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Tower of Babel in Black Female: Innerracial and Innergender Conflicts in *Girl, Woman, Other*

Jingting, Fu

School of Foreign Studies, University of Science and Technology Beijing, Beijing, China.

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***Corresponding author:** Jingting, Fu
School of Foreign Studies, University of Science and Technology Beijing, Beijing, China.

Abstract

Girl, Woman, Other depicts the intergenerational life experiences of twelve women, showing their multiple differences in terms of gender, class, culture and sexual orientation. Although they all have feminist consciousness and share the same feminist discourses, these discourses demonstrate highly heterogeneous semantic directions and practical paths among different characters, revealing deep divisions and ruptures within the group. Based on Audre Lorde's and Bell Hooks' theories of the politics of difference, this paper will illustrate the differences and conflicts that exist under the superficial unity, and emphasize that true feminism should recognize and respect the differences rather than cover them up. Moreover, combining Lorde's and Hooks' critiques of the discourse of "sisterhood," it is pointed out that the so-called unity will be reduced to an empty slogan if black women ignore their historical and identity differences in the face of structural oppression. Through a close textual reading, the paper will reveal the hidden divisions behind the three shared discourses of "sisterhood," "empowerment" and "freedom": Although the discourses are the same, their meanings are contradictory. The black female community is not a homogenized whole, and there are also racial and gender conflicts within it. The purpose and conclusion of this study are to challenge the traditional feminist representations of black women and to reiterate the necessity of difference in order to build an inclusive feminism.

Keywords: *black feminism, innerracial conflicts, innergender divisions, the politics of difference.*

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1. Introduction

Girl, Woman, Other (2019) is a novel written by Nigerian-British author Bernadine Evaristo and won the Booker Prize of the year for its unique narrative structure and insightful social criticism. The novel centers around twelve female characters, most of whom are black or mixed-race women living in different historical stages and social environments in England. These characters span three generations, and cover a wide range of professions and classes, including artist, teacher, farm worker, bank clerk and entrepreneur. The fiction focuses on one woman in each chapter, connecting the seemingly loose but intertwined network of relationships among characters. The central figure of the story, Amma, is a radical black female director in London who welcomes the premiere of her work, *The Last Amazon of Dahomey*, at the National. "The strong African female warriors of the play seem to mirror the novel's resilient characters, their complex identities, along with their diverse occupations, classes, ethnicities and sexualities" (Sarıkaya-Şen, 2021, p. 305). Around this event, the novel unfolds the lives of other characters, including Amma's daughter Yazz, close friends Shirley and Dominique, Yazz's friend Megan/Morgan, Shirley's student Carole, and Carole's mother Bummi. They come from different backgrounds but are intertwined with each other in one way or another: Some are teacher-student relationship, some are connected by blood, and some are connected through friendship, love, and even conflict. Using a non-linear narrative and poetic prose style, free of traditional punctuation and free-flowing language, Evaristo paints a complex, contradictory and tense picture of the black female community in the UK.

Contemporary feminist theory is increasingly aware of the limitations of a unified narrative based on universal female experience. The life experiences of different women in *Girl, Woman, Other* precisely show the complexity of differences and contradictions within the female group. Therefore, based on Audre Lorde's and Bell Hooks' theories of the politics of difference, this paper focuses on the differences and contradictions of women in the novel, and explores the conflicts and heterogeneity hidden behind the seemingly unified feminist discourses. Both scholars criticized a superficial unity in feminism, as well as the call for unity: Hooks (2015) "radically calls into question the notion of a fundamentally common female experience which has been seen as the prerequisite for our coming together, for political unity" (p. 22). The unity is hiding contradictions, "distorting our real differences…romanticizing our histories of struggle and survival in a new centrism, or fragmenting, disempowering or destroying one another in our internalized oppression of self-hatred" (Martin, 1993, p. 50). Therefore, "Difference is that raw and powerful connection from which our personal power is forged" (Lorde, 2012, p. 74). Hooks (2015) also pointed out that "working collectively to confront difference, to expand our awareness of sex, race, and class as interlocking systems of domination, of the ways we reinforce and perpetuate these structures, is the context in which we learn the true meaning of solidarity" (p. 25).

More specifically, both scholars have critiqued the discourse of "sisterhood" in the feminist unity, which the first chapter of this paper seeks to analyze. Feminism only focuses on the common oppression suffered by women as a whole, so "there is a pretense to a homogeneity of experience covered by the word sisterhood that does not in fact exist" (Lorde, 2012, p. 78). Hooks (1997) also observed that feminism's vision of sisterhood is on account of the common oppression, but "the idea of 'common oppression' was a false and corrupt platform disguising and mystifying the true nature of women's varied and complex social reality. Women are divided by sexist attitudes, racism, class privilege, and a host of other prejudices" (p. 485).

Thus, it should be recognized that even if women share the same feminist discourses with each other, the different experiences and paths of understanding may lead to the opposite meanings of the same discourse. From the perspective of the three shared discourses of "sisterhood," "empowerment," and "freedom," this paper will explore how these discourses present profound differences in understanding and value conflicts in concrete practice, reflecting the tensions and fissures within the black female community that are difficult to ignore. Through the combination of theory and text, this paper aims to challenge the traditional feminist narrative that treats black women as a homogenized whole, to reveal the structural differences and identity tensions within the women's community, and to further argue that a truly inclusive feminism should be based on the respect for differences and contradictions, rather than masking contradictions and dissolving differences in the illusion of discursive unity.

2. Literature Review

The research on *Girl, Woman, Other* is carried out mainly from the following aspects: Literary style, intersectionality, stigma, temporality, subject-object empathy, and identity. Regarding the literary style, Abram (2024) focused on the "free indirect style and focalization" (p. 11). Moreover, the fiction adopts the form of prose and has no full stops, only commas and dashes as connections. This distinctive punctuation makes "the prose a casual quality suggestive of conversation, crafting an intimate connection to the characters" (Abram, 2024, p. 9). Sarıkaya-Şen (2021) discussed the transmodern narrative in *Girl, Woman, Other*, demonstrating how this novel spoke up for black women in the UK and emphasizing the "empathic relatedness and solidarity" (p. 303) in black feminism. Intersectionality is a core perspective in the fourth wave of feminism, which pays attention to how factors such as gender, race, class and sexual orientation interact with each other, leading to the multiple marginalization of women. Strauss (2023) used intersectionality to probe how the novel presents the fourth feminist movement. Through describing "the intersections that shape their individual identities, their experiences of inequality and intersectional discrimination, Evaristo discloses systemic problems of marginalization and exclusion in contemporary society" (Strauss, 2023, p. 29). As for stigma, Zorc Maver (2020) studied how the women are stigmatized and proposed that they are not only victims, but also bring changes (p. 119).

Besides, Sánchez-Palencia (2022) presents feminist, queer and diasporic temporality in the novel, which challenges the traditional concept of linear and normative time (p. 316). About subject-object empathy, Borbély (2021) discussed "the mutually constitutive relations…between subjects and the object worlds they inhabit" (p. 281). For example, Nigerian immigrant Bummi protested against her daughter Carole's alienation from her own culture by showing a large bag of Basmati she bought from a small store in Bangladesh. This kind of rice is much cheaper than the small packages of rice sold in the supermarkets of affluent communities. This plot demonstrates how material things (rice) have become a symbol of cultural identity and economic reality, while also revealing the predicament of immigrants in terms of economic and social status, and conveying criticism of consumerism and

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commercialization (Borbély, 2021, p. 289). Last, about identity, Yue (2022) examined the contemporaneity and subjectivity of identity, and identified that the novel "challenges the reductionist interpretation of 'the other' and 'otherness' to explore the complexity of identity" (p. 73).

The above research and studies compose a sound foundation for the present paper. Many studies have focused on the presentation of black women's experiences and the construction of multiple identities, just like Borbély (2021) commented that the novel is dedicated to "a deliberately inclusive politics of (post)gender representation" (p. 287). Evaristo (2019) herself also recognized that "there is a political underpinning to *Girl, Woman, Other*, which is to explore as many black British women as possible in a single novel." Therefore, many scholars have appreciated the novel's efforts to break down stereotypes and strengthen women's voices. However, a limitation in current research is that they concentrate on exploring the common situation of black women from a holistic perspective, ignoring the real purpose of presenting so many different female characters in the novel, just like what Sarıkaya-Şen (2021) illustrated: "Amma's and Dominique's stories show that sisterhood and sorority can help marginalised women to heal their wounds and to find relief by relating to the suffering of other subaltern women" (p. 308). They only analyze the common oppressions women have suffered, and emphasize the collective consciousness and solidarity that have developed in the midst of oppression. In contrast, the contradictions and divisions within the black female community have not been sufficiently explored.

More specifically, current studies have paid less attention to the differential tensions within black feminist discourses, especially how these shared discourses reflect specific divisions and conflicts between different black women. For instance, Sarıkaya-Şen (2021) only observed the same motherhood empowerment experiences shared by Amma and Bummi (p. 311). However, there are fewer studies that reveal how the unified feminist discourse is questioned, dismantled, and even subverted in the text, and they fail to focus on the ruptures of understanding and conflicts of practice within the black women's community in terms of historical backgrounds, class positions, and gender politics. Evaristo stated in an interview: "Multiplicity and variety are weapons against stereotyping and invisibility" (Donnell, 2019, p. 99). Therefore, based on this research gap, this paper centers on the divergence hidden under the shared feminist discourses through a fine-grained textual analysis, criticizing the homogenized narratives of black women in contemporary mainstream feminism. The paper emphasizes that a truly inclusive feminism must recognize the differences and conflicts within the group and value the historical and structural tensions between individual experiences, rather than relying on abstract shared discourses to hide the inequalities of reality.

3. Contradictions and Divisions in the Shared Feminist Discourses in *Girl, Woman, Other*

3.1 The False Unity of "Sisterhood": A Break in the Discourse of Solidarity

In *Girl, Woman, Other*, "sisterhood" is frequently presented as a central discourse of feminist community, which seems to represent solidarity among women. However, as Lorde and Hooks pointed out, "sisterhood" masks the differences and contradictions among women with a superficial unity. In the novel, the rift in sisterhood is particularly evident in Amma's relationship with her friend Shirley, and her daughter Yazz. Underneath the shared feminist discourse, there are deep value differences and power imbalances, exposing the hidden tensions and ruptures.

Amma and Shirley have been friends since they were in school, and their relationship is initially demonstrated as a long-lasting female friendship that transcends divisions:

> Shirley never had a negative word to say about her sexuality, covered for her when she bunked off school and listened avidly to her tales from the youth theatre—the smoking, snogging, drinking, acting—in that order, even when their paths forked after school, Shirley into teaching, Amma into theatre, they maintained their friendship. (Evaristo, 2019, p. 28)

This ostensibly reflects the complementarity and tolerance between different female identities. However, as the text progresses, the sisterhood between them gradually reveals its internal imbalance. Although they share the same advocacy of female solidarity, it is difficult to reconcile their values: Amma, as a radical left-wing playwright, has a liberal lifestyle, advocates critical discourse on gender and class, and conveys her politicized feminist views through plays. In contrast, Shirley, as a rigid, meticulous vice-principal of a school, represents a traditional, middle-class path to stability. Although Amma defends Shirley when some friends think Shirley is a very boring person, "Amma stood up for Shirley's ordinariness/ she's a good person, she protested" (Evaristo, 2019, p. 28). However, the very use of the word "ordinariness" reveals contempt, and Amma sees Shirley's dull life as a backdrop against her own life of radical freedom, suggesting a latent sense of superiority.

Furthermore, the financial relationship between the two shatters the illusion of sisterhood. Shirley often supports Amma when she has a financial crisis: Debts are the things Shirley "sometimes wrote off as birthday presents" (Evaristo, 2019, p. 28) to Amma, without ever showing any sense of superiority or making any demands in return. The "one-way" (Evaristo, 2019, p. 28) financial support lasted for a long time. This unconditional giving could have been seen as an expression of sisterhood, "until Amma reasoned she made Shirley's safe and predictable life more interesting and scintillating" (Evaristo, 2019, p. 28). In her view, Shirley is willing to give money because she is the color in her uninteresting life. This statement reduces Shirley's generosity to a response to her charisma, suggesting a contempt for Shirley's lifestyle. Therefore, in this context, sisterhood is unequal: Amma enjoys Shirley's material support but never confronts the emotion and trust behind it. Instead, she transforms it into a confirmation of her personal worth. Amma believes that her plays can contribute to feminism and she has cultural capital, and therefore despises Shirley's life, while failing to see how Shirley has helped female students to get into better schools and ignoring her "passion, experience and capability to continue her profession" (Nair, 2025, p. 477). Amma seems to think that only her own way of life is valuable, dismissing the differences altogether. Thus, this asymmetrical relationship reveals that even within the seemingly progressive framework of sisterhood, the power structure still exists, which has only shifted from gender dimension to value judgment and cultural capital. The relationship between Amma and Shirley illustrates that if sisterhood fails to face up to its internal structural inequalities and contradictions, it will easily slip into a one-way domination of the

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radical over the old-fashioned, and lose its foundation of equality and mutual respect.

In addition to friendships, in terms of the parent-child relationship, "the first chapter portrays intergenerational differences in an apparently progressive and revolutionary manner" (Nair, 2025, p. 476). Amma looks to pass on radical feminism to the next generation, hoping to build an unbreakable sisterhood with her daughter. She "wanted her daughter to be free, feminist and powerful" (Evaristo, 2019, p. 35), organizing various classes for Yazz and thus "we come to know Yazz for her precocious confidence and exuberant expression" (Abram, 2024, p. 11). However, Yazz does not carry on Amma's feminist tradition. Instead, Yazz rejects feminist values in favor of non-binary gender and humanism, even sarcastically labeling her mother a "feminazi" (Evaristo, 2019, p. 36).

Yazz's shift must be placed in the context of her upbringing to be understood. Unlike her mother, who has experienced "intersectional discrimination past and present" (Strauss, 2023, p. 26), Yazz grew up in a middle-class family with good education, and was a direct beneficiary of the fruits of Amma's feminist struggle. Just as Yue (2022) pointed out that since Amma changed her position from marginalization to recognition totally through her own efforts, she "largely represents the practices of the traditional black feminism, which emphasizes the giving ability of black women, including the enhancement of individual giving ability and the confrontation with giving abilities of men or white women" (p. 78). To some extent, Amma is the self-projection of Evaristo, who both actively promoted the Black Women's art movement, and "saw women come together to share knowledge, skills, and resources and to find solidarity and strength in the face of racism, sexism, class-based oppression, and other intersecting forms of discrimination" (Abram, 2024, p. 6). Nevertheless, Yazz did not experience firsthand the reality of having to fight multiple oppressions. In comparison, the feminism her mother insisted on was, in her view, an outdated and exclusive form of identity politics. In the era of globalization, her university environment promotes a theoretical paradigm of post-gender and post-identity, non-binary, intersectionality and humanitarianism have become the keywords of the new generation. In this context, Yazz sees humanitarianism as a higher moral stance than feminism (Evaristo, 2019, p. 36). The latter, in her eyes, has been reduced to the label of group self-interest. By opposing Amma's feminism, Yazz establishes her own independent voice and position.

Therefore, the intergenerational rupture between Amma and Yazz reveals the fragility of sisterhood across generations, instead of "a strong, empathetic sense of solidarity" (Sarıkaya-Şen, 2021, p. 306). Amma's attempts to construct a mother-daughter sisterhood ignore the differences in the historical conditions. Although Amma sees her gender politics as emancipatory education, Yazz equates it with a discourse of authority and rejects its legitimacy. However, it is worth noting that Yazz's rejection of feminism may also fall into another kind of forgetfulness of historical experience and self-centeredness, thus further reinforcing the neglect of women's internal differences.

By analyzing the relationships between Amma and Shirley, and Amma and Yazz, it can be seen that sisterhood in the novel is far from being a natural and unified discourse and demonstrates solidarity, but a complex construction full of tension and conflict, highlighting the inability of sisterhood to escape discursive ruptures within the politics of difference. The shared discourse on the surface conceals the unequal power, divergent values and intergenerational fissures behind. It is in these subtle but profound differences and ruptures that *Girl, Woman, Others* challenges the traditional unified feminist narrative of the black female community.

3.2 The Conflicting Nature of "Empowerment": The Division in the Discourse of Power

"Empowerment" is a highly resonant keyword in contemporary feminist discourse, representing the awakening of women's subjectivity, access to power, and resistance to structural oppression. However, the discourse is not as cohesive as it seems in *Girl, Woman, Other*. Instead, the novel reveals the tension of "empowerment"—The autonomy on one side may be perceived as betrayal by the other. One's resistance to tradition may become the source of power for the other to give value. Thus, behind the shared discourse of "empowerment" lies a profound contradiction between power division and identity politics.

Dominique's relationship with Nzinga reveals the asymmetry of empowerment: What one person sees as empowerment may be what another person sees as control. Encouraged by her lover Nzinga, Dominique flees what they consider to be a masculine London to join Spirit Moon, a radical feminist community in the American West, in pursuit of an idealized feminist utopia. In Dominique's eyes, the "endless space and vistas" (Evaristo, 2019, p. 79) in Spirit Moon contrasts sharply with "the polluted air, dirty streets, frenzied atmosphere and hard-edges of London" (Evaristo, 2019, p. 79). She believes herself to be liberated, finally becoming the subject with feminist empowerment. However, she soon falls from being an active agent of empowerment to a passive one, as Nzinga, ostensibly an empowerment mentor, gradually exerts mind control over Dominique: "We have to be vigilant, Nzinga said to the gathered women who seemed hypnotized by her... there are women among us who've been sent to destroy us, internalized racism is everywhere..." (Evaristo, 2019, p. 78). Nzinga infiltrates personal judgment, creates antagonisms, and emotionally abducts and verbally humiliates those who do not conform, reflecting the exclusivity, hierarchy, and control implicit in the apparent uniformity of empowerment. Nzinga ends up highly manipulating and isolating Dominique, transforming empowerment into total submission: "She started treating me like a disciple instead of a lover, and became possessive, aggressive and played mind control games …she wouldn't let me out of her sight, said I should be grateful that she'd rescued me, from what? who knows..." (Evaristo, 2019, p. 105). Dominique suffered an enormous disillusionment: "She believes that Nzinga is an angel sent to help her discover her real self but soon realizes that Nzinga's so-called affectionate attitudes are atrocious, aggressive, violent, and sometimes even sadistic" (Sarıkaya-Şen, 2021, p. 308). Therefore, empowerment discourse is not necessarily a means of promoting equality, but rather a tool for shaping norms, boundaries and power structures. The unity of empowerment is shattered, presenting the potential for appropriation and weaponization, and becoming an expression of exclusivity and control.

The relationship between Carole and Bummi also exhibits the contradictory comprehension of empowerment. Carole empowers herself to become a successful black woman by meeting the expectations of the white people, and gaining class advancement through marrying a white man. The reason is that Carole received too much unfair treatment at school due to her black identity, which made her realize that if she wanted to be accepted by

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society, she could only strive to join the white community. Therefore, Carole is on her way to becoming "all English" (Evaristo, 2019, p. 145) and "white-assimilated" (Nair, 2025, p. 476): "She aligns her lifestyle with that of the White and high-class highflyers with whom she works and socializes" (Nair, 2025, p. 477). Carole's approach did enable her to gain a firm foothold in the white community and become a successful figure in the banking industry, who "climbs the corporate ladder" (Sarıkaya-Şen, 2021, p. 311) and finally has the power to determine.

However, in this process, Carole cuts off her cultural roots from her mother, Bummi, who insists on preserving Nigerian cultural traditions and expresses her disappointment with Carole's choices, whose success is at the expense of her emotional identity and ethnic belonging. This suggests that empowerment may be embedded with oppressive norms of what constitutes success in the dominant ideology. In contrast, Bummi, while adhering to her cultural identity, set up a cleaning company to offer job opportunities, empowering black immigrant women who struggle to survive in the UK. Therefore, through the different empowerment choices of the two generations, "*Girl, Woman, Other* highlights the need to overcome conflicts and divisive lines between feminist waves and urges an intergenerational perspective in contemporary feminism" (Strauss, 2023, p. 24).

Girl, Woman, Other reveals the complicated rupture of values, cultural identities, and resistance strategies within black feminism by showing the divergent practices of different characters under the discourse of empowerment. Whether it is the tension between Dominique and Nzinga over freedom and loyalty, sexuality and power in their intimate relationship, or the traditional confrontation between Carole and Bummi, empowerment demonstrates its multifarious meanings in real life. It can either be a shell of oppression and manipulation or a self-reconstruction out of trauma. Underneath the seemingly shared term, there are different experiences and conflicting voices.

3.3 The Multiplicity of "Freedom": A Fracture in the Discourse of Liberation

Despite that "freedom" is often seen as one of the most universal appeals in feminist struggles, in *Girl, Woman, Other*, Black women of different generations and life experiences give "freedom" very different and even contradictory connotations. Whether it is the control of the body, gender, or identity, "freedom" has never been a unified goal or experience, but rather a tension between social norms and personal choices. Nevertheless, these divisions do not diminish the power of feminism. Rather, they are a reminder that respect for difference is a prerequisite for freedom.

LaTisha is a young black single mother. She views sexual freedom as an expression of entitlement, claims to like bad boys and has sex with multiple men as her choice as a modern woman. However, LaTisha's claim to freedom is largely reconfigured by capitalist gender culture as sexual desirability capital. She recognizes her value by becoming a sexy object for the male gaze. For example, a man she met in the club, Mark, "his bedroom eyes making her feel sexy and the drink making her feel romantic, she gave it up without protection in the back of his car in an empty parking lot that very evening" (Evaristo, 2019, pp. 191-192). Her freedom is actually a new form of discipline—The female body remains in the position of being desired and gazed at. Unfortunately, LaTisha does not realize this, and her sexual freedom gives her "three unwanted pregnancies by the age of twenty" (Sarıkaya-Şen, 2021, p. 304), for whom she must work hard to provide a good life.

In contrast, Carole's definition of freedom is very different. LaTisha and Carole are friends in Peckham, and both faced the absence of father during their childhood. LaTisha's father abandoned the family for another woman, and she grew up witnessing the pain of her mother. Thus, she emotionally craves attention and recognition from men. This psychological motivation leads her to understand freedom as the freedom in sexual choices, and she believes that being a sexy woman is the most important thing to her, which is a way to show her self-worth. In comparison, Carole's father died because of excessive fatigue when she was young. Her upbringing, while equally challenging, did not internalize the dependence on heterosexual relationships. After experiencing severe sexual trauma, Carole chooses to distance herself from her past life in an effort to reinvent her identity. She understands freedom as self-esteem and future possibilities gained through academic performance. Therefore, with Shirley's help and encouragement, Carole is determined to get into a good college and move up the social ladder so as to get out of the messy black underclass. As a result, Carole becomes estranged from LaTisha. These two paths to freedom represent the different strategic choices black women make when facing a major turning point in life: LaTisha relies on physical attractiveness for her right to be seen, while Carole tries to cleanse her traumatized past through the path of social recognition. Their differences do not stem from divisions in political stance, but from different mechanisms of perceiving and responding to the absence of patriarchy and trauma in their personal experiences.

Morgen/Megan, "a social-media influencer quite radical in her politics" (Sarıkaya-Şen, 2021, p. 304), is presented with a non-binary gender identity, bringing a new dimension to the discourse of freedom. Evaristo acknowledged that Morgen/Megan represents "a very interesting development that young people, in particular, are increasingly embracing the idea of gender fluidity in a way that many people of my generation can't accept" (Manyika, 2024, p. 105). From Morgen/Megan's perspective, freedom is no longer just about escaping oppression or acquiring the right to choose, but about the fundamental liberation that breaks the gender binary and redefines the way of being. "Gender-free means I identify as neither male nor female, I also identify as pansexual, which means I'm attracted to individuals on the male-female trans spectrum…" (Evaristo, 2019, p. 334). Here, her freedom is not just a matter of personal choice, but a rebellion against the traditional construction of gender, which reveals the deep division of gender identity behind the discourse of freedom.

In contrast, Julie, as Morgan/Megen's mother, represents a more traditional, socially normative image of women. Her understanding of freedom is rooted in the dominant social expectations: An eligible daughter should be docile, beautiful, wear dresses, own Barbie dolls, and dream of becoming a wife and mother. Behind these expectations is Julie's conformist freedom—A search for limited freedom within the rules of society, finding it in a stable marriage and a decent life. However, Julie's normalized freedom is a shackle from Morgan/Megen's point of view: "Her mother was unthinkingly repeating patterns of oppression based on gender" (Evaristo, 2019, p. 313). Julie forced Morgan/Megen to dress up as a girl in the traditional sense, which in fact denied her real gender experience and self-identity. She reacted to Morgan/Megan's tattoos, short haircut and neutral dress with violent rejection, even dumping dinner on the floor in protest. The "unsupportive family" (Nair, 2025, p. 476) eventually led to Morgen/Megen's departure. Julie's anger is not only just an emotional reaction to the rebellious

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behaviors, but also a conflict between her view of freedom with her daughter's—She cannot understand why her daughter would reject something that is normal, highlighting the value rupture between generations.

The presentation of the discourse of freedom in *Girl, Woman, Other* has long been fractured into different directions, paths, and goals, and cannot be summarized in a unified gesture. It is this fissure that constitutes one of the most complex and real issues in the feminist movement—Difference is not an obstacle to freedom, but rather a foundation that prompts readers to rethink how freedom is possible.

4. Conclusion

In *Girl, Woman, Other*, Bernadine Evaristo, through the narratives of twelve female characters, breaks the homogenized feminist narratives. This paper centers on the three apparently unified feminist core discourses of "sisterhood," "empowerment" and "freedom," scrutinizes the interactions and growth of several key characters in the novel, revealing the multiple meanings and internal divisions of these shared discourses in specific contexts.

Amma and Shirley, or Amma and Yazz present the inequality and conflicts of "sisterhood"; Dominique and Nzinga, or Carole and Bummi manifest the different interpretations of "empowerment"; LaTisha and Carole, or Morgen/Megan and Julie demonstrate the divergent choices of "freedom". These examples show that black feminism is not an unbreakable integrator within itself, but rather a complex community intertwined with different classes, sexualities, educational backgrounds, and affective experiences. Once these differences are abstracted into uniform slogans, they may obscure the real situations and diverse demands of individuals, and even produce new discursive oppression.

Girl, Woman, Other exactly reflects what Lorde and Hooks emphasized: A true feminism must recognize and respect innerracial and inndergender differences, seeing divisions as opportunities for understanding and change rather than barriers to solidarity. The novel is a literary exercise in this theoretical position: Evaristo refuses to construct an idealized community of black women, but rather, by giving voice to differences and contradictions, she makes complexity itself the starting point of politics. In this way, this study not only seeks to question the obscuring of black women's experience by unified discourses, but also attempts to reaffirm that it is only through the recognition of conflicts and differences that feminism can develop political alliances that are truly inclusive, dynamic, and emancipatory. Therefore, this paper presents a literary intervention that reflects on contemporary feminist political discourses. Under the Tower of Babel of multiple discourses, the question of how to find understanding in divisions and build new female alliances in cracks may be the fundamental problem that *Girl, Woman, Other* leaves readers and scholars with.

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