Silent Spring by Rachel Carson. Structure: The review should critically assess the aims, arguments, and content of the book. Be concise. 1. Title and bibliographic information a. Complete book title, author, publisher and place of publication, publication date, ISBN number, and number of pages. 2. Introductory paragraph (Hook) a. Start the report by setting the scene. For example, the book may focus the challenges of studying ecology in the Arctic, so you might set the scene by briefly describing the formidable conditions of the area (vivid landscape descriptions), or some other striking aspect of the context of the book (e.g., accounts of inquisitive animal behaviors or seemingly bizarre plant adaptations, or treaties on environmental issues on climate, invasive species, collapse of fisheries, etc.). Consider researching the author’s background. The inclusion of some of this information in the introductory paragraph often works well in providing context. Was the author always walking around, looking and poking into things, typified by Gilbert White or Henry Thoreau, who developed models of human life integrated into a beloved landscape in their writings? Or was author more like Rachel Carson, Aldo Leopold or Loren Eisely, institutionally trained, who worked with expanded knowledge (not from intuition) of the biosphere's interdependence (stuff of ecology). How did the author translate information into feelings and visions? Perhaps some of this info should also go to the main text. 3. Establish aim of book and summarize it (Body) a. Include the aim(s) of the book and whether or not the aim(s) are achieved. b. Describe how the authors partition the book to meet the aim. Avoid falling into the trap of stating what every single Chapter looked at. c. Succinctly highlight aspects of chapters that interested you. Were there any arguments in the book that you found particularly persuasive or ingenious? Were there any actions described in the book that you found unusual, innovative, or intrepid? What is special about those arguments or those actions? d. Consider answering the following questions if relevant to your book: i. Has the author imbued, in the essay or book, his or her field of studies (marine biology, anthropology, cellular biology, astronomy, botany or whatever s/he was trained in), with humanistic concerns and poetic resonance? ii. No idea has been more influential and inspiring than the grand spectacle of evolution, to understand the nature of nature and arrays of biodiversity. Ecology provides physical place or environment for this evolutionary dance that species perform. Where do you think the author stands in that regard? In other words, has the writer explained his or her observations of nature in light of evolution? Note that the web of life is composed of two distinct threads – one that links organisms at any given moment in time through the flow of energy (ecology), and another that connects all biota through deep time via genetic information and shared common ancestry (evolution). Ecology and evolution (that is, ecology from the perspective of evolution), in a single theme, provide a robust scientific platform for understanding nature and appreciating its diversity. iii. How does the author use his personal voice/perspective/experiences and his scientific knowledge to explore the complexities of the natural world? Remember that the overall aim of ecological science is to understand biodiversity and the factors influencing species distribution and abundance and their interactions with their biotic and abiotic environment (as members of communities and in the context of ecosystems they are part of). The bigger goal is to understand our place in this grand design of nature: Where do we really belong in this bewildering design? 4. Emphasize the strengths and weaknesses (Body) a. Address positives/strengths by highlighting the objective value of the content of the book and your own personal experience reading it. However, avoid making the book report about you. b. Address negatives/weaknesses in a constructive light. While writing about the weaknesses of the book, think always in terms of positive criticisms. State the issue and describe how a future edition could address your concerns. Again, make sure that you keep the book report on the book, and not on you. c. To do this, ensure your review focuses on the book’s contents, its main argument (or your argument about the book) and don’t wander. Do not spread yourself too thinly. In that case, you will lose your potential readers. Remember that you need to hook the readers from the beginning to the end. d. Minimize quotations. If you must quote, select a short one and do not go beyond two quotes. Any more and the book report starts looking like, well, the book! e. Independently, state the problems and issues the world currently face and challenges to overcome these problems. [The author may have stated the contemporary problems the world faces with his or her own lens that may differ from yours]. How the author, in your opinion, should have addressed the important challenges the humanity is currently facing. 5. Resolution (Conclusion) a. The last paragraph should include a few sentences that state what the book succeeds in doing and how the fields of research explored by this book are enriched by the book’s addition.