

Summary of Research Project

Traditionally, misogyny is conceived of as a feeling of hatred towards women. This view appears to be shared by ordinary speakers (see dictionary and encyclopaedia entries) and by classic feminist literature (for instance, see Greer, 1970; Frye, 1983; Smith, 1989). Nevertheless, several theoretical issues are left underdetermined. It remains unclear what kind of affective mental states it refers to, how the phenomenon connects to relevant social structures, and how it accounts for its non-hostile manifestations. *Contra* this view, Kate Manne (2018) argues for characterising misogyny as a sanction-distributive mechanism aimed at maintaining and reinforcing the patriarchal order. Her characterisation has the merit of better accounting for the systemic nature of misogyny and improving conceptual clarity. As I show in Grassi (2026), however, Manne's approach has some drawbacks. First, by adopting a reactive approach to understanding misogyny, Manne's account undermines its capacity to predict and denounce some of its manifestations. Second, it fails to address its affective dimension adequately by introducing a tension between recognising the role of structures and framing misogyny as an affective phenomenon. These criticisms motivate further revisions of the concept.

My doctoral thesis explores the tension between conceiving misogyny as an individual mental state or as a structural mechanism. It is aimed at developing a unified theoretical account of misogyny that integrates the psychological and structural perspectives by (i) incorporating the structural explanation of the phenomenon by definition and (ii) treating the affective dimension as a core component.

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