Stephanie Johnston (00:00):

Good morning, everyone. And how wonderful to see such a big welcoming crowd for our talk. Thank you all for coming out this morning. I'll introduce us first. Maybe me first sing. I'm talking I'm Stephanie Johnston former book publisher at Wakefield press and now practicing urban and heritage planner. And one of the big projects I've been working on for the past it's actually seven years now is the Mount lofty ranges world heritage nomination. And I also sit on the Adelaide Parklands authority. So that is actually the context for my encounter with Dr. Tim pauser. Tim is senior research associate at the Bentham project at the UCL university college of London's faculty of laws. And he's brought here by arts, humanity research council of the UK research council. So I came across Tim in my research for the Mount lofty bed.

Stephanie Johnston (01:13):

So at the heart of a world, heritage nomination is the requirement to meet at least one criteria. There are seven altogether and half of those are cultural criteria and the other half are natural criteria, which is already a sort of uncomfortable division. However, those, those, those, those two sort of area UNESCO areas are actually brought together in the world of cultural landscapes, which are landscapes that have evolved over time through the interaction of people and the environment. And so what we're looking in at, in the Mount lofty ranges, and also I might add that the Adelaide Parklands are, are also now moving to go for a world heritage nomination. And it may end up that the two end up being combined and they will be under an historical argument. So what we're trying to do is demonstrate one of the, well, a couple of the criteria, one is to demonstrate a significant stage in world history and the other is to be directly or tangibly associated with events or ideas of outstanding universal significance, which brings us to Jeremy Bentham and the philosophical radicals in London back in the 1820s and thirties.

Stephanie Johnston (02:37):

And I'm going to ask Tim to explain to us who were the philosophical radicals and what kind of radical ideas did they promote?

Tim Causer (<u>02:47</u>):

The philosophical radicals were sort of the first people moving towards democratic reform of but the British establishment essentially stole from, with the franchise abolition of slavery and see transportations and new south Wales and van Diemen's land. And many of them were influenced by bend to them. Many of them were Ben somites meant like so William Molesworth in particular was a real he was the bentonite spent the money as it were. But George Grote Torrens, these were people who've been some new regular reading and discussion forums in London. They would meet to discuss Bentham's works as well as others. So it's sort of Bentham is at the heart of this nexus of reform, even though as ever with Bentham. It's not usually him that has the direct influence upon government policy. It's usually the next generation of Bentham mites who do so for instance, with the abolition of transportation, Bentham wrote about new south Wales in 1802 and 18 or three, but it wasn't until several decades later in the 1830s.

Tim Causer (03:59):

And particularly with the select committee of 1837 and 38 chaired by William Molesworth, which partly led to the abolition of transportation to new south Wales. And that was worth reports on transportation is a really Bentham document that follows the same methodology has been from dead 35 years earlier

music, the same language. And it's the same with, as we see, we'll see with the colonization of south Australia, I think that Bentham's ideas are in there and democratic reform Bentham wanted annual parliaments universal franchise votes for women. So he was ahead of his time in

Stephanie Johnston (04:43):

That sense. Okay. And I guess it's what we're, we're we're looking at is trying to make these connections between Benz and the man and south Australia, but maybe you could also, apart from those big, broad, big picture ideas, which I guess were really the beginning of modern democracies as we know them what was, what, what else was Bentham in terms of you know, his philosophies and, and so on, and what else is he known most known for beyond his time? Yeah.

Tim Causer (<u>05:22</u>):

Bentham, I guess, is best known for, for three things. Firstly, and most importantly, he's the founder or the founder of the modern doctrine of utilitarianism. That is the, the idea that every action and piece of legislation should be to promote the greatest happiness of the greatest number as is most famously known for saying so the principle of utility Bentham applied to everything that he, he thought about it later in his life. So it was he thought people were motivated by the avoidance of pain and the gaining of pleasure and pleasure being the analog for, for happiness. So Bentham's essential philosophy was that the government should act in the greater good which, so it leads to the second thing he's most famous for the, this the panoptic and penitentiary scheme, which spent them's design, which he came up within the seven early 1790s.

Tim Causer (06:18):

He spent a decade trying to persuade the government to build one. So essentially it's a circular prison with the cells arranged around the outer wall. The center of the prison would have been dominated by an inspection tower in which the governor sat and the governor could look into the sales at any moment, see what the prisoners were up to. But the most importantly, the prisoners couldn't see the governor. So they had to assume they were being watched at all times and behave in order to avoid the punishment that would follow eminent. It's essentially sort of the God in the machine would be the governor and the governor would have been bent them if he'd persuaded the government to build one. So he spent 10 years trying to get it done a lot of energy, a lot of money. And he found it utterly dispiriting when the government Welsh on the deal at the legislation, the 1794 penitentiary act, and the appropriation act of 1799 had authorized the building of the panopticon.

Tim Causer (07:15):

And Benson thought that ministers had just set aside this legislation on their own authority. And this was on just, and it it's the panopticon experience we think, which made Bentham more radical. And he developed this theory, what he called sinister interests. The idea that the government was acting in its own interests and in the interest of the rich and the powerful and the mobility. Whereas they should be acting in the interests of the people and applying the principle of utility oddly relevant to these ideas. So he became more and more radical throughout the rest of his life. Essentially he was a rabbinic Republican Democrat by the time,

Stephanie Johnston (07:58):

But like other he's actually in New York at the moment.

Tim Causer (<u>08:00</u>):

Yes. the third thing he's most famous for is asking to be resected after his death and then his skeleton to be reassembled and put on display. So it bent died in 1832 just prior to the passage of the 1832 anatomy act. And this was a period when there was a shortage of corpses to be dissected by surgeons to advance medical science, Bentham was not religious. He thought the body was just a wondrous machine. And when you died that that's that's it. So to help promote general welfare, he asked for his body to eat the thought about, he first asked to be detected and give his body to science when he was 21. So it wasn't just the, the last women, a strange old man. So he'd been thinking about it for many years and he was distracted in front of an audience of his friends, which may have been a bit odd for them, but not for him.

Tim Causer (<u>09:00</u>):

And after the section, the body was reassembled by one of his disciples, Thomas Sanford Smith another philosophical radical who was involved in the passage of the 1832 anatomy act. And the, the auto icon is he spent them skeleton, it's padded out, dressed in a suit of his own cloths and with a wax head on top. He wanted his real head to be part of it, but the preservation program process didn't go very well. So there's this, this like this, and yes, I, Stephanie says he's currently in New York at the metropolitan museum of arts on a, a an exhibition about the human body. So I think he'll be back in London in August. He might get back. In fact, actually he might get back to the UK before I do I'll race him.

Stephanie Johnston (09:50):

So I guess the, the, the next area I'd like to explore. So I think many of you will be aware. Yeah, well, I find most people in south Australia are aware of Colonel light and the role that light played and the sort of on the ground governor Hindmarsh and the debates about where to locate Adelaide and so on. But I found when I was director of Wakefield press, that it would give Wakefield, wasn't actually nearly as well known maybe amongst this audience, but in terms of the broader public school kids. And so on, everyone had this vague idea of maybe the Wakefield plan for south Australia, but I found myself explaining the way well learning and explaining as I went along, being corrected by my historian business partner, but I thought it might be useful just to run through what is, what were the core tenants of the Wakefield plan.

Stephanie Johnston (10:48):

And then we look at how that relates to Jeremy Bentham and back to England. So we were talking about the philosophical radicals and Wakefield press I mean, Wakefield was actually in prison reading all that material, I think, and the, in particular, the anti colonization material. And that's where he kind of cooked up his idea for a well, a way to colonize that was wouldn't require slavery and wouldn't require convicted transportation and the core areas, the core ideas he came up with was rather than, you know, when he looked at other failed collar colonies. And one of them was in fact, the Swan river valley purse, original colony, which made an attempt to settle with free settlers however, failed to succeed because of the lack of labor supply, because settlers could get land. And and then, but because everyone could get land, there was no one there to work the land.

Stephanie Johnston (<u>11:59</u>):

And so he came up with the idea that you would have to put a price on the land, so that, and the, and that everything should be sold well in advance. And that the money from the sale of that land would then pay for settlers to come out. And it was very important that there were to be a certain kind of

settler, so a young couples and possibly children and, and that these couple, and then the, that the price of the land when these couples came out would require them to have to work for a number of years before they could afford to buy their own land. But the carrot of eventually owning land in a new colony was there to entice people out and, and other ideas that came in here with the idea to concentrate the settlements. So to not let it be disperse, dispersed, and therefore uncivilized.

Stephanie Johnston (12:52):

So it was trying to set up a sort of civilized society from the start and in all, that was the importance of self-sufficiency as well. So the idea that it would be a self-supporting society, that wouldn't be a drain the mother country, if you like, and involved in that was the idea of agriculture at the heart of that society. So you can start to see where the idea of the agricultural landscapes and their connection to these ideas fits in and a happy society. So that's probably a way, so where did, how, how do you know how much of a connection was there actually between Bentham and how do we know that Bentham was involved in all this planning by Waco? Cause we, we tend to hear about Wakefield, but we don't hear much about Bentham.

Tim Causer (<u>13:39</u>):

Yeah. in August, 1831, Bentham wrote this document, colonization, the company proposal, his own sort of outline for how this free democratic colony, which would promote utility, could be founded in south Australia and as excuse me, as Bentham scholars it can seem a bit in congruous with what Bentham wrote about colonies elsewhere. He's generally regarded as an anti-colonial thinker. During the 1790s, he wrote a, an address to the national assembly of France in 1793, actually the year before he'd been made an honorary citizen of France, and it was called Jeremy Bentham's address to the national assembly, something along those lines, but he only published it in 1830 and it was called inland your colonies. So it gives you an idea of where he's coming from. Bentham's basic arguments against colonies were that they were an economic drain upon the mother country that capital was better invested in the mother country itself.

Tim Causer (<u>14:46</u>):

That colonies exacerbated that were a cause of war in the European powers would fight over them and their resource and their alleged resources. It meant that the European powers had to maintain huge standing armies to and send out expeditionary forces to put down any rebellions and yeah, by emancipating, their colonies France would save money be an example to the rest of the world and emancipating their colonies and giving freedom to French citizens abroad. So in, in that sense, this can seem odd, but Bentham was always willing to see the potential benefits of colonies and colonization if, if it could be done in an ordered fashion without any of the corruption that other phenol other colonies had seen such as it particularly in the penal colony of new south Wales and thought it had been established and timely illegally. So he was, he was always willing to countenance having a colony is, is safe, particularly if it would act as a safety valve in terms of allowing what they called excess population in the UK to immigrate.

Tim Causer (<u>15:59</u>):

So there's the whole debate around Thomas Malthus and the fear of subsist population, outstripping, subsistence, and not been able to supply its population. Bentham definitely knew it would given Wakefield. It's not entirely clear when they met. But Bentham definitely knew Wakefield's father for at least 25 years before he wrote this. And there's a letter somewhere where Wakefield senior's described

as being one in Bentham's intimate circle. So they're reasonably close. Wakefield did send one of his works anonymously to Bentham in 1829. And there's a Bentham's copy of this pamphlet is in the British library in London. And it's got a very bemused note, presents them written on it, saying something along the lines of sent by anonymous author without an explanatory note. But he in Wakefield's work England in America, which was published in 1833, Wakefield suggests that or implies at least that he converted Bentham to seeing the potential advantages of colonies and colonization.

Tim Causer (<u>17:06</u>):

But given the Bentham from it held that view already for 30 odd years, I suspect Wakefield's version could be reasonably discounted and Bentham himself would have disagreed with the idea that Wakefield converted in Weaver or non-published letter in the Benson project written in June, 1831 to another radical MP called Joseph Hume, where Bentham says he had essentially thrown his mantle over Wakefield and he would turn into good account. So Bentham seems to be saying that he converted Wakefield's to his way of thinking. So I think it's, it's probably somewhere in the, in the middle, I suspect it was discussions that there isn't a paper trail, sadly at the, we have at the moment to suggest how and why they met and how and why they may have influenced one another. It's it's a way essentially we'll have to sort of tease these ideas out of what the, what Benson wrote and what Wakefield or what the other members of the colonization society and Wakefield associates role.

Stephanie Johnston (<u>18:07</u>):

Yes. And one of the very timely things that I guess it's not a, not a coincidence that it's time with your visit to Australia, but is the actual transcription of this document. So this document was written in 1832, but it has remained in handwriting with some attempts at transcription. But this is the first time it's been properly transcribed and will be published in book form for the first time. But I'm kind of interested also in, you know, the whole work of your whole Bentham project. So what, and I guess this is one of the last things to be transcribed. But how does that fit in with the big picture of the whole Bentham project?

Tim Causer (<u>18:50</u>):

Yeah. well, the, the Bentham project was founded in 1958 at UCL by the UCL committee. When they say it's essential work is to produce a new edition of Bentham's collected works. So it's a recognition of Bentham as an internationally important philosopher and his ideas are for universal significance. So we depend on project has thus far produced 33 of what we think will be a projected 80 volumes UCL, we have about 80,000 manuscript pages like this written or composed by Bentham. The British library has another 15,000 or so. So it's a colossal job just transcribing the stuff and then being able to edit them into text so that the new edition of Bentham's works is based upon both on published manuscripts and texts, the published in his lifetime. So we then compile those texts, edit them and add historical annotations to assist the reader in understanding what Benton was talking about.

Tim Causer (<u>19:55</u>):

In many instances we have since 2010 run a crowdsourcing project where we've, we've just finished digitizing all of Bentham's papers, we're putting them online and volunteers from around the world have been helping us to transcribe them. So since October, 2010, the volunteers have now transcribed over 21,000 pages like that. Not all like that. Cause I have to say that handwriting is a Bismal. I mean it, 1831 Bentham was 83 and he was functionally blind at that point. So it's, it's pretty wretched. But earlier in his life, his handwriting was patchy, but readable. But as you can see there all the deletions there's several, I mean, a lot of the manuscripts he was editing as he went along. So he would write a draft,

come back to it, edit it, scratch things out, add into any old additions. So it's, it's very much a detailed editorial projects.

Tim Causer (20:59):

And there are 50 manuscripts in this particular document, which is Stephanie said has never been published before my head of department, professor Phillip Schofield. Who's the director of the Benton project transcribed it maybe 25 years ago. So we've gone back to it and sorted it out. But you have, as you, you might have 50 manuscript pages, but then any, by no means in order. So you then have to work out what texts Bentham might have discarded put it in order to rearrange it. So two, the text might finish on status, this folio five might finish halfway onto that, on that page. And then jump ahead, five pages in the numerical sequence. So it's, it's a complicated process. But we having transcribed Bentham along is fantastic because it means we have draft transcripts available to work with of a particular manuscript. So if it said, if you were editing a volume, I'm editing Bentham's writings on Australia and these are the contents of that volume.

Tim Causer (22:01):

Some of these were printed in Bentham's lifetime, but if it's a manuscript, you would have to go through the entire Bentham collection or 100,000 pages looking for the correct. Although the relevant manuscripts transcribed them, edit them into coherent texts. So if we have draft transcripts available via transcript meant them, it saves a huge amount of time and we can crack on with the, the editorial process. And then the volunteers who contribute will be acknowledged in every introduction to the volumes, to which they've contributed. And there'll be acknowledged when their transcripts are uploaded to our free digital repository for everyone to access Bentham it. So it it's yeah, we're maximizing happiness by applying the principle of utility to to this.

Stephanie Johnston (22:53):

One of the, when Tim sent me this transcription and along with the, all the photos of the original pages one of the interesting things to come out of it is the discussion around the name for the new colony. And w some of us will be familiar with Don Dunstan's book that he named Felicia. And I think until this moment most, and that appears, so a few names appear in the book one is Liberia. And and then there are anecdotes in the, in the in the margin you know, with Felicia or Feliciana, obviously these have meanings, you know, associated with those ideas of freedom and happiness. But I gather that there might be some questions around at least the the name Felicia and attributing that to Ben. Yes.

Tim Causer (23:54):

Bentham refers to his proposed, the proposed colony is Liberia and does so on several occasions throughout the text. Most of the ti the manuscript is in Bentham's hand, which is the, the ink there, but there are a number of pencil annotations in an unknown hand, which we're still trying to identify. And it's this unknown hand that suggests, as you say, Felicity in a year, or for this year as a, as an alternative I'm quite keen to figure out who this is, because there are certain other comments that may have influenced what Bentham might've thought that we, we don't think it's Wakefield because there's in following this manuscript in Benton's papers is a letter from Wakefield with comments it's called comments upon the colonization society's plan, and the handwriting is very different. So we're still trying to work that out. It's it's very annoying. Might have to crowdsource that as well.

Stephanie Johnston (24:58):

In all this context and discussion around ideas, I guess we're all also familiar with the concept of the south Australian colony being a paradise of descent. And these plans were all very much about attracting the labor, but also entrepreneurs, people who were really prepared to come out and make a go of it. But it seems to me, there was a kind of natural marriage between that and attracting the entrepreneurs and also attracting religious dissenters. Can you sort of expand on that maybe through Benson XYZ, but also through the way it might've been written up in the documents or

Tim Causer (25:43):

Came about it doesn't mention religion specifically, but you get the sense that it's like even the name Liberia suggests freedom and throughout the chapter, the manuscript, he it's, it's preaching tolerance and acceptance and democracy. So I think that's, that's certainly implied. And the, when the manuscript, hasn't very many similarities with the Wakefield plan that the was being put forward. So we see, and there are so many similarities that it's it would be very, it would be remarkable if it, if one hadn't influenced the other in so both plans suggest founding the colony by a joint stock of the joint stock company would always see the, the colonization south Australia that both envisage raising 500,000 pounds and spending it in exactly the same way, namely purchasing the land to fund immigration, building the colonial infrastructure and yeah, and loans for small capitalists who would then come out and live in the colony.

Tim Causer (26:51):

The immigration of young couples, solar Bentham took a slightly stricter line in that he wanted young couples without children with the very hard to police. But he, he thought the children would be a, an unnecessary drain on the colony in its early years. Whereas the, the Wakefield plan suggests it just says young manageable people. I think at least the one that's written about at the same time as this. So there are my suspicion is that Bentham followed Bentham wrote this in the light of reading the, the revised Wakefield plan that was submitted to government in 1831. Again, there's no paper trail, which as a historian is irritating, but but he then added his own innovation. So Bentham goes on to write about how the, the political constitution of the colony. So he comes down, he says, democracy is, and I call it a necessity.

Tim Causer (27:49):

So this is his democratic radicalism coming to the forefront here. He does. He refused the idea of having a monarchy installed in south Australia because there wasn't enough money to support a Monarch in the style to which they were stunned, but also it would mean introducing a house of Lords and he didn't want that. And he said he would have been introducing all the corrupt political establishment. So the UK, which he'd spent decades trying to reform into this new colony, which would, would be pointless. It would just be repeating the mistakes of new south Wales and van Diemen's land. So he bent me eventually comes out to say that it should be on the same lines as the U S Republic, but only with the lower house. So no, no need for Senate. And he calls it, this, this simplicity is one of the attractive things about south Australia, that simplicity of government and that he laid out a pathway to, to independence for the colony so that the governor would only be in office for maybe four or five years when there were enough people in the colony who raised a petition, demanding the governor resigned, he would, and then the constitution, which would had already been drafted would just be activated.

Tim Causer (29:10):

Independence would, would come.

Stephanie Johnston (29:13):

Another question that just in the last few days of talking to people, many people are interested in is if you like the Aboriginal question and whether there, you know, what was the context of those philosophy, philosophical radicals. Did Bentham have anything to say generally and or specifically about colonial settlements with regard to Aboriginal people?

Tim Causer (29:41):

Well, I think the philosophical radicals were certainly involved in the, in the protection campaign of the period Bentham doesn't end, at least in colonization company proposal. Does any space plan, the Benson plan? He doesn't explicitly say anything about the indigenous people of the region, but in in S let's say they in setting out his vicinity maximizing principle, the idea of concentrated settlement. So everyone's in an urban center, essentially Adelaide, you would avoid frontier conflict with the indigenous people of the region and in his writings on new south Wales, he focuses in upon the violence inflicted upon the indigenous people of new south Wales by the convict colony in is one of the, one of the major failings of the, of the colony here. When he mentions the avoidance of frontier conflict in south Australia, he then added this marginal note to himself.

Tim Causer (<u>30:38</u>):

So he would, this, this manuscript is essentially, it's an outline of what he would often do is write an outline of a text and then come back to it months, or even years later and sketch it out in full. So this, this may have been an aid memoir to himself. So he says in a van Diemen's land, it has been determined absolutely. To extubate the natives. So I find it interesting that even now we have debates about debates and denial denial is about what happened in van Diemen's land during the eighties and twenties and 1830s, but Bentham 10,000 miles away in 1831, recognized that it was a war of extermination there. If he'd have gone on to expand on this point, if he'd gone back and re written up the work more fully he would have certainly returned to that theme, I think, and, and expressed an opinion in more strident terms, I think. But sadly he doesn't go into any more detail here.

Stephanie Johnston (31:39):

One other theme, I think we've got enough time that I'd like to explore is this, you know, the concept of a utopia when you read a you, or is it just propaganda? So I guess when you read we have the one document from Bentham, but quite a number of documents from Wakefield and others, which were also basically sales documents. They were trying to get people to invest in their idea. And so there was a lot of building up of expectations, I would say about what w what was to be found here and, and how it could be the basis of an ideal society that leaves all the woes behind. Is there, is, was that a theme at the time, in terms of now, I'm trying to also put it in a global context where there are other people traveling all over the world to set up utopias, or, and how does, how does this sort of fit in with that moment in history?

Tim Causer (<u>32:37</u>):

It does seem to be that, that moment where particularly, I guess, with the the abolition of transportation, so new south Wales, that people are thinking about ideal societies and how you model them. And south Australia does reading Whitefield. It's very idealistic and utopian that event. And I think Bentham is tapping into that as well in this it's, it's modeling the, the ideal society. And I think Bentham writing this, it's linking south Australia inextricably with both this, this really, this vitally important philosophical tradition of the mid 19th century, but also that, that strand of utopianism and, and

Bentham it wasn't the first utopia Bentham had thought about when he was writing about this panopticon in the 1790s, he planned an entire panopticon estate surrounding the prison. So he wanted people to go in the general public to go into the prison, to see what the governor was doing and make sure the prisoners were being treated well. And that the governor wasn't misbehaving and just generally get an idea of the prison, but around he, in a lot of unpublished manuscripts where he talks about panoptic and Tavern, where people could go after seeing the prison, ornamental gardens around place, a flying car, which I'm still not quite sure where that is. But it it's, it's creating a better world, I think, is the essential idea and a happier world. And I think that's what he's trying to do in south Australia as well.

Stephanie Johnston (34:17):

Yes, I was actually another cause it was, you know, it's pretty exciting when you got this manuscript to actually read it. And he had, at the beginning, he had a list of about 10 special ends in views. So what were the aims of this society? And I was delighted on behalf of my friend, Gabe Kelly, who runs the center for wellbeing here that, you know, about number three or four, literally spelled out that this would be a society, which aimed for the wellbeing of its citizens, both mental and physical. So, and you talked about education as well, isn't it? It's it's

Tim Causer (<u>34:57</u>):

It's again, cause he didn't flush it out. It's a blueprint for this, this new and ideal society, I think. And it's a really important moment that Bentham is getting involved in the, in the debate about this place.

Stephanie Johnston (35:13):

I don't know, not, not maybe not everyone here was there last night, but Robin Archer gave a talk and essentially at the heart, her talk was about I guess, cliches. And she was comparing the cliches of jobs and growth with, she started talking about cliches of freedom and democracy. But I think this, you know, this is very contemporary, this notion of how are we going to pursue jobs and growth for the rest of our lives? Or are we going to start looking at things like happiness once again?

Tim Causer (<u>35:42</u>):

And I think in that vein one of the most recent volumes of Bentham's collected works, which has been published edited by the director, Phillips Schofield is of worked called the book, the book of fallacies, which is Bentham's analysis of how politicians use fallacious arguments to prevent reform and forestall things. So it's things like appealing to authority and so on. And it it's of real contemporary relevance. So he imagined the board with all these final fees could be stuck on the wall in the house of commons and pointed to if one of the politicians used one of the fantasies. So I loved that idea. I think it should be. I'd like I'd like one of the ones in the commons in the UK, because as you know, that UK is having a bit of a meltdown at the moment with the alarm buzzer that would go off when someone uses these things. But it's a real relevance. And again, I think that the, this is an attempt to form a society where you don't have to reform it's done from the beginning and set up properly.

Stephanie Johnston (36:48):

And self-correcting, I think that was, that was something we probably had to wind up with. I think it was always hoped that you would set, but it wouldn't be fixed in concrete that it would be something that could adapt and evolve and correct itself over time. Yeah. Okay. Well, we're on to question time.

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