

## THE POSTHUMAN CONDITION: LONG PERSPECTIVES, IMMINENT DECISIONS

### MatchPoints 3 seminar at Aarhus University

**May 6-7, 2010**

Will humans be able to live 200 years? Or 500 years? If biotechnology can be used to "upgrade" humans physically and mentally, should it be done, and if so, to what extent? Are the consequences so overwhelmingly complex and uncertain that society should refrain from even limited uses of biotechnology? How will biotechnology affect societal cohesion, and can the development be controlled? Or is this a Pandora's box that should remain closed?

These are just a few of the many questions that arise as a result of the increasing ability of technology to change biology and, in the long run, to radically change human living conditions. This development has created a new horizon that Professor Francis Fukuyama has called, in his skeptical book of the same title, "our posthuman future", since it is predictable that over time a series of technologies can and will change our understanding of what it means to be a human being.

Featuring Francis Fukuyama as the keynote speaker, the conference aims to address the challenges of

- Imagining a society where the properties of humans have shifted radically;
- Assessing the scope of deploying technologies that are underway;
- Basing decisions on an ethical foundation that does not entail a concept of human nature;
- Finding out what kinds of political action can and should be taken in the face of this situation.

The conference is interdisciplinary and gathers leading Scandinavian and international researchers within the fields of biotechnology, medicine, ethics, politics, and aesthetics. The Australian artist Stelarc will participate via video link from Australia. Francis Fukuyama will be speaking on May 6 in the afternoon. See the complete programme below.

The conference was organized by Associate Professor Mads Rosendahl Thomsen, Professor Jacob Wamberg, and Professor Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen, all of Aarhus University.



### Media coverage

[Podcast](#) with Anders Sandberg and Francis Fukuyama

### Programme

All sessions will take place at the [Lake Auditories](#), Aarhus University

#### Thursday May 6

##### 10.00-11.15 Imagining the future

Mads Rosendahl Thomsen: The new human and the last human in fiction since 1900

Søren Holm: The medicine of the future – long life and eternal happiness?

##### 11.30-12.30 Cognitive enhancement, inequalities, and the posthuman future

Anders Sandberg: How much is a better brain worth? Cognition enhancement and the personal and social benefit of cognition

Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen: Treating symptoms rather than causes? On "enhancement" and social oppression

##### 13.30-14.30 Liberties and duties to enhance in liberal societies

Lene Bomann-Larsen: A liberal view on liberal enhancement?

Julian Savulescu: The Moral Imperative to Enhance Human Beings

##### 15.00-16.30 Keynote

Francis Fukuyama: Agency or Inevitability: Will Human Beings Control their Technological Future?

#### Friday May 7

##### 9.15-11.30 Human identity: knowledge, control, and distinctiveness

Maxwell Mehlman: Can We Survive Directed Evolution?

Klemens Kappel: Subversive knowledge. Being in error about who we are

-15 min break-

Torbjörn Tännsjö: Biological egalitarianism. A Defence

##### 11.45-12.30 Artistic embodiment

Stelarc (via video-link)

##### 13.30-14.45 Art and Technology

Jacob Wamberg: The Dehumanization of Art Continued

Gert Balling: Art as Experimentarium for Consequences of Technology Insinuating Itself Into the Human Body

#### 15.00-16.30 Round table

Francis Fukuyama, Klemens Kappel, Maxwell Mehlman, Soren Holm and Julian Savulescu

## List of speakers

### Keynote

Francis Fukuyama, Johns Hopkins University and Aarhus University

### Special presentation via video link

Stelarc, artist, Australia

### Other speakers

Anders Sandberg, Oxford University

Gert Balling, Center for Innovation Policy at the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation

Jacob Wamberg, Aarhus University

Julian Savulescu, Oxford University

Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen, Aarhus University

Klemens Kappel, Copenhagen University

Lene Bomann-Larsen, University of Oslo

Mads Rosendahl Thomsen, Aarhus University

Maxwell Mehlman, Case Western Reserve University

Soren Holm, University of Manchester

Torbjörn Tännsjö, University of Stockholm

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