

Opponent's Report on MA thesis by Martin Šinal'

## **An Analysis of Francis Fukuyama's Arguments Exemplified on Contemporary Dystopian Cultural Production**

Mr. Martin Šinal' delineates some of the basic coordinates regarding the pressing and intriguing contemporary problem of posthumanism and biotechnological manipulation and enhancement. The American scholar Francis Fukuyama and his positions on this whole dynamic are set out, especially in his *Our Posthuman Future* (2002), and then interrogated by the candidate, who then also moves on to some fictional texts and their contemporary treatment of some of these same issues; the narratives deployed include Octavia Butler's *Lilith's Brood* (1987-1989) and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005).

The diploma thesis contains 73 pp. across an Introduction, five chapters, a Conclusion, and a Bibliography. The prose style is of a good quality though there are a number of small errors such as the following: "gained on in frequency" (8) should be without the 'on', "in order contextualize" should read "in order to contextualize" (9), "later form" (10) should be "later to form", "restrains" (12) should read "restraints", "generation of" (18) should be "the generation of", "depraving" (35) should be "depriving", "to radical distinction" should read as "to a radical distinction", "just like" (50) should be "just as", "to the its very" (61) should be "to its very", "takes form of a" should be "takes the form of a".

Overall, this reader appreciated the rigorous close reading of Fukuyama's arguments and how the problem plays out in the textual space of the fictional works abovenoted. Time and again the candidate aptly displays the views both of others, and of other target works, so that the account is very analytical and descriptive, and even a kind of inventory of others' views. At times, though, I would like to have a greater sense of where the candidate stands himself on these matters.

Therefore, my main concern here is to learn from the candidate in a succinct and basic way his own tack on the major issues broached in the thesis? Does the candidate consider that there are emancipatory potentials with the onset of biotechnological intervention and innovation? If so what would they be? And on the other hand: what for the candidate are the downsides to the whole recent remarkable phenomena of posthumanism, transhumanism, and the at least in theory possibilities for biotechnological enhancements for the human subject? For example, do the main aspects of biotechnological intervention function as exclusionary, inegalitarian and divisive or more open and participative democratic for the candidate? I understand that in the abstract the candidate is partly clear about Fukuyama's shortcomings and yet in the actual thesis I do not see the lucid whole argument as really discernible as such. Please clarify how Fukuyama's shortcomings (his Factor X theory for instance) are part of a larger dynamic and field of view that you wish to highlight, so as to do justice to the problem you address and in which your own views may be articulated.

Also, what are some of the key and maybe even unanswerable questions that the candidate's probing cultural analysis allows us to think about?

In light of the foregoing mentions, I hereby recommend the pre thesis defense mark of a very good 2 (velmi dobře) for the thesis work, which may be upgraded to an excellent or a 1 (výborně ) in the event of a strong defense and clarification of the issues.

Erik S. Roraback, D.Phil. (Oxon.),  
29 August 2016.