

A STUDY OF TIMAYA'S *BUM BUM* (REMIX) AND THE FEMALE BODY AS OBJECT OF DANCE IN NIGERIAN MUSIC VIDEOS.

Tayo Joan Adenuga, Ph.D
 Performing Arts Department
 Kwara State University,
 Malete, Kwara State
 Joanie_tayo@yahoo.com

Abstract

Dance is a popular form of artistic expression distinguished by the unique use of the human body to perform agreeable movements to a given rhythm. Even though existing studies have discussed the context, form, sociology and relevance of dance to a large extent, not too many studies have explored the use of the female body as object of dance in Nigerian music videos. Through a content analysis of Bum Bum (remix), BBR, by Inetimi Alfred Odom, popularly known as Timaya, featuring Sean Paul, this study examines the instrumentality of the female body with the objective of underscoring active components used to present it as object of dance in the music video. We leverage on Mulvey's (1975) male gaze theory and Fredrickson and Roberts' (1997) objectification theory. Music title, lyrical composition, visual expression and filming techniques were discovered as channels of presenting the female body as object of dance in Bum Bum (remix) ft. Sean Paul. We recommend a more artistic approach to dance especially in music videos without turning the female body to objects of sexual pleasure and desire. This study suggests that regulatory bodies should be more interested in the composition of dances and the use of the female body in Nigerian music videos before they are pushed out for public consumption.

Keywords: Female body, Object of dance, Dance, Nigerian music videos, *Bum Bum*(remix)

Introduction

Dance, according to Ojuade (2021) is life. This may be because everything that makes up dance can be related to life itself. Movement, rhythm, expression, release of emotion and energy, are vibrant mechanisms conjured to create dances. Usher (2022), posits that dance has been part of human history since its earliest origins, bringing transcendence to spiritual rituals and creating bonds within communities. Dance styles have changed through history, but dance itself remains one of the most expressive physical art forms. This explains why the entire body is involved in the performance of dance. While movement implies that the body is constantly in motion during a dance performance, the body is the basic instrument for the art of dancing. Rhythm implies that there is a regulated time the dance follows. Expression comes from the face and the body in response to the mood established by the dance. Most dances have specific moods which the dancers wish to express, thus, the face bears the prevailing emotion by bringing the mood of dance to limelight. Emotion flows through the mind of the dancer as part of the vehicles of communication to the audience. Even though every human being has the ability to move his body, not all human beings can combine elements of dance together to achieve accurate communication. The body of a woman especially, is fast becoming a means of passing certain sexual information through dance as well as marketing music videos in Nigeria and an example of this is *Bum Bum*(remix) by Timaya featuring Sean Paul.

Timaya, whose real name is Inetimi Alfred Odom, is a Nigerian singer and songwriter. He hails from Odi in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. In addition to Afro-Caribbean/Dancehall music, Timaya is renowned for fusing Nigerian pop with hip-hop, and soca elements. He is the founder of (Dem Mama) Records Limited. Paul Sean Ryan Francis Henriques, popularly called Sean Paul, is a rapper and reggae and dancehall singer from Jamaica. In the year 2000, he released his debut album titled Stage One. His second album, Dutty Rock, which came out in 2002, made him famous and recognized as an international brand.

The Female Body as a Gendered Entity in Dance

Dance is basically recognized as an art form that goes hand-in-hand with tradition. One traditional aspect of dance is the portrayal of male and female dancers in performance. In addition to choreography and movement, gender stereotypes influence the roles created for men and women. Dance is generally gendered art. While men are being created to be dominant and strong, women are being created to be complacent and weak; hence their specific dance motifs and styles especially in music videos. No wonder Pettit (2019:14), believes that there are gender roles and stereotypes that limit how dancers can express themselves both physically; through their dancing, and emotionally; through the character that they are playing. There are certain factors that can influence and bring about gendering of dance.

Paramount among such factors is the physiological make up of both genders. There are physiological differences between males and females that readily contribute to the inequality in their dance movements. For example, in most cases it would not be possible for a female to lift a male above her head and support him there. This is why a male dancer can be a warrior while a female dancer is his wife who brings food and water to him at the battlefield and is eventually sent home to her children to avoid any form of emotional distraction. In African dances, a male dancer is made to till the ground, plant and harvest while the female dancer merely conveys harvested crops to the house. A male dancer fetches fishes from the river while the role of the female dancer is to dance in excitement for the bountiful harvest and take the fish home. Dance reflects a gendered sociocultural pattern and this forms the basis of objectifying the bodies of both genders especially women.

Female bodies are made to move rhythmically to the admiration and sexual pleasure of men in many Nigerian music videos. Prominent among the dance styles frequently utilized are twerking, lapping and grinding. Twerking is a popular feminine dance, utilized generously in many music videos, perhaps because of its characteristics which majorly involves the use of buttocks. Grinding: this dance is also known in popular street slang as juking, freak dance or freaking. It is a type of close partner dance where two or more dancers rub or bump their bodies against each other, usually with a female dancer rubbing or bumping her buttocks against a male dancer's genital area. Grinding is more than a dance; it is a gendered and sexualized form of communication. The way grinding is done, it clearly communicates intimacy, pleasure and gender difference. It involves direct body contact, wilful physical engagement and sexual attraction between dance partners. There are no fancy movements in grinding. No twirls, spins or dips. A man simply presses his groin against a woman's buttocks, and they both move in tandem to the beat, literally grating against each other. The tempo of the movement increases as the tempo of the music picks up. Grinding involves the use of genital areas, buttocks, legs and arms. When a woman grinds for a man, she closely moves her pubic area towards the man's genitals, stroking up and down in accordance with the rhythm. In a flip-over movement, she lurks her buttocks against the genitals of the man and vibrates in a buzzing position, while she either holds her knees with her hands or swings the hands in a simultaneous order.

In *Jo Dada* by Naira Marley for example, the opening shot is that of a girl twerking to the introductory picture of the video. Similarly, in *Bounce* by Rema, some girls twerked in a moving car at the beginning of the video while men sit to admire their bodies. In *Agege* by Tekno featuring Zlatan, girls who are scantily dressed were made to twerk and grind in a moving truck, driven by a modestly dressed man. Onlookers, mostly men, watched the girls on dance parade as they were being carried around town. In *Putin* by Tekno, girls twerked on sand, bush paths and bare floors. They swam around the only man in the video to welcome and entertain him. In *49-99* by Tiwa Savage and *Pawon* by Olamide, the girls twerked on the roof of static vans and trucks, parked in different positions. They also gave some lap dances to affluent looking men dressed in flowing regalia and caps. One common thing about these dances as used in the music videos is that, at every point they were done, men were present to relish the moving bodies of the girls and to fiddle with them.

Twerking and grinding were energetically displayed in *Putin* and *Bounce* as though it was a competition. The girls struggled to outdo one another as they danced to impress the men around. In 49-99, the girls danced to entertain men and call out money from their wallets. The men in the video understood this gesture as it was performed, and responded accordingly by throwing money around to excite the girls. In *Jo Dada*, twerking and lapping were performed to appease men and get them to drop money in different currencies. The girls took turns to show how well they could twerk so they can be deserving of the monetary reward up for grabs. This study x-rays *BBR* by Timaya featuring Sean Paul as an example of Nigerian music videos that is densely gendered and female bodies used as dance objects therein.

Theoretical Framework

To define its framework, we leverage on Laura Mulvey's (1975) male gaze and Fredrickson and Roberts' (1997) objectification theories. Mulvey's male gaze theory states that *women are exhibited and constantly looked at and displayed in order to demonstrate a visual and erotic impact as if all women want to be looked at solely as sexual objects*. Fredrickson and Roberts' (1997) objectification theory posits that *girls and women are typically acculturated to internalize an observer's perspective as a primary view of their physical selves*. Both postulations express how women are being viewed, perceived and treated as mere objects, yet believing that it is their desire to be so treated. A careful look into the selected music video establishes the relevance of these theories and their application thereof.

Lyrics of *BUM BUM (Remix)* by Timaya featuring Sean Paul

Move it
Special request y'all by the girls them
Shake it...move it
Shake it...move it
Shake it...leggo
Sean Paul pon the track
Remix it just like that
Timayapon the track
Sing for the girl them when the beat drop
Beat drop, when the beat drop
Sing for the girl them when the beat drop
See
The way you whine whine e dey make me go down low...make me go down low
The way you whine whine e dey make me go down low...make me go down low
All my ladies shake up your bum bum
The girls them shake up your bum bum
The girls them shake up your bum bum
E no matter where ya come from

The way you a sexy moan got a feeling
Put your pant down and swirl
Said the way that you're shaped, make me want it girl
Time to forget the pink seal
Gal, you got the sex appeal
And i want your sexual healing
Push up ya whine to the ceiling
Shake your bum bum anytime for me

Ladies shake up your bum bum....shake your bum bum anytime for me thing
 Baby, shake up your bum bum....shake your bum bum anytime for me thing
 Ladies shake up your bum bum....shake your bum bum anytime for me thing
 Yeah oh no nonono
 This girl she a calling my phone
 Oh no nonono
 This girl she no wan let me go
 Next thing, she want make i ping her
 Ah she want me to answer
 Every night she want make i ring her
 Baby shake up your bum bum....shake your bum bum anytime for me thing
 Your bum bum
 Yeah ladies shake up your bum bum....shake your bum bum anytime for me thing

Girl me love all your whine
 Just come and pull it for me
 Girlfriend don't shy my girl, just bring it, give me
 Girl me want you to wiggle it, jiggle it
 Pull it for me
 Girl me love when you wiggle it, jiggle it
 Pull it for me
 Bum bum

See anytime when she a dancing, a dance
 The men are go want to collect her number
 Ya bum bumshake your bum bum anytime for me thingYa Bum bum
 Ladies shake your bum bum shake your bum bum anytime for me thing
 Yeah yeah
 Get in the mood
 Get in the groove
 Girl me i like the way that thing dey move
 Anytime when you waka e dey move
 Not to talk when you dey dance you dey groove
 Yeah, big calabash
 Big calabash
 Big calabash

Reporting the video of *BUM BUM* by Timaya ft. Sean Paul

Music Title- *Bum Bum* (remix)
 Music Artist- Timaya featuring Sean Paul
 Executive Producer- Timaya
 Record label and Music Producer- Dem Mama Records
 Beats by- Young D
 Directed by- Shutah Films
 Duration- 3 minutes 52 seconds

Video opens with graphic designs introducing the record label; Shutah Films. 23 seconds into the video, a vixen shows up shaking her buttocks to the lyrics that says *shake it*. Timaya holds and fondles another vixen's buttocks on the 34th second. 42 seconds into the video, an almost naked vixen is seen dancing in-between Timaya's legs. Timaya hits to rhythm the naked buttocks of another vixen at 1:03 seconds of the video. Just after that at 1:08 seconds, another vixen; almost naked swings her buttocks to entertain Sean

Paul. By the 14th second after the first minute, Timaya uses his hand to trace the body of another vixen from waist down. A vixen appears with a chain hanging on her naked tattooed body round her waist as she swings around Timaya at 1:21 seconds. Another vixen caresses and dances with a tree at 1:30 seconds of play. 43 seconds after the first minute, three vixens appear on a ship. One dances with Timaya while two others lie facing down, rolling their waist and shaking their naked buttocks.



1:56 seconds an almost naked vixen surfaces as she displays her naked buttocks. She deeps her left index in her mouth, licks it and rolls her eyes simultaneously, picture fades into 2:19 seconds where two vixens; one totally naked and the other in pant and G-stringed pants are seen dancing on the sands of the seashore.



They spread their thighs as if sitting in a yoga way, wriggling and throwing their buttocks to rhythm. Next picture shows another naked lady dancing behind Sean Paul and Timaya. At 2:21 seconds, Timaya is seen seated and beating his laps to follow the ongoing rhythm for the vixen dancing in front of him to shake her buttocks in matching order. Next picture reveals a vixen at 2:47 seconds dancing around a pillar as if seducing it.



All other pictures till video fades showed Sean Paul, Timaya and all the featured vixens in interchangeable sequence.

The Female Body as Object of Dance in *Bum Bum* (Remix)

Projecting the female body as an object is commonplace in media culture, but music videos provide the most potent examples of it. Research has demonstrated that women in music videos are portrayed as one dimensional, sexualized character, lacking agency, with little or nothing to offer besides their bodies. The implication is that female characters are valued only for their physical appearance and ability to entertain and please the men in the videos. To the girls and women who watch music videos, these images send the confusing message that to be female is to be alluring yet passive, sexy but also submissive. In this study, we identify some components used to present the female body as object of dance in Bum Bum by Timaya featuring Sean Paul.

- (a) Music Title
- (b) Lyrical Composition
- (c) Visual expression
- (d) Filming Techniques

Music Title

Titles are important in introducing something to an individual or group of people who come across it especially for the first time. Titles often give information about the content, concept and context of any given work. There are many music titles in Nigeria that carry an undertone of objectification. *Bum Bum* for instance, describes a dismembered part of the female body that should be viewed mainly as such. Dismemberment of the body of a woman partitions it in a way that emphasis is laid on just one or very few parts of the body that attracts or appeals to the viewer. The purpose of captioning a song with such titles is mostly to catch the attention of people (listeners and viewers) and make them anticipate for the visual expressions of the music.

There are many other music titles that clearly objectify women. Some of such titles include:

Idi Nla (Meaning big buttocks) by Da Grin featuring Lala (2009)

Ukwu (meaning buttocks) by Timaya (2014)

Bobbie e (a slang that expresses the meaning of breasts) by DjZeez (2009)

Ibadi (meaning waist line) by May D (2014)
Bum Bum (meaning buttocks) by Davido featuring Zlatan (2019)
Bebedi Alhaja (meaning Alhaja's buttocks) by Sexy Steel (2012)
Obo to che (meaning a dripping vagina) by Damino Damoche (2012)
Idi Oremi (meaning my friend's buttocks) by Naira Marley (2020)
Bum Bum (meaning buttocks) by Harry Song featuring Davido (2020)
Wine am for me (meaning roll it (waist) for me) by Piper featuring Terry G (2009)

Lyrical Composition

Lyrics are words that make up a song usually consisting of verses and choruses. Composition is the act of putting together, combining or arranging a work of art. Lyrical composition involves putting together words to form the idea and concept a song writer intends to project to the public. In their arrangement, most song writers compose punch lines that capture objectification as chorus; ad-lib or modulated verse.

In *Bum Bum* by Timaya featuring Sean Paul, the following lyrics can be identified as objectifying lines:

All my ladies shake up your bum bum
The girls dem shake up your bum bum
Put your pant down and swirl
The way that you're shaped, make me want it girl
Time to forget the pink seal
Gal, you got the sex appeal
Shake your bum bum anytime for me
Shake your bum bum anytime for me thing
Just come and pull it for me
Girlfriend don't shy my girl, just bring it give me
Girl me want you to wiggle it, jiggle it, pull it
For me I like idinlanla
See as she dance dey dance kerewa
She don dey put men for being wahala
Ladies shake your bum bum
Girl me I like the way that thing dey move
Big calabash, Big calabash
Nigeria people go call am pay money, pay my money

All the lyrics above can be said to be talking down on the female body, advertising and dismembering it. In the first few lines of the lyrics reported, the dismembered body is being instructed to put her pants down and swirl. Her body becomes an attraction to the prying eyes of men. She is being stripped off the privacy of her vagina, which was referred to as the pink seal. She is also addressed as one with the sex appeal. This means that she is perceived as a sex object whose major duty is to satisfy the prying eyes of men "anytime". Going down into other lyrics, the woman is being asked to come and pull "it" for the man. Her buttocks were referred to as "it". Such lyrics as bring it, give it to me, wiggle it, jiggle it and pull it are pointers to objectification in the music. The word 'it' in this case, suggests a thing; a mere object. An affirmation of the man's love for big buttocks is proudly expressed as the woman's dance moves is said to be an initiator of big controversies and problems. Her buttocks are the referred to as a thing; a big calabash seeking attention and calling for monetary reward.

Many popular music lyrics and videos are sexualised; containing high levels of sexual content with an increasing number of songs including demeaning messages of men controlling women, sex as a top priority for men, objectification, sexual violence against women, sexual exploitation, degradation of women, women being defined by having a man, and women as not valuing themselves without a man (Flynn et al 2016). Although objectification has been researched primarily by examining visual messages in music videos, lyrics offer a unique and underexplored perspective on this topic.

Visual Expression, Dance Movements and Gestures

Music videos have long relied on provocative images of female sexuality to attract viewer attention. In fact, women are presented as ravenous creatures who desire sex at all times and with any available man. One strange aspect of many Nigerian music videos is that women often far outnumber men, which means that many times, women have to share the available men. This visual strategy; multiple women draped over a man, has become one of the more enduring techniques in music videos, something that directors and artists can go to in the absence of creativity. Jhally's (2007:34) description of music video visual expression appears to be a general template for music video making around the world. In Nigerian music videos for instance, Jhally's words best describes the manner in which women are visually expressed and made to function in the videos. She says:

What roles are women shown in, in the videos? From the inevitable cheer leaders, airline stewardesses partying on planes, hotel maids in short skirts, repressed librarians just bursting to discover their inner sexy babe, school teachers in lust with their male students, sorority girls just having a great time pillow fighting with each other, or authority figures like chicky police women with hips or schoolgirls in uniform in lust with anyone. The condensation of this is found in music videos where a peepshow runs through the gamut of these stereotypical characters; a nurse, policewomen, and of course a school girl. In fact, peep shows and strip clubs are the main hang out for one of the major female characters; the stripper. From playing a small part in the early history of music videos, they've evolved into one of its major components, sometimes shown as lap dancers, most of the time they are wrapped in various ways around a stripper's pole which now seems to be a standard unavoidable prop. The compliant stripper is of course the ultimate heterosexual male fantasy and her ubiquitous presence should tell us something about the imagination that propels this part of popular culture.

To gain entrance into the music video industry, female artists have to use the visual language that has already been established as the norm. Musical ability is just one of the talents that is needed to establish a presence in music videos and it is clear that many female artists thoroughly understand the requirements of the pornographic imagination. To navigate the barriers that this way of looking at the music videos presents, female artists are compelled to use the only visual language the culture allows, the central aspect of which is that women have to present themselves as primarily sexual objects.

Filming Techniques

One basic way women and girls are taught about femininity in music videos is through the ways characters are filmed. Jhally (2007:42), for example, believes that, the camera is often allowed to pan up and down a woman's body or zoom in on one part of her, such as her legs or cleavage. Women are shown posing or dancing for men, encouraging them to watch. This epitomizes Mulvey's (1999) idea of the male gaze. This way of filming reduces women to one part of their bodies and only to the sexual part of their multifaceted characters. Jhally goes on to point out that the camera techniques themselves are not

the problem, but rather the representation of women only as sexualized bodies, not as complete humans. The explicit images of what men and women are shown doing is just one way. There is also a story told by the visual techniques and forms that are used by the makers of music videos. That is, there is a story of the camera itself, which tells us that being female is connected to sexuality and that women find their own identities in terms of how pleasing and desirous they are to men. The most obvious strategy to communicate this is by actually showing them posing before a camera, inviting the viewer to gaze at them. Even when there are no cameras directly present in the scene, the women invite the look from the viewer behind the camera that is filming them. They are presented as wanting to be watched, inviting it, desiring the look, enjoying being on display. This is not the mere invitation but literally open and willing for whatever men want to do to them. To communicate in even more explicit terms that it is okay to watch and to desire, another common technique shows women softly touching themselves while men look on. The filmic invitation is clear; women are nothing but sexualized bodies that live for male attention. In the absence of a man or a camera, women turn the gaze inward and watch themselves in mirrors, strengthening the idea that they are legitimate objects of desire. In most Nigerian music videos, the person (mostly the woman) being watched is regarded as a passive thing. A common filming technique that reflects this view of the woman is a passive thing to be consumed by watching males involves the camera panning the willing and exposed bodies of these women.

Women's bodies are surveyed, looked at, analysed in the same way that one is likely to examine it as an object. The camera angles that are used to shoot women reinforce this view. For example, in *BBR*, the shot from above looks down into a female cleavage cannot help but emphasize one part of a woman's body as being central to her identity. A variation of this has women bending over in front of the camera. Similarly, when the camera looks from below as in the manner of looking up a dress it is reminiscent of a forbidden and taboo kind of watching. Another conventional technique that illustrates this is the shot between the legs of a woman, her legs framing the action on the other side. These ways of visually representing women seem to lead almost naturally to focus the gaze on only one part of their bodies. Women in music videos are fragmented and presented as a number of simple and disconnected body parts. This is a common filming technique. It is a way to present women as an object of fair gaze. Female performers must take on the fantasy roles that the pornographic imagination dictates. They perform for the camera and the male gaze, presenting them invitingly. They touch themselves suggestively, undress for the watching audience, allowing the camera to pan up and down their bodies, looking at them from above as well as from below. Their bodies are fragmented and they become defined through their various body parts.

Findings and Recommendations

This study has established that the female body is used as object of dance in *BBR* by Timaya featuring Sean Paul. Through a theoretical approach and analysis of video content, the objectives of this study have been foregrounded. Four components were used to project the female body as object of dance in *BBR*. They are music title, lyrical composition, visual expression and filming techniques. These components can be avoided if the making of music videos is approached from an artistic and creative point of view. This will help the way women are made to feature and improve the way their bodies are treated in music videos. Certain standards of production should be set for emerging music videos in the area of lyrical composition, costuming, choreography and general production design. This will elevate the overall content and reposition the entire outlook of music video in more positive lights. In *BBR* the female body is portrayed as one dimensional, sexualised character, lacking agency, with little or nothing else to offer besides the body. Music video directors are encouraged to view the female body the same way they view male bodies. It will influence the portrayal of female bodies in music videos.

The female body is a highly commercialised entity in *BBR*. This is evident in the number of views, likes and downloads it has attracted on YouTube and many downloading sites. Music videos rely on provocative images of the female body to attract viewer attention. This is evident in the number of views *BBR* has recorded on the YouTube channel, numbering over fifty-seven million (57, 276, 331). It also shows that many viewers are often attracted to female bodies featured in music videos. To curb this, promotional strategies and marketing skills should be activated as channels of distribution and sales of music videos. This will drastically reduce the commercialisation and objectification of the female body. Unemployment is one of the factors affecting the increase in female body objectification. Many women are ready and willing to objectify themselves or give themselves up for objectification because of the monetary rewards there from. Employment for Nigerian youth, especially the female gender, should be prioritised and given special attention. It will provide women with better quality of life as they will generate income legitimately and with utmost modesty.

In agreement with the male gaze theory, female bodies in *BBR* are exhibited and constantly looked at and displayed in order to demonstrate a visual and erotic impact as if all women want to be looked at solely as sexual objects. Dance in music videos ultimately genders. This gendering affects how the female body is perceived and treated. The physiological differences between male and female bodies contribute to the kind of dance movements performed by both genders. While the men in *BBR* performed free uncoordinated dances, the female vixens performed erotic movements orchestrated and aimed at the portrayal of objectification. Gender stereotypes also influence the way the female body is being treated in Nigerian music videos. As portrayed in *BBR*, men were approached in heroic terms while women, perceived as dance objects, were treated so. Pictorial arrangement and placement of female bodies in *BBR* reveals the mind of the director towards them. Scantly dressed female bodies were on display like items on market shelves for sale. Treating the female body as object of dance starts from the way she is perceived.

To address this perception which will eventually influence the way the female body is treated; other additional measures can be put in place to assist the earlier mentioned recommendations. Music video content should be censored by approved regulatory bodies before releasing them for public viewing and patronage. There should be a total overhauling of the Nigerian music industry. This is to sieve out existing music videos with injurious content and ban them. It will also control the content of upcoming music videos. Rules and regulations guiding music video content should be put in place. This will ensure creativity above body objectification usually paraded in Nigerian music videos. Penalties should be set and made public to music video makers, to avoid ignorance; this will uphold strict adherence to the set rules.

Implementation of regulations should be checked and reviewed from time to time. Proper trainings should be organized for individuals who are involved in every area of music video making in Nigeria and licensing should be introduced to music video making in Nigeria. Directors should also be compelled to acquire license before they can be declared eligible to work

Conclusion

The use of the female body as object of dance has been interrogated in this study. Through an analysis of the video content and lyrical composition of *BBR*, the true position of the subject matter has been ascertained. A theoretical background to male gaze as a major contributor to female body objectification has also been provided. Creativity should be the core ingredient of music video production in Nigeria, beyond the use or treatment of the female body as object of dance, and to attract huge patronage. The contribution of this study to knowledge are the results gotten from the analysis of *BBR* which presents four basic components used to project female body objectification in the music video. Studies in the use of the female body in diverse art forms are encouraged. It will help to understand and project the experiences, realities and struggles of women in global scholarship.

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