

SEARCHING FOR PATHS IN DARK WATERS:
ALEXANDRE RODRIGUES FERREIRA, ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE
AND THE NATIVE PEOPLES OF THE RIO NEGRO, BRAZIL.

EDUARDO G. NEVES

"VOYAGES OF SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY"

PROF. RICHARD SORRENSON

MAY 1991

University of Bloomington / Indiana

I. INTRODUCTION

In 1492, arriving at the island of Hispaniola, Christopher Columbus named the natives he met there as "Indians". It was his firm belief that he had reached India through an alternative route, so the choice of the name seemed natural. Columbus and his men left, others came later to realize that the place was not India, but the natives, from the Pacific Northwest to Tierra del Fuego, remained "Indians". It could almost be a joke, but this very first episode represents well the way Europeans would deal with the natives for the next centuries.

In the beginning, the natives were the inhabitants of India; then they turned to be different things: living fossils, an example of some early stage of human evolution; a paradigm of degradation; or the symbol of nature's good qualities. In all these representations - no matter how good or bad they were - it is clear the effort of the conquerors to understand the natives according to a frame of reference they brought from Europe.

The Europeans also brought their plants, animals, weapons, diseases, religions, and, significantly, they brought "history", for everything that happened in the Americas before 1492 belongs to "prehistory". Native Americans could not be indifferent to the European presence, and they also attempted to understand it according to their frames of reference. So, if at one side we have reports, journals, chronicles, ethnographies; at the other there are messianic movements, cargo cults, myths. In

this paper, I will discuss one aspect of this multifaced process of understanding by discussing the works of two European scientists that travelled in the Amazon in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

These two scientists - Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira and Alfred Russel Wallace - had very few things in common but happened to spend a significant amount of their time and energy in the Rio Negro, a northern tributary of the Amazon. Different reasons led both men to work there and they left distinctive impressions about the region and its people. I am also interested in working in the Rio Negro and initially I conceived this paper as an adequate opportunity to appreciate the documental value of Rodrigues Ferreira's and Wallace's production. One of my main concerns is to evaluate the impact of the European presence over the native populations of the area, and then I reasoned that it would be interesting to use Rodrigues Ferreira and Wallace as sources of information on this subject.

However, I realized that, in order to accomplish this, I needed also to understand the circumstances in which these travels were performed. In other words: to be able to evaluate the potential use of Rodrigues Ferreira's and Wallace's reports on the Rio Negro, I had also to understand the reasons that led both men to travel there, the ways they were being supported on their endeavor, the interest they - and other people - had on the information they were gathering. I had then to sketch something like a sociological study of their production, in order to frame

their works in an adequate historical perspective. In light of this, I would say that the paper develops in two fronts: one, probably more interesting for the historian of science, focus on the sociological/historical perspective mentioned above; the other, of a more personal interest, considers the potential anthropological information that is stored in these reports.

The paper is organized in the following way: first, I will present the methodological instruments to be used on my analysis; second, I will discuss Rodrigues Ferreira's and Wallace's travels individually; finally, I will briefly discuss the ethnographic potential of the information provided by these two sources.

II. INSTRUMENTS FOR AN ANALYSIS OF THE TRAVELLERS

Brazilianist anthropologists have traditionally made an extensive use of chronicles, journals and reports of early travelers in order to obtain historical information about the populations they were studying. For instance, an examination of the "Handbook of South American Indians" published in the late 1940's shows how the contributions of ethnologists like Alfred Métraux and Curt Nimuendaju are based on the use of this type of document.

Probably the best example of this procedure is the work of Florestan Fernandes. Fernandes was never a fieldworker, and all his ethnological production about the Tupinambá, the former inhabitants of the Brazilian shore in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, is based on the use of chronicles of missionaries, colonists, adventurers of the period. From these documents - thirty five primary sources covering a period of almost one hundred and fifty years - Fernandes extracted information to produce two monumental works, "A Sociedade Tupinambá" and "Função Social da Guerra na Sociedade Tupinambá", where he attempted to analyze the extinct Tupinambá society according to a functionalist perspective.

Because of the nature of his work, Fernandes was concerned in establishing some formal procedures to guide the use of historical sources by anthropologists. For him the use of historical documents only makes sense when these documents are

considered under the broader social context in which they were generated (FERNANDES 1975: 270). By social context he meant not only the political and social characteristics of the period when these documents were produced, but also, the major ways in which natural and social phenomena were apprehended, understood and explained. In this perspective, European eyes and minds would privilege the observation of some aspects of reality in detriment of others, as well as the description of the most singular and exotic aspects of the societies they were encountering, like incest or infanticide. It is possible then to suggest that there was a broad formal coherence in the ways that this new reality was being experienced and expressed by Europeans. As Fernandes stated: "the state of spirit of the individuals that attempted to transform their personal knowledge, obtained directly in their status of agents of the "Western World" expansion, is characterized by a certain orientation of attention, and by a related concern with veracity" (IBID: 272, tm). Fernandes then concluded that such common formal structure in perception and description shared by the chroniclers, would guarantee his use of documents produced by a diverse range of people and covering a time span of one hundred and fifty years, to elaborate a synchronic model of the functioning of Tupinambá society.

There are however some problems with Fernandes' reasoning. If it is true that there are some common patterns of apprehension, description and explanation than can be verified in different narratives, a balanced analysis of these documents

needs also to consider the particular circumstances of the experiences being portrayed. For instance, while the colonists have been always supportive of the use of indian slave labor, the Jesuits were strong defenders of indian freedom. So, despite being agents or representatives of this thing called "the Western World", missionaries and mercenaries had different interests in the colonies and it is likely that such differences appear in their reports. Moreover, European notions about native Americans were always changing during the last five hundred years, what also contributed to bring diversity to the content and scope of reports.

In an attempt to refine some of the questions that Fernandes did not explore at length, João Pacheco de Oliveira Filho suggested that the category "traveller" is too generic, encompassing individuals with different formations, tasks and interests (OLIVEIRA Fo, 1987a, 1987b). Based in his research about travellers of the Upper Amazon in the eighteenth century and first half of the nineteenth century, he concluded that four general subgroups could be identified in that particular population of travellers (1987a: 127).

First, there were great scientific expeditions, like La Condamine's, Rodrigues Ferreira's, Spix and Martius', and Agassiz'. Such expeditions were funded by the state, or scientific societies; they were composed by more than one individual and their members had formal scientific training, some of them being eminent figures at that time (IBID: 129). Second, there were

travels whose main goal was to provide specimens to museums, scientific institutions and private collectors. People belonging to this group had also a profound scientific interest but they lack formal academic training. Their position in the intellectual picture of the period was marginal, but they indeed made important scientific contributions. Funding was limited and irregular, and because of this and all the work of preparing the specimens, these travels tended to last for long periods of time. In this group we find people like Alfred Russel Wallace, Henry Walter Bates, and Richard Spruce (IBID: 130). A third group of travellers was composed by individuals whose main goal was to do economic and geographic surveys of the Amazon. These travels were either funded by private or public institutions, their nature was very pragmatic, and the observations made focused on things like the climate, the potential use of rivers as means of communication, the potential use of natural resources. Among this group of travellers, there were W. Smyth and Herndon (IBID: 132). Finally, there was a last and more heterogeneous group, which main characteristic was the fact that these individuals were travelling with private funding, what in part explains the short span of their travels. People belonging to these groups had different formations and different goals, there were writers - Monnier, physicists - Avé-Lallemant, bored millionaires - Osculatti, militaries - Maw. Because of these differences the quality of their reports is also variable (IBID: 133).

Although it was elaborated to deal with a specific

group of people travelling in a particular region at a particular period, I will transplant Oliveira Filho's scheme to analyze Ferreira's and Wallace's travels in the Upper Rio Negro. The period of time I am dealing with is the same as he was, and both Ferreira and Wallace fit well under the categories Oliveira Filho presented, what makes my use of his categories not that arbitrary.

I believe that we can now re-consider Fernandes' early propositions in light of Oliveira Filho's scheme. So, instead of searching for a common pattern of apprehension and depiction of reality among an homogeneous mass of travelers, we are able to distinguish basic differences in the structure and functioning of the voyages, differences that would condition the form, content and scope of the documents made - or not - available to the public.

Thence, in order to place traveller's reports in an adequate historical perspective, as well as to evaluate the potential of the ethnographic data they contain, the following questions must be asked: which were the goals of the voyage ? Who was funding it ? Who was travelling ? Which were the rewards for the travellers ? How were the travels internally organized ? (OLIVEIRA Fo. 1987a: 101).

But if the above inquiries relate more to the structure, the organization of the travels, it is also important to identify the unique eye of the observer in the way phenomena were apprehended and depicted. The critical reader of the

documents should then be able to recognize that there is a tension between the constraints imposed by the structure and organization of the travels at one side, and the ways travellers would present their experiences at the other.

For Oliveira Filho, the process of apprehension and depiction of phenomena includes five levels: observation, perception, interpretation, expression, and practical goals. "Observation" refers to the mechanic record of things; "perception" includes the intellectual framework through which were observed; "interpretation" is formed by the concepts and notions that account for the phenomena observed in light of a given set of theories and ideologies; "expression" consists the materialization of these interpretations in a given form; and "practical goals" indicates the way the four previous levels were influenced by the immediate objectives of the travel (1987b: 159).

In the following sections I will attempt to apply these methodological tools to analyze Ferreira's and Wallace's reports about Upper Rio Negro native populations. I will initially focus on the structure of these travels, then I will examine the way the world views of both authors limited the range of their observations.

III. ALEXANDRE RODRIGUES FERREIRA

Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira occupies a dubious place in the history of Brazilian science. Born in Brazil during the colonial period, Rodrigues Ferreira had all his scientific training in Portugal and, by reading his reports, one realizes that he identified himself more with the interests of the metropolis than with the interests of the colony. However, during the twentieth century, Brazilian scholars attempted to view Ferreira as a kind of hero, a pioneer of Brazilian science in the eighteenth century, the local Humboldt (CORREA Fo 1939).

Rodrigues Ferreira was born in Salvador, state of Bahia in 1756. It was there that he obtained his basic education, and in 1770 he moved to Portugal in order to pursue an ecclesiastic career. After his initial studies in the University of Coimbra - the most important of Portuguese schools of the period - Rodrigues Ferreira changed his mind and decided to study natural history instead of religion. At that time, Coimbra had just passed through profound changes that aimed to align it with other European universities. Several foreign scholars were hired and one of them, an Italian from Pádova called Domingos Vandelli, exerted a strong influence on him. It is probable that Rodrigues Ferreira was exposed to the work of other European scientists of the period through his contact with these foreign professors.

In the 1770's the Portuguese government decided to organize scientific expeditions to the colonies in Africa and

America, and so in 1778 Rodrigues Ferreira was indicated by Vandelli to led an expedition to the Amazon region in Brazil (GOELDI 1895: 7). Other expeditions were sent to Mozambique - Manoel Galvão da Silva; Angola - Angelo Donati; and Cape Verde - João da Silva Feijó (CORREA Fo 1939). In 1779 he got his doctorate in philosophy and then moved to Lisbon where he worked on the "Real Museu da Ajuda". In this period he also participated in a scientific expedition to the coal mine of Buarcos, while waiting for the moment to leave to Brazil.

It was only in 1783 that Rodrigues Ferreira initiated his travels in the Amazon. With him came two artists - José Joaquim Freire and Joaquim José Codina - and one botanist technician - Agostinho Joaquim do Cabo. His main supporters were Martinho de Mello e Castro, then an important minister in the court of Lisbon, and Martinho de Souza Albuquerque and João Pereira Caldas, governors of the provinces of Grão-Pará and São José do Rio Negro. Rodrigues Ferreira brought official instructions that allowed him to ask for all kinds of help from government officers, including food, indians, shelter and equipments (GOELDI 1895: 9-10). He could then rely on an extensive network of relations that would provide him and his fellows material and logistical support. They were also receiving a salary - 400\$000 a year for Ferreira and 300\$000 a year for his assistants (CORREA Fo 1939: 197).

Rodrigues Ferreira's travels lasted for nine years, from 1783 to 1792. He started off in Belém, at the mouth of the

Amazon, where he spent almost one year visiting the surroundings, including Marajó island. In september of 1784 he left Belém, arriving at Barcellos, then capital of the province of São José do Rio Negro, in march of 1785. He would spend the next three and half years travelling by the Negro and some of its major tributaries like the Branco, the Uaupés, the Içana and the Xié, among others. During this time, Barcellos functioned as his base of operations, the place to which he would always return after some months of travel, and where he would process the information and material collected. It is the documents produced in this period, particularly from august to december of 1785 when he travelled in the Upper Rio Negro, that will be discussed here. In august of 1788, Rodrigues Ferreira initiated his journey up the Madeira river to the province of Mato Grosso, where he stayed until september of 1791, returning to Belém in the beginning of 1792. At the end of this year he returned to Portugal.

After his arrival in Portugal, Rodrigues Ferreira was made vice-director of the "Real Gabinete de História Natural" and the Botanical Garden in 1795, a position he occupied until his dead. Ferreira spent the rest of his life processing and studying the material he collected in the Amazon, but he would suffer great distress with this work. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Portugal was passing through a stage of open decadence, and money to be invested on scientific research was then scarce. Even worst, in 1807 the Napoleonic army invaded Portugal, forcing the royal family to seek refuge in Brazil. It is not clear why

Rodrigues Ferreira did not escape with the royal family, for around 15,000 people followed the king in his retreat across the Atlantic, and Ferreira himself was Brazilian.

In 1808, a commission of French scientists led by Geoffroy Saint Hilaire - who followed Bonaparte in his journey to Egypt - visited Portugal with the goal of confiscate all objects considered of scientific interested stored in Portuguese museums. There are no precise figures for the quantity of material seized by Saint-Hilaire. According to Goeldi, at least 1,583 zoological specimens, 1,360 botanical specimens, 10 fossils, 59 minerals, and 5 manuscripts were taken to France (1895: 105-106). Many of the specimens were still under study and Rodrigues Ferreira did not publish anything from his Amazonian travels during his lifetime. Therefore, it is probable that several species classified and presented as new by nineteenth century French naturalists, had been in fact collected and possibly studied by Rodrigues Ferreira. The last few years of his life were spent in deep melancholy, and in 1815 he died at the age of 59.

Rodrigues Ferreira's work is poorly known outside Brazil and Portugal. He did not publish the material he collected and analyzed during his travel to the Amazon. In a way, the travel itself is but one part of a great scientific expedition: people like Humboldt and Wilkes spent decades only processing and publishing the material they collected in their travels, and it was this armchair activity that secured them fame and recognition by their scientific peers. Rodrigues Ferreira did not publish and

even if he had done so, his language was the Portuguese, then and now a marginal language in terms of scientific publications.

The scientific production resulting from the "Philosophical Journey" can be divided in three groups: written material, ichnography, and specimens collected. In the first group there are twenty ethnographic memoirs; eleven zoological memoirs; five botanical memoirs; two mineralogical memoirs; two memoirs on agriculture; one on navigation; and one on medicine (CORREA FILHO 1939: 224; FERREIRA 1972, 1974). There are also twenty one miscellaneous writings, including travel journals, information of diverse subjects like hydrography, history, and other "philosophical observations" (CORREA FILHO 1939: 225). Some of this material was published posthumously, others remain unissued. The "Diary of the Philosophical Journey to the Rio Negro" was published in separate parts in the 1880's, in the "Revista Trimestal do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico do Brasil". An integral edition, commemorative of the bicentenary of the "Philosophical Journey" was issued by the Museu Paraense Emilio Goeldi, of Belém, in 1983. This the edition I am using in this paper.

The specimens collected were periodically sent to Belém and Lisbon. Because of bad care, many of them were already ruined when Rodrigues Ferreira returned to Portugal. Also, the confiscation of the specimens by the French make it difficult to evaluate the amount of material that was shipped. Just as an example, from the Rio Negro alone, thirteen remittances were sent, a total of

202 volumes including living animals, plants, drawings, texts (CORREA FILHO 1939: 204).

The ichnographic production is composed by 912 watercolors and ink drawings, prepared by José Joaquim Freire and Joaquim José Codina (HARTMANN 1975: 23). It is probable that the watercolors were only finished in Portugal, after sketches elaborated during the journey (IBID: 25). For Thekla Hartmann, "the descriptions and graphic representations of indians (...) are ethnographically precise. The objects represented in the watercolors are accurately depicted and resemble well the originals. There is nothing vague. They were not included for decorative reasons. Their record is documental: in most cases they allow for the tribal identification of the indians represented" (1975: 49, tm).

Rodrigues Ferreira's was the first expedition to the Amazon organized and funded by the Portuguese crown with - at least formally - explicit scientific purposes. Before his travels, the available historical information about Upper Rio Negro native populations comes from reports of missionaries, militaries or government functionaries. Among them, there are the works of the priests José Monteiro de Noronha and Ignacio Szentmartonyi, who travelled in the area in the 1750's; Francisco Xavier Ribeiro de Sampaio for the 1770's and Manoel da Gama Lobo d'Almada for the 1780's (ALVES DA SILVA 1962: 20; MELLO LEITAO 1941, MOREIRA NETO 1983, WRIGHT 1981: 600). For Hartmann, Rodrigues Ferreira's work is historically important because it provides "information

about an intermediary time period between the Jesuit's reports, that were suddenly interrupted when the order was banned from Brazil, and the reports of foreign naturalists of the first half of the nineteenth century" (1975: 33, tm).

However, the reading of Rodrigues Ferreira's works indicates in fact that he was as concerned with economical and political matters as he was with scientific subjects. For Carlos Moreira Neto, his work was conditioned "by the multiplicity of the subjects of political and administrative interest that he should inform of and, in some cases, suggest solutions" (1983: 18). The metropolitan government was eager to know about the economic potential of the colony as well as about the factors that hindered its development, and the information provided by the "Philosophical Journey" was expected to be helpful in this way. However, his case was not an exception: eighteenth century scientific voyages were never purely scientific, they also had a pragmatic character that resulted from the major interests of the funding agents. So, information about better routes of navigation, topographic maps of the shores, indications of safe harbors, were as important as the description of new species. In the eighteenth century, "le voyageur n'est pas l'auteur de son regard. C'est le monarque, le prélat, le négociant, bref le commanditaire qui doivent voir à travers de son récit" (WEIL 1984: 57).

It is through this pragmatic perspective that the ethnographic value of Rodrigues Ferreira's work needs to be

understood. I will now proceed to a brief discussion of his views about natives expressed in the "Diary of the Philosophical Journey in the Rio Negro". In 1757, the temporal and spiritual control of Indian villages was withdrawn from the missionaries (REIS 1989: 113), a decision that encouraged the use of native slave labor in the Amazon. This new lay system - called "Directory" - where the Indian villages were administered by people indicated by the crown - the "Directors of Indians" - was openly criticized by Rodrigues Ferreira (1983: 76, 95). For him, the use of native labor was not adequate to the needs of the colony, and the best solution would be the introduction of African slaves (pp. 519, 656). He also believed that the only way to assure the development of the region would be the replacement of extractivism by an economy oriented towards agriculture and cattle ranching (pp. 111-114, 125, 690). The accomplishment of this project would imply in the introduction of a new population in the area, composed by Europeans - to control the work - and Africans - to perform it. The Indians themselves were not considered in terms of a developmental policy (GALVAO & MOREIRA NETO 1974: 14).

In Rodrigues Ferreira's opinion, there was nothing intrinsically bad about the Indians, but they lack initiative to perform things by themselves. In a comment about native agriculture he stated that the Indians were not "as deficient of ideas of interest, as it is believed; the question is for us to be able to stimulate them" (pp. 62). So, the role of Europeans was to

teach the natives, to show them the way to improvement. However, he advocated the use of force against rebels when it would be necessary to "pacify" them, as it was the case of the powerful Mura and Mundurucu (GALVAO & MOREIRA NETO 1974: 17).

Rodrigues Ferreira had the opportunity to observe several native societies, some of them no longer extant. In his comments, however, the different groups are not always clearly differentiated from themselves. In the "General Participation of the Rio Negro" - a kind of summary of the "Diary of the Philosophical Journey" - he advises that: "in just one village, as many different languages are spoken as are the different tribes of natives that live there. The superstition of all of them, their different habits, the extravagance in dressing and ornament, their festivities and dances, their martial and ceremonial instruments, their weapons and domestic tools, all of this represent a wide field of observation, that I will just briefly approach" (pp. 618). He acknowledged that his working conditions were not adequate to do ethnographic research, he had too many things to look at, and probably not time enough to do them. In his "Memoir About the Indians Uerequenas", he stated that "it is necessary to show the Americans in all different situations that Nature have been placing them, to follow their steps in the different degrees of sociability by which they have passed through, to gradually advance from the Childhood of their civil life until the maturity and declination of their social situation, and to observe the efforts perpetrated, in different times,

by their active Faculties, in all 'branches of Industry both at War and at Piece" (1974: 73). This passage is very interesting because it reveals an awareness of the necessity of long-term ethnographic fieldwork, a procedure that would only be incorporated in the discipline after the work of Bronislaw Malinowsky in the 1910's.

Rodrigues Ferreira's discussion of the native populations of the Rio Negro is divided in the following categories: superstitions, moral habits, cloths and ornaments, festivities, martial and ceremonial instruments, weapons, domestic tools. There is then an attempt to depict reality according to some key principles that could be compared. Such concern about diving reality in groups, categories is characteristic of eighteenth century science. The System of Nature of Linnaeus, whose principles were followed by Rodrigues Ferreira, is probably the best example of this: "it was composed to give the world of flora an appropriate setting in the universal hierarchy of being. With this in mind, his (Linnaeus') classification also embraced minerals, animals, and man. In it every geological formation, herb, tree, fish, quadruped, and variety of man was ticketed and arranged in a great catalogue according to an over-arching hierarchical scheme" (HODGEN 1964: 424).

An extensive comment of the ethnographic contribution of Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira demands more space and elaboration. I believe however, that the discussion presented above can illustrate the context in with his ethnographic data

was obtained. Born in Brazil but educated in Portugal, Rodrigues Ferreira's opinions identified better with the interests of metropolis than the colony. Having had scientific training, but working as a kind of bureaucratic surveyor, it is not surprising that his work compares negatively with other scientists of the period - Humboldt would make his travels just one decade after Rodrigues Ferreira. The ethnographic potential of his work is thus relative: it is satisfactory for the anthropologist interested in studies of material culture and subsistence practices, it also provides some demographic data, but it is generally too vague for a more refined understanding of the structure and functioning of the native societies of the Rio Negro in the second half of the eighteenth century.

IV. ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE

Alfred Russel Wallace came from a background completely different from Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira. Born in England at January 8, 1823, in Usk, a small town close the Welsh border, Wallace was the eighth son of a nine children family, from which only four would reach adulthood. His father was a children's tutor and also operated a small subscription library. Because of his family's economic condition, he had the average education of a low-middle class English kid in the early 1800's.

At the age fourteen he had to quit school and moved to London to work with his brother, then an apprentice carpenter. This first stay in London would be important for the development of his political ideas, for there he was exposed to the miserable conditions of the working class and also the ideas of the utopian socialists, mainly Robert Owen (BRACKMAN 1980: 106, STOCKING 1987: 96). Owen believed that "the character of every individual is formed for and not by himself, first by heredity, which gives him his natural disposition with all its powers and tendencies, its good and bad qualities; and secondly, by environment, including education and surroundings from earliest infancy, which always modifies the original character for better or for worse" (WALLACE 1905, vol 1: 89). It is, so from this early period in London that Wallace would get acquainted to the some of the ideas he will defend and further re-elaborate for the rest of his life: socialism and natural selection.

In the summer of 1837, Wallace joined his eldest brother to work of as a land surveyor. For the next six years both travelled extensively through England and Wales. It was in this period that Wallace learn to manipulate instruments that he would eventually use in his travels like, for instance, the pocket-sextant (WALLACE 1905, vol 1: 109). It was also in this period that Wallace became interested in understanding the diversity of life forms, although as he said: "at that time I hardly realized that there was such a science as systematic botany (...) that there was any kind of system or order in the endless variety of plants and animals which I knew existed" (IBID: 110).

In 1844, he got a job as an English teacher at the Reverend Abraham Hill's Collegiate School in Leicester. At that time he red Humboldt's "Personal Narrative of Travels in South America", Darwin's "Voyage of the Beagle" and Malthus's "Principles of Population". This latter book impressed him significantly: "its main principles remained with me as a permanent possession, and twenty years later gave me the long-sought clue to the effective agent in the evolution of organic species" (WALLACE 1905, vol. 1: 232). It was there, in 1845, that he met Henry Walter Bates, who eventually would be his fellow during part of his stay in the Amazon.

In 1846, with the death of his brother William, Wallace left Leicester to work again as a land surveyor for railroad companies. It was in this period he got acquainted to Lyell's

"Principles of Geology". At that time Wallace and Bates were already planning to travel to South America. In London they established contact with Samuel Stevens who would be responsible for the dispose of their duplicate specimens in the best way, take charge of their private collections as well, insure each collection as they were dispatched, and keep them supplied with the required stores (BRACKMAN 1980: 129). The arrangement was the following: Wallace and Bates would collect the specimens in South America, send them to Stevens that by his turn would sell them to museums or private collectors. The money resulting from this transactions would be employed in funding the travels. So, Wallace and Bates were travelling without official or institutional support, they were scientific free-lancers, working on their own.

In April of 1848 the two men left for the Amazon, arriving in Belém in May. They would travel together for the first two years but then would take different ways: Wallace spent four years in the Amazon, Bates spent eleven.

Wallace returned to England in 1852 and in the following year he published two books "Travels on the Amazon and Rio Negro" and "Palm Trees of the Amazon". In 1854 he left home again, this time to the Malay archipelago, where he would stay for eight years. During this time he performed ninety-six collecting expeditions, travelling more than 15,000 miles by sea (BRACKMAN 1980: 194). It was there, in the island of Ternate, in the Moluccas that in 1858 he wrote his paper "On the Tendency of

Varieties to Depart Indefinitely from the Original Type", presented jointly with Darwin's sketch of the theory of natural selection at a meeting of the Linnean Society that same year.

In 1862, Wallace was back to England again. With the prestige obtained with his work in the Malay archipelago, he turned to accepted to be British scientific establishment of the period, being friends of Darwin, Lyell and Hooker. He never got a regular job, living on the publication of the twenty four books he wrote, on the selling of his collections, on lectures he gave. In 1881 Darwin interceded with the government for the concession of an annual pension of £ 200 that Wallace retained for the rest of his life.

Wallace died in 1913, at the age of ninety. Until the end of his life he remained a free-thinker, involving himself in different causes like land nationalization, socialization, spiritualism, and an anti-vaccination campaign.

"Travels on the Amazon and Rio Negro" occupies that undefined place characteristic of some travel books of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Like Humboldt's "Personal Narrative", Darwin's "Voyage of the Beagle", or Bank's "The Endeavor Journal", it was written by a scientist to be read both by scientists but also by the educated public in general. The difference was that, contrary to Humboldt, Darwin or Banks, Wallace did not have a formal scientific training. In this sense, as it was proposed in the introduction of this paper, his work remains closer to the work of Henry Walter Bates and Richard

Spruce. Wallace, Bates and Spruce were self-taught scientists, coming from low-middle class families. For them, travelling was both a result of their scientific interest and also a way of making a living with the selling of collections. Banks, Humboldt and Darwin all came from wealthy families that had the resources to fund their voyages.

The reception for "Travels on the Amazon and Rio Negro" was mild: Darwin himself felt disappointed with it. The book was considered naive and superficial. For a biographer of Wallace, "the 'Travels' were not as successful as many of his later works, for he had not yet mastered the technique of weaving biological theories into personal narrative" (GEORGE 1964: 18). The first edition of the book had only 750 copies that did not sell completely; a second edition was published in 1889, the same year that it was published in the US. In 1939, it was translated to the Portuguese with the title "Viagens pelo Amazonas e Rio Negro". Thence, if the book was not a success, it was not a complete failure, as the successive re-editions indicate. The edition I am using for this paper bears no date, but I believe it was issued in 1903 or 1904 by Ward, Lock & Co., of London.

The book is divided in thirteen descriptive chapters that are a journal of his four years of travels in the area. There are also four synthetic chapters: "Physical Geography and Geology", "Vegetation", "Zoology" and "Aborigines"; and one appendix: "On Amazonian Picture Writings". In the beginning, Wallace travelled with Bates and with his brother Herbert.

However, the two journeys up the Negro and Uaupés he performed alone. During the rainy seasons he would stay in major Amazonian towns like Belém - then "Pará", Manaus - then "Barra" - and Santarém. In this places he could rely on a network of British and North American Citizens to provide him support.

The itinerary of his travels was the Following: first, from May 1848 to July 1849, he travelled in the Lower Amazon, having Belém as a base of operations. In this phase he went to the Islands of Marajó and Mexiana, and to the Tocantins, Guamá and Capim Rivers. He then spent six months travelling around Santarém, in the mouth of the Tapajós River. The next two years he would spend travelling on the Rio Negro and some of its tributaries, having the town of Manaus, located at the confluence of the Negro with the Amazon, as a base of operations. For two times he travelled up the Negro, and in one of these occasions he went to the Cassiquiare channel, a natural body of water that links the Orenoco and Negro basins which had been also visited by Humboldt almost fifty years before. In July of 1852 he left Belém for England. After three weeks in the sea, in the middle of the Atlantic, a fire broke in the ship, forcing Wallace and all the crew to spend ten days drifting in the ocean. Practically all of his collections were lost in the fire, as Wallace said: "everything was gone, and I had not one specimen to illustrate the unknown lands I had trod, or to call back the recollections of the wild scenes I had beheld !" (1903: 278). From all of his four years in the Amazon, what remained were his collections of fish

and insects, and a small box of miscellaneous materials, sent to England in 1849 and 1850 (OLIVEIRA FO 1987a: 123).

Wallace's first impression of the Amazon was not very enthusiastic: "on the whole, I was disappointed. The weather was not so hot, the people were not so peculiar, the vegetation was not so striking, as the glowing picture I had conjured up in my imagination" (1903: 3). In a way, such disappointment is understandable if one thinks that he read Humboldt before coming to the Amazon. After a while, however, Wallace got used to the characteristics of the region and began to admire them. In the following description of a stream in the Island of Marajó the sense of sublime is clear: "I was much delighted with the beauty of the vegetation, which surpassed anything I had seen before: at every bend of the stream some new object presented itself, - now a huge cedar hanging over the water, or a great silk-cotton-tree standing like a giant above the rest of the forest. The graceful assai palms occurred continually, in clumps of various sizes, sometimes raising their stems a hundred feet into the air, or bending in graceful curves till they almost met from the opposite banks. The majestic muruti palm was also abundant, its straight and cylindrical stems like Grecian columns, and its immense fan-shaped leaves and gigantic bunches of fruit, produced an imposing spectacle. Some of these bunches were larger than any I had before seen" (IBID: 66).

Wallace's attitudes about the people - native or not - he met along his travels were ambivalent. At one side there was

his tolerant socialist background, at the other, there a kind of Protestant moralist puritanism so characteristic of the Victorian age (STOCKING 1987: 98). He would often explain social phenomena through the use of deterministic theories. For instance in an observation about the inhabitants of Manaus he stated that "among the causes which tend to promote the growth of such widespread immorality, we may perhaps reckon the geographical position and political condition of the country" (pp. 264).

He also made a clear differentiation between savages living in a "natural" stage and the Indians already corrupted by the evils of civilization (sic.). In his autobiography he remarked that "the most unexpected sensation of surprise and delight was my first meeting and living with a man in a state of nature - with absolute uncontaminated savages ! This was on the Uaupés river, and the surprise of it was that I did not in the least expect to be so surprised. I had already been in the country always among Indians of many tribes; but these were all what are called tame Indians, they wore at least trousers and shirt; they had been (nominally) converted to Christianity" (1905: 288).

Wallace travelled two times up the Uaupés, and his ethnographic observations about the native groups of this area were, until the end of the nineteenth century, to most complete available. They are particular rich in what relates to subsistence practices, material culture and settlement patterns. The location of several settlements is furnished with a relative

precision and a he provided very good description of a longhouse located at a place called Jauareté, at the border of Brazil and Colômbia (pp. 341). However, like Rodrigues Ferreira, he tended to approach the "Indians" as a general category, and differences among ethnic groups were not approached by him.

When he attempted to present general explanations, the influence of nature was suggested as a potential force shaping socio-phenomena: "one of the singular facts connected with these Indians of the Amazon valley is the resemblance which exists between some of their customs, and those of nations most remote from them (...) It will be necessary to obtain much more information on this subject, before we can venture to decide whether such similarities show any remote connection between these nations, or are mere accidental coincidences, produced by the same wants, acting upon people subject to the same conditions of climate and in an equally low state of civilization" (IBID: 360). The above passage already indicates the tension between diffusionism and evolutionism that would characterize late nineteenth and early twentieth century anthropology (TRIGGER 1989).

Wallace was pessimistic about the future of Amazonian natives. For him, the advance of the national society was inevitable and the consequences of it would be harmful: "they will probably, before many years, be reduced to the condition of the other half-civilized indians of the country, who seem to have lost the good qualities of savage life, and gained only the vices

of civilization" (1903: 361).

According to George Stocking, Jr. Wallace belonged to a sort of "movement from Enlightenment developmentalism to biblical degenerationism and then towards evolutionism (...) and the parallel degradation of the states of savages in the minds of Europeans" (1987: 80). He was a romantic and he brought the idea of the good savage alive within himself. Maybe this is the reason why his opinion about native Amazonian was much more sympathetic than Bates' or Spix and Martius'. Although, he was one of the co-discoverers of the principle of natural selection, his ideas about non-Western populations were not, at least not in "Travels on the Amazon and Rio Negro", impregnated by the prejudicial evolutionism of nineteenth century British anthropology.

V. CONCLUSION

Most of the collections made by Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira and Alfred Russel Wallace during their stay in the Amazon are now lost. Both men dedicated a significant part of their energy to their travels. In their reports, more than once one is informed about the their precarious situation of work. Wallace almost died of Malaria in the Uaupés, and Rodrigues Ferreira's fate was not different. Wallace's brother died at the age of 22, in Belém, of yellow fever.

Their attitudes about native Amazonians in way illustrates their destinies after both left the Amazon. Rodrigues Ferreira was a conformist: he was born in Brazil but identified himself more with the interests of the metropolis than of the colony. His individual opinion is the opinion of the king or the governor, and this is the bias that guides his ethnographic descriptions. Wallace in his turn, was more of a free spirit: it is true that he brought pre-conceived ideas from Europe with him but he at least attempted to view the indians by their own. It is not accidental then that Rodrigues Ferreira finished his life almost inactive as a bitter government bureaucrat while Wallace travelled once more and reached respect by his peers at the end of his life.

It is not the point here to judge whether one of the sources is better than the other. Both have a wealth of ethnographic and historical data that is almost not paired for the particular periods were the observations were made. The

critical reader needs only to be aware of the different nature of them. What makes them different is not only the time span between Rodrigues Ferreira's and Wallace's travels, but rather the conditions in which each travel was performed and, perhaps more important, the proper way that both men looked at the world.

VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alves da Silva, A.

1962 A Civilização Indígena do Uaupés. São Paulo: Salesiana.

Brackman, A. C.

1980 A Delicate Arrangement: the strange case of Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace. New York: Times Books.

Correa Filho, V.

1939 Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira, vida e obra do grande naturalista brasileiro. São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, Coleção Brasileira, 144. __

Fernandes, F.

1975 [1949] Um balanço crítico da contribuição etnográfica dos cronistas. In: A Investigação Etnológica no Brasil e outros Ensaio. Petrópolis: Vozes, pp. 191-298.

Ferreira, A. R.

1974 Viagem Filosófica, Memórias Antropologia. Rio de Janeiro: Conselho Federal de Cultura.

1983 [1885, 1886, 1887, 1888] Viagem Filosófica ao Rio Negro. Belém: Museu Paraense Emilio Goeldi/CNPq.

Galvão, E. & C. A. Moreira Neto

1974 Introdução. In: Viagem Filosófica, Memórias Antropologia. by Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira. Rio de Janeiro: Conselho Federal de Cultura, pp. 9-20.

George, W.

1964 Biologist Philosopher: A Study of the life and writings

of Alfred Russel Wallace. London: Abelard-Schuman.

Goeldi, E. A.

1895 Ensaio sobre o Dr. Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira. Belém:

Alfredo Silva.

Hartmann, T.

1975 Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira e seus dois desenhistas.

In: A Contribuição da Iconografia para o Conhecimento de Índios Brasileiros do Século XIX. São Paulo: Coleção Museu Paulista, Etnologia, vol. I, pp. 21-49.

Hodgen, M. T.

1964 Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Mello Leitão, C.

1941 História das Expedições Científicas no Brasil. São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, Coleção Brasiliana, 209.

Moreira Neto, C. A.

1983 Introdução. In: Viagem Filosófica ao Rio Negro. by Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira. Belém: Museu Paraense Emilio Goeldi/CNPq, pp. 12-42.

Oliveira Filho, J. P.

1987a Elementos para uma sociologia dos viajantes. In: Sociedades Indígenas e Indigenismo no Brasil. J. P. Oliveira Filho, ed. Rio de Janeiro: UFRJ/Marco Zero, pp. 84-148.

1987b Os atalhos da magia: reflexões sobre o relato dos

naturalistas viajantes na etnografia indigena. Boletim do Museu Paraense Emilio Goeldi, Antropologia, 3(2): 155-188.

Reis, A. C. F.

1989 [1931] História do Amazonas. Belo Horizonte: Itatiaia.

Stocking, Jr., G.

1987 Victorian Anthropology. New York: The Free Press.

Trigger, B.

1989 A History of Archaeological Thought. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wallace, A. R.

1903? [1853] Travels on the Amazon and Rio Negro. London: Ward, Lock & Co.

1905 My Life. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 2 vols.

Weil, F.

1984 La relation de voyage: document anthropologique ou texte littéraire. In: Histoires de l'anthropologie: XVI-XIX siècles. B. Rupp-Eisenreich, ed. Paris: Klincksieck, pp. 55-65.