"Silent Spring at 50"


Fifty years after its publication, a comparative analysis of the reception of Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring in the United States and in the UK emerges in this conversation between Mark Wilson and the podcast’s host, Jan Oosthoek. The book’s success in the United States is assessed by means of comparison with precursors such as The History of the Standard Oil Company by Ida Tarbell (1857–1944), which appeared in 1904, as well as contemporaneous publications, including Our Synthetic Environment by Lewis Herber (the pseudonym of Murray Bookchin), which appeared in the same year as Silent Spring. The conversation also broadens out into other issues that either helped shape the reception of Silent Spring or competed with it for attention, including the testing of nuclear weapons, agriculture and the organic food movement in the UK, and the use of DDT as a measure to tackle malaria.

(17.4 MB)


Exploring Environmental History podcasts are periodic programmes featuring interviews with people working in the field, reports on conferences and discussions about the use and methods of environmental history. They are posted on the Environmental History Resources website, which is maintained by Jan Oosthoek.

Further readings:

Related links:

- Exploring Environmental History at Environmental History Resources
  http://www.eh-resources.org/podcast/podcast.html

Websites linked in this text:

- http://ccmixter.org/files/Zapac/30640
- http://ccmixter.org/files/snowflake/7555
- http://www.eh-resources.org/