



# The Ethics of Invention: Technology and the Human Future

*Sheila Jasanoff*

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## **The Ethics of Invention: Technology and the Human Future** Sheila Jasanoff

Technology rules us as much as laws do. It shapes the legal, social, and ethical environments in which we act. Every time we cross a street, drive a car, or go to the doctor, we submit to the silent power of technology. Yet, much of the time, the influence of technology on our lives goes unchallenged by citizens and our elected representatives. Our embrace of novel technological pathways, Sheila Jasanoff shows, leads to a complex interplay among technology, ethics, and human rights. Inventions like pesticides or GMOs can reduce hunger but can also cause unexpected harm to people and the environment. Advances in biotechnology have given us tools to tinker with life itself, leading some to worry that human dignity and even human nature are under threat. But despite many reasons for caution, we continue to march heedlessly into ethically troubled waters. As Jasanoff ranges across these and other themes, she challenges the common assumption that technology is an apolitical and amoral force. Technology, she masterfully demonstrates, can warp the meaning of democracy and citizenship unless we carefully consider how to direct its power rather than let ourselves be shaped by it.

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