W.E.B. Du Bois Department of Afro-American Studies Celebrates Its 40th Anniversary

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Steve Tracy has added another book to the volumes he is working on during his sabbatical in Spring 2010. In addition to his book on the blues and American literature for Oxford University Press and Chicago Bound: Black Writers of the Chicago Renaissance for University of Illinois Press, he will be editing a 500 page volume on roots music for Ashgate (UK) Publishers Library of Popular Music. The volume will include articles on blues, country, bluegrass, zydeco, and various other types of roots music selected by Steve, who will also provide an extensive introduction for the volume. This Spring, two pieces he wrote dealing with August Wilson will be published in a volume on Wilson for the University of Iowa Press. Oxford University Press will also be releasing his edition of Roark Bradford’s "John Henry" novel and play in paperback next Spring.

Steve Tracy returned to China for his second visit in October 2009. Invited by Central China Normal University (CCNU) to lecture and Zhejiang Normal University to deliver a keynote address, Steve spent six days in China talking with students and professors and sightseeing at cave sites and monuments in Central China. Steve's lecture on Sterling Brown, "Syncopating Heroes in Sterling Brown's Poetry," was attended by 250-300 graduate students and faculty, most of whom knew little about Sterling Brown or the folk heroes that turned up in his works. Two grad students, Barbara and Shirley, ushered Steve around Wuhan, showing him local landmarks and the theatre, outside of which Steve played harmonica for local children, who were very inquisitive about the strange man with the strange instrument.

Scholars from all over China attended the conference, which featured panels and papers on a variety of subjects in American studies. Steve's talk on the second day, "Without Respect for Gender," preceded by "Swing Low Sweet Chariot" in honor of Obama's rise to the presidency, was well received, and has been accepted for publication in Foreign Literature Studies (FLS). At dinner the second night, Steve found himself sitting at a table with all women (the night before it had been all men) taking some good-natured ribbing regarding his manual dexterity with the chopsticks. When the final dish came out--noodles in a slippery sauce--the ladies just looked at him and burst out laughing.

After many pictures and goodbyes, Steve took his leave of the conference, flying to Beijing and then Chicago, and ultimately to Bradley airport.
Congratulations to our Class of 2010!

**PH.D. GRADUATES**

Catherine L. Adams earned degrees from Johnson C. Smith University and Temple University. She recently defended her dissertation titled, "Africanizing the Territory: The History, Memory and Contemporary Imagination of Black Frontier Settlements," chaired by Michael Thelwell, Emeritus Professor. Her research interests include nineteenth- and twentieth-century African American literature, especially migration, nationalism and transnationalism narratives. She currently resides in Greenville, North Carolina.

Jacqueline M. Jones is an Assistant Professor of English at LaGuardia Community College, CUNY and is originally from the Bronx, New York. Jackie received her B.A. from SUNY Geneseo and an M.A. in Afro-American Studies at UMass Amherst. The title of her dissertation is “Where I Want To Be: African American Women’s Novels and the Journey toward Selfhood during the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements,” chaired by Professor James Smethurst.

David Lucander is currently teaching at Rockland Community College. He received his B.A. from Westfield State College majoring in History and his M.A. in Afro-American Studies at UMass Amherst. His research interests are Twentieth Century African American History, social movements and grassroots protest. David’s dissertation title is “It is a New Kind of Militancy”: March on Washington Movement, 1941-1946, chaired by Professor John H. Bracey, Jr. David is originally from Springfield, Massachusetts.

Christopher Tinson is currently an Assistant Professor of African American Studies at Hampshire College. He earned an M.A. in Ethnic Studies from San Francisco State University and a B.A. from California State University, Dominguez Hills. His interdisciplinary research and teaching interests include black radical traditions, pan-Africanism, Hip-Hop culture, race and sports, critical media studies, and community-based education. The title of his dissertation is “The Fight For Freedom Must Be Fought On All Fronts: The Liberator Magazine and Black Radicalism In The United States, 1960-1971,” chaired by Professor Ernest Allen, Jr. Chris is a resident of Holyoke and is a co-host of TRGGR Radio, a Hip-Hop-rooted Social Justice radio program on WMUA 91.1 FM at UMass Amherst.

**B.A. Graduates**

Sonia Gloss and Leslie White
Emahunn Raheem Ali Campbell received his B.A. in English and B.S. in Political Science from the University of Virginia's College at Wise, and his M.A. in English from the University of Memphis. His research interests focus on Marxism, post-structuralism, Caribbean philosophy, Black Arts movement, prison arts movement, and literature of the left. Emahunn was born and raised in Washington, D.C.

Julia Charles is from Greensboro, North Carolina. She received her B.A. in English from Bennett College and an M.A. in English and African American Literature from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. Julia has spent many years advocating for youth and young adults in the foster care system across the country. She is a motivational speaker and has traveled extensively throughout the country sharing her experiences. She is the author of “Surviving the Storm: the Life of a Child in Foster Care.” As a part of the W.E.B. Du Bois Department of African American Studies, Julia is on the literature and culture track where her interests are in Charles W. Chesnutt and James Baldwin.

Kelli Morgan was born and raised on the Westside of Detroit. Her interests in African-American history and culture began when she was in high school, but did not fully flourish until she became a student of Wayne State University in 2000. Kelli graduated from Wayne State University with a cum laude B.A. degree in 2006. She was a Ronald E. McNair Scholar and most recently, a recipient of the Dudley Randall Endowed Scholarship from the Department of Africana Studies. These are only some of the highlights of her activities at Wayne State University. Additionally, she has been readily involved in extracurricular activities involving the Department of Africana Studies and in the broader Detroit metropolitan community.

Agyei Tyehimba was born and raised in Harlem, NY. He did his undergraduate work at Syracuse University where he earned a Bachelor's degree in Sociology. He earned his Master's degree in Africana Studies from the Africana Studies and Research Center at Cornell University, under the mentorship of Dr. James Turner. He and other educators founded KAPPA Middle School in the Bronx, NY in 2000. In 2007, he co-authored Game Over: The Rise and Redemption of a Harlem Hustler, published by Simon & Schuster. Agyei’s research interests include black power, black nationalism, and black student activism in the 20th Century.

Fangfang (Barbara) Zhu is from China. She received her B.A. in English and an M.A. in British and American Literature from Central China Normal University. Barbara’s research interests focus on 20th century Afro-American literature, as well as music and literature.
CURRENT GRADUATE STUDENTS

Flávia Santos de Araújo is from the Northeast of Brazil. Having earned both her B.A. and M.A. in Literature at the Federal University of Paraíba (Brazil), she is interested in developing her doctorate research on the literary representations of Afro-descendant women in the American diaspora, focusing on the production by women writers of African descent in the region.

Kabria Baumgartner is a native of Los Angeles, California where she completed both an M.A. in Afro-American Studies and a B.A. in English at University of California. Kabria’s research interests are nineteenth century African American history and culture, African American education, and slavery. Her dissertation examines educational opportunities for young African American women in antebellum America. Kabria has been awarded a 2010-2011 Spencer Foundation Dissertation Fellowship.

H. Zahra Caldwell was born and raised in New York. She has a B.A. in both Black Studies and History from SUNY New Paltz, an M.A. in Black Politics from Howard University, and a M.A.T. from American University. Zahra’s research interests center around African American women and image in the forties and fifties as well as black cultural history. Zahra is a 2010-2011 Dissertation Fellow at SUNY Oneonta.

James Carroll is writing his dissertation titled "Vernacular tradition and political innovation: Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, Sun Ra, and the African Atlantic." He completed an M.M. in jazz composition in 1998 at UMass Amherst. Jim and his family are currently living in Carriacou, Grenada while his wife, Valerie Joseph, does anthropological fieldwork.

Savannah Carroll is a native of San Antonio, Texas. Her dissertation will focus on the intersection of race, gender, and nation for the black population in Mexico during the 20th and 21st centuries. She holds a B.A. from Arizona State University in Political Science and African American Studies.

Alex Carter received his B.A. from Alabama State University and an M.A. from the University of Iowa. His academic interest is the Black Panther Party's international influence on social movements, specifically, with the Dalit Panthers of South Asia. Alex is a native son of Washington, D.C.

Markeysha Davis’ research interests include urban poetry (modernist), black social and political thought, Pan-Africanist intellectual thought and literary movements, among others. Her dissertation will be centered on the poetry of the Black Arts Movement and the concept of nation building through art and performance. She hails from Detroit, Michigan.

Crystal Donkor received her B.A. from New York University in English and Africana Studies, and her M.Ed. from CUNY Lehman in Middle and High School English Education. Crystal’s research interests include multicultural education and reclaiming African-American women's voices through historical literature. She is from the Bronx, New York.
CURRENT GRADUATE STUDENTS

Vanessa Fabien is from Miami, Florida where she completed her B.A. in Afro-American Studies at the University of Florida. Her research interests center around ecofeminism, environmental ethics and the impact of environmental degradation upon disadvantaged communities of color. She is specifically studying the Southern Tenant Farmers Union and the activism of black women within the union.

Jonathan Fenderson was born and raised in Southern California. He holds a B.A. in Africana Studies from California State University Dominguez Hills and a Masters from Cornell University’s Africana Studies and Research Center. His research interests include African American history, 20th Century African diasporic cultural movements, and Africana Studies. Jonathan received a two-year pre-doctoral fellowship at the Carter G. Woodson Fellowship at the University of Virginia.

Donald Geesling received his B.A. and M.A. in History from the University of Tulsa. His research interests include twentieth century black cultural politics, jazz studies, black intellectual history, and the Black Arts Movement. His dissertation will focus on the life and professional career of the groundbreaking African American poet, singer, novelist, and activist, Gill Scott-Heron. In addition to scholarly pursuits, Geesling has been a professional musician for over two decades, recording and performing live on the Hammond B-3 and Fender bass.

Ernest L. Gibson III, received his B.A. in Religious and Philosophical Studies from Fisk University and his M.A. in American Studies from Purdue University. Ernest’s research interests include: twentieth-century African American literature; race, gender and sexuality studies; literary, cultural and critical race theory; African American philosophical thought; and Greek mythology. His dissertation research explores the notion of the Fraternal in the fiction of James Baldwin.

DeRoy Gordon received his B.A. in Political Science from Long Island University and an M.A. in Public Administration/Public Management from John Jay College of Criminal Justice in N.Y. His research interests are African American politics focusing on 19th Century African American political theory.

J. Anthony Guillory is from the Lone Star State. He received his B.A. in Theology at Texas Lutheran University. Anthony’s research interests include education history of African Americans in the South; class variation in southern African American communities; and the historical relationship between black athleticism and mainstream sport.

Jason Hendrickson was born and raised in New York City and graduated from Duke University with a B.A. in African and African American Studies. His research interests include the Harlem Renaissance, discourses of gender vis-à-vis constructions of masculinity/femininity, whiteness studies, African American poetry, and hip-hop studies. Jason’s dissertation will examine how Black writers during the Harlem Renaissance conceptualize, integrate and/or marginalize Africa and as a referent for heritage and identity.

Allia Matta is from Queens, New York. She completed her B.A. in Liberal Arts at Bard College and her M.A. in English from Long Island University. Her research explores the literary and cultural production of African/African Diaspora women writers and artists. Allia received a 2010-2011 Diversity Assistantship from the Graduate School at UMass Amherst.
CURRENT GRADUATE STUDENTS

**McKinley Melton** is originally from Marietta, Georgia. He received his B.A. in English and African and African American Studies from Duke University. McKinley is currently writing his dissertation, "Pen Stroking the Soul of a People: Spiritual Foundations of Black Diasporic Literature," which argues that black spirituality is central to black cultures by examining the centrality of black diasporic spiritual expression to the black literary tradition.

**Johanna Ortner** is an international student from Austria who started her undergraduate studies at the University of Vienna in the African Studies and American Studies for two years, before transferring to Rutgers University. She continued her undergraduate studies in African and African American Studies and graduated in May 2009. Johanna’s research interest is black women's history.

**Cynara Robinson** received her B.A. in Journalism and an M.A. in History from Howard University. Her research interests include looking at social movements of the 1960’s and 1970’s, inclusive of interests in the urban rebellions and those occurring on black college campuses. Cynara is from New Orleans, Louisiana.


**Cristina Tondeur** is from Chapel Hill, NC. She received her MA from Indiana University at Bloomington and is currently finishing her dissertation entitled, "We Are Tired of Your Games: A History of the Civil Rights Movement in Evansville, Indiana.” In addition to her dissertation research, Cristy also utilizes critical race theory in her other research, presentations, and community activism.

**Angelique Warner** received her B.A. and M.A. in English from Kent State University, and an M.F.A. in Creative Writing from New Mexico State University. The title of Angie’s dissertation is “Negotiating the Law: Black Women Writing Out The Abject”.

**Jamal Watson** received his B.A. in English from Georgetown University, M.S. in Journalism at Columbia University, and an M.A. in Afro-American Studies at UMass Amherst.

**Takao Yoshioka** is from Okayama-Ken, Japan. He received his B.A. in English and Afro-American Studies from Coe College, M.A. in African American World Studies at the University of Iowa, and an M.A. in Afro-American Studies at UMass Amherst. The title of Takao’s dissertation is “‘Between the World and Me’: The Concept of the ‘Marginal Man’ in the Fiction of Richard Wright”.

**Karla Zelaya** is from Brooklyn, New York. She received her B.A. from SUNY College at Cortland in English and an M.A. in Afro-American Studies from UMass Amherst. Karla’s dissertation title is, “Remember ‘Tis A Start: Uncovering Nineteenth-Century African American Literary Theory”.

**GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS & VIEWS**

**Kabria Baumgartner** received the Spencer Foundation Dissertation Fellowship, 2010-2011. She also received the Artz Research Award at Oberlin College to conduct archival research.

**Jonathan Fenderson** received a two-year pre-doctoral fellowship at the Carter G. Woodson Fellowship at the University of Virginia. Jonathan also was acknowledged at the 93rd Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) held in October, 2008 as the winner of the Graduate Student Essay Contest. He presented his essay entitled, “Large Ideas Which Never Got Down to Earth or Finance”: W.E.B. Du Bois, Carter G. Woodson, and the Encyclopedia Africana, 1909-1963” at a panel with other prize winners, and it will be published in a future issue of the *Journal of African American History*.

**H. Zahra Caldwell** is a 2010-2011 Dissertation Fellow in the Departments of Africana and Latino Studies and History at SUNY Oneonta.

**Allia Matta** received a 2010-2011 Diversity Assistantship from the Graduate School at UMass Amherst.

**Jason Hendrickson** and **Kabria Baumgartner** were selected to participate in the 2010 NCBS Ford Foundation Summer Institute for PhD Students. **Jonathan Fenderson** participated last summer and this summer he'll be serving as research assistant and program coordinator.

The **95th Annual ASALH National Conference** was held in Raleigh, North Carolina in October 2010. The theme was “The History of Black Economic Empowerment.” Graduate students such as Savannah Carroll, Markeysha Davis, Kelli Morgan, and Cynara K. Robinson presented their work. It was a great conference!

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**Surviving the Storm: the Life of a Child in Foster Care by Julia Charles** is a personal journey of the author’s life in foster care. She also shares stories of those who made a difference in her life and how they helped her build hope and faith for a better life. Now in her mid-twenties, Julia is hoping this book will speak to other youths in care as well as the adults who try to help them.

**Game Over, by Azie Faison and Agyei Tyehimba**

Faison was a ninth grade dropout who earned more than $100,000 a week selling cocaine in Harlem, New York, during the peak of America’s “War on Drugs” between 1983 and 1990. Faison, along with two partners, was an urban prince with cars, jewels, and people—in awe of this million-dollar phenomenon—at his feet. His legacy has been praised by hip-hop’s top names in their lyrics, and his life was the basis for the urban cult classic film *Paid in Full* starring Mekhi Phifer, Wood Harris, and rapper Cam’ron and produced by Jay-Z’s Roca-A-Fella Films.
FACULTY NEWS  (Continued from Page 2)

Professor Manisha Sinha received the Howard Foundation fellowship from Brown University for the 2009-2010 academic year. She delivered the OAH Distinguished lecture "Lincoln in the Age of Obama" at Sienna College in November, 2009 and completed a talk on John Brown, "His Truth is Marching On" for Historic New England in September 2009. She delivered a talk on abolition at Harvard University in March 2010 and co-convened a conference on Secession at the Filson Historical Society in November 2010. Professor Sinha has chaired and commented on panels on abolition for the American Studies Association Conference (November 2009) and the American Historical Association (January 2010). She was the Black History Month lecturer at Mariannopolis, a private school in Connecticut, in February 2010. Professor Sinha delivered the OAH Distinguished Lecture "Lincoln in the Age of Obama" at the Du Bois Lecture.

Professor Strickland participated in two panels at the NCBPS (National Conference on Black Political Scientists) on March 18-20th. His papers were “The Patriot Act: Does it Make Us Safer?” and “If Jefferson is Wrong, America is Wrong”. On April 13th, he spoke at Jackson State in Mississippi at the 2009-2010 Medgar Evers/Ella Baker Civil Rights Lecture Series on Black Power. On April 15-18th at the Remembrance 50 Years of SNCC in Raleigh, NC., Professor Strickland participated in the panel “Up South: SNCC’s Influence on the Northern Movement.” He also spoke at Brown University on April 22nd at “A Symposium for the 50th Anniversary of the Founding of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)”; and on “Black Politics: Independence or Integration?” On April 30th Professor Strickland lectured at the Franklin County Bar Association’s Law Day observance in Greenfield, Mass. His talk was “From Civil Rights to Pseudo Rights: A Fifty Year Perspective on How the Victimization of Black has become the Victimization of (almost) All.”

One hundred and fifty people crowded into the Amherst Room in the Campus Center to hear Sonia Sanchez, Sam Cornish, Everett Hoagland, and Askia Touré discuss the upsurge of poetry by African American writers in the 1960s and 1970s and read their own poems. The panel was part of a continuing series of events organized by the Du Bois Department of Afro-American Studies, supported by funding from the College of Humanities and Fine Arts, and sponsored by other African American Studies departments and programs at the Five Colleges. All of the speakers emphasized the long history of black poetry, its connection to the political struggle for freedom and equality and the continuing relevance of this literature to the present.

After being introduced by Afro-Am. graduate student Allia Matta, Everett Hoagland, the former poet laureate of New Bedford, set the tone for discussion, connecting past struggles of African Americans for social justice to the work of black poets in the 1960s and 1970s and to the responsibilities of artists in the present. Sam Cornish, the first (and current) poet laureate of Boston, spoke of his artistic evolution in Boston and his hometown of Baltimore during the 1960s and 1970s. He spoke of the period as one when it was possible for someone from poverty like himself to find success as a poet. He then read a poem about Harriet Tubman that he dedicated to his mother, a domestic worker like Tubman. Sonia Sanchez, poet, educator, playwright, and the author of more than fifteen books, talked about how the poets of the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s and 1970s were concerned with artistic and political liberation. At the core, she noted, they were investigating “what it meant to be human” and were trying to become more human in the best sense. Askia Touré, one of the most prolific poets and critics of the Black Arts Movement, and a winner of an American Book Award, spoke of the importance of elder artists and activists to the black poets of the 1960s and 1970s as well as the importance of keeping the spirit of that time alive now.

After the opening presentation, a lively discussion between the panelists and the audience took up such topics as the continuing significance of the Black Arts Movement, the relation of art and politics, and the social impact of language. The panel was followed by a book signing.
Congratulations to our Newlyweds!!

David Goldberg and Beth Cole
David Lucander and Ursala Wieczorek
David Swiderski and Cassiel Owens

Dr. Trimiko Melancon is currently an Assistant Professor of English, Women’s Studies, and African Studies at Auburn University. Congratulations to Trimiko for the renewal of her prestigious fellowship as a Visiting Scholar at Emory University’s James Weldon Johnson Institute for Advanced Interdisciplinary (2008-2010). She has also, commendably, had two articles recently published in the latest issues of African American Review, the official journal of the division of Black Literature of the Modern Language Association, and Callaloo. She is completing her book manuscript Unbought and Unbossed: Transgressive Black Women and the Politics of Representation.

Dr. Sandra Duvivier is an Assistant Professor of English at James Madison University where she teaches in Caribbean and African American literatures and gender studies. She is also a 2009-2010 Scholar-in-Residence, sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities and Ford Foundation, at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. She will complete her manuscript Beyond Nation, Beyond Diaspora: Mapping Transnational Black American Women’s Literature. Her publications appeared in Callaloo, MaComère, A House Divided and Jenda (forthcoming).

Dr. Jennifer Jensen-Wallach for her new book entitled, Richard Wright: From Black Boy to World Citizen (Ivan R. Dee Publishing, June 2010). She is currently an Assistant Professor of History at the University of North Texas.

Andrew Rosa (‘06)


Dr. Stephanie Y. Evans, Associate Professor at University of Florida, Gainesville, published a new book entitled, African Americans and Community Engagement in Higher Education, a co-edited volume that discusses the centrality of race in town/gown partnerships. She also has an article, “African American Women and International Research: Dr. Anna Julia Cooper’s Legacy of Study Abroad,” in Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad.

She also has a book chapter, "A Historical View of the Contributions of Black American Males in Higher Education" in Henry T. Frierson, Willie Pearson Jr., James H. Wyche. (Eds). The Diminishing Representation of Black American Male in Higher Education: A Critical Need for Reversals, Emerald Press. Dr. Evans was the 2009 ASALH Program Chair, Cincinnati, Ohio and has been tenured and promoted to Associate Professor.

ALUMNI NEWS
FALL 2011 COURSES

AFROAM 101. Introduction to Black Studies, 3 credits
Instructor: Donald Geesling
TuTh 9:30-10:45 a.m.

AFROAM 117. Survey of Afro-American Literature I, 4 credits, (AL,U)
Professor Tracy
Lecture: MW 9:05-9:55 a.m.
Discussions: W 10:10, F 10:10, F 11:15

AFROAM 132. African-American History: 1619-1860, 4 credits, (HS,U)
Professor Sinha
Lecture: MW 3:35-4:25 p.m.

AFROAM 151. Literature & Culture, 4 credits, (AL, U)
Professor Smethurst
Lecture: MW 11:15-12:05 p.m.
Discussions: F 11:15, F 1:25, F 2:30

AFROAM 161. Introduction to Black Politics, 3 credits, (SB, U)
Professor Strickland
TuTh 11:15-12:35 p.m.

AFROAM 170. Grassroots Experience in American Life and Culture I, 3 credits, ( I )
Instructor: Alex Carter
Thursdays 6:30-9:00 p.m.

AFROAM 191A. African American Short Stories, 3 credits
Professor Jimoh
TuTh 11:15-12:30 p.m.

AFROAM 236. History of the Civil Rights Movement, 4 credits, (HS, U)
Professor Shabazz
Lecture: MW 4:40-5:30 p.m.

AFROAM 253. Pre-Civil War Black Writing
Professor Rusert
TuTh 1:00 - 2:15 p.m.

AFROAM 254. Introduction to African Studies, 4 credits, (HS, U)
Professor Morrison
TuTh 4:00-5:15 p.m.

AFROAM 290E. The Slave Narrative, 3 credits
Professor Rusert
TuTh 9:30 - 10:45 a.m.

AFROAM 297D. The African American Image in Film, 3 credits
Professor Allen
TuTh 2:30-3:45 p.m.

AFROAM 365. Composition: Style & Organization, 3 credits
Instructor: Richard Hall
TuTh 1:00-2:15 p.m.

AFROAM 390C. Afro-American Literature of the 1930s, 3 credits
Professor Smethurst
MW 1:25-2:15 p.m.

AFROAM 397C. Black Globalization and Imperialism, 3 credits
Professor Morrison
TuTh 2:30-3:45 p.m.

AFROAM 529. Literature of the Harlem Renaissance, 4 credits
Professor Tracy
Tuesday 12:00-2:30 p.m.

AFROAM 691F. Black Political Struggle, 4 credits
Professor Strickland
Thursday 2:30-5:00 p.m.

AFROAM 692B. The Black Power Movement, 4 credits
Professor Allen
Wednesday 12:00-2:30 p.m.

AFROAM 692J. African American Literary Movements, 4 credits
Professor Jimoh
Wednesday 12:00-2:30 p.m.
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