

The Cristo Rey Comunicado

Rio Madiera, Amazonas October 1999

Chris King

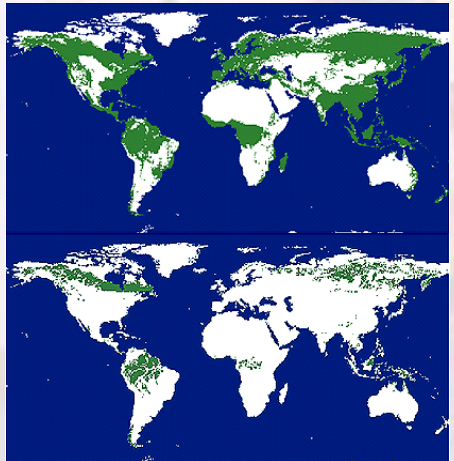
Paradiso and Inferno

I begin this hymn to the regeneration of life in night vigil amid relentless tropical lightning, reclining in a hammock on the *Conquista*, a river boat to Manaus on a pilgrimage to the greatest forest-jungle and hot-spot of biological diversity on planet Earth, the veritable living Garden of Eden, domain of the giant water serpent the great anaconda. I have come to witness at first-hand the impact of human development on our great tropical paradises and to make a plea for the tree of life of diversity while there is still time. It is written in consummation of a tortuous series of journeys along many rivers from the very source of the Amazon in sedge swamps on the high altiplano, along the alpine Urubamba, past the precipitous peaks surrounding Machu Picchu, over the high snowy Andean pass to Qillabamba meeting the Urubamba again rolling out of the cloud forest, navigating white-water rapids in a dug-out canoe down her, cul-

minating in the Pongo de Manique, the manic gorge forming the last wild portal of the Andes. On, past remote villages and missions to the frontier oil town of Sepaua and then by planing outboard canoe down that anaconda, the muddy, log-strewn Ucayali, to sleepy Atalaya. Then in a hot noisy banana boat strewn with bales of dried catfish winding its way relentlessly north for many days, to Pucallpa. Then by river freighter to the junction of the Marañon, where we wandered amid the lagoons and meanders of the Pachaya and Samiria, and on to that decaying gem of the rubber boom, Iquitos a city of 100,000 accessible only by river. On to Leticia at the Columbian, Peruvian, Brazilian triangle and down the Brazilian Solimões now ever-larger, sweeping steadily under the hull as it cuts its way towards Manaus and the final confluence with the clearer, darker Rio Negro, where the mighty Amazon will finally and unambiguously wind it's way unchallenged to the Atlantic Ocean.

World Resources Institute maps of world frontier (virgin) forests as they originally stood and as they stand today. There are additional areas of secondary growth and other regeneration, but these tend to have predominant weedy species and not the climax diversity of virgin forest and jungle.

Of course all the tributaries, from the Madeira to the Madre de Dios, Mother of God, from the Negro to the Napo, are Amazonas in the integral whole, just as *la selva*, the forest and its ecological diversity of plants, fungi and animals is also the verdant Amazonas - the largest tropical forest on Earth, literally the lungs of our living planet, fashioned from over 250 million years ago, as the Andes began to push upward, reversing the westward river flow of the original continental valley that had from time immemorial flowed to the Pacific,

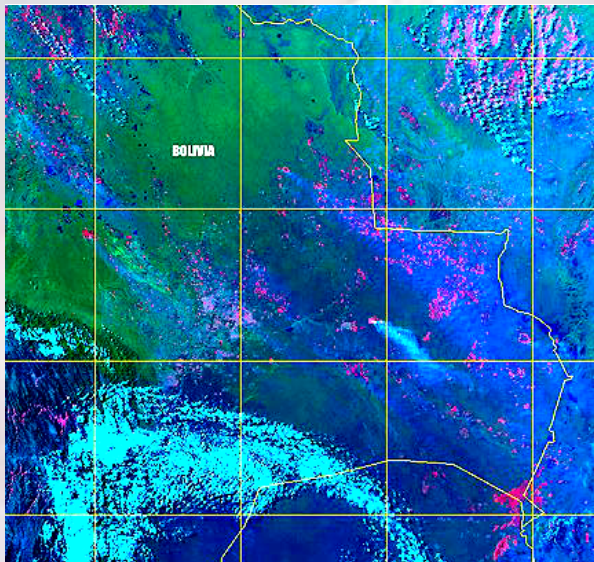


now forming the world's hugest river basin, as the giant shallow lake spanning almost the whole of the South American continent finally broke through to the Atlantic in the East.



Fires on the Rio Madeira, Brazil

Yet the Amazon is unique neither in its diversity nor in the destruction taking place. Diversity is threatened *todo mundo* - the world over - by a mass extinction which will haunt human civilization throughout the rest of our fragile history, unless we can take the steps now to plant the seeds of renewal. Hence this hymn to life.



Bolivian jungle fires (red not spots) and smoke light streaks as photographed by NOAA satellite in the infra-red and visible spectrum combined 12th August 1999. According to information produced by the Project Bolfor, based on the satellite images of NOAA/ NESDIS 4.5 million hectares are affected in Santa Cruz, 2.3 million in Beni, and 1.3 million in the other departments.

The rivers we traverse form an endlessly flowing highway, bordered by thatched villages with their attendant gardens and small plantations, mingling natural harmony with forest

destruction, sometimes living closely in cooperation with the natural world, but nevertheless on a vast scale taming and forever changing the face of the forest along every river bank, because of the mass movement of population into the jungle, diminishing or eliminating many keystone species, from the seed-eating fish such as the great paiche to the tall hardwoods, such as the stately mahogany, and with them the many other dimensions of climax forest diversity, as the secondary growth of a few dominant species lays claim to areas cleared of virgin forest too extensive to regenerate in full diversity.



Fires in the dry tropical forest in the vicinity of Ascension which also had forty nine houses burned by uncontrolled fires lit by hacienda owners a month before.

Many indigenous peoples have learned how to live in close proximity with nature over countless centuries, without causing massive wholesale destruction, although it is true that the first waves of migration of 'primitive' humankind did cause the demise of many of the America's great land animals. Many village societies today do demonstrate how it is possible to live in cooperation with natural diversity and reap, through nurturing it, the benefits of abundant food, diverse medicines and many natural products which enhance the quality of life, both at home and in far-flung urban societies. It is from such village culture that a more compassionate relationship with the natural world already made by many indigenous peoples can be engaged and celebrated by an enlightened eco-society. It is also possible to have a productive world with genuine abundance for all without wholesale destruction of the world's great wilderness areas, given a fairness of distribution of resources to those in genuine need. Currently, there is up to 50% more food produced world-wide than required to feed every man woman and child, so the real problem is fair distribution, clouded by ownership and property rights and who pays the distribution costs, not lack of arable area.

However, unrestrained developmental forces are encroaching upon the landscape from all directions with an ever accelerating pace of wholesale devastation, which could see the great forest resources of living diversity reduced to a few national parks, comprising only a tenth of their former area, before the end of next century.



Vista negro: Panoramas of instant death. The burning of dry tropical forest in Bolivia, September 1999 for hacienda agribusiness development.



If this happens, as current rates of felling and burning indicate, two thirds of the living diversity of planet Earth could become extinct by 2100. Much of this drive for extinction is abetted by international financial pressures, but it is also comes from a deep misunderstanding of humanity's relationship with nature, fuelled by personal greed. Climatic change and rising oceans may make this situation profoundly worse.

There has always been fire and storm, along with small-scale slash and burn and other forms of forest destruction, forming a fractal matrix for subsequent regeneration, but what is different about the current holocaust is its awesomely massive scale and rapidity, combined with climate change, which itself renders species inviable by taking seed out of their climatic germination zone. The development onrush threatens to leave no quarter at all for diversity in the scramble to mount ill-conceived comic-strip development.

Major development organizations such as the World Bank have sponsored extremely destructive practices, including opening access routes which bring in a rash of further destruction and frank financing of short-term exploitative projects in their haste to retrieve foreign debt by wholesale extraction of utilizable resources, or by promoting short-term agribusiness development with little or no regard for the long-term future of the land, or the wider ecological impact.

National and local governments have also shown themselves capable of corrupt exploitation of massive resources and displayed a cavalier disregard for their own living resources in their rush to urban and technological progress. Gilberto Mestrinho, as mayor of Manaus in 1994 declared "Man is the centre of the environment and I will be the governor of men, not of animals and the forest. ... There are hardly any healthy trees in Amazonia and they should all be used before the woodworm gets to them. I like trees and plants, but they are not indispensable. ... After all men have managed to live in space for a year without trees".

When mahogany had already become commercially extinct in Bolivia and there were only about 160 trees left in a national park north of La Paz, officials found that 66 of the remaining mature trees had been illegally felled in a smuggling operation. When attempts were made to hold those to account, this was frustrated, because the perpetrators were associated with high-placed friends of the Bolivian president.



A convoy of articulated logging trucks in the evening at Vila Tunari Bolivia, waiting to take their load through under the shelter of night. We saw species including red mahogany, banned from logging, on such trucks, coming from the direction of a national park. Some logs oozed the dark red sap characteristic of *Virola* species which are endangered and subject to CITES protection.

Developmental forces are in turn fuelled by trans-national corporations, competing in the short term for rapidly diminishing resources such as tropical hardwoods with no interest in or responsibility for the regions they are setting out to exploit for financial gain. Many of these corporations have atrocious track records, such as the Asian logging companies, which have all but destroyed South East Asia's tropical forests in a few years and are now

ving for strategic rights to do the same to the Amazon.



Bulldozers are used both to drag logs and to forcibly clear areas of vegetation. These were being used to do both.

These influences are in turn compounded by rich land owners, often absentees living in cities like La Paz, who have received title, through concessions based on their existing assets in livestock, or drug income, and who seek, often with international financing, to make the most capital as quickly as possible from any form of business development, however ill-conceived or destructive. These are followed by smaller scale colonists, miners, poachers and millers who tend to follow the destructive pattern set up by the development process.



The effects of small scale settlers can also be devastating as they follow on a smaller scale the destructive practices of the larger hacienda owners and development projects. Even as we arrived to shoot they were in the midst of chainsawing down the one remaining tree of any stature in the centre.

Deeply rooted in the human psyche is a more insidious malaise, the combination of mechanism and religious abhorrence of nature that has characterized the Western tradition from the Fall of Biblical Genesis to the Newtonian universe. While the dominant religious theme of Christianity is dominion over an unruly abhorrent, sinful, slimy and sexually mortal natural world, a world to be feared and conquered by man in the name of God, the scientific world view stemming from Newtonian mechanism is one in which nature is merely a *machina de vida*, admittedly complex, but in essence a machine having no intrinsic moral or ethical value in a universe of mechanism essentially devoid of any meaning to existence, except perhaps for the rule of the selfish gene. This opens the door to frank selfish greed in the name of capitalism, and intellectual and other property rights. It is in the combination of these two perspectives, religious and mechanistic, that the most devastating destructive impacts of humanity upon nature and our prospects for a living future are perpetrated in the name of business, the free market, and short-term economic progress.

The evening thunder still echoes with reverberations of the inferno of the burning season we have just witnessed in Bolivia, devastating in one swoop thousands of kilometers of unique tropical forest in a holocaust of some seventeen hundred separate uncontrolled fires, intentionally lit, often by hacienda owners to clear the land for rapid agribusiness development, spanning vast tropical forest areas, a *vista negro* of several days journey, through many distinct endemic regions, culminating outside Trinidad, Trinity echoing the first nuclear blast, in a ring of fire racing towards us from all directions, scorching its way through a living jewel - a verdant ocean of emerald savannas, punctuated by small jungle islands dotted with violet and yellow flowering trees, strewn with small lakes and wetlands, teeming with the diversity of innumerable species of wading birds, capybaras, cayman, monkeys and butterflies, or mariposas as they are known in Espaniol.



Fires on the interspersed savannah and tropical forest islands San Borja, Bolivia September 1999.

A veritable Garden of Eden cut by the flaming sword, the fires levelling in an instant this diversity to a few lonely birds crying as they fly across the blackness of a parched, darkened wasteland - echoing the two destinies of humanity, life and death, the two vistas light and dark, the two worlds good and bad, expressed precisely in the two Spanish words *paradiso* and *inferno* - paradise and hell. It is the inferno of natural diversity which is the

instantaneous transformation from living paradise to *muerto diablo*, death by hell fire, for the *Arbol de Vida* - the Tree of Life - is in biological fact, as in spirit, the ancient tree of immortality, uninterrupted by the mortal coil - to “die like one of the princes” - to which the individual is naturally, bound from the monarch butterfly to the king.

An immortality manifest in and sustained through evolutionary diversity, spanning over three thousand million years, a full third of cosmic time, leading in a web of procreation, sometimes called the germ-line, a web unbroken throughout history, to each and every one of us - the ultimate bearer of immortality in the continuity of life.



Some of the diversity of creatures seen in the immediate vicinity of the fires in the savannah and forest islands, including cayman, monkeys, capybaras, and manifold bird species from tuiuiu to grey herons.

To transform the life tree to instant death in the name of progress carries with it with it an ever-darkening cloud - cumulative long-term depletion of the economic health and viability of human civilization and with it the the hopes and security of life's continuity for our offspring, their offsprings' offspring and the offspring of all life forms for millions of years to come, unless this living hell, the inferno of biological and genetic diversity is arrested and a renewal of life, and with it the robustness against natural disaster, which life's diversity, by its very existence, manifests and protects, is effected in time to save as much as is conceivably possible.

Revival in Tierra de Vera Cruz

Adorning this spectre of paradise and its ultimate destruction in the inferno of hell in the countries of Latin America, are two others. From *El Salvador* - the Savior, famous for its clandestine death squads, to Brazil, christened by its discoverer Cabral *Tierra de Vera Cruz* - “Land of the True Cross”, equally famous for killing every man, woman and child of the millennial movement at Canudos to erase it from the nation's memory and for the annul-

ment of the conviction of Darly Alves da Silva for ordering the assassination of Chico Mendes, environmental campaigner and rubber tapper advocate, the only one among hundreds of such political murders since the 1970s to be effectively brought to trial.



Julio Cañari Alvarado with blue Virgin on the Cristo Rey. A lone Catholic among many born-again evangelists on board.

Complementing this macho tradition of vigilante abrogation of justice is the spectre of many forms of Christianity, from the deeply pagan manifestations of Catholicism, with its Marian processions, accompanied by deafening fireworks and idolatrous statues adorned with the gold of the Incas, a thin veneer for the undying affection for the ancient virgin sachamama, Mother Earth, anaconda of the founding *Ashkanika*, still honoured in the indigenous undercurrents. The many missionary stations

relentlessly converting diverse Indian peoples from their ancient ways into a meek subservience to civilization. The strange Amazonian theological sects and those merging Qechua and Jewish beliefs. The union vegetale nominally Christian but imbibing the vine of the soul. The burgeoning tide of evangelisticas born again in Jesu Cristo, exhorting in the plazas and mercados with loudspeakers, drawing in the trusting and vulnerable with the baptism of rebirth, celebrated in indoctrinations large and small, from two or three gathered in video preaching parlours to en-mass baptisms in football stadiums.

The savannah and forest islands contain many flowering plants including brilliant yellow and purple flowering trees.

On the Conquista almost everyone is in the throes of a Christian revival which is blowing in the wind across Latin America. Several of the crew are born again - amicable but committed to spreading the word that Jesus saves. Many people sing religious hymns loudly. Everyone wants to know what denomination you come from. A woman is studiously leafing through Biblical Apokalypsis beside me as I write. A more intellectual looking man is reading "Hermentutica". Another young man is poring over a Portuguese comic of the New Testament. Direct simplicity of belief conveyed in Jesus saves, Christ loves you. Christ is coming soon! - *Jesu salvae. Cristo te ama. Cristo viene pronto!* - scrawled in white paint on the rock faces of the mountain passes out of La Paz. The question that continues to smoulder as I move through the Amazonas is "Can this ocean of spiritual belief, the historical endowment of the Western cultural tradition to the Garden, *corpus Christianity* as a social movement of transformative love, be tapped to seed a renewal of humanity's relationship with nature?"



To those that would decry the intrusion into the ecological arena of an old style religion which has rejected evolution, treats nature as abhorrent and diabolical and opts for a naive divine creation of a universe only a few thousand years old, I reply that where the great gardens of Earth's living diversity lie are also populations following major world religions, that saving life's diversity is not just a scientific or even rational question, because the Earth stands before us much like an artist's palette, that because the church and religion generally is a river to her people, infiltrating every town and village far into the jungle, given a wind of change to fulfil the destiny of the tree of life, she too can become a flood tide for renewal of life's diversity, by appealing to human altruism and love in a way which science never can on logical grounds alone.

There is no logical or scientific way alone to save the ecology of the planet. Indeed, Bertrand Russel has pointed out that science itself preaches that life is meaningless in a universe of utterly immense violent forces and that only the cosmic heat death awaits those intrepid ones who would venture into the black hole of intellectual honesty. This dilemma of science - that it has no net ethical content - means that science can be used equally for healing our planet's ecology or reducing it to a fragile genetically-engineered nightmare - for every committed ecologist there is an unscrupulous corporate genetic engineer. The choices are creative and have to do with love and inspiration not simply scientific logic.



Butterfly species in the savannah
Beni Biological Reserve.

Although the evolutionary process will be with us as long as there is life on Earth and humanity may pass away through accident or misadventure long beforehand, we have gained such powers to alter the living face of the planet that is its now only through our love and creative vision that the planet will, in the short term become whole again. This is a creative process of free choice which goes far beyond the rational and scientific. In so far as love and social justice have a meaning, they are also the key to the future of life's

diversity. Great social movements, the Christian church and the paths of the book included, have a key part to play because in their redemption, they can give people the will, love and ethical commitment to share and protect Earth's living resources for the greater good.

The Iquitos Naming

from *The Three Halves of Ino Moxo* by Caesar Calvo
Inner Traditions ISBN 0-89281-519-1

Read at Iquitos 10th October 1999 in respect of the tradition of the curandero, the living sacraments, as a warning of the immense loss to the welfare viability and natural experience of future generations in pronouncement of renewal of Biodiversity in proclaiming the epoch of the Tree of Life - Arbol de Vitae.



Reading the namings of Ino Moxo

"Look at the jungle. If you try to listen to the sounds of the jungle what do you hear?" And as if he had just caught himself, as if he himself were both the blowgun and the dart and the hunter and the prey and the burning wood waiting in the kitchen, Ino Moxo raised his voice: "Not only the scream of the alert monkeys, not only the humming of the mosquitoes, of the arambasa, which is the darkest and fiercest bee, of the chinchelejo, which you call dragonfly, of the chushpi, which infects you as it bites, of the charachyupaísa which bleeds without warning, you not only hear the ronsapa hissing in the wind, and the mantablanca, which drinks your hair, and the quilluavispa of yellow flights, and the papási, which is born of worms, but is not a worm, and the wairanga, which never touches the ground.

Not only do you hear the flute bird, the firirín, which can't fly and has wings, nor the ushún nor the tabaquerillo, nor the shánsho nor the piuirí nor the grayish timelo, nor the white white tibe, nor the taráwi, which eats snails and is too black, nor the sharára, which knows how to live under water very well, and even better above the wind, nor the blue zui-zúu, nor the great yungurúru, whose eggs are of the zui-zui colour, nor that giant red and white stork called tuyúyu. Not only will you listen to the all-knowing urkutútu. Nor the quichagarza, loose in excrement. Nor the ucuashéro, nor the tiwakuru, which only eats ants and sings in the top of the wimbras, nor the páwcar, which imitates the all songs of the other birds, with its yellow and black plumage, nor the unchala, the same as a wine-red dove, nor the paujil, which you may have tasted with flesh more flavourful than that of the makisapa monkeys, more flavourful than the meat from the small white lizards, more pleasant than the plum from the tageribá, nor the tatatóo, which is a bird of prey that some call virakocha. You not only hear the maraquíña duck, the locrero, the pinsha, the montete, which in certain places is called trumpetero, the tuhuáyu, the pipite, the panguana, which always lays five eggs and then dies, those blue macaws they call marakána, nor the carnivorous wapapa (surely you have seen it on the Mapuya river), not only do you hear its cousin the wankáwi giving the alarm when a human being approaches, nor the chinwakullin, nor the korokóro nor the ayamáman, which weeps like an abandoned child, nor the camúnguy, nor that man-sized stork with grey feathers called mansháku, so many birds ...

Not only do you hear the fat clouds of insects, chirping out after dusk deep into the labyrinth of the jungle. Not only does the distrustful snake sound out, the tunchi forecasting a death, the sly quiet otorongo seeking warm flesh, nor the sticky ronsoco in the yuca patches, nor the huge fish with big heads in tricky nets.

Not only do you hear fish: the akarawasú, the gamitana, the tamborero, the paiche three metres long with a bony tongue, which lays creatures, not eggs, the peje-torre, which inflates itself with air and floats like a buoy, the dorado which has a single spine, the chállualagarto, the kunchi, the añashúa, the eel that kills you with just one electric discharge, the manitóa, the shitári, the doncella, framed in

black fringes, the chullakaqla, orphan without scales, the tiriri, the fasácuy in the bottom of lakes, the shirúí, the maparate, the shiripira, the bujárqui the makána which looks like a sword with three edges, the shuyu, which knows how to walk on land, a fish of the road, and the canero, which enters your anus and eats your guts, and the demento-chállua, which almost flies through the air, almost, and more incredible, the saltón, that giant fish that jumps several yards above the surface, weighs more than two hundred pounds and measures over two metres long.

Not to speak of the paña , which you know about as piraña which consumes you in a few moments without reluctance. And the kawára huge, and the palometa, tasting almost like a desert and the bujéo also called the river dolphin, the female being more delicious in love than a woman, more tasty according to the fishermen who have tried it, and it has a vagina and breasts like a woman, and delivers its yong like a woman. Cutting out the labia of a female bujéo and curing them, some shimimpiaré make infallible bracelets for the love affairs of rejected lovers, as is well known. And you also hear the great carachama with a stone mouth, which lives out of the water for a week or more , and which comes from long ago , from before the deluge, before the tiger came and dispersed our first Ashkanika ancestors, so many fish ...

Not only do you hear snakes, the innocent afanánga, harmless among the pastures, barely defending itself by swishing its tail, and the aguaje-rnachácuy, which breathes in the water and has skin like the surface of the fruit of the palm, and the deadly small naka-naka stalking in the rivers, and the mantona with its useless length of ten metres, harmless to anyone with its ten yards of strident colours, pure naive ornament, and the poisonous five meter long chushúpe biting its prey several times, and the yanaboa reaching fifteen metres in length, as thick as a man, whom it first hypnotizes and the devours, and the sachamáma boa with ears, different from the yakumama, which lives only in the water. The sachamáma is a land boa, it inadvertently undergoes mimesis: grass grows freely on its body. The jergón instead undegoes mimesis but with a purpose: As it grows its skin turns to a reddish colour, mottled like brilliant leaves, and you can spot it by its aura, by that brilliance, that the jergón leaves in the places through which it will pass, as a signal, as a soul.

You hear so many existences, so many silent wisdoms, when you hear the jungle. And that is even without being able to hear any longer the song of the fishes which once brightened the waters of Pango, the Tambo and the Ucayali rivers, muscical animals that foresaw the arrival of the great black otorongo, and fled days before its arrival and were saved. You must know that the otorongo, with its giant paws produced an avalanche of rocks that killed the life in the rivers. Only those singing fish, which in their songs spoke and listened to the future, could survive the mud of those paws. Even though today they may no longer know how to sing, or perhaps if they still know how to sing they must do so in secret, with sounds our ears are not accustomed to perhaps in another dimension ...



Floating markets Iquitos

You should know that everyone, even human beings when they are very young, can hear the future, just as fish could do before the deluge, as so many present day animals can do. So many lives that know what will happen and cannot speak to us, warn us. Children in general, have nine senses, not five, and I have seen some that have access to eleven. As they grow, their bodies gradually become poisoned with foods and with miseries, and as their souls become home to stained thoughts and dreams, the bodies and the thoughts of men lose their senses, their forces. That is why the sorcerors, the great shirimpiure, in order to fully exercise the powers of air, to fully develop the powers of seeing use the spirits of children, souls like new little families, occupying the abodes of their body,

the ruinous dwellings ...

Not only do you hear animals, the awíwa, the worm one can eat like the zúri, another tasty worm of many colours, and the noisy toad that weighs more than a kilogram and is called wálo and the bocholócho, which knows how to sing , and in its song knows only how to say its own name, bocholóchoooo, calling always to itself from afar, and the manacarácuy, a fighter, invincible among birds, and the cupisu, a small water turtle, which eats its own eggs and flesh, and the firece wangána, wild pigs that live in herds of savage fangs, and the tokón, that monkey with a huge hairy

tail and the allpacomejeen an ant sentenced to live in the ground, and the bayuca, poisonous worm covered with blue, yellow, red and green hairs, and the large ant without poison that feeds on mushrooms and is called curuince, and the añuje, almost like a hare of some size, and the isango, which we can't see and bites us, getting into our flesh like a punishment, and the anañawi, the eye of the dead, which others call the firefly or glowworm, and the achúni, sought after because it has a bony phallus, which when powdered is used to season the potions used by impotent men, and the other wild boar with coarse hair and a snowy collar named sajino, and the ronsoco, perhaps the largest rodent in nature one metre long and one hundred kilos in weight, and the apashira, whose name is used by villagers as a synonym for a woman's sexual parts. The sounds come from so many animals that you've seen, that you haven't seen, that no one will ever see - creatures that learn how to think and converse just as human beings do ...

The sounds also come from plants, from vegetables: the katáwa, with poisonous sap, the chambira which lends its leaves to make rope, the breadfruit tree, which they call pandisho the tall makambo, with big leaves and a fruit resembling a man's head, the spiny fejiñá, which grows in the lowlands, the rugged pashako the machimango, with impossible odors, the chemicúa, whose branches tear with the slightest breeze, the wakapú with harder heartwood than the bloodwood, the itininga, the witino, the itahúba, the winkungu, with its black spines, and the straight tree called espintana, which when fallen is good to sit on and talk, and the wakapurána, better for firewood, and the chonta, heart-of-palm, from waseai, cinámi, pijúayu and hunguruáhuí, palms. And the hunguráhuí from whose fruit flows an oil which makes hair grow. And the creeping wayúsa whose leaves contain a powerful tonic to erase weakness, and the sapote with a fruit the color of green shade. And the very hard tawarí. And the shiringa, the rubber tree that unwittingly brought us disgrace. And the quinilla and the tamaráo, and the shapája of oily fruits and the wiririma and the giant shebón, offering leaves to thatch rooves with, and the vegetable marble we call tágua, and the stúlli, that rarest banana with great red flowers and the wingu, a bush whose fruit becomes a cup to hold drinks and is called tutúmo and the pitájáy, the black and hard pona and the giant aguaje, and the andiroba, and the caimito, with fruits like a virgin's breasts, and the waqrapona, waisted palm and the delicious anona, and the cashú, which is almond on the outside, and on the inside more sweet and juicy, and the apasharáma, with a leather-curing sap, and the barbascó, with a poison root, and the citrus camucúmu, semiaquatic, and the capirona, matchless as firewood and charcoal, and the aripasa, with its small green-gray round fruit not to be eaten and the curmala, and the punga and the cumaréba and the cashirimuwéna, and the ashúri, which protects teeth from caries, and the catiríma, whose fruits are fought over to the death by some fish, and the beautiful cocona, and that tuber eaten raw, called ashipa and the pucaquiro with very hard red heart wood and the leafy punqúyu under whose shadow nothing can live because it expels venom from its branches and the leafier parinári, with a large red fruit called súpay-oqóte, devils ass, and the lupuna in the river banks, with its immobile wings red on white, just above the ground, the biggest of trees in all of Amazonia. And the other one that rains like a winter roof. And the other one that inflates and explodes worse than a hundred bullets in the night, deep in the forest. and the renaco, growing more than forests without leaves and without flowers and the garabatokasha, which cures several types of cancers and dissolves the torpor of the aging joints, and the tamshi, which distances you from the cold and the coca used with ayawashka for divination, and the kamalonga is used also for diagnosis, and the renaquilla entertains the lame, and the wankawisacha cures alcoholics forever, and the chamáiro helps in chewing coca, and the blackscrow floating beneath water, halfway down thin rivers which betray better than the juice of tohé when the moon is green and the time is good to cut cedars without splitting their bark, and the paka, which also sounds like a tunnel along vanished rivers, and the zarsaparilla cures syphilis, and the green papaya eliminates the mange and the bad breath and its leaves cover the toughest meats and turn the juice of the flowers of tohé. And the tohé which makes you see the worlds of today and the worlds of tomorrow that form those of today, and the para-pára, better known as the as the hipporúru. That leaf never loses its shape, as if it returns to the original shape in the branch, always returns to how it was, to its size, to the size and form of its two births. And it is not for that reason but for the powers that flow from afar that the leaf of the hipporúru knows how to return sexual youthfulness to men and the quinoquina, which centuries ago learned how to wash rotting wounds, And the vine of the dead ayawashka sacred, the Mother of the Voice in the Ear. With ayawashka, with oni xuma, if you deserve it, you can pass from dreams to reality, without leaving the dream ... So many, so many plants all producing sounds. The abuta - pay attention - the abuta, a medium height tree whose reddish root is boiled and when the liquid is drunk, in a few days the sugar in the blood is erased, diabetic no longer suffer. And the mariquita, half lover, half flower, which knows how to open only in the purest shade. And the tzangapilla, orange and large, an only daughter, a flower warmer than a feverish forehead. All of them, all of them produce sound as the stones do.

And above all, you hear the sounds of the steps of the animals one has been before being human, the steps of the stones and the vegetables, and the things every human has previously been. And also what he has heard before. before all that you can hear at night in the jungle.. Inside each one of us hears throughout life, dances and fifes and promises and lies and fears and confessions and war

shouts and moans of love. Voices of the dying that one has been or that one has only heard.. True stories, stories of tomorrow. Because everything that one will hear, all of that sounds in the middle of the night, in the jungle. It is in the jungle that sounds in the middle of the night. Memory is much, much more, do you know? The truthful memory also remembers what is to be - and what will never come about, it also retains that.. Imagine. Just imagine. Who could hear everything? What could hear everything at once and believe it?



Cristo Redemptor - Rio

The Rio Redemption of the Tree of Life

I'm coming here to Rio to pronounce something about the millennium, and its about the destruction of biodiversity in the Amazon and its preservation.

I come on this vigil to Rio because the Rio biodiversity convention happened in 1992 and essentially all those good promises have been abandoned, that the rate of clearing of rain-forest in the Amazon basin has increased by perhaps thirty percent. The last burning season in Bolivia was an atrocious example just as the fires in Sumatra in 1997 and 1998 with el Niño were atrocious, of absolutely wanton destruction promoted by many factors - promoted by national governments to make rapid gains, because of corruption; promoted by transnational corporations; promoted by the world bank, who are trying to amend their track record, but their track record is atrocious, promoted by hacienda owners who manage to get large swathes of land by owning cattle, and in final turn by small scale settlers who don't know any better, because of the examples that are set - massive destruction of hell fire throughout the hot spots of genetic diversity on this planet.

Now the religious tradition stands accountable, particularly Christianity and the Judaic tradition assuming dominion over nature in the very genesis, in assuming dominion in the Eden story by the sweat of our brow to conquer nature, in a failure of engagement, in a confrontation with the natural in which woman was cursed, the snake was cursed, nature was cursed and by the sweat of our brow we set out to dominate nature and that has been an excuse ever since for civilization to dominate nature in the name of religion.

And what we find now looking back on this whole epoch is that it is really a stream of consciousness account of the fall of humanity in patriarchal urban civilization from integration and attunement with nature. And we now stand as the dawning of cosmic humanity looking at ourselves and the universe, and this is the real apocalypse, this is the unveiling of our

true nature as cosmological entities biologically in space-time.



The aim of Jesus' mission was to bring about the return of the tree of life and that was the sense in which he was trying to undo the original mistake that people perceived to have been made in Eden. Now the mistake that was made in Eden was to forsake the continuity of immortal life and the prophecy at the end of the Bible is that of the return of the tree of life, which is "things hidden since the foundation of the world". The tree of life was hidden and withdrawn by God lest we have both immortal life and knowledge.

Now to care for the planet in cosmological time we need now to have the tree of life back.

And there is a phenomenal contrast between the destruction of the Amazon forest by fire by what is inferno and the destruction of all the great forests of the world by logging by fire by chainsaw by bulldozer, but particularly by fire because inferno is the word for hell and paradise is couched in terms in every artistic representation of the diversity of the animals, Adam naming the animals, the diversity of the animals and plants, and the creation of the cosmos in its diversity and we stand responsible in cosmic time.

Shortly after Jesus was crucified, there were over a million people reputedly killed in the siege of Jerusalem and there was a diaspora of Israel so there's a real sense that the ends of days that was prophesied by the Jewish apocalyptists in a political sense actually did come about, but the mission of Jesus and the timing of the mission stands very temporary in human political terms by comparison with the sort of crisis we are perpetration on the world in evolutionary time through the destruction of biodiversity and by genetic engineering our food plants.

And the damage that is being done now in the Amazon and that damage that will be done of companies like Monsanto are allowed to engineer the food plants that are grown across the vast productive areas of the planet and not protect the natural diversity of our food plants is absolutely huge and will be a detriment and a famine to humanity which could last fifty million years, at least ten million years.

We are facing a situation that between a third and two thirds of our genetic diversity will be lost now you cannot regain that ever.