

# Hugo to find the concept of natural law

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Hugo Grotius had many accomplishments in his life. He was a child prodigy, worked as a professor, and had a law degree. Throughout his career as a lawyer, he had many major clients. He went through an incredible amount of adversity to become the father of international law by helping to find the concept of natural law which is widely used today.

Hugo Grotius was born in Delft, Holland on April tenth, 1583. His family was very well educated, prosperous, and willing to be set apart from everyone else. Grotius was labeled a child prodigy when he was young, which motivated him to take on tasks that most adults of that time wouldn't even try to accomplish. By the age of eight, Grotius started writing elegies in Latin.

Then, when he was eleven, he became a student at the Faculty of Letters at the University of Leiden. In 1598, at the age of fifteen, Grotius accompanied Johan van Oldenbarnevelt on an embassy to the court of France where he met King Henry IV. His extensive knowledge and skill impressed King Henry IV so much that the King named him the “miracle of Holland.

” Three years later, the United Provinces wanted to restructure the autonomy of Spain, and needed a Latin historiographer to monitor their history. Grotius, who was eighteen at the time, was chosen over a full time, experienced professor of rhetoric for the job (Miller). At this point in time, Grotius had proved himself very exceptional. While he was in France, he went to the University of Orléans, and earned a degree in law. Once he got his degree, he decided to open a law practice.

Many high class people were drawn to Grotius, due to his substantial success at his very young age. The Dutch Grand Pensionary, Jan van Oldenbarnevelt, and prince Maurice from Nassau were two of his most famous clients. Prince Maurice was so impressed by Grotius, that he chose him as attorney general over Holland, West Friesland, and Zeeland in 1607. He was chosen over two other candidates who were more experienced than him. Grotius didn't really enjoy practicing law, so once he was appointed Attorney General, he joyfully close his law firm. The position of Attorney General paid very well, and with that he married Maria van Reigersbergen. They soon had three daughters and four sons.

(Miller) In 1613, after working as Attorney General for roughly six years, Grotius was appointed pensionary of Rotterdam. In that same year, there was a dispute about freedom of seas between the English and the Dutch, which arose after two Dutch vessels were accused of trespassing in English waters around Greenland. The British then seized the Dutch ships and took all of the cargo. Grotius, infuriated with the actions of the English, led a protest.

He believed that there should be freedoms of seas, which led him toward the beginning of international law. Sadly, the English refused to return the cargo, or consider freedom of seas from a legal point. (Miller) The year of 1613 was exciting, but also cause major turmoil for Grotius. There was a dramatic change in theological thinking between the orthodox Calvinists and reformers, which then labeled Grotius, Oldenbarnevelt, and other supporters of religious tolerance as reformers, or Remonstrants, while Prince Maurice

was labeled as a Calvinist, or Contra-Remonstrants. In 1618, Maurice staged to overthrow the state's general, which placed Grotius in a difficult position, because he was the Pensionary of Rotterdam. Oldenbarnevelt, Rombout Hoogerbeets, and Grotius were all imprisoned. Maurice then wanted to eliminate Remonstrants, and executed Oldenbarnevelt.

He then declared that Hoogerbeets and Grotius would remain in prison for life. During his time in prison, Grotius wrote his most important work. He had access to books, papers, and writing utensils.

By using these, he put himself in danger of getting a much greater sentence. So, in 1621, his wife, Maria, sent a boat to the prison to help Grotius escape. He was shipped out, and fled to Paris. (Miller) Once he was free and in France, Grotius got a pension that gave him a promise of security. This is where he began writing the composition of *De inure belli ac pacis* (On the law of war and peace), which was published in 1625.

In this composure Grotius wrote three books. The first book has three chapters, which give a basis of lawfulness of war, the right of war, and what the public needs to know about their rights during war. In chapter one, the first statement reads: The disputes arising among those who are held together by no common bond of civil laws to decide their dissensions, like the ancient Patriarchs, who formed no national community, or the numerous, unconnected communities, whether under the direction of individuals, or kings, or persons invested with Sovereign power, as the leading men in an aristocracy, and the body of the people in a republican government the disputes, arising among any of these, all bear a relation to the circumstances

of war or peace. But because war is undertaken for the sake of peace, and there is no dispute, which may not give rise to war, it will be proper to treat all such quarrels, as commonly happen, between nations, as an article in the rights of war: and then war itself will lead us to peace, as to its proper end.

(Grotius, 6)