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Ltd 2018

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UK Personal Statement: Law

When Aristotle wrote that "law is order [and] good law is good order", he could have been describing English common law that evolved in a different land, a century and a half later. Even with the ebb of the Empire, the sun has still to set on the far-flung jurisdictions of common law. The practical nature of the common law appeals to me through its affinity with the layman and its ability to adapt through the dynamic concept of precedent. From the Scottish Mrs. Donoghue's encounter with a snail to Mr. Chwee's dispute over computers in Singapore, concepts reflecting a progressive social consciousness have been developed across jurisdictions and the international family of common law. Thus, the duty of reasonable care to avoid harm to your neighbours and the principle to avoid benefitting from another's mistake are easily explainable to modern communities. To me, English law represents a legal system that is closely connected to the "man on the Clapham omnibus". Studying in Britain would be coming home to the spiritual and practical roots of law; an opportunity to learn in the environment that made it universal.

Interested in the adversarial debates of common law jurisdictions, I joined the Model United Nations (MUN) debate club. With its randomly assigned positions and fierce debates in front of judges, MUN felt especially similar to a court. The MUN parlance further introduced the art of compromise to the field of debate. With resolutions constantly circulating, I learnt the skills of persuasion and delicate negotiation as I strove to be the one on the soapbox at every caucus. The mixture of private deal-making and public debate gave new insights on how the legal system operates in reality. Earning Best Delegate laurels in the National University of Singapore conferences, I led teams abroad to the Princeton and Harvard competitions where I received an Honourable Mention. Behind the headiness of debate, these conferences emphasised current affairs and their effect on the global landscape. I took this understanding to a current affairs competition by NUS, where teams discussed the future political and legal landscape of Singapore. From MUN, I took away a greater understanding of law and a keen awareness of the need to stay up to date with the world around me.

I found such experiences helpful during my internship at [redacted] LLP, where Jurisprudence spiced up my hours with law reports. Of especial note was the discussion regarding the sale of human organs in a local case. The way in which the obiter dicta influenced legislators' later decision to legalize financial compensation for organ donors is evidence of the sway of the common law. The proximity that the courts had with the everyday man reflected the social consensus that regulation was better than prohibition. Such discussions revealed the divides of the legal world. From debates over utilitarianism to the development of purposive interpretation, I came to comprehend the complexity of the legal system. Away from the firm's library, I continue my learning with books such as *Understanding the Law* by Sweet and Maxwell and *Understanding Jurisprudence* by D. Meyerson. The way each writer discusses similar topics is a constant eye opener to the multi faceted nature of Law. Meyerson's feminist slant is especially refreshing as she analyses the traditional system of laws through the lens of its male majority history.

Learning my 4th language, Russian, through self study, I am fascinated to see influence of law on linguistics. France's Ministry of Culture and Russia's Legislation on Language are footnotes in the story of law. I find the fun side of law in Open University Programs such as the Common Law Module run by the University of London. The lectures and access to notes keep me abreast of legal developments. With such experiences, I am eager and well suited to learn what Hobbes famously called "The Public Conscience".