

Groundwork

In June 2009 I joined a team from the University of Glasgow Biology Department who are contributing to ongoing research on rainforest biodiversity.

Typically early European explorers took a Journal and Sketchbook with them on their travels. I followed that lead, but reading also shapes observation and interpretation.

This reading list is in development

From science and social science, I look towards photography, drawing, and fiction. How do I, from Scotland, form impressions and take images of extraordinary biodiversity in the rainforest? My starting point was one who is uninformed - possibly disinformed - so I have to tease out different viewpoints and expertise. "Rainforest" is an idea full of our projections and unexamined assumptions. Sadly I cannot assess work in Spanish language.

The Payamino Project

The project website is being revamped but you can see it on:
www.payaminoproject.org.uk

Extract from the website: The Payamino Project is a thriving community conservation and development project. Situated in the foothills of the andes East of Quito, the indigenous community of San Jose de Payamino entered an agreement with Aalborg Zoo in 2002 to protect their forest and way of life from the increasing pressures of oil, logging and mining companies eager to exploit the Payamino's 27,000 hectares of primary lowland rainforest.

This unique agreement supports the community with education, healthcare and sustainable development projects, allows world class research and ecotourism to be undertaken in this unexplored pocket of the Amazon and ultimately protects the future of this area.

Zoologists from the University of Glasgow first formed an expedition to Payamino in 2000, and groups have gone every year since. This year a team of eight students will continue ornithological and amphibian research in this extraordinarily biodiverse area of rainforest.

For the Ecuador 2009 Prospectus and Research Summary - apply to expedition leader, Fiona Morton on 0603186m@student.gla.ac.uk

"The Geographies of Biodiversity Conservation in People Dominated Landscapes – a case study of the Payamino Project in the Sumaco Region of Ecuador" was submitted in 2007 as MRes in Human Geography at the University of Glasgow. For further info contact martin.muir@ges.gla.ac.uk

Zoology

Ref John Kricher. A Neotropical Companion: an introduction to the animals, plants and ecosystems of the New World Tropics. Princeton University Press.

Political geographies

Key text on conservation and protected areas:

Ref D Brockington, R Duffy, J Igoe. 2008. Nature Unbound: Conservation, Capitalism and the Future of Protected Areas. Earthwatch: London

For campaigning updates see www.amazonwatch.org

The Yasuni-ITT initiative is a significant recent move made by Ecuadorean government - an extract from www.soyasuni.org.en:

The Yasuni-ITT initiative, named for Yasuni National Park and the respective Ishpingo, Tampococha, and Tiputini oil reserves that lie underneath, was first launched in June 2007 and seeks international financial support to offset the country's forgone oil revenues. The President of the Republic of Ecuador, Rafael Correa, has indicated that the first option for the country is to leave the crude oil of Yasuní untouched underground. The idea is to stimulate the national and international society to contribute in this expensive national decision. The government expects, through this mechanism, to recover 50% of the income it would have obtained by extracting the crude oil. The State will emit certificates for the crude oil of Yasuní, and promise to keep the crude underground forever and use the funds to better protect Yasuní National Park.

An article by Geraldine McDonald analysing the impacts of extractive industries in Latin America (CIDSE briefing paper, 2009)

McDonald draws conclusions based on this situation:

- A worrying number of cases where extractive projects have caused and continue to cause severe environmental damage and damage to the health of surrounding communities.
- The lack of meaningful consultation with communities who share their land with mineral or other natural resources, and the absence of binding mechanisms to ensure that communities' wishes are respected.
- An increasing tendency to criminalise opposition to extractive projects.
- Organisations' insufficient knowledge of national and international laws and mechanisms to better defend and advance the rights of poor and vulnerable people affected by extractives projects.

CIDSE is a coalition of 16 Catholic development agencies in Europe and North America which share a common vision on poverty eradication.

BBC country profile / Ecuador:
<http://news.bbc.co.uk>

BBC report on “Trees versus oil”:

Ref Joe Kane. Savages. Macmillan. 1995. A North American journalist’s account of working with a representative of Huorani people for justice in oil extraction.

Ref Suzana Sawyer. 2004. Crude Chronicles: Indigenous Politics, Multinational oil and Neoliberalism in Ecuador. Duke University Press.

European Exploration in Ecuador

Ref Alexander von Humboldt: Personal Narrative of a Journey to the Equinoctial Regions of the New Continent, 1814. Humboldt's extraordinary talent as an artist and in the life sciences– was directed towards finding out about “the unity of nature”.

Humboldt seems to have left people out of the picture – for one example of very much general critical review see:

Ref Mary Louise Pratt, Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation, New York: Routledge, 1992

Ref RD Stone 1986. Dreams of Amazonia. Penguin. Harmondsworth.

Anthropology / Cultural Studies

Ref Blanco Muratorio. The Life and Times of Grandfather Alonso: Culture and History in the Upper Amazon. Rutgers University Press. 1991. New Jersey.

Ref Hugh Raffles. 2002 In Amazonia: A Natural History. Princeton University Press

Ref Nancy Leys Stepan. 2001. Picturing Tropical Nature. Reaktion Books: London

History

From a Latin American viewpoint:

Ref Eduardo Galeano. 1973 /1997 Open Veins of Latin America: five centuries of the pillage of a continent. Monthly Review Press: New York

Art after European Contact in Latin America / Ecuador

Ref GA Bailey. Art of Colonial Latin America. Phaidon

Check out: Quito school of Art which was one of the main productions centres of religious art in the "New World"

Ref Dawn Ades (editor).1989. Art in Latin America. Yale University Press: Newhaven

Ref Edward Lucie Smith. 1993. Latin American Art of the 20th Century. Thames and Hudson: London

Ref Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp. America: Bride of the Sun. 500 years of America and the Low Countries.

Ref AL Bush and Lee Clark Mitchell. The Photograph and the American Indian.

Ref100 Latin American Artists. Exit Publications

RefIvo Mesquita. Cartographies. ISBN 0-888915-170-9

RefLatin American and Carribean Art:MoMA at EL Museo. 2004

Ref O. Baddely and V. Fraser. Drawing the Line: Art and cultural Identity in Contemporary Latin America.

The Artists for Nature Foundation responded to a request from an Ecuadorean conservation organisation to promote awareness of the dry forest of Ecuador, the Tumbesian Region, by publishing a book of drawings made by visiting artists from across the world, in 2002. This approach employs traditional drawing and painting in conservation politics.

Ref Editor R. Williams. Treasures of the Forgotten Forest. ANF.

Further info source:

www.iniva.org

Check out: Tomas Ochoa (Ecuador) -Regina Vater, Rimer Cordillo, Roberto Evangelista, Martha Lucia Villafone, Mariana Varela, Maria Fernanda Cardoso

Fiction

Ref Isabel Allende. City of Beasts. A cracking kids book about a Californian lad who becomes a friend of the Indians and a conservation hero in the Amazonian jungle.

Ref Isabel Allende. Inez of My Soul

Ref Gabriel Garcia Marquez. 1989. The General in his Labyrinth. Penguin: Harmondsworth