

**Is ethics able to guide technology?
Bioethics and the challenges posed by new biotechnological powers**

Current analyses of Western bioethical debate tend to focus on the differences between competing moral perspectives. However, it usually goes unnoticed the hidden assumption that all these moral perspectives do share: the belief that the new biotechnological powers can be directed by ethics. It is this assumption that has guided Hans Jonas in his elaboration of an ethics for the technological era.

In light of the new techno-scientific developments, can we continue holding this “humanistic premise”? In other words, is ethics able to guide technology?

To properly face this radical challenge, we cannot but consider the line of thought that goes from Heidegger to Severino. Such line of thought expresses the most radical scepticism towards the ability of ethics to guide technology.

The thesis I will argue in my lecture is that some approaches on the relationship between ethics and technology developed in Europe – like those by Habermas and Ladrière – are able to counter such scepticism and to reaffirm the humanistic premise on which bioethics itself is built. These approaches will help me outline a bioethics model that can reduce the gap between the widening of our possibility of choice and the weakening of our collective ability to choose.