

# La Lettre de Rabelais aux parents et aux élèves



**N°30**

**Semaine A**

Du 18 au 24 mai



	COLLEGE	LYCEE
<b>Mardi 19</b>		<p>Parcoursup : début de l'affichage des propositions - délai de réponse des candidats à J+4 - affichage des notifications de refus en filières sélectives</p> <p>Parcoursup : consultation de l'intégralité de la fiche Avenir par les élèves</p>
<b>Mercredi 20</b>		<p>Parcoursup : début de la phase d'accompagnement individuel ou collectif pour les candidats n'ayant eu que des réponses négatives pour les préparer à la phase complémentaire – professeurs principaux et PsyEN</p>
<b>Jeudi 21</b>	<b>Ascension</b>	
<b>Vendredi 22</b>	<b>Pont</b>	
<b>Samedi 23</b>	<b>Pont</b>	
<b>Dimanche 24</b>		<p>Parcoursup : passage du délai de réponse des candidats à J+2</p>

## INFORMATION AUX FAMILLES

### AIDE A L'ORIENTATION – SAIO ET PARTENAIRE EURO-FRANCE ASSOCIATION :

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Rectorat de Versailles –SAIO

### CAMPAGNE DE BOURSES DE LYCEE 2020/2021 :



La campagne des demandes de bourse de lycée pour l'année scolaire 2020-2021 est ouverte et se termine le jeudi 15 octobre 2020.

Pour en savoir plus : Vous pouvez contacter les secrétaires élèves collège et lycée, et utiliser le simulateur de bourse en ligne [www.education.gouv.fr/aides-financieres-lycee](http://www.education.gouv.fr/aides-financieres-lycee).

## DU COTE DU LYCEE

Une affiche de célébration pour un lauréat des Olympiades Nationales de Philosophie 2020. Elle présente une chouette perchée sur une branche d'arbre. Le texte est en vert et blanc sur un fond vert flou.

**Chouette, Chouette, Chouette !!!**

*Au Lycée Rabelais,  
les élèves ont du talent....*

**Thomas Delmas, TS2,  
est lauréat des  
Olympiades Nationales de Philosophie 2020**

En raison de la situation sanitaire actuelle et à défaut des Olympiades internationales prévues initialement au Portugal, il participera aux e-Olympiades internationales de Philosophie organisées par la Slovénie du 28 au 31 mai 2020. Nous lui souhaitons très bonne chance.

**The laws of conscience, which we pretend to be derived from nature, proceed from custom.  
Michel de Montaigne, *Essays*, Book 1, Chapter 23**

In Chapter 23 of book 1 of *Essays*, Michel de Montaigne goes against the commonly held notion – especially in religions - that the laws of conscience and morality are inherent to Human nature, and thus that they would be universal and absolute. Indeed, he states that they instead proceed from custom. The origin of the laws of conscience is of particular interest as it could give an insight as to whether they could and should be revised: if they are acquired by Nature, then it would seem unreasonable to not follow them, whereas if they stem from custom, then they would be relative and susceptible to change from one social group to another as well as in time. Therefore, one could not consider that their laws of conscience apply to and should be followed by every other Human being, or at the very least not without acknowledging that there are alternative moral laws. To elucidate this matter, I will show that there is no such thing as a universal morality, and yet I will highlight laws of conscience that can be derived from reason and thus by anybody. Afterwards, I will develop how laws of conscience can then become object of custom rather than reason, and finally, I will explain why we pretend that the laws of conscience derive from Nature.

Are the laws of conscience universal and absolute? If they were derived by nature, they should be. And yet many examples show discrepancies in such a conception. Take the killing of animals. Some people find it rather immoral, choosing to adopt a fully vegetarian diet, while others don't see a problem with killing them to produce food or products such as leather. This shows a moral plurality. Then again, one might say such an example isn't relevant to moral issues or that one of the sides is simply an abnormality of some sort, as would be someone born with one leg missing. Therefore, let us take an interest in cannibalistic societies, as such an issue is unlikely to be considered as anything but a moral issue and the existence of societies practising cannibalism indicates that it doesn't constitute a random accident. In *Tristes tropiques* (1955), Lévi-Strauss describes a particular kind of cannibalism which is not motivated by the need to eat, but by a cultural belief: indeed, he explains that some tribes believe that ingesting parts of a dead body can purify it from evil and thus constitute a kind of post-death ritual that is to them completely moral. Other tribes ingest their enemies' corpses as a symbolic end to their wrong-doing. With such examples, it is clear that morality can express itself in different ways, and thus universal laws can't be formulated to dictate morality. The laws of conscience are relative. This relativity also applies time-wise: In the 17th century, it was considered immoral for a woman to show too much skin in occidental societies whereas nowadays it is far more accepted. The use of the word "accepted" illustrates this relativity: laws of conscience are composed relative to others. Without others, the notion of moral duty becomes rather irrelevant: it is in regard to others that right or wrong is expressed and as such it is by others that right-doing or wrongdoing is rewarded or punished: praise and shame, inclusion and reclusion, ... The fact that moral law is enforced by others, or by the fear of what others may do is a further indicator that Montaigne saw well.

However, there does seem to be a missing link. If the laws of conscience proceed from custom, they should have become custom at one point or another and thus one might ask where they originally came from. It can be surmised that laws of conscience can first and foremost derive from reason. As Kant explains this with his "Categorical Imperative", for a moral law to be viable, it must be possible for it to be followed by everybody. For example, if one were to consider whether theft is moral or not, they would have to recognize that their end goal is to enrich themselves. But if such a law was followed by everyone else, then everyone could steal, and no one would get richer as everyone would be the victim of theft as well. Therefore, such a behaviour cannot be the object of a moral law. There we have found an origin to laws of conscience which ultimately aim to enable people to live together. Indeed, moral duty is a limit to the freedom of individuals which allows a society to grow in cohesion. And the differences between societies and the beliefs which are shared explain the relativity of moral laws. Now that a root to moral laws has been uncovered, let us see how and why it is transmitted through customs.

The main reason custom comes into play is the gap between when a Human being can reason properly and when a Human being can act. Indeed, when Humans are young, they can't yet reason and think, or at least not in such a way to form their own moral laws. So they take those taught to them by others, namely parents, whether it be intentionally, by reading a fable for example, or unintentionally, by mimetism. This is essential as there seems to be no practical alternative to education at such a young age, and moral values are necessary for social cohesion. Nevertheless, the child once grown up should ideally forget these moral laws and reason to find them again or new ones which are more suitable to his time. Indeed, as the laws of conscience are first found by reasoning, they are prone to be objects of error, and thus if transmitted blindly could end up being detrimental to the well-being of society. In the same manner, as they are relative, if they keep on being transmitted they could become obsolete or, worst, deleterious. For example, strong patriotism and a higher regard from one's own country might be a beneficial moral value during times of tension or war but might be detrimental in times of peace, since it would discourage cooperation. Therefore, it is all the more important to recognize when a law of conscience proceeds from custom, as thinking otherwise could disrupt social cohesion.

If the consequences of such a false representation could be so dire, why pretend laws of conscience are derived from Nature? This illusion is likely caused by a desire, the desire to reassure oneself that one's actions are "right". Indeed, if morality is relative, then that means that what's right at one time or for some people might be wrong for others or in the future. Such an idea is frightening and makes the process of decision-making all the more unsettling. There seems to be an innate desire in Humans towards an absolute so as to be sure that error is absolutely avoidable. The consequences of this illusion have clearly been shown throughout History: populations have been decimated or enslaved as their existence challenged the moral supremacy of the great powers of the time.

To conclude, it would seem the laws of conscious are indeed not the product of Nature but reason and custom and as such they are relative and depend on the time and the process from which they stem. Realizing this is essential to ensuring the sustainability of a society as well as to avoid irrational and inconsistent behaviours as a consequence to a flawed conception of moral laws.



## **BULLETIN OFFICIEL N°19 DU 07 MAI 2020 :**

### **ORGANISATION GENERALE**

Réouverture des écoles et des établissements scolaires

Conditions de poursuite des apprentissages - Circulaire du 4-5-2020 ([NOR : MENE2011220C](#))

### **ENSEIGNEMENTS SECONDAIRE ET SUPERIEUR**

Parcoursup

Calendrier de la procédure nationale de préinscription pour l'accès dans les formations initiales du premier cycle de l'enseignement supérieur : modification Arrêté du 30-4-2020 - J.O. du 2-5-2020 ([NOR : ESR2010558A](#))

### **BAC, BREVET 2020 : LES REPONSES A VOS QUESTIONS**

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