



Plunkett Centre

Annual Report 2007



Plunkett Centre

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 **ACU National**
Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Sydney Canberra Ballarat Melbourne



**St Vincents
& Mater Health**
Sydney

Management Committee

From the University

Professor Peter Wilson Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and International), Chairman
Associate Professor Dr John Ozolins, Head, School of Philosophy

From the Hospital

Ms. Mary Foley, Chief Executive Officer, St Vincents & Mater Health Sydney
Mr. Mark Hales, Director of Mission, St Vincents & Mater Health Sydney

From the Centre

Dr Bernadette Tobin, Reader in Philosophy, Director



From the Management Committee



The year 2007 was another highly successful year for the Plunkett Centre. The Centre continued its valuable research, education and participation in public discussion of ethical issues in health care and medical research. The many important initiatives of the Centre during 2007 are described in this report.

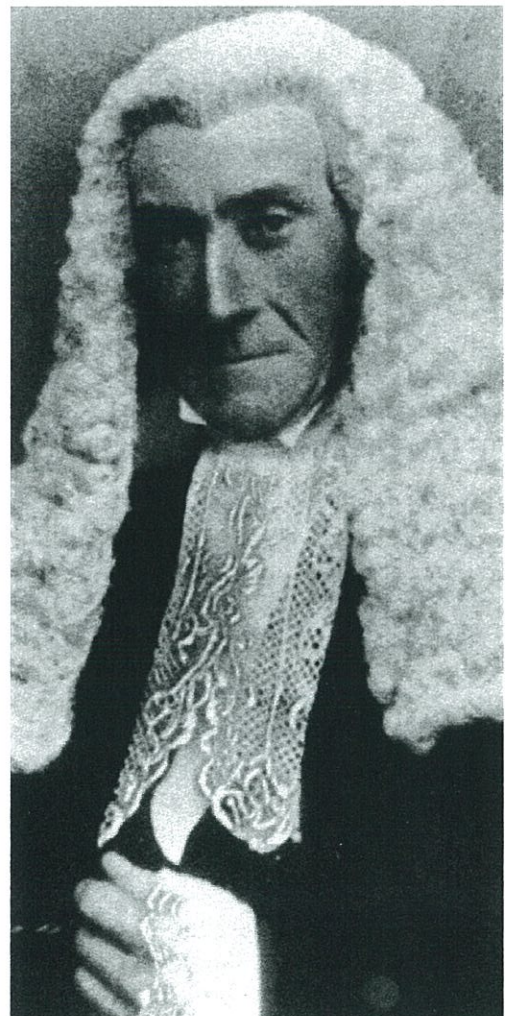
The Plunkett Centre is named after John Hubert Plunkett, a great friend and benefactor of the first Sisters of Charity in Australia, at various times the chief law officer in New South Wales, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sydney, and the person who was responsible for extending the protection of the law in this state to convicts, assigned servants and aborigines.

The Centre is committed to providing leadership in bioethics and the ethics of medical research. It operates on the basis of an agreement between Australian Catholic University and St Vincent's & Mater Health, an agreement which goes back to 1989. This agreement was extended for a further five years at a special ceremony in December, 2007.

In my capacity as Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and International) at Australian Catholic University, and on behalf of Steven Rubic, the Chief Executive Officer of St Vincent's & Mater Health, I wish to acknowledge the valuable work of the Centre and to express the appreciation of the Management Committee. I congratulate the staff of the Centre on the success of their work in 2007. I would like particularly to acknowledge with appreciation the valuable contribution of Mrs Linda Purves during her many years with the Centre.

Peter Wilson

Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and International)
Australian Catholic University



John Hubert Plunkett



Staffing

Director

Bernadette Tobin MA Med (Melb), PhD (Cantab)
Associate Professor and Reader in Philosophy,
School of Philosophy, Australian Catholic University

Academic Staff

Gerald Gleeson STB (CIS), MA (Cantab), PhD (Leuven)
Professor of Philosophy, Catholic Institute of Sydney

Stephen Buckle MA Hons (MaqU), PhD (ANU)
Senior Lecturer in Philosophy, School of Philosophy,
Australian Catholic University

Helen McCabe RN BHA (UNSW), MA PhD (ACU)
Research Associate, Plunkett Centre for Ethics

Visiting

Warren Reich BA (St. Joseph's College, Alabama), STB
(Catholic University of America), STL (Catholic University of
America), STD (Gregorian University, Rome), Distinguished
Professor of Religion and Ethics, Professor Emeritus of
Bioethics, Georgetown University.

Research Student

Mr David Wu, 3rd year student, Faculty of Medicine,
University of New South Wales (till March 2007)

Administrative Staff

Linda Purves JP



From the Director



Research – both into sound principles of conduct and into actual practices – informs good teaching and clinical consultation. At the Plunkett Centre, we do our best to make a contribution to the body of ethical

knowledge and understanding that informs health care, medical research and clinical practice, a contribution which is aimed at bringing together the best in contemporary moral philosophy and in the Catholic tradition of philosophy and theology.

In 2007, in our Monday-morning seminar, Dr Stephen Buckle led us in a reading of a contemporary work in Aristotelian ethics. The seminar is both an intellectual blessing on the rest of the working week and an opportunity to ensure that our ‘applied’ work is nourished by more ‘theoretical’ reflection. This Report documents the activities of the rest of the working week. It speaks for itself. But three events of the preceding year are worth a special mention.



Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding
Pictured left to right A/Professor Bernadette Tobin, Ms. Mary Foley,
Professor Peter Sheehan and Sr. Helen Clarke

In March the Director (along with colleagues Professor Daniel Sulmasy of St Vincent’s Hospital in Manhattan and Professor Nancy Dubler of Montefiore Medical Centre in the Bronx) addressed a meeting of Senators of the Italian Republic together with medical doctors from around Italy - in the Senate’s Lecture Hall on the lovely Piazza della Minerva in Rome – on the kind of legislation with respect to end of life care and advance directives which would serve the people of Italy well. The three papers, already published in the proceedings of the Italian Senate, will be republished in *Bioethics Outlook* during this year.

In November we farewelled Dr Gerald Gleeson. Gerry has been a member of the Centre since its earliest origins in 1989, a popular contributor to *Bioethics Outlook* and a reliable source of advice, in particular on the complex Catholic tradition. We shall miss him.

And in December the Chief Executive Officer of St Vincents & Mater Health Sydney and the Vice-Chancellor of Australian Catholic University signed another Memorandum of Understanding which ensured our basic funding for the next five years.

Once again, I would like to express my appreciation for the support of the members of the Management Committee and for the hard work and good cheer of my colleagues: Stephen Buckle, Helen McCabe and Linda Purves.

Bernadette Tobin



Financial Report for 2007

Income	
C/Forward	20,872
SV&MH	93,750
ACU	125,000
Subscriptions	8,286
Seminars	4,800
Other grants	10,883
CHCA (NSW)	58,433
Total Income	322,024
Expenditure	
Salaries	274,745
Library	2141
Consultancy	1624
Leasing	3654
Photocopying	1503
Printing	3810
Rent	20926
Stationery	1035
Internet	1653
Travel	1478
Internal non-salary	7804
Other	2451
Total Expenditure	322,824
Carried Forward	-800



Publications

Book Chapters

Buckle S. "Introduction", in David Hume, *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding and Other Writings*, Stephen Buckle (ed), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (2007), ix-xxxi.

Gerald Gleeson: "Faith and Reason" in *John Paul II: Legacy and Witness*, Robert Gascoigne (ed), Strathfield: St Paul, 2007.

Peer-Reviewed Articles

Buckle S. "Hume's Sceptical Materialism", *Philosophy* (2007), 82:4, 553-78.

Buckle S. "Descartes, Plato and the Cave", *Philosophy* (2007), 82:2, 301-37.

Buckle S. "Peter Singer i utylitaryzm. Nauki płynące od Rousseau i Kanta" ("Peter Singer and Utilitarianism: Drawing a Lesson from Rousseau and Kant", translated into Polish by Joanna Klimczyk), *Etyka* (2006), 39, 72-86.

McCabe, H.M. 'Nursing Involvement in Euthanasia: how sound is the philosophical support?', *Nursing Philosophy*, (2007) 8:3, 167-75.

McCabe, H.M. 'Nursing Involvement in Euthanasia: a nursing-as-healing-praxis approach', *Nursing Philosophy*, (2007) 8:3, 176-86

McCabe, H.M. 'Nursing the Patient in Pain: Rights and Virtue', *Nursing Monograph*, 2007, St Vincents & Mater Health Sydney.
Available at: <http://www.ciap.health.nsw.gov.au/hospolic/stvincents/>

Tobin BM. Spinal muscular atrophy type 1: Is long-term mechanical ventilation ethical? *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health*, (2007), 43, 237-242 (with Monique Ryan, Henry Kilham, Stephen Jacobe, David Isaacs)

Other Articles

Buckle S. "Playing Catch-up with Scientific Change", *Mercatornet* (www.mercatornet.com), August, 2007.

Buckle S. "Galileo, Modern Science and the Catholic Church", *The Guardian Weekly*, 30 August, 2007.

Buckle S. "Absurd Dismissals of Plato", *Higher Education Supplement, The Australian*, 29 August, 2007.

Gleeson, Gerald: Review of John Cowburn, *Personalism and Scholasticism* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2005). *The Australasian Catholic Record* 84/3 (July 2007): 369-371

McCabe, H.M. 'Paying attention to the Pharmaceutical Industry', *Health Matters*, (2006), 39: 18-20; republished in *Bioethics Outlook*, (2007) 18:2, 10-12

McCabe, H.M. 'Principles of end-of-life decision-making', *Health Matters*, (2007) 41: 17-19.

McCabe, H.M. Review of 'Defiant Birth: Women who resist medical eugenics', *Bioethics Outlook*, (2007) 18:1, 7-12

McCabe, H.M. Review of 'Who Owns Our Health?', *Bioethics Outlook*, (2007) 18:4, 6-10



Other Appointments

Tobin BM. 'Doing the ethics of mission', *Health Matters*, (2007) 43, 26-27.

Tobin, BM. 'Our Genetic Future', *Bioethics Outlook*, (2007) 18.1, 1-12.

Conference Proceedings

Tobin, BM: Più parole e meno pezzi di carta: I fiduciari: uno strumento più valido dei testamenti biologici per includere nuove realtà nella moralità tradizionale', in *Le dichiarazioni anticipate di volontà sui trattamenti sanitari, 12^a Commissione permanente del Senato (igiene e sanità) Palazzo della Minerva, Marzo 2007, 46-62* ['More talk, less paper: Health care proxies: a better means for extending traditional morality than are living wills', *Proceedings of the Senate of the Italian Republic, 29th March 2007*]

Stephen Buckle

- Member, British Society for the History of Philosophy

Gerald Gleeson

- Member, NHMRC's National Health Committee
- Member, NHMRC's Working Party on Post-Coma Unresponsiveness
- Member, NHMRC's Australian Health Ethics Committee
- Member, NHMRC's Working Party on Guidelines on Assisted Reproductive Technology

Helen McCabe

- Referee for *Nursing Monograph, International Journal of Nursing Studio, Ethics Education*

Bernadette Tobin

- Member, Bioethics Committee, St Vincents & Mater Health Sydney
- Founder & Trustee, Mary Philippa Brazill Trust
- Member of Council, Guild of St. Luke
- Member, Mission and Values Committee, St Vincent's Health Care Campus, Sydney
- Director, Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation
- Member, Clinical Ethics Advisory Panel, NSW Department of Health
- Member of Editorial Board, *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics*
- Director, Garvan Institute of Medical Research
- Member, Royal Australasian College of Physicians' Conflict of Interest Working Group



Presentations

Gerald Gleeson

'Mission and Identity in Catholic Organisations', Melbourne.

'Surgery in the presence of multiple co-morbidities', Calvary HealthCare Canberra.

Tele-Forum: 'Collaboration between Catholic and Non Catholic Healthcare providers', Catholic Health Australia.

'Responsible Parenthood', Catholic Moral Association of Australia and New Zealand.

'Ethics and Genetic Testing', Catholic Bioethics Colloquium.

'Ethics and Family Planning', Sydney Natural Fertility Services.

'Contemporary issues in ethics and religion', Clergy conference, Parramatta Diocese.

'Contemporary Issues in Theology and Ethics', Keynote presentation, Clergy of Parramatta Diocese

'Ethical issues', Catholic School Teachers, Rooty Hill.

'Ethics and the Human Person', Keynote presentation, Diocese of Armidale.

'Catholic Ethics in a Secular Culture', Annual Respect Life Lecture, Townsville.

Helen McCabe

'End-of-Life Decision-Making', Palliative Care Seminar for general practitioners, Cowra, NSW

'End-of-Life Decision-Making', Teleforum, Catholic Health Australia, ACT

'End-of-Life Decision-Making', Ethical Challenges in Today's Nursing Practice', St Vincents & Mater Health Sydney

'Ethical Decision-Making in Cancer Treatment', 4th Year medical students, University of Sydney, Concord Hospital



Dr. Helen McCabe, Research Associate

Bernadette Tobin

'Future Care Planning/Advance Directives': 2007 National Colloquium for Catholic Bioethicists, Melbourne,

'Advance directives and the role of Catholic Healthcare guidelines': Presentation to Board of St Vincents & Mater Health Sydney.



'Ethical issues in palliative care': Seminar on Palliative Care, Sacred Heart Hospice

'Più parole e meno pezzi di carte': Seminar on Advance Care Directives, Senate of the Italian Republic, 29th March 2007

'Advance Directives: new guidelines for patients and professionals', SVH Grand Rounds

'The sanctity of human life: contemporary medical research', Keynote presentation, 6th Annual Dialogue Australasian Network Conference, Brisbane

'Catholic bioethical teaching: foundations, meta-ethic, application to euthanasia', Scots College, Sydney

'An ethical approach to care: Fostering good decision making at end of life: patients, representatives; doctors': Centre for Leadership and Ministry, Catholic Health Australia

'Catholic Foundations for Ethics', Catholic Education Office, Sydney

'Advance Care Planning', Medical Advisory Committee Chairs, Little Company of Mary Health Care, Melbourne

'Doing the ethics of mission', Annual Conference, Catholic Health Australia, Sydney

'Healing the dying: the ethical challenges in palliative care', Palliative Care Perspectives Workshop, Sacred Heart Hospice, Sydney

'Future Care Planning', Teleforum for Catholic Health Australia

'Care at the end of life: what do we need to know?' Waverley Health Promotion and Waverley Seniors' Centre

'Ethical dimensions of the search for a cure', Muscular Dystrophy Association of NSW

'Human Embryonic Stem Cells and their implications for Catholic hospitals', Calvary Mater Hospital, Newcastle

'Church and State in Healthcare: A Catholic perspective', Plenary Presentation, 2007 Joint Conference, Australasian Bioethics Association/ Australian and New Zealand Institute of Health, Law and Ethics, Melbourne



Research Projects

Throughout the year, each member of the Centre conducts his or her own research. Listed below are general descriptions of the subjects, both continuing and new, on which our staff were engaged last year.

Stephen Buckle

David Hume's philosophy.

Utilitarian and related trends in modern moral thought.

Gerald Gleeson

Problems of co-operation as analyzed in the Catholic tradition

Helen McCabe

Ethical challenges in nursing practice

Ethical aspects of pain management

Ethical aspects of health care administration

Warren Reich

Georgetown Chivalry Project

Bernadette Tobin

Religion, the state and the provision of health care

Ethical issues in care of newborn children



Clinical Ethics In-Service Program

One of the marks of a good teaching hospital is that it provides opportunities for in-service education of its staff. For some years now St Vincent's Hospital, the Mater Hospital and the Children's Hospital at Westmead, have included 'cases which raise significant ethical issues' in their in-service programmes. Generally a case is presented by a health care professional, commented on by a member of the Plunkett Centre and then the case is discussed by the presenter's colleagues.

- Should the patient's refusal of further treatment have been respected?
Presentation of case by Ms Melveta James, Transplant Social Worker, St Vincent's Hospital
- Screening potential refugees on the basis of their health status: an examination of the ethical issues.
Annual Hospital Meeting, Children's Hospital at Westmead
- Growth attenuation for non-therapeutic reasons:
Presentation of case by Dr Henry Kilham, Children's Hospital at Westmead
- Responding to family needs: how far does duty of care extend?
Presentation of case by Ms Lesley Sinclair, Nurse Unit Manager, Sacred Heart Hospice

- Ethical challenges in end-of-life care:
Presentation of cases by Professor David Isaacs, Children's Hospital at Westmead
- Caring for partner of dying patient who may have been in an abusive relationship:
Presentation of case by Ms Jenny O'Mahony, Social Worker, Emergency & Intensive Care Unit, St Vincent's Hospital



Linda Purves



Teaching

Stephen Buckle

Senior Lecturer in Philosophy, Bachelor of Arts, Australian Catholic University: PHIL 102 Philosophy of the Human Person (ACU Strathfield), PHIL 209 Philosophy of Art (ACU Strathfield), BUSO 203 Business Ethics (ACU North Sydney)

Presenter, Philosophy seminar for postgraduate students, Plunkett Centre for Ethics, St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney

Supervisor, PhD: Problems in informed consent

Co-Supervisor, BA Honours student: Hume's philosophy of belief, Catholic Institute of Sydney

Gleeson Gerald

Body, Mind and Person, Catholic Institute of Sydney

Supervisor, PhD: Ethical issues in relation to pre-natal testing.

McCabe Helen

Part-time presenter, Philosophy 602 (Advanced Problems in the Ethics of Health Care), Master of Arts in Applied Ethics, Australian Catholic University

Occasional Presenter, Nursing Ethics, University of Tasmania

Tobin B.M.

Co-Supervisor, PhD Thesis: Doctors' understanding of the distinction between killing and letting die (University of Melbourne)

Co-Supervisor, PhD Thesis: Informed consent and the evidence-based movement in medicine (Australian Catholic University)

Lecturer: Philosophy 602 (Advanced Problems in the Ethics of Health Care), Master of Arts in Applied Ethics, Australian Catholic University

Supervisor, Independent Learning Project: Patients' Preferences about medical decision making, University of New South Wales



Consultancies

For many years now, the Plunkett Centre has offered a confidential 'ethics consultation' service to health care professionals who work in the various institutions which make up St Vincents & Mater Health Sydney and also to other health professionals in other institutions in Sydney, New South Wales and beyond. Our sponsoring institutions treat the use of this service by external health professions as a form of community service: it is also a valuable source of 'ethical data' for members of the Centre.

Selection of issues addressed:

- Ethical implications of removing patients from life support.
- Guidance on respecting a patient's request for privacy
- Ethical implications of introducing mixed wards
- Guidance on performing a caesarean section on a patient with pregnancy-induced hypertension
- Ethical issues in relation to endometrial ablation
- Single ethical review of multi-centre trials

- Nursing home care
- Filming in operating theatres
- Genetic testing
- Ethical implications of doctor discharging patients to rehabilitation facilities in which she has a financial interest.
- Clinical guidelines for communicating prognosis and end of life issues to adult patients and their families
- Misleading advertising
- Ethical implications of creation of public juridic person
- Patient with delirium who pulls out feeding tube
- Patients who do not wish to be tested for communicable diseases
- Donation after cardiac death
- Research on human oocytes
- Patient with suicidal refusal of treatment

Total number of consultations undertaken by staff of the Centre:	27
- from within St Vincents & Mater Health Sydney:	14
- from other healthcare institutions/practitioners:	13

Year	Total number	Source by Location		Source by professional group				
		SV&MH	Other	Administrators	Doctors	Nurses	Allied health practitioners	Others
1997	34	11	23	4	5	7	4	14
1998	38	14	24	5	6	8	3	16
1999	39	15	24	6	9	9	4	13
2000	54	34	20	18	6	6	4	22
2001	64	35	29	22	12	6	2	22
2002	38	24	14	10	6	4	7	11
2003	17	9	9	8	9	8	1	5
2004	27	15	12	7	7	1	4	8
2005	32	12	20	6	6	1	7	14
2006	28	9	19	4	7	2	3	12
2007	27	14	13	8	8	5	1	5

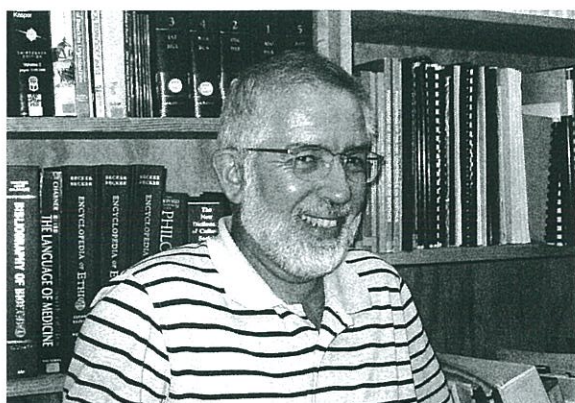


Media

Buckle S.

"Higher Education Research Funding and Liberal Education", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 January, 2007

"New Labour, Democratic Socialism and the Howard Government", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 January, 2007



Dr Steve Buckle, Research Associate

McCabe, H.

ABC Television: Documentary: 'Rampant: How a City Stopped a Plague': interviewed by Victoria Midwinter Pitt for Penny Chapman Productions

National Library of Australia: Oral History – The AIDS epidemic at St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney, 1984-1987: interviewed by James Waites

Tobin, BM

Sydney Morning Herald: New Guidelines on organ transplantation after cardiac death: comment, 15 February, 2007

ABC Radio 612 Queensland: AHEC's guideline on sex selection for non-medical purposes: interviewed by Madonna King, 19 February, 2007

ABC: Old people requesting euthanasia: background briefing

ABC Radio National Breakfast Program: Italian legislation on advance directives: interview, 2 April, 2007

Sydney Morning Herald: Research on children ("Experts call for pediatric drug tests"): comment, 10 July, 2007

Sydney Morning Herald: Ethics of using stem cell therapies to restore elite athletes' broken bones: background briefing

ABC Darwin: Withdrawal of life support for man involved in car accident in Kakadu National Park; background briefing

Avvenire: 'Dichiarazioni anticipate: la due giorni internazionale deela Commissione Sanità: comment, 30 March, 2007

Europa: 'Roma: Testamento Biologico': comment, 30 March, 2007

Il Foglio: 'Per Ignazio Mario il testamento biologico non è tutto, però aiuta': comment, 30 March, 2007



Bioethics Outlook

Volume 18

Number 1

Our Genetic Future
by Bernadette Tobin
*Defiant Birth: Women who resist
medical eugenics*
a review by Helen McCabe

Number 2

*End-of-Life Care Revisited (Recent
Debates Have Raised Some
Important Foundational
Questions)*
by Daniel Sulmasy ofm
*Paying attention to the
Pharmaceutical Industry*
by Helen McCabe

Number 3

*Justice in the allocation of health
care resources: the debate about
criteria*
by Bridget Hogan

Number 4

Anxiety about perfection
by David Langsford
Who Owns our Health
a review by Helen McCabe

Submissions

National Health and Medical Research
Council's revised draft: 'Ethical guidelines
on the use of assisted reproductive
technology in clinical practice and
research'

Bernadette Tobin, Gerald Gleeson,
Keith Hartmann on behalf of
the Bioethics Committee of
St Vincent's & Mater Health

National Health and Medical Research
Council's revised draft: 'Ethical guidelines
on the use of assisted reproductive
technology in clinical practice and
research'

Bernadette Tobin on behalf of the
Plunkett Centre for Ethics

National Health and Medical Research
Council's ethical guidelines for the care
of people in post-coma unresponsiveness
(vegetative state) or a minimally-
responsive state:

Bernadette Tobin and Richard
Chye on behalf of the Bioethics
Committee of St Vincents &
Mater Health Sydney

NSW Department of Health
No CPR Orders

Bernadette Tobin and Helen
McCabe on behalf of the
Bioethics Committee of
St Vincents & Mater Health
Sydney

St Vincent's and Mater Health
Mixed Wards in a Public Hospital
Helen McCabe to the Bioethics
Committee



Published by Plunkett Centre for Ethics

A university research centre of Australian Catholic University and St Vincents & Mater Health Sydney


Design and Printing SV&MHS Medici Graphics

ISSN 1332-6843

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