

Unveiling the Power of Sisterhood: Exploring Women's Relationships and Female Bonds in Bharati Mukherjee's *Wife*

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Abstract

This study explores the significance of sisterhood and women's relationships as portrayed in Bharati Mukherjee's novel, Wife. Grounded in feminist theory and women's liberation movements, the research investigates the innate human instinct to support, care, and love, highlighting the potential consequences of lacking such consolidation on individuals' psyche and societal structure. Through a comprehensive examination of the protagonist, Dimple's, relationships with female characters, this paper aims to unravel the extent to which these connections contribute to her personality, identity as a daughter, wife, and immigrant, and her overall dynamics with men in her life. By utilizing a theoretical framework that underscores the importance of sisterhood, this study sheds light on the intricate interplay between women's relationships and their impact on individual lives and broader societal constructs.

Keywords: Feminism, Mukherjee, Psychological Disorders, Sisterhood, Wife.

Introduction

The study of human relationships has long been a subject of interest across various academic disciplines. Within the realm of literature, the exploration of these connections not only serves as a means of understanding the complexity of human nature but also sheds light on the broader social structures and cultural dynamics in which individuals are embedded. This paper focuses on Bharati Mukherjee's novel, *Wife*, as a literary text that delves into the intricacies of sisterhood and women's relationships.

Bharati Mukherjee, a prominent Indian diasporic writer, has gained recognition for her distinctive writing style and thematic explorations. While she identifies herself as an American writer, Mukherjee maintains a strong connection to her Indian heritage and cultural roots, often incorporating references to Indian deities in her fiction. Her body of work predominantly revolves around the diasporic experiences of women, delving into their struggles, aspirations, and processes of self-renewal. Mukherjee's female characters are, very often, "aware of the brutalities and violence that surround them and are often victimized by various forms of social oppression, she generally draws them as survivors" (Soderberg, 1999, p. 3). Her female protagonists frequently grapple with internal conflicts, which ultimately propel them toward the establishment of their own identities and pursuit of personal goals. As a feminist writer, Mukherjee skillfully addresses the issues faced by immigrant women, shedding light on their untold emotional, psychological, and social experiences. Through her writings, she critically examines the societal status and roles assigned to women, as well as the conflicting expectations imposed upon them and their own aspirations.

Drawing inspiration from feminist theory and the women's liberation movements that have shaped our understanding of gender dynamics, this research endeavors to examine the inherent human instinct for support, care, and love, and its significance in fostering sisterhood bonds. The role of sisterhood has been a key aspect within the feminist discourse, as it serves as a means for women to find solidarity and support in a patriarchal society.

However, the absence or lack of consolidation among women and their relationships can yield undesirable effects, both on the individual's psyche and their position within the broader societal framework. By undertaking a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between the novel's protagonist, Dimple, and the female characters she encounters, this study seeks to uncover the extent to which these connections elicit sympathy and influence her development as a daughter, wife, and immigrant. Furthermore, it aims to examine the ripple effects of these relationships on Dimple's interactions with men in her life.

Through an examination of Mukherjee's narrative, our research aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by exploring the portrayal of women's relationships and their impact on individual identity and social structures. To achieve this, we will employ a theoretical framework rooted in feminist perspectives, including intersectionality, standpoint theory, and postcolonial feminism. These perspectives will guide our qualitative research and textual analysis, allowing us to illuminate the intricate interplay between sisterhood, women's relationships, and the multifaceted dimensions of personal growth and societal dynamics. Ultimately, our findings will provide valuable insights into the complex and nuanced nature of women's experiences and relationships, contributing to a deeper understanding of the human condition within contemporary literature.

Rationale

The emergence of Women's Liberation Movements marked a significant milestone in the fight against gender inequality, advocating for shared victimization and addressing the challenges of race and class within the feminist discourse. However, these movements have faced criticisms, with some arguing that they fail to acknowledge the complex social realities experienced by women. As hooks (1984) contends, the concept of common oppression among women becomes questionable when considering instances where women themselves have oppressed and exploited others. This can be attributed to the pervasive nature of sexism, which instills woman-hating attitudes and fosters discord among women in their daily interactions.

In response to these challenges, the notion of "Sisterhood" emerged as a vital concept within feminist theory, emphasizing solidarity and support among women. As highlighted by Jane Rule in her essay "With All Due Respect," the women's movement often employs the term "support," but it can be misunderstood as mere unconditional approval, leading to its withdrawal at crucial moments. Many women believe they are incapable of functioning without such support (hooks, 1984).

In light of these discussions, this paper aims to argue that the protagonist, Dimple, exemplifies the category of women who require support to navigate their lives and make reasoned decisions. Dimple, a dependent and emotionally vulnerable young woman, finds herself in need of assistance from both her female peers and the men in her life. This research seeks to demonstrate how Dimple's psyche and personality have been shaped by a flawed upbringing, exacerbated by her husband and in-laws, and ultimately fractured by the challenges of immigration and encountering new individuals in her life.

By examining Dimple's experiences and interactions in Bharati Mukherjee's novel, *Wife*, this study aims to shed light on the importance of sisterhood and support for women's personal growth and well-being. It seeks to highlight the detrimental consequences of lacking such support systems and the subsequent impact on individual lives. By delving into the complexities of Dimple's character development, influenced by familial, marital, and societal factors, this research endeavors to deepen our understanding of the multifaceted challenges faced by women in patriarchal societies.

Through a comprehensive analysis of Dimple's journey, this paper strives to contribute to the existing body of knowledge regarding the significance of sisterhood and support networks in women's lives. Ultimately, the findings will provide valuable insights into the construction of female identity and the role of interpersonal relationships in shaping individuals' well-being and resilience in the face of adversity.

The Multifaceted Dimensions of Settings

Wife, a novel by Bharati Mukherjee, unfolds across two distinct continents, each characterized by its unique settings. The narrative commences in Calcutta, India, specifically at Rash Behari Avenue, where the protagonist, Dimple, resides with her parents. Within this initial setting, Mukherjee briefly alludes to Dimple's early life and psychological state as an unmarried young woman eagerly desiring marriage.

The story then transitions to Dimple's in-laws' residence in India, situated on the top floor of a three-story building on Dr. Sarat Banerjee Road (Mukherjee, 1975, p. 19). It is within this setting that Dimple endures an unhappy, imprisoned, and disillusioned existence.

Her discontentment with her circumstances even drives her to resort to abortion. It is worth noting that within Dimple's cultural context, pregnancy and motherhood hold significant reverence for women, as they bestow respect and elevate their status within the family. However, Dimple remains indifferent to these traditional values, viewing them as obstacles to her envisioned new life in the United States and displaying no remorse for her actions.

Conversely, the novel's American settings unfold at the Sen family's apartment in Queens, New York, and subsequently at Marsha's apartment on Bleeker Street in Manhattan. At the Sen household, where Dimple and her husband are guests, she finds solace in the company of others, eradicating any sense of loneliness or alienation. Despite Amit's irritable disposition, Dimple develops a sociable rapport with Mr. and Mrs. Sen and their infant child. However, the dynamics shift dramatically when Dimple finds herself in Marsha's apartment. In this environment, she experiences a profound sense of isolation, compounded by Amit's perpetual absence due to work commitments as he endeavors to adapt to his new life. Consequently, Dimple is left alone with her somber thoughts, entrusting her emotional well-being to the hands of Ina Mulick and Milt Glasser.

This dichotomy between the Indian and American settings in *Wife* serves to illustrate the contrasting experiences and emotions encountered by Dimple. It highlights the transformative power of social environments and interpersonal relationships in shaping her psychological state. By analyzing the interplay between these settings, Mukherjee crafts a narrative that explores themes of cultural displacement, personal identity, and the profound influence of one's surroundings on their emotional well-being.

Unmasking Women's Struggles: Patriarchal Society Exposed

In the patriarchal society of Indian-Bengali culture, women are subjected to a system where they are delivered to their husbands as permanent property, regarded as objects to be used and manipulated at will. Bharati Mukherjee's novel, *Wife*, provides an exemplification of this phenomenon through its portrayal of the protagonist, an Indian woman who undergoes a profound transformation that strips her of her former identity, including her traditions, rituals, cultural and social affiliations, and even her original name. Following her marriage, Dimple experiences a loss of her family name, "Dasgupta," which is replaced by her husband's name, "Basu." Similarly, her given name, "Dimple," is substituted with "Nandini" by her mother-in-law. These changes epitomize the patriarchal norms prevalent in societies such as India, where young girls are indoctrinated with the belief that men hold dominion over the family and serve as the pillars of life, while women are considered incomplete without them. Women are expected to be submissive, loving, caring, and willing to make sacrifices for the sake of their husbands, much like the legendary figure of Sita. Dimple, too, conforms to this societal expectation, having been raised with this mindset by her parents, who hold the belief that a woman's destiny lies solely in marriage.

Dimple's upbringing instills in her a deep-seated desire for marriage, leading her to become consumed by the idea. From the outset of the novel, her father is eager to find a suitable husband for her, regardless of the prospective groom's minimum requirements. This urgency drives him to overlook Amit's undisclosed conditions, of which Dimple remains unaware initially. Consequently, the realization of the realities of married life in Amit's household marks the beginning of a series of shocking revelations for Dimple.

The depiction of Dimple's experiences in *Wife* underscores the pervasive influence of patriarchal structures in Indian-Bengali society. It elucidates the societal expectations

imposed upon women, compelling them to undergo transformations that often result in the erasure of their identities and subjugation to the authority of their husbands. By examining Dimple's journey, Mukherjee provides a poignant critique of the patriarchal norms and gender dynamics embedded within the fabric of society. This exploration serves to highlight the oppressive nature of these societal constructs, prompting a critical examination of the inherent power imbalances and injustices faced by women within such patriarchal systems.

Sisterhood and Self-Perception: Examining the Interplay of Female Relationships in Dimple's Life

In the context of a patriarchal society in India, the absence of support and assistance for women becomes ironic. Despite Amit's mother having undergone similar experiences to Dimple, she neither exhibits ease nor sympathy towards her daughter-in-law. In fact, the mother-in-law perceives her treatment of Dimple as fitting within the role of a mother-in-law, believing it to be the appropriate course of action for daughters-in-law, and Dimple is no exception. Alongside Dimple's psychological challenges and dissatisfaction with her appearance, her mother-in-law exacerbates these negative emotions. She fuels Dimple's anxiety through constant reminders that she was not Amit's first choice, expressing dissatisfaction with Dimple's darker skin color and considering her name to be "frivolous and unBengali" (Mukherjee, 1975, p. 15).

Conversely, Dimple's mother, Mrs. Dasgupta, never tires of consoling and reassuring her daughter about marriage and her fear of spinsterhood. She frequently asks, "Why are you worrying?" and assures Dimple that her father will find her an exceptional husband, urging her to avoid frowning as it leads to wrinkles (Mukherjee, 1975, p. 4) and dismissively remarks, "Only Christians become spinsters" (Mukherjee, 1975, p. 10). While Mrs. Dasgupta offers solace, her concern primarily revolves around Dimple's physical appearance, as she believes that no one would desire to marry a girl with wrinkles. She even makes light of Dimple's concerns about her breasts, jokingly advising her, "Stop worrying! Worrying makes them shrink!" (Mukherjee, 1975, p. 4). As a mother, Mrs. Dasgupta is content with her daughter, attempting to uplift her spirits. However, her preoccupation lies with Dimple's physical attributes rather than her emotional well-being. Dimple reacts reluctantly to her mother's advice and comments, begrudgingly accepting them.

In the United States, Mrs. Meena Sen, Dimple and Amit's host, embodies the symbol of an Indian immigrant who, despite being distant from her homeland and culture, remains tethered to her beliefs and principles. She fulfills the roles of wife and mother in an exemplary manner. Her relationship with Dimple is secure and effortless. Although Dimple despises their living situation, Mrs. Sen epitomizes all that Dimple is expected to be. Mrs. Sen represents a traditional Indian woman adapting to her new environment as an immigrant in the US while still embracing her culture. In contrast, Ina Mulick stands in stark contrast to Mrs. Sen, characterized as "more American than the Americans" (Mukherjee, 1975, p. 68). For many, Ina serves as a negative role model for Indian immigrant women and wives. However, over time, Dimple grows closer to Ina, continually imagining herself through Ina's perspective (Mukherjee, 1975, p. 103). Ina's frequent unexpected visits to Dimple's home reinforce their bond. Their relationship is founded on mutual admiration for distinct reasons: Dimple views Ina as the ideal woman she aspires to be, while Ina finds solace in Dimple's naivety and innocence, which are absent in her social circle, whether Indian or American. Nevertheless, Dimple's superficial perception of Ina as a liberated, modern, and content

woman evolves after Ina confesses her misery. Ina's role in Dimple's life is transformative, motivating Dimple to break free from her constraints. However, simultaneously, Ina adds to Dimple's internal confusion.

Pixie, Dimple's close friend from Calcutta, is another influential woman in her life. Mukherjee intentionally assigns the name Pixie, meaning "a cheerful mischievous sprite," to symbolize a free-spirited woman who exudes happiness (Merriam-Webster). Pixie embodies everything Dimple longs for but cannot achieve in her own life. She enjoys greater freedom and imposes herself on society as an educated, independent woman with a respectable job, marrying the man of her choice whom she loves.

Upon learning of Pixie's marriage from her mother, Dimple fixates on how luxurious her friend's life will be, consumed by thoughts of wealth, parties, work, and fame. Dimple becomes envious of Pixie's life and the social events she would attend. Dimple's thinking is consistently superficial, lacking depth or rationality.

Dimple's relationships with the women around her vary. On one hand, she encounters traditional-minded women like her mother-in-law and mother, who believe that a wife should emulate Sita. On the other hand, she encounters modern women like Meena and Ina, whose characters sharply contrast with each other. Dimple struggles to embody both the faithful wife and the independent woman. Meanwhile, her close friend Pixie offers little assistance as she personifies all that Dimple dreams of being: an independent woman with a respectable job and a rich, famous husband who ensures a glamorous social life.

Overall, Dimple's interactions with women in her life present a range of dynamics. Traditional and modern perspectives clash, contributing to Dimple's internal conflict. These relationships ultimately shape her understanding of her own identity and aspirations.

Unveiling the Layers of Dimple's Psychological Transformation: Navigating Identity, Self-Perception, and Emotional Growth

Before her marriage, Dimple lacked self-confidence and possessed a weak personality, expressing dissatisfaction with both her life and body. According to Mukherjee (1975), she worried about her physical appearance, including her body shape and underdeveloped breasts (p. 4). Dimple's upbringing and societal expectations played a significant role in shaping her life goals, primarily revolving around finding a suitable husband. This overwhelming focus on marriage led to mental distress, resulting in her brief hospitalizations. Dimple became fixated on marriage, interpreting various signs, dreams, and even illnesses as indicators of her impending nuptials. Thus, Dimple's initial psychological disturbance can be attributed to her upbringing, which fostered thoughts of self-underestimation and suicidal ideation. Her parents, who should have provided support, encouragement, and nurtured her self-confidence, instead contributed to diminishing her sense of self-worth. Her father, for instance, lost interest in photographing her after she lost her initial plumpness, reinforcing Dimple's belief that she appeared unattractive in photos and resulting in her limited presence in the family album (Mukherjee, 1975, p. 12). Even when searching for a husband, her father convinced the photographer to enhance her appearance, implying his dissatisfaction with her. Unfortunately, Dimple's self-confidence did not improve after marrying Amit; in fact, he further reinforced her self-underestimation through constant criticism. Amit's derogatory comments, such as mocking her lack of knowledge and insisting that she should engage in constructive activities rather than dwell on her thoughts of Calcutta, served to undermine her confidence (Mukherjee, 1975, pp. 86, 111).

Amit desired complete submission and sacrifice from Dimple, displaying a disregard for her feelings and perpetuating her self-underestimation. Dimple's sense of self-worth deteriorated further after marriage, intensifying her frequent nervous seizures. Consequently, she frequently contemplated harming Amit and even imagined hiding his body in the refrigerator, developing new suicide plans each day.

Dimple's life-long dream was to marry a neurosurgeon, which she believed would bring her freedom, a luxurious lifestyle, and love (Mukherjee, 1975, p. 3). However, after marriage and relocating to the United States, Dimple's dissatisfaction persisted. While attending parties among middle-class Bengali immigrants, she found herself yearning for something more in her soulmate. She gradually realized that marriage entailed more than simply finding a suitable partner to spend her life with. Although Dimple admired Sita, the legendary sacrificial wife, Amit did not deserve her sacrifices. Dimple was unsatisfied with every aspect of her husband, including his physical appearance. In her imagination, she constructed an ideal man by combining various features from advertisements, highlighting her discontent with Amit's physical attributes (Mukherjee, 1975, p. 23). She aspired to have a life similar to that of an American wife, desiring a job, regular outings, and freedom from her husband's traditional mindset, personality, and social status. As she interacted with new people, she often compared Amit to other men who showed her attention, such as Mr. Khanna. This attachment to anyone who displayed even slight interest in her stemmed from her yearning for love and attention in her isolated days in the United States. Mr. Khanna's job offer and belief in her capabilities contrasted with Amit's lack of support, which further fueled Dimple's attraction to Mr. Khanna (Mukherjee, 1975, p. 61). Similarly, Jyoti's positive remarks and engaging conversations with Dimple uplifted her spirits temporarily, eliciting a sense of self-confidence. Dimple felt validated by Jyoti's attention, leading her to feel guilty about her husband but simultaneously empowered. Consequently, she experienced jealousy whenever Jyoti showed interest in other women. In contrast, Milt Glasser represented the epitome of America for Dimple. She found him intriguing due to his foreign background, culture, and unique perspective (Mukherjee, 1975, p. 174). Dimple considered Milt as someone she could genuinely communicate with, unlike her silent exchanges with Amit, Ina, and even Meena Sen. Their conversations with others often remained unspoken, but her conversations with Milt allowed her to discuss various topics freely. While she realized that she had done most of the listening, Dimple found their exchanges exhilarating. She regarded Milt as an urban nomad, not as brilliant and dependable as Amit, but easier to connect with despite his foreignness (Mukherjee, 1975, p. 191). Dimple's comfort in Milt's presence enabled her to express herself openly and share aspects of her life that she had never divulged to Amit. Consequently, she developed a newfound sense of confidence and affection for Milt, emotions she had never experienced with her husband.

The Shifting Sands of Immigration: Exploring the Intricate Impact on Dimple's Psyche and Self-Perception

Amit readily adjusts his appearance to conform to the American lifestyle and environment. He willingly replaces his Indian Khaki attire with American suits and even shaves his mustache to assimilate into American culture. Conversely, Dimple lacks the courage to embrace such changes due to her apprehension regarding the judgment of her new diaspora Bengali society in the USA, Amit's disapproval and ridicule, and even her fear of her mother-in-law in India, as Amit shares every detail with her.

Despite Ina Mulick's encouragement to adopt more modern American clothing, Dimple firmly rejects the idea and staunchly defends her choice to wear a traditional sari. However, during an outing with Milt Glasser, she finds herself unable to uphold her pride in her Indian traditional attire. Instead, she reluctantly dons Marsha Mookerji's American garments, attempting to align herself with his style. Simultaneously, she tries to conceal her true identity by wearing sunglasses, fearing the possibility of encountering someone she knows and feeling ashamed of herself. Internally, she remains uncertain about her attire, lacking conviction in her decision to conform to an American style of dress. In truth, Dimple adopts this American outfit not out of personal conviction or genuine desire, but solely to impress Milt. However, despite making this sacrifice, her overwhelming sense of guilt towards Amit prevents her from fully enjoying the moment.

Consequently, Dimple finds herself trapped between her own desires and societal expectations, torn between longing for love and accepting her predetermined fate, and struggling to reconcile her satisfaction with the approval of others. Consequently, Dimple's infidelity towards Amit with Milt is a direct result of Amit's rude and dismissive behavior towards her. Her affair stems from her yearning to experience love and be loved and represents a desperate final attempt to seek attention in her precarious emotional state.

Bonds Beyond Borders: Unraveling the Transformative Potential of Sisterhood in *Wife*

Dimple's journey in the novel *Wife* by Mukherjee sheds light on the complex dynamics faced by women as they navigate the expectations and constraints placed upon them within the institution of marriage. Dimple's constant struggle to fulfill the role of the perfect wife to please not only her husband, Amit, but also her parents-in-law and her own parents, becomes a source of conflict as it clashes with her innate desires for freedom and love that remain unexpressed and unconfessed. Ravichandran and Deivasigamani (2013) highlight Amit's expectation for Dimple to conform to a robotic behavior, effortlessly knowing how to please him, while failing to recognize the tremendous emotional toll it takes on her. Dimple's predicament represents the ambiguous perspectives of immigration and serves as a symbol of the dilemmas of voice, as she is rendered voiceless without the ability to articulate her innermost thoughts and desires.

Dimple emerges as a sensitive woman with a fragile personality and a disordered psyche, shaped by the affection and influence of those around her. Hence, "Dimple reveals the disintegration of a woman's personality. She treats her situation with utter indifference and cultivates no interest in life" (Abhilasha, 2022, p.656). Thus, the weight of societal expectations and a lack of support, sympathy, and love ultimately fracture her sense of self, driving her to frequently entertain suicidal thoughts as a means of escape. Paradoxically, while she contemplates ending her own life, Dimple exhibits a deep-seated fear of death and is emotionally affected by news of others' demise. This fear is compounded by a persistent terror of falling victim to violence in the unfamiliar territory of the United States. Consequently, her fragmented state of being propels her further away from reality, rendering her psyche irreparably shattered.

The culmination of Dimple's internal struggles manifests in a shocking act of violence, as she unconsciously stabs her husband seven times. The line between truth and falsehood, reality and imagination, action and thought becomes blurred for her, making it difficult to discern the boundaries of her actions. This tragic turn of events underscores the

profound consequences of Dimple's isolation, lack of support, and the absence of genuine love and understanding in her life.

Wife offers a fictional narrative that resonates with the real-life challenges faced by women when transitioning from their parental homes to new environments, whether within the same country or across borders. Dimple's sense of alienation is palpable, regardless of geographical location. In India, escape seems impossible, while in the United States, she finds a semblance of attention and validation beyond the confines of her marriage. This newfound external encouragement serves as a catalyst, emboldening Dimple to break free from the shackles of societal expectations and pursue her own desires.

Mukherjee's portrayal of Dimple's journey as a wife illuminates the multifaceted experiences and internal conflicts endured by women within the institution of marriage. By delving into the complexities of gender roles, cultural expectations, and personal aspirations, the novel highlights the pressing need for empathy, understanding, and empowerment in order to foster healthier and more fulfilling relationships within the context of marriage. Dimple's story serves as a poignant reminder of the significance of individual agency, self-expression, and the pursuit of personal happiness in the face of societal pressures.

Conclusion

This paper served to underscore the importance of support networks for women, particularly those who find themselves in circumstances similar to Dimple's. It highlights the necessity of moving beyond superficial gestures of solidarity and instead cultivating authentic connections rooted in empathy, understanding, and a commitment to dismantling oppressive systems. By doing so, women can foster an environment that nurtures personal growth, collective empowerment, and genuine liberation. In her novel, Mukherjee intricately constructs a narrative that examines the nuanced dynamics of sisterhood among women in different contexts. Through the characters of Dimple, Ina, Marsha, and Meena, Mukherjee portrays the complexities of female relationships, encompassing a range of emotions from camaraderie and support to rivalry and jealousy. These relationships serve as a microcosm of the broader societal dynamics faced by women.

One of the significant aspects emphasized in *Wife* is the importance of solidarity and empathy among women. The novel highlights how sisterhood emerges as a source of strength and solace for the female characters, providing a space for understanding and mutual support. This solidarity acts as a counterforce to the societal pressures and expectations placed upon women, allowing them to navigate their own experiences and choices. Mukherjee's exploration of sisterhood in *Wife* also offers a platform for challenging patriarchal constructs and norms that restrict women's autonomy and agency. By showcasing the bonds formed between the female characters, the novel provides a means of resistance against societal expectations, enabling the female characters to question and redefine their roles within the institution of marriage. Sisterhood becomes a vehicle for empowerment and the assertion of agency.

The portrayal of sisterhood in *Wife* extends beyond mere support and empowerment; it becomes instrumental in redefining notions of cultural identity, societal expectations, and personal aspirations. Through their shared experiences and connections, the female characters in the novel find the courage to navigate the complexities of assimilation, negotiate their desires within the context of marriage, and challenge the limitations imposed upon them by societal norms. Implications and Significance: The portrayal of sisterhood in *Wife* holds

broader implications within the discourse on gender, identity, and female empowerment in literature. Mukherjee's novel disrupts conventional notions of sisterhood by presenting a diverse range of female relationships that reflect the complexities and conflicts inherent in women's lives. This depiction prompts readers to critically engage with issues such as cultural assimilation, the intersectionality of gender and race, and the negotiation of personal desires within the context of marriage. Furthermore, the emphasis on empathy, solidarity, and shared experiences in *Wife* invites readers to examine their own perceptions and assumptions about female relationships and the power dynamics embedded within them. The novel prompts a critical analysis of societal norms and expectations, encouraging readers to challenge the oppressive structures that limit women's agency and fulfillment.

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