

Agrégation interne d'anglais
Session 2018
Épreuve EPC
Exposé de la préparation d'un cours



Ce sujet comprend 3 documents :

- **Document 1** : Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* 1818
- **Document 2** : "Transhumanism: Could We Live Forever?", *BBC News*, 2015
- **Document 3** : Tim Wu, "How To Live Forever", *The New Yorker*, 2015

Compte tenu des caractéristiques de ce dossier et des différentes possibilités d'exploitation qu'il offre, vous indiquerez à quel niveau d'apprentissage vous pourriez le destiner et quels objectifs vous vous fixeriez. Vous présenterez et justifierez votre démarche pour atteindre ces objectifs.

Document 1 : Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*
1818, pp 58-60

CHAPTER V

It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils. With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. It was already
5 one in the morning; the rain pattered dismally against the panes, and my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.

How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! — Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of pearly whiteness; but these
15 luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips.

The different accidents of life are not so changeable as the feelings of human nature. I had worked hard for nearly two years, for the sole
20 purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body. For this I had deprived myself of rest and health. I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation; but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart. Unable to endure the aspect of the being I had created, I rushed out of the room, and continued a long time traversing my bedchamber, unable to compose
25 my mind to sleep. At length lassitude succeeded to the tumult I had before endured; and I threw myself on the bed in my clothes, endeavouring to seek a few moments of forgetfulness. But it was in vain: I slept, indeed, but I was disturbed by the wildest dreams. I thought I saw
30 Elizabeth, in the bloom of health, walking in the streets of Ingolstadt. Delighted and surprised, I embraced her; but as I imprinted the first kiss on her lips, they became livid with the hue of death; her features appeared to change, and I thought that I held the corpse of my dead mother in my arms; a shroud enveloped her form, and I saw the grave-
35 worms crawling in the folds of flannel. I started from my sleep with horror; a cold dew covered my forehead, my teeth chattered, and every limb became convulsed: when, by the dim and yellow light of the moon,

as it forced its way through the window shutters, I beheld the wretch —
the miserable monster whom I had created. He held up the curtain of the
40 bed; and his eyes, if eyes they may be called, were fixed on me. His jaws
opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled
his cheeks. He might have spoken, but I did not hear; one hand was
stretched out, seemingly to detain me, but I escaped, and rushed
downstairs. I took refuge in the courtyard belonging to the house which I
45 inhabited; where I remained during the rest of the night, walking up and
down in the greatest agitation, listening attentively, catching and fearing
each sound as if it were to announce the approach of the demoniacal
corpse to which I had so miserably given life.

Oh! no mortal could support the horror of that countenance. A
50 mummy again endued with animation could not be so hideous as that
wretch. I had gazed on him while unfinished; he was ugly then; but when
those muscles and joints were rendered capable of motion, it became a
thing such as even Dante could not have conceived.

I passed the night wretchedly. Sometimes my pulse beat so quickly
55 and hardly that I felt the palpitation of every artery; at others, I nearly
sank to the ground through languor and extreme weakness. Mingled with
this horror, I felt the bitterness of disappointment; dreams that had been
my food and pleasant rest for so long a space were now become a hell to
me; and the change was so rapid, the overthrow so complete!

Document 2 : “Transhumanism: Could We Live Forever?”, *BBC News*, September 14th, 2015

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p032gl5x>

Document vidéo (2'56") à consulter sur la tablette multimédia fournie.

Document 3 : Tim Wu, "How To Live Forever", *The New Yorker*, 2015

Could technology help to make our minds last forever? Consider the following parable, about a very wealthy man I'll call Nicolas Flamel.

As he became older, Flamel became fixated on the idea that he didn't want to die. After considering the problem for a long time, he figured that what he needed to do was move the contents of his mind into a receptacle more stable than a human head. Flamel was an engineer who made his fortune in networks, and he felt confident that what we think of as our brains—and as ourselves—was really nothing more than a combination of electrical pathways. [...]

Flamel dedicated his fortune to the brain-uploading project, and over the years came to realize that he'd be able to do what he wanted—with one rather important catch. Transferring the information contained in his physical brain would require the brain's destruction. But, at the age of eighty-eight, after testing his technology on rats, he eventually decided to go forward. He would submit to his own procedure.

Flamel remained awake for his surgery, and as he lay on the hospital table his brain was picked apart, its information transferred to a computer one neural connection at a time. At first, he felt nothing, but eventually he experienced a sense of fading, as though he were falling asleep. And then something unexpected happened. The computer said to him, distinctly, "I am awake." But Flamel observed that he was still lying on the table. And then he understood that, whatever might happen to the computer, he was about to die.

The story of Flamel is just a parable, but uploading the brain, or achieving "whole brain emulation," has in recent years become something of a cause célèbre among certain scientists and entrepreneurs. "It's theoretically possible to copy the brain onto a computer, and so provide a form of life after death," Stephen Hawking said last year. Ray Kurzweil, the author of a series of books about what he calls the Singularity, has declared that we may be uploading our brains by the twenty-thirties. [...]

Assume, along with Hawking and Kurzweil, that it is plausible for the information in our heads to be digitized and stored somewhere else. And assume, as scientists now tend to do, that our minds are actually stored in our physical brains. (Descartes, on the other hand, thought that the mind resided in the pineal gland.) As the story of Nicolas Flamel suggests, it's still not at all clear what uploading the brain would mean. What if what's created, even if it has a copy of your brain, just isn't you?