

GEPOLITICS AND THE MULTIGENERATIONAL NARRATIVES OF GABRIEL  
GARCIA MARQUEZ AND JHUMPA LAHIRI

by

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Honors Thesis

Appalachian State University

Submitted to The Honors College  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Arts in Geography and English

December 2018

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## Abstract

Indian-American author Jhumpa Lahiri in *The Namesake* and Colombian novelist Gabriel García Márquez in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (herein *One Hundred Years*) both explore multigenerational families and geopolitical influences in their respective novels. Their narratives revolve around the lives of a central family, The Buendías in *One Hundred Years* and the Gangulis in *The Namesake*. Throughout the stories, the way individual identities are influenced by family and domestic life, as well as how families and experiences are shaped by space, is explored. In *One Hundred Years*, the story revolves around the Buendía family, their integral part in the construction of the town of Macondo, and the spirit of the town, which relies on the family itself. In *The Namesake*, the premise involves the growing up of Gogol Ganguli, who is born into a Bengali family but in the United States, and the consequent anxiety that revolves around Gogol coming to terms with his identity. It is necessary to examine the domestic spaces through which both stories are constructed in order to understand how, also, the novels themselves explore the concept of space and movement -- *The Namesake* focusing on the movement to and from a place, and *One Hundred Years* focusing on the movement of the world into a place, which ultimately unravels the fabric of the location.

## **Geopolitics and the multigenerational narratives of Gabriel García Márquez and Jhumpa Lahiri**

Literature often serves as a medium through which authors and readers can explore ideas of identity through their narratives. Frequently text becomes a tool for ‘mapping’ ones experience and understanding one’s place in the world. According to Robert Tally, “As writers map their worlds, so readers or critics may engage with these narrative maps in order to orient ourselves and make sense of things in a changing world” (Tally 2011). For authors such as Jhumpa Lahiri, this mapping occurs through the terms of ethnicity and understanding oneself through displacement and movement. Lahiri focuses on larger themes of otherness, and the feelings that Bengali-Americans have to mediate when navigating between two starkly different cultures. For Gabriel García Márquez with *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, literature is a means through which concepts of isolation are investigated. How, then, can these two authors provide greater context to our understanding of how identity is mapped? Can we truly separate the two when analyzing their works? Additionally, how can literature help the reader understand human geographical problems such as displacement, identity, and family?

Indian-American author Jhumpa Lahiri in *The Namesake* and Colombian novelist Gabriel García Márquez in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (herein *One Hundred Years*) both explore multigenerational families and geopolitical influences in their respective novels. Their narratives revolve around the lives of a central family, The Buendías in *One Hundred Years* and the Gangulis in *The Namesake*. In both novels, the way individual identities are influenced by family and domestic life, as well as how families and experiences are shaped by space, is explored. In *One Hundred Years*, the story revolves around the Buendía family, their integral part in the

construction of the town of Macondo, and the spirit of the town, which relies on the family itself. In *The Namesake*, the premise involves the growing up of Gogol Ganguli, who is born into a Bengali family but in the United States, and the consequent anxiety that revolves around Gogol coming to terms with his identity. It is necessary to examine the domestic spaces through which both stories are constructed in order to understand how the novels explore the concept of space and movement -- *The Namesake* focusing on the movement to and from a place, and *One Hundred Years* focusing on the movement of the world into a place, which ultimately unravels the fabric of the location.

The Buendía family, namely Jose Arcadio Buendía, founds the town of Macondo and his family becomes the driving force that the town is constructed around at the beginning of the story. As the novel progresses and the introduction of technologies and individuals who are part of the modern world-system outside of Macondo become more closely incorporated into the story, the family begins to lose its metaphorical grip on the town as this system becomes more and more present, first from inventions such as telescopes and false teeth, and then railroads and large-scale plantations. The story begins with the founding of a new town by the first generation, and follows seven subsequent generations, ultimately revolving around the idea of solitude and how the town is changed when its link to the outside world becomes more and more permanent.

The central character in *The Namesake*, Gogol Ganguli, struggles with his identity as he grows up, feeling detached from his Bengali heritage and wanting to integrate into a more “American” lifestyle and how he mediates those feelings. His parents, Ashoke and Ashima, grew up in India and, especially Ashima, grapple with the culture change which moving to the United States introduces. Gogol and his sister, Sonia, however, both grew up in the United States and

identify more immediately with the culture therein. Gogol seemingly is “stuck” in this in-between of wanting to conform to American ideals and feeling more comfort in that space, but also being inextricably bound to his Bengali heritage. Throughout the novel he navigates these two spaces, and at times attempts to reject the heritage of his family altogether.

By selectively reducing down my examples from both texts and reading them closely under the context a geopolitical and multigenerational lenses, connections between the novels, such as familial experience, physical space, and their influences on identity, will be explored. Synthesis of both texts is necessary in order to understand the importance of both time and space in the novels. For *One Hundred Years*, I will explore the concept of solitude and how the town begins to lose its spirit of place when connected to the modern world-system via technologies and an eventual permanent link by railroad. For *The Namesake*, I will explore this same concept of integration, but in the concept of physical movement and conflicting identities. Both of these concepts will also be connected back to the way in which time, in the context of family and generational identity, influences the development of these places and how the characters navigate through them.

### **Tally, Bahktin, Wallerstein and Quijano, Harvey, and the personal experience of authors**

García Márquez and Lahiri explore the multigenerational experience and what it means to define identity based on physical space and location. The stories are two sides of the same coin -- one involving movement from one place to another, and the other involving a single place and the movement of the world into it. Without reading the novel through both a lens of time and space, or spatiotemporally, it is difficult to truly understand the entirety of the characters’

experiences, and how the identities of the characters cannot be tied back to a single experience. Reading the novel spatiotemporally yields not only a better understanding of these characters, but a more productive read altogether. Ultimately, it is necessary to integrate the concepts of multigenerational experience and geopolitics to confront the complexity of the experiences in these stories, and to understand that these stories are best read not through simply a spatial or temporal lens, but a combination of both. Using the definitional framework of literary cartography from Robert Tally's *Spatiality*, as well as an incorporation of Bakhtin's notion of the chronotope and Immanuel Wallerstein's definition of the modern world-system, among others, I hope to further understand how these novels are constructed spatiotemporally.

According to Robert Tally, literary cartography is a technique used by an author which is a form of mapping, the act of writing being an inherently cartographic activity: "Like the mapmaker, the writer must survey territory, determining which features of a given landscape to include, to emphasize, or to diminish." It is the literary cartographer's job to "determine the degree to which a given representation of a place refers to any 'real' place in the geographical world" (Tally 45). According to Tally, a map does not have to always be an explicitly visual representation, it can take on the form of words, and the act of storytelling is in itself mapping. Tally argues that while, traditionally, narrative has been a strictly temporal form, the idea of narrative and plot as also spatial has become prominent in the past few decades (Tally 49). Literary cartography involves the author giving sense and form to the world, a technique which is used by both García Márquez and Lahiri: Lahiri to depict the Bengali-American experience, and what it is like to move from one place to another, and García Márquez to depict the idea of solitude and the change an isolated place undergoes when the modern world-system comes into

it. This recognition of García Márquez and Lahiri as writers who are also mapmakers will provide the necessary explanation which allows further examination of the worlds they construct, and how space and time both are key to their development.

A key theme throughout *One Hundred Years* involves the introduction of technologies and people from the outside world into Macondo, with more and more of these influences trickling steadily into the town as the narrative progresses. The usage of the word “modern” to explain the introduction of these influences does not fully encompass the events taking place, and the word itself has too many meanings depending on context. Throughout my examination of *One Hundred Years*, I will instead focus on Immanuel Wallerstein’s concept and definition of the modern world-system in reference to what is being brought into the town of Macondo. This concept revolves around the concept of Americanness and European colonialism in particular, which makes “modern world-system” a more salient term to use in the context of the novel due to the way in which the outside world becomes more and more connected to the town as the story progresses. Wallerstein’s concept is both spatial and temporal, giving a specific setting to the unfolding of history and historicizing the development of the modern world. His concept can also be applied to *The Namesake*, as the expansion of European colonialism did not only occur in what would become the Americas -- one of the most potent examples of European colonial influence being the British in India from the sixteenth through the twentieth centuries.

The geosocial concept of “the Americas” did not come about until the sixteenth century, and with it came the modern world-system and the construction of the capitalist world-economy. What makes the Americas so distinct in this way is the destruction of indigenous populations and the introduction of a labor force which effectively replaced the existing institutions (Quijano and

Wallerstein 549). When talking about the introduction of technologies to Macondo, the concept of “newness” and modernity is inextricably linked to this complete new construction of “American” ideals and the New World. The introduction of the modern world-system into Macondo changed the town bit by bit, and imposed the idea of the town being effectively behind the rest of the world in terms of technology and production. A discussion of the modern-world system not only exists as a definitional framework for explaining the change in Macondo, but its focus on ethnicity also aids in understanding the banana plantation and repression of the town’s population during that time.

The modern-world system ties into the narrative of *The Namesake* with a focus on the global movement of a population. British colonial influence in India caused English to become a prominent language in the country. Ashoke, who grew up in a Bengali family which was rather educated -- his grandfather’s library consisting of many Bengali texts, but equal parts English and western -- was taught to speak English. This allows Ashoke to move the United States and be capable of attending graduate school at MIT and eventually acquiring a professorship at a northeastern university. Ashoke and Ashima are also a potent example of the need for immigrants to assimilate into American culture in order to be fully recognized as citizens -- they both must make sacrifices to integrate into the culture while also attempting to hold on to their Bengali heritage, one which they do not wish to shed (Quijano, 550).

I want to encourage a chronotopic analysis of both texts, falling on Mikhail Bahktin’s notion of the choronope. Chronotope, meaning time-space, is an analysis which looks at the way space is structured in a text, while also considering how time is passing, and how they are intrinsically connected in creating the world in the text. According to Bahktin, “spatial and

temporal marks are fused into a meaningful and concrete whole. Time here thickens, grows denser, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes more intense and drawn into the movement of time, plot, history” (Bahktin 235). Bahktin’s notion ties together the method that I am using to analyze these texts -- a chronotopic analysis is precisely what is necessary in order to more comprehensively and productively read both *One Hundred Years* and *The Namesake*.

*One Hundred Years* seems to trace the chronology of historical events, but in condensed form, the literary effect making it seem as though less time is passing than actually is, as if characters are speeding through historical events and developments in the town. While the amount of history that the characters live through is believable, the textual effect makes it appear as though it is occurring in a cyclical, compressed structure. This condensed chronology of events that take place in the story can be attributed to the mysticism which exists in the narrative, where time (and age, subsequently) seems to take on less weight in the story than the history of the family -- for a while, even the occurrence of death was unfamiliar to the people of Macondo before the gypsies arrive: “Macondo was a town that was unknown to the dead until Melquiades arrived and marked it with a small black dot on the motley maps of death” (García Márquez 77).

The literary effect of the condensed nature of time passing within the novel also exposes readers to the concept of time-space compression, an idea coined by David Harvey. According to Harvey, time-space compression occurs as a result of increased acceleration in exchange and consumption -- allowing commodities to be “circulated through the market system at greater speed” (Harvey 285). While his argument acknowledges the event occurring largely after the Industrial Revolution, we can use this concept of time-space compression to understand how the events in Macondo seem to progress at a rapid pace. It is appropriate to use Harvey’s concept

when we recognize García Márquez as a postmodern writer -- because his writing of *One Hundred Years* occurred primarily in the 1950's and 1960's, much of what he does literarily would be aesthetically categorized as postmodernist (Harvey 41). Although the construction of Macondo takes place in a much earlier time, recognizing the context of when the novel was being written justifies the usage of a postmodern take on time and space such as Harveys.

Time-space compression also applies to *The Namesake* in the most simple sense -- the ability for Ashoke, Ashima, Gogol, and others to travel back and forth from India to their home in New England is possible because of this compression. They are living in a time in which rapid transit and movement is common and able to be used by almost anyone, making the distance between India and the United States seem much smaller than it is in reality. It is important to consider this when we think about the novel -- this Bengali-American family is able to retain their locational ties in both spaces of their heritage because of this increased speed of movement.

Additionally, the transformation and division between members of the family often lies in their consumer choices. While Ashoke and Ashima, the direct immigrants of the family, still adhere to most of their Bengali customs and consume in a way that is linked to their past, Gogol and his sister often identify themselves with "American" commodities: objects, such as foods, which can fix them in this "American" space where they feel most comfortable.

It is also incredibly important to consider the contexts in which these texts were written in relation to the authors: both Lahiri and García Márquez draw from their own personal experiences of identity and space to provide the framework for their narratives. García Márquez inspiration for Macondo stemmed from his hometown of Aracataca, as well as many of the political events occurring, such as the many wars that Colonel Aureliano Buendía participates,

being reflections of the many civil wars Colombia goes through. García Márquez' depiction of organized religion and the Catholic church in Macondo also is a reflection of his own opinions about religion and its influences on Colombia at the time. For Lahiri, Gogol Ganguli, the main character in *The Namesake*, experiences much of the same issues she lives through as a first-generation Bengali-American. He experiences a disconnect from his Bengali heritage, growing up in New England, and goes by his "pet" name, meaning, "the name by which one is called, by friends, family, and other intimates, at home and in other private, unguarded moments" (Lahiri 26). How the authors are situated in space and time often directly influences the way their narratives are written and how their characters, then, situate themselves.

### **The Foundation of an Isolated Town and the Immigration of a Family**

*One Hundred Years* and *The Namesake* both are introduced by the movement to a new place: Ursula and Jose Arcadio Buendía, the first generation of the family which the narrative revolves around, pack up and found Macondo, along with several other families, seeking to escape their current life and begin anew. In *The Namesake*, Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli, a recently married Bengali couple, move to New England after Ashoke decides to attend graduate school there. The foundation of the town of Macondo becomes a clean slate for which the Buendía family can begin, with the town's growth developing around it. For the Ganguli's, moving to the United States is a choice which is made by Ashoke and creates a sense of uneasiness in both characters -- the United States being an entirely different culture from their Bengali origins, and they immediately must learn how to navigate that space. The introduction of these two novels help to establish the locational framework for which the narratives will be

outlined: the movement into and out of a space, and the subsequent development of the families which occurs in these spaces, and is often dependent upon them.

*One Hundred Years* revolves around the town of Macondo and its founding family, the Buendías. The town comes into existence when Jose Arcadio Buendía, with a want to escape a past which is plagued by his killing of a man over a cockfight, with a group of young men and their families “dismantled their houses and packed up,” crossing mountains and eventually clearing an area by a river but, geographically, unsure of all else (García Márquez 24). The story reads as the subsequent history of the town and the lives of its founding family, following seven generations of Buendías. For a long while after its founding, the town experiences isolation from the outside world, only being linked by bits and pieces brought in by bands of gypsies who occasionally visit. Jose Arcadio Buendía is an eccentric man with a distinct sense of adventure which only grows further at the introduction of these gypsy inventions, Ursula, his wife, is a more grounded and cynical character, who continually throughout the novel becomes a voice of reason and, sometimes, prophecy.

The subsequent generations of the Buendía family often bear names of the previous generations. Those children frequently adopt similar traits and dispositions to their namesakes, creating an effect of continuity and identity across the generations. Aureliano Buendía, the son of Ursula and Jose Arcadio Buendía, is an intensely focused but solitary man, who eventually becomes a Colonel and links Macondo to various civil wars and conflicts which bring the town closer and closer to a loss of its once solitary, magical nature. More members of the family begin to grow and link themselves to places and technologies that originate outside of the town, eventually permanently connecting Macondo to the modern world-system very physically, by

way of railroad and the creation of a banana plantation which, although on the surface brings prosperity to the town, marks its inevitable decline. Aureliano Triste, one of the seventeen sons of Colonel Aureliano Buendía, is who urges the construction of the railroad into the town -- and brings it in eight months later (García Márquez 222). Ultimately, the novel is an exploration of family dynamics framed by the gradual change in the place where it continues to grow -- the decline of the town, the location, is undeniably bound to the generations of the family which founded it, and vice versa. In the end, the town is destroyed by a storm, and the last Aureliano of the family, from the seventh generation, is taken along with it (García Márquez 417).

*The Namesake's* narrative revolves around the Bengali-American experience and the differences in the feelings of displacement between first-generation Bengali-Americans and their immigrant parents. Gogol Ganguli, the main character in *The Namesake*, is born at the beginning of the novel, shortly after his parents, Ashima and Ashoke, have moved from their hometown in India to Massachusetts, where Ashoke is pursuing his graduate degree. In order to be released from the hospital with their child, Ashoke and Ashima must give him a name, breaking Bengali custom by not waiting for a name from Ashima's grandmother. They name their child Gogol, after the Russian author Nikolai Gogol, who is of great significance to Ashoke. Ashoke, who was involved in a train crash which was the catalyst in his decision to move to the United States, only lives because a page of "The Overcoat", a short story by Nikolai Gogol, catches the eye of a rescue team. This is the source of his son's namesake, and as the family continues to live out their lives in the United States.

Gogol grows up, he becomes increasingly aware of the differences between him and his European-descended classmates, friends, and colleagues. Not only does he feel ethnically

different from who he is around, but he is further isolated by his name, which has neither American nor Bengali roots. Before he goes to college at Yale, Gogol sheds his name and changes it to Nikhil. As he gets older, he only dates women who are Anglo-American, and rejects almost completely the Bengali side of his heritage. During this time of separation, Ashoke dies, and his death creates an intense guilt in Gogol, who begins spending time with his family again, and starts dating a woman named Moushumi, who is also Bengali-American. While at first they find that they understand each other and get married, eventually their marriage becomes strained, and after Moushumi cheats on Gogol with a man, they divorce. The novel ends with Gogol finding his father's copy of Nikolai Gogol's short stories, and begins to read the book of his namesake.

### **Authorial connections and the real world as reference for narrative**

It is important to recognize the implicit influence an author's experience of space and identity can often have on their narratives. For both García Márquez and Lahiri, the locations in which their characters are bound are reflections of the towns or areas they grew up in. For García Márquez, the change the Colombia underwent during his time there, and his personal feelings of the history he knew, influenced the events which focused on in *One Hundred Years*. For Lahiri, her own experience of being a child of Bengali immigrants influenced how she depicted Gogol's own experience: even down to his name. The authors using their own experiences as reference for their stories ties back to author as cartographer: "The literary cartographer, even one who operates in such non-realistic modes as myth or fantasy, must determine the degree to which a given representation of a place refer to any 'real' place in the geographical world" (Tally 45).

Often, the events that occur throughout *One Hundred Years* are reflections of historical events which occurred before and during its writing. The hometown which Márquez grew up in, Aracataca, is the real-world referent upon which Macondo was based, with the physical geography being similar as well as the political events which influenced the town (Pelayo 2). The geopolitical events -- that is, political events that occur with a distinct relationship to geography -- which occur in the novel and link to the modern world-system coming into the town are often the result of outside forces. The gypsies bringing distinct exposure to the modern world-system for Macondo is a reflection of the concept of Americanity fully establishing itself in Latin America -- the concept of “newness” emerged, the inventions being considered new and, therefore, better, more compelling (Quijano 552). This distinctly created a divide between those living in Latin America, especially those in Macondo, with outside forces which brought in technology which was specifically a product of the modern world-system. The introduction of the banana plantation also displays the subsequent peripheralization of Latin America, where Macondo could be considered “undeveloped” therefore allowing the corporation to extract cheap labor from the town under the guise of mutual benefit (Quijano 552). The construction of the railroad tangibly links Macondo to the Industrial Revolution, which, in the concept of Americanity, brings “economic growth and development, and/or progress” (Wallerstein 1).

Many scholars conclude that the hometown of Gabriel García Márquez, Aracataca, provides a real world reference which Macondo was based upon, with the size and nature of the town being very similar to the fictional Macondo. According to Reuben Pelayo, “The town of Aracataca, where García Márquez was born, is hardly visible on most maps” (Pelayo 2). The relative anonymity of the town is similar to the nature of Macondo, which, in the beginning of its

founding, is known almost exclusively by those who live within it. Aracataca's place in a larger geographical context is often missing on any physical document, while Macondo lacks even a map to tangibly situate its place to outside forces. Jose Arcadio Buendía, who was the primary founder of the town, was "completely ignorant of the geography of the region. He knew that to the east there lay an impenetrable mountain chain and on the other side of the mountains there was the ancient city of Riohacha..." (García Márquez 10). The city, upon its founding, has no physical link to other communities in the country, and is found by chance by the gypsies who visit the town and introduce the scientific discoveries they possess. The town of Macondo exists in isolation, and, although the story revolves around it, in a larger picture is a town which likely possesses little significance to the outside world.

The town of Aracataca is definitively linked to the outside world by a small railroad station, a trait which becomes shared with Macondo when Aureliano Triste urges the construction of the railroad within the town which results in a permanent link between Macondo and the rest of the nation (Pelayo 2). The physical geography of the area also is similar to that of Macondo. Aracataca is located on the foothills of the Andes, where Macondo is flanked by an "impenetrable mountain chain" to the east. Márquez based much of the town of Macondo on the physical geography of Aracataca, much like he used the political developments which he lived through as a basis for events in *One Hundred Years*, a good example of the time and space García Márquez lived in/through is fused together in the narrative, and how García Márquez as an author acts as cartographer, mapping the areas of his narrative with his hometown as a reference map for its construction.

Similar to how García Márquez drew from his personal experiences and the places in which he grew up to help strengthen his narrative, Jhumpa Lahiri has done the same. The idea of an identity which contains multitudes is a concept which Lahiri is best known for, with Isaac Chotiner, a reporter from *The Atlantic*, having called her the “acclaimed chronicler of the Bengali-immigrant experience” (Chotiner 2008). Lahiri was born in England to Bengali parents, and grew up in the United States. “Jhumpa” is her pet name, or the name which she is referred to by her family, friends, and others who have close relationships with her. She began going by this name in kindergarten, and her family lived in Rhode Island when she grew up, keeping connections with their Bengali family and friends in Calcutta -- her family, effectively, situating her in time but disconnecting her in space. As an educated, “bi-literate” Bengali-American, Lahiri’s writing of Gogol’s experience makes more sense, as much of his experience relates back to Lahiri’s own (Cheung 7). Being born to Bengali parents in England and then growing up in the United States, Lahiri’s depiction of Gogol’s growing up allows readers to see the many issues and identity crises which occur when Bengali children with multiplicitous identities grow up in a space diverging from that of their parents and relatives.

Lahiri seems to have come to terms with this multiplicity of identities in a way that Gogol struggled to. Recently in her adult life, she moved to Rome and decided to begin writing in Italian. In a 2017 interview, when asked about this abrupt change, Lahiri responded, “I used to look for an identity that could be sharp, acceptable, mine. But now the idea of a precise identity seems a trap, and I prefer an overabundant one: the Italian piece, the Brooklyn one, the Indian one” (Pellas 2017). Lahiri having come to terms with her own identity and embracing her multiple backgrounds is one of the key issues in *The Namesake*: Gogol often doesn’t know

which identity or heritage to hold close, often rejecting one aspect of his identity in favor of another. Lahiri, with such a similar experience she has to Gogol, likely felt these same feelings, and used her personal experience as a way to make legible how people often go about mediating those feelings.

It is important to consider Lahiri's experience growing up as a referent for Gogol's experience, much like considering García Márquez hometown and experience of Colombian history to understand the spaces in which the authors developed, which, in part, inspired their narratives. With a knowledge of these authors backgrounds and experiences, we can come to understand how the writer acts as cartographer in their own stories, similar to how Tally describes the functioning of a map, which "shapes the different bits of data into a meaningful ensemble to be interpreted and understood" (Tally 55). As well, we can also use our chronotopic analysis to understand how the authors have used their own time and physical space to fuse together their ideas in the narrative (Tally 56).

### **Significance of trains as "in-between," or linkages from one place to another**

Both *The Namesake* and *One Hundred Years* incorporate the symbol of the train strongly into their narratives, with the transportation representing both change and connections from one place to another. In *One Hundred Years*, the train, introduced by Aureliano Triste, becomes the definitive link which connects Macondo to the outside world. In *The Namesake*, trains are often areas in the story where periods of personal reflection and change occur, as well as being the catalyst for movement. Trains in both instances aren't necessarily places, but links, spaces between which allow for, in *One Hundred Years*, movement of the outside world in, and for *The*

*Namesake*, transit outward, personal change situated in the movement from one place to another. Both authors deliberately bring in the motif of a train as a way of mapping their characters' experiences: the train serves as a way to bring characters from one place to another, and situates them on a greater scale to the rest of the world.

The direct connection for Macondo to the outside world comes with Aureliano Triste's construction of the railroad, which links the town definitively to the industrial world beyond it. However, this link to the modern, more technologically advanced world -- the modern world-system -- is tied to the decline of the town -- the period of growth which the railroad brings is ultimately lifeless, as the true power source of Macondo, the Buendías, are slowly waning in prominence. Even upon the introduction of the train to the town, which brings with it theatres, electricity, and the telephone, an unnamed woman in the town proclaims: "It's coming...something frightful, like a kitchen dragging a village behind it" (García Márquez 222). Where the first signs of technology, which linked the town to the modern world sporadically, held a certain magic which flowed naturally with the spirit of the town, a link which is undoubted, like the railroad, seems to draw the life out of Macondo like a vacuum: "It was as if God had decided to put to the test every capacity for surprise and was keeping the inhabitants of Macondo in a permanent alternation between excitement and disappointment, doubt and revelation, to such an extreme that no one knew for certain where the limits of reality lay" (García Márquez 224).

The train also serves as a mode of transit which brings outsiders into Macondo at a rapid pace -- before the inhabitants of Macondo can hardly realize it, the town is transformed into one which contains multiplicitous identities and cultures. "The suspicious inhabitants of Macondo

barely began to wonder what the devil was going on when the town had already become transformed into an encampment of wooden houses with zinc roofs inhabited by foreigners who arrives on the train from halfway around the world” (García Márquez 226). Not only does the train bring a multitude of who the town would consider foreigners, but it also brings a distinct set of people: those who saw Macondo as a place to be exploited, fertile land on which to begin a factories for capital gain. This is a concept which Wallerstein and Quijano both talk about: the peripheralization of Latin America and the use of it as a location where cheap labor and commodities can be exploited (Quijano 553). In merely eight months after the introduction of the train when these people begin to visit, it becomes harder for the inhabitants of Macondo to recognize their own, displaced in a space which used to be their own but, with the movement of these people in, has become something else entirely (García Márquez 228).

Ursula, who for so long has remained the anchor of the Buendía family and, subsequently, the town of Macondo, feels, even after she becomes blind with age, an unease long before it is readily realized by the rest of the citizens. “The world is slowly coming to an end and those things don’t happen here anymore” (García Márquez 189). Her realization marks the unease which overcomes the people of Macondo, and ultimately serves as an omen for the fate of the town itself -- now that there is this permanent link, a route for escape to return to the foundational mysticism and wonderment of the town becomes muddled and obscured.

In *The Namesake*, trains in the story take on an important meaning beginning with the crash that Ashoke experiences on his way to Jamshedpur. On the train ride, Ashoke speaks to one of the other passengers on the train named Ghosh, who asks him if he has seen much of the world, to which Ashoke replies to only places in India. “Not this world,” Ghosh responds,

explaining that Ashoke should see as much of the world as possible while he is young (Lahiri 15). Shortly after their conversation, the train crashes, and while Ashoke is trapped beneath the rubble, the detail which saves him is a page from “The Overcoat,” the short story written by the Russian author Nikolai Gogol. Ashoke, during his recovery time, refuses to read, reminded of the circumstances of his confinement.

The accident is what convinced Ashoke to pursue engineering at MIT and start a new life far from his home and his traumatic experience. The significance of the “Russian writer who saved his life,” Nikolai Gogol, is established, and becomes the namesake of his son many years after the accident (Lahiri 21). The train accident marks a point in Ashoke’s life which convinces him to leave his home in pursuit of a different life. His move marks more than just a change in his life -- Ashoke considers the train crash and the subsequent move as “rebirths” in his life: “None of this was supposed to happen. But no, he had survived it. He was born twice in India, and then a third time in America. Three lives by thirty” (Lahiri 21) The train, which originally was intended to link Ashoke to his family in Jamshedpur, as a result of the accident ends up transporting him elsewhere, away from his family and home, to a “new” world, a space where he is morphed into someone else.

The birth of Gogol also begins a new chapter of Ashoke’s life, and Gogol’s naming also begins his identity as tangential to the accident his father experienced in his youth. Ashoke keeps the experience rooted in Gogol’s namesake a secret from him until Gogol is about to graduate from Columbia and the memory of Ashoke’s accident resurges after Gogol is trapped on a train, someone having jumped in the tracks and committed suicide. When Ashoke brings up the incident that led to the naming of his son, Gogol comes to a realization: “And suddenly at the

sound of his pet name, uttered by his father as he has been accustomed to hearing it all his life, means something completely new, bound up with a catastrophe he has unwittingly embodied for years. ‘Is that what you think of when you think of me?’ Gogol asks him... ‘Not at all,’ his father says eventually, one hand going to his ribs, a habitual gesture that has baffled Gogol until now. ‘You remind me of everything that followed’” (Lahiri 124). The accident, where Ashoke was saved with a page of *The Overcoat* clutched in his hand, and the subsequent birth of his son, marked another life for him, the events on the train metaphorically linking the family to the United States.

Other pivotal moments in the novel seem to happen on trains, situating trains as a symbol of not just literal but metaphorical transit. Events which occur on trains often result in the characters coming to realizations about their place in the world, and are an in-between space where personal development or understanding often occurs. Ashima leaves her bags on a train after shopping in downtown Boston and buying items to give to her family in Calcutta when she next visits. When she finds this out, she becomes hopeless, thinking that what she has bought, relics from the United States which she was to give to her Bengali family, are forever lost. However, when Ashoke calls the lost and found, the bags are returned without a single thing missing (Lahiri 42). This experience causes Ashima to develop a connection to Cambridge, and, although not necessarily eliminating it, calms her anxiety about the unfamiliar place and becomes a story which helps her develop relationships with Ashoke and Ashima’s acquaintances in the city: “She has a story to tell at dinner parties. Friends listen, amazed at her luck. ‘Only in this country,’” Maya Nandi says” (Lahiri 43).

During the family's eight-month trip to India, Sonia has an allergic reaction to jackfruit on a train, and at the same time, someone on the train is robbed and murdered. The family is stuck on the train for five hours while the police investigate, and Ashoke is asleep through the occurrence, shocked when he wakes up and is reminded of his trauma: "No one is more terrified than Ashoke, who privately recalls the other train, on that other night, and that other field where he'd been stopped. This time he'd heard nothing" (Lahiri 86). The experience leaves Gogol and Sonia happy to go home, yet the family is left feeling isolated upon their return: "Though they are home they are disconcerted by the space, by the uncompromising silence that surrounds them. They still feel somehow in transit, still disconnected from their lives, bound up in an alternate schedule, and intimacy only the four of them share" (Lahiri 87). The stark contrast between their American lives and their Indian heritage becomes more evident to Gogol and Sonia, and the following months after the trip are punctuated by re-situation with American brands, music, and acquaintances until the trip becomes the past: "They take hot showers, speak to each other in English, ride their bicycles around the neighborhood. They call up their American friends..." (Lahiri 88).

Throughout both novels, trains serve as links to other places, but also are physical objects which create divides within families. For *The Namesake*, trains serve many purposes depending on the individual character's experience: Ashoke's experience on the train changed his life, causing him to make a move away from his hometown and to the United States. For Ashima, her train ride in which she lost her bags ended up connecting her more to the United States, a country which she long resented moving to with her husband. For Gogol and Sonia, their sickness on the train during their time in India while Ashoke was on sabbatical cemented their preference for

American ideals and culture, further displacing them from their Bengali heritages. In *One Hundred Years*, the construction of the railroad in Macondo tangibly links the town to the modern world-system, a space which causes technologies and visitors from outside places into the town, leading to the eventual disruption of life there, and, eventually, the destruction of the town altogether. In all instances, trains exist as an in-between, an area which has no physical boundary or space, but rather one which leads to greater conclusions of the space around it: the characters, although in differing situations, all are sparked into movement or complicate their notions of space by way of this transit.

### **Encountering Different Social Hierarchies**

A large portion of both novels focuses on how the introduction to social hierarchies which greatly differ from the characters' own establish a point of conflict which the characters must navigate. In *One Hundred Years*, the first social change which occurs is the gypsies visiting the town, reconnecting Macondo to its colonial roots. As the introduction of technologies increases, the town is then connected nationally, and finally, internationally. Connected to these outside links is the establishment of a strict orthodoxy, which occurs as Macondo continues to be concretely linked to the outside world, and the identity of the town, the space in which these forces are coming in, is forced to adapt to their overwhelming surroundings. In *The Namesake*, Ashima and Ashoke moving to New England means encountering different social hierarchies and adapting to a life which is distinctly "American." The family finds themselves in a new system, but one in which they are labeled a foreigner, distinctly separate from it. While the enforcement of organized religion in Macondo causes the town's identity to change, to the point where it

becomes less recognizable to the founders, the Ganguli family is displaced in a new space in which they must change and adapt.

The more exposure Macondo has to outside forces, the greater the influence becomes and the faster the town changes. Even when the gypsies first visit the town, Melquiades comments on how the world seemingly shrinks as technology progresses: “Science has eliminated distance...In a short time, man will be able to see what is happening in any place in the world without leaving his own house” (García Márquez 2). According to Harvey, this compression that has come about in the 20th century causes a “disorienting and disruptive impact upon...cultural and social life,” a disruption which seems to be mirrored in the continuous unraveling of the core of Macondo as time progresses and the outer world begins to seep into the town (Harvey 284).

Macondo starts off as a town which has little connection to the outside world, slowly becoming fused by links which expose the town to the modern world-system, first colonially, then nationally, and finally internationally. These links to modern technology at first are only touches -- the gypsies, part of Melquiades troupe, are the first outside group to locate the town and bring in their worldliness and innovations. This comes and goes with little regularity, and Jose Arcadio Buendía latches on to the various innovations which are introduced to the town. This introduction of technology to the town seems to cast a spell on the people there, with Jose Arcadio Buendía coming to his own conclusion, spurred by his fascination with these technologies: “Right there across the river are all kinds of magical instruments while we keep on living like donkeys” (García Márquez 8). When the gypsies come into the town, “in an instant they transformed the village,” demonstrating the tremendous influence they had on the way of life there (García Márquez 16).

One item which is brought along, ice encased in a pirate chest, is what captivates some in the town, and a scene which remains in Aureliano Buendía's mind until the end of his life. Although this introduction happens early, it is an occurrence in the novel which lingers in the memory of the Buendía family, concretely establishing a point of fascination that tries to be duplicated later on in the story, with the construction of an ice factory. From then on, the townspeople come to expect the presence of the gypsies, and their visits become a rhythm, even when it is not Melquiades troupe which visits the town. Their introduction of flying carpets and mystical innovations becomes a part of the way the town operates, and the identity of the area is largely reliant on the commonality of the magic which occurs there.

The simplicity of life that once marked the town of Macondo is slowly altered with the introduction of the modern world-system to the town, which is brought in by outside forces. García Márquez likely does this deliberately to show the break in isolation that the people of Macondo experience after being introduced to this system and its technologies. The town soon incorporates the gypsies visit into their natural cycle of life, reconnecting the town, by pieces, to the colonial world which it previously separated itself from upon its founding by moving into a space of isolation. The people of Macondo further adjust to the progressively faster introduction of technology into their town, but at the cost of the town's spirit of place, and the town itself is eventually destroyed by a storm, a symbolic example of how this modern-world system sparks the decline of the town into nothingness.

The role of Roman Catholicism in the development of Macondo and the development of an organized church, which the inhabitants of Macondo had been separated from since its founding, is a product of the modern world-system. While the inhabitants of Macondo were

exposed to religion long before a priest came into the town, their isolation caused them to fall into a more mystical pattern of practice, one where miracles and god were commonplace. The introduction of rigid, organized Catholicism to Latin America by Spain and Portugal led to the institution of hierarchical systems which were arbitrary to the people who it was being enforced upon, and, although the people of Macondo were once exposed to this, the re-introduction of the organized system which disrupted the solitude of the narrative is of similar nature to the historical development (Wallerstein 7).

However, Macondo suggests well that the people in these communities did not have a lack of spirituality, rather, quite the opposite. The people of Macondo thrive on faith, and experience miracles on a daily basis. They have come to see these divine events as commonplace, an integral part of the fabric of their community. The early inhabitants of Macondo reinforce this when the first priest comes to Macondo, believing he must baptize and save the people in the city: "Thinking that no land needed the seed of God so much, he decided to stay on for another week to Christianize both circumcised and gentile, legalize concubinage, and give the sacraments to the dying" (García Márquez 81). The people of the town, however, ignore the priest, telling him that they have a more direct link with God, without need of an intermediary. This is the first time in which a strict hierarchy of religion is enforced on the city, a discipline of orthodoxy, bringing along with it the first major project of these priests -- the construction of a church in Macondo.

Fernanda del Carpio's introduction into the town marks the second major time when organized religion becomes a force in Macondo. Fernanda is introduced with a bloody gesture, her presence disrupting a point of peace in the town: "She had been chosen as the most beautiful

of the five thousand most beautiful women in the land and they had brought her to Macondo with the promise of naming her Queen of Madagascar” (García Márquez 201). Aureliano Segundo, of the fourth generation of Buendía’s, visits Fernanda’s hometown and insists that he marry her. Fernanda’s marriage to Aureliano Segundo gives her the power to try to enforce her strict moral code on the entire household, and transform it into a copy the life she lived growing up, which was characterized by a false sense of self-importance, her parents insisting that her family was rich and powerful when in actuality they lived in a town that lacked spirit or wealth (García Márquez 206). She became incredibly religious and disconnected from others, her whole life bound by spiritual code. Her introduction into the story leads to an unhappiness within the home, and a strictness which is characteristic of her religion. She attempts to change the habits of the Buendía family, putting an end to customs of eating which were not strict and scheduled, forcing the family to eat at a single table in the dining room as a symbol of Mass. Even her changes of simple acts caused a tenseness within the family that is a product of her social rigidity (García Márquez 212).

Fernanda’s husband, Aureliano Segundo, is her foil, a man who has no strict moral code -- he sleeps with a concubine even after he and Fernanda are married. The differences in his personality and Fernandas is a reflection of the differences between the outside world and Macondo: Macondo, before her introduction, seemed to have no need for this kind of structure and hierarchy -- their link to spirituality and mysticism was more direct, and the introduction of such regulations only serve to strip the town of its freedom. The real miracles occur to those who have no strict adherence to these kinds of arbitrary hierarchies. While Fernanda continues to enforce her rigid ways on the family, it is Aureliano and his concubine, Petra Cortes, who

experience wealth and happiness, the farm they create together becomes prosperous (García Márquez 210).

At the beginning of *The Namesake*, when Gogol is born, Ashima and Ashoke must confront a difference in cultures when they are forced to name their son before they can leave the hospital. This breaks Bengali tradition, which relies on a name given by the wife's -- Ashima's -- grandmother to come up with the formal name for the child. When they tell the doctor of their predicament, he asks them if they have a "backup" name, one that they could choose if they disliked the name given by Ashima's grandmother. This choice, however, isn't considered by the parents: "It has never occurred to either of them to question Ashima's grandmother's selection, to disregard an elder's wishes in such a way" (Lahiri 28). The doctor continues to suggest that Ashoke and Ashima name their child after one of their ancestors, another concept which is distinctly western in origin. "This sign of respect in America and Europe, this symbol of heritage and lineage, would be ridiculed in India. Within Bengali families, individual names are sacred, inviolable" (Lahiri 28). This one of the first exposures that the Ganguli's have to a difference in tradition, a social hierarchy which they are not yet accustomed to -- one that disconnects them from the space they are in and creates a point of anxiety.

In the novel, the feeling of isolation and sense of being in-between is not something that just one character experiences -- each character, in their own way, uses their own personal experiences to try to come to terms with the feeling. Ashima is perhaps the person in the novel which experiences the most frequent anxiety and feeling of displacement. Upon moving to the suburbs outside of Boston, Ashima further associates her life in the United States as one riddled with perpetual anxiety: "For being a foreigner, Ashima is beginning to realize, is a sort of

lifelong pregnancy -- a perpetual wait, a constant burden, a continuous feeling out of sorts” (Lahiri 49). She goes on to describe the experience as “a parenthesis in what had once been an ordinary life, only to discover that previous life had vanished, replaced by something more complicated and demanding” (Lahiri 50).

As the family ages and Gogol’s sister Sonia is born, the family has begun to comply more with traditions in the United States, knowing that compromises to the social hierarchy is necessary to feel a sense of belonging in their location. On the outside, the Ganguli’s even begin to appear like an American family: “And yet to a casual observer, the Ganguli’s, apart from the name on their mailbox...appear no different from their neighbors.” Though this outside conformity seems like it may be easy to do, figuring out what changes to make and what customs to adopt is a point of deliberation with the family, a problem which they continually discuss with their Bengali friends in the area. The Gangulis begin to celebrate western holidays, such as Thanksgiving and Christmas, hanging wreaths on their doors. Christmas becomes “an event the children look forward to far more than the worship of Durga and Saraswati” (Lahiri 64). The family gives in in other ways, too, with Ashoke adjusting his clothing habits to that which fit the style of the area, and Ashima allowing Gogol to have “an American dinner once a week as a treat” (Lahiri 65). However, the Ganguli’s make efforts to not lose their Bengali identity, even while being separated from the location of their heritage by thousands of miles. They continue to attend religious ceremonies and have Gogol attend Bengali language and culture lessons. The adaptation to the social hierarchies of the United States are less conversion and more mediation in their lives: they must change for the sake of their children who are growing up in this space

which is primary to them, but still secondary to Ashoke and Ashima, who are deeply connected to their Bengali roots.

### **Namesakes and the notion of dual-identity**

Both novels in part revolve around how the identities of characters are influenced based on their namesakes. In *One Hundred Years*, the personality traits of characters in the novel often are determined by the family members who they are named after. While in *One Hundred Years* the same names are repeated throughout multiple generations, *The Namesake* deals with an entirely different type of naming: Gogol is given his pet name from outside of the family, his father deciding instead to name him after a Russian author, completely disconnected from his family or ethnic identity. The repetition of names throughout *One Hundred Years* and the disconnect of naming in *The Namesake* are both ways in which the characters situate themselves within their families and their locations.

In *One Hundred Years*, the continual comparison of children to their families is a product of the multigenerational experience -- with so many Buendías, it is natural to draw comparisons between the different generations to their predecessors. The process of naming in *One Hundred Years* becomes something which bound by both space and time: this similar naming links each subsequent generation with the memory of their family, but also is a way to make sense of all of the activities which occur in the one hundred years that the novel takes place. By linking the actions of generations to that of their predecessors, we are able to notice patterns in the location of Macondo that we previously would not -- the ways in which Jose Arcadios are moved forward by a sense of adventure, how Aurelianos are both inquisitive and influenced by the integration of

Macondo in the larger geographical context -- identities are never purely determined by family or location, but rather a hybrid of the two experiences.

The first Jose Arcadio, the son of Ursula and Jose Arcadio Buendía, is characterized by his brash personality which led to him fleeing from home and disregarding many of the social norms of the town. A hulking figure, Jose Arcadio possesses the feeling of wanting to escape where he is from, the same feeling which his father acts upon early in the novel: he ends up leaving Macondo to follow a band of gypsies and returns years later a man who claims to have seen much more of the world than the inhabitants of Macondo can comprehend. While his original desire to leave the town is similar to his father's, his experience outside of Macondo, in a new location not characterized by his family's presence, he becomes an entirely different person.

The Aurelianos of the family, however, tend to be the quiet, thoughtful, brooding types. The Aurelianos tend to be focused more on their inner thoughts than their interactions with people. Aureliano Buendía, after Macondo becomes linked to the nation by outside forces, becomes a Colonel, occupying himself with the happenings of the regimes which function outside of Macondo. Aureliano's revolutionary activity becomes yet another link the outside world has to Macondo -- the many civil wars that take place in the country seem to occur with Colonel Aureliano in the middle. He starts over thirty separate rebellions throughout the country, with few being successful, yet leaving a mark on the country with the liberal party presence. Near the end of the novel, Colonel Aureliano becomes solitary once again, after leaving behind his political activity. Aureliano, being the first of that name in the family, becomes rather someone who shapes his own namesake, but is also shaped by the forces which he is pulled into politically.

As more and more characters are born into the Buendía family, characters' are anchored in Macondo by the traits that they share with their predecessors. When Aureliano Segundo decides to name his son Jose Arcadio, Ursula is the first to have doubts, recalling the brash nature of the Jose Arcadios of the family and the withdrawn nature of the Aurelianos. She points out the only deviation from this trend comes with Aureliano Segundo and Jose Arcadio Segundo, who seem to take on the personalities of their opposing namesakes: "Even when they grew up and life made them different, Ursula still wondered if they themselves might not have made a mistake in some moment of their intricate game of confusion and had become changed forever" (Garcia Marquez 182) This mix up in the fourth generation represents a sort of dual-identity -- the characters who have namesakes relating to their predecessors are now expected to abide by those personalities. However, the naming of the Segundos within the story is again a way that the narrative can keep track of where the family is situated in time. When they mix this up, it is as if the family is suspended, unsure of their place in the larger context of the town -- when they both die at the same moment, they are mixed up in their graves, representing a reversion to the original idea that the two were switched at birth. Ursula later decides that, although the boys' personalities do not match that of their namesakes, there is one unifying trait between all Buendía children: "That's what they're all like...crazy from birth" (Garcia Marquez 182).

In *The Namesake*, Ashoke attributes Russian author Nikolai Gogol and the page from *The Overcoat* as the factor which saves his life and leads him to suggest the name of his son to put on the birth certificate while they wait for Gogol's familial name from Ashima's grandmother. Gogol, from the moment he was born, is pinned with a name which has no ethnic grounding in either of his locational identities: it is a name which is neither Bengali nor American, which

leads to a deep resentment for his name and his Bengali identity throughout much of the novel. He rejects that part of his life, feeling dread when he must visit India or partake in the customs that his parents still cherish. In his English class, when his teacher announces that they will be reading “The Overcoat,” Gogol immediately feels nauseous at the fact, at the forced confrontation with the origin of his name. “It’s as though the name were a particularly unflattering snapshot of himself that makes him want to say in his defense, ‘That’s not really me’” (Lahiri 89). Gogol wants to escape from talking about his name, and avoids interacting with any of his classmates, convinced that everyone is fixated on this facet of his identity which he resents. Not even having read the story which inspired his name, “The Overcoat,” or knowing the true story of his father’s near-death experience which inspired him to move to the United States, Gogol believes that he can reject his namesake, push it away without acknowledging it.

Gogol feels an existential confusion with his name, one that is not American or Bengali, but rather one completely removed from his own experience. Before knowing the true nature and origin of his name, Gogol feels isolated and irritated by his namesake, and it takes a very long time (and many attempts to adopt different names outside of his familial relationships) for him to come to terms with his pet name. *The Namesake* handles names differently from *One Hundred Years*, because the main character has a name which is original, but not locationally bound. In the context of time and family, Gogol’s name bears no reference to those who came before him, instead leaving him to figure out his own identity, while also figuring out where he fits in space.

Lahiri’s characters often embody the experience of a person caught in the space between -- the middle ground between their Bengali heritage and previous generations’ home and their “adopted” homes, the places where their families move. But this space between is not just a

spatial concept, Gogol's name is a sense of confusion for him as well, his identity muddled by an inability to truly claim his name or his heritage. Not only does the immigration of his family lead to an inherent alienation of the entire family, but his identity cannot even be bound in either of the places in which his heritage belongs. His name and heritage, effectively, create an identity for Gogol which is multiplicitous.

One of the most profound moments in the text comes when Gogol reflects on his identity in terms of his name: "The writer he is named after -- Gogol isn't his first name. His first name is Nikolai. Not only does Gogol Ganguli have a pet name turned good name, but a last name turned first name. And so it occurs to him that no one he knows in the world, in Russia or India or America or anywhere, shares his name. Not even the source of his namesake" (Lahiri 78). Gogol struggles often with an inability to fit in with those around him, which he attributes to his Indian heritage, but more deeply, his name, which even he himself cannot concretely explain to others. During one conversation over dinner with his parents, Gogol mentions how no one takes him seriously, but comes to the realization that the only person who continually questions his own name is himself -- prompting him to change his name to Nikhil (Lahiri 100).

Even when Gogol changes his legal name to Nikhil in an effort to shed the anxiety created by his pet name, he still feels a sense of dual-identity: "At times he feels as if he's cast himself in a play, acting the part of twins, indistinguishable to the naked eye yet fundamentally different. At times he still feels his old name, painfully and without warning, the way his front tooth had unbearably throbbed in recent weeks after a filling...He fears being discovered, having the whole charade somehow unravel...his original name printed on the front page of the Yale Daily News" (p. 106). Although he insists being called Nikhil, even to his parents, he feels

betrayed when they do just that when calling him at his university, “making him feel in that instant that he is not related to them” (Lahiri 106).

The sense of dual-identity brought upon by naming in each text shares definite similarities: Gogol feels like he is playing the part of twins, while Aureliano Segundo and Jose Arcadio Segundo are so similar that they are continually mixed up when they are younger, raising a question of how not only does the name of a person influences their identity, but situates them in space as well.

### **Conclusion: The Effectiveness of Chronotopic Reading**

Analyzing the stories of *The Namesake* and *One Hundred Years of Solitude* reveals something incredibly important for a productive reading of both texts: the intertwined nature of space and time, how spatiotemporality is inseparable and characters’ experiences are influenced by a mixture of both of these factors. The selection of four main factors -- an author’s personal experience, trains as “in-between” and links from place to place, social hierarchy brought upon by change in place, and names as familial and spatial grounding -- all combine together to better understand how the narrative in both stories is a chronotope. The concepts of literary cartography introduced by Robert Tally, the time-space compression of David Harvey, and Immanuel Wallerstein’s concept of the modern world-system, all link together to help us understand also how space and time are linked together in these novels. What, ultimately, is productive about reading these texts in this way is that it reveals how the authors have built their characters to be multiplicitous: brought together in terms of family but influenced and inextricably linked to the locations which they exist within. *One Hundred Years* explores how one family, the Buendías,

found a town which originally exists in isolation and has a spirit of place which is very distinct, but ultimately changes and becomes destroyed by further exposure to the outside world. In *The Namesake*, the narrative revolves around instead what occurs when the Gangulis move from a place to somewhere new, and how they must, through their heritage, family, and new location, adapt to their surroundings and find their place in the world once again.

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