



Londrina: From Paraná Plantation to Domingos Pellegrini's *Red Land*¹

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims at proposing some reflections on the novel "Terra Vermelha" – *Red Earth* by Domingos Pellegrini, relating the text to the constituting elements of Londrina city, and, later, its modernization process. As a theoretical and methodological approach, we firstly focused on the author's biography, the novel study itself, and its reverberations towards the discursive elaborations, then we made some inferences about the dialogical book construction over the years. Next, we listed some memories about the Parana city colonization process. For this paper accomplishment, we used as theoretical contribution some important scholars like, (BAKHTIN, 2010), (NASCIMENTO, 2020), (FOUCAULT, 1996, 2001) and (GILBERT, 2014). Finally, we carried out some considerations about this study and the city itself, where, from the "cutting down" of the virgin forest to the contemporary buildings, there was the story of some brave and hardworking people, who made it "sprout", in the middle of a place until then forgotten by Brazilian rulers, one of the richest and most prosperous cities in Brazil.

KEY WORDS: Londrina. Speech. Modernity.

I. INTRODUCTION

If from the city study we already know that it constitutes itself as a collective work, which challenges nature and covers a vast network of

multiple meanings, revisiting it, whether through historical or fictional discourses, it is an opportunity to read, reread and rethink this space created where one lives, people gather but disaggregate and everyone turns out to be a set fragment, a collective portion. In this sense, we delineate here a reflection on Londrina city and its representation in the literary discourse of Domingos Pellegrini's novel *Terra Vermelha – Red Land* [13].

It should be noticed that in a novel study, it is relevant to reconstitute traces of the author's biography, in order to place the work as part of the context in which it was produced. Thus, the author as a producer of discourses, as postulated by Michel Foucault, in his texts – *What is an author?* and *The Order of Discourse*, is not an element prior to the work, as it appears in the plot of discourses, as a functional principle, being both the work and author a constituent part of the same discourse: "The author is something that gives disquieting language his fiction point units, their coherence nodes, their insertion in the real." (FOUCAULT, 1996, p. 28) [6].

Dialoguing both real and fictional spheres, the writer himself Domingos Pellegrini, author of the narrative *Red Land*, object of this study, was born in Londrina, Paraná, in 1949. During his childhood, he had the opportunity to witness the coffee peak culture in the region. At the time, the municipality was known as "The Coffee Capital". Because of his family's history and, we can safely



say, of practically everyone who was born in the city, the immigrants' memory was present from their early childhood, as Affonso Romano de Sant' Anna points out, in the book preface *Red Land*: "You are going to read the pioneers' story who made the richness of Paraná State, the ones who left small towns like Capivari and Rafard and headed to Londrina and there, built one of the major national cities in the country".

The author graduated in Literature in Londrina State University. He worked as a journalist and publicist; however, it was in Literature that he

Red Earth: a work constructed dialogically through the years

The book *Red Land* [13] by Domingos Pellegrini was released in 1998, however, according to the author himself, on a newspaper section published on March 26, 2013, in *Gazeta do Povo* newspaper, it had already been rewritten a few times, he comments himself: "When the novel *Red Land* came out in its first edition, in 1998, it already had a story: written with *Bolsa Vitae* in 1993, it was rewritten five times, once a year, until it was published" (www.gazetadopovo.com.br – Accessed on 06/01/2021) [12]. Thus, we can infer that the novel was carefully prepared until its final version and then publication, becoming an important source for colonization accounts, with traces of discursive memory, time, space and historicity.

Red Land [13] by Pellegrini, takes place in Londrina, the author's fiction environment. It was a city which had a different urbanization process compared to other places in the nation, since the settlers came, in majority, from other countries, as well as from different parts of Brazil and at the beginning of the colonization, its population process was "financed" by the *Companhia de Terras Norte do Paraná* (CTNP) – *North Paraná Land Company* (NPLC). Regardless of whether it was a fair "deal" or not, at least the new comers received a "piece" of land to plant. Its emancipation process is notoriously one of the most recent compared to other cities in Brazil, as its foundation dates back to December 10, 1934, the "mother city", so to speak. Before the emancipation, Jataí city, also in the State of Paraná, had its foundation in 1855 and has today a population of just about twelve thousand inhabitants. We listed the two cities just to demonstrate the disparity and uniqueness present in the region, driven by coffee, "Londrina smiled itself. The rich laughs for nothing, said Zé. Never had a land given out so much coffee, doctors and peons agreed that red-land was unique for the green gold. – We are in the best land for the best business in the

stood out on the national scene, his first book: *O Homem Vermelho – The Red Man*, released in 1977, won the Jabuti awards, the most traditional and expressive literary honor in Brazil. The same distinction was repeated in 2000, with the work: *O Caso da Chácara Chão – The case of the grounding farmhouse*. He wrote short stories, novels, poetry and novels, and his children's book: *A Árvore que dá Dinheiro – The Giving Money Tree*, in 1981, which had more than three million copies published. In 2011, he released the novel: *Herança de Maria – Mary's Inheritance*, an autobiographical work.

world after oil – Zé repeated while buying farms, hiring foremen, planting coffee". (PELLEGRINI, 1998, p. 347) [13].

However, for the city's apogee to be reached, it was necessary at first, to face robust logistical setbacks, such as the Atlantic Forest, still intact at that time, supply scarcity, industrialized or not, and, above all, the lack of inhabitants to "raise" the city. There was a need to implement minimum structural conditions to attract new residents, despite the Paraná state had been proving inefficient in the colonization process, at the same time, private companies became interested in investing there due to the high soil productivity. In this regard, the following information can be found on the IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics) website "Since 1922, the state government began to grant land to private colonization companies, preferring to use its resources to build schools and roads. In 1924, the history of *North Paraná Land Company* (NPLC) had begun, a subsidiary of the English firm Paraná Plantations Ltd., which gave great impetus to the developmental process in the northern region. That year, in response to an invitation from the Brazilian government – which got wind of the British interest in opening areas for cotton cultivation abroad – the Montagu Mission arrived, headed by Lord Lovat, a technician in agriculture and reforestation. Lord Lovat was impressed with the exuberance of the North Paraná soil and ended up acquiring two plots to install farms and cotton processing machines, with the support of the "Brazil Plantations Syndicate", in London (<https://cidades.ibge.gov.br> - Accessed on Feb. 11th, 2021).

The newspapers of the time endeavored to propagate a speech of euphoria and success about the creation of Londrina, on an article published in *Correio of Paraná* newspaper on May, 21, 1934, the following text is found: "The brand-new city. It shines on its own in a sun with its red roofs and it grows, cutting down forests, planting coffee".



Hereupon, the immense farms were gradually being transformed, receiving more and more immigrants, intending to build the city's urban space. The English intention was pretty much specific, that is, to use the region for cultivating and exporting cotton, in a process similar to what happened previously in India, although, in the North of Paraná, it was not installed a colony only restricted to the English, but anyone else was welcomed as long as they were prone to working and cultivating on those lands.

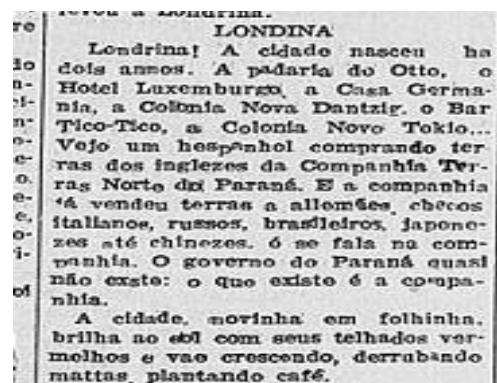
Thus, all possible efforts were made to carry out its colonization. In this process, the *North Paraná Land Company* (NPLC) stood out; the company provided portions of land for the immigrants, giving them the provisional financial condition to a future payment when the "given property" gained its profits. In addition, it publicized the abundant cultivating lands in Brazil and mainly abroad, producing a favorable image in order to attract new residents and buyers, as Boni comments: "In Londrina, the *North Paraná Land Company* (NPLC), an English company that colonized the region, hired photographers with the aim of producing images that, if disseminated elsewhere, would attract new buyers and residents. In this way, photographs from the city's first decades portrayed the majestic trees and, consequently, the quality of the soil, the first buildings and the place infrastructure. The company also produced albums distributed among its brokers, who traveled around the country and abroad looking for buyers (BONI, 2011 p. 151) [2].

The disclosure carried out by the company had a very efficient reverberation, quickly, a considerable group of people from different parts of Brazil and the world began to move away to the northern region of Paraná. This caused a demographic explosion in the Municipality, reaching the proportions that were consolidated in the contemporary world. Considering that Londrina was made up in a cosmopolitan and unique way in the colonization of Paraná and Brazil, we realize that this feature was printed in the verses of the municipal anthem, music composed by maestro Andrea Nuzzi and lyrics by Francisco Pereira Almeida Jr.: "Londrina! City with open arms/ To all the children of our Brazil! And to all those from distant Homelands/ Who here, confident / Under an indigo canopy / They built their home and their children were united/ And the children of our Brazil were united! Londrina!/ City that rises and grows/ That sprouts and blooms/ That fruitfully expands!/ That the country enriches, How high, and how great/ The charm offers/ Always a girl! Londrina! From

woods and forest clearing/ Londrina from fields filled with doubled cob gardens/ From close rows of coffee plants!/ From great sunsets of golden afternoons,/ From schools along lengthy roads!/ From plow, from books, from industry and from faith!/ With open arms, it gives rest and shelter,/ To all who seek it, maternal and gentle!/ However, fearless, if its pride overshadows itself,/ Usually be bold, fearless, hostile./ Its fertile soil, feral, generous/ To whom, affectionately, sows its seed,/ For one gives a thousand!/ Standard of work planted in History! Londrina! City that virile people/ Raised for the Glory of our Brazil! (Music: Andrea Nuzzi; Lyrics: Francisco Pereira Almeida Jr.).

Right in the first verses we perceive the city cosmopolitan vocation, "*Londrina! City with open arms/ To all the children of our Brazil! And to all those from distant Homelands*" (Francisco Pereira Almeida Jr.). In a way, these verses portray the beginning of the first years of the municipality's formation, exalting that "anyone" would be welcome to contribute to the city construction, regardless of ethnicity, nationality or religious belief. At that time, the demand reached unimaginable proportions.

As the Government of Parana was not properly complying with its administrative assumption, the company established itself as a land manager as well; the newspapers at the time are excellent sources to elucidate what was politically happening. Regarding that assumption we find in *Correio of Paraná* newspaper one article dated on June 21, 1934, reporting the state absence and the leading role of (NPLC):



Pic. 1 – *Correio of Paraná* newspaper, 05/21/1934, p. 3. Depository of the National Library Foundation - Rio de Janeiro

The excerpt from the newspaper above demonstrates how the English company had already sold land to Germans, Czechs, Italians, Russians, Brazilians, Japanese and even Chinese, thus, the



opening path of colonization to immigrants developed itself, reaching its peak with the coffee culture growth and the settlers gradually saw the city gain more and more inhabitants until it became the contemporaneity municipality, a regional metropolis, the “gate” to southern Brazil and “one of the highest human development indexes in the country” (BONI, 2011) [2]. The *Red Land* novel highlights this context and is, therefore, a story of pioneers, memories and the modernization of one part of the Brazilian southern region. Urban development happened so quickly that some houses were left amidst larger buildings, as noticed in a book passage: “The house surrounded by buildings, ferns sprouting from the shady walls; the trees stretching out in the yard, looking for sun, and the blossoms thinning out year after year. Realtors clap their hands at the gate – Don’t you want to sell your

Memory of a colonization

The novel *Red Land* [13] goes back in a peculiar way to the history of the immigrants who gave rise to the city of Londrina in the north of Parana State, southern Brazil. These pioneers, first dozens, then hundreds and, in a short time, thousands, were responsible for build a new Municipality from scarce resources and little infrastructure to the modern houses and buildings. These immigrants came from the most different regions of the country and the world as well. As we can perceive in this book passage: Gracia and Jeofrey argued again at the yard foot, while the Japanese bowed to the Germans getting on the bus, and the Germans, already flushed with the sun, blushed even more. They all wore jackets and ties, most in denim, some in cashmere, but they were farmers even in the way they walked, not knowing what to do with their unoccupied hands. The Japanese came from São Paulo farms, where they had earned the money out of hardworking to buy their own piece of land. The Germans came directly from Europe, and the ferryman was proud: - People from thirty countries have already passed through this ferry here! In Capivari town, apart from the blacks, almost all came from Italians or Portuguese and were always fighting against one another; how could so many races get along there? – There is much work – said the other rider – so there is no time for anyone to fight (PELLEGRINI, 1998, p. 103) [13].

In the excerpt above, we detect Gracia, a Spanish chariot driver, and Jeofrey, a “half” English employee of the English land company, discussing about the probability of raining that day. In this passage, we observe the Japanese workforce, who

house Mr. José? They bring proposals from construction companies; one day, one even asks why the house doesn't have a doorbell. – For it's from a time when a house didn't have to have a doorbell, a time when a word was kept, the bank lent cheap money, friendship counted and whoever wanted to work always had a job”! (PELLEGRINI, 1998, p. 467) [13].

The contrasts were increasingly consolidated, the pioneers were gradually being replaced by occupational new models in that territory, in the quote above, we find a kind of resistance in fighting back against the modern life style, trying to maintain their long-lived model of dealing with land in the midst of an overwhelming process of urban modernization. Along the next lines, we carry out reflections on the memories of colonization which are present in the novel study. could buy their own land after years of work in São Paulo and on German farms, coming directly from the European continent, bringing their own customs, traditions and some appreciation for labor. Finally, the ferryman's announcement: “People from thirty countries have already passed through this ferry here” (PELLEGRINI, 1998) [13]. A very expressive diversity for such a small place at that time that turned out to be a stage for constant disputes, however, there was so much to be done that those efforts needed to be concentrated upon them, for, “There is much work – said the other rider – so there is no time for anyone to fight” (PELLEGRINI, 1998) [13].

The novel main characters are José, Sebastiana, Gracia, Zé do Cano, Mané Felinto and Góis. The connecting thread running through the plot is the trajectory of a pioneer couple who arrived in the region, in a search for new life opportunities in the so-called “Red Land”, just like them, were all the ones intending to get the trail of “green gold”, as Nascimento points out: “José Pellerini and Sebastiana’s saga, from sugarcane plantations in São Paulo’s countryside, towards the land of promises, recounts the drama of thousands of immigrants from various corners of Brazil and the world in the wake of the green gold (NASCIMENTO, 2001, p.141) [11].

Each of them can easily be measured up to illustrious figures from the city's history, evidently adapted and reinterpreted within the fictional freedom of the book's proposal. They are not “personas” with extremely elaborate existential conflicts, nor concerned with the elegance and life refinement of the elite from big cities; they are, in fact, practical, objective beings, average people with



a "world to create", for this reason, and/or maybe because of that, we learn from all of them, a type of character austerity and some ambition that reflect the collective thinking, that is, for anyone's development, it would be essential the municipality progress itself. "The English don't want money readily – the blacksmith said – they want settlers to value the land" (PELLEGRINI, 1998 p. 97) [13].

The main character's life, the one of a "certain José", can easily be compared with grandparents' and great-grandparents' stories from London, who after many misfortunes in life, find a place to settle down, build a home and grow up there. The city in that context was very young and because of that, practically all the first generations were born abroad, as highlighted by Sant' Anna: "This novel, at first glance, develops itself around a character named José. One José who has something to do with Joseph from Kafka's own stories, or even with the simple José in José Saramago's latest novel – *All the names*. It could also be compared to "José" in Drummond's poem – *What now, José?* In all these authors, the surnames are practically irrelevant. José from Kafka is just a Joseph K. Drummond's and Saramago's ones are just average José's (SANT'ANNA, 1998, p. 10) [14].

Affonso Romano de Sant' Anna is perceptive when comparing José from *Red Land* with Joseph from Kafka and José from Saramago or the one from Drummond. José, from Kafka, is judged incomprehensibly for a hidden offence. José from Saramago brings out his existentialist questions as does José from Drummond. The character José from *Red Land* can be defined as a "pacesetter", as well as all the others who helped to build the city, from a restarting conception, because this was, in fact, the Londrina representation, a fresh new start for humble people from different walks of life, in a region that did not have, at that time, traditional surnames, so, just José is enough, as long as he is willing to work "until the flesh falls down from the bones". "To those sites don't go noble people, only tough ones, only losers, then they settle down there" (PELLEGRINI, 1998 p. 98) [13].

José's wife, Sebastiana, another important character, definitely cannot and should not be understood as the traditional-type wife model, since she, in fact, was the prominent figure in the family constitution. In her first appearance, the author reports her as an excellent "cane cutter" in a mill located in Rafard¹, even becoming a finalist in a

labor competition with José. Her family came from Minas Gerais to Capivari. The two cities are close and, according to the book, they had an old dispute, so there would be no marriages among people from rival cities. Although, José was from Rafard and Sebastiana from Capivari, they got married and their union "paved the way for other weddings to take place" (PELLEGRINI, 1998) [13].

This female character had a life completely dedicated to work and her children, supporting the family many times, making sweets, cooking, always making ends meet, especially when José was away. In Londrina, she was responsible for the design and construction of the Pioneer Hotel, becoming financially independent from her husband, something *avant-garde* for the occasion.

Another relevant persona in the novel is Zé do Cano, just like José, he was an Italian born-national. His father gave him a lot of toilet construction material, just enough for him not worry so much about dire financial problems as he could install pipes and latrines in the "English city" houses. What his old father had not imagined was that in the beginning of the city foundation, all houses were made of wood and as they were in the middle of the forest, wood supply was not a big deal. As they were starting to settle down, no one bought his goods or needed his services. His friendship with José begins in the character's first passage in Londrina, a short time later he offers himself to build Mané Preto's house. During the labor, Zé do Cano realizes that he could make money out of the construction activity, thus, he eventually becomes a very successful contractor. "- For me it's going to be a school – Zé do Cano decided – I'm going to become a builder, as a plumber I can't make it. Enough with so much working, the deal is to hire people to work!" (PELLEGRINI, 1998, p. 179) [13].

Regarding Mané Felinto's character, we can say that he is certainly the most idealistic one in the novel, as he personifies the first seasoned socialists at the beginning of the communist party.

inhabitants in the last census. The demographic density is 74.7 inhabitants per km² in the municipality's territory. Neighbor of the municipalities of Capivari, Elias Fausto and Mombuca, Rafard is located 3 km south-west of Capivari the largest city in the surroundings. Located at an altitude of 519 meters, de Rafard has the following geographic coordinates: Latitude: 23° 0' 42" South, Longitude: 47° 31' 36" West (<https://www.cidade-brasil.com.br> - Accessed on Jan. 26, 2021).

¹ Rafard is a city in the State of São Paulo. The inhabitants call themselves Rafardenses. The municipality extends over 121.4 km² and had 9,076



Because of his ideals, he was arrested and tortured several times, taking part in a guerrilla along with his squatter “comrades” and eventually he becomes a city councilor in Londrina, when the City Council House was just a wooden building and had just a few public audiences for discussions. He built his philosophical presuppositions by being a bricklayer, working all day-long on construction sites because at the time, there was no payment for being a city councilor, that is, his yearning for politics was really genuine. At the end of his life, after years of struggle, he ended up selling insurance and as he didn't pay his pension nor accumulated assets so he had to work really hard despite being very old.

Góis is another central character for the novel contextualization and also proves to be like Gracia and another illustrious pioneer from Londrina, Mr. Olavo Godoy, a good analogy to understand the behavior of most people who lived there. Unlike most settlers, Góis was one of the only ones at the beginning of this colonization to preserve the native forest whereas most inhabitants used to put the forest on the ground. His initiative was responsible for creating the largest state park in Northern Paraná. In an article entitled “The Godoy's' wood: a treasure from Londrina”, the journalist Clóvis Borges defined the area as follows: “The symbology of this area is marked by the history of Olavo Godoy and his family. Unlike other landowners throughout this large region, Mr. Godoy decided to perpetuate a fraction of his areas in the form of a sanctuary, which allowed for its conservation. It should be noted that his attitude was not due to legal imposition or any other motivation. His decision, unusual at the time, was motivated solely by the perception of the importance of not totally destroying the lush nature of the region. The gift that Londoners and other citizens living in this region received today is of immeasurable value. It arises from the vision of a Brazilian who denied following the saga of destruction that imposed the almost complete decimation of natural areas in northern Paraná. The Godoy's Wood State Park is a landmark of resistance, an example of civility and a deep sense of public interest demonstrated in practice by a citizen who decided to challenge the rest of his peers, even at a time when the destruction of nature was a symbol of development and progress (BORGES, 2017) [2].

As the author argues “The gift that Londrinenses and other citizens living in this region received today is of immeasurable value” (BORGES, 2017) [2]. This is undoubtedly a coherent statement, considering that having access to the Atlantic Forest in the region was not an easy

task. Since all the territory was practically deforested for the implantation of the first cities by the British, the devastation was overwhelming, but on the other hand it had its good side because it made room for plantations, especially the most profitable one at the time, coffee.

The characters in Domingos Pellegrini's novel – *Red Land* blend fiction and reality, hybridizing themselves (HALL, 2008), as explained above through the real characters in the city's history. These pioneers were the builders of a cosmopolitan and collaborative identity, present even in the contemporaneity on people's faces and habits. Regarding the construction of the *Hospital Santa Casa de Misericórdia – Holy House of Mercy Hospital* in Londrina, once again, the book mixes literary license and history, considering that the joint efforts of the population majority, regardless of origin, creed or ethnicity were required to build a shelter whose construction would overcome the known state leniency. “Mr. Gracia” arrives with a truckload of bricks and, “Then the others started too, in an instant they unloaded the truck. Then he left his jacket and tie in the pile of bricks, took a hoe from the truck, and began digging where the engineer, months ago, had staked out the alignment of the foundations. More hoes appeared, a boy went home to pick up a shovel for his folks, the engineer came from the office with the foreman. The company sent a gang of pedestrians, women brought sandwiches and lemonade in pitchers and mugs. They stood there in the sun watching the men work, the rich women fanning themselves with fans under their umbrellas, the poor ones covering their heads with a scarf, while the men dug and sweated together like brothers making a house; and so that day, when night fell, the foundations were built. The priest said a mass right there, thanking God for the day of glory, the people kneeling on the fresh earth, and then the construction would never stop (PELLEGRINI, 1998, p. 187) [13].

As we can observe in the text above, the collectivity spirit marked the beginning of the entire colonization process, as these men were no longer Germans, English, Polish, Japanese, Italians, Spaniards or subjects from São Paulo, Minas Gerais, Northeasterners or anywhere else: they were Londoners (Londrinenses). They were in charge of accomplishing something greater than themselves, that is, a city construction that would become the home for all their descendants. On the opening day of *Holy House of Mercy Hospital*, the main character José makes a speech, emphasizing the pioneers' union sense, which helped to triumph over the barriers of color, ethnicity, religion etc: “It was



in the red dust that I learned to see not the color or race or the condition of anyone, because here we all came in the same condition as people seeking new life in a new land. Here we learned to look into the eyes. We saw that the mud that gets stuck also unites. We arrived scared but found friends. Here we plant, as Góis says, splitting our hands like a horse's foot, even without tools we plant in virgin land, 'marrying' our life to this land. (PELLEGRINI, 1998, p. 266) [13].

"Marrying' our life to this land" (PELLEGRINI, 1998) [13], this character in the novel demonstrates how distinct was the pioneers' and their offspring's journey in these lands. Unlikely other parts in the country where old brawls originated previously, for example, the one between Germans and English who went through great conflicts, but, in a distinctive way, in *Red Land's* environment, there was a harmonic coexistence to the point where they garnered efforts to build the city and call that place their own home.

During the Second World War context, many people speculated that it would be a very delicate situation, since the immigrants were, in their majority, German, Japanese and Italian, being supported by an English company, which constituted a very peculiar moment. In that regard, the author writes a passage in which the intervening sheriff orders Tiana, José's wife, and the pension owner, to remove off the flags of the "enemy" countries: "- You have to take those flags off the wall. She said, no way. She said that when they arrived, Londrina still didn't have a flag, so she had put those up on the wall, long before the war started. In any case, the English one couldn't be taken off, because the Company was from there, it could represent an offence if this is done. The ones from Japan, Germany, Italy couldn't be taken off either for these colonies were the three largest ones in Londrina" (PELLEGRINI, 1998, p. 278) [13].

While the world was concerned with the horrors produced by World War II overseas, in that place, there was no talk about war but peace, considering that most pioneers from distinguished nations were, in fact, fleeing from any conflict. In fact, what they really wanted was an opportunity to work freely in their colonies, this time, on a highly productive soil, different, in some cases, from their birthplaces.

About the great war, it can be inferred that the main motivating reason which caused the Second World War, was the Nazi German military expansion supported by a nefarious ideology that mistakenly spread the nasty "white race superior idea" over the others. In the year 1933, the German

National Socialist Party rose to power and from then on, their actions were guided by the German dissatisfaction towards their country's damage and losses after the First World War. In a short time, there was minorities' persecution, especially Jews, who were segregated and many were exterminated in concentration camps. However, what made other countries actually enter the conflict was expansionism, as they were all threatened by other nations and their "military tactical organization" (GILBERT, 2014). The result was a conflict of proportions even more devastating than the previous one as Martin Gilbert comments: "World War II is among the most devastating conflicts in human history: more than forty-six million soldiers and civilians perished, often in circumstances of prolonged and terrible cruelty. Along the 2,174 days of war that elapsed between Germany's attack on Poland in September 1939 and Japan's surrender in August 1945, the overwhelming majority of those who died, whether at the war front or not, had obscure names and faces, except for the few ones who knew or loved them; but in many cases, which perhaps also run into millions, even those who in later years might have recalled a victim have been eliminated as well. It was not just forty-six million lives that were annihilated, but the vibrant life and vitality they had inherited and could have bequeathed to their descendants: a heritage of work and joy, of struggle and creativity, of knowing, of hope, and happiness, which no one would receive or transmit" (GILBERT, 2014) [7].

As the author emphasizes, "it was not only forty-six million lives that were annihilated" (GILBERT, 2014), but its tragic outcome echoed and still reverberates in many "political games" and, occasionally, we still find antidemocrat "voices" permeating destructive discourses, including, in so-called contemporary democracies. For this reason, in the novel context, the character Jeffrey writes a letter concerned about the immigrants' situation in Londrina: "When the war started, I thought, my God, those Germans, Italians and Japanese over there, what will become of them, what will they do, realizing that Brazil is at war against their home-countries. Whenever I read a newspaper, I expected to find bad news there. I was proud to know that in the Red Earth there was no bloodshed, peace won war" (PELLEGRINI, 1998, p. 287) [13].

If we take a thorough look at the character's comment in the novel, we can realize that "peace won the war" (PELLEGRINI, 1998) [13], certainly for a number of reasons, some of which we elucidated above, when discussing passages in the text, others we will discuss in the



next topic when studying Londrina city at the beginning of its colonization, this time considering other historical aspects. Furthermore, the novel constitutes itself as another source to promote a peculiar understanding that makes up the many aspects concerning the Brazilian historical and cultural formation, considering the distinct aspects of its colonization as a whole. Domingos Pellegrini, in his book *Red Land*, portrayed the colonization process in northern Paraná, a place that was conceived for immigrants from different spots and ethnicities whose lands were promised to the Jews, as preached by the Holy Scriptures.

The Londrina city environment gains great importance, as we learn from the speech published in the press – *Correio* of Paraná newspaper: Liberal Party of Paraná. As Bakhtin writes, all discourses are ideological by nature, and therefore, there is no sign neutrality (BAKHTIN, 2010). Thus, all the typical discourse euphoria about the benefits of the modern and economic development served only hegemonic interests. An excerpt from the novel expresses the development path in Londrina, elucidating how Tiana and José's marriage opened the way for a mentality more suited to changes in Rafard and Capivari municipalities, although the cities are immersed in a typical provincial conception of that time: "Both cities Rafard and Capivari were still in the old feud, but their marriage had opened the way for others. Anyway, he realized that even joining the two small towns, almost two centuries of existence, they did not have the size and life of Londrina only fifteen years old" (PELLEGRINI, 1998, p. 298) [13].

As we have already mentioned in this work, Rafard and Capivari regions were also constituted in the Brazilian colonizing context. However, the city of Londrina already demonstrated that it would be a regional capital, due to its agriculture and for having housed a diverse population opened to immigration. The initial conception gradually gives in to a new proposal, the premise of future-oriented modernity: "The specific future orientation of the modern era is only formed insofar as social modernization opens up the rural experience field and artisanal life worlds, typical of old Europe, mobilizes and devalues it as a guideline that regulates expectations" (HABERMAS, 2000, p.19) [9].

This "specific future orientation of the modern era" (HABERMAS, 2000), referred by the author, is also captured by Domingos Pellegrini's novel in temporal counterpoints elaborated by him: the landscapes built inside the city's Holy House of Mercy show José's character, who was already an

old man, looking back on his own life. By recalling the times when he was a pioneer, it symbolizes the context of an artisanal and rural world mentioned by Habermas.

About the ethnic diversity of the early years, Rubem Braga (1913-1990), a prominent Brazilian chronicler, was still an aspirant at occupation initiative in Paraná. The reporter then was one of the first to portray the multiculturalism present in that environment. In one of his chronicles, we can see one of the many German refugees, Dr. Koch Weser, who was a government minister at the time, becoming another average farmer among the thousands who arrived there:



Pic. 2 - Correio of Paraná newspaper, 05/27/1934, p. 2. Depository of the National Library Foundation - Rio de Janeiro

The immigrants' past stories did not guarantee them privileges and/or better conditions, in that context, they were all rural workers and city dwellers with the intention of building a new life there. The honors received in the past did not help and, in some cases, worsened the situation. An example of this, is the main character of the book, who, in search of a "new life", contributed to the city's growth. In the excerpt from the newspaper above, we notice that Dr. Koh Weser, who had been, twice, minister of state in Germany, became a simple farmer, just like the others, without any kind of special treatment.

To elucidate the context at the beginning of the 1950s, the novelist discusses the habits that were introduced by the English which were lost in the city's hybridization process (HALL, 2006) [10] as new behaviors were constituted from then on. As much as the city experienced peace throughout its immigration process during World War II (1939 – 1945), the two other largest colonies still felt resentful toward one another when: "Both theaters replayed war American movies, and the German and the Japanese, who always appeared in the movies as thugs or imbeciles, would stop going to the movies for several years. House of Seven no longer existed, where the young men of the company threw parties; and from the English there was little more than the word '*footing*', that mania of walking at night along Paraná Avenue" (PELLEGRINI, 1998, p. 321) [13].

The fragment above elucidates how the customs introduced by the English colonizers were lost over time, "from the English there was little



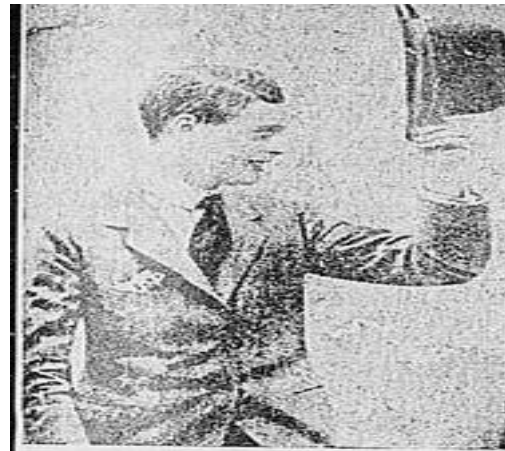
more than the word *footing*” (PELLEGRINI, 1998) [13]. Nowadays, the term is forgotten, however, near the Metropolitan Cathedral, on the margins of the aforementioned Paraná Avenue, there is the Marechal Floriano Peixoto Square, better known as “Flag Square”. On this Square, traces of the former English colonizers can still be found, as on the ground they constructed lines similar to the United Kingdom flag (São Jorge’s cross format), supposedly, a tribute to the first colonizers, although there are scholars who believe that the Square architectural design was “similar to others built on that occasion” (ARREBOLA, 2014).

In Londrina, there was a very special relationship with the English company, this appreciation was even shared by the Prince of Wales himself, who acquired some land in the region and, through an extremely advantageous agreement, had his debt forgiven by the State of Paraná after promising a railroad construction to the city limits, as we can learn from the passage below:

“Estrada de Ferro S. Paulo-Paraná”, a boa nova segundo a qual, apesar das magnificas rendas provenientes das vendas de nossas terras auferidas pela Companhia o Interventor do Paraná promettia “perdoar as dividas para com o Estado” uma vez que as linhas ferreas fossem levadas até Londrina.

**Pic. 3 - Paraná Newspaper, 07/24/1933, p. 4.
Depositary of National Library Foundation - Rio de Janeiro**

According to the same section in the *Correio* of Paraná newspaper, on July 24, 1933, entitled “Paraná at auction”, the photo of the Prince of Wales, Sir. Lord Asquith, giving a greeting in gratitude for the debt forgiveness from the English owners of Paraná Plantation as a result of constructing railways in Londrina:



S. ALTEZA AGRADECE
terras nacionaes, para ir favorecer
os nossos deveres inglezes.

**Pic. 4 - Paraná Newspaper, 07/24/1933, p. 3.
Depositary of National Library Foundation - Rio de Janeiro**

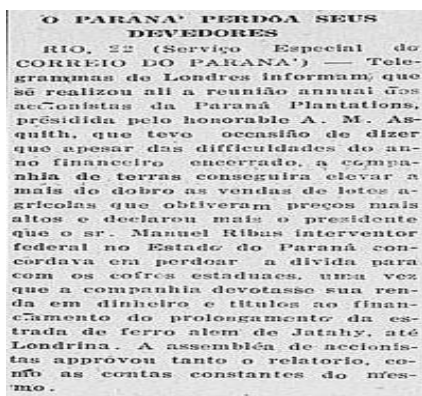
The debt remission was granted by the then State Governor, Dr. Manuel Ribas, although there is some acidity in the Journal's comment, it is important to emphasize that it is headquartered in the state capital, the city of Curitiba, where all the governing powers were concentrated, however, in the countryside, there was a state leniency, already mentioned. And from the countryside inhabitants' point of view, the agreement with England was much better than the characteristic Paraná state “lack of zeal” and its onerous privileged capital, Curitiba.

Along the novel plot, the author demonstrates the city dwellers' uneasiness about the exorbitant profit made by the CTNP, especially, from the original previous intentions. This feeling appears in Mané Felinto's character speech, which, as it was already observed, conveys a genuine and fierce idealism. The character carries out his reading, understanding colonization as a *coup*: “The company purchased over a million hectares from Paraná at a bargain price; then they opened the first towns and tracts and the land valued so much that they sold it for a fortune and returned to England! It was the coup of colonization!” (PELLEGRINI, 1998, p. 324) [13].

The numbers displayed through the character's speech are compatible with the documents of the time, authors like Boni (2011) [2], Hoffman (2011) [8], Borges (2017) [3] and the IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics) itself, ensure the data proximity. In addition to these voices, we find in newspapers of the time, the State Government forgiving the



English debt if the railroad construction was extended, that is, demonstrating that the development and modernity discourse was ideological, as shown in the passage below:



Pic. 5 - Correio of Paraná newspaper, 27/05/1934, p. 3. Depository of National Library Foundation - Rio de Janeiro

However, it is important to point out that the gained company fortune was also shared with the first farmers, as the land in the region was considered one of the most productive in the world. Thus, we assume that this is one of the reasons for the novel title. About the high soil productivity, we find in Dutra (2014): “The Purple Earth is an extremely fertile soil type, it has a very relevant characteristic due to its reddish-purple appearance, due to the presence of minerals, especially iron, coming from the decomposition of basaltic sandstone rocks that were deposited in this terrain millions of years ago when there was the largest lava flow that the planet has ever known during the separation of Gondwana (present-day South American and African continents) in the Mesozoic Era” (DUTRA, 2014, p. 11) [4].

This unique production capacity “due to the presence of minerals” (DUTRA, 2014) [4], which the author refers to, made the city, in the 1960s, responsible for the largest coffee production in the country and, in a short period of time in the whole world. According to historians and pioneer inhabitants who witnessed the phenomenon, “in this decade, the region of Londrina was responsible for 51% of all coffee produced in the world” (SAVIANI, 2015). This expressive production favored the so-called “coffee barons” emergence, farmers who had large properties that made possible the investment in what was beneficial to them.

However, on July 18, 1975, there was a “frost” which ruined practically all the coffee plantations in the region, and, as a result, many

settlers were forced to change strategies about how dealing with it, Saviani (2015) interviewing one of the engineers of the Brazilian Coffee Institute (ICB) that supported the plantations at the time highlights: “Agronomist Francisco Barbosa Lima, who worked at the Brazilian Coffee Institute (IBC) on the day of the frost, recalls the effects of it. ‘The thermometers registered -3.5°C in the shelter and -9°C outside. An unparalleled cold that burned the coffee groves from top to bottom’, says Lima, who currently works at the Ministry of Agriculture (SAVIANI, 2015, p.1) [15].

After the disastrous event, according to Arrebola (2014) [8], the frost harmed the production in the northern region of Paraná State, reducing the number of bags harvested almost to zero. In a period that lasted in average one year, about “300 thousand hectares were practically eradicated” (SAVIANI, 2015) [15]. A significant number of scholars are blunt in stating that it was catastrophic for the coffee growers who bet on monoculture and were surprised by the destroying climatic episode.

Even with the fateful happening that took place in 1975, the city achieved progress, developing an important solid agricultural business, the largest one in the region. The real estate market also came to be an excellent business opportunity, as a result, many construction companies emerged. New immigrants were attracted to this site due to the good conditions demonstrated by Londrina geographic position, and new shopping malls were built. So, the municipality strategic location made it possible for the region to establish itself as a trading center, as highlighted by Grassiotto: “Londrina emerged in a strategic location, functioning as a connection center between the cities of northern Paraná (Maringá, Apucarana, Paranavaí and others) and the larger capitals as (São Paulo and Curitiba). The connection with Santos and the cities of the communication axis, also allowed it to become an export center of agricultural production, mainly coffee, and an important wholesale distributor of various products, both from Brazilian regions and from international capitals. Hence its development as a commercial warehouse, and instead of becoming industrialized, it grew as a service provider, regional center for shopping, culture and leisure. Today its area of influence represents about 4.5 million inhabitants, the metropolitan area comprising 662,789 inhabitants” (GRASSIOTTO, 2003, p. 105) [8].

After becoming a major cultural and leisure base, in addition to a commercial outpost, as Grassiotto (2003) [8] points out, the municipality developed an urban space with cosmopolitan



characteristics. Accordingly, the architectural works that were built have different values, mixing new and old features.

Thus, we can understand such city building constructions in four distinct phases in progression. The pioneering phase when they were carried out in wood in addition to some vernacular creative solutions; a period in Art Deco in which masonry constructions especially in commercial buildings downtown were raised with their peculiar style; and, after years of construction, came the modern period when the Le Corbusier-style architecture is seen; and, finally, the contemporary times, when a new pulsating eclecticism was incorporated in the city and “numerous architectural trends are observed” (GRASSIOTTO, 2003) [8].

II. SOME CONSIDERATIONS

Discussing the novel *Terra Vermelha – Red Land* by Domingos Pellegrini is an attempt to intersperse a pleasant and passionate reading of Londrina city history; a text permeated by factual events that, when combined with the book plot, make us reflect on the pioneers’ herculean work to build a city in the remote areas of Parana. These tough hardworking people come from different nations: mostly German, Japanese and Italian and in that land, finally got a place to call “home”. From then on, they were considered Brazilians, and above all, Londoners (Londrinenses) to honor the city that welcomed them so well and there they manager to make a living out of its rich soil.

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2. Jornal do Paraná. Curitiba. Fig. 2- Jornal Correio do Paraná, 27/05/1934, p. 2. Depositário Acervo Fundação Biblioteca Nacional. Rio de Janeiro-RJ, Brasil.
3. Jornal do Paraná. Curitiba. Fig. 3- Jornal Correio do Paraná, 24/07/1933, p. 4. Depositário Acervo Fundação Biblioteca Nacional. Rio de Janeiro-RJ, Brasil.
4. Jornal do Paraná. Curitiba. Fig. 4- Jornal Correio do Paraná, 27/05/1934, p. 3. Depositário Acervo Fundação Biblioteca Nacional. Rio de Janeiro-RJ, Brasil.