

# Fukuyamas philosophical system and the ethics of biotechnology

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Francis Fukuyama is an American political scientist. He is an acclaimed author and a worldwide critic of using biotechnology to alter human nature. He is a professor of political economy at John Hopkins University, and he has dedicated his research in finding the factor that brings 'dignity' to humans (Moore 11). He is a popular figure on the subject of bioethics in matters regarding advancement in biotechnology. He is against violating the dignity of humans through scientific research.

His view on human nature expands beyond the idea that humans are just organic matter with chemicals in them. There is 'something' that separates humans from other animals. This concept leads his other theories on bioethics. Such that experimentation on humans should not violate their dignity. And that the essence of being human should remain intact as this separates humans from animals.

According to Fukuyama, the factor X makes humans as the world knows them. It is the factor in human body that cannot be reduced to moral choices, language, sociability, sentience, emotions, or any quality that has been put forth as a ground for human dignity (Healey & Rayner 55). He terms the factor that is responsible for the dignity in mankind, the factor X (Moore 11). In other words, it is an ideology that each person holds.

According to Fukushima, Jews, Christians and Muslims share a common theme that the man is created in the image of God (Fukushima 86). This theory is the base for Factor X among those followers. Similarly, an atheist also has factor X, which can be moral authority.

Fukuyama is not against biotechnology. He is against violating the sacredness of humans. This concept might be abstract to scientists. Factor X

cannot be calculated. It does not have that form that scientists would like to consider relevant. In fact, the concept of factor X is relevant to the person's beliefs. Different belief systems generate different factor X's. Such a thought might seem too spiritual for scientific study, but Fukuyama has dedicated his studies to preserve human sanctity.

Francis Fukuyama, a bio-conservative, along with other writers such as George Annas, Leon Kass, Jeremy Rifkin, Bill McKibben, and Wesley Smith, opposed the use of technology to modify human nature (Bostrom 202).

Fukuyama fears that the man's nature is the most precious thing that can be affected by the recent advances in human biotechnology. According to him the human nature is "species-typical traits" of human beings that provide the basis for feelings such as shame, sympathy, anger and pride, and they arise from genetic factors (Dilley & Palpant 289). Clearly, it is a philosophical debate rather than scientific.

The belief also holds true in scientific research. There is no absolute truth. Scientific knowledge is very important and highly beneficial for mankind. But as there is no tangible proof of god (or factor X) there is also no proof of non-existence of god. Fukuyama believes that morality is more important than any other value system.

#### Bibliography

Bostrom, Nick. "In defense of posthuman dignity." *Bioethics* 19. 3 (2005): 202-214.

[Important because Bostrom's study reveals how the ethical dilemma sways between transhumanism to bioconservatism. It contributes towards Fukuyama's viewpoint on human dignity]

Dilley, Stephen, and Nathan J. Palpant. Human Dignity in Bioethics: From Worldviews to the Public Square. New York: Routledge, 2013. Print.

[The book discusses the concept of human dignity from the origins of metaphysical foundations]

Fukuyama, Francis. Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002. Print.

[The central theme for this paper comes from this book. Fukuyama fears that in the wake of medical research on human genes, if such experimentation continue, humanity will be altered beyond recognition]

Healey, Peter, and Steve Rayner. Unnatural Selection: The Challenges of Engineering Tomorrow's People. London: Earthscan, 2009. Print.

[The next human evolution will not be natural, it will be engineered by humans. This is claimed by Healey and Rayner, the author of this book. The book is referenced here as it discusses the challenges that humans will face regarding biotechnology]

Moore, Pete. Being Me: What It Means to Be Human. Chichester, West Sussex, England: Wiley, 2003. Print.

[Moore's work was almost essential to use as it gives the supplementary philosophical perspective on the subject of being human]