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The Free Sea (Natural Law Paper)



Synopsis

Natural Law and Enlightenment Classics

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) was a great humanistic polymath, lawyer and legal theorist, diplomat and political philosopher, ecumenical activist and theologian.

It's mostly an essay on how the ocean belongs to no one nation, written in defense of what would be considered an act of piracy now that there are international courts and bodies governing the seas. Grotius simply tries to explain how no one man or nation can try to enforce ridiculous claims that no one else can legally sail where said person forbids. It would be a more convincing argument had he spent more time demolishing the basis for the claims for all rather than justifying the Dutch claims against Portugal's attempt to control all of the trade with Asia, from the right to sail upon the waters to interacting with the locals for trade. It's well written, but I think it lacks weight due to the limited subject upon which he talks.

A man from 1609 waxing poetic about specialization-in-trade, hints of globalization, freedom of navigation, the rights of men, and universal values all in the space of a magazine - and you thought WE were smart.

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