The Northern/Scottish Dialect in Nathaniel Woodes'
A Conflict of Conscience (1581)[1]

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1. INTRODUCTION.

Varieties of English other than the 'standard' were frequent in 16th-c. literature, in poems and jest books and also in fiction[2] and in drama. Since the days of Chaucer and the Wakefield Master, when literary dialects started to be used as a means of characterization, this device had generally become a way to signal the rusticity and comicity of characters. Not all varieties had the same function or status. Whereas southwestern traits had come to be associated with comic country bumpkins, whatever their origins, Irish with wild characters and Welsh with foolish, Northern and Scottish features were not always only used for comedy.[3] In moralities and interludes and in the Renaissance drama Northern and Scottish traits were combined in the speeches of characters specifically nationalized as Scots or Northern. From a linguistic point of view these two varieties were also more carefully represented than others although most audiences would have been unable to distinguish between them. Blank (1996: 108) shows that the attitudes towards Northern English differed from those towards the other varieties and were ambivalent: "At once the rude dialect of ploughmen and an ancestral English, the Northern dialect was prosecuted as provincial and defended as the wellspring of the national language".

As years went by and almost up to the last century, all these stage characters became highly conventionalized and so did the linguistic features given to them. Nevertheless, it seems plausible that, at least in the initial stages, some of these regional traits actually reflected current usage.

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[2] For instance on Thomas Deloney's use of dialect see García-Bermejo (1998).

[3] On literary dialects in general and in this time period see Blake (1981), Blank (1996) and Eckhardt (1910-11) among others. On Irish English in English literature see among others Bartley (1954), Bliss (1979), Rabl (1987), Sullivan (1980) and Truninger (1976). On Scots characters in English literature see among others Hoenselaars (1992) and Bartley (1954).

The aim of this paper is to analyse and describe some of the Northern/Scottish features that mark the speeches of Caconos, one of the characters in the late morality *A Conflict of Conscience* by Nathaniel Woodes, printed in 1581.[4] I will also attempt the clarification of some doubtful readings. This is considered the first instance of the use of Northern/Scottish traits in drama. No modern edition of the play, with a full body of notes, has ever been published.

2.1 NATHANIEL WOODES.

Very little is known about the life of Nathaniel Woodes apart from a few bare facts which are doubtful. Apparently, he studied in Cambridge from 1567 to 1574; between 1572 and 1586 he was rector of a small parish, South Walsham St. Mary's, near Norwich, where he had been ordained; he was incorporated at Oxford in 1594. *CC* is his only known work. Oliver (1949: 2) goes as far as to suggest not only that this information might correspond to another Nathaniel Woodes but also that "Possibly (...) [he] was not the original author, but merely the editor or revisor of an earlier play". Whatever the case may be, even if no biographical relationship with the north country can be established, Caconos'ss speeches seem to indicate that the author must have met people from the North and must have been familiar with Scottish orthographic conventions.

2.2 *THE CONFLICT OF CONSCIENCE*

Nathaniel Woodes' late morality *CC* tells the story of the Italian Protestant Francis Spiera or Spira who was made to return to Catholicism and died full of remorse for it. There are two different endings in the two printed issues of the play: in the first Francis Spiera commits suicide, in the second, he returns to Protestantism. It is an anti-Catholic play, written after England had been through the throes of the Reformation and after Queen Mary had provided Protestantism with a martyrology.

CC is a lesser known work, that has received very little attention from the literary critics. To my knowledge just three papers have been devoted to it. Wine (1935) and Oliver (1949) deal basically with its sources and Jackson (1933) with editorial matters. As far as the standard History of Literature reference books are concerned only Baugh (1967: 365) mentions it, and as an interlude rather than a morality. This seems acceptable, given the period in which it was written, and the many similarities between both types of play. However, *CC* has more points in common with moralities than with the interludes. As Wine (1935: 676) points out: "(...) although called a comedy on the title-page, [it] was clearly intended to be a moral play, and in general shows the structure and main features of that type". However, whereas moralities did not generally have a historical subject, *CC* does.

There is no specific indication in the play about the geographic provenance of the Northern/Scottish speaking priest Caconos. Vice-characters in the *moralities* were often represented as speakers of regional varieties. It is not surprising, therefore, that the language of Caconos, an objectionable Catholic priest in an anti-Catholic play, should be marked with regional features. Blake (1981: 73) shows that in the moralities a South-Western variety "(...) tended to be used for the wicked characters

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[4] Hereinafter *CC.* Apparently it was only printed once, in 1581, although there were two issues which differ on the title page, the prologue, and the ending. Also there are some variations in the text which Jackson (1933:592) considers "(...) merely corrections made while the sheets were passing through the press". There have been few editions of this play. J. P. Collier printed the second issue in 1851. His text was reprinted by W. C. Hazlitt in 1874 in modernized spelling. A collotype facsimile of the second issue appeared in 1911, edited by J. S. Farmer. Finally, in 1952 the Malone Society published a full version reproducing the first issue and photostats of the alterations in the second issue, collating the two surviving copies of the first issue and the eight copies of the second, held in libraries on both sides of the Atlantic. All references will be to this 1952 Malone Society facsimile reprint.

who were often portrayed as grotesque and hence as comic". But in this case, Caconos's speeches are coloured with a mixture of Northern, Scottish and Midland forms.

Woodes may have preferred to use Northern/Scottish traits for two reasons: 1) As a subliminal attack on Mary Queen of Scots. 2) Because he may have drawn this character from a northern clergyman who became notorious in Norwich in 1571 for his ignorance and pro-Catholic attitude (Wine 1935: 378).

The dialect passages in *CC* have been studied from a linguistic point of view by Edouard Eckhardt (1910: 94-97) and by Blake (1981: 74-75). Blake described the main spelling conventions selected by Woodes to indicate the Northern/Scottish origins of Caconos. Eckhardt carefully enumerated and classified the different 'non-standard' spellings. However, he carried out his analysis before the modern development of Dialectology and he lacked tools such as *The Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English* (McIntosh *et al.* 1986; hereinafter *LALME*). Reliable studies about the Early Modern period such as those by Dobson (1968), Barber (1976), Cercignani (1981), or Görlach (1991), or the ones based on *The Helsinki Corpus* had not yet been published. His statements need to be revised and all the data he so painstakingly gathered should be reassessed in the light of recent research on historical dialectology.

3. Linguistic Analysis

I will now attempt a description and linguistic analysis of the dialect passages. Woodes not only tried to suggest a Northern/Scottish accent but also included some regional lexis and morphology. A detailed analysis of all the traits present in *CC* would be too lengthy, as a look at the miscellaneous features in Table 1 shows (see next page). Some of the phonological traits suggested are very well known, while others I have already studied elsewhere (see García-Bermejo Giner 1998; Forthcoming). As regards the morphological features, like the ending *-is* as the plural morpheme in Scottish English, or the dialect forms of the verb *must*, *i.e. mun*, common in Northern England and the Midlands, they require no further comment. I will only focus on some of the other phonological and lexical features.

The interpretation of the spellings must sometimes take into account both the English and the Scottish contemporary orthographic conventions.[5] Of course, we have no way of knowing how actors would follow these linguistic cues, or how much of their own knowledge about these varieties they would apply to their performances. Often two interpretations are possible, depending on the set of orthographic conventions followed.

For the most part Woodes is accurate in his suggestions, although at times he includes analogical formations. He is quite consistent in his representation of the dialect, and Caconos tends to use only the 'non-standard' form of a word. However, there are also many 'standard' forms in his speeches. In the sections that follow I have gathered the different variant spellings in tables indicating how often each of them appears in the text and also whether Caconos also uses the 'standard' form of the word.

Probably influenced by earlier writers Woodes also includes forms that at the time were already archaisms, and also some vulgarisms and malapropisms. We should remember that, as Blake (1981: 75) points out: "[Woodes] wanted to portray his character as a prejudiced fool and so he gave him improper and corrupt language as well, thus turning his Scots into a matter for scorn".

When possible I have traced the history of the different traits. Many of Woodes' spellings are not attested in *OED* although this play is among the primary sources of the dictionary.

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[5] About Scottish orthographic conventions, see especially Aitken (1977) and Kniezsa (1997).

TABLE 1. MISCELANEOUS TRAITS.

af x5 off x11	Clargy x1	tham x2	awd x1	buke x3	de x9
affer x2,	clarke x1	theam x1	lawliness x1	fule x1	dea x1
affring x1	tharawawt x1	them x1	thawgh x1	gude x1	deas x1
apprest x1	wharas x1	twalfth	thaw x1	gudewill x1	do x1
befare x1	whare x1	awt x4	vara x2	good x1	inte x2
before x1	wharon x1	out x1	mara x1	luke x1	intea x2
braught x1	war x5	Sawl x2	<Marry!>		te x21
brought x1	wer x1	awer x1,			to x5
far x23		awr x17			onte x1
for x1		awre x1			
con x1		nat x1	deel x1	thratty x2	
can x3	lang x1	not x3	deuill x1	waud x2	
lond x1		thot x1	rewhayre x1	wawd x4	
mons x1		that x19	whadragesima x1	wawde x1	
man x2	mawght x2	sal x1	whaiet x1	wol x1	
han x5	mowt x1	sall x3		woll x1	
newis x1	mun x4			will x3	
sen x1	must x3			wil x1	

3.1. PHONOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF SELECTED FEATURES

3.1.2. VARIANT SPELLINGS OF WORDS WITH ME /iː/

The most frequently used feature in *CC*, as seen in Table 2, is the substitution of <i> for <ay> or <ai> in words that originally had ME /iː/. The same convention is analogically applied also to words which originally are thought to have had the short vowel (highlighted in table one). This may be an intentional malapropism on the part of Woodes. In Caconos's speeches there are only three words with this root vowel that are written in the 'standard' way, *childles*, *light* and *price*. Aitken (1977: 2-3) shows that at the time these words were pronounced in Scottish English with a diphthong /ei/ and they were variously spelled with <i-e>, <y-e>, <y>, <yi>. ME /iː/ had been fully diphthongised in northern England at the time but in southern England it was pronounced as /i/.[6] For Alexander Gill (1619) and Simon Daines (1640) Northern ME /iː/ and Southern ME /ai/ were the same. Dobson (1968: §137) considers [ai] "(...) a dialectal (especially Northern) pronunciation (...)". In *LALME* (1986, 4: 41, 92, 103, 121, 124, 126, 149, 150, 159, 168, 169, 170, 181, 191, 192, 206, 233, 256), we find different late ME spellings for words with this root vowel. Forms with <ai>, <ay> are recorded only for *die, fight* and *high* in texts from Norfolk, Devon, Somerset, Dorset, Gloucester, Hartford, Wiltshire, and Hereford.

TABLE 2. M E /iː/

Anticraist x1	**delayuered** x1	**Paicture** x1
Chraist x2		Picttures x1
Chraistes x2 Chrayst x1	faind x1 faynd x1	**Phailelegoos** x1
Chraystss x1	frayday x1	**Saickness** x1
Arataykes x1	laik x1 layk x1	**saysmataykes** x1
Assaynd x1	laykwais x1	**sayk** p 1
ay x28 ays x2 I x1	laytell x1 laytle x1	spay x1
Bay x 19 by x1	laytle x1	taym x1
Bayble x1	**mairacles** x1	taythes x1
Besayd x1	may x6 mayn x1 my x3	thrayse x1
Daying x1	monethmayndes x1	whaiet
Delayuerance x1	minde x1	

3.1.2 VARIANT SPELLINGS OF WORDS WITH M E /ai/.

For words with ME /ai/,[7] Woodes uses the graphies <e>. <ea>, <ey> as seen in Table 3. During the 16th c. ME ai came to be pronounced in the south with a long monophthong [❽ ☞:], which became [e:] in the 17th c. and finally merged in its development with words that had had ME /a:/. Once again,

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[6] On the dialectal development of ME /iː/, ME /uː/, ME /aː/, ME /oː/, and ME [kw] in the North in Early Modern English see García-Bermejo Giner (1998).

[7] About the development of ME /ai/ see among others Wyld (1925: 247ff; 1927: § 268), Barber (1976: 302 ff), Ekwall (1975: §§ 31-32), Dobson (1968: §§ 229, 230), and Jespersen (1949: §§ 11; 41-45).

the process of monophthongization started in the North and Midlands earlier than in the South of England. To this day monophthongal pronunciations remain in parts of Yorkshire.[8] Woodes keeps the 'standard' spelling in words such as *away, day, Germayne, say. LALME* (1986, 4: 36, 37, 69, 76, 101, 176, 205, 219, 245) records <ey> as a frequent spelling for ME /ai/ in the Midlands and East Anglia, and less frequently but also attested in the East and West Ridings of Yorkshire and as far south as Surrey, Sussex and London. Aitken (1977: 3, 7) shows that at the time in Scotland a diphthongal pronunciation [ᵊi] or a monophthongal pronunciation [e:] were possible, variously spelt <ai>, <ay> or even <a-e>. In this case, as in the previous section, Woodes implies a variant pronunciation possible in Scotland although the spelling conventions he follows are not Scottish.

TABLE 3. ME /ai/

feth x1	lemen x1	sent x13
gean x1 geanes x1	pented x1	sents x2, St. x1
geyn x1	prea x4	

3.1.3 VARIANT SPELLINGS OF WORDS WITH OE /a:/

Spellings reflecting the different development of OE /a:/ in the North and in the South are also present in *CC,* as seen in Table 4. Woodes´ spellings reflect the late 16th-c. Northern English pronunciation of such words, /æ:, ᵊ:, e:, ᵊ★/. *LALME* (1986, 4: 85, 155, 197, 253-55) records *bath* in the North, North West Midlands and part of Scotland, *haly* in Yorkshire and West Midlands as well as in parts of Scotland, *hely, heli* in the West Riding of Yorkshire, *whem* for *whom* in Gloucestershire, Heartfordshire and Sussex. Aitken (1977: 3) shows that at the time [e] was the Scottish English pronunciation in words with OE /a:/ as root vowel, variously spelt as <a-e>, <ai>, <ay>, <e> (see also Kniezsa 1997: 40).

TABLE 4. OE /a:/ IN THE NORTH.

bath x1	se x3 sea x4	whe x1
clethes x1	mara x1 mare x2	whese x1
hally x8 hely x1	ene x2	

In *CC* <e> alternates with <a> and <ea>, suggesting perhaps that Woodes might have partly relied on written sources for his representation of Northern/Scottish traits. *Hely* is attested in *OED* only in ME texts, whereas there are many citations for *hally* in the 16th c. There are also many citations for *mare* in contemporary Scottish texts. *Sea* was common in the North and Scotland in the 16th c. *Ene, whe, whese* represent true Scotticisms, which have survived to the present day in Southern Scotland (see Robinson 1985) and also in the North of England. The *English Dialect Dictionary* (hereinafter *EDD*) records variants with [e, e:] as the root vowel and [hw, w] as the initial consonant of *whe, whese* in Scotland, Northumberland, Cumberland, Yorkshire, Lancashire and Derbyshire. Halliwell (1850) records *whe* as a Northern form.

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[8] About present day dialectal pronunciations of ME /ai/ see among others Wells (1982: §§3.1.12; 4.4.1/5/11) and Anderson (1987: §§ 3.12/13/14; 4.3).

3.1.4 SPELLINGS THAT SHOW PALATALIZATION OF [g]

The spellings in Table 5 show the palatalization of [g] that took place in the OE period before original front vowels. Our present day pronunciation of these words with [g] is explained as due to Scandinavian influence.[9] *LALME* (1986, 4: §§ 36, 37, 135, 137) records similar spellings in the South, Midlands and East Anglia, but not in the North.

Only *yate* is now considered characteristic of the North. It is descended from the OE singular (whereas the form with initial velar voiced plosive comes from the OE plural). Dobson (1968: § 376) says that a palatalized pronunciation is given by Butler, Gataker and Smith in the 16th c. Only Smith had a connection with the North. It may well be that such a pronunciation still existed in the 'standard' language at the time. *EDD* records it in Scotland in the north of England and also in the West Midlands and as far south as Oxford, Sussex, north Devon and Cornwall. The *Concise Scots Dictionary* (herinafter *CSD*) considers it to be a Scottish form from the late 14th c.

TABLE 5. PALATALIZATION OF [g]

ayen x2
ayenst x2
yate x1
yifts x1
giue x2

Yift is recorded in *OED* in the 14th and 15th centuries. The palatalized forms are explained as "perhaps new formations from the verb", that is, from the original *giefan.* Nevertheless, our present day pronunciation of the verb apparently originated in the North. Neither the *Survey of English Dialects* (hereinafter *SED*) nor *EDD* record any variants of this word and those for the verb all have an initial voiced velar plosive. Halliwell (1850) does record *yiffe* as a variant form of *to give* but does not specify a particular location for it.

As regards *ayen* and *ayenst,* they were originally Southern forms, current up to the 16th c. and superseded by *again, against* from the 17th c. What is more, *OED* specifically indicates that "In Sc. and north of England... *against* was not adopted". Elsewhere in the text we find *againe* and *against.*

With his use of *yift, ayen, ayenst,* Woodes was apparently implying pronunciations still current at the time or already archaisms, maybe considered 'non-standard', but not specifically Northernisms or Scotticisms.

3.2 LEXICAL ANALYSIS.

3.2.1 DIALECT LEXIS

Some of the specifically Northern or Scottish forms Woodes selects to indicate Caconos's origins, as seen in Table 6, are well known and require no further explanation.

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[9] About the palatalization of [g] in this phonological context see among others Dobson (1968: §§ 376, 430 n4).

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TABLE 6. DIALECT LEXIS.

brunt x1	ilk x2 ilke	kirke x1 kirkings x1
fra x2, fre x1	whilk x8	lope x1
frea x1	ken x4	pooches x1
gang x1	kirk x1 kirks x2	punt x1
gar x1		
gif x11 gyf x1		

Brunt, *fra,* etc*., gang , gif, ken, kirke,ilk, whilk , lope, pooches, punt* were used south of the border as well. *Kirk*, for instance, was a well known Scotticism and Northernism. In Sir John Cheke's 1550 *The New Testament in English* we read " Yis word church... commeth of ye greek κυριακον.as ye north doth yet moor truli sound it, ye kurk, and we moor corruptli and frenchlike, ye church" (1550 Cheke Matt. xvi. 18 note). As regards *kirkings*, such a variant is not attested in *OED*, but *churchying*, meaning "The public appearance of a woman at church to return thanks after childbirth", is.

Gar in the first sentence uttered by Caconos, "This newis de **gar** me lope", is considered by *OED* "Chiefly Sc. and north dial." There are over two hundred citations for it in the dictionary, mainly in Scottish texts although there are also a few from English texts. In John Florio's *A World of Words* (1598) it is defined as "Make or garre to do as the Scottish men say" (qtd. in Halliwell 1850) which suggests that it was clearly considered a Scotticism at the time, even if it was also in use in the North. *EDD* records it in Sc. Irel., Nhb., Dur., Cum., Wm., Lks., Lan., Der. and Lin. *CSD* says that it has the meaning "to make a person or thing do something" from the late 14th c.

As the centuries have gone by these words have come to be easily identified Northernisms or Scotticisms and at the time audiences would have associated them with that part of the country, as they turn up frequently in jest books, in Scottish works, and even in Spenser's *Shepheardes Calendar* (1579) published two years earlier than *CC.* Woodes is generally quite consistent in his use of them.

3.2.3 MALAPROPISMS

There are several malapropisms in Caconos's speeches, always related to religious common expressions in Latin, as yet another indicator of the ignorance of this Catholic Priest: *Tastament* for *Testament,* for instance, or *De Parfundis Clam Aui*, for *De Profundis Clamavit,* not recorded in any of the standard dictionaries. *Sacarment* for *Sacrament* suggests the same kind of r-metathesis. Again it is an unrecorded variant although *sacurment and sakyrment* are mentioned in *OED* as existing in the 15th c.

3.2.4 DOUBTFUL READINGS

As I mentioned earlier, no fully annotated edition of this play has been published in modern times. The latest edition, that provided by the Malone Society in 1952, is simply a facsimile of the 1581 text. There are several doubtful readings in the dialect passages that I will attempt to clarify.

> Far se lang as thea han Images wharon te luke,
> What nede thea be **distructed** awt af a Buke.

There is no trace of this word in the standard dictionaries. It seems to be a pun on the verbs *instruct* and *destruct*. *OED* records the verb *destruct*, *i.e. to destroy*, for the first time in 1958 although there is a citation for it from the 2nd edition of Joseph Mede's *Works* (1638) which was changed to *destroyed* in the 3rd edition (1653). This suggests the possible existence of the verb already in the late 16th c. The noun *destruction* is first recorded in the early 16th c. (*destruccioun* 14th c.) and the verb *instruct* in the late 15th c.

> He says besayd that the Pope is Anticraist,
> **Fugered** of Iohn bay the seuen hedded beast
> And all awre religion is but mons inuention,
> And with Gods ward is at utter dissention.

Neither *OED,* nor *EDD, CSD, DOST (Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue),* or the standard etymological dictionaries record this word by itself or as a variant. It might be related to the vb. *fudge*, which *OED* says is "an onomatopoeic alteration of *fadge*", also of uncertain origin and first found in the late 16th c., "with vowel expressive of more clumsy action" and which means: "To fit together or adjust in a clumsy, makeshift, or dishonest manner; to patch or 'fake up'". *OED*'s first certain[10] quotation is from Philip Luckombe's *The History and Art of Printing* 1771. *EDD* records similar meanings in the 19th c. for *fudge* and *fadge* which show the possible relationship between *fugered* and these words in Sc., Yks., Lan., I.Ma., Chs., Stf., Not. , Lei., Nhp., War., Wor., Go., Hnt., Nrf., Suf., Dev.

> Thus in mayn owne buke, ay is a gude Clarke
> But gyf the Sents war gone, the Cat had eate my mark
> Se the **sandry** mairacles, whilk ilk Sent haue done,
> Bay the Picttures on the walles sall appeere to them Soone.

There is no record of this variant in any of the dictionaries I have checked. It might be a printers' error for *sondry* , *i.e. sundry, separate, individually*, as such a variant is recorded by *OED* in the 14th and 16th c. It does not seem to reflect any known variant pronunciation of the word, which was *sindry, sendry* in Scotland and the North at the time. It might also be a pun on *sandrey, sandery*, 15th c. form of *sanders*, meaning 'made of sandalwood'.

> Te de him a plesure ay wawd gang a whole yeare,
> Gif it war but the make him a **Fadocke** te beare.

Fadocke does not appear in any of the dictionaries I have checked. It may be either a printers' error or an intended malapropism along the same line as *Sacarment* or *De parfundis clam aui*. It seems to be a variant, real or imagined, of the word *faggot* in the sense of "the embroidered figure (...) which heretics who had recanted were obliged to wear on their sleeve, as an emblem of what they had

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[10] There is a 1674 citation from Nathaniel Fairfax, *A Treatise of the Bulk and Selvedge of the World* which *OED*'s considers doubtful. Fairfax also uses *fadge* in the same work with the same sense.

merited", that is, they had been sentenced to be burnt alive. *OED* records the expression *to bear a faggot* "(...) as those did who renounced heresy". In *CSD* we also find the expression common in Scotland in the late 16th c. *to burn (one's) faggot* meaning "to renounce heresy".

4. CONCLUSIONS

All in all the dialect traits present in this play seem to indicate that Woodes had a good basic knowledge of the Northern/Scottish variety he was trying to suggest. Even if at times he uses analogical formations, vulgarisms and archaisms, still his representation of Northern English is for the most part accurate.

A linguistic analysis of the dialects used in 16th-c. Early Modern English literary texts is possible and would be worthwhile. This kind of texts should be tapped to improve our knowledge about regional varieties in the Early Modern Period. The traits selected by writers before regional characters had become conventionalized would contribute to give us a clearer idea of what the dialectal panorama was like at the time.

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