**Group 5**

SELECTIONS FROM THE SPIRIT OF THE LAWS (1749)

Charles de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu (1689-1755)

(Primary Source)

Of the Laws in General

Laws, in their most general meaning, are the necessary relations arising from the nature of things. In this sense, all beings have their laws, the Deity his laws, the material world its laws, the intelligences superior to man their laws, the beasts their laws, man his laws. . . .

Since we observe that the world, though formed by the motion of matter, and void of understanding, subsists through so long a succession of ages, its motions must certainly be directed by invariable laws. . . .

Law in general is human reason, inasmuch as it governs all the inhabitants of the earth; the political and civil laws of each nation ought to be only the particular cases in which human reason is applied.

They should be adapted in this manner to the people for whom they are framed, because

it is most unlikely that the laws of one nation will suit another.

They should be relative to the nature and principle of each government. . . . They should be relative to the climate of each country, to the quality of its soil, to its situation and extent, to the principal occupation of the inhabitants, whether farmers, huntsmen, or shepherds: they should have a relation to the degree of liberty which the constitution will bear, to the religion of the inhabitants, to their manners, and customs . . . in all which different respects they ought to be considered.

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| Does this primary source have an example of how human society is governed by Natural Laws? Cite evidence. |  |
| Does this primary source have an example of Natural Laws can be discovered by rational men? Cite evidence. |  |
| Does this primary source have an example of how human society can turn from traditional, authoritarian forms, and progresstoward a more perfect government through rational thought? Cite examples. |  |