CONSPIRACY AND PROPAGANDA
Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*

After watching the Michigan State University documentary, *Dying To Be Heard,* about Dr. George J. Wallace, form small groups to discuss the following:

Question 1
As an introduction to her book, *Silent Spring,* what does Rachel Carson accomplish in writing "Chapter 1: A Fable For Tomorrow"? What ideas, attitudes, or arguments does it introduce? For a modern fable of your own, about one of the following topics, and be prepared to discuss how the moral of your fable is conveyed?
1. global warming
2. the global (or national) economic crisis
3. immigration
4. gay marriage
5. the war in Iraq (or another conflict in which the U.S. is involved)

Question 2
Why does Rachel Carson quote Jean Rostand at the end of Chapter 2, "The obligation to endure gives us the right to know"? Form a position in your group on
a.) exactly *what* the obligation to endure *is,* and
b.) what gives us the right to know anything.
Select another contemporary topic, problem, or conspiracy about which you feel strongly that you have "the right to know." What do you have the right to know about and why? What limits on knowledge (if any) have been placed on your ability to know the facts or the truth? Why (or why not)?

Question 3
The reactions to Rachel Carson's book in 1963 were vituperative and concerted efforts to discredit her science and her standing as a member of the scientific community. In writing this book, does Carson insinuate a conspiracy or cover-up about the dangers of pesticide use? Were the contemporary reactions to it a conspiracy or cover-up? Why or why not? In what ways does the story of Michigan State University professor Dr. George J. Wallace (*Dying To Be Heard*) contribute to your answer?

Question 4
Based on your examination of *Silent Spring*, collaborate on a definition of the word "conspiracy." (Do not consult a dictionary.) Name **three** criteria you would use to establish whether or not something is a conspiracy.