Gynism beyond Mainstream Feminism: A Deconstructionist Analysis

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Abstract

Insightful and in-depth analysis of Eboh's theory of gynism proves that the theory is conceptually broad and composite when compared with mainstream feminism. It differs with the general notion of feminism in approach and in context. In approach, it applies accommodationist love, humane and complementary approaches, while contextually, it connects individualism and self-determination to continental and environmental relations; the uniqueness of which is that it captures virtually all relevant areas where exploitation and subjugation are prevalent. However, most scholarly interpretations and expositions of the theory seem not to be holistic enough to expose the basic underlying components of the theory. Deconstructionally, this paper provides the main perspectives of gynist theory, which include humanistic, continental and environmental, with the aim to attain a global egalitarian culture of justice, equity, respect and mutuality necessary for the achievement of genuine humanism.

Keywords: accommodationist love, egalitarian culture, feminism, gynism, humanism.

Introduction

The human world is characterized by lots of inhibitions that are repugnant to self-advancement, continental autonomy, and environment preservation and sustainability. Different segments of humanity and nature have been subjugated, exploited and dehumanized. There are global instances of structural injustices, inequalities, and other unfair treatments. The eco-system is continuously degraded

and exploited. Continentally, there are issues of race and racial discrimination, imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism. These are mostly influenced by the structural patriarchal hegemony and institutional practices aimed at supremacy in perpetuity (Elechi 2021b, p.99). No doubt, humanistic attitude towards all human beings, the entire ecosystem and the global world is urgently needed for harmonious co-existence and the development of society. The need to change this systemic status quo gave rise to Eboh's theory of gynism.

Gynism is more than a theory of feminism; it goes beyond mere feminist theory to encompass other very important areas that require liberation. As Allinson puts it "Gynism is a position that goes 'beyond feminism' and includes elements that could be considered Marxist – though Prof. Eboh does not characterize these elements as Marxist" (2021, p.124). Even Eboh acknowledged that gynism is a broad and composite theory that goes beyond feminism. Feminism, which basically argues for the political, economic and social equality of both men and women, has been divided over time because of the approach of its proponents. The two major classes being radical and liberal feminism; while radical feminism fights for the invalidation of systems and the annihilation of men, liberal feminism fights for a more egalitarian society. Gynism is a call for the liberation of women through the creation of an egalitarian culture that seeks for the good, respect and actualization of all, irrespective of their gender. Gynism, therefore, can be defined as a philosophical and gender theory that advocates for the destruction of sexist mindset, upholding equity and complementarity in human relationship. It fights for the liberation of Africa from Western hegemonic hold, and also calls attention to a proper relationship between humans and the ecosystem, knowing that the continuity of the human race is dependent on the survival of the ecosystem.

The term *Gynism* is unconventional and consciously coined for the purpose of showing the significance and necessity of a new approach that respects societal mores and core values. Stating the reason for the uniqueness of the term, Eboh provides four major answers: (1) the Western brand of feminism is mostly radical in nature. It encourages and actively advocates for misandrism, destruction of the men and takeover of men's roles in the society. Their brand of feminism is disruptive to natural order, and African women do not want to be associated with

such radicalism as they recognize the interdependence between men and women (Eboh 2000, p.31-32). (2) Racism and feminism are two different but closely related realities of our time. Western feminists are mostly white supremacists who join their men to perpetrate racism against African men and women. Their hatred for Africans cannot be masked with the claim of universal feminist movement for the good of all women as they have continually joined in the capitalist racial discrimination against Africans. African women, therefore, cannot join forces with their counterparts in the West as this will not augur well for those of them who have to fight racism and capitalism on the international level and sexism at the home front. This will amount to fighting against oneself as racism against Africans is felt by both men and women in Africa. African gender theorists, therefore, prefer to join their men in fighting against racism and Western supremacist tendencies knowing that unless their men and continent are freed, they cannot, in the true sense, be free (Eboh 2000, p.32). (3) Given that feminism is a fight against masculine chauvinism and hegemony, Eboh argues that using terms that have the same masculine appendages to conceptualize this important fights makes for a willing conformism to remain in this inextricable androcentric web that the theory seeks to break away from. Defining the "second sex" in 'terms and function of man', for Eboh, limits the efforts of this liberation quest. Therefore, she coined the word Gynism that she may 'etymologically dispense with masculine radix especially in Alice Walker's *womanism* and Chioma Opara's *femalism* (Eboh 2000, p.105). (4) Lastly, Eboh argues that the experiences of African women in diaspora and African women within Africa are not the same; the women in diaspora may have resentment towards African women in Africa as they hold them (and their men) responsible for their woes and bitter experiences of the slave trade (Eboh 2000, p.33). Again, they have a daily experience of racism in its raw nature, and they may not have an experience of structural sexism as it is with the women in Africa, and women in Africa may hardly have an encounter of racism unless when they leave the continent, thus Eboh is opposed to an indiscriminate combination and mixture of these experiences as if they were one and the same (Eboh 2000, p.32-33).

The foregoing, therefore, makes clear the aim of gynism as an Afrocentric theory that projects African values and complementary relationships between men and women. Gynism is "a gender theory with common sense because it abhors cutting

the nose to spite the face" (Eboh 2024), It upholds the natural order of mutual respect in marriage between men and women. Its uniqueness is that it captures virtually all relevant areas where exploitation and subjugation is prevalent. It is a theory of justice and equity meant to address and correct all forms of abuse and exploitative practices in society. For Eboh, the woman question is not a simple one that has a single answer or approach, any feminist theory or quest must go beyond mainstream feminism. Gynism, therefore goes beyond feminist or woman centeredness to accommodate all other aspects of the society that experience the same form of exploitation that the women go through. The attainment of a global egalitarian culture of respect and mutuality is the essence of gynism. It is a theory of complementarity.

Gynism as Complementary Theory of Gender

Another distinctive attribute of gynism is that it is a theory of complementarity. It is a call for the recognition of the inherent traits in each of the sexes, their strengths and weaknesses and to understand that these two sexes serve to promote themselves and better their lives in mutual support and help. Like other brands of African gender liberation movements, gynism considers men not as rivals but as complementary allies in progress (Jaja 2021, p. 222). Complementarity is the interdependence of the sexes on each other, which fosters the growth, development and actualization of the whole, for when there is mutual contribution of all in the scheme of things, there is bound to be growth of the whole that naturally propels the growth of the individuals.

Eboh in order to emphasize the indispensability of complementarity between men and women, espoused the Siamese *Twins Theory* in her *Women Trafficking and Men Traffickers: An Essay in Gynist Theory* (Eboh 2000, p. 43). The presentation of the Siamese theory is a deconstruction of the status quo, a critique of the culture of women subjugation and subservience, as she notes: "this is an underlying bedrock theory in the collective unconscious which informs most gender relations. It is a base on which many patriarchal superstructural gender malpractices rest. An allegorical elaboration of the dictum: man is the head of the woman" (Eboh 2000, p. 43). This dictum, according to Eboh, figuratively depicts man and woman conjoined at the neck as Siamese twins. The theory, she says, conjectures man to be

paralyzed from the head down, while the woman is headless without the man as her head. Men who hold tenaciously to this dictum get lost in over confidence and over reliance on their masculinity, like the Shakespearean Julius Caesar who walked into his own death because of his overconfidence and reliance on his being 'too masculine to listen to a woman'. This assumed heartlessness of men could account for why men seem to lack empathy for women and unable to navigate reality with the eyes of women. Being without hearts, by virtue of being paralyzed from neck downwards, the men are beasts who act beastly towards women and this makes it impossible for them to feel with and empathize with the women. This imagery, Eboh observes, has placed on the woman, by convention, the task of making the man desire her. Being a headless monster, the woman has to live her life preparing to make an impact on the man and so endear herself to the man through certain attributes like softness, submissiveness, humility, care, etc., that are not expected of the man (Eboh 2000, p.43). The woman must not be too forward, she must relegate herself to the background and allow the man the center stage at all times, no matter her cognitive level and other outstanding qualities. Men have through conventions, and cultural practices, inferiorized women, making them play second fiddle roles, labeling them with all manner of dehumanizing and inferior concepts justified by the dictum, 'man is the head of the woman' (Eboh 2000, p.44). Men are, according to Eboh, threatened by the qualities of some women who are not ready to conform but set themselves apart through their cognitive and industrial enterprises. Such women who refuse to be bent to the repressive conventional practices, are avoided by men because they are seen as being too big for men's ego (Eboh 2000, p. 44).

The Siamese gender theory is repressive of women, it denies the innate qualities in womanhood and makes being feminine abhorrent while it encourages the masculine qualities, making them supreme, sublime and perfect. It denies the rights of women to self-definition, self-determination and self-actualization, and does not consider the yearnings and needs of the woman but subjects them to what the man desires and wants of her. It does not promote co-equality between spouses. Eboh argues that the theory does not acknowledge the mutual need of the man and woman. She puts it thus: "the Siamese Gender theory neither highlights the fact that man needs woman as much (if not more than) woman needs man nor brings

man to the awareness that his intolerance of highly enterprising women stems from psychological insecurity"(Eboh 2000, p.45).

Eboh's presentation and interpretation of the Siamese gender theory is understandable given that gynism is a deconstructionist theory that questions assumptions and conventions in order to break the patriarchal hegemony and masculine chauvinistic tendencies. The interpretation of the Siamese gender theory, 'an allegorical elaboration of the dictum: man is the head of the woman' (Eboh 2000, p. 43) in the light of encouraging the subduing of women while encouraging men to demean women, Jaja says, "is antithetical to the status of the traditional African woman prior to colonialism" (Jaja 2021, p. 237). He argues that women in African feminism understands that the man and woman have their own vocation, one that differs from the men. The indispensability of the complementary role of the women in the society, he avers, are noted by African feminisms. Gynism, like other African gender theories, seeks the holistic good of the society, while advocating for the women to be active participants in their affairs and that of the society. However, Siamese gender theory, according to Jaja, is not reflective of this as it downgrades women only to culinary and coital utility, views women's outstanding qualities as menacing to the men (Jaja 2021 p. 238).

A body without a head has no natural or scientific possibility of surviving, just as it is with the head that has no body. Analogically, the man and woman cannot survive without the other and they are of equal importance. Since the man is bodiless, as he only has the head and the woman is headless with only the body, it goes to prove their interdependence on each other as they need to work and function together, just like the Siamese twins in order to survive. None is complete and can survive independent of the other but they live and survive in mutual inclusivity and love. Their roles to each other are complementary. Being conjoined at the neck, as Siamese twins, they have and share vital organs. This implies that men and women "have a shared past, a shared heritage, shared duties and shared goals, so much so that a forceful separation of the two would be detrimental to the human race. If the head benefits, so does the body, if the body is thriving, so is the head. The destiny of man and woman is intricately interwoven, that total independence of women from men (radical feminism) is impracticable, if not

impossible" (Jaja 2000, p. 238). In the same vein, two conjoined heads that do not have 'a body (gayness) does not advance the cause of the human society, or any biome for that matter' (Jaja 2000, p.238).

Siamese gender theory, therefore, is a proof of the complementary aspect of gynism. It proves the inextricable mutual interdependence of men and women. It does not *in se* seek or prove the subjugation or demeaning of women, rather, proves that men and women are incomplete without each other and that a mutual cohabitation in complementarity, recognizing their individual strengths and weaknesses while making up for the lacks in each other, is the surest way to self-actualization and that of the society. The greatest strength of the society lies in the acceptance by men and women that their strengths are not meaningful to the society unless they serve the weaknesses of the other. It is in this consciousness that the Western radical feminist approach that considers men as threats to the well-being of women can at least be tamed, if not entirely abrogated. This consciousness and understanding is what gynism seeks and advocates for. Gynism fights for a mutual cohabitation in complementarity, where no one is neglected but all are respected even in their uniqueness and natural endowments.

Gynism beyond Mainstream Feminism

Generally, feminism, which centres on gender relationships, is an intellectual and political movement that seeks justice and equality for women. The fulcrum of feminism is the attainment of gender equality in rights, opportunities and benefits, access to resources, power and decision-making positions and processes. In fact, feminism seeks equal participation and legal protection. It advocates for self-determination, and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. It is against male dominance, exploitation and supremacy. In other words, feminists advocate for same or equal treatment and recognition. They want to be seen and heard. As espoused by Jaja, there are generally three focal points that could be deduced from Western feminist movements; (a) Sexism, (b) Patriarchy and (c) focus on middle-class western women (Jaja 2021, p. 220).

Sexism: they seek the destruction of sexist inclinations and treatment of people based on their sexes. For them, sex does not define one's humanness or aptitude,

rather the universal class of humanity is supreme over and above sex considerations. However, there is the total neglect and abandonment of classism, racism and colonialism. Western feminists seem to believe that sexism is the only way people are being suppressed. Most times, they pay blind eyes to racism and classism. Colonialism with all its evils and even neo-colonialism that has kept colonialism and slavery alive, ravaging Africa and her women are not of interest to them. Thus, black women (even those who fought against sexism with them) who were faced with realities of racism and classism on a daily basis were not taken note of. Not even the slavery that they championed (the worst level of suppression and denial of humanity of the other) mattered to them. Sojourner Truth aptly captured this in her "A'int I a Woman?" speech delivered at the 1851 Women's Convention in Akron, Ohio, where, *inter alia,* she laments, "And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?" (Truth, 1851). The experiences and peculiarities of women of different cultural backgrounds were not considered by the Western feminists in their struggles.

Patriarchy and patriarchal systems: Western feminists again believe that the patriarchal systems that existed and still exist need to be destroyed for women to be liberated. Mohanty, Ruso and Torres, however, argue that they erroneously believe that industrialization and urbanization are tantamount to liberation and equality, and that there is need for such industrialization and urbanization in the third world countries in order to liberate the more oppressed women of the third world countries (Mohnaty, *et al*, 1991, p. 54).

Focus on the liberation of middle-class western women: The target of the whole fight of Western feminists was the liberation of the middle-class women and seeking their equality with their male counterparts. The realities of middle-class western women represented for them, the reality of women globally, albeit erroneously. They presumed their experiences and world-views to be the case with all other women across the globe. Eboh explaining this, writes: "We, African women regard sexism and capitalist racism as two sides of the same coin. Head or tail, we lose, whereas our Western counterpart loses in sexism, but wins in racism and shares in the gains of capitalism (Eboh 2000, p. 31).

However, different shades of feminism abound, both in context and approach for the attainment of liberation politically, economically, culturally and environmentally for societal progress and development. African or Black feminism and the radical Western feminism are forms of feminism that are not parallel in approach and context or content, comprehensively. For instance, while the African feminism regard men as complementary partners in progress instead of competitors, the Western feminism is radical in approach, tending to claims of superiority over their male counterpart, thus, advocating for the overthrow of the patriarchal hegemony and the men who they accuse as responsible for their misfortune through revolutionary means, antagonism, scandalous, aggressive and violent confrontations and litigations (Nnolim, 1999 p.47). Radical feminists are known for aberrant behaviours such as self-assertiveness, domineering, abusive, and nonconformists to the norms and mores of society. Most of them are overbearing, disrespectful, roundly un-submissive, and unfaithful to their husbands. Radical feminists tend to have problems in marriage, family, or workplace (Elechi 2021b, p.103). Eboh's conviction that radical feminism must give way for liberal feminism necessitates gynism, a variant form of Africana feminism that eschews any form of radicalism and sees human society in the most proper sense. There are many theories of African or Black feminism, including *Womanism* and *Femalism* by Alice Walker and Chioma Opara that respectively captures African woman's predicaments and their efforts for liberation and emancipation, but the theories are not holistic enough in scope to accommodate varied segments or forms of hegemonic exploitations that are similar to what the women are experiencing.

Gynism has proved to be composite enough in advocating for justice and equity for all existents: male and female, developed and underdeveloped world, biotic and abiotic natural environment, in order to address and correct the oppression, subjugation, exploitation, abuse and all forms of discriminatory practices in society (Elechi, 2021a, p.102). It is the philosophy of freedom and emancipation of humans, continents and nature from all forms of inhibitions; it is derived from the complementary existence of all existents. Gynism provokes a more general and all-encompassing version of the idea of complementarity which we can preferably call an 'egalitarian complementarity'. It is a philosophical call for a humanistic attitude

towards the entire ecosystem. It demonstrates the importance of complementary existence between humans, and between humans and nature. It calls for the de-construction and abrogation of obnoxious aspects of patriarchal cultures, customs, and socio-political processes that demean women and inhibit their freedom and emancipation. Eboh's theory of gynism can be understood in three strands or perspectives, including humanistic, continental and environmental.

Humanistic Perspective

Every human being has the natural right to define, determine and actualize himself or herself without any form of inhibition. The dehumanization, depersonalization, inferiorization and denigration of women is forbidden because it is against rational and natural order. Every individual has dignity and a certain measure of potential. The spirit of *we-ism* or *my being-ness because of the being-ness of the other* captured in Ubuntu philosophy of *I am because we are,* the underlying spirit and principle that characterize African *weltanschauung,* must be allowed to rule the human world. The humanistic shade of gynism advocates for an equitable treatment of all human beings in the society irrespective of gender or class. It advocates for the rescinding of all oppressive and inhibiting practices as these do not benefit the society, rather, they limit potentials and possibility of individuals actualizing themselves, and in turn contribute meaningfully to the overall development and actualization of the society's full potential. Asouzu reechoes this in his *Complementary Philosophy,* where he argues that the existence of each person is important to the materialization of the essence of all as individual existent serves as missing link of the whole. (Asouzu, 2007, p. 10). Therefore, the existence of each person is only meaningful to the extent that he is meaningful to the whole. It is an egalitarian complementarity that believes that men and women complement each other in a manner that does not give room for limitation on gender-based roles or differences in human worth. Both men and women are equal in responsibility and authority. Gynism believes that God has no favourites. Male and female were made equal and at the same time by God. None of the two genders is an afterthought. As God created other animals in pairs - male and female – so did He in the creation of humans. Being created in His image and likeness, every human being has the spark of God and so, a moral being. This implies that every human being is, by nature, a free agent, capable of, and entitled to self-definition, determination and

actualization. Men and women serve as gender relations for mutual rapport and complementarity. In her article *Status of Women and Democratization in Nigeria* Eboh argues that a healthy society can only be created and held together when there is a necessary interdependence between the male and female genders.

This strand is basically common among feminist theories, it unmasks the structural injustices and exploitative tendencies in human relations between men and women" (Eboh, 2016, p.11). It seeks the abrogation of obnoxious patriarchal customs and cultures that demean and hinder human beings (male and female) from attaining their full potentials (Elechi 2021a, p.102). It advocates that all within the same social strata be treated equally irrespective of gender and status; that opportunities to social goods must be based on merit and any inhibiting practices against self-determination repealed. It is a theory for the liberation of both men and women. It is on this basis that John Rawls postulates his two principles of justice. He argues that a just state must ensure that 1) the equal rights and liberties of each person must be to the extent that this liberty is available, 2) social and economic inequalities are inevitable, these inequalities should be; a) open to all, b) they should not be attached to any individual but to offices and positions that are accessible to all in the society (Rawls 1999, p. 52-53). Rawls argues for equality in opportunity for all. Every person should be able to access social privileges, no matter their gender, and inequalities should not be gender-based but be conquered based on individual merit and effort to attain that stratum of social life that separates him/her from others, and not because the person is of a particular sex is. The humanistic sense of gynism is focused on the fight against all forms of oppressive and exploitative hegemonies of all humans – male and female with the aim of liberating and emancipating them (Eboh 2000a, p.26). According to Eboh, women liberation and emancipation vindicates the impartial love and justice of God, and the celebration of the advantage of equity in human race (2000b p.106).

Continental Perspective

Continentally, "Gynists seek liberation not only from male domination but also from foreign rule and neo-colonialism. To them, the so-called post-colonial era is an illusion; it does not exist, because colonialism is an on-going process… for so long as Africa remains in bondage, African woman's liberation will never be total"

(Eboh 2000a p.30). Interdependence of nations is a necessary and unavoidable reality in world politics and trade. No nation, strictly speaking, is self-subsistent, as we all need one thing or the other from others. The need for reliance of a nation on another has, unfortunately, led to the politics of domination and *survival of the fittest.* This natural need that was meant to serve the natural benefit of all involved based on equality, has, however, led to the domination of the weaker and poorer nations by the supposed stronger and wealthier nations for their sole benefit. Scientifically and economically advanced nations oppress and take undue advantage of the less advanced ones, to the extent of forcefully tapping into the natural resources. Gynism, thus, fights all forms of slavery and oppressive rule in the form of colonialism, neo-colonialism, indirect or foreign rule, imperialism, sexism, racism, capitalism, etc. between one country/continent and another (Elechi 2021b, p.111). "The evils of neo-colonialism are as biting as the ills of the colonial period. Flag independence without economic independence is a farce" (Eboh 2000a p.31). For Eboh, "the leitmotif of gynism is to review the subordinate position of women in the scheme of things and to fight side by side with African men for the liberation of the continent from the shackles of western hegemony." (2000a p. 34). The selfish ventures of imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, slave trade, capitalism and racism are extensions of injustice, inequality, discrimination, exploitation and suppression. They are connected to prejudice, and antagonism against a people or continent. They are linked in the exhibition of hatred and resentment and the development of underdevelopment of society. They are promoted by the selfish motive to dominate, marginalize and sustain economic gains, political expansion, psycho-mental control and socio-cultural devaluation in Africa (Elechi 2021a, p.87). The harm done to the soul, mind and body of the Africans by imperialism are enormous and innumerable. With colonialism and neo-colonialism, there are visible unequal power relations between Africa and the Western world. A reality that is against the creed for the formation of the United Nations and its Charter, "to strengthen peaceful co-existence among member nations, while recognizing and reaffirming their belief in the fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of human person, in the equal rights of men and women of nations, large and small" (U.N., *Charter*). There is, as it were, the politics of connivance that makes it possible to perpetually enslave weaker nations and

continents like Africa. These forms of slavery limit human and continent's potentials to progress and development.

Environmental Perspective

All living things have an interdependence of life on each other for survival and sustenance. According to Eboh, 'eco-systems are normally open systems that are synergistically in relationships… Ecosynergy can always be proved from natural activities such as nitrogen cycle and food chain… This is all the more reason why we should care for all existents' (Eboh 2000, p. 87). The rational capacity in humans, notwithstanding, has remained the force that threatens not only the survival of other species: plants and animals, but also their own existence and survival. The ineluctable effects of the reckless pillage of the environment are with us. The climate has been deeply harmed by our actions, ranging from the depletion of forest reserves, emission of gas and gaseous substances into the air, destruction of rivers, seas and aquatic lives, have made life insufferable. Environmentally, gynism advocates for the respect and care of the ecology and organisms (Eboh, 2000b, p.102). It checkmates man's spoilage of the natural environment and advocates for its proper treatment by human beings (Eboh 2001 p.22). The environment falls within the category of the oppressed because despite the fact that nature is replete with biodiversity, man has continually disrespected nature in negation of the accommodationist logic which states that nature is filled with other creatures other than man and that these creatures must live in mutual respect, tolerance and accommodationist love. An arm of gynism that is concerned with environmental preservation is referred to as ecogynism (Eboh 2000b p.107). Ecogynism emphasizes the development of a pluri-cultural mentality that leaves no room for oppression and exploitation of nature. When the habitats are destroyed, biodiversity is lost, and natural resources depleted, then nature is forced to respond in such a way that human life is put in danger with increasing cases of deaths and terminal illnesses and other challenging health conditions (Elechi 2020, p.29). Ecogynism borders on two ideals, namely: "duty of care" or "ethics of care" by humans towards the environment rather than plunder it; and the "principle of live and let live", because the environment is a web of life. These values represent two fundamental conceptual schemes of ecogynism: eco-dialogue and eco-justice as necessary requirements for environmental preservation and sustainability. A

culture that strictly adheres to existential recognition and treatment of the environment as a sacred trust, and a web of life rather than a culture of degradation, exploitation, and dominance is required for environmental sustainability. Human relationship with other existents, the flora and fauna, the biotic and the abiotic natural environment must be egalitarian and complimentary without the dominance model of androcentrism. Nature must be preserved because its variety is necessary for homeostasis and the maintenance of equilibrium in the universe (Eboh 2001 p.25). Ecogynism is therefore an approach and method of achieving friendly and harmonious synthesis of existence, and proffering solutions to natural disasters and issues relating to environmental sustainability (Elechi 2023, p.207). This, Eboh terms *synecology* or *eco-synergy*, which can be proved from natural activities such as nitrogen cycle and food chain. Oxygen, for instance, which is a necessity for human survival, is a product of plants. During the process of photosynthesis, plants absorb our waste respiratory products: carbon dioxide in exchange for the healthy and clean air (oxygen) that we breathe to keep us alive. Humans would be helplessly in an unbearable state without the plants and trees. Mankind, therefore, depends on other ecosystems for survival and vice versa. According to Albrecht, the maintenance and sustenance of symbiotic relationship within the environment is the highest good, symbiosis is a way of coexistence (2019 Pp.101-102). As Margulis puts it, "Life did not take over the globe by combat, but by networking" (1986 p.15), and Weiner records that "symbiotic interactions permeate modern ecosystems" (1999 p.377). For Eboh, nature exhibits synergy, mutual cooperation and interaction in a form of unspoken dialogue; there is an interrelatedness of all existents based on the conviviality for mutual survival and sustenance. This form of dialogue, which can also be called *eco-dialogue,* is naturally intended by the creator for the achievement of a universal community (Eboh 2002 p.63). Desmet writes that "…the values of nature are perhaps the key to metaphysical synthesis of existence" (2022 p.8).

Conclusion

Gynism is both revolutionary and novel, it seeks to draw attention to attitudes and mentalities that were hitherto, taken for granted. It questions the moral, religious, cultural and political foundations that enable the continued inhibition and subjugation of women. Many western feminist theories, especially radical

feminism portray violent attitudes towards men, upturning natural institutions and plans, leading to the LGBTQIA: a movement that purports to seek assertiveness in the society, especially in the West as a reaction to the problem of women subjugation, but have distorted the minds of many and caused more moral and cultural issues than solving them. Many women as a result of this consciousness detest men and want nothing to do with them, but resort to sexual relations with fellow women. Some men too, as a way of self-expression and definition (albeit wrongly to the morally objective mind) resort to sexual relations with fellow men. This man-hating has rather caused more social and moral problems than it purports to solve; creating a society of people with identity crises, who are morally inept and culturally disorientated. Gynism differs from these socially disruptive and misandrist trends, taking a more holistic approach that puts into cognizance natural sequence and plans in its quest for liberation and emancipation.

Eboh's gynist theory intentionally goes beyond mainstream feminism in scope and in approach. In scope it is broad and wider than feminism. In approach, rather than the display of aberrant attitudes and behaviours, gynists employ accommodationist love, humane and complementary approaches. Gynists thrive to attain equity, justice and liberation through dialogue and critical education. Unlike feminism in general, Gynism is not limited to the struggle for the rights of women but also accommodates those of the men. It does not seek to overthrow the male counterpart and the patriarchal hegemony but regards them as complementary partners in progress instead of competitors. Gynism goes beyond feminist or woman centeredness to accommodate all other aspects of the society that experience exploitation and degradation. Its major perspectives include humanistic, continental and environmental, with the aim to attain a global egalitarian culture of justice, equity, respect and mutuality, which are necessary for the achievement of genuine humanism.

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