


## From cultural identity to the feeling of place in “the tale the trail of your blood in the snow” by Garcia Márquez / *Da identidade cultural ao sentimento de lugar no conto “O rastro do teu sangue na neve” de Garcia Márquez*

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**Received:** december 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019. **Approved:** december 22<sup>th</sup>, 2019

### How to cite this article:

CHAVES P. CARVALHO, Aldenora M.; DE OLIVEIRA, Maria Angélica. From cultural identity to the feeling of place in “the tale the trail of your blood in the snow” by Garcia Márquez. *Revista Letras Raras*, Campina Grande. v. 8, n. 4, dez. 2019, p. Port. 168-184 / Eng. 157-174. ISSN 2317-2347.

### ABSTRACT

In the last decades, research on the identities of subjects in late Modernity has gained great visibility in the field of Human and Social Sciences, thanks to the approaches that have modified the perspectives and conceptual boundaries about the subject, identities, cultural processes and other themes pertinent to postmodernity. In this sense, this article analyzes the marks of cultural identity and the feeling of non-belonging of the deterritorialized subject represented by the character Billy Sánchez in the Hispano-American tale *The trail of his blood in the snow* (2009) by the Colombian writer García Márquez. Based on the theoretical assumptions of cultural studies and discursive studies, we intend to identify, from this analysis, the main meanings about concepts such as: place and non-place, feeling of belonging and need for recognition present in the above-mentioned story. We will take the theoretical tools worked by Hall (2006), Canclini (2008), Augé (2007), Bhabha (2010), Pesavento (2008) and, in the literary field, García Márquez (2009), among others.

**KEYWORD:** Subject. Identity. Place/non-place. García Márquez.

### RESUMO

Nas últimas décadas, as pesquisas voltadas para as investigações acerca das identidades dos sujeitos na Modernidade tardia ganharam grande visibilidade no campo das Ciências Humanas e Sociais, graças às abordagens que modificaram as perspectivas e fronteiras conceituais acerca do sujeito, das identidades, dos processos culturais e demais temáticas pertinentes à pós-modernidade. Metodologicamente, esta pesquisa caracteriza-se por ser um trabalho de natureza bibliográfica e objetiva analisar as marcas da identidade cultural e o sentimento de não-pertencimento do sujeito desterritorializado representado pela personagem Billy Sánchez no conto hispano-americano *O rastro do teu sangue na neve* (2009), do colombiano García Márquez. Embasadas nos

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.35572/rlr.v8i4.1349>

pressupostos teóricos dos estudos culturais e dos estudos discursivos, pretendemos identificar, a partir dessa análise, as principais acepções acerca de conceitos como: lugar e não-lugar, sentimento de pertencimento e necessidade de reconhecimento presentes no conto supracitado. Tomaremos os instrumentos teóricos trabalhados por Hall (2006), Canclini (2008), Augé (2007), Bhabha (2010), Pesavento (2008) e, no campo literário, García Márquez (2009), dentre outros. Os resultados iniciais apontam para a efetiva percepção de pares organizadores dos conflitos nas ciências humanas e sociais quando da análise do conto em estudo

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Sujeito. Identidade. Lugar/não-lugar. García Márquez.

## 1 Introduction

The death of others affect me:  
their dying, their death  
are part of my life,  
are milestone to the last limit.

(Joan Reventós, *A morte concreta*, 2008, free translation)

The literary text, as discursive materiality, situated in the scope of veracity, always consists in the relation with the real, either to ratify, deny, supplant or transform it. Literature recreates worlds, and reconstructs *ad infinitum* experiences, but it is in the scope of reality, in daily life, where it finds what is essential: the culture, history and memory of people. In its (re)invention of the real, according to Sandra Pesavento (2002, p. 40, free translation), “literature is the domain of the metaphor of writing, in an allegorical form of the narrative that tells us about reality in a different way, to go convey beyond”<sup>1</sup>, enunciating and denouncing identities/identification based on human relations. Based on this relation between real and fictional, which constitutes literary work and is motivated by it, in this paper we aim to analyze, from a cultural studies perspective, the milestone of the subject identity - in the character Billy Sánchez - from the short story *The Trail of Your Blood in the Snow*, by the Colombian writer Gabriel García Márquez, published in the book *Strange Pilgrims* (2009). Once addressed the issue of cultural identity, we also intend to analyze, among the relativist cultural characteristics of the process of cultural representation, the ‘sense of place’ that underlies the aforementioned Hispanic-American short story.

The concepts of identity established within the aforementioned theoretical instruments can be understood in their complexity, since they link different meanings about individuals and their relationships with the society in which they are inserted. In this context, starting from the concepts of identity proposed by Hall (2006), Canclini (2008), Bhabha (2010) and Pesavento (2011), we can affirm that investigations, debates and questions about identity are increasingly dilated and fluid regarding Cultural Studies and Discourse Studies. According to this logic, it is not possible to

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<sup>1</sup> “A Literatura é o domínio da metáfora da escrita, de forma alegórica da narrativa que diz sobre a realidade de uma outra forma, para dizer além.”

establish a common meaning which legitimizes the idea of a fixed identity. From this perspective, the concept of identity is acknowledged as a mobile, fragmented, transitory, social, historical and ideological construction, connected, according to Silva (2000, p. 97), to discursive and narrative structures, to representation systems. This transitory aspect of identities can be explained by the fact that,

Identities are fabricated, invented, which does not necessarily mean that they are false. Identities, as a sense of belonging, are imaginary formulations that produce social cohesion and individual recognition. Identities ensure and comfort, and are endowed with positivity that allows acceptance and support. Identities are based on real and objective data, collecting traits, habits, ways of being and past events, such as places and moments.<sup>2</sup> (PESAVENTO, 2008, p. 4, free translation)

Therefore, according to Silva (2000, p. 79, free translation), identities “cannot be understood [...] outside the systems of meaning in which they acquire a sense. They are not beings of nature, but of culture and of the symbols systems that compose it.”<sup>3</sup> In modern days, the concept of multiple and plural identities or even identifications is common. From this perspective, Coracini (2003) finds that:

Despite the illusion that is established in the subject, identity always remains incomplete, always in a process, always in development. Thus, instead of talking about identity as a finished product, we should see it as an ongoing process and prefer the term identification, because it is only possible to capture moments of identification of the subject with other subjects, facts and objects.<sup>4</sup> (CORACINI, 2003, p. 243, free translation).

We also highlight that, from these assumptions, the notion of identity(ies)/identification requires establishing another discussion within the same scope: the difference between national identity and cultural identity, which is discussed in the next section.

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<sup>2</sup> “As identidades são fabricadas, inventadas, o que não quer dizer que sejam, necessariamente, falsas. As identidades, enquanto sensação de pertencimento, são elaborações imaginárias que produzem coesão social e reconhecimento individual. Identidades asseguram e confortam, sendo dotadas de positividade que permite a aceitação e o endosso. Identidades fundamentam-se em dados reais e objetivos, recolhendo traços, hábitos, maneiras de ser e acontecimentos do passado, tal como lugares e momentos.”

<sup>3</sup> “... não podem ser compreendidas [...] fora dos sistemas de significação nos quais adquirem sentidos. Não são seres da natureza, mas da cultura e dos sistemas simbólicos que a compõem”.

<sup>4</sup> “Apesar da ilusão que se instaura no sujeito, a identidade permanece sempre incompleta, sempre em processo, sempre em formação. Assim, em vez de falar de identidade como algo acabado, deveríamos vê-la como um processo em andamento e preferir o termo identificação, pois só é possível capturar momentos de identificação do sujeito com outros sujeitos, fatos e objetos.”

## 2 Nacional identity *versus* cultural identity

The proposition of the three concepts of subject is among the theoretical contributions of Stuart Hall (2006). In an attempt to describe the evolution of the concept of identity, the Jamaican cultural theorist and sociologist establishes three concepts of subject in modernity: the Enlightenment, the sociological, and the postmodern subject.

In the Enlightenment conception, the subject is conceived as a sensible individual, endowed with reason, that is, aware of his/her actions, being him/herself, the center of the self. In the conception of the sociological subject, the center of the self is formed by the relationship with other people and, therefore, the identity is formed through the interaction between the self and the society. Thus, the subject is stuck in the established social structure, which includes the processes and sociocultural expressions to which this identity is attached. In the conception of the postmodern subject, the individual does not have a fixed identity; such an absence as that allows for an identity variation according to the ways through which he/she is represented in cultural systems. It is from this conception of postmodern subject that a fragmentary understanding of identity/identification is founded.

Therefore, for Hall (2006), the postmodern subject is identified as a fragmented being, devoid of a defined, essential or permanent identity, that is, it is an individual who acquires different identities according to the established moment and the result of his/her experiences within a given cultural community. For Hall, in this configuration, the subject is formed by contradictory identities and, thus, the identifications are continuously being displaced due to several elements, namely: national, cultural, gender, ethnic, social class, religious confession and many other identities that constitute the fragmented subject in late modernity.

In order to approach the sense of “place” and, consequently, the feeling of belonging or territorialization, we rely on Hall's (2006) contemporary studies on national cultures conceived as imagined communities. In this respect, the sociologist establishes an important concept about national cultures, for him, in late modernity, the national cultures in which individuals are born become one of the essential sources in the formation of the cultural identity. The author adds:

In the modern world, the national cultures in which we are born constitute one of the main sources of cultural identity. In defining ourselves, we sometimes say that we are English or Welsh or Indian or Jamaican. Obviously, in doing so, we are speaking metaphorically. These identities are not literally imprinted

on our genes. However, we do think of them as part of our essential nature.<sup>5</sup>  
(Hall, 2006, p.47, free translation)

From this perspective, we understand that, in the absence of a sense of national identification, the subject, in late modernity, remains more susceptible to a profound sense of individual loss, given the historical constructions and, consequently, all the materiality that results from this forged construction. We, therefore, comprehend that Hall's (2006) main argument is that national identities are not just traits with which we are born; on the contrary, they are constitutive elements, forged within a cultural representation and are responsible for the reproduction of such traits. Accordingly, we can also comprehend the author's proposition when he states that a nation cannot be considered exclusively a political entity, but rather a means "that produces senses - a system of cultural representation. People are not just legal citizens of a nation; they participate in the idea of the nation as represented in their national culture."<sup>6</sup> (Hall, 2006, p. 49, free translation).

In this respect, there is no way of thinking of national cultures as definitively and, consequently, integrated. In a more fluid sense, some cultural elements or characteristics such as language, beliefs, traditions, memory and 'sense of place' may be mentioned when representing a single population, provided that such elements can be shared by all. Thus, we come to the epistemological dimension of the author's thinking when he states that "modern nations are all cultural hybrids"<sup>7</sup> (HALL, 2006, p. 62, free translation).

Historically, the idea of nation/nationalism emerged in the eighteenth century in Europe to mark the identity of a particular population, their language, religion, customs, traditions and other cultural characteristics. During the fifty years of Liberalism in Europe, between 1830 and 1880, criteria that allowed the classification of a particular population as a nation were established, namely: a) the historical association with an existing state, b) the existence of a cultural elite with written administrative and literary vernacular, and c) the capacity of conquering other nations and, consequently, its political and territorial expansion, that is, in order for a population to be

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<sup>5</sup> "No mundo moderno, as culturas nacionais em que nascemos se constituem em uma das principais fontes de identidade cultural. Ao nos definirmos, algumas vezes dizemos que somos ingleses ou galeses ou indianos ou jamaicanos. Obviamente, ao fazer isso estamos falando de forma metafórica. Essas identidades não estão literalmente impressas em nossos genes. Entretanto, nós efetivamente pensamos nelas como se fossem parte da nossa natureza essencial."

<sup>6</sup> "... que produz sentidos – um sistema de representação cultural. As pessoas não são apenas cidadãos/ãs legais de uma nação; elas participam da ideia da nação tal como representada em sua cultura nacional".

<sup>7</sup> "As nações modernas são, todas, híbridos culturais".

constituted as a nation, it was necessary to have an organized state, with an established common language and culture, and also the presence of a military force.

In this sense, the concept of national identity makes all the differences that exist in a particular sphere of the nation become homogeneous, and consequently establishing a discourse of unity of a unified population around common ideals, with a language, culture and other essential elements for establishing and maintaining a national identity. For this reason, Charles Taylor (2004), proposed the concept of the need for recognition “of the nation that is formed, in relation to two interlocutors: its members, who must internalize this 'national soul' they have been taught, and the already established states, which must respect this nation.”<sup>8</sup> (FIGUEIREDO; NORONHA (2005); apud TAYLOR, 2005, p.52, free translation). In this perspective, as it occurs at the individual level, collective identity is formed by dialogism, and therefore the need for recognition of such aspects contributes to the realization of the process of creating a national identity.

While in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there was a predominance of the identity based on the nation-state, in the twentieth century, with the end of the notion of nationality, the space for a discussion about particularism emerged, that is, those elements that transcend what is national and remain exclusively in the sphere of the individual. Therefore, we can notice that the idea of national identity is not at risk of disappearing, yet it is no longer the only reference for understanding the new identifications. However, the process that leads to the construction of a national identity will always be permeated by contradictions and consequently, there is “nothing more international than the formation of national identities”<sup>9</sup>. (FIGUEIREDO; NORONHA apud THIESSE, 2005, p. 288, free translation).

Now, based on this understanding, we can consider cultural identity as those identifications that do not rely on a nation-state, but rather on the sense of belonging to a common culture. In this sphere - cultural identity - all geographical references are disregarded, since in these identifications remains exclusively a strong tendency for the transnationalization of cultural elements - race, ethnicity, gender, religion - determining only a common heritage for diffusion. According to Noronha and Figueiredo (2005),

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<sup>8</sup> “... da nação que se forma, em relação a dois interlocutores: seus integrantes, que devem interiorizar essa ‘alma nacional’ que lhes foi ensinada, e os Estados, já estabelecidos, que devem respeitar essa nação”.

<sup>9</sup> “Nada de mais internacional que a formação de identidades nacionais”.

This implies a historical review and questioning of the hegemonic culture, which did not include the search, the search for ancestors, the creation of a lineage, the choice of symbols, and even sometimes the establishment of, if not a language, at least a means of communication.<sup>10</sup> (NORONHA; FIGUEIREDO, 2005, p. 200, free translation)

In this context, when we consider the processes of building a commonnational or cultural identity, the need for a standard and limited thinking will always be instituted in such construction, - a model with the same goal - that is, there will always be a demand for recognition.

As a result, a distinction is made between the imminent need for recognition by subjects who belong to particular cultures and the demand for such recognition. This difference establishes a basic argument when we understand the concepts of national identity and cultural identity. In this respect, we highlight the idea that “both are movements that are close together because they are constructs that deep down are based on very similar categories”<sup>11</sup> (NORONHA; FIGUEIREDO, 2005, p. 200, free translation). That means that, without the idea of existence from the nation-state, every organization of symbols that constitute cultural identities is set to constitute an 'imagined community', not feasible in the scope of materiality. This community will be effectively determined according to the broader concept of culture or even the narrowest concept of race, ethnicity or gender. In this perspective, let us move on to the analysis of the marks of cultural identity and the feeling of non-belonging of the character Billy Sánchez.

### 3 Billy Sánchez: from cultural identity to the deterritorialization of the subject

But, sometimes, in the centrality of modern cities, it is a Theseus without Ariadne's thread to the way back that one is forced to face the monster. At times, the thread is lost, and, with it, the revelation of the secret of the center. Deciphering the city, this is the challenge.

(Sandra Jatahay Pesavento, 2008, free translation )

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<sup>10</sup> “Isto implica na revisão histórica e no questionamento da cultura hegemônica, que não os incluiu, na busca de antepassados, na criação de uma linhagem, na escolha de símbolos e até mesmo, por vezes, no estabelecimento, senão de uma língua, ao menos de uma linguagem”.

<sup>11</sup> “Ambas são movimentos que estão próximos pelo fato de serem construtos fundamentados em categorias no fundo muito semelhantes”.

Gathered over the years, the short stories that compose the work *Strange Pilgrims* (2009), by Gabriel García Márquez (1927-2014), are probably the result of his own “pilgrimages”, or rather his cultural experiences during the numerous international trips of the Colombian writer across Europe and the Americas. The title also expresses the content addressed in the short stories when describing trivial elements and landscape components that the author had probably visited. Descriptively, the work: “*Strange Pilgrims*” brings together stories of Latin Americans who live outside their territory, but who maintain a deep relationship and sense of belonging to their homeland, seeking to preserve “their” cultural identity.

In the twelfth short story, *The Trail of Your Blood in the Snow*, the object of our study, García Márquez describes the exciting story of the young couple Billy Sánchez and Nena Daconte who, after their nuptials, travel to Europe to celebrate their honeymoon on a long journey by car from Cartagena de Indias in Colombia to Paris. Early in their honeymoon trip, at a diplomatic reception, Nena had received a bouquet of roses from the couple of ambassadors who received them in Madrid. This trivial and seemingly unimportant incident unleashes the thread that will lead the whole narrative concerning the ‘pilgrimage’ of the young Billy Sánchez in foreign lands.

According to the intradiegetic narrator, both Billy and Nena, who came from aristocratic families, “belonged to the provincial families that had freely ruled the city’s destiny since colonial times.”<sup>12</sup> (MÁRQUEZ, 2009, p. 227, free translation). However, despite the very similar socioeconomic standards, Billy and Nena have pairs of opposites regarding personality and thinking pattern. According to the narrator, Billy Sánchez was the typical rich young man from a wealthy family, also known for his ‘bohemian’ behavior, while Nena Daconte was a cultured girl who “spoke four languages without an accent” with an “exquisite mastery of the tenor sax”. In the emotional sphere, Nena Daconte and Billy Sánchez, each in their own way, present the reader with very contiguous behavioral marks, both extravagant and extremely greedy for life.

If we consider two spheres: the rigorous education given by the family to young Nena and the paradoxically indolent education received by Billy Sánchez, we have the main argument in establishing the affective relationship between them. Young Billy presents as his main identity mark the absence of parental care and maternal indifference, as well as Nena, since she grew up far from family ties, always studying away from home in schools in Europe.

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<sup>12</sup> “... pertenciam à estirpe provinciana que manejava ao seu arbítrio o destino da cidade desde os tempos da colônia.”



The first and unusual encounter between the characters Nena and Billy indicates the tone of the romantic relationship that will be established between the youngsters. Nena had just returned from La Châtellenie boarding school in Saint-Blaise, Switzerland, where she had studied in recent years. At eighteen, she was extremely mature in the face of the most controversial situations. This maturity was what caused the then-bohemian Billy Sánchez to change his behavior from the day he, along with his gang, broke into the women's locker room in Marbella beach where Nena was. Let us look at the discursive sequence<sup>13</sup> (DS1), in which the narrator tells us the event of the “first date” of this unusual couple:

DS1: The only thing he was wearing was a small fake leopard-skin underpants [...]. Nena Daconte stood motionless, doing nothing to hide her intense nakedness. Billy Sánchez performed his childish ritual: he lowered his leopard-skin underwear and showed her his respectable upright animal. She looked straight at it without surprise. - I've seen bigger and harder ones, she said, controlling, her terror. - So think carefully about what you're going to do, because with me you'll have to behave better than a black man.

In fact, not only was Nena Daconte a virgin, but she had also never seen a naked man before, yet the challenge turned out to be effective. The only thing that Billy Sánchez did was punch the wall in anger with the chain wrapped around his hand, shattering his bones. She drove him in her car to the hospital, helped him overcome his convalescence, and in the end they learned together how to make love the right way.<sup>14</sup> (MÁRQUEZ, 2009, p. 227, 228, free translation).

The narrator tells us the facts in the first person, as we can see in the following DSs:

DS2: The employee who had received him at the embassy *told me* years later that he himself received the chancellery telegram an hour after Billy Sánchez had left his office, and had been looking for him through the secret bars of Faubourg St. Honoré. . He *confessed to me* that he had not paid much attention to it when he received it, because he would never have imagined that that man stunned by the news of Paris, and such a poorly dressed lamb jacket, had such an illustrious origin in his favor.<sup>15</sup> (MÁRQUEZ, 2009, p. 251, free translation).

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<sup>13</sup> Discursive Sequence (DS): sequences in which the discourse materialized in language becomes material utterance, generated from the interpellation of the individual as a subject.

<sup>14</sup> “A única coisa que vestia era uma cueca exígua de falsa pele de leopardo [...]. Nena Daconte permaneceu em pé, imóvel, sem fazer nada para ocultar sua nudez intensa. Billy Sánchez cumpriu seu ritual pueril: baixou a cueca de leopardo e mostrou-lhe seu respeitável animal erguido. Ela olhou-o de frente e sem assombro. – Vi maiores e mais firmes – disse, dominando o terror. – Portanto, pense bem no que você vai fazer, porque comigo vai ter que se comportar melhor que um negro. / Na verdade, Nena Daconte não apenas era virgem, como nunca até aquele momento havia visto um homem nu, mas o desafio acabou sendo eficaz. A única coisa que ocorreu a Billy Sánchez foi disparar um murro de raiva contra a parede com a corrente enrolada na mão, de despedaçou os ossos. Ela levou-o em seu automóvel para o hospital, ajudou-o a superar a convalescença, e no final aprenderam juntos a fazer o amor de boas maneiras.”

<sup>15</sup> “O funcionário que o havia recebido na embaixada me disse anos mais tarde que ele mesmo recebeu o telegrama de usa chancelaria uma hora depois de Billy Sánchez ter saído de seu escritório, e que andou procurando-o pelos

DS3: Nena Daconte was admitted at 9:30 am on Tuesday, January 7, as I could verify years later in the hospital archives.<sup>16</sup> (MÁRQUEZ, 2009, p. 239, free translation).

From this meeting on, Nena Daconte and Billy Sánchez began an intense and voluptuous romantic relationship. The intimacy between the two is narrated in an atmosphere of companionship, longing and obstinate love. Accordingly, “every day, for weeks, they rolled naked under the astonished gaze of the portraits of civil warriors and insatiable grandparents who had preceded them in the paradise of that historic bed. Even in the pauses of love they remained naked.”<sup>17</sup> (MÁRQUEZ, 2009, p. 229, free translation). In the narrative, we find that Nena and Billy's relationship often promoted the establishment of an identification between them that crossed the boundaries of affective behavior. During the narrative, the construction of the character of Nena Daconte points to an identity of a strong, decisive and courageous woman. A woman who is ready to face the challenges that life has to offer. While Billy Sánchez is identified as a rude, uneducated but brave man who does not take much initiative and, moreover, trapped in the futility money can buy.

By her identification of an experienced, mature, resolute woman, Nena Daconte would be a kind of emotional compass in the couple's decisions, as can be seen in the idea of spending the honeymoon in Paris, the French capital she knew well, which would guarantee emotional safety while the Latin American couple stayed abroad. However, the injury to Nena's finger caused by the thorn of a rose at the moment that she received the bouquet changed the plans of the trip as soon as they arrived in Paris.

### 3.1 In foreign land: ‘the non-place’

When we consider the polarity narrated in García Márquez's short story, we can highlight that the French anthropologist Marc Augé (2007) proposed a distinction between 'places' and 'non-places'. For him, the 'non-place' indicates opposition to home, to dwelling, that is, the

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bares sigilosos do Faubourg St. Honoré. Confessou-me que não tinha prestado muita atenção quando o recebeu, porque nunca teria imaginado que aquele costenho atordoado pela novidade de Paris, e uma jaqueta de cordeiro tão mal posta, tivesse a seu favor uma origem tão ilustre.”

<sup>16</sup> “Nena Daconte internou-se às 9:30 da terça 7 de janeiro, conforme pude comprovar anos depois nos arquivos do hospital.”

<sup>17</sup> “Todos os dias, durante semanas, rolaram nus debaixo do olhar atônito dos retratos de guerreiros civis e avós insaciáveis que os haviam precedido no paraíso daquela cama histórica. Mesmo nas pausas do amor permaneciam nus”.

personalized place of the subject with which he has already established a relationship of identification and emotional safety. From these assumptions, we can observe that the conceptions of 'place' and 'non-place' are transitory opposites, therefore fluid, since the idea of 'place' is never completely extinguished and that of 'non-place' is never fully materialized. In this regard, we have:

Behind the hours and the strengths of the landscape, we find words and languages: specialized words from the liturgy, from the 'ancient ritual', in contrast to those from the workshop 'that sings and chatters'; words also from all those who, speaking the same language, recognize that they belong to the same world. The place is completed by the speech, in the allusive exchange of some codes, in the connivance and in the intimacy of the speakers.<sup>18</sup> (AUGÉ, 2007, p.73, free translation)

From this perspective, we can state that, with regard to García Márquez's work, the access to the codes of language is the first element evidenced in the short story, which contributes to deterritorialize the character Billy Sánchez, as Latin American. When we resume the narrative, we notice that by the time they arrived in Paris, Nena Daconte was already very weak from the heavy bleeding on her ring finger. When she is already in Paris and still conscious, Nena manages to guide Billy by describing the route to an emergency hospital in the French capital. At that moment, Billy is a foreigner and does not understand the local symbols, the visible codes that organize the life of the city, nor does he recognize the language, which makes him not commune with the subjects around him, have no exchange of cultural codes or cultural intimacy or companionship.

Within this configuration, we can mention the existence of another aspect to be considered, one that deals with the distinction proposed by the Chinese geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (1983), between 'space' and 'place'. Tuan establishes his theoretical assumptions in the field of Humanistic Geography about a relationship between 'space' and 'place', where "space and place are familiar terms that indicate common experiences. [...] The place is safety and the space is freedom: we are connected to the former and we want the latter".<sup>19</sup> (TUAN, 1983, p. 03, free translation).

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<sup>18</sup> "Por trás da ronda das horas e dos pontos fortes da paisagem, encontramos, na verdade, palavras e linguagens: palavras especializadas da liturgia, do 'antigo ritual', em contraste com aquelas da oficina 'que canta e tagarela'; palavras também de todos os que, falando a mesma linguagem, reconhecem que elas pertencem ao mesmo mundo. O lugar se completa pela fala, a troca alusiva de algumas senhas, na convivência e na intimidade cúmplice dos locutores."

<sup>19</sup> "Espaço e lugar são termos familiares que indicam experiências comuns. [...] O lugar é segurança e o espaço é liberdade: estamos ligados ao primeiro e desejamos o outro".

We can observe in the short story that from the moment Nena Daconte is admitted to the hospital, the Latin American Billy Sánchez, her husband, finds himself alone and exiled, deterritorialized, away from his place and his space. The feeling of non-place and non-belonging is evident when he tries to establish an effective dialogue with other people and is unable to do so, because he does not know the local language or the cultural codes, as we can observe in the DS transcribed below:

DS2: There, finally, they got an Asturian on duty who helped him get along with the doorman, who proved that Nena Daconte was certainly registered at the hospital, but that visitors were only allowed on Tuesdays from nine to four, which means six days later.<sup>20</sup> (MÁRQUEZ, 2009, p. 240, free translation)

DS4: So many rationalistic gimmicks were incomprehensible to a pure Sánchez de Ávila, who had only two years earlier sent himself into a movie theater in the city outskirts with the mayor's official car, and had caused death in front of two dauntless police officers. He understood even less when the hotel doorman advised him to pay the fine but not to move his car at that time, because he would have to move it again at midnight.<sup>21</sup> (MÁRQUEZ, 2009, p. 243, free translation)

The days passed and gradually Billy realized “that he would never be able to order butter or eggs the right way, because he would never learn to say it, but the butter was always served with bread, and boiled eggs were in sight on the counter and he could pick them up without asking.”<sup>22</sup> (MARQUÉZ, 2009, p. 244, free translation)

According to Canclini (2008), the main idea of what it means to enter and leave the cultures of others is the perception of the conflict that is established during the process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. In this regard, Canclini makes reference to two distinct processes, namely: a) the loss of the spontaneous relationship of the culture with the geographical and social spaces, and b) the idea of relative 'territorial relocations'. Therefore, it is possible to realize the extent of such a conflict when Billy recalls his place, “the taste of fried fish and coconut rice. He remembered his trinitarian-walled house where it would be now seven

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<sup>20</sup> “Lá conseguiram, por fim, um asturiano de plantão que o ajudou a se entender com o porteiro, e este comprovou que, por certo, Nena Daconte estava registrada no hospital, mas que só eram permitidas visitas nas terças-feiras, das nove às quatro. Quer dizer, seis dias mais tarde.”

<sup>21</sup> “Tantas artimanhas racionalistas eram incompreensíveis para um Sánchez de Ávila e pura cepa, que apenas dois anos antes havia se enviado num cinema de bairro com o automóvel oficial do prefeito, e havia causado estragos de morte diante de dois policiais impávidos. Entendeu menos ainda quando o porteiro do hotel aconselhou-o a pagar a multa mas a não mudar o carro de lugar naquela hora, porque teria de muda-lo outra vez à meia-noite.”

<sup>22</sup> “... que nunca lhe seria possível pedir manteiga ou ovos do jeito que fosse, porque nunca aprenderia a dizer, mas a manteiga era sempre servida com o pão, e os ovos cozidos estavam à vista no balcão e apanhava-os sem precisar pedir”.

o'clock of the previous night, and he saw his father in silk pajamas reading the newspaper on the porch."<sup>23</sup> (MÁRQUEZ, 2009, p. 243, free translation)

Throughout the short story, we can identify in Billy Sánchez a sharp and gradual, but not purposeful, fading of the natural relationship with his culture and familiar geographical spaces. When he is alone, he remembers the peculiarities of his life and his place in Caribbean Cartagena. The idea of territorial relocation takes place slowly throughout the narrative when Billy Sánchez finally begins a painful and also instinctive process of relocation, since Nena Daconte - who spoke French and knew the local culture - was not next to him, as exemplified in DS5:

DS5: In the usual café he realized that he had learned to greet in French, and to order ham sandwiches and latte. [...]. In addition, three days later, the employees were familiar with him and helped him explain himself. Then, on Friday at lunchtime, while trying to pull himself together, he ordered a steak with chips and a bottle of wine. Then, he felt so good that he ordered another bottle, drank it halfway, and crossed the street decided to force himself into the hospital.<sup>24</sup> (MÁRQUEZ, 2009, p. 244, 245, free translation)

In *The Trail of Your Blood in the Snow*, we can observe the possibility of the subject adjusting to the non-place because they need to survive and not because of the sense of belonging to the place in question, as it happens to the character of the short story. The City of Light, unaware of his loneliness, represents to this Latin American the certainty of his non-belonging, that is, of a non-place that is never fully complete. In this stone book<sup>25</sup>, Billy Sánchez is nothing but a pilgrim.

We can observe that in the Paris envisioned by the young Hispanic-American, given the absence of his beloved, events often unfold in a painful and icy scenario. In this setting, shaped as a deterritorialized subject, overwhelmed and lonely, without the protection of his compass, Nena Daconte, Billy identifies, in this non-place, only negative aspects, only abandonment and

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<sup>23</sup> "... do sabor do peixe frito e do arroz de coco. Lembrou-se de sua casa com as paredes de trinitárias onde agora seriam sete da noite de ontem, e viu seu pai com um pijama de seda lendo o jornal no fresco da varanda".

<sup>24</sup> "Na cafeteria de sempre percebeu que havia aprendido a cumprimentar em francês, e a pedir sanduíches de presunto e café com leite. [...]. Além disso, depois de três dias, o pessoal que servia estava familiarizado com ele, e o ajudava a se explicar. Assim, na sexta-feira na hora do almoço, enquanto tentava botar a cabeça no lugar, pediu um filé com batatas fritas e uma garrafa de vinho. Então, sentiu-se tão bem que pediu outra garrafa, bebeu-a até a metade, e atravessou a rua com a firme resolução de se meter no hospital à força."

<sup>25</sup> "According to Walter Benjamin, (2008), apud: PESAVENTO, 2008), in *Paris, capitale du XIXe siècle*, the city is a stone book. This stone book, architectural discourse, in each era, it is to reading.

isolation, which in no way represent his idealized space or place of identification. In the DSs below, we exemplify Billy Sánchez's negative view of The City of Light:

DS6: General Leclerc Avenue was a hellish knot<sup>26</sup> (MÁRQUEZ, 2009, p. 237, free translation)

DS7: A Typical Tuesday of the Parisian January, cloaked and dirty<sup>27</sup> (MÁRQUEZ, 2009, p. 238, free translation)

DS8: For three days, the same dirty drizzle fell without a break<sup>28</sup> (MÁRQUEZ, 2009, p. 248, free translation)

DS9: A triangular dormer on the tenth floor, breathlessly reached by a spiral staircase that smelled like boiled cauliflower.<sup>29</sup> (MÁRQUEZ, 2009, p. 240, 241, free translation).

We can perceive that Billy Sánchez's apathy and indifference to the beauty of the French capital are also based on the feeling of non-belonging, since he does not share the place's identification codes. Throughout the trip, Nena Daconte had warned her husband of the hidden traps in Paris. Nena had traveled during her childhood with her parents across European lands and knew France well, so much that she claimed there were no more beautiful landscapes in the world. She had come to this conclusion from her own experiences in Europe, which is why she states:

DS10: 'There are no more beautiful landscapes in the world, but you can die of thirst without finding anyone who gives you a free glass of water'. She was so convinced that at the last minute she had put a soap and a roll of toilet paper in her bag, because in French hotels there were never soaps, and the paper in the toilet was the previous week's newspapers cut in squares hanging on a hook.<sup>30</sup> (MÁRQUEZ, 2009, p. 235, free translation)

In Nena's view and experience, despite all the extraordinary beauty and progress, foreigners in Paris would, paradoxically, be prone to great difficulty if they did not know the 'codes and passwords' to access the French culture. As soon as he found himself alone, Billy Sánchez realized the dimension of Nena Daconte's observations about the cultural marks of the host people. Because Billy did not speak that foreign language - French - and did not master any of

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<sup>26</sup> "A Avenida General Leclerc era um nó infernal"

<sup>27</sup> "Uma terça-feira típica dos janeiros de Paris, encapotados e sujos"

<sup>28</sup> "Durante três dias caiu sem pausa a mesma garoa fina e suja"

<sup>29</sup> "Uma água-furtada triangular no nono andar, aonde chegava-se sem fôlego por uma escada em espiral que tinha cheiro de couve-flor fervida."

<sup>30</sup> "Não há paisagens mais belas no mundo, mas você pode morrer de sede sem encontrar ninguém que lhe dê um copo d'água de graça'. Tão convencida estava que na última hora havia metido um sabonete e um rolo de papel higiênico na frasqueira, porque nos hotéis da França nunca havia sabonetes e o papel nas privadas eram os jornais da semana anterior cortados em quadrinhos e pendurados num gancho."

the nation's identity codes, Billy could not evaluate the extent of the problems that would arise from this cultural gap. The contingency of such aspects placed Billy in a limbo of behavioral and cultural alienation, for while Nena had been keeping control of adverse situations during the trip, he had remained in the same frenzied ecstasy provided by his father's wedding gift: a new convertible car, a *Bentley*, covered in genuine leather. He had been overwhelmed by the futility of material achievements.

By the time they arrive in Paris, Billy still nurtures his identity as a "domesticated Latin American bohemian." After the first dazzle from the exciting trip on his Bentley, Billy Sánchez finally begins - due to Nena's absence - an atrocious process of emotional and cultural maturation. Unable to get into the hospital and without any news of his wife for three days, Billy tried to break into the hospital with the same savagery he used to use in his adventures with friends in Cartagena de Indias, as we can observe in the DS below:

DS11: The watchman followed him, always repeating the same question in French, and finally grabbed him by the arm so hard that he had to stop. Billy Sánchez tried to get away with a fighter appeal, and then the watchman insulted him in French, twisted his arm behind his back like a master key, [...] took him almost suspended to the door, cursing in pain, and threw him like a sack of potatoes in the middle of the street.<sup>31</sup> (MÁRQUEZ, 2009, p.245, free translation)

After this traumatic episode, he proceeded to act as Nena Daconte would if they were together. Then, "that afternoon, being sore from the lesson, Billy Sánchez began to mature. He decided, as Nena Daconte would have done, to look for his ambassador."<sup>32</sup> (MÁRQUEZ, 2009, p. 245, free translation). Finally, he decided to seek help at the Colombian embassy in Paris, in a useless attempt to find help. However, in this episode, it was not language that deterritorialized this Latin American man, but rather the mistaken cultural conception of the Embassy official's speech and impassive gaze towards the foreigner. Let us look at the following sequence:

DS12: The official who received him instead of the ambassador seemed to have just recovered from a deadly illness, not only based on his black velvet suit, but also from the secrecy of his gestures and the meekness of his voice. He understood Billy Sánchez's anxiety, but remembered, without losing his sweetness, that they were in a civilized country whose strict rules were based

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<sup>31</sup> "O vigia seguiu-o, repetindo sempre a mesma pergunta em francês, e finalmente agarrou-o pelo braço com tanta força que o parou em seco. Billy Sánchez tentou se safar com um recurso de brigador, e então o vigia mandou-o à merda em francês, torceu-lhe o braço nas costas com uma chave mestra, [...] levou-o quase que suspenso até a porta, xingando de dor, e atirou-o como um saco de batatas no meio da rua."

<sup>32</sup> "Naquela tarde, dolorido pela lição, Billy Sánchez começou a ser adulto. Decidiu, como Nena Daconte teria feito, procurar seu embaixador."

on the oldest and wisest criteria, unlike in the barbaric Americas, where it was enough to bribe the watchman to enter hospitals. 'No, my dear young man,' he said. There was no other remedy but to submit to the empire of reason, and wait [...]”<sup>33</sup> (MÁRQUEZ, 2009, p. 246, free translation)

The DS12 above points to the conception of the embassy official in his judgment of foreigners, more specifically the Latin American one in the short story of García Márquez. We can infer that the embassy official was already territorially relocated, that is, he had already absorbed the cultural identity of the other nation and its normative standards, and also the hostile discourse with blunt references to known American behavioral patterns that are considered reprehensible by other so-called 'civilized' nations.

Such behavior by the embassy official reinvigorates the stereotype reproduced in the context of a common understanding of immigrant subjects in various foreign territories. When we analyze these facts, we turn to the critic Homi Bhabha (2010), who states that “in the language of political economy, it is legitimate to represent the relations of exploitation and domination in the discursive division between First and Third World, between North and South.” (BHABHA, 2010, p. 44). We can then infer that among such relations, there is also a pair of opposites established between Latin American and European, as presented by García Márquez.

Even though the embassy official is also a Latin American, like Billy Sánchez, he presents himself as a relocated subject and expresses these identity marks of culture and sense of belonging and place in relation to Europe, more precisely to France-Paris. Perhaps for this reason, he is indifferent to Billy's anguish and added: “See you, go to the Louvre. It's worth it”.<sup>34</sup> (MÁRQUEZ, 2009, p. 247, free translation). Thus, we can infer that the relocated subject expresses his need for recognition to the place in which he now lives, considering that the reference to the Louvre museum denotes a connoisseur of the memorable places of The City of Light. This monument constitutes an identity mark of Paris, since, according to Pesavento (2008, p. 10, free translation), “the monument is something that is erected as a place of memory, as a significant landmark for remembrance, which implies choices made at a given time.”<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> “O funcionário que o recebeu no lugar do embaixador parecia acabado de se restabelecer por uma doença mortal, não só pelo terno de veludo negro, mas também pelo sigilo de seus gestos e a mansidão da sua voz. Entendeu a ansiedade de Billy Sánchez, mas recordou, sem perder a doçura, que estavam num país civilizado cujas normas restritas se baseavam nos critérios mais antigos e sábios, ao contrário das Américas bárbaras, onde bastava subornar o porteiro para entrar nos hospitais. ‘Não, meu caro jovem’, disse. Não havia outro remédio além de submeter-se ao império da razão, e esperar [...]”

<sup>34</sup> “Até lá, vá ao Louvre. Vale a pena.”

<sup>35</sup> “O monumento é algo que se erige como um lugar de memória, como um marco significativo de referência para a rememoração, o que implica escolhas, tomadas em uma época dada.”



In the last pages of the short story, the narrator tells us that when Billy Sánchez was finally able to enter the hospital, he finds out that his wife, Nena Daconte, had died five days earlier, seventy-two hours after entering the hospital's emergency room. He also learns that during the 48 hours following Nena's death, he had been the most wanted man in France, and stunned by such thoughts "he left without saying goodbye, with nothing to be thankful for, thinking that the only thing he needed urgently was to find someone to punch, to forsake his misfortune."<sup>36</sup> (MÁRQUEZ, 2009, p. 252, free translation). Deterritorialized from his place, without identity characteristics around him, and punished by the atrocious experience that had made him mature, Billy Sanchez legitimizes his non-place.

### Final considerations

Podemos dizer que a morte de Nena Daconte fez parte da vida de Billy Sánchez redimensionando sua construção identitária. Em *O rastro do teu sangue na neve*, o narrador intradieético, ou melhor, o narrador-investigador nos revela, numa combinação de narrativa literária e jornalística, a mudança de perspectiva do sujeito desterritorializado e ausente do seu lugar. Essa mudança ocorre numa esfera temporária, posto que o lugar da personagem Billy Sánchez – Cartagena de Índias – permanece; isto é, seu lugar e o sentimento de lugar nunca se extinguem. Por outro lado, o paradigma de realocização não chega a se concretizar, ou seja, o não-lugar – Paris – nunca se realiza.

Ao longo do conto, percebemos a gradativa transformação desse latino-americano, de adolescente bandoleiro a homem adulto e sujeito desterritorializado. O caminho percorrido por ele desvenda um processo que vai desde o sentimento de não-pertencimento ao território estrangeiro – Paris – até a sustentação das marcas identitárias que confirmam seu lugar. Afinal, era a primeira vez que saía de sua terra e, por isso "a primeira visão de uma cidade diferente da sua, [...] as árvores peladas, o mar distante, tudo ia aumentando um sentimento de desamparo que ele se esforçava por manter à margem do coração". (MÁRQUEZ, 2009, p. 232)

O conto de García Márquez aponta para as marcas da identidade cultural do sujeito desterritorializado e que não compartilha com a sociedade em volta, daqueles símbolos, códigos, senhas culturais e valores propostos entre os locutores. Para além das marcas identitárias, o conto mostra também a possibilidade do sentimento de pertencimento quando da ausência do

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<sup>36</sup> "Foi embora sem se despedir, sem nada a agradecer, pensando que a única coisa que necessitava com urgência era encontrar alguém para arrebentar a correntadas, para se desquitar de sua desgraça".

lugar. Nesse sentido, o não-lugar permanece como transitório. Através do discurso literário, entre o real e o ficcional, García Márquez denuncia como o latino-americano é (des)cuidado pela Cidade Luz quando este não conhece seus códigos culturais, quando não se identifica com a cultura nacional.

À guisa de uma conclusão e na tentativa de argumentar que o mundo moderno e suas paisagens transitórias plasmam em formas, “Talvez cada colocação devesse terminar por um ponto de interrogação [...]. Pede-se ao leitor que as supra’ (TUAN, 1983, p. 08). Nesse sentido, inferimos que dentre os atuais pares organizadores dos conflitos nas ciências sociais propostos por Canclini (2008), tais como: tradição/modernidade, local/global, norte/sul, quiçá possamos, a partir dos recentes Estudos Culturais, incluir nesses espaços, outros pares de oposições, quais sejam: latino-americano/europeu e lugar/não-lugar, temáticas abordadas nesse artigo.

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