

Affective Infrastructures and the Politics of Relation in Bernardine Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other*

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Abstract

Critical discussions of Bernardine Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other* have predominantly approached the novel through the frameworks of representation, intersectionality, and Black British visibility. While these perspectives have been essential in illuminating the text's intervention in debates on race, gender, and belonging, they have tended to foreground identity categories over the relational conditions through which identities are formed and sustained.

This paper reads *Girl, Woman, Other* through the lens of affective infrastructures, drawing on Raymond Williams's concept of "structures of feeling," Lauren Berlant's notion of "infrastructures of feeling," and AbdouMaliq Simone's idea of "people as infrastructure." It argues that Evaristo's most significant intervention lies not simply in representing diverse subjectivities, but in rendering visible the networks of care, transmission, memory, and social mediation through which subjectivities emerge and endure.

Across generations, institutions, friendships, pedagogical encounters, political movements, and familial histories, the novel constructs social life as a form of interdependence rather than autonomous individuality. Its fragmented structure, polyphonic narration, and hybrid form map modes of connectivity that usually remain below the threshold of narrative attention, thereby shifting the emphasis from identity as a fixed category to relation as an ongoing process.

In this sense, *Girl, Woman, Other* offers a distinctive form of social knowledge in which belonging emerges through circulation, reciprocity, and historical transmission rather than individual achievement or collective homogeneity. By foregrounding affective and social infrastructures that sustain everyday life, Evaristo reimagines the political possibilities of the contemporary novel. Ultimately, *Girl, Woman, Other* emerges not merely as a site of representation, but as a form that renders visible the relational conditions through which lives become intelligible, narratable, and historically connected.

Keywords: *Girl, Woman, Other*, Bernardine Evaristo, Black British literature, relationality, narrative form.