



## **A FEMINIST ANALYSIS OF BERNARDINE EVARISTO'S *GIRL, WOMAN, OTHER***

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Bernardine Evaristo's Girl, Woman, Other (2019) is a Booker Prize-winning novel. It narrates the stories of twelve different people, most of them Black British women. The novel shows their struggles, dreams, and connections across generations, classes, and sexual identities. The present research paper studies the novel from a feminist point of view. It explains how Evaristo uses interconnections, exclusive writing style, and rich characters to break the idea that there is only one way to be a woman. The novel considerate diversity and reveals how patriarchy, racism, and heteronormativity play important role to affect women's lives. It also explains how the novel creates a new form of feminist harmony based on differences and thoroughness.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Bernardine Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other* is well-known for its experimental writing style and for talking deeply about gender, race, and identity. The novel includes twelve characters, most of them Black British women, whose lives are interconnected through family, friendship, and history. Together, their stories create a picture of different experiences of womanhood in Britain.



In the past, many feminist stories focused only on gender and they were treating all women's struggles as the same. But Kimberlé Crenshaw, Black feminist scholar introduced the idea of intersectionality, it explains that women's lives are shaped by race, class, sexuality, and other factors together. Evaristo uses this idea of intersectionality in her novel and shows that womanhood cannot be reduced to one story. There is an attempt to explain how Evaristo's writing style, her characters, and her themes form an inclusive feminist story that mirrors the real intricacy of Black British womanhood.

### **Form as a Feminist Act**

Writing style of author itself carries a feminist message. Evaristo does not use traditional punctuations and avoids strict rules of grammar. Sentences flow freely without full stops or capital letters in many places. She refers her style as "fusion fiction," which breaks the rules of traditional English literature. Most traditional literary forms were made by white men and reflected their way of looking at the world. Evaristo has refused these forms and tried to create a space where women's voices can exist freely, especially Black women's voices. The free-flowing style of writing or expression also matches with the idea that identity is not fixed but always moving and changing.

Another significant thing can be noticed that Evaristo does not have one "main" character. All the twelve characters are given equal space and importance. It is certainly a feminist choice because it values every woman's story equally. Whether it is a young strange girl or an elderly rural woman, their voices matter in the same way.

### **Characters and Intersectionality**

Bernardine Evaristo has formed twelve main characters in *Girl, Woman, Other*, each with a unique story that enhances the larger picture of Black British womanhood.

Amma is one of the central figures. She is a Black lesbian playwright. Her life and work reflect the challenges of surviving in Britain's theatre scene, which is dominated by white men. Through the character of Amma, Evaristo shows the struggles of being both a queer activist and a mother. She tries to balance political ideals with raising her daughter. Yazz is the name of Amma's daughter, she represents the younger generation of feminist. She questions the older feminist movements while enjoying the benefits they fought for. Her character shows how feminism changes across time.

Carole is another important character in the novel. Her story reveals the impact of trauma and social mobility. She was from a poor background, later becomes a banker but continues to carry the weight of her past. She faces racism in her workplace. Author tries to illustrate through her character that financial success does not eliminate systemic oppression which is deeply rooted. In the same way, Carole's mother, Bummi, embodies the struggles of migrant



women. She is migrated from Nigeria to Britain. She wishes a better future for her daughter but faces cultural clashes and the agony of seeing her child departing from her roots. Dominique, is another character, Amma's close friend. She adds another layer with her experience as a queer woman traversing love and activism. Her character shows that even within advanced spaces, power dynamics can exist.

Morgan is another striking character, formerly known as Megan, she is identified as non-binary and reject traditional gender categories. her journey of life challenges the boundaries of cisnormative feminism and expands the novel's vision to include gender diversity. Another character, Shirley is a teacher and Carole's mentor. Her character reveals the pressures, the Black women face in professional roles, sometimes which costs the cultural sensitivity. Evaristo also explores generative memory through Hattie, an elderly woman living on a farm. And her mother Grace, both are connected to the Windrush generation. Their stories help to link Britain's colonial past with the present, focusing how women protect family histories and cultural identity. Together, all these characters form a web of interconnected lives which reject the idea of a single story for Black womanhood, instead it presents a chorus of diverse voices.

### **Themes in Girl, Woman, Other**

Evaristo's novel explores several important themes that connect all the characters. One of the strongest notions is intersectionality, which means that people's experiences are shaped by many overlapping factors like race, gender, class, and sexuality. The novel shows that Black British women not only face sexism alone, but their struggles are mixed with racism, class discrimination, and sometimes homophobia. For example, Carole faces gender bias in her workplace, but her challenges are more than this one. They are multiplied because she is a Black woman in a white-dominated environment.

Another central themes are feminism and womanhood. Evaristo questions the idea that there is one universal way to be a woman. Through the different characters like Amma, a queer activist in London, and Hattie, a rural grandmother, the novel displays that womanhood is shaped by personal history, culture, and identity. Closely connected to this is another theme of patriarchy. The novel emphasizes how male-dominated systems affect women's personal and professional lives. It may be Winsome's troubled marriage or the subtle discrimination faced by women like Carole at her workplace.

Racism and Britain's colonial history are intertwined throughout the novel. Evaristo has connected the experiences of contemporary Black British women to the legacy of migration and empire. Characters like Grace and Hattie symbolize this theme, showing how historical injustice continue to affect later generations. Another major theme is queer identity and liberation. By focusing lesbian and non-binary characters such as Amma, Dominique, and



Morgan, Evaristo makes it clear that feminism must include gender diversity and challenge heteronormative structures.

Motherhood and intergenerational relationships also play a key role. The bond between Amma and her daughter, Yazz shows the gap and dialogue between older and younger feminists, while the relationship between Bummi and her daughter, Carole reflects the stress and tensions between migrant parents and their children who grow up in a different culture. Finally, the theme of feminist solidarity runs through the entire novel. Evaristo emphasizes her recognition that true unity among women does not come from uniformity but from respecting differences. The delicate connections between the characters—through their family, friendship, or shared spaces—create a network of stories which show how diverse struggles are linked together in a collective fight against exploitation.

### **Feminist Solidarity Through Diversity**

One of the most important messages of the novel is that unity does not mean sameness. In reality, the characters live very different lives, and sometimes their beliefs even clash. But together, they create a network of stories that show how women's struggles are linked.

Chandra Talpade Mohanty's agrees the idea that real feminist solidarity should accept differences instead of trying to erase them. The subtle connections between the characters — such as blood, friendship, or shared spaces .... create a web of understanding and collective struggle.

### **CONCLUSION**

*Girl, Woman, Other* is not just a novel; it can be a feminist declaration. Through the different features like, unique writing style, intersectional characters, and themes of patriarchy, racism, and queer identity, the novel has created a new way of telling feminist stories. Author admits diversity and refuses to limit womanhood to the single story. Her novel shows that real feminism must include Black women, queer identities, and marginalized classes. It gives us a picture of feminism which is based on empathy, difference, and shared struggle.

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