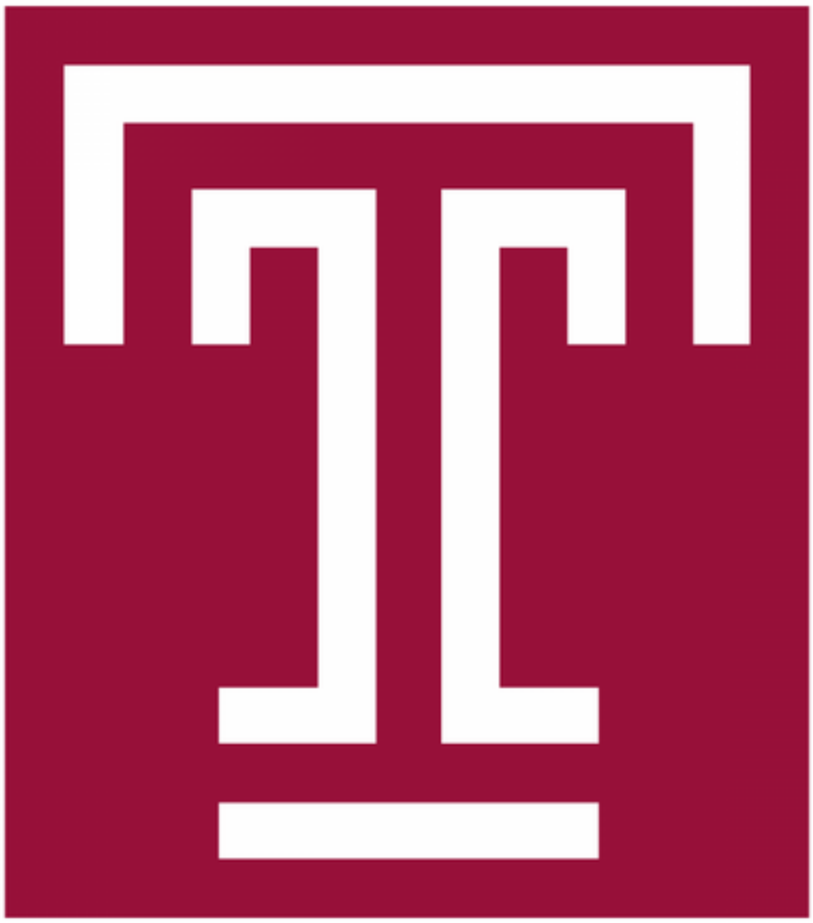

Researching Alexander von Humboldt

Course: **World Society GenEd**

Instructor: **Stella Gevorgyan-Ninness**

Student: **Jakob Werle**

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Despite being somewhat forgotten today; Alexander von Humboldt's work laid the foundation for the contemporary understanding of environmental science and can be found throughout research today. Multiple sources will be analyzed for their credibility and ability to be used in scholarly applications.

Resource 1

Challenges and opportunities for biogeography—What can we still learn from von Humboldt?

Alexander von Humboldt's role in environmental science was made clear in Schrodt's journal article, *Challenges and opportunities for biogeography—What can we still learn from von Humboldt?*. The main focus of this paper is to inform the reader on how von Humboldt's work has persuaded the understanding of contemporary biogeography by summarizing his workstyle and discussing their strengths and weaknesses. The author remarks how strong von Humboldt's systematic research style is, "His approach was characterized by making connections between non-living and living nature (including humans), based on interdisciplinary thinking and informed by large amounts of data from systematic, accurate measurements in a geographical framework." (Schrodt et al., 2019). Comparing this claim to von Humbolts' controversial influence by Nazi Germany displays the author's broad evaluation (Schrodt et al., 2019). Furthermore, the author includes a vast number of citations while making arguments, which can be seen both in the direct writings and the reference list.

Resource 2

The Lasting Contribution of Alexander von Humboldt to Our Understanding of the Natural World

Taking a straighter forward approach, Mohan and Tamma capture von Humboldt's addition to environmental science by explaining the difference between his findings and their contemporary understandings. While this article provides insights into von Humboldt's influence, the analysis is rather shallow; only going one or two layers deep when discussing a particular piece of literature or research. Yet, the article fortifies itself by having a wide range of examples to explore further. For example, at least four of von Humboldt's works are provided in the section *Humbolt's Publications and Influence on Popular Understanding of Science* (Mohan & Tamma, 2021).

Resource 3

Basics of Environmental Science

Basics of Environmental Science is an introduction to environmental sciences for anyone who is interested (Allaby, 2000). An attempt to educate the reader, the textbook covers a wide

breath of environmental topics ranging from a non-technical introduction to environmental science to depth analyses on a plethora of researchers and scientific additions. Von Humboldt is only brought up twice throughout the entire 323-page text. However, the author was certain to grasp von Humboldt's contributions to environmental sciences. He is given credit for his exploration of South Africa and foundational work that established much of what we now call an "empirical" scientific approach (Allaby, 2000).

Final Evaluation

All three articles provided insights into Alexander von Humboldt's influence on contemporary environmental science. In a scholarly application focused on von Humboldt, Schrodt's *Challenges and opportunities for biogeography—What can we still learn from von Humboldt?* would be the most useful article due to its deep analysis of von Humboldt's technical work and discourse on societal controversies. Despite less focus on von Humboltd, *Basics of Environmental Science* is also a strong choice because of its wide coverage of topics and credibility. While *The Lasting Contribution of Alexander von Humboldt to Our Understanding of the Natural World* was informative, it did not provide as deep analyses as the other texts, making it the final choice.

References

Allaby, M. (2000). *Basics of Environmental Science* (2nd ed.). Taylor & Fracis Group.

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