

Unit 2 Handout 1 : DesJardin's Environmental Ethics Chapters 1 & 2

Discussion: Technological Solutions to Environmental Problems

The irony of DDT and other pesticide/fertilizer (over)use: Whether it is overkill, soft bird eggs, or massive areas of hypoxia, in all of these cases people were attempting to provide a technological solution to a basic human problem, that is, to improve human well being.

Question: How could it have happened that our attempts to use scientific and technological means to improve our environment actually make it worse?

Science, Ethics, and the Environment

- Relying on science and technology (or on economics or the law) without also considering the ethical and philosophical issues involved raises as many problems as it solves.
- A basic assumption of DesJardin's book:
 - Environmental policy ought to be decided in the political arena and not in scientific laboratories, corporate boardrooms, or government bureaucracies.

Question: Is scientific objectivity really a myth?

- example: pg. 10

Question: Does philosophy get us any closer to objectivity than science? [DesJardin seems to just assume so...]

What is Environmental Ethics?

- A systematic account of the moral relations between human beings and their natural environment.

Discussion: Why Protect Endangered Species?