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The Great Awakening

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The Great Awakening

by [Joe Escobar](#) – Saturday, October 17, 2015, 11:03 AM

After studying the required materials, address the various questions. To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post. To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within in THEIR post.

IMPORTANT – SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post. Do NOT simply leave it RE: The Great Awakening

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Great pockets of awakening.

by [Stanley Cates](#) – Sunday, October 18, 2015, 2:55 AM

I find myself feeling as though Bonomi's article kind of like a sermon; compelling and moving; but not terribly specific. "The great awakening created conditions uniquely favorable to social and political, as well as religious reform by piercing the facade of civility and deference that governed provincial life to usher in a new age of contentiousness". While that's well and good, and may very well be true in specific areas, she really fails to illustrate any kind of unification that came from the "Great awakening". That is to say that Baptist were still Baptists, and Methodists still Methodists, and no two sects melded into one.

Butler on the other hand offers some rational base on his ideas; "They appeared too erratically in too few colonies under too many auspices to make such generalizations." It isn't at all surprising to me that people will tend to make a generalization about historical events; as mammals we tend to make generalizations as a primitive survival technique in order to make quick uncomplicated decisions... Lions are bad, shelter is good. This isn't a trend that has gone away, but when we stop to think about it a little more in depth we find that typically our generalizations are misguided... Except maybe the lion thing. While Bonomi seemed to paint the period as a sort of pre-revolution renaissance that swept the eastern seaboard Butler refutes mentioning; "... local circumstances that made communities receptive to elevated religious rhetoric". Though he doesn't mention any specifically, things like disease and poor economics come to mind.

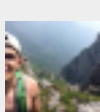
In all I find Butlers analysis more profound, down to Earth, and based in rational observation more than feel good history.

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3

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Re: Great pockets of awakening.



by [Joshua Kaleel](#) – Monday, October 19, 2015, 1:08 PM

In response to your statement “she really fails to illustrate any kind of unification that came from the "Great awakening". That is to say that Baptist were still Baptists, and Methodists still Methodists, and no two sects melded into one.”

She explained that the Great Awakening “encouraged people to act of individual conscience.” A large part of the Great Awakening was realizing that unification was tainting their beliefs. With this new ideology, one can have personal truths, whether they line up with others or not. Which is a unification in its own way.

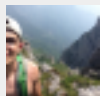
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Re: Great pockets of awakening.
by [Stanley Cates](#) – Monday, October 19, 2015, 5:54 PM

I'm afraid I have to disagree. Unification: the process of being united or made into a whole.(google definition) By definition "having personal truths" is not unification. "individual conscience" is not unity. In fact the words individual; 1. single; separate. 2. of or for a particular person (google definition), and unification by nature contrast with each other.

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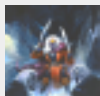


The Sporadic Awakening
by [Joshua Kaleel](#) – Monday, October 19, 2015, 1:12 PM

I agree with Jon Butler most, but not completely. He picks apart the blanketing idea of the Great Awakening being a sudden, massive, single event. Explaining how some mainland colonies saw very few revivals during the same years (p. 8). To believe that religious oppression alone is what pushed this Awakening is unrealistic and that intentions of personal gain have to be taken into consideration.

“No one would seriously question the existence of "the Great Awakening" if historians only described it as a short-lived Calvinist revival in New England during the early 1740s (p. 7).” This sentence does a very good job of summing up what i agree with here. If the Calvinist revival was described in a far less exaggeratory & romanticized, the facts of the event would be more apparent & one would realize that there were far more factors that played a part in this mentality change.

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Yes No MAYBE?
by [Brianna Huber](#) – Wednesday, October 21, 2015, 1:21 PM

To Stanley Cates, and Joshua Kaleel, greetings, and I am glad to say I really enjoy reading your posts.

Stanley, I really was delighted by the description of your response to Bonami’s prose in article!

Upon reading and contemplating it I thought is Butler’s article more like that of a lawyer(having only to defend and make a case for an extreme NO?)? I then thought about it further, and then wondered, the difference in opinion between these two perhaps seems less of a BIG YES & a BIG NO, than it might seem at first. I have thought about it a lot, and finally now am jumping into the conversation.

It seems that their individual statements are more or less on a balancing board, debating the varying degree of influence. Also I feel that the format of these YES & NO essays really come to mind. One person must take a “yes”, and one must take a “no”. While this is great for a debate type setting where individuals can cross communicate in real time as opposed to a shot in the dark essay which, I am wondering if these are, and am under the impression that they may be for the case of originality of thought much like the initial posts we make to this forum, however I do not know if Bonami and Butler have the opportunity to potentially agree and “authenticate”, or disagree/ “disprove” any of the statements of the other writer in this platform.

Considering Butler’s many references to those in the field with a general YES vote, and the faults he finds in their outlook/findings, this does not necessarily tear completely away from the idea that the Great Awakening could have had an affect of the ability for revolution. While he does argue that it was not the main push for it (revolution). The Quote below is underlined with what is the most important in relation.

“Their leadership was local and, at best, regional, and they helped reinforce—but were not the key to—the proliferation and expansion of still–regional Protestant denominations in the colonies. As such, they created no intercolonial religious institutions and fostered no significant experiential unity in the colonies. Their social and political effects were minimal and usually local, although they could traumatize communities in which they upset, if only temporarily, familiar patterns of worship and social behavior. But the congregations they occasionally produced usually blended into the traditional social system, and the revivals abated without shattering its structure. Thus, the revivals of religion in prerevolutionary America seldom became proto–revolutionary,, and they failed to change the timing, causes, or effects of the Revolution in any **significant way.**” – Butler

Significant is a big word. Also Bonami seems to perhaps focus in on this yes potential while Butler wants to diminish it. Yet how disparate, or far apart are the thoughts from these two essays, really. Their main pivotal point of difference from a layman’s (mine) perspective seems to be their ability to see if peoples, organized or unorganized, can make a difference, while also the words **significant** is added in there to increase this academic drama.

Organized was probably a word that may not represent the "backwoods", and academic institutions and newspapers, can provide much documentation for historians. These were tools of the coastal areas.

Don't know that I perticularly can agree with one distinctly as a YES or NO. I feel the hard word in all of this is SIGNIFICANT.

Joshua Kaleel, I especially like your quote of "To believe that religious oppression alone is what pushed this Awakening is unrealistic and that intentions of personal gain have to be taken into consideration."

Please let me know if you feel this is too long winded. I will try to better say what I mean with less words. Do you agree? Dissagree?

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Re: Yes No MAYBE?

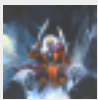
by [Stanley Cates](#) – Wednesday, October 21, 2015, 5:10 PM

Long winded has gotten such a negative reputation; I'd say analytical instead, which is not a bad thing. I like your assessment of the word "significant", it raises a point that I had considered when writing my original post but had reserved for later; point being that in the spectrum of yes or no the answer is almost always somewhere in the middle.

In the quote from Bonomi that I referenced in my first post she uses the word "contentiousness". Contentious: "giving to argument or provoking argument" (google definition). By this word I am under the impression that she is implying that this was a sort of rallying cry to foreshadow the coming revolution. But given the idea of significance that you pointed out I can't help but think that later economic pressures would be more significant sources of revolution than the religious awakenings.

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Contention – religion, polotics

by [Brianna Huber](#) – Wednesday, October 21, 2015, 11:56 PM

I appreciate the hat tilt, and also hearing your translation of Bonomie's word choice in **contention**.

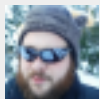
I will reflect on your statement which you posted (below) about economic pressures after I read the last 10 pages of chapter 4 before class tomorrow, and look forward to it.

For me currently, I am still not able to state if The Great Awakening had a **significant** effect or not (relatively to some other things).

"But given the idea of significance that you pointed out I can't help but think that later economic pressures would be more significant sources of revolution than the religious awakenings."– Stanley Cates

I could try to identify with your point, which I do. If it were me personally I would much rather have someone try to take my religion, not my money, or land, or ability in politics etcetera, however that really is not a good example with me because I am not religious, I am however, spiritual.

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Re: Contention – religion, polotics
by Stanley Cates – Thursday, October 22, 2015, 12:29 PM

More what I'm getting at is that questions of religion in this context tend to be a little more flexible than those of economics. That is to say that while someone could potentially take a religious practice underground, although I don't think that actually applies in this particular case, economic pressures are far more difficult to avoid **and** they tend to have an effect of a broader range of people.

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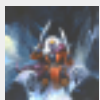
Re: Yes No MAYBE?
by Jacob St. Clair – Wednesday, October 21, 2015, 7:19 PM

Brianna, I'm coming to really start thinking "yes" to your question, "..is Butler's article more like that of a lawyer (having only to defend and make a case for an extreme NO?)". After reading more into Butler's article, it seems Butler is looking for anything and everything that will cut down at the view that the Great Awakening had any sort of significant effect on the Revolution and its outcome. "First, with one exception, the pre revolutionary revivals should be understood primarily as regional events that occurred in only half the colonies,"(pg 10).

This to me is Butler really trying to stab at a link between the Great Awakening and the American Revolution, and it seems like quite a weak stab to me. Even half the colonies would be enough to spark this way of thinking as an individual for the rest down the road. And down the road we wanted to become our own one nation, and not a nation of Great Britain. Butler's goes on later to say what I believe to be his weakest point. "The relationship between pre revolutionary political change and the revivals is weak everywhere except in Virginia," (pg 11). We watched a video in class on Tuesday of how rich, and almost royal, Virginia became with the boom if tobacco and slave labor. Virginia was so rich to the point that these men who flourished in Virginia had time to read, come up with ideas, think for themselves, and for the future of America.

The Great Awakening's overall theme seems to be that it lead people to ultimately think as individuals. Some of these men who thought as individuals were our founding fathers. And some of them lived in Virginia, such as Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and George Washington. So if these were some of the men that lived in the one place that even Butler said experienced political change, who's to say they couldn't convince a young America to think as they did down the line?

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Perhaps religion or the lack thereof has more to do with Bonomi and Butler than of Revolution
by Brianna Huber – Thursday, October 22, 2015, 1:15 AM

Hello Jacob St Clair,

Perhaps their styles of writing or argument are indicative of the points of view they hold in some way.

Here is an interview done with Jon Butler. It is interesting to read. It looks as if it is from the year 2004.

http://historynewsnetwork.org/article/9144

One thing that was of particular interest to me was this portion–

"In addition, it corrupts the state. That is, it brings into government elements of politics and elements of religion that are less than desirable."Jon Butler – See more at:
<http://historynewsnetwork.org/article/9144#sthash.mivADRWx.dpuf>

I am not a religious person, I am a spiritual person, and I am curious when;

1 Professor Escobar says, founding documents were created by religious peoples, or "by Puritans" in particular, I believe was how he put it in lecture,

2 when I read from Jon Butlers "NO piece" that religion was not enough to influence much, yet in his interview, he seems to grant religion much ability(while I am quite aware/can imagine, that he is talking about the Large Anglican Church in this particular sentence),

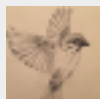
3 and also, it is interesting reading about one of Bonomi's books, *The Lord Cornbury Scandal: The Politics of Reputation in British America*, and it sounds like she has a poetic and relatable way of writing about humans (*which I like in her article, full disclaimer) in her book, as well as her "Yes article".

The quote below is a book review for *The Lord Cornbury Scandal*,

"An intriguing detective story that....casts light upon the operation of political power in the past and the nature of history writing in the present.--Alan Taylor, New Republic

<http://www.amazon.com/The-Lord-Cornbury-Scandal-Reputation/dp/0807848697>

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Foreshadowing
by [Jacob St. Clair](#) – Monday, October 19, 2015, 2:48 PM

After reading both parts of each essay, I would have to say I side with Patricia U. Bonomi.

Patricia describes the Great Awakening as, "that intense revivalist tumult from 1739–1745," (pg 3). She then goes on to explain why this movement was so crucial to colonists. "By promoting church seperations and urging their followers to make choices that had political as well as religious implications, the Awakeners wrought permanent changes in public practices and attitudes," (pg 3).

I see how and why Butler is against the stance of Bonomi's. The Great Awakening was, "a short-lived Calvinist revival in New England during the early 1740's," (pg 7). But is that all it really is? Patricia talks how religion has always been considered an agent of radicalism. And for the first time, this revival marked a significant divide in popular thought. "...as an insurgent minority in every church, they could only advance their religious ideology only by overturning the orthodox majority," (pg 4). This was huge for colonists to be able to accomplish this. This sparked courage in colonist's for outward thinking and "the dismantling of old institutions," (pg 6). I completely agree the Great Awakening made colonists, "less hesitant to do it again," (pg 6).

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Awakening the Revolution
by [Andrea Adelman](#) – Monday, October 19, 2015, 7:30 PM

I agree with Patricia Bonomi in saying that The Great Awakening WAS a key to the American Revolution. It was a time when so much change occurred: more diverse ways of thinking, growing population, availability of printed materials, and a changing society. Any change of pace can be a key to greater change.

"Religion has always been considered a likely agent of radicalism." (Almost) Every religion has a belief that religions unlike their own are seen as abnormal, radical, or even wrong. To believe something that isn't the norm is to be a radical. "...the Awakeners began as an insurgent minority in every church..." To this day, individuals with 'radical' beliefs reach the masses by first overturning the majority's thinking.

The Awakeners were quick to rid themselves of cliches regarding the traditional ways relationships were held. (Separation of Church & State)

"...the Great Awakening broke down social cohesion in America, it simultaneously elevated the individual."

Another great example of how societal change can be the beginning of larger change. Once you adopt a new way of thinking of things, you aren't quick to abandon it. When you can make your own decisions, choices, and mistakes, would you be so quick to give up that freedom?

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Agree more with Patricia Bonomi
by Justin Smith – Monday, October 19, 2015, 9:29 PM

I have to agree more with Bonomi's stance on the subject primarily for the point that she brings up about each persons individualism. She states that this was a period of time where people separated themselves from the congregation and made decisions for God individually. I think this is so important because of the lasting impact that it has had in modern times. From my experiences, religion is very individualized in a sense that everyone has their own struggles and they make their own decision on how to cope with the issue. The only problem i have with this belief is individuals were encouraged to deal with the problem anyway necessary, even if it affected others.

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Individualism Reflection
by Brianna Huber – Thursday, October 22, 2015, 1:26 AM

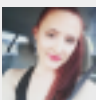
Hello Justin Smith,

I enjoy reading your statement about individualism.

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Encouraging individualism
by Lauren Collett – Monday, October 19, 2015, 10:17 PM

I can see each of the writers side easily but I find myself agreeing more with Patricia Bonomi more so. She brings up a lot of good points about The Great Awakening bringing about the change in churches that would allow people to make more decisions for themselves. Which Bonomi mentions with the Revivalists encouraging people to act on their own decisions.

“In exhorting their followers to make personal decisions for God, and then to act on those decisions regardless of their effect on the larger society, the revivalists gave sanction to a new dynamic in human relationships.”(pg. 5)

I find it interesting because the notion of individualism in churches is wide spread in current society. People are constantly finding their own path towards God, which I guess I had taken for granted but was not always so. I believe this is idea was what brought so many people “in the fold” so to speak in this time period and caused it to be so influential in the shaping of America as we know it. Bonomi also mentions a lot about people challenging the idea of authority in the church which I think is an important point she makes in her argument because it gives the individuals even more power.With preachers even encouraging followers to to look into other religions.

“Together they launched a mass movement that made bold assaults on established forms of church government and traditional assumptions about deference and social order. Evangelical preachers constantly exhorted their followers not to shrink from painful choices between alternative religious doctrines” (pg. 5)

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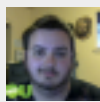
The (not so) Great Awakening
by Oliver Valdivia – Monday, October 19, 2015, 10:22 PM

After reading the articles by Butler and Bonomi, I found that I agreed with Butler's argument that the Great Awakening didn't have a considerable impact, if any, on the American Revolution. I think lots of times we like to generalize an event and assume it applies for everyone. Butler argues that in this case the revivals witnessed in

the colonies were generalized and the actual revivals were very localized and it they were never "the key to the expansion of the colonial churches." For me his most influential example was when he spoke about the many Anglican aristocratic Virginians who also led the revolution. Butler follows this thought by saying that the revivals may "have been of some importance in helping colonist make moral judgments about eighteenth-century English politics, though many colonists unconnected to the revivals made these judgments as well." Here Butler acknowledges the point Bonomi and many historians make, but he refutes it by saying that it was not necessary to be connected with the revival to disagree with the policies of the English and act upon those strong disagreements like was done in the American Revolution.

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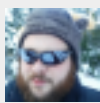
The Start of the Awakening

by [Jacob Rothaupt](#) – Monday, October 19, 2015, 10:51 PM

On page 133 in our textbook, I think it makes a good point in pointing out that Whitefield was an innovator, so to speak, in The Great Awakening. It seems evident that he was the greater cause or reasoning (can't really find the word I'm looking for) as opposed to John Wesley.

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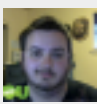
Re: The Start of the Awakening

by [Stanley Cates](#) – Monday, October 19, 2015, 11:19 PM

Catalyst?

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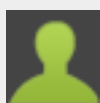
Re: The Start of the Awakening

by [Jacob Rothaupt](#) – Wednesday, October 21, 2015, 3:27 PM

Going by the google definition of Catalyst, I'm not sure that that is the word I would use. He's clearly one of the first involved but I wouldn't say that he was the absolute cause.

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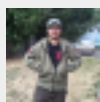
America the Great

by [Jacob Leturno](#) – Monday, October 19, 2015, 11:21 PM

I believe that Jon has more of a point with "the great awakening" and with our over explanation of these times is why many people stand behind Patricia. Jon stands at a place where he sees the pioneers as lesser people then they are made out to be, because in the grand scheme of things their leadership was a drop in the bucket. Although in the story books it sounds better to say that america was the hero. I personally disagree with Patricia because she lets her personal feeling out more so into her writting so it could interfere with the facts.

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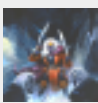
Was this the start to what now is known as the USA?

by [Jonathan Davis](#) – Monday, October 19, 2015, 11:37 PM

I think that as people became more self-reliant as the pressure from England lessened, they started to focus on themselves. So, maybe Patricia U. Bonomi is right, but without written accounts of the colonists saying that change was happening, Logically, I don't feel that I could agree with one author or the other completely. However, Bonomi does make a compelling statement with plenty of facts to support her stance. Separation from England would likely have been the sole reason for unification. I feel that with more information, I would be able to better form an opinion on this topic.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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"...but without written accounts..." J.D.
by [Brianna Huber](#) – Thursday, October 22, 2015, 2:02 AM

Hello Johnathan Davis,

"...but without written accounts of the colonists saying that change was happening, Logically, I don't feel that I could agree with one author or the other completely. However, Bonomi does make a compelling statement with plenty of facts to support her stance. Separation from England would likely have been the sole reason for unification. I feel that with more information, I would be able to better form an opinion on this topic." – Johnathan Davis

I agree with your point here, it makes a lot of sense to me.

Maybe the culture of colonial warriors(Liberty, Equality, Power Page 108 the sub chapter on The voluntaristic ethic, public life, war), who followed individual thought more than the career-men in the British Military, form more of a marker (distinguishable to the current day) of when colonists really showed a "straying from the Mother Land". I imagine that a British royal of the day would not look upon this to approvingly.

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Wow
by [Brianna Huber](#) – Monday, October 19, 2015, 11:45 PM

Here we go!

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Re: Timeline–scattered dates, not specific enough to establish key involvement?
by [Bethany Scott](#) – Monday, October 19, 2015, 11:48 PM

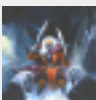
"The Great Awakening" also is difficult to date. Seldom has an "event" of such magnitude had such amorphous beginnings and endings. In New England, historians agree, the revivals flourished principally between 1740 and 1743 and largely ended by 1745, although a few scattered outbreaks of revivalism occurred there in the next decades. – Jon Butler

This is one such variable that sways me, while I’m not denying the validity of events spurred by the great awakening overall, it seems very likely that the influence doesn’t have as direct a connection to the revolution as Patricia Bonomi seeks to establish. I don’t doubt that it did affect the mindset of many when approaching tensions that led to the revolution began to build...but one thing I personally would look at for that correlation is the timeline, and here it just doesn’t seem to fit that the great awakening itself was that big of a key piece leading to the revolution, or at least not one consciously recognized at the time.

Did anyone else have any thoughts about the length of the great awakening in relation to the revolution, or the motivations behind both that might establish a secondary connection?

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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USA PASSIONS
by [Brianna Huber](#) – Tuesday, October 20, 2015, 12:17 AM

This all sounds like a world of PASSIONATE FOLLOWERS.

“This last notion captures vividly the new spirit of defiant individualism that was one of the most radical manifestations of the Awakening. No longer were consensual values to prevail over individual ones, at least in matters concerning the soul. Now private judgment and intuitive under- standing had equal if not superior claim on the conscience. In a word, decision making had been internalized.”–Bonomie

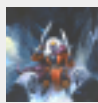
This sentence alone reminds me more of some certain aspects of some of the personality, and culture of the

culture found in our USA, and Bonomi seems to have a generally cohesive flow displayed here that feels in parallel with the text that I have read for this chapter.

However, I have been experiencing a hard time keeping up with the reading. So, honestly, having only made it to page 147 in chapter 4 as of this moment, and only just finishing Bonomie’s portion of the argumentative essay, I am disappointed to say that I can not as of yet evaluate these two.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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ARMENIAN Typo?

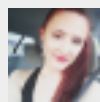
by [Brianna Huber](#) – Tuesday, October 20, 2015, 12:37 AM

In the 6th line of Mr. Butler's Argument, it says, "...imbibed **Arminian** principles that allowed humans to believe they might effect.."

Does Mr. Butler have the intention of saying Armenian? It seems like he must mean American.

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Arminian not a typo

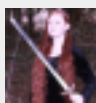
by [Lauren Collett](#) – Thursday, October 22, 2015, 5:34 PM

When Butler says **Arminian** ideals I believe he's talking about the teachings of Jacob Arminius. He went against the Calvinist ideas of predestination and believed in salvation, god's mercy and free will. Many of the ideas the revivalists later used during The Great Awakening. Here is the link to an encyclopedia entry I found on him but there is many other resources. Also Butler uses the word again in the second paragraph of page 7 "Their sponsors vigorously criticized the soft-core **Arminianism** that had reputedly overtaken New England Congregationalism, and they stimulated the ritual renewal of a century-old society by reintroducing colonists to the theology of distinguished seventeenth-century Puritan clergymen, especially Thomas Shepard and Solomon Stoddard."

(<http://www.britannica.com/biography/Jacobus-Arminius>)

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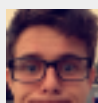
Re: Arminian not a typo

by [Bethany Scott](#) – Friday, October 23, 2015, 2:36 PM

Thanks for the research, Lauren. I had to look up what he meant by it, and its definitely new exposure for me.

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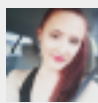
Re: The Great Awakening

by [Nikita Douglass](#) – Wednesday, October 21, 2015, 4:13 PM

I don’t know if Great Awakening was the key to American Revolution, but I believe it was a major influence on what caused and led up to the American Revolution. From my understanding, I see that Great Awakening have made a huge impact in the religious community. My point is, I agree with Patricia U. Bonomi that Great Awaken wasn’t the key to American Revolution. “First, revivalism never was the key to the expansion of the colonial churches. Presbyterianism expanded as rapidly in the middle colonies between 1710 and 1740 as between 1740 and 1770. Revivalism scarcely produced the remarkable growth that the Church of England experienced in the eighteenth century unless, of course, it won the favor of colonists who opposed revivals as fiercely as did its leaders” pg. 9.

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George Whitefield, an exaggeration or an integral part?

by [Lauren Collett](#) – Thursday, October 22, 2015, 5:45 PM

After watching the video I think its important we discuss a little bit about George Whitefield. In the video they mention him several times but what stuck out the most was the fact that one historian in the video says he believes Whitefield may have preached to every single person living in the colonies at the time, which he clocked in at about 3 million. A man who never wrote down his sermons according to the video.This is in stark contrast to the portrayal by Butler in his essay where he says that Whitefield's role was exaggerated and people stopped caring about him. Here is the section

"Historians also exaggerate the cohesion of leadership in the revivals. They have accomplished this, in part, by overstressing the importance of Whitefield and Edwards. Whitefield's early charismatic influence later faded so that his appearances in the 1750s and 1760s had less impact even among evangelicals than they had in the 1740s. In addition, Whitefield's "leadership" was ethereal, at best, even before 1750. His principal early importance was to serve as a personal model of evangelical enterprise for ministers wishing to promote their own revivals of religion. Because he did little to organize and coordinate integrated colonial revivals, he also failed to exercise si cant authority over the ministers he inspired"(page 8)

So we have a video that says yes he's very important.He was integral to The Great Awakening etc. Then we have a historian who says that idea is exaggerated. I am inclined to agree with the video and the book on this one. It could easily be argued that a man who draws "tens of thousands" (as mentioned in the textbook on page 133) would be important in **some** way or another.

What do you guys think about him? Who do you agree with? Also hopefully we can discuss the role of Johnathan Edwards in another post.

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Re: George Whitefield, an exaggeration or an integral part?
by [Bethany Scott](#) - Friday, October 23, 2015, 2:44 PM

I thought he was referring to everyone in that specific colony, not all the colonies? Also, I think Butler was questioning his importance to the revolution based on his leadership, not his leadership within the intents and purposes of the great awakening. The tens of the thousands that he drew do make him an important figure for the religious aspect of this time, but keep in mind that butler is out to prove that there is a "nonexistant correlation" between the uprisings in the church and the later uprisings in the revolution. Yes, Whitefield is important, but did he spur an attitude of rebellion that led to political activism?

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Bonomi: give me proof of following change.
by [Bethany Scott](#) - Friday, October 23, 2015, 2:04 PM

Correlation is not causation, and while Bonomi did a lovely job of outlining the awakening, I can't recall her pointing out specific events or patterns of change that followed the awakening; she simply highlighted the potential for spiritual uprising to lead to political uprising.

"The unitary ideal of the seventeenth century continued to be eroded in the post-Awakening years by further church separations. Moreover, as the Reverend William Shurtleff noted in 1745, the "dividing Spirit is not confin'd to those that are:: Friends" of the revival. **Nor was it confined to the religious sphere.** That "dividing Spirit" would be manifested everywhere after mid-century in the proliferation of religious and political factions".

Bonomi doesn't note exactly how it wasn't confined to the religious sphere, but I did find this:

"This last notion captures vividly the new spirit of defiant individualism that was one of the most radical manifestations of the Awakening. No longer were consensual values to prevail over individual ones, **at least in matters concerning the soul**".

"Thus, beginning in the 1740s and continuing into the next decade, Presbyterian and Congregational separatists constructed a defense that stressed the rights of minorities against majorities, and of individuals against the whole, **in matters of conscience**".

Matters of the soul and matters of conscience are not inherently the same; it could be fully against my conscience (morals, ethics, beliefs built on an understanding of the way the law should operate) to pay a tax on tea but not a matter of my soul, which generally implies **eternal** importance, my beliefs on the unseen,

intangible, and my responsibilities within. Which does she mean? She states that people began to push back against authoritarianism on matters of the soul, but does not give examples of a political element of the awakening, or change coming from it.

There may be a good argument for the importance of the awakening to the revolution, but Bonomi isn't being clear enough. The material is less dry than Butler's to get through...but far less deciding. Again, does a great job of walking one through the great awakening, but doesn't touch down on why it should be clearly responsible for inspiring the revolution.

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Re: Bonomi: give me proof of following change.
by [Andrea Adelman](#) – Friday, October 23, 2015, 6:03 PM

I feel like it all comes down to perception and interpretation. I feel like Bonomi does a good job of providing surface information with how the Great Awakening was a key for the Revolution. She might not come right out and say it, but it can definitely be read deeper in the information she does provide.

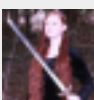
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Bonomi's lack of specifics
by [Oliver Valdivia](#) – Saturday, October 24, 2015, 7:02 PM

I absolutely agree with your point that Bonomi lacks specifics. I think you do a very good job in showing parts of her argument that lacked clarity. This is part of the reason why I like Butler's argument much more. I think he understands that lots of the historians who see a strong correlation between the Great Awakening and the American Revolution are fairly vague in their description of the events. Butler says that they love to use "hurricane metaphors" and commonly say that the revivals "swept" the colonies. The first thing I noticed while listening to the video was that they also said the revivals "swept" the western colonies.

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Bonomi vs. Butler
by [Bethany Scott](#) – Friday, October 23, 2015, 2:46 PM

Bonomi: “Religion has always been considered a likely agent of radicalism. Nor is there reason to doubt that the tremendous stir of the Great Awakening altered the social and political equilibrium of colonial life. Just as the revival marked a significant divide in popular thought and practice, so too it would supply the most pertinent and usable model for radical activists in the years that lay ahead.”

Perhaps, but Butler has something to add to this.

"The relationship between prerevolutionary political change and the revivals is weak everywhere except in Virginia, where the Baptist revivals indeed shattered the exclusive, century-old Anglican hold on organized religious activity and politics in the colony. But, their importance to the Revolution is weakened by the fact that so many members of Virginia's Anglican aristocracy also led the Revolution".

Okay, so perhaps the great awakening did affect the political activism of the previously Anglican now baptist community that was perhaps already subservient in manner to the church and crown, but not the colonists who were already being made increasingly uncomfortable with England's tight hold on them, already ready to fight authority, regardless of being as Anglican as England. To me, that weakens the importance of the awakening to the revolution. It was important, but perhaps not on the scale that enthusiasts such as Bonomi would claim.

Bonomi: "...New England separatists were fond of quoting 2 Corinthians 6:14--17—"Be ye not unequally yoked together with Unbelievers. . . Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate."

Okay, so it's encouraging patriot nationalism? What does Butler have to say?

"the pre-revolutionary revivals occurred in the colonial backwaters of Western society where they were part of a

long-term pattern of erratic movements for spiritual renewal and revival that had long characterized Western Christianity and Protestantism since its birth two centuries earlier. Thus, their theological origins were international and diverse rather than narrowly Calvinist and uniquely American".

That's right, the video added on to this forum also adds that a similar awakening against the Anglican church/authority had also been going on in Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and parts of England. I don't think the colonists saw the English as unbelievers, and while perhaps a spirit of separatism was attached to their new-found conversions, there's no direct connection that leads me to believe the awakening was some sort of warm-up for the revolution.

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Video Historians versus Authors

by [Andrea Adelman](#) – Friday, October 23, 2015, 6:28 PM

The video historians are very clearly on the side of "yes". They talk about how the Awakening brought together people of all denominations to hear the same words of many sermons and pastors. Conversions seemed to be the largest result of the revivals, even "the inception of evangelicalism in the South." Any impact on stimulation of fervor of religious, political, or other kinds has a great impact on the resulting actions people take. And, lastly, the very last sentence spoken: "Religion can be seen as a kind of backdrop or precause of the American Revolution."

The textbook authors are also on the side of "yes". On page 134, subsection "Long-Term Consequences of the Revivals", they mention that while women church members soared, most men discontinued going altogether, and becoming Freemasons instead. They state, "The revivals shattered the unity of New England's Congregational Church. Evangelicals seceded from dozens of congregations to form their own "Separate" Churches." They go on to provide more facts about how this new type of religious practice changed everything for the United States. All in all, the results brought forth by the Great Awakening could only be seen as a revolution. Everything was changing in one form or another. Creating colleges, separating churches, ideas on slavery, etc. are all results of such.

"The revivals transformed American religious life." (137)

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Re: Video Historians versus Authors

by [Jonathan Davis](#) – Friday, October 23, 2015, 7:03 PM

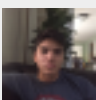
The textbook authors seem to think like the video historians do. George Whitefield is illustrated as a key player of the Great Awakening. On page 133, "He had the power to move masses of people through a single sermon, and he too began to preach the 'new birth' – the necessity of conversion experience."

The video historians also say that "George Whitefield was the great evangelist of the Great Awakening." Also at the end of the video, like Andrea mentioned, they say "Religion can be seen as a kind of backdrop or precause of the American Revolution."

So from all the facts they have provided us with, I feel that the Awakening was truly the tipping point for revolutionary thought.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Response to Great Awakening video

by [Oliver Valdivia](#) – Friday, October 23, 2015, 7:45 PM

The historians in the video are clearly on the "Yes" side of the debate. I think that the historians believe there is a fairly significant connection between the First Great Awakening and the American Revolution. One of the historians goes on to say, "That idea of individual experience of grace began to feed into emerging ideals of American independence and American individualism." He believes the experience of the revivals began to give the colonists a feeling of individualism both from colonist to colonist and a few years later from England.

Our textbook authors also think the Great Awakening was very significant to American history. They say things

like, "The revivals had dramatic consequences" (134) and "The revivals transformed Americanreligious life" (137). They don't state blatantly that they believe the Great Awakening had a huge impact on the American Revolution, but going off of those statements I do believe they see a strong correlation.

I started having doubts about my initial belief that the Great Awakening didn't have a significant effect on the American Revolution. After rereading the essays by Bonomi and Butler I still agree with Butler and the "No" argument. Another strong quote Butler had was when he said, "No one would seriously question the existence of "the Great Awakening" if historians only described it as a short-lived Calvinist revival in New England during the early 1740s". I think this is important because it correlates with our textbook when they say, " Amid the enthusiasm of Whitefield's tour, more men than usual joined a church, but after another year or two, men became hard to convert". (134)

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Clearly in support of the Great Awakening
by Justin Smith – Friday, October 23, 2015, 10:37 PM

This video definitely supports that the Great Awakening was a huge milestone in American history. Just the way that they talk about George Whitefield talking to crowds of tens of thousands of people and making crowds weep by the way he said 'Mesopotamia" shows the side the historians in the video take on the subject. He is also referred to as the first big star of America. I like how the historians bring up the fact that a lot of the sermons given were attended by a working class people. I feel like the type of religion that people practice can be very closely related to what social class they are part of. Of course that isn't always true, but especially in this time of religious reformation it could've played a huge role in people's religious views.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: American Revolution
by Nikita Douglass – Saturday, October 24, 2015, 10:35 AM

After reading more about American Revolution, I learned that a lot of historians are trying to connect the Great Awakening and the American Revolution, but I believe it's to different topics. Like I have said already in my previous forum, the Great Awakening made a huge impact in church community. Churches have split, new groups start forming and it gave more freedom to people to choose to which church they want to go. Where's American Revolution takes a bigger part of the history compare to Great Awaking in my opinion. "It marked the first time in history that a people fought for their independence in the name of certain universal principles such as rule of law, constitutional rights, and popular sovereignty." (Digital History)

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: American Revolution
by Jacob Leturno – Saturday, October 24, 2015, 11:45 AM

I agree with your statement i believe the two events held high importance in creating the world we have today but i do not feel as though they are not connected directly. the american revolution was crucial to the power crisis we where having in the colonies at the time. where as the great awakening was crucial due to the vast followers that the religions where gaining and the stature they bring with them. both of these events are important but in my opinion not connected.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: George Whitefield
by Nikita Douglass – Saturday, October 24, 2015, 1:37 PM

"His voice was so musical, claimed one observed, that he could seduce a crowd just by the way he pronounced 'Mesopotamia'. Using his acting skills, he imitated Christ on the cross, shedding 'pious tears' for poor sinners. Or he became God..." (pg 133). I feel like the author of our history book shows his bias side. The way he talks about Whitefield like he's God. I understand Whitefield has helped spread the Great Awakening, I would say he was a great preacher and attracted a large group of audience during the 18th century.



I'd have to disagree.....
by [Lauren Collett](#) – Saturday, October 24, 2015, 2:57 PM

I'm sorry but I don't think the text book is talking about Whitefield like he's god that's why they say "using his acting skills" and if you didn't cut off the end of it you would see it doesn't say "he became god" it says "he became god at the Last Judgment" meaning he impersonated God's words at the Last Judgment which is a part of the bible that refers to judgment day The book is simply referring to instances of his acting skills in known sermons according to the people that were there Also the first line you quoted even says "claimed one observer" its not the authors words that he had a musical voice and what not. Although it is probably true there is a bias in the textbook and they do spend a long time on the Great Awakening I think you are misinterpreting there words here especially by cutting off the quote from the book.



Re:George Whitefield
by [Nikita Douglass](#) – Saturday, October 24, 2015, 5:32 PM

Okay, you got me. I might have cut off the last part on purpose. The way author described George Whitefield I thought was extremely cheesy. I probably shouldn't have said that the author was comparing George Whitefield to God, but my point was to show that the author is bias.

[The Great Awakening](#) ►

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