

Paradise is a Bazaar:

In chapter two of The Causes of War, author Geoffrey Blainey argues that international relationships (free trade, communication, and human behavior) do not necessarily promote peace, but may actually lead countries to having conflicts they might otherwise never have. He states, “[neither] foreign travel, a web of world commerce, democratic discussion, bilingualism, Olympic Games, nor Esperanto (a language invented by a Russian physician named Zamenhof as an international language)” foster long-term peace. He substantiates this by declaring that WWII was proof that close international ties didn’t evade international conflict (Blainey, 1988, p. 25). He cites Adam Smith’s book, The Wealth of Nations, which work promotes international trade and a global economy. Smith wrote that a nation gained most when its commercial policy enriched rather than impoverished its neighbors (Smith, 2007, p. 105). Blainey criticizes policies of appeasement, such as those instituted by Britain’s Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain when he negotiated with Germany’s dictator, Adolf Hitler just shortly before WWII. Blainey mentions that it is a fallacy to assume that people who are more alike will have few conflicts; he uses the frequent historical incidence of civil wars to support his argument. He doubts that human behavior (nature) promotes either peace or war. Blainey wrote this book based on research he had done on all international wars fought since 1700. He questions in this book, as do most historians, the *causes* of wars as they relate to human behavior. Blainey attempts to challenge the notion that individual nation-states are to blame for the incidence of war, and supposes that “peace and war are alternating phases of a relationship in which rival nations must be seen as pairs” (Blainey, 1988, p.20).

Blainey argues that international trading relationships don't necessarily promote the mutual gain of each nation involved in international trade. He states that "the international flow of goods and ideas and the creation of institutions" do not actually promote mutual economic gain nor peaceful relations but conversely lay the foundation for future conflict and disagreements (Blainey, 1988, p.18). He criticizes Adam Smith's notions on the mutual benefit of international trade (both for the importing and exporting nation) and holds that nations who are more dependent upon one another are more prone to conflict because they have greater contact with one another.

As Adam Smith had written in his 1776 book, The Wealth of Nations, nations gain most when their commercial policy enriched rather than impoverished their neighbor (Smith, 2007, p. 105). Smith theorized that the flow of ideas and goods between and among nations promoted for positive trading relations, which has a positive effect on lasting peace. Smith illustrates that trading relationships between Great Britain and China were especially intimate because China produced silk, and Great Britain could not do so as cost-effectively. Because of the nature of the trading relationship that these two nations shared, peace was experienced (even if for a short time) (Smith, 2007, p.104).

Blainey is critical of the Manchester Creed which was an idealist theory with a very optimistic view on human behavior (nature). Manchester, a city in Great Britain, had been engaged in exporting cotton and other goods. The Manchester Creed held the philosophy of extending free trade to every corner of the globe and maintained that "nations grew richer through commerce than through conquest" (Blainey, 1988, p.18). Blainey himself is not

optimistic of human behavior (nature) and questions whether it even promotes peace (or war, for that matter) to begin with (Blainey, 1988, p29). He subscribes to the conservative theory of I.R. Blainey opposes the Manchester Creed and correlates the arteries of [world] commerce (Suez Canal, Trans-Siberian railway and trans-Atlantic telegraph lines) and the incidence of war.

Just as the true nature and inherent qualities of man can never be fully comprehended nor clearly defined, neither can concrete and definitive *causes* for war be established. Blainey draws quick conclusions from coincidental events such as the splicing of the trans-Atlantic telegraph wire and subsequent snapping of the same and the start of the American Civil war. The two are simply causes of one another. No causation can be clearly defined as to the reasons that wars occur. Rational theories of I.R. maintain that human nature is generally good. Smith promotes trade among nations because mutual gain is better achieved when each is enriched, rather than one taking advantage of the other. Although reasons for the existence of peace can never be definitively proven, it is better maintained when men are concerned for the welfare of others.

Blainey makes the case that peaceful negotiations and policies of appeasement are not proven to evade war—regardless of the language in which they are conducted (German and Volapük are his examples). He cites the appeasement between Neville Chamberlain and Adolf Hitler in 1938. Chamberlain supposed that Hitler would “respond to rational discussion and appeasement” (Blainey, 1988, p.28). After negotiations, Chamberlain “believe[d] that it [was] peace for [their] time” (qtd. in Blainey, 1988, p.28). Blainey is quick to mention that WWII broke out only a year after this negotiation. Volapük and the Russo-Polish tongue, Esperanto

were both created as international languages to promote peaceful relations between and among states, but they, the newly-invented languages, actually created more conflict because no one could agree on which language to accept as the universal one.

French was the international language from the 17th to the mid-20th century. It was used as the international language of diplomacy and international affairs. As such, those actors operating on an international level could understand one another better and conduct negotiations with a fuller comprehension of one another because there was a common language. The creation of a universal language demands that some actors set aside their language to adopt another, and, by extension, abandon their culture, that they might accept the universal tongue and culture it substantiates. It is understandable that the creation of a new universal tongue may be controversial, but French proved useful for over two-hundred years.

In conclusion, it is evident that international trading and universal languages are highly controversial. The true nature and *causes* of war, though, can never be known. Because of this, the discovery of causation is left up to the imagination and interpretation of the researcher. Peaceful negotiations have not been shown to cause war to occur, it is simply a mere coincidence that WWI broke out after Chamberlain and Hitler spoke. In short, we really don't know the causes of war. As Blainey himself said "the prevailing knowledge of the causes of war must be deeply tinged with myth and superstition" (Blainey, 1988, p.32).

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Summary Critique:

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