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International Day for Indigenous People 9 August

Indigenous people and the UN

The world's estimated 370 million indigenous people are found on every continent, in more than 70 countries. They often face discrimination and are counted among those who are extremely poor, illiterate and without adequate health care and other social services. Frequently they are affected, in a disproportionate way, by the effects of climate change, deforestation and other forms of environmental degradation or exploitation.

As the realities and needs of indigenous people gain increased visibility, this is a moment to review some of the steps the United Nations has taken to make the voices of the indigenous heard and to protect their rights:

1) www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/index.html—website of the **UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**. The most recent gathering of this advisory body to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) was held in New York from May 18-29, 2009, bringing together about 2,000 indigenous representatives from around the world, representatives from different countries and UN bodies, as well as civil society, NGOs, and academia. A report of this session can be found on the website mentioned above. One of the issues discussed was a report on extractive industries (e.g., mineral, oil and gas extraction) and their impact on indigenous communities.

2) www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/declaration.html — website of the **UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on September 13, 2007. Of the four states that

voted against the declaration in 2007, the Australian government has indicated in early 2009 its readiness to endorse the declaration. The declaration is available in the six official languages of the UN (with an unofficial translation on the above website in Maori ...)

3) www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/second.html— website of the **Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (2005-2014)**. The goal of this Decade is to further strengthen “international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous people in such areas as culture, education, health, human rights, the environment and social and economic development, by means of action-oriented programmes and specific projects, increased technical assistance and relevant standard-setting activities.” (A/RES/59/174).

4) <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/indigenous/rapporteur/> — website with information about the mandate and work of the **UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples**, Mr. James Anaya. For urgent action by the Special Rapporteur in the case of alleged human rights violations, please contact: urgent-action@ohchr.org

Cecile Meijer, rscj NGO Office July 2009

[/www.rscjinternational.org/en/our-presence-at-the-un/annual-days-and-weeks/2546-9-august-international-day-of-the-worlds-indigenous-people.html](http://www.rscjinternational.org/en/our-presence-at-the-un/annual-days-and-weeks/2546-9-august-international-day-of-the-worlds-indigenous-people.html)

Living Justly in Aotearoa

*... a justice, peace and integrity of creation newsletter ...
from Pax Christi Aotearoa New Zealand
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Working through Whiteness

... what is needed today might be called a missiology of risk which, fragile as it is, is shaped by the ever-present Spirit's call to lives of empathy, love, responsibility and accountability, instead of a missiology of control which assumes that it is possible to guarantee the efficacy of one's action if one only tries hard enough, which all too often ends up in a kind of cultured despair.

The notion of a missiology of risk that values finitude, interdependence, change and particularity offers a powerful and stimulating model for the search for theological and theoretical perspectives in mission that respond to the complexity and dynamism of life.

Katja Heidemanns
2004

A few quotes to give an idea of current reading ...

The political nature of "settlement" has not, however, been absent in more obviously "settler" cultures like Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, but in some ways the term "settler colonies" covered up the real politics of these cultures. It seem to refer mainly to the very obvious majority white populations without taking into account of the physical violence and representational erasure done to indigenous communities in order to achieve that "whiteness." In the 1980s, analysts of colonialism and postcolonialism began to reexamine the implications of "settler colonies," to emphasize the violence that the single, ostensibly benign, term "settler" concealed. This essay uses the term "settler" for terms of brevity, but the "invader" rider should always be kept in mind, as it is in the theory. (Johnston and Lawson 2000:362)

A key element in settler postcolonial theory is an examination of the processes by which emigrant European settlers "displaced" indigenous occupants. This displacement took many different forms. It was physical, geographical, spiritual, cultural, and symbolic. Indigenous peoples were characteristically moved from their traditional lands onto less desirable tracts of country: this happened in the history of settlement of the United States, New Zealand, South Africa, Canada, Argentina, and Australia. (Johnston and Lawson 2000:363)

Whiteness is not just about bodies and skin colour; instead it is 'more about the discursive practices that, because of colonialism and neocolonialism, privilege and sustain global dominance of white imperial subjects' (Moreton-Robinson 2002:78). [Australian Aboriginal feminist]

In a classic article, first published in 1988 but reprinted many times, Peggy McIntosh (1998) drew parallels between denials men engage in to avoid recognising male privilege and the denials that obscure the dimensions of white privilege. The most widely cited premise of critical studies of whiteness is that white people do not recognise 'their unearned racial privileges' (Rasmussen et al. 2001:10). For bell hooks, 'white people's absence of recognition of their race is a strategy that facilitates making a group, the "other"' (1992:167).

The 'other' has become the key word in understanding the relationship between privilege and oppression. (Pease 2002:120) [Australian]

Whiteness and race are "real." Like gender, they help shape an individual's sense of self, experiences, and life chances, and they have lasting, real, tangible, and complex effects. ... Moreton-Robinson notes that when white women are not racialized, "race privilege remains uninterrogated as a source of oppression and inequality." (Radford Curry 2004:246) [USA]

The knowledges we have developed are often dismissed as being implausible, subjective and lacking epistemological integrity. This is despite the fact that colonial experiences have meant Indigenous people have been among the nation's most conscientious students of whiteness and racialisation. Participant observation was our method for acquiring knowledge of our total environment and it was deployed to gain knowledge about white people. Indigenous knowledge of whiteness is more than a denial of dominant assumptions regarding the reality of race and the superiority of whites; such knowledge is not simply a reaction to what whites do and say. Our curiosity, compassion and knowledge of what constitutes humanity inform our consideration of a variety of white behaviours, histories, cultural practices and texts. (Moreton-Robinson 2002:85)

Critical whiteness reflects the beginnings of a possible reframing of race relations work. ... The project initiates a rigorous, critical problematization of whiteness as active participant in processes of domination rather than of racialized difference as the effect of such processes. Toni Morrison advocates the approach in these words: "My project is an effort to avert the critical gaze from the racial object to the racial subject; from the described and imagined to the describers and imaginers; from the serving to the served" (1992, 90) (Levine-Rasky 2002:11) [Canadian feminist]

Working *through* whiteness infers a desire to struggle against the inequities that whiteness arranges. (Levine-Rasky 2002:18)

David Tutty *Pax Christi Aotearoa-New Zealand*

There is a Future for the Peaceful

NZ Prime Minister John Key has been under increasing pressure to send another Special Air Services (SAS) squad to join the a renewed US/NATO/ ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) effort to control Afghanistan. Mr Key told a 27 July press conference that he was “*sympathetic to arguments that more troops are needed to stabilise the troubled country*”.

At the same time, he said that his cabinet’s decision would be based on “*what is perceived to be in the best interests of New Zealand*”. While insisting that he was listening to the New Zealand people on the issue, he also referred to the safety of New Zealanders around the world and the dangers posed by an unstable Afghanistan as a “*base for terrorist attacks around the world.*” This seems to indicate that he is bending to pressure from the US and Australia to see our best interests in a renewal of the abandoned ANZUS alliance and in lining up with the rest of the ‘Western Alliance’ in ‘confronting Terror’. The 27 June release also contained indications of US pressure from ambassador to North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), Ivo Daalder. He urged New Zealand to consider its relations with the US, Australia and other ‘allies’: “*God forbid there be a threat to New Zealand. Wouldn’t it be good for a country like Holland or Canada or Slovakia or the US to be ‘there for you’?*” (NZPA 23 July 2009)

There are many counter indications that NZ would do well to stay as far away as possible from such considerations. Helena Cobban in *Just World News* 27 July 2009, says: “*... many Americans still have a lot of concern about future Al-Qaeda attacks, or about Afghanistan once again turning to the kind of place where Al-Qaeda can find a safe haven for organising its heinous plots. But once again, the insertion, use and maintenance of a large western military force in the Afghan-Pakistan border regions seems like just about the worst, and most counter-productive way to respond to these concerns.*”

History and reason would seem to agree. Afghanistan has proved impossible to conquer and control in the past, while it seems that terrorism, wherever it occurs, is a desperate response by the dominated to their domination by great military force.

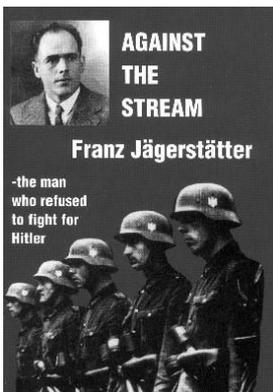
Malalai Joya, exiled Afghani woman parliamentarian, says: “*I don’t believe it is in your interest to see more of your people sent off to war, and to have more of your tax-payers’ money going to fund an occupation that keeps a gang of corrupt war-lords in power in Kabul ... the longer this occupation continues, the worse the civil war will be. We want a helping hand through international solidarity, but we know that values like human rights must be fought for by the Afghans themselves.*” (*The Guardian* 26 July 2009)

John Key would do well to heed this message and put funds about to be squandered on fruitless military adventures into that ‘international solidarity’, supporting Afghani civil society in their struggle for human rights and values.

Let Psalm 37 and John Dear have the last word: “*The meek shall possess the earth. They shall delight in abounding peace ... There is a future for the peaceful. The wicked draw a sword ... But their swords shall pierce their own hearts and their bows shall be broken ... People of war are a futureless people ... By continuing to build weapons of mass destruction, by waging war, squandering the world’s resources, slaughtering the world’s poor, we not only lose any sense of peace, morality or spirituality. The stakes are much higher – we lose our future.*” (*National Catholic Reporter* 28 July 2009)

Let’s not go there.

Kevin McBride Pax Christi Aotearoa-New Zealand



9 August 2009 = Commemoration Franz Jägerstätter Conscientious Objector: Refused to Fight in Hitler’s Army

“Thus I believe God has shown me most clearly through this dream, or revelation, and has convinced me in my heart how I must answer the question: should I be National Socialist [Nazi] or Catholic? I would like to call out to everyone who is riding on this train: ‘Jump out before the train reaches its destination, even if it costs you your life!’” ...

Others, including priests, tried to convince Jägerstätter to change his mind, in order to save his life, especially since he had a wife and three small children. Jägerstätter, however, expressed his belief that perhaps the best thing he could do for his family was to refuse to cooperate with the Nazis. He would rather his children have a father martyred for following Christ than a Nazi for a father.

Prophetic Vocation for Women to Guard Water

o Women and men were born from her/his mother. God creates womb in the woman's body. What the meaning of this reality? Women have to care human life from her body, her mind and heart, her faith. But, woman cannot take care by herself, because her ecology influences her life. She needs to support her body with health food, clean water for reproductive health and many kinds of herbs to prevent her from sickness. She has to maintain her healthy not only for herself, but also for the offspring. Every child eats originally from and as her/his mother eats. Women Reproductive Health depends on the good ecology.

o Human drama happened in Buyat Pante, North Sulawesi Indonesia in the year 2000. There, a mining gold industry "New Mont" threw away tailing to the Buyat bay. This bay is the source of economic life for fishermen Buyat Pante. All fish go away from this bay and some fish had polluted by chemical arsenic, antimony, mercury and manganese. Tailing from the gold mining had been polluted fish and also the river and well, the source of clean water of the peoples. Slowly the people's health decrease. First of all children feel itches, then emerges swallow on their body. Women also feel like this, but special for women they get problem for their menstruation. They bleeding and come out black blood clot from their womb. In that time there are some pregnant women. The baby were born unhealthy, their skin scaly, and most of them died before 5 years old.

o From that story I learn that clean water is urgent need to woman reproductive health, especially the need for woman vagina, womb and other reproductive organ cleanness. Womb is the place where human life to begin processing.

.....

o Water is a primordial reality and it has urgent role for human life and its ecology. Water symbolized every step of human life. Ancient myth and modern science agree and determined water as the original of life, fetal membrane water is the place human being starts her/his life. Water has its own circle and there outside cannot be controlled. Rain for all people without discrimination. Water is not private possession. But when government policy controlled the water, human rights for water become a serious problem of life. This situation conscious us for reflecting to our original life.

o The scriptural view of the earth and ecology told us that in the beginning of life is God. The biblical creation story opens with a vision of darkness, wind and water (Gen.1:2). Out of the Creator's energies the elements emerged. Form-

less matter takes form. The Creator fills the void with land and water (Gen.1:6-10). The Creator inaugurates creation with power, and there was light (Gen.1:3). Again and again, act by act, the Creator spoke and it happened. God saw that everything was "good" (Gen.1: 12). Creation mirrored the goodness of the Creator in the responsive relationship of all species. God gives all the creatures to people because of love. Therefore the Psalm praise the Creator as the One who sustains what we now call the earthly ecosystem, the web of life (Psalm 104:10-12; 16-18,24)

o Prophetic tradition views pollution is a biblical term that conveys God's disgust at the moral fouling of human relationship and the impact of social degradation upon God's beloved Earth. In our day the word pollution depicts environmental contamination. The prophets obviously lacked our scientific knowledge, but they were highly sensitive to the interaction that knit the human community to the natural landscape and the divine purpose. The prophets saw that pollutant, entering the sensitive web of life at once point, spread quickly through the whole. Although concerned about the impact of pollution upon human welfare, they were equally concerned about God's honor and the health of the landscape (Isaiah 24: 4-6). The prophets always spoke out when the King abuse his power to destruct ecology as the source of life. The prophets missions to proclaim justice in the world include justice for nature. The new vision of justice culminates in a covenant between the Creator and the created. The land is removed from politics to the realm of ethical decision.

o Jesus' embraced the world is description of the Reign of God. The Gospel of John begins with "in the beginning was the Word" (John 1:1). This is a meditation on the word of God. John identified Christ with the whole creative process (John 1:1-5). Out of the creative process emerged the world. Jesus came in this world to renew the creation of God. The Kingdom that Jesus announced embraced the life of this world, animal, vegetable, and all human. Jesus used parables for his teaching. Most of his parables related with nature, agriculture, food and human life. Jesus did condemn the greed for power and wealth, which brings about unnecessary poverty and inhuman oppression. For to day, what Jesus' condemn is the government abuse of power by policy which destruct ecosystem. Global regulation is controlled by big industry countries and do not pay attention to develop countries. The "Few Country" make unjust decision for "The Many Countries".

o Christian tradition as Franciscan spirituality reflected to the nature. Saint Francisco from Assisi admired God's creature

Prophetic Vocation (cont)

and doing theology through nature. He called water as his sister, sister water. Ecology is our sibling, who take care our life, so we have to love her, by caring and guarding. We can also learn from modern theology “*the earth as revelatory*” theology of Thomas Berry. He rejoices over the Earth’s evolutionary history and its revelatory dimension. Through his analysis he found that nowadays, people especially in industry countries, have substituted the myth of Creation and vision of the Reign of God in the Earth to progress basic on production and accumulation capitals. Berry considers today and every day, every moment, a new moment of revelation. In each moment we are made aware of how the Divine operates in and through the universe.

Another theology from Sallie McFague, as another feminist theologian, she suggested the model of God. She rejects the Enlightenment perspective which separate God with the human being, God and nature. This view influenced people see themselves as separate from everything else. The world was there for human to use as they wished and God taking a power distant interest. McFague believes that there are good reasons for rethinking our views of God. We view God affects how we view ourselves, our role in the world, our responsibility for the fate of the world. Human hold in their hands the fate of many millions of species, including their own. So we can and should re-envision God to realize God authority. She reminds us that we view God as King or as Father only a metaphor. Metaphor might be present such a destabilizing, challenging, loving God to us. There fore McFague says that God and human connected one another, because God loves human and the world. She views Earth as God’s body. God incarnate to Jesus is a passionate love and bonding with the Earth. When we view the Earth as God’s body, for Christian profoundly change our relationship with the world. We also love the world for caring and sustaining. [Nancy C. Wright & Donald Kill, *Ecological Healing, A Christian Vision*, Orbis Book, NY, 1993]

o The theology of world includes our theology of water and earth. From theology of Creation to theology of Incarnation can inspire us to do

theology of water and earth. Making equal relationship, caring water and earth as our sisters are our manifestation our love to God, our response to God’s love.

Let us joint the Social Movement to change the World

o Faith without doing is nonsense. Doing theology for ecology can be expressed through many kinds of activities and concrete action. From the prophetic dimension we have to proclaim justice and peace for all creation. We are called to invite people go into process sustain discernment.

o Women are called to the original authority as water resources guard, saved food manager and caring the earth. Women are in the security food chain, from water, soil, seed, crops, herbs, spices, fuel and nutrient food. The wisdom of women often unvoiced, should be more fully utilized by all social units, their families, communities and government. Feminist power should be promoted, by village women empowerment. Village women society hid a lot of feminist potential regarding their close relationship with ecology and culture. We have to dig more and more these feminist potential.

o We as woman can do: Learning to become ecological activist. Develop our awareness and invite another to joint us save the world, Create women community as motor of social movement and caring to the water. Earth and security food, to do social analysis in feminist perspective continuously, supporting organic farming and food sovereignty movement.

o World Social Forum provides opportunity to women and supported this movement to change the world to the Justice and Peace world and people joint to our process transformation. This process begins from me first.

Nunuk P.Murniati
Indonesian Catholic Feminist Theologian and Asia Region Coordinator — EATWOT— Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians
Yogyakarta, September 2008

We
feel
the
urgent
need
to
reinvent
our
dreams
of
love
and
justice,
and
our
capacity
for
communion
mercy
and
solidarity.

Ivone
Gebara
Catholic Brazilian
Feminist
Theologian

God is Creation: Womanist Theology & the Earth

Womanist theology is a liberation theology emerging from the African American Christian community using black women's experience to interpret God's relationship to the world, human relationships, and community to community. While "community" has traditionally meant "the community of human beings," I intend to establish a womanist theological concern for all life forms in nature which in turn augments an ecological justice stance for the earth. The environment is relevant to womanist theology because it is God's sacred creation. Shamara Shantu Riley notes the similarity between womanism and ecology:

"There is no use in womanists advocating liberation politics if the planet cannot support people's liberated lives, and it is equally useless to advocate saving the planet without addressing the social issues that determine the structure of human relations in the world" (Riley 2004:415).

The future of the earth is an issue that is relevant for all people, including African-American women. One of the goals of womanist theology is to bring black women's experience into the hermeneutical circle of Christian theology from which it has been excluded. If the experience of women of African descent in the United States is brought into the hermeneutical circle of God-talk related to ecological reflections on Christian experience, themes related to a theological understanding of ecology linked to creation is of central importance.

Womanist theological methodology emphasizes biblical narrative and personal experience. A Womanist standpoint on creation underscores that God's formation of the earth has four movements. First, God's earth emerged out of nothingness. Second, all that God created was embraced by notion of "goodness." Third, humans were made the image of God. Finally, God was present and active in the creation process.

Womanist theologian Karen Baker-Fletcher interprets the creation stories in Genesis 1 to suggest that God created the world out of nothing -- *creation ex nihilo*. Her theological understanding of creation is supplemented by personal experience. She writes about her grandmother who created wonderful meals out of scraps and made bedspreads out of old curtains. "Womanists write from the wisdom of African-American women whose survival has depended on a God who can make something out of nothing" (Baker-Fletcher 2004:432). She writes elsewhere that, "God who 'makes something out of nothing' and a 'way out of no way' is like the poor mothers of the globe, who with other women in their families or communities pull a scarcity of resources together

to produce a context of sustenance for their young" (2006:71-72).

As the drama of creation unfolds in Genesis 1 a repeated phrase used throughout the chapter is, "And God saw that it was good." [Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31.] This means that all life created by God has inherent significance and value. Baker-Fletcher used African American culture to explain, saying in her text, "As African-American preachers and church mothers often say, "God don't make no junk!" (Baker-Fletcher 2004:435).

The theme of the integrity of God's creation is reinforced by Patricia L. Hunter, who writes, "If *all* God created was very good, including humankind, then *all* women, regardless of ethnicity, class, or varying abilities, are a part of God's very good creation" (Hunter 1993:189-90). Hunter argues that God's "good" creation requires all women regardless of their race/ethnicity, economic status, or ability be treated with righteous justice.

A second goal of womanist theology is to deconstruct the colonized minds of the oppressed. The God who creates must be understood in ways that move beyond traditional white Euro-centric patriarchal interpretations. God is neither white nor male. Hunter maintains that "What is critical for Christian women of color is to understand the contradiction of believing all of creation is good (including women of color) while treating ourselves as less than acceptable to God, and accepting despicable treatment from men and other women" (1993:190). Therefore, it is essential for African-American women to identify with the Imago Dei in whose image they are made.

A womanist theological understanding of creation is foundational if we who are African American and women in the United States context are to take environmental justice issues seriously. It is the very notion that God's presence is creation that is centrally important for the work of Womanist theology as a liberation theology advocating for justice for the earth. As Shug Avery a character in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* tells her friend, Celie, "It pisses God off if you walk by the color purple in a field somewhere and don't notice it." As a womanist theologian, I like womanist philosopher and novelist Alice Walker believe that "God is everything... Everything that is or ever was or ever will be" (Walker 1992:166). Indeed, God is God's creation.

Linda E. Thomas
US-EATWOT Theologian

The task then identified by many anti-racist activists and scholars is to make whiteness more visible.

Just as feminism has challenged men to critically reflect upon their masculinity, so anti-racism challenges white people to reflect upon what it means to be white.

Just as men have been challenged not to take 'male' for granted, so white people have been challenged not to take 'white' for granted.

For white men, of course, this involves a double challenge.

.....

Injustice and inequality are easier to recognise than privilege and power of the dominant racial and cultural group, which tends to remain normalised and unscrutinised.

Frankenberg argues
(in White Women, Race Matters 1993)
the recognition of white race privilege in the relations of race is more difficult than the recognition of the oppression of others.

Bob Pease

Australian Whiteness Theorist

Decentring white men: critical reflections on masculinity and white studies 2002

An important part of this process of undoing privilege is 'learning to see ourselves as others see us'.

Kincheloe and Steinberg (2000) argue that if white men see themselves through the eyes of indigenous peoples and peoples of colour, they may be more able to confront 'their tendency to disown the continued existence of racism'.

So a key aspect of challenging white subjectivities involves inducing white people to listen to non-whites.

This means that we must take the perspective of those that we define as 'the other' seriously. We must study the insights of indigenous peoples and others from non-white cultures not only to understand their experience of oppression but also to learn about their ways of living in the world.

One of the other dangers of critical whiteness studies is that whites may only read what other whites have to say about whiteness, just as many masculinity scholars do not read feminism.

Subordinate groups 'have done most of the work of figuring out how privilege and oppression operate', so we need to read what they have written.

It is important to remember that the most important work on whiteness has been written by people who are not white.

Bob Pease

Australian Whiteness Theorist

Decentring white men: critical reflections on masculinity and white studies 2002

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*We are joined by a common determination to work
for a society in which all have the right and ability
to take part in the political, social and economic structures
which affect our lives.*

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Contact Barbara 372 7026

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*For information and resources on Peace Issues
including Indigenous issues, Te Tiriti o Waitangi,
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... .. **Anthony Gittins CSSp**

Catholic Missiologist Chicago

Nobody is completely objective, dispassionate, or open-minded.

*Wherever we go, we bring with us our not-so-hidden
agendas and preferences. None of us comes to
new situations utterly naïve or entirely open. ...*

*We carry with us preunderstandings: tendencies, biases,
and assumptions that we use to make sense of the world.
We must identify and unmask them. Then we will realize
just how we interpret the world and how culture-bound
and limited our interpretations sometimes are.*

We Pray

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O God

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We
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