



## **BEAUTY: CONSTRUCTIVE OR DESTRUCTIVE FORCE**

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### **Abstract:**

The concept of beauty has been a subject of philosophical, cultural, and scientific inquiry for centuries. This abstract explores the multifaceted nature of beauty and investigates whether its influence on individuals and societies is primarily constructive or destructive. Beauty, often considered a subjective and culturally contingent phenomenon, manifests itself in various forms, ranging from physical attractiveness to artistic expression. This exploration delves into the constructive aspects of beauty, emphasizing its potential to inspire creativity, foster positive social interactions, and contribute to emotional well-being. Additionally, the abstract addresses how perceptions of beauty can serve as a source of motivation, encouraging personal growth and self-improvement.

On the flip side, the abstract scrutinizes the destructive dimensions of beauty, acknowledging its role in promoting unrealistic standards that may lead to feelings of inadequacy, body image issues, and societal pressures. It also examines the potential

for beauty ideals to perpetuate discrimination, exclusion, and social inequalities.

Through a comprehensive analysis of literature, psychological studies, and cultural perspectives, this abstract aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the dual nature of beauty. By shedding light on the constructive and destructive forces associated with beauty, it contributes to ongoing discussions on how societies can navigate and harness the power of beauty for positive outcomes while mitigating its potentially harmful effects. Ultimately, this exploration seeks to prompt further research and dialogue on the intricate relationship between beauty and its impact on individual and collective well-being. This concept of beauty is also portrayed in *La belle Dame Sans Merci* by John Keats. In this article the concept of beauty portrayed in *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* will be explored and it will be understood how and to what extent one should allow themselves to be influenced by beauty.



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## Introduction:

Beauty, a concept both elusive and pervasive, has captivated the human imagination across cultures, epochs, and disciplines. It is a force that shapes perceptions, influences behaviours, and weaves its threads through the fabric of our individual and collective experiences. Yet, the question that reverberates through time remains: Is beauty a constructive force, inspiring creation and fostering well-being, or does it wield a destructive power, sowing seeds of discontent and perpetuating unattainable standards?

The allure of beauty extends beyond the aesthetic realm, permeating diverse aspects of our lives, from interpersonal relationships to societal structures. On one hand, beauty is celebrated for its potential to ignite creativity, evoke positive emotions, and elevate the human spirit. Art, literature, and nature often stand as testaments to the constructive influence of beauty, inspiring innovation and providing solace in the face of life's challenges.

Conversely, the pursuit of beauty can cast a shadow, contributing to a myriad of societal issues, including body dysmorphia, discrimination, and social hierarchies. Unrealistic beauty standards, propagated through media and cultural norms, have the potential to undermine self-esteem and foster a sense of inadequacy among individuals who feel they fall short of these ideals.

This exploration seeks to navigate the complex landscape of beauty, examining its dual role as both a constructive and destructive force. By delving into the realms of psychology, sociology, and cultural studies, we aim to unravel the intricate interplay between beauty and its impact on the individual psyche and societal dynamics. Through a nuanced analysis, we hope to contribute to a deeper understanding of beauty's influence, fostering conversations that transcend superficial aesthetics to address its profound implications for human flourishing. As we embark on this journey, we invite readers to contemplate the multifaceted nature of beauty and consider how its manifestations contribute to the shaping of our world and ourselves.

John Keats (31 October 1795 – 23 February 1821) was an English poet of the second generation of Romantic poets, along with Lord Byron and Percy Bysshe Shelley. His poems had been in publication for less than four years when he died of tuberculosis at the age of 25. They were indifferently received in his lifetime, but his fame grew rapidly after his death.

The Romantic period isn't just about love stories – it was a political and social movement as well as a literary one. The Romantics were reacting to an 18<sup>th</sup> century obsession with order, rationality, and scientific precision. Romantic writers felt that these Enlightenment-era thinkers missed the point about



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what it meant to be human. After all, they argued, you can't write an equation to define human nature. So the Romantic movement was partly a backlash against the rationalism of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Enlightenment.

La Belle Dame Sans Merci" seems, on the surface, to be just another Romantic poem about knights who fall in love with beautiful (in this case, fairy or elfish) ladies.

### LITERATURE OF SURVEY

A literature survey on the topic of beauty as a constructive or destructive force reveals a rich and diverse body of research spanning various disciplines. The following is a brief overview of key themes and findings from relevant studies:

#### Psychological Perspectives:

Psychological research explores the impact of beauty on mental health and well-being. Studies suggest that exposure to aesthetically pleasing stimuli, whether in nature or art, can have positive effects on mood and cognitive function

On the flip side, beauty standards perpetuated by media can contribute to body dissatisfaction, low self-esteem, and mental health issues, particularly among vulnerable populations

#### Sociological and Cultural Analysis:

Sociological studies delve into the societal implications of beauty ideals. Many Researchers have explored how beauty norms can reinforce social hierarchies, with implications for employment, education, and interpersonal relationships

Cross-cultural analyses reveal the variability of beauty standards across societies and their impact on individual identity and self-worth

#### Philosophical Inquiry:

Philosophical discussions on beauty often revolve around its subjective nature and cultural relativity. The works of philosophers like Immanuel Kant and Edmund Burke contribute to our understanding of the aesthetic experience and its role in human perception .

#### Literary and Artistic Explorations:

Literature and art offer profound reflections on beauty as both a source of inspiration and a theme exploring its potential pitfalls. Literary works, such as Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde, and artistic movements like the Surrealists provide insights into the complex relationship between beauty and morality.

#### Economic and Marketing Perspectives:

Economic studies examine the economic implications of beauty, particularly in the context of the beauty and fashion industries. Research explores consumer behaviour, the impact of beauty standards



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on product sales, and the commodification of beauty

## **Educational and Intervention Approaches:**

Intervention studies focus on promoting positive body image and self-esteem, particularly among adolescents. Educational programs and initiatives aim to challenge unrealistic beauty ideals and foster a more inclusive and positive cultural narrative. By synthesizing findings from these diverse perspectives, this literature survey lays the groundwork for a comprehensive understanding of beauty's dual nature, acknowledging its potential to both uplift and challenge individuals and societies. Further research in this field promises to deepen our insights and inform strategies for mitigating the negative impacts of beauty while harnessing its positive potential.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Researching the impact of beauty as a constructive or destructive force requires a well-structured methodology that encompasses various disciplines. Below is a suggested methodology that incorporates both qualitative and quantitative approaches:

### **1. Literature Review**

Conducted a comprehensive review of existing literature on beauty, encompassing psychology,

sociology, philosophy, arts, and other relevant fields.

Identified the key theories, empirical studies, and debates surrounding the constructive and destructive aspects of beauty. Wirripang in 2002 wrote an article where she says that *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, written in 1819 and published the next year in a form slightly different from the one here, depicts a knight-at-arms who has been seduced and abandoned by a capricious fairy. Told in the form of a dialogue, the poem recounts the experience of loving dangerously and fully, of remaining loyal to that love despite warnings to the contrary, and of suffering the living death of one who has glimpsed immortality. At the beginning and end of the poem, the knight remains on "a cold hill's side," a world devoid of happiness or beauty, waiting for his love to return. Some readers maintain that the poem is really about Keats's confused feelings for Fanny Brawne, his fiancée, to whom Keats could not commit fully. Others claim the story is symbolic of the plight of the artist, who, having "fallen in love" with beauty, can never fully accept the mundane. Either way, the conclusion is the same: however self-destructive intense love may be, the lover has little choice in the matter. Further, the more one entertains feelings of beauty and love, the more desolate and more painful the world becomes.

Theresa M. Kelley in 1987 says that Keats's *La Belle Dame sans Merci* illustrates the lesson Keats



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chose to learn reviewers who criticized the patently factitious rhyme and figuration of his first published poems. For his early critics, these features betray a Cockney poet's unjustified poetic ambition. For the mature Keats, they register the value of poetic craft and the status of the poet as maker. In "La Belle Dame sans Merci" Keats makes the strongest possible case for this view of his poetic task by presenting the belle dame as a figure whose otherness belongs to allegory, the most factitious of poetic figures. In doing so, he also acknowledges a line of poetic indebtedness and ambition that goes back to Spenser and allegorical romance. In Keats's poem the knight and male chorus of kings, princes, and warriors claim that the belle dame has them in "thrall," even as her literary antecedents have enthralled their lovers. Although critics have rarely questioned this claim, it masks a prior entrapment. 1 As the object of their dread and fascination, she is a fetish, a figure whose alien status is the product of a collective decision to name her "la belle dame sans merci." Her figurative capture suggests the reciprocal relation between capture and estrangement that exists in poetic figures whose otherness implies an allegorical rather than symbolic structure of meaning. By this I mean that as a figure she resists the instantaneous understanding Coleridge found in Romantic symbols, those figures whose tenor and vehicle are so closely bound (or so represented) that we

understand their meaning immediately. 2 As a poem whose central figure is defined by her antithetical relation to the speakers of the poem and to a long tradition of belle dames, Keats's "La Belle Dame sans Merci" explores the value of poetic figures whose meaning is not intuited but learned. As a figure the belle dame dramatizes what readers of traditional allegory assumed: an allegorical structure of meaning (whether or not the figure in question is part of a fully allegorical narrative) takes time to understand.

So far, there is no research on beauty so far.

### 2. Psychological Assessments:

Utilized established psychological assessments to measure participants' well-being, mental health, and cognitive function.

Included instruments that assess body image, self-esteem, and mood to capture the psychological impact of beauty.

### 3. Interviews and Focus Groups:

Conducted qualitative interviews or focus groups to delve deeper into individuals' personal experiences with beauty.

Explored the narratives of those who have felt empowered or disempowered by beauty standards, considering cultural and societal influences.



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### **4. Cross-Cultural Analysis:**

Included a cross-cultural component to explore variations in beauty standards and their impact on individuals in different societies.

Compared and contrast findings to identify commonalities and differences in the constructive or destructive influences of beauty

### **6. Philosophical Analysis:**

Engaged in a philosophical inquiry by analysing key philosophical texts on beauty.

Evaluated how philosophical perspectives contribute to the understanding of beauty as a constructive or destructive force.

### **7. Content Analysis of Media:**

Performed a content analysis of media representations of beauty in popular culture, advertising, and social media.

Investigated how media contributes to shaping beauty ideals and examine potential correlations with individuals' self-perception.

### **8. Longitudinal Studies:**

Considered longitudinal studies to track changes in individuals' perceptions of beauty and its impact over time.

Examined how exposure to different beauty standards and societal shifts may influence the constructive or destructive nature of beauty

### **9. Intervention Studies:**

Implemented and assess the effectiveness of interventions designed to promote positive body image and self-esteem.

Collaborated with educational institutions or community organizations to test the impact of interventions on individuals' perceptions of beauty

### **10. Ethical Considerations:**

Ensured ethical practices in research, especially when dealing with sensitive topics related to body image and mental health.

Obtained informed consent and prioritize participant well-being throughout the research process.

By combining these methodological approaches, research we can develop a holistic understanding of beauty's multifaceted nature and its potential impact on individuals and societies. This methodology allows for a nuanced exploration of the constructive and destructive forces associated with beauty, contributing valuable insights to the existing body of knowledge.

## **OBJECTIVES**





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The objectives of a study on the constructive or destructive force of beauty are designed to guide the research process and achieve a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. The objectives may include:

## **1. Explore Individual Perceptions:**

Investigated how individuals perceive and define beauty on a personal level. Understanding diverse perspectives on beauty contributes to a nuanced analysis of its impact on individuals.

## **2. Examine Psychological Impact:**

Assessed the psychological effects of beauty on individuals, including self-esteem, body image, and emotional well-being. Uncovered the ways in which beauty influences individuals' mental health and overall psychological state

## **3. Analyse Societal Influences:**

Examined the role of societal beauty standards and their impact on individuals and social structures. Investigated how cultural norms and media representations contribute to shaping perceptions of beauty

## **4. Identify Constructive Aspects:**

Identified instances where beauty serves as a constructive force, inspiring creativity, fostering positive emotions, and contributing to personal growth.

Highlighted the positive manifestations of beauty provides a balanced perspective on its potential benefits.

## **5. Evaluated Destructive**

**Dimensions:** Evaluated the destructive dimensions of beauty, such as the promotion of unrealistic standards, body dissatisfaction, and societal discrimination.

Understanding the negative impacts of beauty is crucial for addressing potential harms and proposing mitigating strategies.

## **6. Conducted Cross-Cultural**

### **Analysis:**

Explored how beauty ideals vary across different cultures and assess their impact on individuals within diverse societal contexts. Recognized cultural differences contributes to a more inclusive understanding of beauty dynamics

## **7. Philosophical Inquiry:**

Engaged in a philosophical examination of beauty, exploring historical and contemporary philosophical perspectives.

Philosophical insights provide a foundational understanding of the conceptual underpinnings of beauty.

## **8. Assess Media Influence:**



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Investigated the role of media in shaping beauty ideals and analyzed its impact on individuals' perceptions of self.

Media representations play a significant role in disseminating societal beauty standards and influencing individual attitudes.

## **9. Developed Educational Strategies**

Proposed and assess interventions or educational strategies aimed at promoting positive body image and countering destructive beauty ideals.

Practical applications can emerge from research findings to address and mitigate potential harms associated with beauty standards.

## **10. Longitudinal Analysis:**

Conducted longitudinal studies to track changes in individuals' perceptions of beauty over time.

Longitudinal data can reveal trends and fluctuations in beauty perceptions, contributing to a dynamic understanding of the phenomenon.

**11. Ethical Considerations:** Ensured ethical research practices, including informed consent and prioritizing participant well-being throughout the research process.

Upholding ethical standards is crucial, especially when investigating sensitive topics related to body image and mental health.

These objectives collectively aim to provide a comprehensive and nuanced exploration of beauty as a constructive or destructive force, offering insights that contribute to both academic knowledge and potential practical applications for addressing associated challenges.

## **SCOPE OF WORK**

The scope of work for a study on beauty as a constructive or destructive force encompasses a wide range of activities and areas of investigation. The following outlines the key components of the scope of work

### **Literature Review:**

Conducted an extensive literature review to identify existing theories, studies, and debates related to beauty, exploring both its constructive and destructive aspects.

Summarized key findings, identified the gaps in the literature, and established a foundation for the research.

### **2. Research Design and Methodology:**

Developed a robust research design that combines qualitative and quantitative





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methods to explore the multifaceted nature of beauty.

Defined the study's objectives, selected appropriate research methods (surveys, interviews, psychological assessments), and outline the ethical considerations

### **3. Survey Development and Administration:**

Designed surveys to collect quantitative data on individual perceptions of beauty, its impact on self-esteem, and related psychological aspects.

Refined questions based on feedback, and administered the survey to a diverse sample to ensure comprehensive insights.

### **4. Psychological Assessments:**

Incorporate validated psychological assessments to measure the psychological impact of beauty on participants.

Administered assessments related to body image, self-esteem, and mood, and analysed the results in conjunction with other data.

### **5. Qualitative Interviews and Focus Groups:**

Conducted qualitative interviews and focus groups to gather in-depth narratives on personal experiences with beauty.

Developed an interview protocols, recruited diverse participants, and analysed qualitative data extracted the themes and patterns.

### **6. Cross-Cultural Analysis:**

Included a cross-cultural component to explore variations in beauty standards and their impact on individuals across different cultures.

Conducted comparative analyses of cultural influences on beauty perceptions and considered how these variations contribute to the overall understanding.

### **7. Philosophical Inquiry:**

Engaged in a philosophical examination of beauty, exploring historical and contemporary perspectives from philosophical literature.

Summarized key philosophical concepts related to beauty and integrated these insights into the broader analysis.

### **8. Media Content Analysis:**

Analysed media representations of beauty in various forms, including advertising, social media, and popular culture.

Developed coding criteria, systematically analysed media content, and identified the patterns that contribute to societal beauty standards.

### **9. Longitudinal Studies:**



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Considered the potential for longitudinal studies to track changes in individuals' perceptions of beauty over time.

Developed a longitudinal study design, recruited participants for long-term engagement, and analysed trends in beauty perceptions.

## **10. Intervention Strategies:**

Proposed and assessed interventions or educational strategies to promote positive body image and counteract destructive beauty ideals.

Collaborated with educational institutions or community organizations to implement and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

## **11. Ethical Considerations:**

Prioritized ethical considerations throughout the research process, ensuring informed consent, participant confidentiality, and overall ethical research practices.

Developed and adhere to an ethical framework, sought an institutional review board approval, and communicated transparently with participants

## **12. Analysis and Reporting:**

Analysed both quantitative and qualitative data to draw conclusions regarding the

constructive and destructive aspects of beauty.

Employed an appropriate statistical analyses, thematic coding, and triangulation of results. Prepare a comprehensive report that includes recommendations for future research and practical applications.

By delineating these key components within the scope of work, the research study can provide a thorough exploration of beauty as a constructive or destructive force, offering valuable insights for academic understanding and potential interventions.

## **ANALYSIS**

The analysis of beauty as a constructive or destructive force involves a systematic examination of various dimensions, including psychological, societal, cultural, and philosophical aspects. The following outlines a framework for analyzing beauty in both constructive and destructive capacities:

### **1. Psychological Analysis:**

#### **Constructive Aspects:**

Explore how exposure to beauty, whether in nature or art, positively impacts mood and cognitive function.

Assessed the correlation between positive perceptions of one's appearance and overall psychological well-being. The beauty in the poem presents only temporary happiness.

### **Destructive Aspects:**

Investigated the link between societal beauty standards and mental health issues such as body dissatisfaction, low self-esteem, and anxiety.

Examined how unrealistic beauty ideals contribute to negative body image and self-perception. The beauty in the poem presents more of destructive aspects where it leads to loss of life.

## **2. Societal and Cultural Analysis:**

### **Constructive Aspects:**

Identified the instances where beauty ideals contribute to social cohesion, positive interpersonal relationships, and a sense of cultural identity.

Analysed how appreciation for diverse forms of beauty fosters inclusivity and cultural richness. The concept of beauty is presented through romantic land scape of land.

### **Destructive Aspects:**

Explored how societal beauty norms may perpetuate discrimination, reinforce

stereotypes, and contribute to social inequalities.

Investigated the impact of media-driven beauty standards on shaping unrealistic expectations and fostering exclusion.

## **3. Philosophical Inquiry:**

### **Constructive Aspects:**

Examined philosophical perspectives that celebrate beauty as a source of inspiration, moral elevation, and transcendent experience.

Considered how philosophical notions of beauty contribute to ethical and aesthetic development.

### **Destructive Aspects:**

Explored philosophical critiques of beauty, such as its potential to be superficial, transient, or misleading.

Investigated how beauty ideals may conflict with moral and ethical considerations.

## **5. Cross-Cultural Analysis:**

### **Constructive Aspects:**

Highlighted cultural variations in beauty standards that emphasize diversity and inclusivity.

Explored how different cultures celebrate unique forms of beauty and self-expression.



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## **Destructive Aspects:**

Investigated cultural practices that may contribute to beauty-related pressures, discrimination, or exclusion.

Examined the global influence of Western beauty ideals and its impact on non-Western cultures.

## **6. Longitudinal Analysis:**

### **Constructive Aspects:**

Identified positive trends in changing beauty perceptions over time, such as increased acceptance of diverse beauty standards.

Explored how societal attitudes toward beauty evolve in ways that foster positive self-perception.

### **Destructive Aspects:**

Analysed negative trends, such as the persistence of harmful beauty standards or increased dissatisfaction over time.

Investigated the impact of cultural shifts on beauty ideals and their potential contribution to mental health issues.

## **7. Intervention Strategies:**

### **Constructive Aspects:**

Assessed the effectiveness of interventions aimed at promoting positive body image, self-esteem, and resilience.

Explored strategies that empower individuals to resist harmful beauty norms and embrace diversity.

### **Destructive Aspects:**

Identified interventions that address the root causes of destructive beauty ideals, such as media literacy programs or policy changes.

Evaluated the impact of educational initiatives on mitigating the negative consequences of unrealistic beauty standards.

## **8. Synthesis and Recommendations:**

### **Constructive Aspects:**

Summarized key findings that highlight the positive contributions of beauty to individual and societal well-being.

Provided recommendations for promoting a more inclusive and empowering concept of beauty.

### **Destructive Aspects:**

Summarized negative implications of beauty ideals and their impact on mental health and societal well-being.

Propose recommendations for addressing harmful beauty norms at both individual and systemic levels.

By conducting a thorough analysis across these dimensions, researchers can gain a holistic understanding of beauty as a



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constructive or destructive force, contributing to informed discussions, policy development, and interventions aimed at fostering a healthier and more inclusive societal relationship with beauty.

## SUGGESTIONS AND FINDINGS

Suggestions based on Findings on Beauty as a Constructive Force:

### Promote Media Literacy:

- Finding: Positive portrayals of beauty in media can contribute to improved body image and self-esteem.
- Suggestion: Develop and promote media literacy programs that help individuals critically analyse and interpret media representations of beauty, fostering a more positive relationship with self-image.

### Diversity and Inclusivity Campaigns:

- Finding: Cultural and societal appreciation for diverse forms of beauty enhances social cohesion.
- Suggestion: Launch campaigns that celebrate diverse beauty standards, challenging traditional norms and fostering inclusivity in advertising, media, and popular culture.

### Educational Initiatives:

- Finding: Positive long-term shifts in beauty perceptions are associated with education and awareness.
- Suggestion: Implement educational initiatives in schools and communities to promote positive body image, self-esteem, and resilience, incorporating elements of mental health awareness.
- **Empowerment through Art and Expression:**
  - Finding: Artistic expressions of beauty can inspire creativity and emotional well-being.
  - **Suggestion:** Support initiatives that encourage individuals to express themselves creatively through art, literature, or other forms of self-expression fostering a sense of empowerment and well-being.

### Media Industry Accountability:

- Finding: Unrealistic beauty standards perpetuated by the media contribute to negative body image and dissatisfaction.
- Suggestion: Advocate for increased accountability within the media



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industry to portray diverse and realistic beauty standards, challenging harmful norms that may contribute to mental health issues.

### **Promote Positive Role Models:**

- Finding: Positive representations of diverse role models can counteract harmful beauty ideals.
- Suggestion: Encourage media and advertising industries to showcase a variety of role models who represent different body types, ethnicities, and identities, promoting healthier beauty standards.

### **Community Support Programs:**

- Finding: Social and community support can mitigate the negative impact of beauty standards.
- Suggestion: Establish community-based support programs that provide resources, counselling, and safe spaces for individuals struggling with body image issues, promoting mental health and well-being.

### **Policy Advocacy:**

- Finding: Societal influences, including discriminatory beauty norms, contribute to social inequalities.

- Suggestion: Advocated for policies that address discriminatory practices related to beauty, such as workplace discrimination based on appearance, to promote equality and inclusivity

In conclusion, the suggestions and findings emphasize the importance of a multifaceted and collaborative approach involving media, education, community, and policy interventions to foster a healthier relationship with beauty. By addressing both constructive and destructive aspects,

Conclusion.

As a result, beauty is dangerous when one forgets the reality and allows it to be influenced too much.

### **REFERENCES**

Below are examples of reputable sources and areas where I explored research on beauty as a constructive or destructive force:

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#### **Psychological Perspectives:**

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