Victorian Women Writers Project Resurrected

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LIBRARIES

INDIANA UNIVERSITY
Bloomington

Overview

- Introduction and Background to the Project(s)
- New Proposal
- English Department
- Scholarly Encoding
- Web Development Plans
- Combating Graceful Degradation: Benchmarks and Measures for VWWP Success

Original Mission of the VWWP

- The goal of the Victorian Women Writers Project is to produce highly accurate transcriptions of works by British women writers of the 19th century, encoded using the Standard Generalized Markup Language (SGML). The works, selected with the assistance of the Advisory Board, will include anthologies, novels, political pamphlets, religious tracts, children's books, and volumes of poetry and verse drama. Considerable attention will be given to the accuracy and completeness of the texts, and to accurate bibliographical descriptions of them.

Original Mission of the VWWP, cont.

- Texts will be encoded according to the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) Guidelines, using the TEILite.DTD (version 1.6) We will include with each text a header describing fully the source text, the editorial decisions, and the resulting computer file. The texts will be made freely available through the World Wide Web.

- For more information about the project, see the following article:

- Willett, Perry. "The Victorian Women Writers Project: The Library as a Creator and Publisher of Electronic Texts," *Public-Access Computer Systems Review* 7.6 (1996): 5-16 <URL http://info.lib.uh.edu/pr/v7/n6/will7n6.html>

Genesis of the Reawakening

- Early discussions with members of the English digital humanities endeavors
- Graduate student interest in VWWP as a source of usable texts for their own research
- Our realization that the project was incomplete and looked quite dated
- Increasingly regular inquiries by 19th century and digital humanities scholars

New Proposal -- Overview of New Content

- Get accepted into the DLP workflow through the fall call for project proposals
- The goal…to broaden and enhance the original project
- Open the Victorian concept

Partnership with the English Department

- Departmental practicum series this semester
- Course in Fall 2010 for graduate students
  - Introduction to Digital Humanities
  - Developing a scholarly digital edition of sorts

Moving forward…

- Advisory board
- Editorial workflow policy

Principles Governing VWWP Scholarly Encoding

- Scholarly encoded texts require substantial human intervention by encoders with subject knowledge
- These texts might include encodings of semantic, linguistic, prosodic, or other advanced features to facilitate “deeper” or “richer” encoding
- Often scholarly encoded texts include elements for editorial, critical, or analytical additions; manuscript descriptions; translations; or other textual apparatus (i.e. variant readings, annotations, etc.).

Text Encoding Components

- Representing the text: advanced content analysis and presentation
  - Structural
    - Identifies textual hierarchy (e.g., canto, stanzas, lines of poetry) and other textual components (e.g., paragraphs, lists, etc.)
  - Semantic
    - Metadata for the electronic and for the source document
      - genre, subject and thematic headings
      - Prosopography (relationships between people or characters)
    - Phrase-level encoding
      - rhyme scheme and meter for poems
      - personal and place names
  - Stylistic
    - Typographic features like bold, italics, small case, etc.

Quick Intro to the TEI Guidelines

- Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) / *Guidelines for Electronic Text Encoding and Interchange (TEI)*
- The TEI *Guidelines "are addressed to anyone who works* with any text in electronic form. They provide means of representing those features of a text which need to be identified explicitly in order to facilitate processing of the text by computer programs" (Sperberg-McQueen).
- TEI provides elements, attributes, and other mechanisms for encoding prose, poetry, drama, dictionaries, critical apparatus, linguistic corpora, and other scholarly and non-scholarly texts.

TEI, Version P5: Basic Components

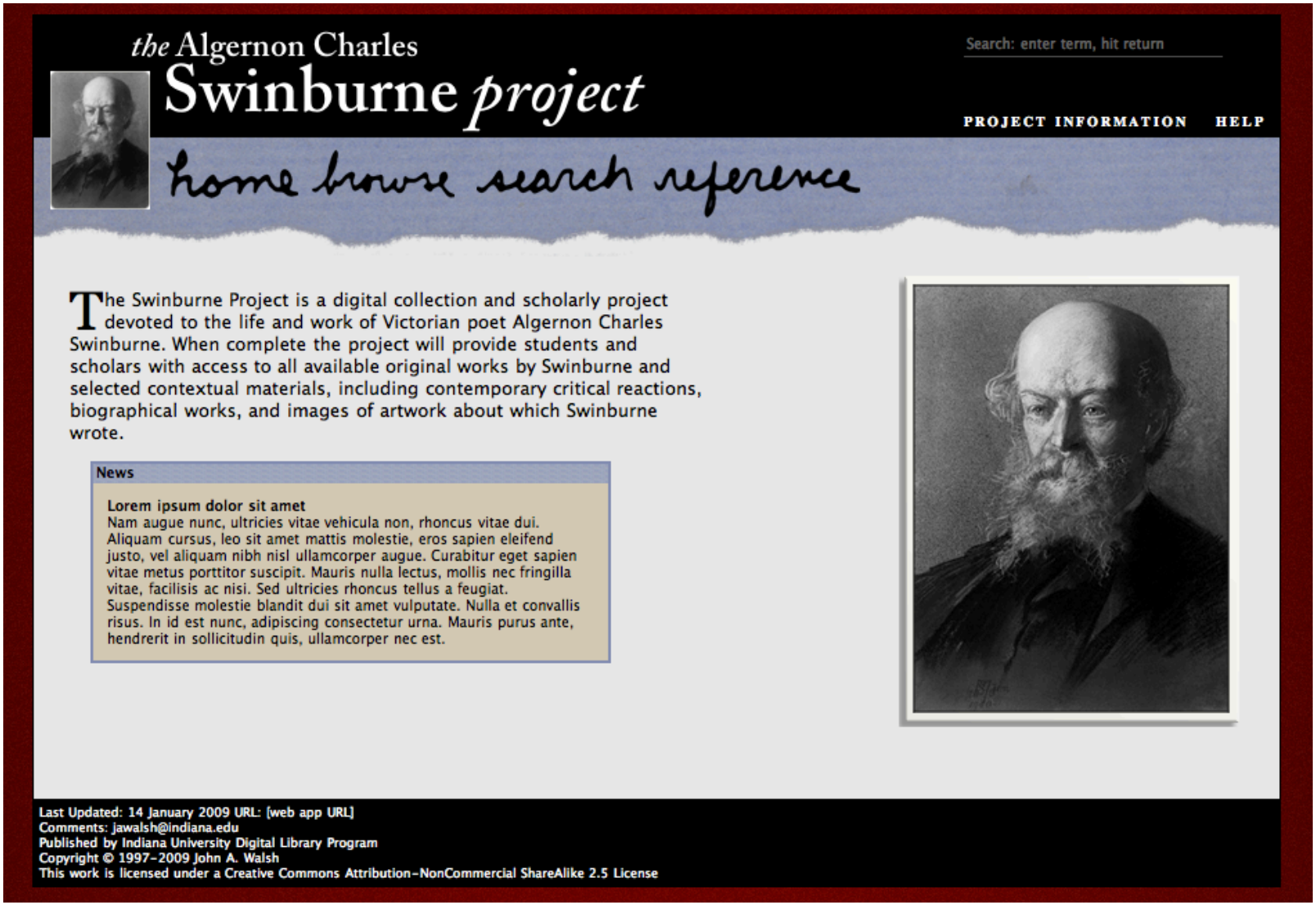
- **<TEI>**: The root element of a TEI document
  - **<teiHeader>**: The metadata header for a TEI document. Includes bibliographic, technical, administrative, and other metadata about the digital file and the analog source
  - **<text>**: The text itself, e.g., the title page and chapters of a novel, the acts and scenes of a drama, the books or cantos of a long poem. The <text> element is further subdivided into:
    - **<front>**: Front matter, e.g, title page, table of contents, preface or dedication.
    - **<body>**: The main body of a document, excluding front and back matter, e.g., chapters, stanzas, acts.
    - **<back>**: Back matter, e.g., indices, appendices.

VWWP Scholarly Encoding Practices

- Codified in local encoding guidelines that heavily reference the TEI P5 Guidelines
- Emphasis on form
  - Prose (fictional, political tracts, etc.; text divisions, headings, notes, quotes)
  - Drama (cast list, set, stage directions, speaker, speech)
  - Verse (stanza types -- quatrain, rhyme scheme, meter, lines)
  - Letters (embedded or Epistolary texts – opener and closer)
- Genre and thematic access
  - Integrate MLA Thesaurus for genre-access
  - Adopted the Victorian Studies Bibliography subject headings for thematic access and for relating complementary digital resources

Why Scholarly Encoding

- Support richer discovery methods beyond basic bibliographic or full text searching
  - Search for poems with certain rhyme scheme
  - Search within stage directions
- Leverage deeper encoding for advanced textual analysis – from generating simple concordances to establishing patterns in thematic occurrences within a text or across texts
- Foster new readings or understandings of the text


the Algernon Charles
Swinburne project
Search: enter term, hit return
PROJECT INFORMATION HELP
home browse search reference
The Swinburne Project is a digital collection and scholarly project devoted to the life and work of Victorian poet Algernon Charles Swinburne. When complete the project will provide students and scholars with access to all available original works by Swinburne and selected contextual materials, including contemporary critical reactions, biographical works, and images of artwork about which Swinburne wrote.
News
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Swinburne project
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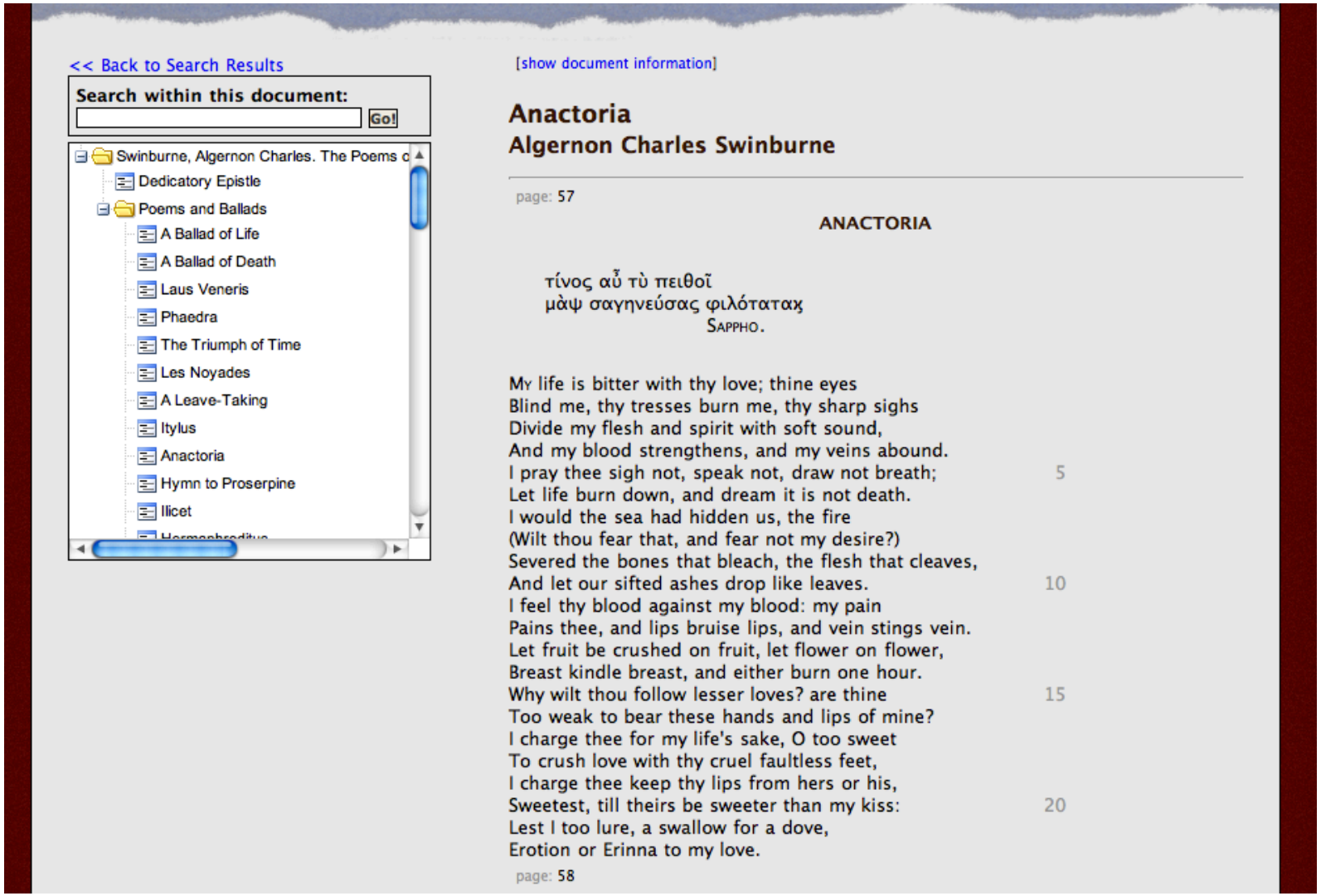
1.
Add
Author: Swinburne, Algernon Charles
Title: Tristram of Lyonesse
Collection: Tristram of Lyonesse and Other Poems
Source:
Swinburne, Algernon Charles. Tristram of Lyonesse. The Poems of Algernon Charles Swinburne. 6 vols. London: Chatto & Windus, 1904. 4: vii–151. London: Chatto & Windus, 1882.
Date: 1882
Search terms in context:
333 hits
...lips for love's sake bade love's will be done. And all the...
...will, all she would, For love's sake that sufficed her, glad...
...And rest about them that no love can give, And over them,...
...of old have given my twain Love and live song and honey-...
...Love , that is first and last of all things made, The light...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A Ballad of Life
A Ballad of Death
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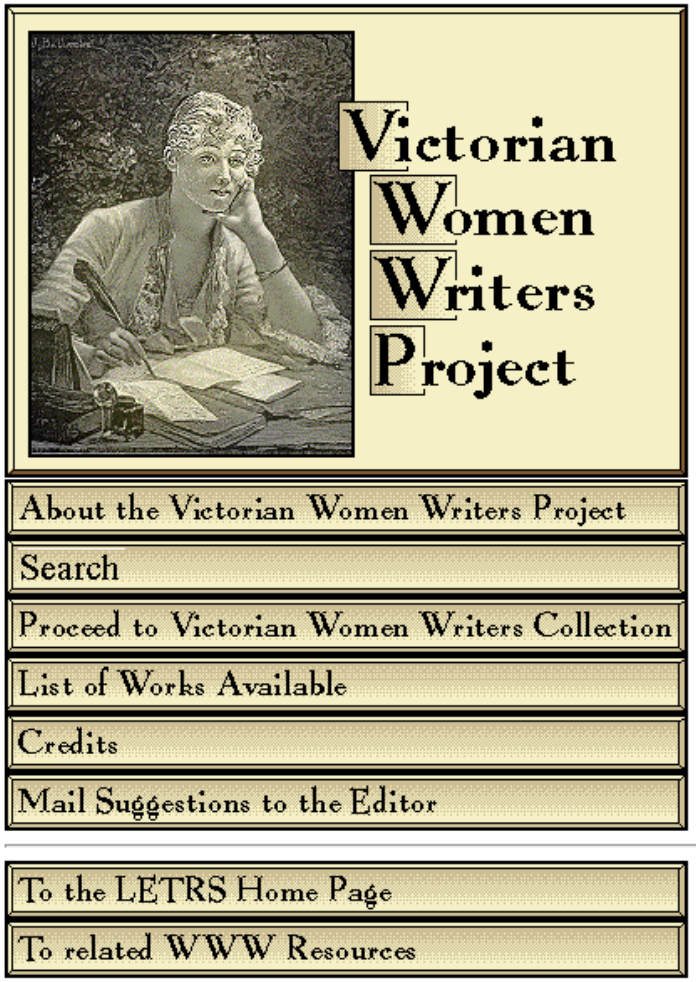
Anactoria
Algernon Charles Swinburne
page: 57
ANACTORIA
τίνος αὖ τὺ πειθοῖ
μὰψ σαγηνεύσας φιλότατας
SAPPHO.
My life is bitter with thy love; thine eyes
Blind me, thy tresses burn me, thy sharp sighs
Divide my flesh and spirit with soft sound,
And my blood strengthens, and my veins abound.
I pray thee sigh not, speak not, draw not breath;
Let life burn down, and dream it is not death.
I would the sea had hidden us, the fire
(Wilt thou fear that, and fear not my desire?)
Severed the bones that bleach, the flesh that cleaves,
And let our sifted ashes drop like leaves.
I feel thy blood against my blood: my pain
Pains thee, and lips bruise lips, and vein stings vein.
Let fruit be crushed on fruit, let flower on flower,
Breast kindle breast, and either burn one hour.
Why wilt thou follow lesser loves? are thine
Too weak to bear these hands and lips of mine?
I charge thee for my life's sake, O too sweet
To crush love with thy cruel faultless feet,
I charge thee keep thy lips from hers or his,
Sweetest, till theirs be sweeter than my kiss:
Lest I too lure, a swallow for a dove,
Erotion or Erinna to my love.
page: 58

Moving to a New, Improved VWWP Web site!



Phases to the Web Development Work

- ***Phase 1*: Migrating original texts for standard browse, search access and full-text display functionality; improved interface design**
- *Phase 2*: Enhanced search features like genre, thematic access; Addition of contextual materials: critical and interpretive content (essays, static timelines, bibliographies, etc.); Generate links to related resources like Victorian Studies Bibliography and links into our library catalog
- *Phase 3*: Addition of page images for the legacy texts and new texts
- *Phase 4* (ongoing, exploratory phase): Experiment with the integration of open source third-party or locally-created tools to facilitate textual analysis, visualizations, annotations, mapping, dynamic timelines, etc.

Phase 1: Migrating Existing Web site and Content to New Platform and Current Standards

- Updating legacy texts from dated SGML TEI P3 standard to newest version of the XML TEI P5
- Harmonizing the legacy text encoding with the new encoding approaches (structural and semantic levels)
  - Promote consistency in searching and display of the original and new texts
  - Possible exceptions: thematic access to the old texts, precision of encoding for the various forms and genres, etc.
- Supporting an ongoing, distributed encoding environment (Xubmit e-text repository)
- Moving to a new e-text, open source delivery system (eXtensible Text Framework)
- Implementing a new, appealing interface design (steampunk – Victorian-era England meets sci-fi/fantasy? Victorian Arts and Crafts movement? Any suggestions?)

VWWP Core Project Team

- Angela Courtney: Project Management, English Liaison
- Michelle Dalmau: Project Management, Text Encoding Consultant
- Brian Norberg: Lead Text Encoder
- Bridgit McCafferty: Lead Text Encoder
- Randall Floyd: Web Developer
- Julie Hardesty: Web Designer

Graceful Degradation in the Digital Humanities

Degradation of a system in such a manner that it continues to operate, but provides a reduced level of service rather than failing completely

- Increasing discussion in the Digital Humanities community about this phenomenon
  - Research being conducted by Bethany Nowviskie, University of Virginia, Scholar's Lab and Dot Porter, Digital Humanities Observatory: http://graceful-degradation.questionpro.com/
  - *Digital Humanities Quarterly, Spring 2009, v3n2: Special Cluster "Done:" http://digitalhumanities.org/dhq/*

Graceful Degradation in the Digital Humanities (cont')

"Decline is a pressing issue for digital scholarship because of the tendency of our projects to be open ended. One could argue that digital projects are, by nature, in a continual state of transition or decline. What happens when the funding runs out, or the original project staff move on or are replaced? What happens when intellectual property rests with a collaborator or an institution that does not wish to continue the work? How, individually and as a community, do we weather changes in technology, the patterns of academic research, the vagaries of our sponsoring institutions?"

Bethany Nowviskie and Dot Porter

Digital Humanities Conference, 2009

VWWP Combats Graceful Degradation

- Build reliable partnerships with the English Department, the Libraries' Arts and Humanities Department and the Digital Library Program
- Build a sustainable model for ongoing support and contributions to the project
- Cultivate textual markup practices outside of the libraries and leverage domain expertise
- Integrate project as a core research and teaching tool for the English department

VWWP Measures of Success

- Ensure (initial) English department buy-in and continual collaboration by updating the VWWP functionality and modernizing the look-and-feel
- Establish a sustainable scholarly encoding framework which is inherently built into the English department curriculum
- Provide a consistent mechanism for scholar-generated critical content to accompany the encoded texts; facilitate connections between other DLP-supported Victorian projects like Swinburne and the Victorian Studies Bibliography
- Evolve the project in terms of encoding approaches, inclusion of critical contextual materials, and advanced functionality (e.g., visualizations, textual analysis tools, blog integration, etc.) so that it becomes a commonly used, dependable and relevant online resource that can be adopted as both a pedagogic and research tool for Victorian scholars

Questions? Comments?

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