Introduction

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Encounters is the key word in this anthology, which consists of studies exploring the connection between identity and difference. Each documents an encounter with an Other, ranging from disembodied male readers encountering fictional females to World Fair visitors observing the "primitive", Swedish travellers writing about Palestinians, Western newspapers conceptualising Afghanistan, Russian intellectuals meeting the masses, and web-site tourists visiting the Baltic. The articles use these encounters to ask basic questions about identity: how is the encountered group described, and what does this description say about the observer and, by implication, the cultural group and discourse which the observer represents?

Encounters and Identity

Sketching historical actors' encounters with various others is, in fact, a fruitful way to understand identity. For identity is constructed, not least in contradistinction to "those who are unlike us". This aspect is stressed in recent thinking about historical identities, as the idea that (for instance) class or ethnic identities are given – the one by the means of production, the other by language and history – has been increasingly challenged.[1] Identities are no longer seen as inherent, inherited, or "natural". Not least local studies have indicated the discrepancies between the "objective" class identity of, say, a nineteenth-century male worker, and his own perception of his identity. Similar disparities appear between the "natural" patriotism expected of a historical group, and its demonstrated allegiances. The last few decades have, indeed, witnessed a slaughter of those "objective" (often, quantifiable) classifications which were once so useful in helping the historian sort his or her historical actors, neatly,

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[1] Like nationalism, so can gender be seen as constructed; see the classic by George L. Mosse, *The image of man – the creation of modern masculinity* (Oxford University: 1996), as well as idem, *The Nationalization of the Masses. Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars through the Third Reich*. For class, e.g., Ira Katznelson et al, *Working-Class Formation: Nineteenth-Century Patterns in Western Europe and the United States* (Princeton: 1986). With this, and other formulations and sources, I have benefited from Tom Olsson's contributions to the Östersjofond project application *Creating Citizens, Communities, Outcasts and Heroes: Mediated Identities around the Baltic Sea*.

into inherently oppositional classes, warring nations, or active versus not-yet-awoken ethnic minorities.

Increasingly, instead, historians are turning to history, culture, and language in order to understand the construction of identity. Not that history, culture, or language pre-determine identity. Identity is, rather, *constructed through* history, culture, and language; while, simultaneously, history, culture and language are *used to express* identity. This has shifted much of the historian's focus to how historical actors themselves formulated and perceived their identities; which has meant an increasing emphasis on a historical understanding of media, symbols, and discourse.[2]

Much of focus is, moreover, on definitions of differences. When people share history, culture, language, and other important symbols, they can be said to constitute a common group, to share a discourse of common identity. The members' discourses of identity deal, however, not only with who *they* are, but also – implicitly or explicitly – with who the *others* are; with differences, margins, and borderlines. Or, to use the language of discourse analysis: we organize our conceptual maps by categorizing things (including our group, and other groups) into "similar" and "dissimilar" – on the one hand, finding sets of correspondences and, on the other, finding oppositions and contrast. Thus, *masculine* is associated with a number of linked attributes (strength, initiative, rationality, soldiering); but it is also very much defined by its immediate opposite, *feminine,* and *its* linked attributes (weakness, passivity, irrationality, motherhood). Similarly, being *Swedish* may be, perhaps, linked to being democratic, secular, modern and egalitarian; but it is also opposed to the *immigrants,* who are (supposedly) authoritarian, tradition-bound, religious and patriarchal. According to critical theory, such polarities are seldom neutral. They are usually connected to a system of hierarchical power relations. The pairs linked in opposition – Men vs. Women, Westerner vs. Easterner, Normal Heterosexual vs. Homosexual – are unsymmetrical. One category has more power (in terms of both resources, and culture and language) than the other: White People vs. Black People, Adults vs. Children, etc.[3]

The power invested in these polarizations, as constitutive of identities, helps explain their obdurate staying-power. They can defy "realities" – anti-Semitism, the fear of homosexuals, and racism, for instance, survive

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[2] "[I]dentities are about questions of using the resources of history, language, and culture in the process of becoming rather than being /…/ Precisely because identities are constructed within, not outside discourse, we need to understand them as produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies." Stuart Hall," Who needs identity" in *Questions of Identity*, eds. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (London: 1996), 3-4.

[3] This can mean power over resources, but also, very much, power over meaning: one group usually has more control of media, schools, the definitions of "truth", etc.; see Gramsci or Foucault for definitions of hegemony and paradigms of truth.

independently of people's experiences of, say, actual Jews, gays or blacks; they are equally defiant of the arguments, otherwise venerated, of scholarly or scientific authority. They can survive even the disappearance of the group disliked. All this, alas, is understandable, for anti-Semitism, homophobia and racism are integral to the self-perception, the perceived group-belonging, the chains of correspondences that make up the identity of the anti-Semite, homophobe and racist him- or herself. To surrender the prejudice would involve a fundamental and unwelcome dislocation of self.

Nonetheless, identities (like language, culture, and history) are in flux; and they can be drastically destabilized. All meanings are negotiated and pluralistic; they can be modified by active opposition. Blacks, gays and Jews have aggressively challenged the meanings imposed upon them. "Black is beautiful", the celebration of the term "queer", the presentation of Jews as sympathetic "fiddlers on the roof" – all can be seen as attempts (more or less successful) to destabilize polarities by challenging the meanings read into the older, hierarchical categorizations of us and others, good and bad. Academics contribute to this political battle in their own minor way, by charting how certain polarities have arisen, spread, and gained dominance; by creating maps, so to speak, of various discourses of prejudice, their chains of correspondences and polarities. The most famous discourse historian is, perhaps, Michel Foucault; while Nancy Fraser and Edward Said are among the most politically significant in the Anglo-Saxon world. These and other luminaries have inspired, and are complemented by, work done in universities throughout the world; in studies that apply, amplify and nuance their findings. This anthology is part of that work.

The West and Its Others

Much of this anthology is particularly concerned with a specific set of stereotypical polarities: the West and its Others. Thus, a World Fair can be analysed according to the Western display of "primitive" peoples; travel accounts betray a Western, Orientalist view of "the Arab"; Swedish newspapers see only timeless fanaticism in the Afghan rebel; modern Western websites define the East as a suitable place for "shock tourism". In each, of course, additional questions arise, often illustrating the potential instability of the polarities implied: the extent to which the World Fair was simultaneously a display of different types of Western masculinity; the way in which *Swedish* travel accounts nuance our understanding of Orientalism; the analysis of how newspapers deal with the invasion of Afghanistan by *another* Easterner, the Russian; or the manner by which travel websites, by nature both regional and global, create new methods of defining both normal and Other.

But not all studies of the West and its Others must concentrate on a Western representation of a non-Western object. The discourse about the Eastern or foreign Other also influences discourses within and outside the West. The

ideals of the West have often, for various reasons (often, having to do with power over technology, economic resources, and formal education) been internalised by elites in non-Western countries. It could be argued that so powerful has been the discursive, political and military hegemony of the West that many non-Westerners have accepted Western tutelage in how to "advance" and "progress", according to Western visions of science, democracy and capitalism. Thus, studies of, say, Russian intellectuals, discover tensions that mirror Western discourse on the Orient; in, for instance, the examination of the tension between the rational, progressive, abstract thinker and the essentially Russian but often violent and ignorant masses.

The polarization of the West and the Other has, of course, also affected internal Western discourse. The perceived differences between West and Orient have been influenced by, and borrowed aspects of, locally constructed oppositions between male and female, spirit and body, rationality and emotion, entrepreneurship and passivity. Thus, the celebration of the Western male's rational, logical, and self-disciplined project of dominating and teaching non-Western peoples is linked to his equally important, patriarchal project of dominance over females and children. The Western Others were, thus, to be found at home – in the opposition between the rational male and irrational female, or the autonomous, self-disciplined middle-classes versus the infantile, hard-drinking, and superstitious workers. Hence, to trace the "normal" Westerner's relationship to his *local* others – the female, the poor, the insane – is to further explore and understand the construction of the West, and its Others.

Discourses, in short, overlap, shift, and mirror each other. One interesting result of this is the mapping of the comparative degree to which the less powerful ("subaltern") group can actually break altogether free of the *terms* of the discriminatory discourse which so consistently degrades it. In general, historians have found that opposition on completely new terms is rare. One tends, rather, to continue to speak – even in opposition – in the terms imposed by those with power. This is understandable. They are often the only terms around that are acknowledged to "make sense" – to oppose excessive police violence in the language of, say, medieval Christianity would not be effective. Further, so much might these terms of discourse make sense that they might, in fact, not be seen as elements of ideology at all; they would be unnoticed, "common sense", simply true. Finally, those in opposition may agree with their oppressors in many things – everything, indeed, except for their own oppression. They would therefore not want to jettison their oppressors' entire world of meanings.

There are untold historical examples of this. Feminists have sought liberation by becoming "like men"; this was the only language they found to voice their opposition, and besides, many agreed with many so-called "male" values. Colonized intellectuals have embraced the civilizational ideals of their colonizers, using the very language of civilization against their oppressors.

Those who celebrated the liberal "public sphere" (as described by Habermas) conceived of its discourse as rational, individualized, autonomous, wholly based on natural laws and on the force of intelligent argument. They neither could nor did see that liberal discourse was deeply influenced by the tropes, expressions, prejudices and norms of the *Ancien Regime* – down to the public performance of ceremonies and rituals of power. Socialist working-class identities similarly incorporated elements of the bourgeois discourse they were supposed to oppose and despise. Nineteenth-century workers were discriminated against for being unruly, drunken, impolite and unchivalrous; many fought back by presenting a 'respectable' (*skötsam*) public persona. The terms of their resistance was, in this as other cases, framed by the dominant, oppressing discourse.[4] Nonetheless, their resistance affected the dominant paradigm, and often led to something altogether new; as critical theorists remind us, resistance is a motor of historical change.

Discourse as Community and Form

Discourses do not exist independently of actors. It makes sense, rather – as evident in the examples discussed above – to treat the discursive negotiation of identity as *group projects*.[5] The groups are defined by their shared prejudices, meanings, and cultural codes. One could call such groups "discourse communities". Robert Wuthnow uses this term in his study of the networks of discourse-producers who promoted the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and early socialism.[6] Similar international discourse communities were formed by the publicists who discussed, formulated, and communicated varieties of liberal, national, socialist, or gender identities.

Such international communities created and influenced many of the identities discussed in this anthology. When Swedes traveled to Palestine, for instance, they were influenced by an international discourse community – that of European Orientalism, as propagated, not least, in travel guides. When books on housewifery celebrated the woman's civilizing mission, this, also, could be seen as participating in an international, separatist-feminist community of discourse. Similarly, Prussian newspapers' peculiar and

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[4] For the liberal public sphere, Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge:1989); Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: 1992); David Cannadine, "The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual," in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm et al (Cambridge, 1997); Clifford Geertz, "Centers, Kings and Charisma," in *Rites of Power* (Philadelphia: 1985); George Yudice, "For a Practical Aesthetics," in *The Phantom Public Sphere*, ed. Robbins; Nancy Fraser, "What's Critical About Critical Theory?" *Unruly Practices* (Minneapolis: 1989). For workers, e.g., Kurt Johannesson et al., eds, *Heroer på offentlighetens scen* (Stockholm: 1987); also the classic by Ronny Ambjörnsson, *Den skötsamma arbetaren* (Malmö: 1988).

[5] See for example Linda Colley, *Britons. Forging the Nation 1707–1837* (London: 1994).

[6] Robert Wuthnow, *Communities of Discourse* (Cambridge: 1989).

particular treatment of women, as excluded from the world of rational-critical debate, reflected a discourse community of liberal newspaper politicians, readers and writers.

Both the personnel, content, relevance and impact of discourse communities change, of course, over time. Power relationships shift; paradigms of knowledge and truth replace each other. This is due to more than resistance. One of the most important causes of change lies in changes in the means available for discursive communication, i.e., changes in the forms of mass communication (the rise of "print capitalism", charted by Benedict Anderson, being only the most famous example).[7] The Catholic priests who commanded Latin, and, hence, the European-wide language of power, constituted a very different *type* of discourse community than that provided by, say, the consumers of a modern web site.

It is, accordingly, essential, when looking at changing discourses and discursive communities, to pay attention to available *genres* and *forms* of communication – that is, to media. The media's formation of identities is, thus, complex and multi-layered. First, media is an expression, and reinforces the identities of, the politicians, spokespersons, publicists and intellectuals who (often) constitute its immediate producers. Media further creates and upholds identities among its consumers, as a group. It is, of course, also part of a social context: it reflects identities extant in society, and must speak to, or challenge, the dominant discourses. And, finally, media's genres and forms frame and influence the identities thus challenged, upheld, and created.

The medium, in short, influences the message. However banal, this tenet remains fundamental to research on identity. Identity is formulated in symbols that are spoken, written, read, and performed – in sort, communicated. Hence, it is important to notice changes in *how* identities are communicated; for these influence how identities are formulated. It also influences their reception; MTV encourages a very different type of group identification than did, say, nineteenth-century Marxist pamphlets. One must, therefore, be sensitive to the *forms* by which identities are formulated, organized, encapsulated, and communicated.

Media's multi-faceted role is emphasized in Anderson's seminal work, in which the nation, as an imagined community, is unthinkable without print capitalism.[8] Anderson's study emphasizes the new print medium, the book. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, mass-produced printed texts were the predominant form of community discourse; books, newspapers, and pamphlets underlay much of group consciousness. The printed travel-guide,

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[7] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: 1991)
[8] Ibid.

which had long helped define imaginary geographies and, hence, the identity of the West, reached its apogee around 1900; while the advent of the daily newspaper had already created a new liberal power, one which allowed its imaginary community to unite, in a single gaze, all relevant political speech, action, and behaviour. A century later, print is under serious attack. Russian intellectuals are sorely hurt by the devaluation of so-called thick journals, in preference to Western-style commercial publications and, above all, television. Web-sites, finally, create new weapons for both defining the abnormal in, and enforcing globalised normality on far-off foreign places. Thus, to the discomfort of text-preferring historians, students of identity must follow Cultural Studies and New Cultural History in widening the scope of study: to include pictures in popular magazines, statues, parades, soap-operas, museums, advertising.[9] It is challenging, to be sure, to look at the community of discourse (of producers, and consumers) propagated by a statue; but this, too, is an expression, and upholder, of modern identities.

Each of the present authors is careful, accordingly, explicitly or implicitly to consider the nature of the media analysed – its genres, structures, and strategies of communication – and their influence on the construction of identities. Each form has its own internal logics. World Fairs were *meant* to categorize, encapsulate, and symbolize. They exist in a context of visitors, entertainment, and political statements; discursively, they survive in maps, newspaper commentary and pictorial guides. Travel guides have a given form, which strongly influence travel accounts. They are *supposed* to start with arrival, continue with street encounters, tell of encounters with beggars, waiters, and porters, and not least, describe (and rank the view of) monuments, buildings and towns. Tourist Web sites, likewise, are often *assumed* to be interactive; the user decides on which of their links to click, and thus co-determines their context.[10] Mass media thus gives us a picture of group identity; it reproduces

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[9] For an interesting discussion, Magnus Rodell, *Att gjuta en nation. Statyinvigningar och national-formering i Sverige vid 1800-talets mitt* (Stockholm: 2002).

[10] Of course, each can only give a sampling of the productions of its discourse community; one Prussian newspaper can scarcely represent the entire discourse of liberal sexism, just as one World Fair cannot be taken as "typical" for all Western masculinities, or four travel accounts for Western travel literature in general. Only when the history of discursive identities has been as thoroughly studied as has, say, the history of politics, will we be able to pass final judgement on these case studies' "representative" value. But they can, in the meantime, provide interesting examples, which can, in their turn, function as working hypotheses; and thus be used for further work in testing, elaborating, or disproving existing generalizations about identities.

[11] For a discussion of the influence of media forms on identities, e.g., Craig Calhoun, "Populist Politics, Communications Media, and Large-Scale Societal Integration," *Sociological Theory* 6 (Fall 1988); James Carey, "The Press and Public Discourse." *Center Magazine* 20 (1983), and idem., *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society* (Boston: 1989), Peter Dahlgren et al, eds. *Communication and Citizenship: Journalism and the Public Sphere in the New Media Age* (London: 1991).

and portrays its various expressions. But this picture is complicated and enriched by the fact that the medium itself influences the expression of identity.[11]

The Contributions

My own essay, accordingly, puts its study of gender identities into the context of the way in which nineteenth-century liberal newspapers functioned as a medium – one anchored in middle-class, masculine forms of communication. It also assumes that certain newspapers participated in the discourse community of a larger, liberal public sphere. This sphere, I postulate, although supposedly open to all, had definite exclusions. It excluded women; females were not seen as legitimate public participants. It also excluded criminals, drunkards, beggars, certain ethnic minorities, and royalty. None of these were really welcome in the world of public, political debate.

These exclusions were linked to forms of communication, which in turn influenced the norms of journalistic reporting. The "normal" reader, the accepted discussant, was – according to these norms – quite disembodied. He (almost always a male) was covered as a voice, not an object to be seen. Long-winded political discussions formed the bulk of the newspaper's material – summarized or quoted, word-by-word. This left room for only passing references to the news of the gross, material world. It was to the latter, however, that women were relegated. The sphere of words, argument and reason was all-male; women only appeared in other types of news, discussed with another type of language. In what news, in what language, and in what company, is the subject of my analysis, in an attempt to find out how this particular encounter – male with female, spirit with body – was structured.

Christian Widholm's article deals with a different set of statements – the geography, architecture, monuments and human exhibits of the Chicago World Fair of 1893. He uses contemporary texts to do this, while not neglecting the world-view presented by the texts themselves. He turns the map of the Fair into a map of contemporary humanity: we progress from the primitive, ethnic and childish, through the feminine, civilizing, and small-scale, in order to end in that apogee of triumphant rational-Western Americanism: "White City". Widholm is primarily interested in how, and in what ways, the different parts of the World Fair presented masculinity – the way in which different types of masculinity (primitive, Orientalist, Western, non-female) were to be met with, in different forms, as one read about or experienced the Fair. But how powerful and hegemonic were these statements? Were there internal inconsistencies; might, indeed, a "native" on live display as "primitive" be using the Fair for a statement of opposition?

The visitors studied by Alexander Cavalieratos are of a very different sort: Swedish "pilgrim-tourists" wandering about Palestine. He is studying the genre of travel-writing, and has chosen four travel books from the nineteen-teens. If

Widholm is primarily interested in testing various theses about the constitution of masculine identities on the World Fair, Cavalieratos is interested in seeing if Swedish pilgrim-tourists conformed to the patterns of Orientalist "us" and "them" identities described by Edward Said (among others). He finds significant similarities; but also important deviations. Prejudices were not simple. On the one hand, for instance, the Orient was – in accordance with Said's thesis – seen as stagnant, passive, and timeless; but, on the other, it presented an Arcadian, Biblical world of ancient simplicity which the travellers enjoyed, indeed hoped for and expected. One must consider the influence of the *Biblical paradigm*, Cavalieratos concludes, in judging these travellers' Orientalism; a conclusion that raises questions about how further careful consideration of various types of travel literature might nuance Said's model of Western contra Eastern identities.

Sanjin Kovacevic is also studying Orientalism, but in a very different context – the year is 1980, and the subject Russia's invasion of Afghanistan. He has used two Swedish tabloids to chart the stereotypes applied to the actors: the Afghan rebel, the "Westernised" Afghan, the "Sovietized" Oriental, and the Soviets themselves. He finds that certain gradations apply. The Afghan rebel, for instance, is seen as a hypermasculine, rifle-bearing, wild and romantic Oriental; but his masculinity gives way to that of the steel-encased Russians, who, in massive formation, and accompanied by large numbers of high-technology weapons, manage to "rape" Afghanistan. These Russians are more modern, more recognizably like us, than the Afghan rebels; but still they are not Western. They are brutal but laughable, Easterners trying to imitate their betters – their representatives dress with out-moded flashiness, resembling ice-hockey players of the 1950s. A similar middle position is occupied by the Afghan President Babrak Karmal, and "Anahita", his Minister of Education. They wear Western clothes, and are much more modern than the Afghan rebels; but they are also lovers, adulterers, nepotists, even slightly incestuous (their children have married each other). Their "embodiment" – indeed, the aggressive embodiment of all the actors, from the "hawk-profiled" rebels to the "blue-eyed" Russians – show their distance from the community of normal, Western, Swedish newspaper readers and writers.

Kerstin Olofsson's case study of the Russian intellectual Vladimir Makanin's book *Escape Hatch* analyses the current – or is it century-long? – crisis of identity among Russian intelligentsia. The group is torn, as she describes it, between being pro- or anti-West, international or nationalist, self-hating or self-celebratory. Throughout, however, despite constant research, critique, and discussion of themselves, they have difficulties defining what the intellectual *is* – which redounds on the question of what his or her role is or has been, historically, and at present. During the Soviet Era, with its veneration of the Word (the object of censorship, underground publishing, and reading-between-the-lines), the answer seemed relatively clear: the intellectual would

present the truth, and the nation and its people would be guided accordingly. During the 1990s, however, this mission became dim, and the discussion of the responsibility, influence, mission and identity of the intellectual reverted to a state of confusion reminiscent of the debates preceding World War One. In Makanin's book, we find similar ambivalence. On the one hand, we have a clear differentiation – reminiscent of Ortega y Gasset's – between the masses (bad), and the intellectuals (good). On the other hand, however, only the masses breathe real air and are healthy, and only he who can pass between the two worlds can hope to save either. Thus, the encounter between the intellectual and the masses continues to pose a central problem for the identity of the Russian intelligentsia.

Kajsa Klein rounds off the anthology with a comparative analysis of three websites, dating from the fall of 1999. Each site deals with the Baltic Sea region, especially the newly-accessible East. She is interested in tracing these sites' contribution to the continuing dialectic between regional and global identity, earthly and cyber geography. She finds evidence of region-building (with the site producers, not surprisingly, situated at the new "region's" center) and of traditional, Orientalist, West-East divides (where the West constructs the East as "shocking", an object of "shock tourism"). When the East is not "shocking", it is the object of a "project mentality" – the target of Western exports of, for instance, models of folk-movement based democracy, or Western standards of the hospitality industry. But Klein also finds evidence of the normalization of post-post-communism. As the West's imagined geography of the East loses its blank spaces, so does the "shock" value of the East decline. The websites help fill these blanks. They include the East in global, media-directed scrutiny and shaming. They also contribute to the penetration of global discourses, symbols, systems and institutions (the English language, neoliberal phraseology, the provision of "phone books", the systematization and publication of investment and purchase opportunities, the creation of Western-style business and institutional networks, etc.). The websites can thus be used to trace the East's transition from "shocking", the object of paternalistic care, to more "normal" – although Klein is a bit wary of defining what "normal" might be.

These articles' common focus on encounters is not coincidental. They were not produced by a single workgroup or project, but they appeared within a shared context. Three of the articles, including my own, were written within the Östersjöstiftelse project *Media Identities around the Baltic Sea*. This project has been largely concerned with discourse and identity within mass media; its geographical focus has been Scandinavia, Germany, the Baltic nations, Poland and Russia. The remaining articles are the work of outstanding Södertörn students, writing C- and D-essays under the advisorship of myself, on the same themes of discourse, identity, and East-West differences. Tom Olsson and I hope in our next, proposed Östersjöstiftelse project – "Creating Citizens,

Communities, Outcasts and Heroes: Mediated Identities around the Baltic Sea" – to further the same fruitful symbiosis between teachers and students, in the hopes that a continued combination of scholarly research and student guidance will encourage and inspire both ourselves and a future generation of scholars who, as is only proper, bid fair to outdistance their mentors.

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