

# 1 The Feeling of Alienation in the Namesake by Jhumpa Lahiri

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4 Received: 8 December 2013 Accepted: 2 January 2014 Published: 15 January 2014

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## 5 **Abstract**

6 Alienation is an unavoidable aspect of modern life. Nevertheless, it is as old as human beings  
7 themselves. The analysis of the interaction between the two sides (the oppressors - the  
8 oppressed, thesis-antithesis) sheds lights on the emergence of alienation and the ways it exists.  
10 The outhors most of whom have experienced the feelings of alienation in the consequence of  
11 their culture having been colonized try to explain this relationship through novels and short  
12 stories. A daughter of an immigrant couple, Jhumpa Lahiri is one of these postcolonial writers  
13 who have been torn between the two cultures. The Namesake, her first novel, skillfully reflects  
14 the situation of the diaspora and the feeling of alienation through its Bengali immigrant  
15 couple and their son, Gogol. Lahiri lays down certain types of alienation through her  
16 characters? lives adventures. Characters from The Namesake show some certain symptoms of  
17 having experienced the feeling of alienation in various form. Considering the postcolonial  
18 theory, the main interest of this article is to examine the theme of alienation and how it is  
19 manifested itself in Jhumpa Lahiri?s The Namesake in the light of Fichte, Hegel, Feuerbach,  
20 Marx, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Sartre, Albert Camus and M. Seeman?s approaches to the term  
21 of alienation.

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23 **Index terms**— alienation, postcolonial, lahiri, the namesake, existential.

## 24 **1 Introduction**

25 orn in 1967 in London and raised in Rhode Island, Jhumpa Lahiri is an Indian-American author who won the  
26 2000 Pulitzer Prize for her short story collection, Interpreter of Maladies. At an early age, she tasted the feelings  
27 of being dislocated, and experienced the feeling of being uprooted, a situation in which one feels being torn into  
28 two rootless identities. In this regard she utters 'When I was growing up in Rhode Island in the 1970s I felt neither  
29 Indian nor American' (Atwan103-104). When Lahiri was two years old, her parents who were Indian immigrants  
30 moved to the USA. One can easily claim that she experienced the duality and ambivalence of the immigrant life  
31 of Indians as she bluntly says: "In spite of the first lesson of arithmetic, one plus one did not equal two but zero,  
32 my conflicting selves always concealing each other out"(Atwan 104). As she underlines, it is meaninglessness  
33 because she could not make a choice between the two identities, which is an enormous motive for her postcolonial  
34 writings. She was an Indian at home but when she stepped out of the threshold of the family zone, she had  
35 to conceal her Indian identity. In fact, Jhumpa Lahiri's PhD. Yüzüncü Y?l Üniversitesi Van/Turkey. e-mails:  
36 mehrectas@hotmail.com, both short story books and her novel reflects her diasporic experiences as a postmodern  
37 migrant living in the USA. Therefore, her characters derive mostly from the real people around her, either in  
38 her past or present. What she does is to combine the India she has created in her dreams with her experiences  
39 she has lived as an immigrant who looks forward to embracing her root. The re-embacing of roots requires a  
40 philosophical journey because of the immigrant experiences of powerlessness and meaninglessness, i.e. alienation.  
41 In this regard Lahiri seems to have voyaged in such a journey as she utters; "No country is my motherland. I  
42 always find myself in exile in whichever country I travel to. That's why I was always tempted to write something  
43 about those living their lives in exile" (Oh, 157). The 'those living their lives in exile' theme is stressed in her  
44 first novel, The Namesake.

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45 The Namesake opens with the scene in which Ashima, a pregnant woman from Calcutta-India, tries to cook  
46 an Indian meal that dissatisfies her. This very first scene reflects the total physical and psychological mood of  
47 migrants. Although she has the same ingredients to cook an Indian dish, she does not manage to prepare as  
48 she did in India. The feeling of displacement and alienation exist in all activities the characters carry out. She  
49 lives in a small and cold apartment and she is alone despite her pregnancy, which is an abnormal situation for  
50 the Indians. She is married to Ashoke Ganguli, who is an engineering student at the Massachusetts Institute of  
51 Technology. Their families arranged their marriage and she moved to the USA to live with her husband. She  
52 successfully bore a boy. The baby is named after Nikolai Gogol, famous Russian author. Ashoke chooses Gogol  
53 as the pet name for the newborn baby. Because Bengali culture requires a baby to have two names; a pet name  
54 to be called by family and a good name to be called in the society. While Ganguli couples are about to leave the  
55 hospital, they are asked to write a legal name for the baby. They just write Gogol on the birth certificate as an  
56 official name for their boy with a hope that they will change later with a good name. The reason of Ashoke's  
57 choosing Gogol as a pet name for his baby is that he is indebted to The Overcoat -a short story by Gogol-because  
58 in a train accident the book saved his life. Gogol has no problem with his name until he enrolls a kindergarten.  
59 Unaware of the fact that Gogol saved his father's life, he changes his name into Nikhil before he starts the college  
60 life. An Indian Gogol shifts into an American Nikhil. The change in his name affects all his life style. Nikhil  
61 gives him an American way of life freedom that does not exist and is not accepted in Bengali culture. In the  
62 end of the novel, we see that Gogol is alone again. Two different conclusions can be drawn from his situation in  
63 the end of the novel: Either he manages to embrace both his past and present life in a more mature way and he  
64 comes a total or he is different from both Gogol and Nikhil.

65 Human life has a vortex flow that develops transcendently and keeps changing through its adventurous  
66 voyage. Fichte best identifies this flow via his triad, which states that a being/ an idea starts with the proclamation  
67 of the thesis. Furthermore, the declaration requires the opposite of the thesis, i.e. antithesis. The crisis between  
68 thesis and antithesis is tension that creates the most suitable (or sometimes destructive) elements for improvement  
69 in human life. The outcome of this tension is synthesis that is the embracement of both thesis and antithesis but  
70 which is also different from the both when each one is taken into consideration separately. Fichte's triad is the  
71 formulation of this vortex flow as Jhumpa Lahiri in The Namesake has pictured Gogol's life.

72 Gogol is the first child of Ganguli couple who are immigrants from Bengali, India. The naming of Gogol, his  
73 ambivalence towards his culture, his struggle for acceptance by his American friends, his duality in social life  
74 (Indian and American), his choice of being an American by depriving himself from his root and his confrontation  
75 with his reality are of crucial importance and focal events as symptoms of Fichte's triad in Jhumpa Lahiri's The  
76 Namesake.

77 Gogol's life has been studied by considering both the triad of Fichte and Hegel's notion of alienation.  
78 Fichte's thesis and antithesis have equaled to the first two steps of Hegel's philosophy (consciousness and self-  
79 consciousness) because they have illuminated the diversion of Gogol into Nikhil. The alienation of Gogol to his  
80 Bengali identity by becoming Nikhil has been evaluated in different ways because alienation in Fichte is different  
81 from Hegel's notion of the term. For Fichte, alienation is an ongoing process and each stage (thesis-antithesis-  
82 synthesis) requires it. Moreover, for him, the result of alienation is alienation again. On the other hand, Hegel  
83 comprehends alienation as a means of negation to become oneself/authenticity. For Hegel, alienation is not an  
84 aim but it is a way to reach the reason.

85 Another aspect that differentiates Hegel from Fichte regarding alienation in Gogol's life is the results of their  
86 process of alienation. There is a unity of thesis and antithesis in Fichte. For him, the character that came into  
87 existence in the end of the novel is the combination of both Gogol and Nikhil. But there is not such a combination  
88 in Hegel's philosophy on alienation. The second stage in Hegel, negation, is just a stimulus for the spirit and  
89 mind to take advantage from selfconsciousness' experiences and become itself, be at home. When these two  
90 philosophies are considered, Jhumpa Lahiri implicitly depicts Gogol as both a new person and a person who has  
91 gained his authenticity. Whether the person in the end of the novel is Gogol, Nikhil or both does not concern  
92 the theme of the article. The process of alienation is the focal point of this article. Besides, the end of novel is  
93 regarded as the combination of Gogol and Nikhil for Fichte, and the Gogol's gaining his authenticity for Hegel  
94 to complete the process.

95 The feeling of alienation that is experienced by the characters of The Namesake cannot be confined to just  
96 Hegel and Fichte's notion of alienation. Thus, Gogol and Moushumi's motives have been analyzed by considering  
97 existentialist alienation. Human condition and existence precedes essence have been shown as two crucial  
98 characteristic for Gogol and Moushumi's motives. Gogol's insistence on freedom of self-naming, choosing an  
99 appropriate way of life for himself and his sufferings as result of human condition. Moushumi's persistence on  
100 her freedom and her explicit connection with France have been regarded as her existentialist motives.

101 In addition to philosophical approaches to alienation, Melvin Seeman's scientific five-fold classification of  
102 alienation has been used in the analyzing of The Namesake. A character can be in many variants of alienation  
103 because of the contiguity. Thus, Ashima experiences "powerlessness" because of her sufferings during her  
104 pregnancy and the displacement of her Bengali values. Ashima is pregnant and at the hospital. There are  
105 not any acquaintances around, which is not an acceptable situation for Bengali culture. In Calcutta, when a  
106 woman is about to give birth, she is taken to her parents' home, and her connection with her husband her  
107 husband's relations is cut until the baby is born. However, Ashima is alone and lonely in Cambridge; there is

108 neither her relations nor Ashoke's. Her experiences in hospital add to her view of life about America. She thinks  
109 that she will never get accustomed to the lifestyle on this continent, a life totally different from her life in India.  
110 In addition, she gives birth to a baby that she will bring up in this country where she does not have any relations  
111 to take advantage from her/his experiences, expect Ashoke. One day she expresses her anxiety to her husband.  
112 "I am saying I don't want to raise Gogol alone in this country. It's not right. I want to go back" ??Lahiri 33).  
113 Nevertheless, she has to face the unbearable loneliness of this place despite her unwillingness. For, she does not  
114 have the power to divert the flow of her family's life in this land. She experiences this feeling of powerlessness  
115 until she decides to move to India after her husband's death.

116 Ashima and Ashoke plan to visit their relatives in Calcutta in the following months. Ashima takes Gogol and  
117 goes shopping. Ashima buys presents for both her and Ashoke's parents. While coming back from the shopping  
118 on the subway, she is late and takes Gogol out of subway clamp. Then someone from the crowd shouts to her,  
119 "your things." ??Lahiri 42) But the doors of subway clamp has already shut. She looks behind their present bags  
120 in the rear car disappearing from the sight helplessly.

121 She stands there watching until the rear car disappears into the tunnel, until she and Gogol are the only people  
122 remaining on the platform. She pushes the stroller back down Massachusetts Avenue, weeping freely, knowing  
123 that she can't possibly afford to go back and buy it all again (Lahiri 42).

124 In India, there was not such a possibility for her to experience such an event and aftermath, to feel so desperate.  
125 She suffers from knowing that the events taking place in this country is not in her power. Everything is challenging  
126 culture, life style, climate and the relationship between people. Thus, she experiences powerlessness because she  
127 cannot make sense of all these. Ashima's pregnancy is one of her unbearable sufferings that defines the limits  
128 of her ability to bear any difficulty. Thus, she defines other sufferings by connecting them to the pregnancy  
129 metaphorically.

130 For being a foreigner, Ashima is beginning to realize, is a sort of lifelong pregnancy -a perpetual wait, a  
131 constant burden, a continuous feeling out of sorts. It is an ongoing responsibility, a parenthesis in what had once  
132 been ordinary life, only to discover that that previous life had vanished, replaced by something more complicated  
133 and demanding (Lahiri 49-50).

134 Ashima has been tolerant to displacement and pregnancy in displacement despite her silent rebellions that  
135 never go beyond an idea. She is aware of the fact that Bengali identity is not equipped enough to wage war  
136 against the displacement and the hegemonic values of the country. "Who had forsaken everything to come to  
137 this country, to make a better life, only to die here?" is her another silent rebellion that passes through her mind  
138 when Ashoke is dead of a heart attack in a remote part of the country (Lahiri 180). After her husband's death,  
139 Ashima ?feels lonely suddenly, horribly, permanently alone, and briefly, turned away from the mirror she sobs  
140 for her husband. She feels overwhelmed by the thought of the move she is about to take, to the city that was  
141 once home and is now in own way foreign. ??Lahiri 278) In fact, Lahiri pictures the dramatic life adventures of  
142 immigrant people and meanwhile how they feel all around the world. These immigrant people are disappointed  
143 because they recognize that they do not gain anything despite their sufferings that has lasted for many years.

144 Before analyzing Gogol's life in the light of meaninglessness, the distinction between powerlessness and  
145 meaninglessness should be presented briefly. For Seeman, powerlessness is the disability to control the events  
146 while meaninglessness can be summarized as the individual's disability to predict the "behavioral outcomes" of  
147 the events or disability to make a choice between two or more choices. (Seeman 786) Thus, meaninglessness stems  
148 from indecisions and senselessness, which is the most prevailing characteristic of Gogol's life. He has to suffer  
149 from being called Gogol until he changes his name into Nikhil but then he experiences the indecision between  
150 Gogol and Nikhil. In addition, his dichotomy does not take place just in names but it includes lifestyle, culture  
151 and identity. At first, he does not want to be called by another name when he is about to attend the kindergarten.  
152 Because "He is afraid to be Nikhil, someone he doesn't know. Who doesn't know him" (Lahiri 57). After he  
153 starts the school, he experiences first insults about his name, and he afterwards decides to change his name.  
154 Before he attends the university, he changes his name into Nikhil. However, Nikhil is not just his new name but  
155 it is the symbol for his new life. Therefore, Gogol experiences a dichotomy that takes place between Gogol and  
156 Nikhil, Bengali and American.

157 Nikhil brings a sense of self-confidence and self-esteem to Gogol's life even for a short period of time. He can  
158 easily communicate with girls and have fun with them. He ignores his family, smokes and loses his virginity,  
159 neither of which is acceptable for Bengali people.

160 But now that he's Nikhil it's easier to ignore his parents, to tune out their concerns and pleas?It is as Nikhil,  
161 that first semester, that he grows a goatee, starts smoking Camel Lights at parties and while writing papers  
162 and before exams, discovers Brian Eno and Elvis Costello and Charlie Parker. It is as Nikhil that he takes  
163 Metro-North into Manhattan one weekend with Jonathan and gets himself a fake ID that allows him to be served  
164 liquor in New Haven bars. It is as Nikhil that he loses his virginity at a party at Ezra Stiles, with a girl wearing a  
165 plaid woolen skirt and combat boots and mustard tights. ??Lahiri 105) While he is taking up the American type  
166 of life style enthusiastically, his other part, Gogol, pricks his conscience. While he is at Maxine's parents' cottage  
167 in the country consuming expensive wine and having fun, he suffers from a pang of conscience. "At times?, and  
168 another bottle of wine is opened, and Gogol raises his glass to be filled yet again, he is conscious of the fact that  
169 his immersion in Maxine's family is a betrayal of his own" ??Lahiri 141). The meaninglessness of his life either  
170 under the name Gogol or Nikhil is crystal-clear. In addition, he understands that the problem with his life is not

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171 just a name even if it has haunted his life. The senselessness of not knowing the real precursor of his life and  
172 the pangs of conscience deepen his disability to make a choice between the two identities and make sense of his  
173 being as a Bengali immigrant couple's son. In short, an "American-born confused Deshi", Gogol is a symbol for  
174 the confusion that immigrants experience under the conditions of displacement ??Lahiri 118).

175 Normlessness and isolation are two the two other kinds of alienation which Moushumi experiences. It is not  
176 normal for Bengali people to express and discuss sexual feelings with others. (Aziz) Ashima and Ashoke represent  
177 this Bengali custom successfully and they make an effort to instill this tradition into Gogol and Sonia. In fact,  
178 the other immigrant families endeavor to do the same thing, too. However, two characters in The Namesake,  
179 one is of Bengali descendent and the other is Russian, Moushumi and Dimitri commit an indiscretion, cheating.  
180 Moushumi had an undesirable puberty. Despite her need for love of the opposite sex especially the white, no  
181 one was interested in her. "The shameful truth was that she was not involved, was in fact desperately lonely.  
182 She had rebuffed the Indian men she wasn't interested in, and she had been forbidden as a teenager to date"  
183 (Lahiri 213). So she harbored infatuations with her teachers and friends at school until she went to Paris for her  
184 education. Everything suddenly changed there and she started to go out with men and gave permission to them  
185 to seduce her anywhere they wanted in a pub or at a park. Thus she gained her selfconfident.

186 She seems to a perfect match for Gogol because she undergoes the same experiences: both of them are Indian,  
187 they both have artistic tastes; they both have suffered their foreign names. However, Moushumi does not want  
188 to be engaged to a person for all her life and she "?wondered if it was her horror of being married to someone  
189 she didn't love that had caused her, subconsciously, to shut herself off" (Lahiri 214). In addition to this feeling,  
190 one day she comes across the name Dimitri who she met when she was a teenager and he was about thirty. "The  
191 name alone, when she'd first learned it, had been enough to seduce her. Dimitri Desjardins" (Lahiri 256). Seeing  
192 this name, something reignites her years with him and she phones him although she is aware that she is married.

193 Middle aged and an unemployed, Dimitri is living in a dirty apartment. He is just the opposite of Gogol,  
194 which makes him attractive for Moushumi. She does not like Gogol's name, she thinks that Dimitri's name  
195 reminds her of her days in Paris. Moushumi regularly visits Dimitri's apartment and she cheats on Gogol. Thus,  
196 Moushumi and Dimitri breaks a social rule which is valid in both Bengali and American society to gratify their  
197 desires. Gratification of desires is not something wrong but the means they apply to gratify is unacceptable by  
198 the society. In addition, a married woman's quest for adventure in the arms of another man apart from her  
199 husband is an unwelcome act in both Bengali and American cultures. Moushumi's motives for isolation is not  
200 just a kind of anger or vengeance. Although she suffered from the conventions of Bengali life style when she was  
201 a teenager, she does not try to devalue these conventions just because of this. The precursor of her rejection of  
202 Bengali values stems from her outlook on life she gained while she was a student in Paris. Paris's existentialist  
203 environment and people's interest in foreigners encouraged her to constitute a modern world view of hers. Her  
204 outlook on life contains characters of existentialist philosophy that rejects any conventional thought and life style.  
205 Thus, she cannot do without her free life style, which makes her to betray her husband, Gogol.

206 Despite the fact that there are not explicit signs of Marx's alienation, an implicit utterance has been regarded  
207 as an evidence to add Feuerbach's alienation to the analysis. Ashoke Ganguli and his parents' being grateful  
208 to Nikolai Gogol instead of God has been taken as their denial of spirituality. According to Feuerbach, human  
209 beings can only overcome alienation by diverting the flow of love and gratitude for God towards human beings.  
210 Ashoke does the same, and he is freer than the other characters.

211 In The Namesake, although there are many rituals, which are carried out by the Ganguli family, none of these  
212 is religious but the rituals are Bengali customs. Thus, the Ganguli are not fundamentalists and even not religious  
213 despite their dependency on India. Moreover, neither the Ganguli nor their relations are grateful to God for  
214 Ashoke's survival from the train accident but instead, they chose to thank Nikolai Gogol, the author of "The  
215 Overcoat". ?he thanks his parents, and their parents, and the parents of their parents. He does not thank God;  
216 he openly reveres Marx and quietly refuses religion? He cannot thank the book; the book has perished, as he  
217 nearly did, in scattered pieces, in the earliest hours of an October day, in a field 209 kilometers from Calcutta.  
218 Instead of thanking to God, he thanks Gogol, the Russian writer who had saved his life ??Lahiri 21).

219 By doing so, Ashoke backs up Feuerbach on the returning of love and thanks from God to human beings.  
220 He changes the object of human love from God to human beings as Feuerbach says, "The task of modern  
221 era was realization and humanization of Godthe transformation and dissolution of theology into anthropology"  
222 ??Feuerbach 1). This is the end of alienation in Feuerbach's philosophy.

223 USA is taken into consideration. Ashima suffers from displacement. Gogol is isolated and estranged. Sonia,  
224 who prefers materialistic satisfactoriness, is as reserved as his father. The difference between Gogol-Ashima and  
225 Ashoke-Sonia stems from their outlook on life and what they centers in their thoughts. Ashoke manages to find  
226 the balance between his essence and the material world by loving and thanking people not any spirituality.

227 Alienation, for existentialists, is not a result of human beings' relationship with material world as in Marx's  
228 philosophy but it is rather psychological and even spiritual. Alienation is an aspect of human condition despite  
229 its prevailing in modern world. Unlike Hegel's philosophy about alienation that says alienation will end in  
230 modern times, existentialists like Kierkegaard believe that the individual in modern world is estranged from  
231 himself/herself more tragically. Thus, modernism has brought inauthenticity with itself.

232 Sean Sayers in "The Concept of Alienation in Existentialism and Marxism" says that existentialists take  
233 alienation as a universal aspect of human condition (9). And according to Sayers, Kierkegaard draws the picture

234 of disabled modern man as Just as desert travelers combine into great caravans from fear of robbers and wild  
235 beasts, so the individuals of the contemporary generation are fearful of existence, because it is God-forsaken;  
236 only in great masses do they dare to live, and they cluster together en masse in order to feel that they amount  
237 to something (qtd. in ??ayers 12). Therefore, the modern man has lost his ability to live his own life with his  
238 will and choice. He is a fallen who looks for authenticity in a corrupted social life where he is being estranged  
239 from himself day by day as some characters in *The Namesake*.

240 Bengali immigrants and the first-generation USborn children are exposed to the such postcolonial themes of  
241 existentialism as freedom, subjective self, denial of traditional values, institutions and philosophy, and exercise  
242 of will and freedom. Freedom is the most sensed theme of existentialism in the novel. Freedom of willpower is  
243 the protagonist's focal quest throughout the novel. Freedom to rename himself, freedom to choose any culture,  
244 university, department; freedom to live where he wants are what Gogol wants consciously or unconsciously.

245 Gogol's life is haunted by his name. Being a son of an immigrant parent, he has already been alienated in the  
246 hegemonic values and means of the American culture. In addition, his peculiar name makes the burden on his  
247 shoulders heavier. The weight of the name on his shoulders becomes so heavy that he cannot carry it anymore  
248 and looks for ways to get rid of this weight. He idealize that " 'There's no such thing as a perfect name. I  
249 think that human beings should be allowed to name themselves when they turn eighteen,' he adds. This also  
250 proclaims the motto of existential philosophy that says existence precedes essence. "To existentialists, human  
251 beings-through their consciousness-create their own values and determine a meaning for their life because, in the  
252 beginning, the human being does not possess any inherent identity or value."(Wikipedia) Thus, an individual can  
253 have the possibility to constitute his/her identity according to his/her essence. This notion ends the effects of  
254 conventional values.

255 For Gogol, existence precedes essence because he objects the traditional values of Bengali culture and he, in  
256 many situations, makes choices that are just the opposite of the values he is expected to obey. He loses his  
257 virginity, moves to another city to live alone, consumes much alcohol, ignores his family by rarely visiting and he  
258 changes his name that is the first thing his family gave him. By becoming Nikhil, he thinks everything in his life  
259 will be on the right track but contrary to his expectations, his loneliness and the sense of isolation do not leave  
260 him in peace. He understands the fact that he cannot be at ease without gaining his authenticity. Therefore,  
261 instead of making reforms that address to the society, he sees the necessity of changes in his inner world that he  
262 has neglected for years. Although his denial of Bengali values is an aspect of existentialist philosophy, regaining  
263 of these values for the sake of authenticity can be an aspect of existentialism and deconstruction of hegemony,  
264 too.

265 The way to the authentic self is through the deconstruction of Nikhil and the quest for Gogol. Although it  
266 cannot be put forward that Gogol has gained his authenticity, he make an effort to be so. In fact, the result is  
267 not important for a seeker the way he takes gives him the relief of being on the way towards himself. Maybe,  
268 this is the reason behind Gogol's calmness in the end of the novel.

269 Moushumi is another character that experiences existentialist themes of freedom/freewill, denial of conventional  
270 values and a quest for authenticity. She is especially addicted to her freedom that gained in Paris. France is  
271 the country of two representatives of existentialist philosophy, Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus, where self-  
272 determination was gained via the French Revolution. Having been educated in Paris, Moushumi is a mixture of  
273 both Revolution and existentialism on freedom. Although she is a member of the immigrant Bengali people, her  
274 life style and behaviors are not confined to a specific culture. She is the symbol of existentialist thoughts. In  
275 addition to her free life style and her addiction to her freedom, she, meanwhile, is struggling to disconnect herself  
276 from whatever constitutes her Bengali identity. Bengali values hinder her from achieving whatever she believes  
277 to be her essence. Her regular visits to Mimitri's apartment and thus her betrayal to Gogol are the results of  
278 the struggle for keeping her freedom and does not lose the connect between her identity and the term freedom.  
279 The reasons behind her betrayal is not just a quest for adventure or lust but "It reminds [Moushumi] of living in  
280 Paris -for a few hours at Dimitri's she is inaccessible, anonymous" (Lahiri 264). Dimitri's apartment is a shelter  
281 for her to escape from the conventional rules of marriage and Bengali tradition. She believes for a while when  
282 she is with Dimitri.

283 Moushumi experiences another theme of existentialist philosophy, death. Death is a crucial problem for  
284 existentialist philosopher Martin Heidegger. According to Filiz Peach's "Death, Faith and Existentialism "article  
285 Heidegger thinks that In the everyday mode of being, Dasein interprets the phenomenon of death as an event  
286 constantly occurring in the world. It is a 'case' that happens to others. The general comment is "One of these  
287 days one will die too, in the end; but right now it has nothing to do with us." Dying remains anonymous and it  
288 has no connection with the 'I' ??Peach).

289 The death of other does not affect observers as it should because, as it is stated in the abstract, the death of  
290 other is a flow of life in the world. Nevertheless, it reminds the observers of the approaching end that means the  
291 end of their possibilities. When Moushumi witnesses Alice's death, the administrative assistant, who "Moushumi  
292 had never been particularly fond of", She "feels sick at the thought of it, of a death so sudden, of a woman so  
293 marginal and yet so central to her world" (Lahiri 255). The death makes her feel sick because it demonstrates the  
294 desperation of human beings when they face the reality of death. The extinction of a being that makes effort to  
295 make sense of his/her life is somehow absurd. By the same token (the meaninglessness and horror death harbors),  
296 human beings are challenged to quest for authenticity. On the other hand, Heidegger proclaims that death is not

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297 a hinder for human beings to get authenticity if they realize that authenticity is "Beingtowards-death".(Peach)  
298 For Heidegger, dread is both alienating and a stimulus for human beings to get authenticity. Thus death is not  
299 something that should be afraid of. Filiz Peach says, "...if man cannot face up to death existentially, he either  
300 preoccupies himself with worldly things or escapes into a mystical realm" ??Peach). Thus, being courageous is  
301 not enough for man's stance against death but he should face it existentially.

302 It is not stated in details what Moushumi's comprehension about death is but it is neat that she feels a  
303 sense of dread that is a sign of reaction to the extinction of a being, which is also considerable for existentialists  
304 because ?, according to Jaspers, the individual's 'unfounded belief' in immortality stops man from seeking his  
305 true self. I would argue that human beings understand the horror of the experience of death whatever their belief  
306 is. However much they may believe in immortality, when they come face to face with death sooner or later they  
307 may still feel despair. In the face of death, no belief can guarantee the individual a sense of relief or a sense  
308 of 'exemption' so to speak ??Peach). Thus, alienated human beings become more estranged from themselves  
309 when they cannot control the occurrence of death but as it is stated by Filiz Peach, the belief in immortality  
310 is worse than the dread against mortality. Because, immortality ends existentialist inquiries and the quest for  
311 authenticity. By the same token, Moushumi's dread against death is confirmation of her existential inclination.  
312 After a short time, she meets Dimitri's name and she forgets everything about Alice. Afterwards, she thinks that  
313 marriage is a convention on her ideal life and her freedom.

314 And yet the familiarity that had once drawn her to him has begun to keep her at bay. Though she knows it's  
315 not his fault, she can't help but associate him, at times, with a sense of resignation, with the very life she has  
316 resisted, has struggled so mightily to leave behind (Lahiri 250).

317 In addition, she tries to live a free life that does not contain any conventional values especially from Bengali  
318 culture.

319 In short, Jhumpa Lahiri successfully tells the story of the diaspora through a Bengali family by underlining the  
320 feeling of alienation throughout The Namesake. She emphasizes the psychological displacement of the alienated  
321 diaspora to create awareness about their efforts for psychological and physical survival.

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