



The Value of Struggle in the Film Ar-Rihlah (The Journey): A Narrative Semiotic Analysis by A. J. Greimas

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the narrative structure and values of struggle in the film Ar-Rihlah through A. J Greimas' narrative semiotic approach. The method employed is descriptive, utilizing qualitative data. Data on the narrative structure and values of struggle in the film Ar-Rihlah were collected using observation guidelines based on time triangulation, assisted by a checklist, through the process of observing, marking, and recording sentences or dialogues that contain values of struggle. J Greimas' narrative semiotic analysis. Data on narrative structure and values of struggle in the film Ar-Rihlah through a narrative semiotic approach were analyzed through three stages: a) identification of the role of actants; b) mapping of functional structures; c) interpretation of narrative meaning that forms the values of struggle. The results of the study show that the values of struggle in the film Ar-Rihlah (The Journey) are not only expressed in physical combat, but also encompass values such as willingness to sacrifice, unity, respect, patience, and an unyielding spirit. The values of struggle in the film Ar-Rihlah, examined through a narrative semiotic approach, are constructed narratively through the relationship between the actants and the stages of the storyline.

Keywords: values of struggle, film, narrative semiotic analysis

Nilai Perjuangan dalam Film Ar-Rihlah (The Journey): Analisis Semiotika Naratif A. J. Greimas

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menentukan struktur naratif dan nilai-nilai perjuangan dalam film Ar-Rihlah melalui pendekatan semiotika naratif A. J Greimas. Metode yang digunakan adalah deskriptif berbasis data kualitatif. Data struktur naratif dan nilai-nilai perjuangan dalam film Ar-Rihlah melalui pendekatan semiotika naratif dikumpulkan menggunakan pedoman observasi berbasis triangulasi waktu berbantuan daftar cek-ricik dengan cara mengamati, menandai, dan mencatat kalimat atau dialog yang mengandung nilai perjuangan melalui analisis semiotika naratif A. J Greimas. Data struktur naratif dan nilai-nilai perjuangan dalam film Ar-Rihlah melalui pendekatan semiotika naratif dianalisis melalui tiga tahap: a) identifikasi peran aktan; b) pemetaan struktur fungsional; c) penafsiran makna naratif yang membentuk nilai-nilai perjuangan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai perjuangan dalam film *Ar-Rihlah* (The Journey) tidak hanya berupa pertempuran fisik, tetapi juga memuat nilai-nilai perjuangan yang meliputi nilai rela berkorban, persatuan, harga-menghargai, kesabaran, dan semangat pantang menyerah. Nilai-nilai perjuangan dalam film Ar-Rihlah melalui pendekatan semiotika naratif dibangun secara naratif melalui relasi antar aktan dan tahapan alur cerita.

Kata Kunci: nilai perjuangan, film, analisis semiotika

Submitted
14/10/2025

Accepted
05/11/2025

Published
11/11/2025

Citation	Alawiyah, S. H., Rohanda, R., & Halim, M. A. (2025). The Value of Struggle in the Film Ar-Rihlah (The Journey): A Narrative Semiotic Analysis by A. J. Greimas. <i>Jurnal Pembelajaran Bahasa dan Sastra, Volume 4, Nomor 6, November 2025, 1941-1950</i> . DOI: https://doi.org/10.55909/jpbs.v4i6.942
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Publisher
Raja Zulkarnain Education Foundation

INTRODUCTION

Film is a type of literary work that is highly popular among the public (Angelina et al., 2024). Film is a form of mass communication media that has great power in conveying messages, stories, and values to its audience (Hamka, 2024). Films are often based on real-life realities or inspired by events occurring in society. They also serve as interpretations or representations of these realities, shaped by the codes, ideologies, and thoughts of the community groups that create them (Anwar, 2022). This film, dubbed in original Arabic, depicts a story set in the history of the Arabian Peninsula, wrapped in a running time of 1 hour and 50 minutes. The film, *Ar-Rihlah*, tells the story of the struggle of the people of Mecca against Abraha's elephant-wielding army, which attempted to attack and destroy the Kaaba (Rohmani et al., 2025).

According to Joyomartono (1990), the values contained in a struggle are the value of being willing to sacrifice, the value of unity, the value of respect, the value of patience and the spirit of never giving up, and the value of cooperation (Aziz, 2021). The value of struggle contained in the film *Ar-Rihlah* is not only about physical battle, but also includes moral, spiritual and social dimensions. Depicted through determination, sacrifice, and also the unity of the people of Makkah to fight Abraha's troops. This fact shows that the film shows a complex meaning and is worthy of deeper study. Semiotics is the study of signs and symbols, as well as the meaning of their use (Taufiq, 2016). In this case, the values of the struggle can be traced through the signs in the film (Shiyam et al., 2024).

According to Taum (2011), Greimas's narrative analysis involves two structural stages: (1) External Structure, the narrative level (narration, particularly the synopsis of the story to observe the sequences), and (2) Internal Structure, the immanent level, which includes: a) Actant Schema and Functional Structure; and b) a study of the three

axes of semantic power (Marwan & Taufiq, 2019). From Greimas' perspective, this approach offers a comprehensive approach to understanding meaning in text. This approach allows researchers to delve deeper into narrative structures and assess how each element in the story interacts to form the overall meaning (Alandira et al., 2024). In film studies, a sequence refers to a collection of scenes that convey a particular story point; in Greimas's view, it is an order of events characterized by certain basic story sentences conveyed by the actants, either explicitly or implicitly (Karnanta, 2015).

Greimas identifies six interrelated roles in a story, defined by a framework called actants. The six roles mentioned include subject, object, sender, receiver, helper, and opponent. Regarding the storyline, Greimas states that the story model is still referred to as the plot. This model is expressed in actions called functions, so it is often called a functional structure (Kumalasari & Surur, 2023; Simanjuntak, 2019).

The functional structure is divided into three stages: the initial situation, transformation, and final situation. Within the transformation stage, there are three other stages: the initial trials, the main trials, and the brilliance stage (Wulandari et al., 2020).

This research was conducted based on the research problem, namely, what values of struggle are contained in the film *Ar-Rihlah* (The Journey) through narrative semiotic analysis?

This study aims to uncover the narrative structure of the film *Ar-Rihlah* using Greimas's narrative semiotic analysis and to reveal how the values of struggle are constructed through its narrative structure. This research is expected to contribute academically to the enrichment of contemporary Arabic literary studies and to provide an understanding that film can be understood not merely as visual entertainment, but as a learning medium rich in values through its narrative structure.



Previous research relevant to this study provides a strong foundation for understanding narrative structure and meaning in various works, including films. One such study is the study by Alandira et al. (2024) which discusses the narrative structure of the story of King Dzulkarnain in the Quran. This study applies Greimas's theory to the Quranic text, thus revealing moral and social values such as leadership, responsibility, and justice. Another study by Shiyam (2024) examines the values of the main character's struggle in the film *Wadjda*. This study found that *Wadjda*'s struggle to obtain a green bicycle reflects the values of courage, sacrifice, patience, and an unyielding spirit, while also symbolizing social criticism of Saudi Arabia's patriarchal culture. Furthermore, research conducted by Wulandari et al. (2020) discusses A.J. Greimas's Actant Scheme and Functional Structure in the stories of the Origin of Mulo Jambi Tulo and Jambi Kecik. This study examines the narrative structure of Jambi folktales through Greimas's actant scheme and functional structure. These studies demonstrate how narrative semiotics can be used to uncover the values within the stories presented. This study is used to uncover the Value of Struggle in the film *Ar-Rihlah* (The Journey).

METHOD

This research method uses a descriptive method based on qualitative data. Qualitative descriptive research is a type of research used in descriptive research (Creswell, 2008; Yuliani, 2018; Razak, 2017). Qualitative descriptive methods are commonly used in various studies in the social, economic, educational, health, religious and cultural fields in various countries.

The type of data used in this study consists of excerpts from dialogue texts by the characters, in the form of sentences or paragraphs, which convey the value of struggle in the film *Ar-Rihlah* (The Journey).

The data source for this film is *Ar-Rihlah* (The Journey). A Japanese animated film produced by the Saudi Arabian company Toei Animation and the media Arab Manga Productions (a subsidiary of the Prince Mohammed Salman Foundation) released in 2021, and directed by Shizuno Kobun, which can be accessed through the YouTube channel CERITA LEMOO at the link <https://youtu.be/L1IqbOIbt-k?si=in4hdxGmQOBC4bzg>

The data collection technique was carried out through the listening method with advanced recording techniques. According to Wisudawati & Sulistyowati (2014), and Balaka (2012) state that the listening method is carried out by listening to the use of language to be studied. Recording technique is carried out after the initial or basic technique and is done with a certain writing tool. In this case, the researcher watched the entire *Ar-Rihlah* film carefully and repeatedly, marked and recorded quoted sentences, reduced them in detail, and made conclusions based on the quoted data.

The data analysis technique in this study uses Greimas' narrative semiotic approach to analyze the *Ar-Rihlah* film related to the values of struggle. The collected data were grouped based on the formulated research questions, through Greimas's actantial scheme and functional structure, then analyzed to determine how the values of struggle were formed through these structures.

RESULT

1. Actantial Scheme

The actantial scheme describes the relationships between roles that create the dynamics of the story, including subject, object, destination, receiver, helper, and opponent. Each sequence shows the development of conflict and character motivation.

Table 1
Actantial Scheme

Sequence	Actantial Scheme	Data	Minutes
Sequence 1 (Abraha's army plans to attack and conquer Mecca)	Object (protecting Mecca)	لكي نحمي مكة من جيش أبرهة العرمم	02:28-02:31
	Opponent (Abraham)	كان هدفهم غزو مكة جوهره جزيرة العرب المزدهرة تجاريا	02:47-02:53
	Subject (volunteer soldier)	اجتمعنا نحن جيش مكة التطوعي في أحر مواقع دفاعنا	2:23-2:26
Sequence 2 (Mecca residents gather to form an army)	Sequence 2 (Mecca residents gather to form an army)	وخبرته رفعت ثقتنا بأنفسنا نحن متطوعي جيش مكة	05:16-05:20
	Object (repel Abraha's army)	نحن لم نجتمع اليوم في الوادي الحسم هذا إلا لنمنع عبورهم وغزورهم مكة ولن نسمح لأبرهة وجيشه أن يخطو خطوة واحدة فيها	04:25-04:38
	Opponent (Abdul Muthallib)	إما أن نخلي مكة على عجالة وإما أن نصير عبيدا لأبرهة	07:19-07:23
Sequence 3 (Mecca residents decide to fight against Abraha)	Destinator (the nationalistic spirit of Aws and the people of Mecca)	لكن لم نستطع حينها أن نسلم مكة طائحين صاغرين لأبرهة وجيشه وعقدنا العزم على خيار ثالث أن نواجه عدونا	7:55-8:08
	Helper (Aws's father-in-law)	إذن سأبدأ الآن بالإعداد لنزوحنا	13:56-13:57
	Destinator (Aws's wife)	كلمتك الرقيقة تغدني دائما من بأسى	12:58-13:01
	Subject (Aws)	إن كتب القتال على أحد منا فأنا من سيتولى هذه المهمة	13:11-13:17
Sequence 4 (Abraha's army approaches with great force)	Opponent (Zurarah)	يا للمتأليات الفارغة	21:03-21:05
	Helper (Zurarah)	أظنني سأقاتل معكم	36:33-36:35
	Subjek (Aws)	ألم تجتمعوا هنا ببسالة من أجل غاية واحد	42:53-42:58
	Opposant (part of the Khuzaymah family)	سنموت سيقتلوننا بسهولة!	40:30-40:34
	Destinator (previous story)	تعلمت من الحكاية التعة بالله والتبات عند الشدائد والأهم أن الإيمان هو الأصل للنجاة	34:14-34:22

Sequence 5 (the battle begins)	Object (protecting Makkah and family)	لقد احتّمنا اليوم لهذا نحن لانقاتل اليوم لنفد البلاء عن مكة وحماية أحببتنا وحسب وإنما لنندأ عن البيت العتيق أعداءه الذين يريدون هدمه	1:05:24-1:05:29
Sequence 6 (the people of Mecca choose to retreat first)	Subject (Commander Nizar)	علينا أن نتراجع	1:09:40-1:09:41
Sequence 7 (Mecca residents experience)	Opposant (Abrahah)	أبرهة!	1:17:12-1:17:14
	Destinator (previous story)	على أن أقتدي بهم أن أصبر كما صبروا وأن أتطلى بيقينهم	-29:49 - -29:43
Sequence 8 (help comes and the people of Makkah win)	Helper (birds sent by Allah (Miracles))	هذه الطيور معجزة! معجزة من رب البيت!	-09:28 - -09:23
	Receiver (all residents of Makkah including Aws)	انظروا إلى النور! إنها إشارة النصر!	-06:14 - -06:10

2. Functional Structure

Functional structure serves to explain the steps in a story's plot, from the initial situation, through transformation, to the final situation. It helps to understand how the story develops and how characters achieve or fail to achieve their goals.

Table 2
 Functional Structure

Initial situation		
The people of Makkah were threatened and forced to surrender by Abrahah who wanted to control Makkah as a major trading center	كان هدفهم غزو مكة جوهره جزيرة العرب المزدهرة تجاريا جاؤوا بجيشتهم الجرار لكي يخيفوا أهلها ويخضعوها لسيطرتهم	02:47-03:00
Transformation		
Initial trials	The people of Makkah formed an army to fight and fight	كان هدفهم غزو مكة جوهره جزيرة نحن لم نجتمع اليوم في الوادي الحسم هذا إلا لئلا نمنع عبورهم وغزواهم مكة ولن نسمح لأبرهة وجيسته أن يخطو خطوة واحدة فيها لسيطرتهم
		04:25-04:38

The main test	The Makkan troops almost disbanded, because they saw the strength of Abraha's troops, and the provocations from the Khuzaymah family	هل سنقاتل هذه الأفيال؟ سنموت سيقتلوننا بسهولة!	40:08-40:09
	The Makkan troops suffered defeat	ذهب قتالكم أنراج الرياح بلا جدوى	40:08-40:10
The stage of glory	Miracles come	هذه الطيور معجزة! معجزة من رب البيت!	100:23-100:25
Last Situation			
The Makkan troops won the war		انظروا إلى النور! إنها إشارة النصر!	103:36-103:40

3. Struggle Values

Struggle values are the result of a person's efforts to overcome life's challenges and problems. They are often depicted as taking action to confront or change a situation. The following are the values of struggle, according to Joyomartono (1990), found in the film Ar-Rihlah.

Table 3
Struggle Values in the Film Ar-Rihlah

Value of Struggle		
Willing to sacrifice	إن كتب القتال على أحد منا فأنا من سيتولى هذه المهمة	13:11-13:17
Unity	نحن لم نجتمع اليوم في الوادي الحسم هذا إلا لئلا نمنع عبورهم وغزؤهم مكة ولن نسمح لأبرهة وجيشه أن يخطو خطوة واحدة فيها	04:25-04:38
Price-appreciating	اجتمعنا نحن جيش مكة التطوعي في آخر مواقع دفاعنا	2:23-2:26
Be patient	علي أن أفندي بهم أن أصبر كما صبروا وأن أتحملي بيقينهم	-29:49 - -29:43
Never give up spirit	لكن لم نستطع حينها أن نسلم مكة طائحين صاغرين لأبرهة وجيشه وعتدنا العزم على خيار تألت أن نواجه عدونا	7:55-8:08



DISCUSSION

Sequence 1

This film begins with a critical situation, where the main character in the movie (Aws) tells the story that Abraha wants to take over the city of Mecca and threatens the residents to leave Mecca or become his slaves. The people of Makkah, including the Aws (Subjects), gathered with determination to form an army. In this sequence, there is also an implicit destination actant in the form of the high spirit of nationalism among the people of Makkah, who formed an army to fight Abraha (the opponent), to protect Makkah (the object).

Sequence 2

The threat becomes more real, which encourages the people of Makkah to become more confident in forming an army. In this sequence, Commander Mus'ab (destinator) is someone who has much experience in fighting. Apart from that, Commander Mus'ab also always provides motivation and encouragement to the people of Makkah to expel Abraha and his troops (object). This made the people of Makkah, including Aws, confident in joining the volunteer army. But in the midst of their gathering, Abd Muthallib (opposant), one of the Makkah elders, came and said that he did not agree to fight Abraha, because the strength of Abraha's army was so great. Abd Muttalib suggested two options to the people of Makkah, namely 1) leaving Makkah (evacuating); 2) becoming Abraha's slave.

Sequence 3

Even though Abd Muthallib did not agree to fight Abrahah, because of the nationalistic spirit of Aws and the people of Makkah (destinator), they finally chose the third option, namely fighting Abrahah and his troops, and not just giving up Makkah. In this sequence, Aws goes home to tell his family that the news about Abrahah's attack is trustworthy. There, Aws' adoptive father advises Aws to take refuge and protect the family, while his adoptive father will go to war. However, re-

membering the past and the goodness of his family, Aws (subject) said that if there was a war, then that was what he was assigned to do. Ultimately, it was his foster father (helper) who took refuge and protected his family. In this sequence, Aws's wife also played a role (destinator), as her words always provided him with courage.

Sequence 4

In this sequence, the troops are shown gathering and preparing to face the enemy. Suddenly, a clash breaks out among the volunteer soldiers, one of whom turns out to be Zurarah (opposite), Aws's former comrade, when they were held captive and enslaved by bandits. In this sequence, Zurarah remarks that the Meccans' idealism of becoming volunteer soldiers to protect Mecca is irritating. Due to the influence of past trauma, Zurarah's principle is that he only works for pay or food; he doesn't depend on or trust anyone, and he also says that faith cannot fill his stomach. In this sequence, Aws attempts to explain to Zurarah that he, too, had similar principles before coming to Mecca, and was saved by his foster father, who told him stories about faith.

This tale served as a deterrent that changed Aws's life principles and taught him the importance of trust, cooperation, and faith. Furthermore, this tale also served as a motivation for all the volunteer soldiers. However, after hearing the story, Zurarah remained steadfast in his principles until he finally wanted to test Aws through combat. After that, Zurarah finally agreed to help fight Abrahah and became Aws's partner during the battle (helper). Not long after, Abraha's army arrived with a large army, which made the people of Mecca waver and hesitate. The situation became even more chaotic when one of the Khuzaymah family (opposites) shouted to retreat, saying that this would be futile. Aws, as the (subject), immediately took the initiative to distract the people of Mecca and reminded them of their purpose. Finally, the people of Mecca took up their weapons again.

Sequence 5

After Abarahah's troops arrived in Makkah, Abrahah sent a messenger to the people of Makkah, stating that he wanted to take control of Makkah without fighting if the people of Makkah were willing to leave. However, the people of Makkah were reluctant to accept the offer and remained determined to protect Makkah, the Kaaba, and also their families (objects).

Sequence 6

In this sequence, Aws and Zurarah see the Makkah troops retreating, then the commander Nizar (object) orders Aws and Zurarah to retreat to plan a new strategy.

Sequence 7

After the retreat, the Makkans gathered to treat the wounded troops, and Commander Nizar explained the new strategy. But something unexpected happened, Abraha also changed the formation of his troops. AWS proposed to attack him first. In this sequence, Aws comes face-to-face with Abraha (opposant). However, it cannot be denied that the strength of Abraha and his troops was formidable; Aws was seriously injured, and the Makkan army was cornered. But Aws remembered a story (destinator) that made Aws not give up. AWS and Commander Nizar fought back. But in vain; the commander, Nizar, was killed. After that, Abraha ordered his troops to execute the surviving Makkan soldiers, including Aws, by trampling them with elephants.

Sequence 8

When they were about to step on the Aws, suddenly all the elephants of Abraha's army stopped and did not follow Abraha's orders. They lined up and faced the same direction, namely the direction of the Kaaba. Not long after, birds (helpers) came carrying stones and threw them at Abraha and his troops until there were none left; finally, the Makkan army survived and won the battle. Upon seeing this incident, they declared it a miracle from Allah. After destroying Abraha and his

troops, the birds flew away somewhere. The people of Makkah, who were not involved in the battle, also saw this incident from the top of the hill, and they cheered happily for this help and victory (receivers).

Functional Structure

The film *Ar-Rihlah* depicts the struggle of the people of Mecca against Abraha. In a functional structural analysis, the film can be divided into three stages: 1) initial situation; 2) transformation (initial trials, main trials, and the glorious stage); 3) final situation.

Initial Situation

In this stage, the film begins with a critical situation, where the main characters describe the threat from Abraha, who wants to seize and conquer the city of Mecca. Mecca is a major trading center.

Transformation

This stage encompasses three stages: the initial trials, the main trials, and the glorious stage. During the initial trials, the people of Mecca decide to gather and form an army to fight Abraha. Entering the main trials, the people of Mecca waver, hesitate, and nearly disperse due to the strength of Abraha's army and the provocations of the Khuzaymah family. Nevertheless, the people of Mecca re-take up arms to fight. However, it cannot be denied that Abraha's army was extremely powerful, causing the Meccan army to be cornered and defeated. In their final triumph, the people of Mecca received miraculous help from Allah and destroyed Abraha and his army.

Final Scene

At the end of the story, the Meccan army won the battle, and all the people of Mecca rejoiced, as there was no longer any threat to them.

The Value of Struggle

Through an analysis of the actantial scheme and functional structure of the film *Ar-Rihlah* (The



Journey), based on A.J. Greimas' theory of narrative semiotics, a consistent pattern of struggle is revealed. This pattern shows how the people of Mecca moved from a threatened situation to victory. The purpose of this analysis is to demonstrate that the struggle depicted in the film is not only a physical struggle against the enemy, but also an inner struggle to maintain humanity, faith, and hope amidst difficult circumstances.

The Value of Self-Sacrifice

In sequence 3, the subject (Aws) says at 13:11-13:17, "If the fight must be fought by one of us, then I will be the one to shoulder this responsibility." This quote appears when Aws declares his readiness to his family to go to war to protect Mecca. Thus, this quote emphasizes that the value of self-sacrifice is built through the main character's moral decision to prioritize the interests of the community over his own safety, which is a crucial foundation for the entire struggle depicted in the film *Ar-Rihlah*.

The Value of Unity

In sequence 2, Commander Mus'ab states at 4:25-4:38, "We have not gathered today in this defensive valley except to prevent them from crossing and conquering Mecca. And we will not allow Abraha and his army to take a single step into it." This quote affirms the shared commitment of the people of Mecca to defend the holy city. This statement emphasizes unity and the value of cooperation. The community pooled its energy, determination, and responsibility for a greater goal.

The Value of Respect

In sequence 1, Aws states at 2:23-2:26, "We, the volunteer army of Mecca, have gathered at our last line of defense." The term "volunteer" here signifies that the struggle was not forced, but rather arose from a conscious and moral responsibility to defend their homeland. This quote reflects the mutual respect among the members of the Mecca community who were members of the volunteer army. This data demonstrates the value of respect,

namely, the recognition of the role and sacrifice of others for the common goal.

The Value of Patience

In sequence 7, Aws says at minutes 29:49-29:43, "I must emulate them, be patient as they were, and hold on to their beliefs." In this quote, Aws demonstrates spiritual and moral awareness that struggle requires not only physical strength but also inner fortitude. Aws realizes that true victory comes from patience and faith in the truth being fought for. This quote explicitly emphasizes the value of patience. It also shows that courage without patience will only lead to despair, while patience with faith will lead to true victory.

The Value of an Unyielding Spirit

In sequence 3, at minutes 7:55-8:08, Aws says, "But at that time, we could not simply surrender Mecca to Abraha and his army. We were determined to choose a third path to face our enemies." In the context of the story, the people of Mecca were faced with two difficult choices: abandoning Mecca or becoming Abraha's slaves. However, they chose the third path, which was to fight, even though the chances of victory were slim. This quote reflects that the people of Mecca fought not only physically, but also against their own fears and doubts. This quote clearly demonstrates the value of an unyielding spirit, as the people of Mecca were steadfast, courageous, and unwilling to submit to circumstances.

CONCLUSION

Based on Greimas' narrative semiotic analysis of the film *Ar-Rihlah* (The Journey), the values of struggle identified include self-sacrifice, unity, respect, patience, and an unyielding spirit. These five values are constructed through the relationships between actants and functional developments within the storyline. This study does not include isotopic analysis or the semiotic quadrilateral, but focuses solely on the actantial scheme and functional structure. Therefore, the expected results can serve as a basis for further research

exploring more complex elements of meaning using a broader semiotic approach.

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