5-2019

Photography and Creativity

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A Project
in Creative Studies
by
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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of
Master of Science

May 2019

ABSTRACT

Photography as an expression has been one of the most useful perspectives in the world of art. The perspective behind photography has made tremendous changes in our society. Today, we have the power and the ability to look at photos and have different variations of meaning. We attach meaning to a photograph in order to stay connected with the feeling it gives us. This paper summarizes the framework behind the different styles of photography and how they are all connected. It also explains the meaning behind the style of photography. In this framework, we will explore different views of photography and how they represent a different contribution to photography and how they have made a difference. This paper starts by analyzing differences in creativity and photography, and observations and perspective, which are not seen frequently. Being a photographer also makes you creative, and this will explain the differences and process.

Keywords: creativity, photography, and perspective.

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INTRODUCTION

Photography is the ability to create images through a personal lens and perspective. Learning about photography started out as a concept. Picking up a camera, you have the ability to create art and an image, which can last for a lifetime. Photography brings out the creativity in people. The concept of photography provides photographers with an opportunity to develop the idea behind creative photography.

A good majority of concepts of photography can be seen within perspective. . The approach towards photography is one of the key insights, which I still apply today. For example, when I look at photography, the first thing I see is art—my ability to express myself through a lens. Picking up a camera as a child was one of the best things that happened. I remember asking my mother during Thanksgiving about getting me camera; it was a shock when she first got it for me.

PHOTOGRAPHY PERSPECTIVE

Photography starts with a concept. Being able to create a visual image, which can last a lifetime, gives an individual the ability to see things a lot differently. As a photographer, I came across various perspectives, which have changed my narrative regarding how I see photography. Creating visually stimulating images can have a profound effect on an individual. The beauty of photography is having the ability to discover your own niche. Many photographers develop their own perspective; they are also able to create a different feeling, which allows people to capture the moment. As a photographer, you develop a sense of awareness with your eyes, which allow you to see things a lot differently.

THE OBSERVER

The moment you pick up a device that allows you to record moments, you become an observer without knowing. Today we can see that with camera phones which allow people to document moments instantaneously. Throughout my observation with photography, I came across things that I have learned about individuals who I have worked with. At times, the people who I work with were not comfortable having their photos taken. From time to time, they will shy away from being seen. Photography has opened my eyes to a new understanding. Throughout my photography session, I was able to gain new insights regarding what photography truly meant. One thing I came to notice during my observation with people who I took photos of is their ability to shy away from the camera. Normally when people have a camera in front of them, they have a different way of reacting to photos being taken of them. When you become a photographer, you learn how to navigate in various forms with your eyes. You learn how to view different things. You learn how to capture moments from different viewpoints, which can be interpreted by different viewers in several different ways. Being able to capture images demonstrates what you are capable of developing.

EXPLORING CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY

Exploring creative photography comes down to different abilities to try new avenues within photography. The genres include landscape, street photography, and portrait photography. The beauty of photography is knowing how to develop an image

that can be compelling. Normally, we can create stories, which can be given several interpretations.

STREET PHOTOGRAPHY

Street photography has a deeper essence. It is the ability to capture the moments of everyday life. Looking at street photography, you can capture moments, creativity, and raw unaltered perspective. Street photography is as simple as taking a photo of a homeless person on the street, or the businessman who is heading to work. A majority of street photography has a monochrome feeling attached to it. When you look at street photography, you can think about everyday life in the form of images. As a photographer, participating in street photography gave me the vision to know what I have been oblivious to on a daily basis.

Looking at street photography, it is amazing how many details we can see in everyday life, yet we choose not to notice them. As a street photographer, I look at it as a form of taking a step back and observing your surroundings. A belief held by most photographers is always expect the unexpected. You may run into people who may not feel comfortable with you taking a photo of them. You may run into cases where you see certain things that are not appealing to you, yet you will be compelled to take a photo of. Part of being an artist is doing the unthinkable and utilizing your ability in taking serious risks. As a content photographer, we want to capture moments, which may last a very long time. This includes capturing a candid moment, which will not happen again unless reenacted. In utilizing street photography, you only have one shot at doing your very best. One of the most important aspects of utilizing street photography is being respectful

towards people. Understanding how photography works comes down to knowing what

you are working with. A study was conducted at a University indicating how students

saw their university through reflective photography (Harrington, 1999). They found that

students had different perspectives about how they saw their school.

Figure 1. Photographed by Aaron Agyapong. Www.Vsco.co/mycreativeportfolio.

Figure 1 exemplifies creativity based on two subjects being in sync within an image and

not knowing each other. This figure says a lot about what street photography is all about,

capturing people within an image and putting the pieces together. I was sitting at a coffee

shop in downtown Los Angeles during Spring Break. This was my opportunity to capture

moments, which will be utilized in my portfolio. I came across a lady on the phone and a

guy standing there, and I told myself this would be an interesting perspective to capture.

As you look at this picture, you can tell the saturation of the edits are consistent with the

content of the photo.

Figure 2. Photographed by Aaron Agyapong. www.Vsco.co/mycreativeportfolio.

Figure 2 was also taken in downtown Los Angeles. Judging by this picture, I took this at a coffee shop through the glass. In fact, I took a risk with capturing this image, because he was not aware that I took a photo of him from a distance. As I looked closely, I wonder what was going through his mind. It can be either good or bad. One thing I can honestly say about street photography is that it is amazing having different sets of images, which can have different meanings and interpretations. My creativity is exemplified through the perspective of this image. The mystery behind this image shows what could potentially be going through his mind.

Figure 3. Photographed by Aaron Agyapong. Www.Vsco.co/mycreativeportfolio.

Capturing this school bus was another way of capturing creativity. The essence of the

school bus captures everyday life symbolizing the avenue for student who attends school.

This represents my creative thinking based how well I incorporate everyday life into

street photography.

Figure 4. Photographed by Aaron Agyapong. www.Vsco.co/mycreativeportfolio.

Figure 4 was taken at an abandoned building. The idea behind this image was to create a compelling image with a clear background. I wanted the subject to be the focus. You can see the background of woods within the image. Creativity is shown within the ideation process of the photo.

Figure 5. Photographed by Aaron Agyapong. www.Vsco.co/mycreativeportfolio.

Throughout my photography, I create a pattern. In figure 5, my friend had a light green

shirt, and I used the background as a tool in capturing a different perspective. In this

image, I took my time with the editing. I had to make sure that the quality of editing was

up to par.

Capturing this image was one of my best pieces of work. It was in downtown Los

Angeles. I wanted to utilize different lighting techniques. I figured by blending the outfit

color with the background, I would create an interesting perspective.

Figure 6. Photographed by Aaron Agyapong. www.Vsco.co/mycreativeportfolio.

Another moment captured in Los Angeles was my friend Samuel. One of the key elements in photography is capturing people while they are not focused. The best photos are the candid moments. They exemplify my creativity because it captures the person's true feelings at the current moment.

CANDID PHOTOGRAPHY

The candid experience is as simple as capturing a moment, which exemplifies perspective from an everyday eye. Candid photography is about capturing the moment you need in order to see differences. From a wider range of artists, candid photography creates a beautiful experience, which brings out the subject's true feelings. One of the most important key points of taking candid photography is knowing if your subject is comfortable with you taking photos of them. One of the key points about engaging in candid photography is understanding that people are not museum exhibits.

As a photographer, you may have to communicate your intentions with honesty and transparency with your subjects. At times, asking permission to take a photograph of an individual shows courtesy. Normally as a photographer, we let our excitement cloud our reasoning, which forces us to take photos in places that may not be deemed appropriate. The reason is because different cultures have different values, and it is your responsibility to learn what the nature of the culture is. Part of being a photographer is knowing when it is not appropriate. There are certain places around the world where photography is not allowed. This may include religious sites or areas within government jurisdiction and areas where photography may not be culturally accepted. Being a photographer and knowing your role can change how you view your avenue of creativity.

SUBJECT MATTER

The subject of your photos is geared towards the person's way of seeing things. From digital cameras to cellphones and recording devices, photography creates

perspective and room for memories. Photographers have found a way to make their

concept an art. Cameras give us a concept for utilizing our creative potential. Creative

potential through a camera says a lot about how an individual takes photos. As a

photographer, your subject plays a key role in your photos. Developing your ideas allows

room for creativity.

BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

The idea of photography is documenting different perspectives within a specific

niche. These niches, includes portrait, landscape, street and wedding photography.

The average person does not see photography as art. They see it as simply pushing a

button on a smartphone and creating an image. As I look at photography, I am able to

understand perspective with different styles of imagery. Photography is the ability to tell

a story within an image. Different aspects of photos tell different stories. Developing

photography is your ability to create meaning.

THE STUDY OF COLOR

Color patterns play a large role in photography. Color influences how we view

things. When it comes to photography, color plays an important role. This includes how

the images are captured. Color in photography includes hue, saturation, and value. These

are all the components that add up to the basis of photography. Studying color is one of

the main aspects of photography. A color scheme in photography determines how a

picture will look. At some point, photography did not have much of research attached to

it (Prosser, 1992).

<u>PHOTOGRAPHER APP</u>

At some point, I had an idea to build the ultimate photography app, which would allow

people to book photographers through an app within their vicinity. The idea of the app is

to allow people to choose the type of photography they are looking for. This includes

landscape and portrait photography. The design of the app is to aid in creating value for

people and also to give a perspective on how a person can develop their creative ability.

Figure 7. Candid photography with Phyllis. Photographed by Aaron Agyapong. www.Vsco.co/mycreativeportfolio.

Figure 7 exemplifies my creativity. I started by saying something funny to my subject and then right at the moment when she laughed, I changed my settings and created a compelling image, which will last a lifetime. This exemplifies my creativity based on what I was able to do within that moment—creating a candid photo, also known as a money shot.

Figure 8. Photographed by Aaron Agyapong. www.Vsco.co/mycreativeportfolio.

One of the key elements, which exemplifies my creative ability within figure 8, comes

from the settings I chose on my camera. I took the colors from the background and added

a few tones within the color palette, which created this compelling image. The majority

of my creativity came from directing this photo and also the postproduction behind it.

Figure 9. Photographed by Aaron Agyapong. www.Vsco.co/mycreativeportfolio.

Figure 9 was taken at Starbucks near Elmwood in Buffalo, New York. This image shows

another variation of my creativity. Initially, I told the subject to look comfortable. I

wanted to break the norms within a coffee shop. Normally in an environment like that,

you are supposed to sit down and have a cup of coffee or read a book. One aspect of this

photo is changing the color sequence within the photo.

Figure 10. Photographed by Aaron Agyapong. www.Vsco.co/mycreativeportfolio.

Figure 10 exemplifies my creativity as well. This photo was taken on a rainy day. I wanted to capture the subject during the evening after work. My creativity within this picture is taking the clothing and creating a filter around it. This allows the photo to have a unique feeling to it. The background of the ship in the photo shows how well you can use resources behind you in aiding within your creativity.

Figure 11. Photographed by Aaron Agyapong. www.Vsco.co/mycreativeportfolio.

Figure 11 was shot near a train station in Buffalo, where I captured an interesting

perspective with an off-guard subject. Initially, I took the tones from her outfit by using

them as a filter. One part of my creativity within this image is taking the yellow paint on

the road and matching it with her outfit. My creativity was shown when I captured this

image during sunset.

VSCOCAM

Have you ever wondered where image filters with a film look come from? If you are leaning towards photography which uses filters with different warm feelings to them, VSCO cam would be the best place to look.

VSCO, also known as Visual Supply Company, started out as a mobile photography organization, which allows the user to post photography more easily. VSCO plays a major role in most modern photography. The idea of VSCO is to bring out perspective within photography. Postproduction in photography has evolved in several formats. Today, VSCO has integrated itself into mobile formats, which has provided several ways to implement filters with a film look, which has attracted users. When you are using VSCO, you are creating a visual story—you are creating a variety of perspectives, which are being brought to life. VSCO has altered how we view photography through effective storytelling images. VSCO starts off with presets, which have been built by a collective group of photographers aimed at developing style. This aspect of photography has aided in the value of creating perspective.

HUMANS OF NEW YORK

"Somewhere along the way, I began to interview my subjects in addition to photographing them. And Alongside their portraits, I'd include quotes and short stories from their lives." -Brandon Stanton – Founder of Humans of New York

Brandon Stanton started Humans of New York as a way of capturing perspectives across New York City. Human of New York is about a photographer who documents perspectives and stories of individuals. The goal of Humans of New York was to capture

the daily glimpse of strangers' lives in New York City. The story behind these portraits

allows us to understand the inside of another person's mind. When you look at the stories

in Humans of New York, you can see a little bit of yourself in strangers.

Brandon Stanton has been featured in several articles across the U.S. for his perspective

of capturing stories of everyday life in New York City. Through Humans of New York,

he is able to capture different perspectives. The idea behind Humans of New York is that

each and every individual carries a lot of stories with them; many times, we do not know

what they are going through.

Figure 12. Photographed by Brandon Stanton, Humans of New York.

*"I wouldn't be here if my roommate hadn't been possessed by a demon. It all started one
night when our upstairs neighbor tried to commit suicide by cutting open his chest. I
knew then something dark was going on. But my roommate seemed fine. He was a
volunteer firefighter. I lived with him for six years. No problems. Then one night he
comes home with a new tattoo. It was a picture of the devil having sex with a gagged girl.*

He's like: 'Isn't this cool?' And I'm like: 'No, man. That's not cool.' Then at 4:30 the next morning I woke up to screaming. I ran out of my bedroom and found him thrashing around in the kitchen. He was slamming into cupboards and knocking over dishes. The whole time he's screaming: 'He's mine! He's mine!' I knew he owned a gun so I locked myself in the bedroom. The next morning he didn't remember a thing, but I wasn't taking any chances. I moved out that day. It felt like a good time to finally move to New York and follow my dreams." Humans of NY

Figure 13. Photographed by Brandon Stanton, Humans of New York.

"My parents were shot when I was ten years old. My mother was a lawyer and my dad was an engineer. They'd been working in South Africa, and they resisted a robbery attempt. At least that's what my grandfather told me. I thought everyone was fooling me until their bodies came home to Zimbabwe. Thankfully my aunt and uncle raised me and I kept going. But I was never able to graduate from school. I have dyslexia. I'm not good at reading or writing. The teachers couldn't understand my problem, and I was expected to keep up with the rest of the class. Other students would laugh at me. And I just couldn't do it. Now I feel lost. I keep to myself. I have nothing to do and I'm just sitting on my talent. I have a mechanical mind. I can understand any machine. But no engineering program will consider you unless you're good with books. And there are no facilities for dyslexia in our country. I see dyslexic people from other countries who have achieved their dreams. And it's painful to see. Because there is no path for me. I'm thankful for Special Olympics. They keep me from being idle, but I can't spend all day on a golf course. I need a job. A few years ago I discovered my father's diary. There was a section where he wrote a page about each of his children. He wrote that I was the smart one. I was the one who could fix anything. I was the future engineer."   Humans of New York

(Special Olympics World Games, Abu Dhabi, UAE

Figure 14. Photographed by Brandon Stanton, Humans of New York.

"I haven't been able to work since my heart surgery. It's been several years since I lost my apartment. Now I have memory problems. I can remember things from my childhood, but lots of important things I'm forgetting. I think I'm about sixty years old but I lost my social security card and ID. When I have a thought in my brain, I forget it before it comes out of my mouth. I sleep on the street. I come here every day for warmth. During the day I can't go anywhere else because they don't let me inside. There's a lot of provocation out there. I can't stand anywhere for long. People call the police. They don't trust me. They think I'm a terrorist. I have to keep moving because my heart can't handle the confrontation. I get very weak. My whole body trembles. Sometimes I pass out. People approach me from agencies but I don't trust them. I don't trust anyone. They want to get my benefits so they can steal them. When your memory is bad, they steal your benefits. I just need to get healthy so I can remember exactly what happened."

Figure 15. Photographed by Aaron Agyapong. www.Vsco.co/mycreativeportfolio.

Figure 15, was taken during the winter in Buffalo. The idea was to capture a winter look. This was an unplanned photography session. I started off by reaching out to see if she wanted to take photos.   This exemplifies creativity because of the editing being done. A majority of my photos show my creativity based on how I position the subjects.

Figure 16. Photographed by Aaron Agyapong. www.Vsco.co/mycreativeportfolio.

This is a co-worker of mine. The photo was taken on a rainy day at Canal Side in Buffalo, New York. This exemplifies creativity through the color tones that were used.

Figure 17. Photographed by Aaron Agyapong. www.Vsco.co/mycreativeportfolio.

In figure 17, I am capturing a perspective of my roommate. I was able to get an idea of

what details to highlight in this photo using effective lighting techniques. Editing photos

with darker tones comes down to knowing how to utilize color effectively.

Figure 18. Photographed by Aaron Agyapong. www.Vsco.co/mycreativeportfolio.

Traveling has been one of my key avenues for photography. Capturing this subject in New York City showed my creativity. I was able to use natural light through this image.

Figure 19. Photographed by Aaron Agyapong. www.Vsco.co/mycreativeportfolio.

　　　　Creativity is captured here. We see a traveler making their way through the

Buffalo train. One of the key aspects within this photo is how perspective is being

portrayed. This photo exemplifies creativity based on the area in which the photo was

taken.

INTERVIEW

Kofi Dua - Photographer

A.A. What made you decide to pursue photography?

K.D. "Curiosity" just wanted to understand how the camera worked.

A.A. Who aided you into your discovery of photography?

K.D. I will say my inner-self my discovery of Photography started when I was in church back in Kumasi, Ghana. Friends were always dressing up and felt the need to document it every Sunday then it just grew into what it is now.

A.A. How does photography play a role in your life?

K.D. Photography is literally my life. There is never a day I don't have a camera with me, I'm always ready to capture a moment.

A.A. How did you feel when you first picked up a camera?

K.D. I was scared at first because of how complex it was but when I decided to learn and practice everything became easy each day.

A.A. How do people perceive you ever since you pursued photography?

K.D. Starting was not easy back then I didn't have access to the Internet and in Ghana local photographers and the arts were not respected but never made that break me.

A.A.   What is your view on other photographers and what are your perspectives?

K.D. I don't pay attention to other photographers because I'm always focused on my road, goals and values. But I appreciate every photography work I see. Photography is just like music and film I get inspired and create my own path.

A.A. As a photographer, what do you look forward to accomplish?

K.D. Having a photography project in Ghana for all the local photographers to be

involved in.

A.A. What inspires you during your ability in photography when you travel?

K.D. Being able to photograph moments that you can look back to.

A.A. Do you believe every photographer needs structure?

K.D. Yes is important to have structure, it keeps you on the right path all the time.

A.A. What is your style of photography?

K.D. I'm versatile but mostly shooting Fashion Photography

A.A. What has photography done for you as an individual?

K.D. It took me to places that my eyes couldn't imagine and meet some very interesting

people. So will say it opened my eyes and mind.

A.A. Do you see yourself as an artist, if so why?

K.D. Yeah of course I'm an artist, I make dreams become reality.

A.A. What is your overall theme as a photographer?

K.D. Quality and color.

Kwesi Yanful – Founder of PortraitNoire.

A.A. What made you decide to pursue photography?

K.Y. I stumbled upon photography by accident, I was a historian for a fraternity in

pharmacy school and part of my responsibilities was to take photos and videos and when I got a camera to do that I loved it so I just started teaching myself photography.

A.A.   Who aided you into your discovery of photography?

K.Y. Prior to starting my historian work, I knew some really OG photographers who became instrumental in the early stages once I picked up a camera — Kelvin Quaye, TJ Letsa, FuFunSoup. Once a I got comfortable with the camera my world blossomed and I got in contact with so many photographers I know today.

A.A. How does photography play a role in your life?

Photography does 2 things for me at this point in my life.

K.Y. 1) is to serve as a mouthpiece for me, so that I can try and make a difference one way or the other. I really love taking portraits of black people and to see the underrepresentation in that is astonishing. Part of the reason we created portraitnoire is just that. 2) I am a clinical pharmacist specialist by trade/training, and I specialize in HIV medicine. Every now and then I need to escape work and photography does not quite nicely.

A.A. How did you feel when you first picked up a camera?

K.Y. I picked up the camera for the wrong reasons at first so I don't think I quite appreciated the gravity of impact of the art I'd just began to dabble in. But today, picking up a camera is freeing, a bit nerve racking too, if I'm honest. But I think it's for a good reason. I want to improve all the time and with every shoot so I'm constantly in a state of unlearning and relearning.

A.A. How do people perceive you ever since you pursued photography?

K.Y. "I don't know that people perceive me differently since I starting taking portraits in comparison to before. But I think people who saw me from he beginning are quite impressed with how much I've grown as a photographer.

K,D I think the biggest thing people are low-key uncomfortable with is finding out that I practice pharmacy in addition to photography. It just astonishes people for whatever reason.

A.A. What is your view on other photographers and what are your perspectives?

K.Y. Photography is so subjective that I don't think I can truly answer this questions. I appreciate most portrait photography and I think in general with instagram and what not we've had a huge increase in photographers. I find that really dope. But I do think that photographers who have been in the game for a long time should take those of us still learning under their wings and mentor us. Right now it just seems like OG photographers only hang and collaborate with each other. But I guess much of the creative scene is like that. It should change though. I used to frown on photographers who heavy altering of images but I've actually grown to really like some of them and how creative these photographers are. It's just incredible what people are creating with the image they took. I'm not there yet but im sure it will be the next frontier if I want to try something else. Right now I prefer clean and minimal work.

A.A. As a photographer, what do you look forward to accomplish?

K.Y. I want this— when you search for "portrait photography inspiration", you don't feel the need to add "black" to the search. Or add black to any search for that matter.

It's rampant these days.

Figure 20. Photographed by Kofi Dua.

Figure 20 is a photo of two women inspired by Kofi. This perspective shows the

point-of-view from a top view. Kofi's creativity is exemplified based on how close he captures his subjects.

Figure 20. Photographed by Kofi Dua.

The details in this image represent culture. It shows how beauty can be aesthetic. Kofi exemplified his creativity by blurring the background and using effective color saturation with the red. In the image, we can see how well he captures emotion and culture.

Interviewee –   Kwesi Yanful – Founder of **Portraitnoire**

AA Tell us about portraitnoire.

KY   "Portraitnoire is and platform and a movement around increasing awareness of portraits of black people and highlighting the community behind it. We've had a few phases of the development and now where we are is truly highlight the community behind it.. I think you'll see a lot of features going forward. You can find us on everywhere @portraitnoire and http://portraitnoire.com."

AA. What are your vision capturing moments of Black people in portraitnoire?

KY "The biggest misconception about the movement is that it has been treated as an extension of me but it really should not be. We were very careful in the beginning with images we shared etc but this is a movement for the community and what the community is creating."

AA Do you believe every photographer needs structure?

KY "No I don't believe that at all. Like any other art, its what ever process that works for the individual photographer. Structure or no structure it's the work at the end that counts. One of those things that the end justifies the means".

What is your style of photography?

"Right now, true to reality, almost minimal portraits. I'm hoping to allow more context in my photos now so working on that piece."

AA What has photography done for you as an individual?

"It has allowed me to meet so many dope people in general. But it also has allowed me to see the beauty in literally anything. It's quite humbling to realize there's beauty in everything #everythingnaart"

AA   Do you see yourself as an artist, if so why?

KY "Unsure how to answer this, haha but maybe once I start showing my photos and doing exhibitions not so much at the moment."

What is your overall theme as a photographer?

Minimal is one that comes mind

CREATIVITY HAPPENS AFTER THE PHOTOS

Postproduction photography is one of the most pivotal aspects of photography. It allows you to develop your perspective within your photography ability. We never experience photography; we experience the creative perspective of a photographer. We experience the abstract creativity from the lens of photography. Post photography has been a movement of art.

From the confinement of a desktop, we can use our mobile camera as a means to create different perspectives of photography (Clawson, 2015). Through techniques and effective lighting, we are able to create newer perspectives.

CONCLUSION

To become a photographer is to become a storyteller, an observer, and an individual who understands the power of creating timeless images. Photography becomes a powerful source when it adds value to human life. Once you find your niche, you become a powerful force who has the ability to create, develop, and see different ideas and perspectives. Creating compelling art with your camera gives you the ability to determine if photography is compelling. Overall, creating images within different niches has the power of altering perspective. The study of art through images is an important part of learning about photography. Photographers are the creators of different views through postproduction.

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