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Johann Moritz Rugendas' Brazil and American Landscapes and Humboldt's Idea of Nature

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Prussian geographer and naturalist Alexander von Humboldt believed that the painting of landscape was essential for scientific research as well as being an educational tool. Considering nature-landscape as a whole, his writings revealed his travels abroad in order to see and understand nature. Mediated through the aesthetics, the landscape seemed like a living unity, while his empirical observations and contemplation aimed at converting the aesthetic spectacle into scientific knowledge. Johann Moritz Rugendas was among the artists clearly under Humboldt's influence. Rugendas first travelled to Brazil in the years 1821-1825, after an invitation to take part in the Langsdorff Expedition, an official project that happened with the support of Brazil's young emperor Dom Pedro I. After meeting von Humboldt in Paris and showing him his drawings, the naturalist convinced him to publish a travel book, helping him to publish with the important Engelmann Publishing House. Between 1827 and 1835 the lithographs that resulted from his sketches were published in Germany and in France under the title "Malerische Reise in Brasilien von Moritz Rugendas", with compositions that informed the European public about the details of nature and the characteristics of the Brazilian landscape and people. Humboldt and Rugendas became acquaintances, and the naturalist fed the painter with new information during the time they spent in Paris. Between 1831 and 1837 Rugendas travelled for the second time to America, and the works that he produced during these trips are somehow different from the ones originated on the first travel. This time he produced larger oil paintings, oscillating between wide Mexican landscapes and scenes that depicted people from Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay.

Keywords: Landscape painting, Alexander von Humboldt, Johann Moritz Rugendas, Latin America landscape, 19th century, Brazil, Chile, Argentina

Foreign authors and artists wrote an important part of Brazilian art history, relying on the pictorial gaze of painters that we nowadays call “travelling artists”. They were people who travelled to different parts of the world on diplomatic or scientific expeditions and missions. In the Brazilian case, except for the two decades that the Dutch occupied the city of Recife in the north-eastern region of the country in the 17th century, most travellers arrived after the transfer of the Portuguese Court to Rio in 1808. When King John VI fled from the Napoleon troops, he brought to Rio the royal family and his court, and he modernized the city that was considered modest and colonial. The first transformation was the opening of the ports of the Kingdom in Brazil to the friendly nations of Portugal in 1810, which stimulated the influx of foreign artists, so that in the following decades, the city received many travellers from Europe, predominantly British.

Before the opening of the ports Portugal was very conscientious about the Brazilian territory and its boundless natural wealth and possibilities for commercial exploitation. It was difficult to visit Brazil before Britain forced the opening of the Portuguese colony to the world, and many times the Portuguese Crown denied passage to explorers and scientists. The geographer Alexander von Humboldt was among those who were not granted passage to Brazil in the first years of the 19th century.

Alexander von Humboldt was born in 1769 and died in 1859 in Berlin. He was not only the most successful explorer-scientist of the 18th and early 19th centuries but was also the most famous and influential German-speaking private traveller. His expeditions depended on his inherited fortune and on the permission of other European colonial forces to explore. In 1798, during his stay in Paris, von Humboldt met Aimé Bonpland, a young doctor and botanist. Together they obtained the permission of the King Charles IV of Spain to depart in 1799 in a self-funded expedition to the Americas. However, as already stated, the Portuguese Kingdom did not grant them the permission. Therefore, they visited the United States and the Spanish colonial territories of Mexico, Cuba, and other parts of South America, but not Brazil. The long travel through the Americas allowed him to acquire enough material for three decades of publishing. Moreover, the five-year journeying helped him to visualise the theory he would develop in the

following decades and, in the end, helped him to consolidate his understanding of nature through data gathering and specimen collections and observation. The process of editing his memoirs and travel accounts for publishing started as soon as they returned in Europe in 1804.

A famous portrait of von Humboldt by Friedrich Georg Weitsch, that captures the scientist in the outdoors and in the natural environment, was painted shortly after his return to Europe from the United States, the last stop of his American journey (fig. 1). The painting – now part of the collection of the Alte Nationalgalerie in Berlin – has a series of references to his life and work. The pale but bright background in which Weitsch sets the geographer reveals a perfect connection between the human mind and nature. Von Humboldt sits on bare land. On his left and in the back, there is a tree with large, dark green leaves, probably a banana tree, and behind it we see the shadow of a different plant, resembling a palm tree. Both species are related to the tropical climate, mementos of the travels that he had just concluded. In the background we see the distant sea with two islands, marking his thirst for voyaging and discovering faraway places. The geographer sits with crafted objects: his favorite barometer, his leather bound book for recounting his activities, a hat, and a coat with golden buttons to underscore that he is a distinguished and well-educated man. Weitsch substituted some of these material things for parts of nature, and these details are not only innovative but complement von Humboldt's theories. First, he depicts him holding a branch with a light pink flower in his right hand. This branch is cut at the bottom with the skill of a botanist for the research, meaning von Humboldt could have collected such a specimen. Additionally, he holds it like a pen, to write down on the blank paper the records of his journey. Portraying the flower branch as a pen and using plant leaves as bookmarks, Weitsch found a sensitive manner of suggesting that von Humboldt wrote about nature and built knowledge *from* nature.

Since his first major publication *Essai sur la géographie de plants* (1805) one image, entitled *Naturgemälde*¹ (fig. 2), occupied a prominent position in his opus. It is not a simple drawing meant to communicate to people what von Humboldt saw on a trip, nor an illustration of anything written in the text. It is rather a system of geographic data, which combines scientific information with observa-



1 Friedrich Georg Weitsch, Portrait of Alexander von Humboldt, 1806



2 Alexander von Humboldt, *Geography of plants in tropical countries*, print, from A. von Humboldt, *Ideen zu einer Geographie der Pflanzen*, 1807

tion drawing. Different from what other scientists had done so far while classifying the natural world into taxonomic unities under a strict hierarchy, always in the form of tables, von Humboldt produced a drawing. As he would claim later, it is a “microcosm on one page” (Wulf, 2016, 139). It depicts the Chimborazo volcano in Ecuador and the plant species living at different elevations. It resulted from the expedition von Humboldt and Bonpland undertook in 1802 ascending the Chimborazo, believed at the time to be the highest mountain in the world.² The pair documented the mountain’s plant life, from the tropical rainforest at the bottom to the lichen clinging to rocks above the treeline. The *Naturgemälde* organizes these observations in an intuitively visual way, showing Chimborazo in cross-section, with text indicating which species lived at different elevations on the mountain.

Von Humboldt believed that such paintings should address the spirit and the imagination, and he stated: “I thought that if my *tableau* were capable of suggesting unexpected analogies to those who will study its details, it would also be capable of speaking to the imagination and providing the pleasure that comes from contemplating a beneficial as well as majestic nature” (Humboldt, 2008, 79). He believed that this form of expression was able to sensitize and awaken the readers’ interest in the natural qualities of what was depicted or described. The idea that the simple contemplation of the spectacle of nature could give pleasure is the echo of German Romanticism that found major inspiration in the grandeur of the natural world. We can find the advocacy for the power of images to understand nature in Prussian philosopher Johann Georg Hamann’s (1730-1788) writings. When Hamann criticized Kant’s separation between sensible intuition and knowledge, he asserted that “The senses and passions speak and understand nothing but images. The entire store of human knowledge and happiness consists in images” (Hamann apud Sallas, 2013, 38).

Von Humboldt wrote *Voyage aux régions équinoxiales du nouveau continent fait en 1799, 1800, 1801, 1802, 1803 et 1804* in French between 1807 and 1834. In 1860, his travel diary was translated into German and subsequently to other languages, engaging a broad readership. Through this narrative, von Humboldt became a sort of intellectual godfather to many travellers and explorers (Giggs, 2008, 17), setting various standards and manners for travel writing and travelling itself.

The first edition of *Anschiten der Natur* (Views of Nature) was published in German in 1808, four years after von Humboldt's return to Europe from his iconic and seminal journey through American lands. It brought to the public the results of the investigations made during the trip between 1799 and 1804. However, this book became more successful after its second edition in 1826, with equal content but with von Humboldt's personal supervision of the translation to French. This was essential for the popularization of the work outside the German-speaking world. Von Humboldt would also supervise the third corrected edition of *Anschiten der Natur* in 1849 in German and the translation to French a year later, naming it *Tableaux de la nature*. In addition, in the following years many versions in other languages came out, including the one in English in 1850. The text suggested that natural scenes should be appreciated both aesthetically and scientifically, through the *Naturgemälde*, or "paintings of nature". Considered the philosophical synthesis of his experience, of the intersection between literature and science, feeling and idea, this work described landscapes with words, in order to create mental images for readers. The result was "a vision at once total and synthetic (*Totaleindruck*), resulting from the detailed analysis of the multiple local phenomena that made up the physiognomies (*Phisionogmie*) of specific segments of the great living body of our planet, which also included the human dimension" (Mattos, 2004, 153).

Indeed, Alexander von Humboldt was a pioneer in seeing the world as a whole, a living organism in which everything is connected. He conceived a bold vision of wholeness that still nowadays influences the way we perceive the world. Von Humboldt believed that the painting of landscape was essential for scientific research as well as an educational tool. Considering nature-landscape as a whole, his writings encouraged the activity of traveling abroad to see and understand nature. Mediated through (the) aesthetics, the landscape was perceived as a living unity, while the empirical observation and contemplation of it could convert the aesthetic spectacle into scientific knowledge. Influenced by Kant's ideas in *Critique of judgment* and by the writings of Goethe and Schelling, von Humboldt devised a new interpretation and representation of the nature on Earth's surface, wherein the concept of space is essential to explaining natural phenomena.

Thus, *Views of Nature* was an attempt to understand to what extent scenes of nature, meaning landscapes, from different continents could be described with-

out losing the effect of the natural, of reality. This is especially interesting since it is considered the direct connection between the Prussian naturalists and the works of the so-called traveler-artists, men and some women who, as *Views of Nature* displayed, tried to make the reader see what was narrated, through meticulous visual descriptions. Literary persuasion that tried to transport readers to the natural world, was the essence of the creation of the sublime, impression of respect and awe for nature. It had the power to illustrate unfamiliar scenes because it was anchored in the detailing, in descriptions that convinced readers that the author had actually been there, bringing them novelties and knowledge firsthand. So, nature's magnitude needed to be accompanied by information and description of the scientific illustrations.

Andrea Wulf, the latest biographer of von Humboldt, recently wrote that von Humboldt constructed the concept of nature. Wulf advocates that the irony is that his concepts "became so widely evident that we forgot the man behind them" (Wulf, 2016, 32). We could say that von Humboldt embodied the idea of modern experience of nature even if he was not the only one to write it down and spread it. After all, in a moment in which scientists were in search of universal laws, von Humboldt wrote that nature should be known firsthand and experienced through the feelings (Wulf, 2016, 27).

Many foreign artists that set foot on Brazilian lands were influenced by the readings of Alexander von Humboldt. The Prussian artist Johann Moritz Rugendas (1802-1858) was one of them. Rugendas first travelled to Brazil in 1821-1825, on the occasion of an invitation to take part of the Langsdorff expedition, an official project supported by Brazil's young emperor Dom Pedro I. The expedition was organized by Georg Heinrich Langsdorff, a naturalist who arrived in Brazil for the first time in 1813 as the General Consul for Russia in Rio de Janeiro. He was a member of the Imperial Sciences Academy of Saint Petersburg and defended the idea of a scientific exploratory expedition through Brazil strongly enough to get financing from the Russian Government. Along with Rugendas, Langsdorff invited the botanical scientist Ludwig Riedel, the astronomer Néster Rubtsov and the zoologist and linguist Édouard Ménétries. This group searched the interior of the state of Minas Gerais in the first part of the expedition, in 1824-1825. However, after dis-

agreements between Langsdorff and Rugendas, the latter decided to leave the expedition and Brazil, and travelled back to Europe.

The choice for Rugendas to generate the connection between a traveller-artist and von Humboldt is not accidental. Rugendas and von Humboldt were acquaintances and exchanged ideas. When Rugendas returned to Europe, he met von Humboldt in Paris with his drawings in hands. The naturalist convinced him to publish a travel book, helping him to publish with the important Engelmann Publishing House. And so *Malerisch Reise in Bresilien* (Picturesque Travel to Brazil) was published between 1827 and 1835, in German and in French, with one hundred prints and explanations of the time he spent in Brazil. Von Humboldt considered landscape painting of vital importance, since he believed it was landscape painting that allowed the invisible and the visible worlds to be united (von Humboldt, 1848, II, 100). Being descriptive and at the same time being perceived as a whole, landscape painting could directly affect the sensitivity of the observer. Therefore, it is not surprising that von Humboldt was interested in and encouraged the publication of Rugendas' records, believing also in the pedagogical character of his creations.

Rugendas' publication describes several landscapes. However, besides the detailed attention the artist gives to fauna and flora, such landscapes are never unattended, and there is always some human presence for the viewer to see. Nature – in the sense of the natural world – usually has a prominent role in such representations and it happens through the physical description of the surroundings in detail, to the point that when the drawings become prints, they appear almost solid, as if they were pictures containing multiple layers of scientific information. We can see this in *Enterrement d'un nègre à Bahia* (Burial of a Negro in Bahia; fig. 3). Here, a procession of black people carrying the dead body of a black man is depicted. Three men kneel in front of the priest, the only white person in the composition. There is this picturesque quality that Rugendas implies when he decides to document a cultural trace of the people of Bahia. This is about Catholicism being imposed to the enslaved Africans forced to come to Brazil during the colonial period, with a message of triumph of the Portuguese over African culture and religion. It is a trace of violence and cultural dominance that happened in Brazil and that probably appeared as exotic to the Prussian artist, who documented it in detail well enough to allow us to describe such ritual centuries later. It is so



3 Johann Moritz Rugendas, *Burial of a Negro in Bahia*, 1827-1835, print, from J. M. Rugendas, *Viagem Pitoresca Através do Brasil*, 1998

descriptive that it is possible to distinguish thick bushes and more than ten different species of plants, with obvious palm trees against the sky and large trees on the right of the composition. The architecture in the background is fairly detailed, and we can grasp the floorplan of the church and convent of Nossa Senhora da Piedade in the back, with its dome and steeples. The human figures appear to serve as scale for nature with their outfits well documented and we understand what kind of garment might be used, the volume of the clothes and the hierarchy of the church staff by their clothes.

Von Humboldt considered the Brazilian artwork of Rugendas a model for “a new epoch of landscape painting” (Catlin, 1989, 49). The “new epoch” to which von Humboldt referred is that Rugendas was able to capture the substance of modern landscape, the substitution of the ideal landscape of pictorial Academic conventions for works based on a more precise observation of nature. Von Hum-

boldt also understood that nature was a complex net of relationships, including the human one. The interest that the young Rugendas had for the different aspects of culture he encountered in Brazil and his decisions to document them, probably sparked von Humboldt's fondness for his sketches, leading to the encouragement for the artist to publish them.³

The *Indiens dans une Plantation* (Indians on a Plantation; fig. 4) is a composition of a group of indigenous people on, what is supposed to be, a coffee farm in the lands of Minas Gerais, Brazil. Some of the indigenous bathe in the waters of a shallow creek, and most of them seek food. A couple harvests fruit from the trees: one picks from the banana tree and the other holds a large piece of a jackfruit. A group asks people on the farm for food, and we see children with bowls in their



4 Johann Moritz Rugendas, *Indians on a Plantation*, 1827-1835, print, from J. M. Rugendas, *Viagem Pitoresca Através do Brasil*, 1998

hands approaching a black man with a striped shirt with a larger bowl with white content – probably manioc. Another black man with the same clothing welcomes the indigenous people in the little river and points towards the distribution of food. A line is formed before a man with a turban on his head, who holds a bottle in his right hand and seems to ask for patience with the gesture of his left one. A group of adults stands behind him: another man in a yellow shirt and hat and three women with their hair in buns. One woman holds a baby on the balcony and a black woman carries a basket full of fruits. They all stare at the arriving group with unease. Rugendas depicts this group of indigenous people without giving details of their ethnicity, suggesting that they are dislocated from their usual environment. Rugendas writes in his book that such scenes were common and that farmers would feed the hungry indigenous people to try to lure them into working for them. His view on the scene and his attempt to register in detail what he assumed was a custom, something that happened regularly at that time, reflects his commitment in documenting everything that passed before his eyes. We see in these images, all the way up to today, notes of prejudice and we are aware of the need to think about it critically. It also demonstrates his scientific spirit, with an almost anthropological look on the people he met in Brazil.

Like other German thinkers, Rugendas interpreted indigenous peoples as another element of nature, emphasizing the absence of history of these people, due to the lack of physical evidence – ruins, monuments or written records (Roca, 2017, 38). Additionally, given the difficulty in collecting skulls to constitute collections to study, physical anthropologists stimulated travellers to make scientific illustrations of heads and faces. Rugendas' thirst for documenting the local population – especially the indigenous ethnicities and black enslaved people – resulted in a series of prints that bring them against natural backgrounds. However, there are also several portraits of people that Rugendas encountered, unnamed, and identified only by their ethnicity. In the lithograph *Coroatos and Coropos* (fig. 5), a Coroado woman and man are depicted in the upper, and a Koropó woman and man in the lower part. With their hair arranged in the Western fashion and their fine-tuned facial features to appeal to European audiences, they are naked, except for the Koropó woman, with a beaded necklace and a striped cloth. From the contemporary, decolonial perspective, this is not only problematic but also



5 Johann Moritz Rugendas, *Coroatos and Coropos*, 1827-1835, print, from J. M. Rugendas, *Viagem Pitoresca Através do Brasil*, 1998

dehumanizing. Rugendas was a man of his time and considered indigenous people as savages and was more interested in their *natural* aspect, as if within the opposition men vs. nature, the non-Europeans were part of the second realm. Additionally, the author separates indigenous people into angry and meek ones (Roca, 2010, 153), which creates another problematic and dehumanizing categorization.

Perhaps the contact with von Humboldt in the “Old World” between 1835 and 1830, made Rugendas see the first people of America with different eyes. During the five years he spent between Paris and Rome, the painter acquired technical painting knowledge, meeting standards in colour and pictorial tendencies. The proximity to von Humboldt enabled information on the American continent, turning this into a period of planning for his next trip. Following von Humboldt’s step, Rugendas wished to gather material for publishing an artistic and encyclopaedia-like work. Between 1831 and 1837, Rugendas travelled for the second time to America, and the works that he produced on these trips are somehow different from the ones originated in his first journey, leaving aside his attempts at topographical views. On the second trip, Rugendas seemed to have absorbed some of von Humboldt’s reflections on humankind-inflicted action over nature, being interested not only in the natural but also in the political and historical spheres of life. The outcomes were the images that represent the relationship between man and nature, history and the conflicts between original people and European invaders. His series generates a discourse about the constitution of American people from the clash of different cultures and racial issues, following von Humboldt’s vision on this matter (Mattos, 2010, 308).

Rugendas arrived in the Veracruz port in Mexico in 1831. He spent several years in the country, dedicating himself specifically to the natural views and landscapes, following von Humboldt’s recommendations. From the encyclopedic understanding of nature, he created views that are the physiognomic representation of the landscape, with topographical and botanical precision, placing the human presence in tiny figures, in harmony with nature, reminding us more of serenity and sublime. *View of the Valley of Mexico with Volcanoes and the Texcoco Lake* (fig. 6), painted around 1833, embodies the unity feeling that von Humboldt praised so much. Like in the engravings from his first visit, Rugendas pays attention to details, to the point that we can distinguish agaves, nopal, sisal and other cacti species.



6 Johann Moritz Rugendas, *View of the Valley of Mexico with Volcanoes and the Texcoco Lake*, oil on canvas, ca. 1833

People and their clothing are richly represented, with drapery that allows for the identification of the modeling of clothes typical of the Mexican indigenous people in stripes, shawls, hats, ties, and props. The whole landscape is descriptive, with plan after plan. In the foreground we see people and vegetation, then architecture and the lake, and the hills and volcanoes in the background enhance the depth. At the same time, the whole picture is airy and is lit up in the morning light, attained with broad loose brush strokes.

However, after the Mexican period, Rugendas gradually moved away from his master's advice: "Avoid the temperate zones, Buenos Aires and Chile [...]. Go where there are many palm trees, ferns, cacti, where there are snow-capped mountains and volcanoes, go to the Andes Mountains [...]. A great artist like you should go in search of the monumental" (Ades, 1989, 50). The artist did travel through the Andes and captured its monumentality but decided to stay for eight

years in Chile. There, he dedicated himself to depicting the indigenous population far from the naturalistic interest and travel registers that marked his Brazilian years in the 1820s and got the impulse from romantic and nationalist novels.

The *Kidnapping of Trinidad Salcedo*, also known as *El Malon* (fig. 7), has a clear literary inclination, made after oral and written accounts of indigenous conflicts in frontier regions. The abduction of a woman by the Araucanians is a recurrent theme in his work in Chile. The painting depicts a surprise attack from the Mapuches or Araucanians against their enemies, with the aim of obtaining cattle, provisions and kidnapping young women. These attacks were known as *malones*. Rugendas' literary approach emphasizes the drama and incorporates elements of Romanticism in the images. The theme of the indigenous people abducting white Christian ladies became a favorite for Rugendas, and his contact with Chilean and Argentinean novels gave him the inspiration for such subjects. More than just painting Otherness, the artist provided the imagery of the founding myths of Chile and Argentina, and in 1835 he even spent the night with the Mapuches by the Bio River, close to the Andean mountains. This romantically based narrative implied the idea of the triumph of civilization over barbarism. In the painting, we see the exact moment of the Mapuche attack, and the menace that the brutal and wild indigenous people represented to the evolved and rational Western values. The need to establish order anticipates the modernizing project of the Criolla elites of the late 19th century (Souza, 2014, 8) and the images that Rugendas composes about the *malones* serve as metaphors for the conquest of the desert landscapes of the pampas as the places to be dominated and the barbarism of the *mapuches* to be combated.

Rugendas' scientific observation drawings that von Humboldt praised could have served as the basis for more narrative paintings when the artist returned to America. The way that von Humboldt perceived the indigenous peoples was filled with Romantic principles without succumbing to a reductive notion of the "noble savage" (Schweninger, 2016, 89), in the sense that the first people in Americas inherited the goodness and the innocence that existed in nature, in opposition to the corruption of the unnatural world. In opposition to that, von Humboldt perceived a unity between environment and humankind, and understood that each civilization had its own pace of development. From extensive observation, he managed to make way for changing prejudicial ideas that Europe had



7 Johann Moritz Rugendas, *The kidnapping of Trinidad Saledo (El Malon)*, oil on canvas, 1845



8 Johann Moritz Rugendas, *Night rest on the rocks near the Casucha de las Vacas*, oil on canvas, 1838

about the first people of America in the 18th century. His ideas pointed towards the ethnic specificities and the notion that although men were related to nature, they were not necessarily submitted to environmental laws (Sallas, 2010, 150). Possibly the intense dialogue between the scientist and Rugendas influenced the latter into stepping into the Romanticism field in a broader sense, making Rugendas' search for "typical" types of people in America.

The types became a direction in Rugendas works in the 1840s. His interests for *costumbrismo* (from Spanish *costumbre*, meaning custom) guided a substantial part of his work in Chile, Uruguay and Argentina. The life of the *gauchos*, inhabitants of the Plata River and the flatlands of the *pampas*, caught his attention in Uruguay and Argentina, as well as the Chilean countrymen *huasos*. These figures of the countrymen are central to Romantic American narratives in the search of the genuine and typical of each place. This search for the essence of the land, transfigured into human types was common at this time, and authors and artists aimed to capture this. If first people are seen as wild and untamed (as in the *malones* paintings), the countrymen were the men who constructed fields and the nation. Whether indigenous or racial mixed men, they were considered skilled, fearless and were still feared, for being unruly. In *Night Rest on the Rocks near the Casucha de las Vacas* (1838; fig. 8), we see *gauchos* resting at night by the fire. Surrounded by bare rocks, they are in the middle of a hostile landscape in the Andes. The nothingness that surrounds them reinforces the mythical romantic freedom of the *gauchos*, with descriptive details regarding their traditional clothing, manners and transports.

Finally, Rugendas finished his journey in Rio de Janeiro, where he barely produced any new paintings. During his one-year stay, Rugendas devoted himself to the unfinished paintings of the previous years, and to a few new works. Rugendas returned to Europe in 1837 full of hope for publishing his new material. However, his plans to publish a comprehensive travel book never came through, despite his attempts in Paris and Prussia, and he ended selling his three thousand works: drawings, watercolours and sketches for oil paintings. Therefore, his impressions of America could not be gathered like in his first book, making the comparison more difficult between his two sets of views on the American continent and the assessment of understanding von Humboldt's influence sparse.

Endnotes

- According to Humboldt himself, it translates as *tableau physique* in French, and it could be understood as “a painting of nature” in English. The German term also carries that meaning of unity – “the whole”.
- We know today that Chimborazo is 6268 meters high, which is more than 2500 meters lower than Mount Everest, with 8848 meters.
- Humboldt probably said this looking at the original drawings. The printed final product definitely changed in the hands of engravers and printers that were part of the process, mostly trying to adequate Rugendas’ impressions (that were barely sketches) to a more adequate language for the European public. For more information see Diener, P. O Catálogo Fundamentado da Obra de J. M. Rugendas. *Revista USP O Brasil dos Viajantes*, 1996, pp. 46-57.

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Illustrations

- Fig. 1 Friedrich Georg Weitsch, Portrait of Alexander von Humboldt, 1806, Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen, Berlin, Wikimedia Commons, public domain.
- Fig. 2 Alexander von Humboldt, *Geographie der Pflanzen in der Tropen Ländern*, print, from A. von Humboldt, *Ideen zu einer Geographie der Pflanzen*, Tübingen, 1807, Leibniz-Institut für Länderkunde, Leipzig, Wikimedia Commons, public domain.
- Fig. 3 Johann Moritz Rugendas, *Enterrement d'un nègre à Bahia* (Burial of a Negro in Bahia), 1827-1835, print, from J. M. Rugendas, *Viagem Pitoresca Através do Brasil*, Belo Horizonte, 1998, 4 Div. pl. 20.
- Fig. 4 Johann Moritz Rugendas, *Indiens dans une Plantation* (Indians on a Plantation), 1827-1835, print, from J. M. Rugendas, *Viagem Pitoresca Através do Brasil*, Belo Horizonte, 1998, 3 Div. pl. 9.

- Fig. 5 Johann Moritz Rugendas, *Coroatos and Coropos*, 1827-1835, print, from J. M. Rugendas, *Viagem Pitoresca Através do Brasil*, Belo Horizonte, 1998, 2 Div. pl. 5.
- Fig. 6 Johann Moritz Rugendas, *View of the Valley of Mexico with Volcanoes and the Texcoco Lake*, oil on canvas, ca. 1833, Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros, Mexico City, Wikimedia Commons, public domain.
- Fig. 7 Johann Moritz Rugendas, *The kidnapping of Trinidad Saledo (El Malon)*, oil on canvas, 1845, private collection, Wikimedia Commons, public domain.
- Fig. 8 Johann Moritz Rugendas, *Descanso nocturno en las rocas cerca de la Casucha de las Vacas* (Night rest on the rocks near the Casucha de las Vacas), oil on canvas, 1838, Collection of the Academia Nacional de la Historia de la República Argentina, Wikimedia Commons, public domain.