

HST 201: US History F19 (Escobar)

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The Debate Continues

by [Joe Escobar](#) - Wednesday, October 23, 2019, 11:02 AM

NEW MATERIALS, short videoclips and a website, are now available on the [Forum Materials and Questions webpage](#).

To make your POSTS using these new materials, 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, something that describes which specific historian or source you are using and whether they support the YES or NO position in the debate. Do NOT simply leave it RE: The Debate Continues

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Re: The Debate Continues

by [Curtis Nordquist](#) - Wednesday, October 23, 2019, 3:33 PM

The video, titled with the question, "Was the Great Awakening a Key to the American Revolution,?" seemed to not really be asking this question as much as just telling us why it was key. This position was most notably (for me) in the end when the last speaker implied that the Great Awakening was the "backdrop to the American Revolution" (6:36 -the man in the red tie was not introduced when he first appeared). However, this implication was fairly clear throughout. One speaker noted revivalism's audience as people who were

"already in church," not like going and preaching to the ignorant (red tie man at :56 in). This video focuses in on two people that were leaders in the revivalist movement: John Edwards and George Whitefield. It seems that the revivalism, the Great Awakening, really took off with these two and other outgoing preachers, whose purpose was that of "stimulat[ing] religious fervor" (Lemons), that is exciting audiences everywhere. Their audiences also were interesting, as they were not the elitists, but the masses: "unconverted people" (Bullock) to "authenticate the religion of the lower classes" (Lemons). Edwards, being described as "an intellectual" and one of America's "original thinkers" (Hawkins), he inspired this fervor in people who'd been accustomed to (and likely bored of) the old Anglican church; he spoke to tens and then thousands of people at a time (Hawkins). Whitefield was described as "young and feisty" (Lemons) and the "first American star" (Marsden) who was always off-script, speaking off the hip to his audience. His audience was defined as being a diverse group: slaves, poor, rich, male/female, etc. -an "across denominational event for Americans" (Bullock). When I think about this "event," I can imagine life before within the churches (that may/may not follow scripture exactly, but all put on the smile for their church), disrupting the cultural norms of the time. These new young exciting preachers, talking about the *individual* having an *individual* relationship with God, and other "wild" notions, would attract a LOT of people who felt that their church is simply a facade, not following scripture, and if they (individually) are responsible for their OWN souls, then they would want to move towards educating themselves in the word of God, rather than having it handed to them, regulated by an organization (a church, controlling its masses). With the previous post, I was on the side of Butler over Bonami because Bonami wasn't offering much in the way of facts and sources. While this video offers various historians, who I'm sure have sources to support their claims, I wasn't clear about just how powerful this movement was. Like anything that blows through like a fire, sure it goes out, but I can see from this video, that the fire burned hot and left a lasting impression on its people; thereby, when the American Revolution started, it would be easy to harken back to when we separated from the Church.

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I think you make an interesting point about how while the movement was relatively short it was very impactful during its time, and its ideas may have continued on into the American Revolution over 25 years later. Especially with how its concepts could have been held by people after the movement and its fervor may have died down to a less ridiculous level. An example of which could be seen in the video about the Founding Father Patrick Henry, and how he used his experience with the Great Awakening during his political career and speeches.

Sum of ratings: [1 \(1\)](#) [Permalink](#)[Show parent](#)[Edit](#)[Split](#)[Delete](#)[Reply](#)**The Broader Religious Movement**by [Ryan Peel](#) - Wednesday, October 23, 2019, 8:00 PM

Is the Great Awakening important? "For some, it was a great blessing. For others, it was just mass enthusiasm." (Great Awakening video, 00:46) For some, it was the best thing that happened in their lives. For others, it was just mass enjoyment. A new way to practice a new religion, which fits into the picture in its own

way. It brought about new colleges, new professions such as lawyers and physicians. It then went on to revitalize the Church of North Hampton. When Johnathan Edwards inherited it, he called it "a church of Dry Bones." (Great Awakening video, 01:27) Do I think the Great Awakening had a huge, monumental impact? No, I do not. When the Boston Tea Party was held, I don't remember religion being a big factor in that decision. Many battles were fought during this time, and it was quick thinking and strategic planning that went into winning this war. I didn't hear much about religion. It doesn't mean people didn't practice during this time, it just tells me that this big event, in the grand scheme of things, didn't do much other than spur growth for the economy and other pursuits not associated with the church.

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Summarize The Great Awakening's effects

by [Tuyen Thanh Diep](#) - Wednesday, October 23, 2019, 8:00 PM

In the reading of The Great Awakening website, providing information on the main impact of the Great Awakening is the rebellion against religious domination that is negative, and authoritarian, also because it brought about bad influences in colonial life. Awakening is considered to have an impact on culture and politics, and this has been shown that Awakening has completely changed. In addition, the article also provides data on the former dominant groups "about 40% of American congregations as late as 1760, that number eventually dropped to under 2.5% by 1790." (The Great Awakening Webside). In the 18th century, colonial emancipation was brought to light under the auspices of the Catholic churches. Once again, they asserted that religious control is their national destiny.

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RE: I say the historians say Yes!

by [Hunter Schultz](#) - Wednesday, October 23, 2019, 10:44 PM

In the Great Awakening video I believe the historians that yes the Great Awakening somewhat was key to the American Revolution. I say this because at the end of the six minute video the historian said " Religion can be seen as a backdrop or precause to the American Revolution". That pretty much says that the religion during the Great Awakening had somewhat to do with the American Revolution happening. Also through the whole video the historians seemed to be on the side of agreeing with the religious movements and speeches talking about how everyone kind of came together as equals for the small period of time listening to the preachers and Sermons.

Quotes from: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yQlhed_RxXu_vUkT6TLIBNT4vbT3XyGz/view

Cite: "First_Great_Awakening.mp4." Google Drive, Google,
drive.google.com/file/d/1yQlhed_RxXu_vUkT6TLIBNT4vbT3XyGz/view.

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The Great Awakening website and key to the American Revolution

by [Emily Fosnight](#) - Thursday, October 24, 2019, 9:33 PM

The website supports the viewpoint of Patricia Bonomi. The website stands behind the idea that the Great Awakening was a key to the American Revolution. "The children of revivalism later echoed this radicalism and popular self-righteousness in the American Revolution, when self-assertion turned against the tyrannical ways of George III," (website.)

"Eventually, this religious zeal turned to revolution and sentiments of self-governance," (website).

"John Adams gave credit to the Great Awakening as the source of motivation behind the war, and in certain parts of England the revolution was even called the 'Presbyterian Rebellion,'" (website).

All of these statements are saying that the radicalism of the Great Awakening fueled the fire to be repeated for the American Revolution. The Great Awakening encouraged independence and individualism, which was the foundation for the American Revolution.

After reading the book, class lectures, reading the yes/no articles handed out in class, and watching the videos, it seems that nearly all of them are of the same opinion, which is yes, the Great Awakening was a key to the American revolution. I can see that it had a great impact on the colonists, so I may have to change my original opinion and go with yeah, the Great Awakening was a key to the American Revolution.

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The "Myth" of the Great Awakening

by [Eric Shoaf](#) - Friday, October 25, 2019, 9:53 AM

After reading all this information and watching all these clips about the Great Awakening, I find myself wondering about Butler's essay. It seems to be the only source that contains the idea that the Great Awakening was not a contributing factor in the American Revolution. After a bit of research I came across the article provided below. The article provides a bit of context in terms of the different narratives surrounding the Great Awakening. Now this article is very long and most of it isn't worth your time reading, but there is one section that stands out to me. The section titled "The Myth of the Great Awakening." The main point of this section is explaining the core arguments of some historians about the Great Awakening. And wouldn't you know it, the first historian listed there is none other than Jon Butler himself.

Now this discovery leads me to be much more skeptical of Butler's claims, especially since every other source we've heard from at least agrees with the scope of the Great Awakening. Butler is the only one saying things like: "It only took place in some of the colonies."

So after all of this new information, I think that yes, the Great Awakening was indeed a contributing factor in the American Revolution. However the amount that the Great Awakening contributed to the Revolution is still unclear.

<https://blogs.brown.edu/atlanticworldreligion/atlantic-awakenings/>

(Side note: I'd like to point out the fact that this article is written by a student at Brown University. However this isn't a huge issue, as the article is more of a method of putting the various arguments in perspective, it doesn't discuss the Great Awakening affecting the Revolution.)

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Re: The Debate Continues

by [Emily Fosnight](#) - Saturday, October 26, 2019, 1:45 PM

After reading the materials and watching all of the videos, I also found it interesting that Jon Butler was the only source telling us no, the Great Awakening wasn't majorly influential to the American Revolution. I, too, found myself skeptical of Butler's essay after originally agreeing with it. I eventually changed my mind, to say yes, the Great Awakening did have an influence on the American Revolution, as well. Thanks for sharing your findings!

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Re: The Debate Continues

by [Sidney Axtell](#) - Saturday, October 26, 2019, 3:44 PM

I completely agree with your statement! Although, I had already agreed with Patricia Bonomi's statement in the beginning just because I happened to do more research and found that John Butler was the only historian who was saying Great Awakening had no major influence on the American Revolution. Although some may agree Butler, due to his reading having it seem as there was more "logical" information, the majority of historians will agree that the Great Awakening was a contributing factor in the American Revolution.

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Claims Made by Butler

by [Marcus Jackson](#) - Saturday, October 26, 2019, 10:25 PM

I think you make some very good points and have interesting views on Butler's essay. While I still found myself agreeing with Butler on the basis of some of his claims that, taking them as true, really qualify the statements made by others. You also touch on the degree to which it affected the American Revolution, which I personally think is crucial in its assessment. As I don't doubt that it affected it in some way, I just doubt that it was a huge contributing factor. One thing I'd like to point out to you is that the textbook somewhat corroborates Butler's claims of lesser influence in some of the colonies saying "the Chesapeake colonies remained on the margins until Virginia and Maryland were drawn into a later phase of the movement in the 1760s and 1770s" (131).

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How New Information Can a No Into a Yes

by [Abraham Millan](#) - Friday, October 25, 2019, 12:05 PM

After reading the initial information, I concluded Professor Butler had the more logical argument. That the Great Awakening was about personal religious reformation than a revolutionary theme. That the time period was about personal enrichment and to have self confidence when it came to faith. However these ideas of looking towards yourself instead of a minister or bishop could give genesis to the ideals of self rule.

Within the new information presented John Adams the second President of the United States of America gave credit to the Great Awakening. Calling the event a "Presbyterian Rebellion". According to Great Awakening mentions how children of parents from the Great Awakening gave birth to the idea of "self-assertion" that would later serve against King George's Rule. That is why now I believe that the Great Awakening could have been a key to the American Revolution.

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Re: The Debate Continues

by [Trevor Mejia](#) - Saturday, October 26, 2019, 9:14 AM

After watching the most recent video clips, my mind hasn't changed. It just expanded on what I was saying before and added more detail. In the most recent video clips, the first one in particular. We see many historians actually state how the individual grace of God helped people of the colonies speak up, this led to creating more American individualism and American independence. All these things together I would claim to be the independent spirit. They would speak out over things such as, pastors and sermons and if they truly had an issue go find a place that worked better for them. To further my point, multiple video clips talk about George Whitfield who was a famous preacher who used aspects of stage acting to help boost his ability to speak to large crowds. His small tips and tricks with pronunciation essentially made him the first Radio host, With over 10 million people from both the United States and Great Britain listening to his sermons. With one history even saying "He could make one weep by the way he pronounced Mesopotamia." George Whitfield traveled and preached at all the colonies. So, although it seems like an only 6 colonies were involved all colonies were affected. Whether it was by word of mouth, the newspaper, or people like George Whitfield who take it upon themselves to share his grace of God with the other colonies. Every Colony still heard about it and was present to the items happening. It's the same as the Rodney King beating only one person was effected but everyone thought the US was present to the situation. Obviously, this wasn't the case for the American Revolution. And like I said before, it's the first step, the revolution was people speaking up and demanding what they want when they couldn't before. I see this to be one of the first steps down a long road leading to the revolutionary war. and to quote what Joe said last class (Thursday 24th) "although it may not have had a direct correlation, history is still threaded together." Or Newton's law Every action has a reaction, think Hitler getting kicked out of art school. Do you think if his teacher knew what he was going to do he would still kick him out of art school? Clearly not, but that is history. Everything happens and will be further built or expanded upon at one point or another. Rome wasn't built in a night, but it was first a small little town with no Italians, after 500 years Rome was expanded into Italy and the Mediterranean, Now it's the center of Italy. That's history, we build on the shoulders of those who stand before us.

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**Re: The Debate Continues**by [Emily Fosnight](#) - Saturday, October 26, 2019, 2:41 PM

After so many different sources, the book, the articles, the videos, the website, and hints from Joe in class, say the Great Awakening did have an affect on the American Revolution, it's hard to disagree with them. Originally, I agreed with Jon Butler, but it seems, from the materials we were provided, that he is the only one who thinks the Great Awakening had no major influence leading up to the American Revolution. It seems all of the other sources view the Great Awakening as an event which led to individualism and independence which was the base for people to stand up for themselves and what they want and believe. It was like a seed planted in them, to grow, and to blossom when the time came, which was the American Revolution.

Sum of ratings: [1 \(1\)](#) [Permalink](#)[Show parent](#)[Edit](#)[Split](#)[Delete](#)[Reply](#)**Re: The Debate Continues- Video**by [Sidney Axtell](#) - Saturday, October 26, 2019, 2:54 PM

The side that these short videos explain the great awakening strongly relate to Patricia U. Bonomi's reading and her view on religion, and how she discussed the religious life in the colonies, followed by a study of religious toleration.

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The website is based off of the evidence that the Great Awakening was a contributing factor in the American Revolution. As well as the multiple video clips "John Adams gave credit to the Great Awakening as the source of motivation behind the war, and in certain parts of England the revolution was even called the "Presbyterian Rebellion"." (Paragraph 4, website article)

Sum of ratings: [1 \(1\)](#) [Permalink](#)[Show parent](#)[Edit](#)[Split](#)[Delete](#)[Reply](#)**First Unifying National Event**by [Logan Yetts](#) - Saturday, October 26, 2019, 5:02 PM

The video seems to be supporting the idea that the Great Awakening had an important impact on the American Revolution. It starts off saying the Great Awakening "swept across the Atlantic and into the colonies." The religious movement, led by figures like George Whitefield, made its way through the colonies and effected the thoughts and ways of life of nearly all colonists. The video also claims this new movement that swept through the colonies united them for the first time and helped get the colonists "on the path to thinking of themselves as a separate people" from the rest of Europe.

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The First Great Awakening video, supports the idea that the Great Awakening definitely helped pave the way to the American revolution. When the historians state, near the end of the video, that, people from all denominations, black, white, rich, poor, young, and old, came to hear George Whitfield's sermons, it shows a bias towards how all walks of life came together. Similar to how in the American Revolution, all walks of life in the Americas came together to help gain independence from Great Britain, The Great Awakening showed a similar type of gathering of people.

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My Final Verdict, Yes.

by [Eric Shoaf](#) - Saturday, October 26, 2019, 6:17 PM

After a week of gaining new information, my opinion has definitely shifted from no to yes. However the degree to which I think the Great Awakening influenced the American Revolution is probably less than most. There is one quote from Butler that has stuck with me throughout these forums: "They may have been of some importance in helping colonists make moral judgments about eighteenth-century English politics, though colonists unconnected to the revivals made these judgments as well."

I think that the degree to which the Awakening affected the Revolution was more personal. Those who heard from preachers like Whitfield used their newfound independence from the church to guide their support of the Revolution. However I don't think it was a huge sweeping movement that affected everyone. It was more of a supplementary cause than a direct cause.

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Degree of Affect

by [Marcus Jackson](#) - Saturday, October 26, 2019, 10:14 PM

I think that you touch on a really good point that I agree with. That you don't necessarily believe as strongly that the Great Awakening affected the American Revolution. I think that this is a very important qualifier though I personally still slightly lean towards Butlers interpretation. Your point about it being far more personal is also important, I think. In my opinion many of its effects were more person to person rather than a mass shift in opinion in every person in the same way.

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Opinions on the Affect of the Great Awakening

by [Marcus Jackson](#) - Saturday, October 26, 2019, 9:26 PM

The historians in the first video most definitely fall on the side that the Great Awakening did have an impact on the American Revolution. They often stress how quickly the revival spread, such as in Northampton, Massachusetts where 300 hundred were converted, over 100 of which in one day (First Video

2:14). Later they also talk about George Whitefield being known by nearly all in the colonies as well as likely being heard by many of them first hand (First Video 4:42). One example of his reach was Boston where he apparently preached to many more people than even lived in Boston at the time (First Video 4:18). These stories reinforce the theatrical nature of Whitefield and his preaching, which was very different from the somber style of preachers in America before him (Unfinished Nation 1:33). However even beyond these stories about its spread they stress the Great Awakening's affect on America by being its first national event (First Video 5:07). This brought together Americans and solidified a national identity and feelings of American individualism. Which itself was reinforced by Whitefield's interpretation of Christianity as a personal experience independent of a church and its doctrine. This was based on the ideas about people having a direct and very personal relationship with Jesus rather than having their religion dictated to them by the churches (Church and State 1:54). This accordingly led to more independent thought and participation (First Video 6:19). The link between politics and the Great Awakening is also reinforced in the videos by the early life of the Founding Father Patrick Henry. Whose speech style and career was heavily influenced by his experience with the movement through his mother, who was a follower of it (Patrick Henry 3:25). These examples and arguments all align fairly clearly with Bonomi's interpretation of the Great Awakening leading to a national change in thought that itself would eventually lead to, and greatly impact, the American Revolution over 25 years later.

The website similarly clearly sides with the interpretation that the Great Awakening directly led to the American Revolution. It makes this clear in the opening paragraph saying, "Though a religious movement, the Awakening had repercussions in cultural and political spheres as well" right out of the gate. Throughout the page they restate ways in which the Great Awakening affected the political situation leading up to the Revolution. Later saying, "The children of revivalism later echoed this radicalism and popular self-righteousness in the American Revolution" another fairly clear illustration of their viewpoint on the situation. They quote John Adams in saying that the Great Awakening was the motivation for the rebellion. As well as saying that the American Revolution was called the "Presbyterian Rebellion" in some parts of England. Granted all this information is taken at face value as it doesn't seem to be quoted from one reliable historian or another from what I can tell.

Having now read the website page and watched the videos regarding the Great Awakening and its effect on the American Revolution I still believe that the Great Awakening did not have as great of an affect on the American Revolution and the political climate that led up to it as many believe. In my opinion many of the facts stated by Jon Butler still hold true as compared to the more general stories and ideas often stated in favor of the great effect of the religious revival. For example the fact that Presbyterianism expanded as rapidly in the middle colonies between 1710-1740 as it did between 1740-1770 (Butler 8). Which shows the reality of how influential Presbyterianism really was compared to some of the lofty claims made. Another crucial factor in my decision was that not even the majority of the 13 colonies was affected by the Great Awakening, with only six having even been particularly affected by it. Even amongst those six colonies there were many groups such as the Baptists, Quakers, and Germans, who all paid attention to the event only later (Butler). These facts in my opinion put enough doubt on the claims made by others that I still agree with my initial beliefs if somewhat less firmly.

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Re: The Debate Continues

by [Glorianna Whiteman-Reyes](#) - Saturday, October 26, 2019, 10:16 PM

These videos seem to take the stance that the Great Awakening had either a great or at least mentionable influence on the revolution. Many of the videos, the fourth one, for example, bring up the expansion of individualist ideals in America as a result of the GA. One historian in that video gives the example of sermons moving away from the language of "our" covenant with God to "your" or "my" covenant with God. This citation of individualism as motivation seems to be one shared with the Yes side of the initial documents given in class. There seems to be at some consensus among all the videos and texts that regardless of what stance you take on the impact the GA had on the revolution, it did affect colonial life. I will say that while there is that consensus, I would trust the information in the last video more than any of the other, especially the first. The first, and longest video makes some comments around the 5:09 mark about how the Great Awakening brought all sorts of people together and blurred some divides between slaves and free men. While the idea of religion being the uniting force that began to switch while peoples' minds toward new moral thinking in terms of slaves is nice, I think that the fourth videos take on the enlightenment and how it made Americans more conscious of their moral appearance is a more realistic historical truth. (The First Great Awakening clip 3:18 mark)

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Re: Influences & Impacts; according to Christine Leigh Heyrman

by [Caleb Willis](#) - Saturday, October 26, 2019, 11:44 PM

All four of the videos had an abundance of information which could possibly sway the viewer to believe the Great Awakening was a Key to the American Revolution. The historians presented reasons to not question the validity of the cause and effect, but it appeared in my opinion, the last listed video describes George Whitefield similar to the textbook. He had the ability to draw large crowds of people in his sermons. "He had the power to move masses of people through a single sermon," (textbook page 113). Crowds were mesmerized by him. I almost feel there was a "cult" like system of religious devotions and excessive admiration for Whitefield. His voice powerful as he spoke in big crowds of thousands of attendants to his sermons. We can attest to this due to Benjamin Franklin's autobiography (The First Great Awakening video "Unfinished Nation - Divergent Paths": 0:55 mark) where he talks about going to hear Whitefield speak in Philadelphia and is pacing away from Whitefield's voice, trying to calculate the radius his voice will travel, and evidently Franklin got quite a ways away before finally reaching the end that his voice travels. (1:05 mark). In the textbook, sermons such as Whitefield's had a strong impact on the religious revivals which swept across the Protestant world, transforming large populations of people. Given the changes in religion and the ability for churches to become separate, new links with Britain between colonies, along with new colleges unlike the older ones, students from all 13 colonies could now be sent throughout America as just a few examples of people experiencing independence and individualism. In conclusion, the textbook authors seem to lean towards the Great Awakening being a key influence on the American Revolution.

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Re: The Debate Continues

by [Hunter Schultz](#) - Saturday, October 26, 2019, 11:53 PM

On the Great Awakening article online I think they would of said yes! The Great Awakening was somewhat of a key to the American Revolution. I say somewhat based of religious ties/influences that it had impacted on the American revolution that it hinted at on the website. stated as "Anti-Catholicism was one of the most prominent traits in the colonies prior to the revolution" showing that its relating to the religious ways in that near future. Also states "The religious fervor spawned by the Great Awakening provided the catalyst for political and military action necessary for fulfillment of religious expectations" meaning religion from the great awakening could had an impact on the military in the American Revolution. How this impacts my final thoughts would be I think the Great Awakening had some affect in the Revolution basing my favored opinion on the website and videos over the reading packet. Online article: <http://www.great-awakening.com/roots-of-revolution/>

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