

A Poet, A Playwright, and a New Program: the *Intergenerational Writers' Lab* Kicks Off at Bindlestiff Studio

Natoma at Sixth Street was alive with poetry and staged readings on Friday, April 9th, as Jaime Jacinto and Patty Cachapero brought their work to Bindlestiff's new location for the kick-off event of KSW and Bindlestiff's *Intergenerational Writers' Lab (IWL)*. The opening night of *IWL*—and the second event ever at Bindlestiff Studio's 505 Natoma venue—was an auspicious beginning for the three weeks of writing workshops, artist salons, and readings to follow. Manila-born, SF-bred poet Jaime Jacinto read selections of his poetry, old favorites as well as brand new ones, and Bindlestiff alum and playwright Patty Cachapero had four actors read excerpts of her full-length play, *MacArthur's Querida*. Over 40 people turned out to hear the work of Jacinto and Cachapero, and the two artists delivered an evening to remember.

IWL, funded in part by a grant from the San Francisco Foundation, is a partnership between KSW and Bindlestiff Studio, and offers readings, workshops, and an artist salon over the course of three weeks. Jacinto and

Cachapero will each lead free two-day writing workshops, in poetry and playwrighting, respectively, and on April 30 and May 1, the students will share the work generated in the sessions. On Friday, April 16, *IWL* attendees had the opportunity to hear the artists discuss their craft and experience, and had an in-depth question and answer period to further explore the writers' work.

The program brings together two outstanding artists and two vibrant communities. Bindlestiff Studio, founded in 1989, is a nerve center of Bay Area Filipino American arts. A permanent, community-based space, Bindlestiff is dedicated to supporting emerging and established artists who continue to challenge and redefine the boundaries of social and artistic expression. The partnership was a definite fit for the artists and organizations involved: Cachapero was a principal writer, director, and actor with Bindlestiff's former resident theater company,

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Patty Cachapero and Jaime Jacinto at *Intergenerational Writers' Lab* opening event.



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Letter from the Executive Director

Spring marks a time of change, and we begin this season with a new and exciting look to our tried and true newsletter. Under the design expertise of board member Choppy Oshiro, we are proud to present to you the new look of the KSW *Quarterly*, packed with more reviews, articles, comic strips, and, of course, all the vital information about KSW's extensive programming. Kim Mizuhara, our Development Associate, has been hard at work securing new grants for some of our exciting programs in the coming months. April marks the launch of our collaborative project with Bindlestiff Studio, the *Intergenerational Writers' Lab*, presenting writers Jaime Jacinto and Patty Cachapero. This program—including readings, workshops, and an artist salon—is free and accessible to the public thanks to a generous grant from The San Francisco Foundation. Then in May, poet Jeff Leong will lead a caravan to his hometown of Locke, California, where he and caravan participants will explore the cultural impact of this town on the fabric of the Chinese American immigrant story. The caravan, scheduled for Saturday, May 15, will be followed on May 20 by a post-Caravan writing workshop with Leong. Seatings for this caravan are limited but still available so please join us for this historic occasion.

Spring also marks a time of new beginnings. Here at KSW that means taking our first steps toward a bigger and better *APAture* festival. Yes folks, it's that time again when birds are singing, poets are spouting and art



is sprouting from the cracks and crevasses of our lives. This year marks the inception of our two year *APAture* coordinator plan. Having said this, I am happy to announce the return of *APAture* coordinator Scott Louie who will be serving out his second year term in the position. Scott returns to us with a wealth of knowledge from last year's *APAture* and an enthusiasm guaranteed to make this year's event one for the ages.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not mention the old with the new. As most of you know, California and

the arts are currently undergoing major cuts in budgets. As a result, arts organizations like Kearny Street Workshop continue to struggle in these difficult times. Now more than ever, the support of our community is needed to guarantee that Asian Pacific American arts are alive and well for years to come. In May, we will be launching our annual spring solicitation campaign. When that letter arrives in your mailbox in the coming month, please take a minute to renew your participation in America's oldest Asian Pacific American arts organization. Together, we will continue to serve our community and give voice to the generations of APA artists to come.

Until then, sit back, relax and catch up with the old friend you've come to know as Kearny Street Workshop.

Truong Tran
Executive Director

KSW Mission Statement

The mission of Kearny Street Workshop is to produce and present art that enriches and empowers Asian Pacific American communities.

VISION Our vision is to achieve a more just society by connecting Asian Pacific American (APA) artists with community members to give voice to our cultural, historical, and contemporary issues.

VALUES We are committed to creating an organization that:

- Nurtures the creation of new and innovative artwork inspired by the Asian Pacific American experience.
- Brings forth the stories of diverse communities.
- Develops artists and leaders in the Bay Area.
- Encourages inclusivity through collaboration and community involvement.
- Promotes cross-cultural and intergenerational understanding.
- Celebrates the spirit of our communities.

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Members of KSW receive all our notices and newsletters, plus discounts on books and classes. KSW Supporters, Major Donors, Patrons and Benefactors receive all of the membership benefits, plus additional gifts, opportunities, and recognition. Join now and receive a free gift.

Donate \$250 or more and receive a hand-silkscreened, signed poster by Nancy Hom. Available while supplies last.

Thank you for supporting community arts!

Quarter in Review

by Samantha Chanse

We started off 2004 with a new show, always a good way to start a new year. *Perspective x3: Visions of Vietnam*, sponsored by the San Francisco Arts Commission Chinatown Community Arts Program, opened in January at the Chinese Culture Center and featured the work of Binh Thai Danh, Chung Hoang Chuong, and Anisha Narasimhan, who flew out from her new NYC home for the opening reception. Over a hundred folks packed the house at the opening, which included prose and poetry readings by KQED's Pacific Time host and local renaissance man Nguyen Qui Duc and our very own Truong Tran, and a musical performance by vocalist/instrumentalist Unity Nguyen, who was last seen performing with Russell Gonzaga at our 5th Anniversary APAture Benefit last September. The artwork was moving and eloquent, the vinyl lettering was reflective, and the food was tasty.



of Intersection for the Arts' Hybrid Project and resident theatre company Campo Santo. The performances by such introspective and inspiring artists made for an evening of entertaining, and often poignant, moments.

In March, *Exploring Dimensions*, an intergenerational salon with Bay Area legend Charlie

Left: *Perspective x3* artists from left to right; Binh Danh, Anisha Narasimhan, and Chung Hoang Chuong.

Below: Nguyen Qui Duc

Chin and APAture 2003 featured artist Jane Chen, who was warmly received at KSW's venue of the moment, the fabulous artist



Bob Hsiang | www.bobhsiangphoto.com

studio of Calvin Roberts and Bob Hsiang. The evening brought together two dynamic artists for a more casual night of demonstrations, discussion, and q & a.

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In February we were thrilled and honored to present local theater artists Sean San Jose, and Naomi Quiñones, and Los Angeles-based C. Pete Lee, in our quarterly series co-presented with CCAP. The event, *Drama Divas*, featured excerpts from Naomi's and Pete's solo shows, and a reading by Sean, who is also a member

Sex Without Secrets Mary Anne Mohanraj bares it all online An interview with KSW's summer writing instructor

by Roohi Choudhry

Originally published in *Hyphen Magazine*.

She's a Web erotica pioneer—and also a novelist, magazine editor, Ph.D. student and experimental cook. Mary Anne Mohanraj's stories may contain themes of Asian American identity, tradition, conflict and rebellion, but the ideas her in work are also universal: longing, pleasure, excitement and wonder. She spoke to *Hyphen* by telephone from her home in Chicago.

When did you first start writing erotica?

Back in '91, when none of my friends had even heard of the Net, I went and checked out the sex news-groups. I read them and thought: I can do better than this! So the initial impetus was kind of random. I stayed with erotica because people had so much trouble with it. It became a political choice. But things are changing so quickly. Now, my local Borders bookstore has two floor-to-ceiling shelves of erotica. I'm really startled at how quickly erotica has been brought into the mainstream.

Do you think this is true within the Asian American community?

I think it's happening, but maybe not so quickly. When I started, it was easy for my mother to say, "Nobody else's daughter does this." And now she can't because it's just not true any more.

You've worked on a wide variety of projects. Which were some of your favorites?

It was very exciting putting together my first book, *Torn Shapes of Desire: Internet Erotica* (Intangible Asset Manufacturing). The big project currently is my dissertation. It's a novel and stories; it starts in America in the present day and goes back to Sri Lanka through four generations. It centers around sexuality in a

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Mary Anne Mohanraj



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Judith Sandoval
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October Light by Jeff Tagami

Reprinted from *Pacific Reader: An Asian Pacific North American Review of Books* (Volume 15, Number 1). Published by Kearny Street Workshop Press.

Reviewed by Barbara Jane Reyes

At the risk of appearing cliché, the word I keep coming back to is "home."

Jeff Tagami offers us poems in the voices of those who have experienced loss. To begin with a violence, a loss of life, as in "October 23rd," we immediately understand the significance of October, and of autumn—this is the ending of the cycle of life. Loss happens in industrial accidents, in mental unsoundness, as in "The Horn Blow," and "Now it is Broccoli." The rural life to which Tagami has introduced us is far from idyllic; real people lose real pieces themselves as they work to make this place their home.

Set along the Pajaro River of Central Coastal California, Tagami's poems explore the intimate relationship between the land and those who work it. The Pajaro is the life vein of this community, a ubiquitous and ever-changing force; it is more than mere river. In "Song of Pajaro":

*Pajaro the men thigh deep in mud . . .
Pajaro the children who clean . . .
Now Pajaro is tired . . .
This Pajaro my mother . . .*

Its waters bring life to the fields of cauliflower, broccoli, potatoes; its waters also carry the dead, as in "I Remember Fermin"; where excess potatoes the boss says



to dump in the river are as expendable as Filipino workers. Tagami presents in metaphor a scathing critique of American excess; food and human lives are so easily disposable.

But far from lamentation or dirge, these poems are lovely and tender; hope-insistent, and here is where Tagami's talent is more than apparent. In these poems so strongly imbued with sentiments of outrage and anger, autumn's darkness and proximity to endings, there is still promise of renewal, for life is cyclical, and in death,

one transcends.

In "Tobera," written in the voice of Fermin Tobera, the Filipino laborer killed in the Watsonville Race Riots of 1930, Tagami asserts what history omits. Without being forgiving, Tobera, through Tagami:

I am not bitter, believe me.

Because in death, there is peace from the brutality of white mobs. Tobera continues to live, in his brothers' whispers: "Tobera, Tobera, Tobera."

Home is Here; this rallying cry, deafening in its quiet.

Jeff Tagami's *October Light* is available at KSW. Please contact us for more information.

Intergenerational Writers' Lab

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Tongue in a Mood. Jaime Jacinto, a poet, teacher, and cultural worker whose contributions to the Bay Area arts scene and APA arts community include publications, performances, and educational forums, teaches at San Francisco State University, and many of his former students were in attendance at Bindlestiff for the IWL events.

The two featured artists are not new to the KSW scene; both Jacinto and Cachapero had worked with KSW in past programs. Patty's solo performances were presented at *APAture 2000*, and KSW Press published Jacinto's first collection of poems, *Heaven is Just Another Country*. KSW is proud to work with these two artists and with Bindlestiff Studio, and looks forward to future collaborations in the years to come. For more information about Bindlestiff, please visit their website, www.bindlestiffstudio.org.



Actors Don Wood and Bernadette Sibayan read excerpts from Patty Cachapero's play, *MacArthur's Querida*, at IWL's opening event.

jay jao | www.mochamonkey.com

Teri Untalan: A Musical Journey Takes Off

by Kan Hayashi

Teri Untalan's debut album, the self-titled *Teri Untalan*, opens with a transfixing acapella invocation, "faith." Although it's unlike any other track on the album, the arresting immediacy of this gospel-influenced song makes for a striking opening into the rest of this rich and varied collection. Untalan takes us from folk-pop to tango, from jazz to country waltz, from pop ballad to lullaby, and closes on a loungy-style trip-hop track (thanks to the production work of Westside Chemical's Jamie Lemoine).

Tom Kelly of the *San Francisco Bay Times* wrote that Untalan's voice "combines crystalline clarity with formidable...evocative power; providing sensual surprises with every note." That description is quite apt, and better than I could say: her voice is possessed of an aching and textured intensity; she seems to embrace and revel in each note, as in the haunting and velvety "accidents will happen," a folk-pop ballad with classical influences. The song, one of forgiveness, keeps itself in taut check, and when the lyric resolves and releases at the line "I forgive you," it feels like the musical embodiment of mercy. Other highlights of the album are the lullaby "little girl," which Untalan describes as "something of a woman's anthem," and the late-addition tango track, "I'm taken," with harmonies that seem to soar effortlessly upwards and across the rich landscape of the song.

Untalan describes the album as a musical narrative of her "recent life journey—weddings of friends, the death of family, overcoming some heady emotional and social obstacles, and coming back to faith and peace." Speculation on the personal details aside, a lot of her listeners are sure to be thankful to the last few years of Untalan's life, for giving us this remarkable debut album.

Teri Untalan is no newbie to the field; a singer, songwriter, and vocalist who has been active in the Bay Area for several years, she is part of the jazz ensemble Lush Life Players, and has performed with Buckethead and Westside Chemical. She performed at KSW's *APAture* festivals in 1999 and 2001, and was a featured artist in *APAture 2003's* 5th Anniversary event. Untalan will be performing on Friday, April 23, at Locus Arts (Galeria de la Raza, 2857 24th Street, at Bryant), at her album release event, also featuring performances by Barbara Jane Reyes, Howard Myint, and Rich McCulley. Hear clips from her new album, or purchase the CD, at her website, www.teriuntalan.com.



www.anthonypidgeon.com

Sex Without Secrets

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lot of ways; the choices between individual desire and familial and social duty, questions of truth telling and secrecy.

Is secrecy an important theme in your work?

I'm interested in how things we don't talk about warp our characters—so much is not allowed to be spoken. I find this deeply frustrating. You're not given the information that would perhaps help you make better decisions.

The immigrant experience is so strange. When people come over here, they bring over this cultural bubble of how the homeland was when they left. And every



generation has to work in ignorance. If we could have more free communication between the generations, then maybe we could all progress a little faster and be a little happier.

I'm actually delighted that the Web offers this forum for people to very inexpensively pour out their souls. I don't want to be afraid about what people might find out about me. I'd rather put it all out there since this is who I am.

Learn more about Mary Anne Mohanraj and read some of her work and her online journal at www.mamohanraj.com. She will be teaching an 8 week workshop on writing erotica, July 5–August 23. To register, or for more info, please contact KSW.

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cont. from pg 4

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Left: Vanessa Au shares her work at Claire Light's *Speculative Fiction Class Reading*. Above: Jane Chen and Charlie Chin discuss art and politics at *Exploring Dimensions* artist salon.

Quarter in Review

cont. from pg 3 —

The last quarter also saw the development of some promising writers and performers in three of our classes—Barbara Jane Reyes' all-genres writing class, Canyon Sam's writing for performance class, and our long-awaited weekend memoir writing intensive with Linda Watanabe McFerrin. The public readings by students from Barbara's and Canyon's class were a real pleasure, and I'm sure we'll be hearing more from some of these writers in the coming years. Keep an eye out for our upcoming workshops: *Poetry Writing with Truong Tran* and *Writing Erotica with Mary Anne Mohanraj*.

February marked the beginning of *APAture 2004* season, and we're quite pleased to have the inimitable Scott Louie back with us for another term of *APAture* coordination. The retreat was a great success, facilitated by KSW vice president and *APAture* o.g. Ernest Mark and *APAture '03* organizer Charlyne Sarmiento. Hosted by the ever-gracious and generous photographer Bob Hsiang, about 15 *APAture* organizers-to-be turned out for a grueling day of debate and general *APAture* orientation. The day was long but invigorating; an auspicious start for our sixth annual *APAture* festival. If you're interested in organizing, it's not too late, so give us a call or email us.

Finally, April 9 – May 1 is our *Intergenerational Writers' Lab* collaborative program with Bindlestiff Studio. Funded by the San Francisco Foundation's Cultural Participation Project, *IVL* brings together poet Jaime Jacinto and playwright Patty Cachapero for three weeks of free readings, workshops, and artist salons.

We also hosted a special event on April 8th, *A Night Out with Greg Pak: Meet the Dude Behind ROBOT STORIES*, an artist salon with the filmmaker. The event was part of a broader effort to promote Pak's Bay Area premiere of *ROBOT STORIES* on April 16. Also in April, the Poetry Center turns 50, and KSW is curating a segment of the celebratory day at the Unitarian Church, presenting poets Al Robles, Pireeni Sundaralingam, Dennis Somera, and Shailja Patel.

And that's about it for this installment of KSW's quarterly program review—thanks for listening. And think about joining us on our Locke Caravan in May with poet Jeff Leong. It's Poetry! Road Trip! Visiting Roots! Picnic! Community! all rolled into one. How can you not want in on this program? Contact us for more information.

until next time,
sam

Thought-Provoking Documentary Examines Asian American Sexual Identity

by Shizue Seigel

For Asian American males who complain that they have been emasculated by popular media, Darrell Hamamoto has a simple solution: put them in porn films. James Hou's *Masters of the Pillow*, which recently screened at San Francisco International Film Festival, juxtaposes Hamamoto shooting his first porno film, *Skin to Skin*, with commentary by Asian American filmmakers and scholars.

Hamamoto, a professor of Asian American studies at UC Davis, thinks that Yellow Porn could be a lucrative source of seed money for Asian American films or TV. "There's no dearth of men who would want to do (porno)," he says, "but there is a lack of opportunity." Rick Lee, the producer of the first Asian American adult content for the Internet, disagrees, saying that straight Asian American men rarely audition for porn. "They do not see it as a career path."

Undeterred, Hamamoto says, "Someday I hope to be the Asian American Larry Flynt." When playwright David Henry Hwang first read Hamamoto's proposal in a scholarly essay entitled *The Joy F___ Club: A Prolegomenon to an Asian American Porno Practice*, he thought the idea was fun and provocative. "It didn't occur to me that he'd actually try and do it." Hwang is skeptical that porn can change the image of Asian American men. "To battle stereotypes you need characters that are fully human."

Asian American Scholar Elaine Kim is equally unconvinced. "In order for people to understand that Asian American men can be promoted to positions of leadership and being listened to, we need more images of them having sex on the screen? . . . I'm not sure."

If Hamamoto's aim is to simply to raise the self-esteem of the Asian American autoerotics, he may be onto something, but if he wants to see more Asian American guys actually dating Asian American girls, he

would be wise to study what attracts women. Instead of porn, filmmaker Eric Byler (*Charlotte Sometimes*) thinks it might be more useful to teach Asian American males "how to ask a girl out."

Hamamoto is no stranger to controversial ideas. He espouses the theory that Asian American women who date outside their race are pawns of colonialism, which Byler calls "just another bullshit political doctrine where men are telling women what to do." As for his porn venture, a pair of 80-year-old Nisei men sum it up. "Who needs that stuff when you can get the real thing?"

Whatever one might think of Hamamoto's ideas, James Hou's film is a fascinating exploration of a controversial subject. Other commentators include actor Eddie Shin and director Justin Lin (*Better Luck Next Time*), Mike Siv (*Refugee*) and actress Ayila Lee.

Hou and Hamamoto plan to hit the campus circuit with *Masters of the Pillow* followed by Hamamoto's 11-minute *Yellowcaust: A Patriot Act*. Hamamoto calls his film "political theatre" in which an Asian American couple has explicit sex while a litany of anti-Asian atrocities scroll across the bottom of the screen.

Hamamoto's belief is that superimposing a soundtrack of loud buzzing and wailing human voices with the sexual images will create a dissonance that causes people to think about the exploitation of Asia by Western colonialism. However, it's just as likely to remind the viewer about the exploitation of women by men of every color and about age-old connections between violence and sex.

See www.mastersofthepillow.com for more information on Hou's film, the campus screening schedule, and Hamamoto's essay.

See more of Jason Shiga's work at his website, www.shigabooks.com



Events

Contact Samantha Chanse, Program Manager for registration or info. • www.kearnystreet.org • ph 415.503.0520 • fx 415.503.0547
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- APRIL**
- **Fri, 4/9** Intergenerational Writers' Lab (IWL) Kick-Off Event featuring readings by Jaime Jacinto & Patty Cachapero; at Bindlestiff Studio (505 Natoma, at 6th St, SF)
 - **Wed & Thurs, 4/14-15** IWL Playwriting Workshop with Patty Cachapero; free (donations appreciated); at Youth Speaks (2169 Folsom, bet. 17th and 18th Sts, SF)
**pre-registration required
 - **Fri, 4/16** IWL: A Conversation with Jaime Jacinto & Patty Cachapero, 7–9PM; free (donations appreciated); at Bindlestiff Studio (505 Natoma, at 6th St, SF)
 - **Sat, 4/17** The Poetry Center's 50/50 Festival, with a KSW-curated program featuring Shailja Patel, Al Robles, Dennis Somera, and Pireeni Sundaralingam; 7–10PM; \$15/door, or \$12/advance (Unitarian Center; 1187 Franklin at Geary Blvd, SF)
 - **Mon, 4/19**: Visual Curatorial Workshop, led by Kevin Chen; 7–9PM; free (donations appreciated); at SomArts Cultural Center (934 Brannan St, SF)
 - **Wed & Thurs, 4/21-22** IWL Poetry Workshop with Jaime Jacinto; free (donations appreciated); at Youth Speaks (2169 Folsom, bet. 17th and 18th Sts, SF)
**pre-registration required
 - **Tues, 4/27** Fundraising Training with Ernest Mark; 6.30–9.30PM; free (donations appreciated); SomArts Cultural Center (934 Brannan St, SF)
 - **Fri, 4/30** IWL Class readings I; 7–9PM; free (donations appreciated); at Bindlestiff Studio (505 Natoma, at 6th St, SF)
- MAY**
- **Sat, 5/1** IWL Class readings II; 7–9PM; free (donations appreciated); at Bindlestiff Studio (505 Natoma, at 6th St, SF)
 - **Tues, 5/4** Facilitation Training with Ernest Mark; 6.30–9.30PM; free (donations appreciated) SomArts Cultural Center (934 Brannan St, SF)
 - **Wed(s), May 5-June 23** Poetry Workshop with Truong Tran; registration open. Please contact KSW.
 - **Thurs, 5/6** Remix: 2004 Opening Reception, with Standup Comedy featuring Kevin Camia, Miguel Fierro, Rob F. Martinez, and Kevin Shea; 5.30–7.30PM; free (donations appreciated); SomArts Cultural Center (934 Brannan St, SF)
 - **Sat, 5/15** Locke Caravan: A Journey to a Poet's Heartland with Jeff Leong; **pre-registration required
 - **Wed, 5/18** Ishle Park's Book Launch, co-presented with Locus; 8–10PM; \$10; Locus Arts (at Galeria de la Raza, 2857 24th St at Bryant, SF)
 - **Thurs, 5/20** Locke 2: A Post-Caravan Writing Workshop with Jeff Leong; **pre-registration required
 - **Wed, 5/26** Stranger Things: A Literary Reading Featuring Mukta Sambrani, Summi Kaipa, and Claire Light; co-presented with the San Francisco Arts Commission Chinatown Community Arts Program; 7–9PM; \$5 suggested donation (750 Kearny St, 3rd Floor, Holiday Inn, bet Clay and Washington, SF)
- JUNE** • **Save the date!!! June 12** APAture 2004 Fundraiser; details TBA
- JULY** • **Mon(s), 7/5–8/23** Sexual and Erotic Writing with Mary Anne Mohanraj; registration open. Please contact KSW.



Kearny Street Workshop

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