

The Feeling of Alienation in the Namesake by Jhumpa Lahiri

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Abstract

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

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

1 Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

neither her relations nor Ashoke's. Her experiences in hospital add to her view of life about America. She thinks that she will never get accustomed to the lifestyle on this continent, a life totally different from her life in India. In addition, she gives birth to a baby that she will bring up in this country where she does not have any relations to take advantage from her/his experiences, expect Ashoke. One day she expresses her anxiety to her husband. "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). Nevertheless, she has to face the unbearable loneliness of this place despite her unwillingness. For, she does not have the power to divert the flow of her family's life in this land. She experiences this feeling of powerlessness until she decides to move to India after her husband's death.

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

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

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

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. It is an ongoing responsibility, a parenthesis in what had once been ordinary life, only to discover that that previous life had vanished, replaced by something more complicated and demanding (Lahiri 49-50).

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

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

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

But now that he's Nikhil it's easier to ignore his parents, to tune out their concerns and pleas?It is as Nikhil, that first semester, that he grows a goatee, starts smoking Camel Lights at parties and while writing papers and before exams, discovers Brian Eno and Elvis Costello and Charlie Parker. It is as Nikhil that he takes Metro-North into Manhattan one weekend with Jonathan and gets himself a fake ID that allows him to be served 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 plaid woolen skirt and combat boots and mustard tights. ??Lahiri 105) While he is taking up the American type of life style enthusiastically, his other part, Gogol, pricks his conscience. While he is at Maxine's parents' cottage in the country consuming expensive wine and having fun, he suffers from a pang of conscience. "At times?, and another bottle of wine is opened, and Gogol raises his glass to be filled yet again, he is conscious of the fact that his immersion in Maxine's family is a betrayal of his own" ??Lahiri 141). The meaninglessness of his life either 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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just a name even if it has haunted his life. The senselessness of not knowing the real precursor of his life and the pangs of conscience deepen his disability to make a choice between the two identities and make sense of his being as a Bengali immigrant couple's son. In short, an "American-born confused Deshi", Gogol is a symbol for the confusion that immigrants experience under the conditions of displacement ??Lahiri 118).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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