142).⁵ Nevertheless, neither the Canadian works imported into the East German literary polysystem nor into the West German literary polysystem reflected the growing wealth of Canadian literature during the 1950s and 1960s.

Surprisingly, the very first anthology of Canadian short stories translated into German dates back to the 1960s. In 1967, Armin Arnold and Walter Riedel published *Kanadische Erzähler der Gegenwart* [Contemporary Canadian Storytellers], a collection of nineteen short stories (both English and French Canadian works), which also includes an elaborate, albeit sharp-tongued, afterword that discusses the political, social, and historical embedding of the translated stories.⁶ Arnold and Riedel's anthology was followed by another anthology, *Stories from Canada – Erzählungen aus Kanada*, published in the FRG in 1969. It includes both the original and the translated versions of five Anglo-Canadian short stories and a very short introduction. According to Riedel (1980), this bilingual anthology re-

few titles, has grown exponentially and now comprises about 1,400 fiction, poetry and non-fiction works" (Holzamer 2012).

4. "Meist wurde weder in der Buchbesprechung noch in Klappentexten klargelegt, dass das betreffende Buch ursprünglich aus Kanada stammte."

5. "die DDR-Rezeption [war] aufgrund des politischen Gewichts, welches Literaturimporte aus dem internationalen, kapitalistischen Ausland in der DDR besaßen, sehr viel bewusster"

6. Both Arnold and Riedel were scholars in the then still very young field of Canadian Studies. Thus, they were familiar with the literature and had a very tangible reason for wanting to promote Canadian literature in the German-speaking world (the anthology was not published in Germany but in Switzerland).

ceived “no critical attention” (58).⁷ Consequently, despite the publication of the first two anthologies of translated short stories and some translated novels, the position of Canadian literature in Germany remained dubious until the 1970s.

1970s: CANADIAN LITERATURE DOES IN FACT EXIST

As Pache stated in his 1976 review of two short story anthologies, it was high time the German readership started noticing the wealth of Canadian literature.⁸ “Ostensibly a review of two short story anthologies published in West and East Germany respectively, his text was the first to announce to the general public in Germany that Canadian literature existed” (Flotow 2008, 317). The two anthologies that Pache reviewed, *Die weite Reise: Kanadische Erzählungen und Kurzgeschichten* ([The Long Journey: Canadian Narratives and Short Stories], published in the GDR in 1974) and *Moderne Erzähler der Welt* ([Modern Storytellers of the World], published in the FRG in 1976), were very comprehensive (21 and 33 works respectively, complemented by a detailed afterword, additional comments, and biobibliographical information and a short preface, a comprehensive introduction, biobibliographical information, and several artworks respectively) and received extensive critical attention, particularly the latter one (Riedel 1980, 63–64).⁹

The most important milestone for the establishment of Canadian literature in Germany was the translation of Margaret Atwood’s second novel, *Surfacing* (1972).¹⁰ Surprisingly, there are two translations of Atwood’s work, both published in 1979

7. “von der Kritik nicht besprochen worden”

8. Canadian literature probably also benefited from the Summer Olympic Games in Montréal in 1976, which attracted international attention towards Canada, including, of course, also to its literature.

9. Holzamer (2000) puts Riedel’s enthusiastic assessment into perspective and states that the first four anthologies of Canadian short stories in German translation “were better than nothing—but none of them seemed to be the ‘next big thing’” (16) [“war besser als nichts—aber der ‘große Wurf’ schien nicht dabei zu sein”].

10. The German translation of her first novel, *The Edible Woman* (1969), was not published until 1985 when Atwood’s popularity was in full swing in Germany as *Die essbare Frau*.

and produced by the same, East German, translator.¹¹ While clearly related by a common source text and a common translator, the two versions, *Strömung* ([Current], GDR, 1979) and *Der lange Traum* ([The Long Dream], FRG, 1979), show several remarkable differences, which reflect the cultural and political embedding of the East and West German texts. Ferguson (2007) analyzed several of these “points in the text[s] at which the cultural influence of the target culture[s] is indubitably at work” (109) and was thus able to confirm the strong influence on the translations, which leads to two ideologically different texts – despite the fact that the source text is identical.

1980s: CANADIAN WOMEN WRITERS PAVE THE WAY

The popularity of Margaret Atwood and Canadian women writers in general, which had already been noticeable during the 1970s, kept growing during the 1980s. In addition to five of Atwood’s novels, two of Atwood’s short story collections, *Murder in the Dark* ([Die Giftmischer], 1983/1985) and *Dancing Girls and Other Stories* ([Unter Glas], 1977/1986), were translated into German. Furthermore, Atwood and her work were frequently discussed in the feuilleton sections of major newspapers, radio programs, and magazines, which in turn promoted the popularity of her literary work.

However, Atwood, a female writer, was not alone in her popularity since she did not only pave the way for Canadian literature in general but for Canadian women in particular. An analysis of the mere numbers of published translations of Canadian novels in Germany during the 1980s illustrates that female writers easily outnumbered male writers: “in the decade from 1980 to 1989 a total of 38 Canadian novels was published in German, 26 by women and 12 by men” (Flotow 2008, 325). In addition to the novels, several complete short story collections, also written by female authors, were translated into German during the 1980s, among them Alice Munro’s *Who Do You Think You Are?* ([Das Bettlermädchen], 1978/1981), *Lives of Girls and Women* ([Kleine Aussichten], 1971/1983), *The Moons of Jupiter*

11. The East German translation was, however, considerably altered by a West German editor before its publication in West Germany.

([Die Jupitermonde], 1982/1986) and *The Progress of Love* ([Der Mond über der Eisbahn], 1986/1989) and Mavis Gallant's *From the Fifteenth District* ([Späte Heimkehr], 1979/1989).

Nevertheless, considering that the publication rate in Germany is very high and that the German literary market is very open for imported literature, the total number of published translations of Canadian literature appears to be rather low in comparison.¹² Apparently, numbers alone do not accurately reflect the German fascination with Canadian women writers in the 1980s. Referring to Even-Zohar's polysystem theory (1990), Oeding and Flotow (2007) suggest that there was a void in the German literary polysystem, which called for "accessible literary or narrative texts written in German with a feminist/womanist approach" (83), i.e. the German system lacked feminist, yet nevertheless entertaining stories rather than provocatively feminist and overly serious polemics and it was Canadian women writers who could at least help fill this void.

Initiated in 1968 in the FRG and during the 1980s in the GDR, the German second wave feminist movement fought, among others, for women's rights, women's equality, free career choices, and reforms in abortion laws in the FRG as well as for peace and freedom of choice in the GDR – and very radically at that (Haaf, Klingner, and Seidl 2009, 189–193).¹³ Thus, the feminist discourse was ubiquitous in both East and West Germany. However, German feminist writing continued in the solemn and serious tradition of post-WWII literature:

These works tended to be aggressively provocative and to demand "women's liberation" rather than produce a good story line, use interesting narrative techniques, focus on writing style and quality, let alone employ hu-

12. Of the 9000 belletristic works of literature published in Germany in 1990, almost half were translations (Börsenverein des deutschen Buchhandels, as quoted in Oeding and Flotow 2004, 146). In general, the number of new publications keeps growing with 86,543 new publications in 2004 and 96,500 in 2007. English is and has been the most important language for literature imports with 67 percent of all new translation licenses (6,160 in 2007) followed by French ("Buchmarkt Deutschland" 2009, 2–3).

13. Since women did theoretically have equal rights and duties in the GDR, the East German feminist movement differed from the West German one and addressed issues such as the double burden of work and family or the mandatory military duty for women (Haaf, Klingner, and Seidl 2009, 191–193).

mour. [Furthermore, they were] largely seen as boring and too introspective, on the one hand, or crude, shrill, aggressive, programmatic, and far too politicized . . . on the other hand. (Oeding and Flotow 2007, 83–84)

This aggressive and political writing style led to a certain “feminism oversaturation” of many German readers, who saw Canadian women writing as a welcome change of perspective, which managed to combine narrative and feminist topics.¹⁴

Atwood’s heroines, “evil, destructive, smart, egoistical, and beautiful” (Oeding and Flotow 2007, 87), portrayed a new kind of woman, which differed from the radically feminist texts that some feminist writers, such as Verena Stefan, Elfriede Jelinek or Germaine Greer, presented. Furthermore, Atwood’s narrative style and her “refreshingly told ‘stories’” offered German readers both a break from the experimental style of some German feminist writers and “from their [own] everyday world” (Oeding and Flotow 2007, 92).

While female Canadian writers such as Atwood and Munro were translated into German much more frequently than their male compatriots during the 1980s, this female-dominated ratio was hardly ever reflected in German anthologies of Canadian short fiction, which, except for Hermann’s 1993 anthology *Frauen in Kanada – Erzählungen und Gedichte* [Women in Canada – Stories and Poems], focus on male writers.¹⁵ Karla El-Hassan and Helga Militz’s *Erkundungen* [Explorations] and Gottfried Friedrich and Walter Riedel’s *Gute Wanderschaft, mein Bruder* [Walk Well, My Brother], both published in the GDR in 1986, make no exception in the overrepresentation of male-authored short stories, with the former including seven stories by female authors (out of a total of twenty-six texts) and the latter including seven stories by five different female authors (out of a total of thirty texts). Thus, while female writers dominated the Canadian literature imports and translations regarding novels, male writers continued to represent Canadian short fiction in German anthologies.

14. The oversaturation of the German readership was probably not only due to radically feminist text but also to the radical and politicized literature of the 1968-generation in general.

15. This problematic situation is also pointed out in Oeding and Flotow (2007).

1990s: MULTICULTURALISM – BEYOND ATWOOD¹⁶

The Canadian literature imports of the 1990s were characterized by the emergence of a new topic: multiculturalism. The topics of multiculturalism and identity fell on fruitful ground in the newly reunited Germany, which was trying to define itself, while also dealing with questions of immigration, racism, integration, and citizenship. The most prominent figure of Canadian multicultural literature of the 1990s as perceived in Germany was the Sri Lanka-born Michael Ondaatje, who “became the Atwood of the 1990s” (Oeding and Flotow 2004, 149).¹⁷ After the success of his book’s movie version in 1996, the literary works *The English Patient* ([*Der englische Patient*], 1992/1993) as well as *In the Skin of a Lion* ([*In der Haut eines Löwen*], 1987/1990), became very popular in Germany. Clearly Ondaatje’s works helped fill another gap in the German literary polysystem, namely multicultural literature, which is written by multicultural authors and which turns the focus away from heated German immigration debates towards entertainment. Furthermore, Ondaatje’s literary success was also seen as an example of a successful integration, following the concept of unity in diversity, which Germany was struggling with. Just like Atwood, who had paved the way for other women writers, Ondaatje led the way for other multicultural writers such as the Indian-born Rohinton Mistry and others.¹⁸

In addition to the numerous Canadian novels that were translated and published in Germany during the 1990s, the German market also saw the publication of four short story anthologies. The first one was Klaus Peter Müller’s *Contemporary Canadian Short Stories* (1990). While this anthology is part of the Reclam foreign language texts series and thus only includes translations of individual words or short phrases, Müller offers a long introduction (in German), which discusses the development of the Canadian short story as well as the difficulty of

16. Although the focus shifted from women’s literature to multicultural literature during the 1990s, Germany did of course keep importing and translating works by female writers such as Margaret Atwood, Alice Munro, or Barbara Gowdy, i.e. the range of topics and authors simply widened.

17. “wurde . . . zur Atwood der neunziger Jahre”

18. However, some multicultural authors, who are very popular in Canada, for example Dionne Brand, have to date barely been translated into German.

choosing stories for an anthology. Müller's anthology was followed by Stefana Sabin's *Kanada erzählt* [Canada Telling Stories] and Karla El-Hassan's *Kolumbus und die Riesendame* [Columbus and the Fat Lady], both published in 1992. While both anthologies were published after the German reunification, they had been prepared while Germany had still been divided (Korte 2007, 41). The last anthology published during the 1990s was Birgit Herrmann's *Frauen in Kanad – Erzählungen und Gedichte* (1993), which was part of a series of women literature anthologies by the publishing house dtv. Herrmann's anthology, published during the early 1990s, clearly benefited from the pioneering work of Canadian women writers in Germany during the 1980s.

Regarding multicultural authors, the four anthologies of the 1990s included barely any of them. *Kanada erzählt* presents one story by Michael Ondaatje and *Frauen in Kanada* includes a story by Dionne Brand, who was born in Trinidad and Tobago. One explanation for the incomplete representation of the Canadian literature of the 1990s could of course be the publication during the early 1990s, with 1993 being the latest year of publication. Another one could be the editors' deliberate reliance on an established, traditional, white Anglo-Canadian pool of authors for the compilation of the stories, which would of course exclude the newer authors. Regardless of the reasons, male, white Anglo-Canadian authors continued to represent the Canadian short story in Germany.

NEW MILLENNIUM: CANADIAN LITERATURE INDEED!

The new millennium has only seen the publication of three short story anthologies, the most recent one being Anke Caroline Burger's *Reise nach Kanada – Geschichten fürs Handgepäck* ([Journey to Canada – Stories for Your Carry-on Luggage], 2010). Burger's anthology is marketed as a literary travel guide and it is part of the *Geschichten fürs Handgepäck* series by the publishing house Unionsverlag. Lothar Baier and Pierre Filion's *Anders schreibendes Amerika: Literatur aus Québec* ([America writing differently: Literature from Québec], 2000) is a collection of French-Canadian short stories and Hartmut Lutz's *Heute sind wir hier, we are here today – A Bilingual Collection of Contemporary*

Aboriginal Literature(s) from Canada, Eine zweisprachige Sammlung zeitgenössischer indigener Literatur(en) (2009) is a collection of First Nations poetry, short prose, and drama excerpts, which presents the original English texts and the German translations side by side.

With only three new anthologies since the beginning of the new millennium, it appears that there is a declining interest in the publication of short story anthologies. However, it is interesting to see that there seems to be a growing attention towards writers beyond the hegemonic white Anglo-Canadian author, i.e. French-Canadian and First Nation writers. Furthermore, several complete short story collections by now firmly established (short story) authors have been translated into German, for example Munro's *Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage* ([Himmel und Hölle], 2001/2004), *Too Much Happiness* ([Zu viel Glück], 2009/2011), and several others. Furthermore, even Munro's very first, highly acclaimed short story collection *Dance of the Happy Shades*, originally published in 1968, was finally published in German in 2010.

MULTICULTURAL, FEMALE, WILD – CANLIT IN GERMANY

The success of Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* (2001), published in German in 2003 as *Schiffbruch mit Tiger*, shows, among others, that there is a continuing interest in multicultural literature.¹⁹ Nevertheless, the "'women's factor' also remains a strong element that sells Canadian work" and the influence of nature and wilderness clichés "on readers raised with such [stereotypical] texts remains redoubtable" (Flotow 2008, 333). In her analysis of the use of translated literature as cultural diplomacy, Flotow (2007) describes literature as a product that can be used for political and cultural purposes: "Literature in translation . . . has been found to rarely circulate innocently or by chance. It is circulated – by certain powers, at certain times, for specific purposes" (195). The themes that are imported to Germany via translated literature and the images that these imports create are chosen by German editors and not least also by the German

19. The movie adaptation, released in 2012, received many favorable reviews and renewed the interested in Martel's literary work.

readership that eventually buys or refuses to buy the translations. According to Flotow (2007), the main imported themes (wilderness, feminism, multiculturalism) and the literature written about and with them is connected by one characteristic, namely good storytelling:

it seems that, perhaps unconsciously, the forte of Canadian writing in Germany has been its storytelling: the women writers tell good stories, the children's books tell stories about bears and snow, the multicultural writers tell stories about their home countries. This is narrative; and this is what Germany imported. (200)

Even-Zohar's polysystem theory gives another explanation for the import of Canadian literature to Germany and for the role of these works in the German literary polysystem. According to polysystem theory, Canadian literature has helped fill several voids in the German literary polysystem since the first waves of translations around the late 19th century.²⁰ During the 19th and early 20th century, the German literary polysystem demanded children's and adventure stories, which tended to emphasize the stereotypical image of Canada as a vast, empty, wild, adventurous, and exotic place. The void, which was filled by Canadian literature and particularly short stories at that time, called for escapist literature, i.e. literature, which could be used as a place to escape to, for example from the cruel reality of war and post-war times or just for the tedious everyday routine. Clearly, the German literary system did not lack these types of stories completely. The success of Karl May's adventure and western novels and stories during the late 19th and early 20th century, for example, proves that the German readership welcomed this type of literature, however, there was still a demand for more adventure and children's literature.

During the 1980s, another void appeared in the German literary polysystem. The topic of feminism was ubiquitous, however, German feminist authors tended to write very radically and polemically, which led to a lack of entertaining feminist literature. The literature written by Munro, Atwood, and other

20. Clearly, Canadian literature was only one of the literatures that helped fill voids in the German literary polysystem, i.e. there were also numerous concurrent imports from various other literatures.

Canadian women writers was welcomed by the German literary system because of its different perspective and because it fell on fruitful ground. The situation was similar during the 1990s, when Germany was trying to find its identity and struggling with questions of immigration and integration. Another void, which called for multicultural literature, opened in the German literary polysystem. Multicultural literature was desired both for its unconventional characters as well as its illustration of successful integration and unity in diversity.

The literature imports of the new millennium have become more diverse and less focused on just one specific topic. Multicultural literature is still an important source. However, authors who were identified with the wave of women's literature during the 1980s are also still very successful in Germany (for example Munro and Atwood). Furthermore, the numerous adventure literature imports of the 19th and early 20th century are still influential. Nevertheless, the broadened range of topics, away from pure "wilderness stories," would give the impression that Canadian literature imports into Germany are becoming less clichéd and less stereotype-based. After all the numbers of literature imports have certainly been growing ever since the first waves during the 1970s, with about three imports per year, four per year during the 1980s, eight per year during the 1990s (Oeding and Flotow 2004, 143-146), and about forty per year since the beginning of the new millennium (Holzamer 2012).

However, the imported text alone is only part of the reception in Germany, which is also influenced considerably by book reviews, interviews, magazine articles, and not least by introductions, afterwords, titles, and notes that accompany the translated texts, so-called paratexts (Genette 1992). Thus, while the original literature imports might become less clichéd and more varied, many paratexts seem to work towards confirming and consolidating clichés about Canada as a country of cold weather, beautiful nature, and wild animals. Future studies should therefore analyze the powerful position of the paratexts of Anglo-Canadian short story anthologies, especially regarding possible or missing changes over time.

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the translation of Anglo-Canadian short stories into German from the very beginnings to the new millennium. It discusses, above all, short story anthologies within their literary, cultural, and translational context. These considerations are complemented with some general remarks about the history of Canadian literature in Germany. Furthermore, this paper illustrates and comments on the main topics and literary forms that have been imported into the German literary polysystem to date (Even-Zohar 1990). Lastly, this paper tries to hypothesize about the reasons for the Anglo-Canadian literature imports and presents possible outlets for further research.

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