

2024

Not My Fault: Far-Right Women and the Exculpatory Narratives of Misogyny and Infantilization

Katie Peters

University of Connecticut

katie.peters@uconn.edu

Recommended Citation

Peters, Katie. 2024. "Not My Fault: Far-Right Women and the Exculpatory Narratives of Misogyny and Infantilization." *Feminist Philosophy Quarterly* 10 (1/2). Article 9.

**Not My Fault:
Far-Right Women and the Exculpatory Narratives of
Misogyny and Infantilization**
Katie Peters

Abstract

One problem highlighted by intersectional and Black feminist theory is that not all oppressed agents are oppressed in the same ways and to the same degree. One of the implications of this for responsibility practices is that social practices of exculpation will not apply equally across all agents. This article explores two false social narratives about far-right women and evaluates them according to the standard view of moral responsibility. The first narrative of misogyny as exculpation holds that far-right women are themselves victims of oppression (of the misogyny of their own movements) and thus not blameworthy for their actions, as misogyny undermines their control and knowledge on the standard view of moral responsibility. The second narrative of infantilization as exculpation also proposes that women lack both knowledge and control on the standard view. The narrative tells us that (White) women, unable to protect themselves, must be protected and avenged by (White) men. If we assume the standard view of moral responsibility, both of these narratives impede our ability to hold far-right women responsible. By instead proposing the adoption of the rational relations view of Angela Smith, this article seeks to demonstrate how a nonvolitionalist account of responsibility can itself become a feminist response to far-right women's extremism with larger implications for our responsibility practices as a whole.

Keywords: extremism, moral responsibility, far-right women, exculpation, misogyny, infantilization

1. Introduction

One problem highlighted by intersectional and Black feminist theory (Crenshaw 1989, 1992; Collins 1990) is that not all oppressed agents are oppressed in the same ways and to the same degree. Correspondingly, the licenses, privileges, and restrictions faced by an agent will vary based on their social location. One of the implications of this for responsibility practices is that social practices of exculpation

will not apply equally across all agents. In the United States, White women have historically been excused from responsibility for many things that women (and men) of color are often held to *higher* standards for.¹ One place this becomes abundantly clear is in the case of far-right women and their work on behalf of their extremist movements.

This article explores two false social narratives about far-right women and evaluates them according to the standard view of moral responsibility. The first narrative of misogyny as exculpation holds that far-right women are themselves victims of oppression (of the misogyny of their own movements) and thus not blameworthy for their actions, as misogyny undermines their control and knowledge on the standard view of moral responsibility. However, while we can concede that these women do in fact suffer (and often severely) from the effects of misogyny, I argue that the misogyny they face does not impede their ability to contribute to far-right extremism—nor does it impede their potential to be held accountable for those actions. The second narrative of infantilization as exculpation also proposes that women lack both knowledge and control on the standard view. The narrative tells us that (White) women, unable to protect themselves, must be protected and avenged by (White) men. This infantilization positions (White) women as perpetually naïve children who must be cared for by White male paternalism. If we assume the standard view of moral responsibility, *both* of these narratives impede our ability to hold far-right women responsible. By instead proposing the adoption of the rational relations view of Angela Smith (2008, 2012), this article seeks to demonstrate how a nonvolitionalist account of responsibility can *itself* become a feminist response to far-right women’s extremism with larger implications for our responsibility practices as a whole.

The rest of section 1 will explore two aspects of the above problem: in section 1.1 I will give an example of how far-right women are dismissed and excused from responsibility in popular American culture, and section 1.2 will outline the standard view of moral responsibility as opposed to nonvolitionalist accounts, represented by

¹ I have, in the past, refrained from capitalizing the “w” in White similarly to the “b” in Black in recognition that while the adjective *Black* refers to the shared culture and experience of the African diaspora, the adjective *White* does not similarly denote an ethnic identity in the same way—and may in fact play into White supremacist arguments for the elevation of the “White race.” However, a reviewer directed me to the excellent arguments of both Kwame Anthony Appiah (2020) and Sally Haslanger (2012, 311) for capitalizing both; they argue that doing so situates the historical creation and artificiality of the concept of race. With that in mind, I chose to capitalize both White and Black in this article, as the artificiality and inconsistent application of White supremacist logic is a key feature of the argument here.

Angela Smith's (2008) rational relations view. In moving on to the exculpatory narratives, section 2 will explore the narrative of misogyny, and section 3 will do the same for the infantilization narrative. The conclusion in section 4 will explore some of the advantages that adopting a nonvolitionalist account can have and will argue that doing so can *itself* be a feminist response to moral responsibility.

1.1. "And girlfriend"

On February 6, 2023, Brandon Russell, the founder of Atomwaffen—a White power terrorist group—was arrested, along with his girlfriend, and charged with plotting an attack on the Maryland power grid (Weiner, Hilton, and Morse 2023). In a Twitter explanation of the history of the Atomwaffen group and their decision to target infrastructure for terrorist acts, historian Kathleen Belew (2023a, 2023d) noted the strangeness of the *Washington Post* article's reference to Sarah Clendaniel as simply Russell's "girlfriend." In a picture accompanying her tweet—taken from the *Post* article—Clendaniel is dressed head to toe in paramilitary gear, complete with skull face mask, semiautomatic weapon front and center, and an extra handgun in a thigh holster.

Two days later, Belew tweeted an explanation of what she calls the "and girlfriend" trope, (the *Post* had since updated their article to refer to Clendaniel as Russell's partner) as well as the role it played in causing the ATF and FBI to miss warnings about the White power movement's plans for the Oklahoma City bombing, as documented in her 2018 book *Bring the War Home*.² Belew says,

"And girlfriend" comes from a long, long issue in journalism, movies, and the academy, in which women aren't recognized as political actors when their beliefs don't align with a feminist mode.

In other words, when women say "I'm just a wife and mother," or "I'm not political," we have usually taken them at their word—even when, in the case of White power women, they were in fact activists as they said these things. (Belew 2023b, 2023e; see also Belew 2023c)

² Carol Howe, subject of a new podcast/audiobook called *The Debutante* by journalist Jon Ronson (2023), had been an undercover informant for the FBI and ATF. Howe had passed on warnings about "dangerous, apocalyptic statements" from the Elohim City group (a White power separatist group that Timothy McVeigh, the Oklahoma City bomber, was connected to). She stated that the leaders said "a 'cataclysm' was pending in the spring of 1995 and that the federal buildings in Oklahoma City or Texas were being targeted for a bomb that would signal 'a racial holy war' in the United States" (Belew 2018, 219).

Clendaniel, whose brother said she had always held neo-Nazi views (Fiallo 2023), was most certainly a far-right extremist in her own right (as the *Post* article describes). Authorities found a written statement from Clendaniel during a search, which they described as a “de facto manifesto.” It included the statement, “I would sacrifice **everything** for my people to just have a chance for our cause to succeed,” as well as references to Hitler, the Unabomber, and Norwegian mass killer Anders Breivik (Fiallo 2023).

As Belew highlighted, even when presented with clear evidence of the White-supremacist activity of far-right women, American society and media³ tend to dismiss women’s involvement and focus on the men. Lack of attention to the topic in general suggests that women’s involvement in the far right is not worth significant attention, supported by the fact that most domestic terror is perpetrated⁴ and organized by men,⁵ but also perhaps because women in racist movements are seen as apolitical in their own right and lacking agency, attached to the racist movement only through the political affiliations of their husbands, boyfriends, or fathers, as sociologist Kathleen Blee (1996) suggests. This article thus begins with this simple question: Why shouldn’t we dismiss Sarah Clendaniel as simply the “girlfriend” of a White supremacist?

1.2. The Standard View versus Nonvolitionalist Accounts

One way to bring far-right women to the fore is to insist that they are, in fact, responsible for their actions. Far-right women have only rarely been held accountable for what they do on behalf of the right, and this dismissal is often largely based on the patriarchal and misogynistic nature of their movements and organizations. The reasoning goes like this: far-right women are *themselves* victims of the misogynistic men in their movements. So how can we hold them responsible for what they do under conditions of oppression? I believe this is a mistake and that taking an intersectional feminist view that highlights the disproportionate amount of power that White women of the far right hold will allow us to see them as rightly responsible

³ The social “we” implicit here is used in the recognition that it is the United States’ history of patriarchy and White supremacy that fosters this dismissal. Oppressed peoples may have situated knowledge that exempts them from falling victim to the type of social narratives discussed in this article (Collins 1990, Mills 2007).

⁴ *The Violence Project* (n.d.) database of mass shootings in the United States (a mass shooting being one with four or more victims) states that from 1966 to 2020, 97.6 percent of mass shooters were male, and 52 percent of shooters were White.

⁵ In *Inside Organized Racism*, Kathleen Blee (2002, 5) suggests that the media and society at large often focus on the forceful male leaders of organized racist movements, and subsequently most male and virtually all female members occupy “hidden niches” in racist groups.

for their behavior and ideology. Many of the excuses that have formed the basis of their exculpation are false social narratives that suggest far-right women do not have enough knowledge or control on a standard view of moral responsibility to count as fully responsible for their actions. This article seeks to evaluate the validity of the standard view of moral responsibility in these situations.

The standard view of moral responsibility posits that agents must have sufficient knowledge and control in order to be held responsible for their actions. We may think that a drugged person does not have full control of their actions or that a young child is incapable of the kind of knowledge needed for detailed ethical dilemmas (Talbert 2016). Focusing on the knowledge requirement in his book *Who Knew?*, George Sher (2009) argues that many popular accounts of responsibility have ascribed to what he calls the *searchlight view*. In this view, an agent's responsibility extends only as far as his awareness of what it is he is doing (Sher 2009, 4). Similarly, volitionalist accounts of responsibility focus on the control condition: they propose that an agent must have voluntary control over anything for which they will be held responsible.⁶ There are two possible outcomes for the standard view of moral responsibility in the cases of far-right women that I am evaluating:

1. The standard view is true. I will argue that even in these cases, taking an intersectional feminist perspective will still allow us to hold *many* far-right women responsible.
2. The standard view is false. An alternative account, found in Angela Smith's (2008) rational relations view, will allow us to hold *all* far-right women responsible.

So, either way, far-right women are responsible for their behavior on behalf of their extremist organizations.

⁶ It is important to note that I am not arguing against any particular individual account of responsibility that forms the standard view, and thus there may be a wide variety of differences in what does, or does not, constitute sufficient control or knowledge on any given individual account. Instead, like Sher's presentation of the *searchlight view*, this formulation of the standard view is meant to serve as a general counterpoint to Smith's rational relations view. The point is not to argue whether particular versions of the standard view will be able to delineate when control or knowledge will be enough for responsibility in the cases presented here; it is instead that Smith's nonvolitionalist account *sidesteps entirely* the thorny questions of control and knowledge that the standard view will encounter.

Angela Smith's nonvolitionalist rational relations view can be summarized as follows:

To say that an agent is morally responsible for some thing is to say that that agent is open, in principle, to demands for justification regarding that thing. To blame or criticize an agent morally for something, then, always embodies (at least implicitly) a *demand to her to justify herself*, and therefore it only makes sense to direct these forms of moral response to an agent on the basis of things that reflect her evaluative judgments. . . . We are morally responsible not only for our intentional actions but also for the majority of our attitudes (our beliefs, desires, emotions, etc.) as well as for our patterns of awareness and many unintentional omissions, since these generally reflect our (often spontaneous and misguided) evaluation of reasons. (Smith 2012, 577–78; emphasis mine)

Smith's (2012) nonvolitionalist account focuses on *answerability* as the basis for moral responsibility. This unified view has the potential benefit of helping us hold far-right women accountable for more than simply their actions. As Smith describes above, since such things as emotions and patterns of awareness (or unawareness) are included in the account, this means that we have the ability to hold people responsible for both conscious and unconscious racism. Whether or not someone acts on their reprehensible beliefs, Smith's account allows us to demand that they answer for that reprehensible content.⁷

There has been some question about whether answerability accounts such as Smith's can address the power asymmetries that occur in oppressive societies (Cicurria 2020, 8) as well as the social nature of a feminist perspective. In their introduction to

⁷ Readers familiar with Michelle Cicurria's (2020) magnificent volume *An Intersectional Feminist Theory of Moral Responsibility* may wonder why I did not simply turn to her account to ground a responsibility theory capable of accounting for an intersectional feminist perspective. The main reason is that in this article, I wish to remain neutral on the idea of whether all of the situations in which far-right women are answerable-responsible are *also* situations in which far-right women are *blameworthy*. Cicurria's (2020, 9) account focuses on blame as a communicative practice that not only marks someone as a norm violator but expresses a negative attitude toward the perpetrator. Instead, following Andrea C. Westlund (2018), I want to retain the possibility that we can have answerability-responsibility without blame—in terms of Cicurria's account, this would mark the perpetrator as a norm violator, but it would *not* express a negative attitude toward them.

the volume *Social Dimensions of Moral Responsibility*, Hutchison, Mackenzie, and Oshana (2018, 6) say that, for Smith, the capacity for an agent to answer is “hypothetical rather than actual, and the demands are mainly demands of the agent as a *reasoner*, not as an interlocutor with others.” My contention is that Smith’s account need not stay in the realm of the hypothetical. Instead, we can use an answerability account in the kind of socially responsive approach that Hutchison and her coeditors seek to build in their volume. The kinds of actions undertaken and beliefs held by far-right women described in this article cause an incredible amount of harm—not just to the people of color to whom those harms are most often directed but also to other White people around these far-right women who are inundated with their ideology. Any community suffering these kinds of harm has the right to *demand an answer* for those harms that have occurred. And Smith’s contention that the agent is answering as a *reasoner* is particularly relevant in these instances: we are talking about harms that occur on the (whether consciously or unconsciously held) basis of an ideology of White supremacy.

2. Misogyny as Exculpation

One reason that far-right women are often excused from responsibility for their actions is the fact that they *themselves* are victims of virulent misogyny in their movements. It is thought that this oppression robs them of control and thus responsibility. This has long been a problem in feminist philosophy: as Claudia Card said,

Not only can oppression make certain virtues difficult to develop, but the question arises in view of the damaging nature of oppression *whether those who are oppressed are moral agents at all*. In feminist philosophy, this has complicated the question of how resistance by the oppressed is possible. (1996, 4; emphasis mine)

Feminist theory suggests that oppression (such as the misogyny and patriarchy faced by women) may be inescapable (Lugones 1990, Frye 1983), and if it is, responsibility practices become complicated by undermining oppressed peoples’ agency (choice, control, and freedom from coercion [Isaacs 2002, 144]).

In order to evaluate whether this thesis is true, let me first turn to the nature of misogyny itself before evaluating its role in the far right. Kate Manne’s (2017, 33) concept of the *logic of misogyny* offers a compelling alternative view to what she calls the naïve conception of misogyny, where misogyny is primarily a property of individual misogynists who are prone to hate women qua women—that is, because of their gender. Instead, Manne’s (2017, 51) conception functions on this basic premise: misogynistic reactions to women like violence or degradation occur when

women are perceived as unbecoming according to patriarchal norms, in order to enforce conformity to patriarchal standards, some of which are implicit (structural), others explicit (individual). On Manne's view, men need not see women as less than human or subhuman; instead, the patriarchal inheritance in our society positions women as human *givers* who owe men moral respect, approval, admiration, deference, and gratitude, as well as moral attention, sympathy, and concern that men do not likewise owe to women (2017, xxi). When women fail to fulfill these roles that men expect them to play, they can encounter the hostility, degradation, or violence of misogyny.

This is an important distinction that makes sense of some phenomena that cannot be explained on the naïve view of misogyny: If it is simply a matter of woman-hating, how can men degrade some women and venerate others (or occasionally, do both simultaneously)? Manne's logic of misogyny allows us to see that if misogynistic reactions are attempts to *keep women in line* when they stray from expected patriarchal norms, then praise for women comes when they fulfill their expected social role with regards to misogynistic or patriarchal men or structures. Manne's (2017, 67) analysis means that where there's misogyny, there's patriarchy; so the presence of virulent misogyny in the far right implies the existence of, or reference to, present or historical patriarchal structures. The oppression described above, as well as the presence of these patriarchal structures, will necessarily limit women's capabilities for control and knowledge on a standard view of moral responsibility. How much voluntary control can a woman have if she is constantly subjected to attempts to keep her in line with the desires of the patriarchy?

We also have good reason to believe that at least some far-right women face *increased* misogyny (relative to women outside the far right) simply due to the nature of the movements they are involved in. In looking directly at the misogyny far-right women face, Tracy Llanera (2023) offers a take on what she calls the *misogyny paradox*. The better alt-right women promote racist hate as visible and vocal propagandists, the more hostility they face from their fellow group-members for acting outside the proscribed "traditional" feminine role. In her article, Llanera recounts the toxic threats female alt-right propagandists face: hate mail, threats of rape and violence not just by their critics but also by their fellow alt-right sympathizers, and abuse against their families. Their very attempts to promote the views of their hate groups label them as women failing to meet submissive expectations, prompting abuse from their compatriots. But conversely, the more *submissive* alt-right women become in compliance with that proscribed role, the more they feel the misogyny of the men in the organization when their compliance does not exempt them from abuse. This is because these "good racist girls" may have internalized feminist norms of their right to independent choice and freedom, including their freedom to choose the traditionally submissive feminine role. When that choice doesn't exempt them from

the misogyny of alt-right men, they feel betrayed. Thus, Llanera suggests that far-right women face a damned-if-you-do, damned-if-you-don't paradox (in a Marilyn Frye-style double bind) that amplifies the misogyny they experience.

2.1. Misogyny and Moral Responsibility

With the understanding that misogyny functions to attempt to keep women in line with patriarchal norms, and with the knowledge that far-right women may face increased instances of misogyny due to the highly patriarchal nature of their movements, we can move on to evaluation of the misogyny narrative on both standard and nonvolitionalist responsibility views. To see how the standard view works with relation to the narrative of misogyny as exculpation, let me begin with an example. Given the highly patriarchal nature of far-right movements, the popular imagining of far-right women often goes something like this:

A White woman (let's call her Kathleen) has the misfortune to be born to a family active in the White supremacist and evangelical far right. Kathleen is brought up to be subservient to her father, to stay "pure" for her future husband, and to expect to have as many White babies as possible. When she ends up fulfilling all these expectations, she becomes active in attempting to recruit other White women to the "tradwife" cause.⁸

Let's review this case in light of the standard view of moral responsibility. For the knowledge condition, it's clear that Kathleen had diminished access to social narratives that would allow her to choose a different path than the highly patriarchal one she was raised to expect. Even if Kathleen was raised in the era of social media proliferation, the way algorithms create epistemic bubbles and echo chambers could still ensure that alternative views do not reach her (Nguyen 2020). Thus, the question of whether she could be held responsible for the knowledge condition on a standard view of moral responsibility is a difficult one. It's clear that her access to alternative, nonmisogynistic and nonpatriarchal narratives during her formative years was incredibly diminished; it's also unclear, given her upbringing, whether she had the ability to circumvent the epistemic bubble or echo chamber she may have found herself in as an adult. Given something like Sher's formulation of the *searchlight view*, where an agent's responsibility only extends as far as their awareness, it's going to be hard to argue that we can hold Kathleen responsible given the level of misogyny and

⁸ "Tradwife" is common slang for "traditional wife." Think of the stereotypical 1950s housewife: subservient to her husband, the happy homemaker having many (White) babies. See Norris (2023).

patriarchal expectations she faced (or at least, it will be difficult to hold her *fully* responsible).

For the control condition of the standard view, it's clear that Kathleen has been raised in an oppressive environment where her choices and expectations were curtailed significantly. She was raised in a highly patriarchal environment, so on Manne's analysis, we can rightly assume misogyny worked to keep her in line with patriarchal expectations. Her father, brothers, and any other men in her conservative church would have constantly reinforced (whether consciously or not) the message that she was to be docile and subservient, continually reminded of her place in the patriarchal hierarchy. Volitionalist accounts of the standard view propose that the control condition means an agent must have *voluntary* control over actions that they are held responsible for. Can we say that Kathleen, who was told all her life that she was inferior to and beholden to the men around her, had any sort of voluntary control over her decisions to stay in the ideology she was raised in? It seems that, once again, the standard view is going to have a hard time holding Kathleen responsible for her behavior or activity on behalf of the far right due to the misogyny she faced.

However, if we assume that the standard view of moral responsibility is false and apply Smith's (2008, 2012) rational relations view, we come up with a very different result. The knowledge and control conditions on the standard view have been explicitly concerned with *how* Kathleen's decisions came about: Was she aware of alternatives, did she voluntarily choose her actions, or did misogyny prevent her from doing so? But this focus on the evolution of her decisions misses the fact that Kathleen's decisions and behavior were White supremacist ones that ultimately worked to recruit more people into her hateful ideology. Kathleen was not only the victim of misogyny in her upbringing, but when she became an adult who recruited others to her cause, she also became a *perpetrator* of that same misogyny. Focusing purely on the way those decisions came about serves to hide the fact that Kathleen's decisions *actively caused significant harm*.

In applying Smith's nonvolitionalist framework, instead of asking *why* Kathleen took certain actions, we shift our focus to the harmed community's right to *demand an answer* for Kathleen's harmful behavior. Particularly when Kathleen begins recruiting other women to her lifestyle, we have questions about her attitudes, behaviors, and patterns of awareness. Why must her babies be *White*? Why should other women also be subservient to men, if they have no personal interest in it and were not brought up to expect that they should do so? What harm is she doing to her children by raising them in such an environment? Because Kathleen is now a grown adult, we have good reason to think that her actions and attitudes reflect her—conscious or unconscious—underlying judgements. Her life appears to have been nothing if not consistent with the way she was raised. Do those she is harming (which, given the insidious nature of White supremacist logic in the United States, might be

American society as a whole) not have the right to ask her to answer for what we see as reprehensible beliefs and ideology? Whether Kathleen's racism is conscious or unconscious, Smith's view allows us to hold her accountable for it in a way that the standard view cannot (at least, not without significant modification and argumentation).

We also have evidence that many far-right women are *not*, in fact, raised like Kathleen was—continually exposed to the patriarchy and misogyny of the ideology they grew up in. Take, for example, social media personality and alt-right influencer Lauren Southern. One of the alt-right's most famous female propagandists of the last ten years, Southern shot to internet fame with her first viral video, "Why I Am Not a Feminist," made as an audition for Canada's *Rebel Media*, an outlet designed by Ezra Levant to be Canada's version of *Breitbart News* (Lombroso 2020a, 2020b). Southern is a wealthy, active propagandist for the far right who raises both awareness and money for their cause. Unlike the fictional Kathleen, Southern enjoyed a "comfortable, middle class" upbringing in a wealthy suburb, where she enjoyed being a contrarian and provocateur as early as high school. Southern told journalist Daniel Lombroso about a time she and a Jewish classmate dressed up as Hitler and Mussolini to get a rise out of their teachers: she further shared that she didn't necessarily believe the things she said, "but the power of making her teachers squirm was intoxicating" (2020a, 2020b).

At the same time, Southern has clearly suffered harshly from the misogyny of the alt-right organizations she has worked so hard to promote. Lombroso's (2020a, 2020b) description of an incident he witnessed while following Southern for an *Atlantic* article and documentary is particularly vivid. Lombroso was tagging along as Southern appeared on Gavin McInnes's talk show (McInnes is the founder of the alt-right organization the Proud Boys in addition to being an alt-right media personality). Southern is the only woman present, and there is no seat for her: McInnes quips, "Are you ever gonna have kids, give birth, are you going to be a mother? Then I'll give them my seat. If you're not making humans, then fucking stand up, bitch." McInnes is here attempting to use misogynistic rhetoric to place Southern into the type of predefined patriarchal role that would most likely limit her voluntary control capacities in significant ways. But Lauren Southern is no Kathleen.

If the standard view of responsibility is true, then Southern may well be responsible for her actions in a way Kathleen is not. Throughout Lombroso's article, Southern describes her intentional positioning as a provocateur and a keen awareness of both the misogyny she faces and alternative ways of life that would free her from that abuse, demonstrating a clear knowledge of why she faces the misogyny she does and what the alternatives are. At the end of the article, she is poised to leave and try to start a new life in a new country, demonstrating that she indeed has voluntary control over her continued subjection to the harsh misogyny of the alt-right. And

Southern does successfully leave and start a new life in Australia—however, by the time the article is published, she has gone back to her old ways and once again works actively on behalf of the alt-right, once again subjecting herself to the misogyny of those movements. In these ways, Southern demonstrates both suitable knowledge and control to be responsible on any formulation of the standard view. But if the standard view is false and we apply Smith’s rational relations account, Southern *is still responsible*. She is clearly answerable-responsible for her actions and behavior despite the misogyny she faces—we can rightly demand that she justify herself at any time.

3. Infantilization as Exculpation

While the infantilization narrative has historically been used to justify women’s oppression, its modern uses in the era of (mostly) equal legal rights for women can become much more insidious. Before moving on to these modern uses, let me first address the historical development of the narrative as well as its unequal application across races. White women’s ability to escape responsibility through the infantilization narrative is based on the perception of their limited agency that is the result of a hierarchical view that positions women in a “naturally” subordinated position relative to men (Frye 1983; Jaggar 1983). In her book on submission and patriarchy, Manon Garcia (2021, 3) writes that this view of women’s natural submission “goes hand in hand with the idea of an essential and natural inferiority of women compared to men: it is because women are viewed as incapable of being free in the way that men are, or that such a freedom is seen as a potential danger, that their submission is good.” If women are incapable of the same freedom or self-determination as men, it stands to reason that they will be found to have less control and knowledge than men on a standard view of moral responsibility.

This has long been a feature of conservative rhetoric used to oppress women in patriarchal societies. Garcia (2021) cites Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s discussion of the education of Sophie in book 5 of *Émile, or, On Education*. Here, Rousseau offers such delights as this: “The man should be strong and active; the woman should be weak and passive; the one must have both the power and the will; it is enough that the other should offer little resistance.” In the US far right, this idea has been evident since at least the first Ku Klux Klan that arose in the southern United States after the end of Reconstruction. The first KKK used the narrative of imperiled White womanhood to fuel their campaign of terror and brutality against the recently freed Black population (Blee 1991, 12–13). Blee writes, “The racial state of the slave South ... was built on a foundation that dictated a hierarchical division of male and female, as well as white and black. It kept white women within a role that was exalted in prose but sharply divided from and inferior to the privileged social role of white men” (1991, 15–16). The infantilization narrative utilizes this idea to tell us that (White) women,

unable to protect themselves, must be protected and avenged by (White) men. This infantilization positions (White) women as perpetually naïve children who must be cared for by White male paternalism. As mentioned in section 1.2, children are not seen as having sufficient knowledge or control on a standard view—thus the White woman as perpetual child would not be, either.

One clear problem with this exculpatory narrative (before we even get to in-depth discussions of responsibility) is that while it can *ostensibly* be applied to any woman, this paternalistic protection and its ensuing escape from responsibility have *never* been applied consistently across racial lines. Black women, in contrast, have always been seen as “other” and outside this narrative of fragile, vulnerable White womanhood. Think of Sojourner Truth’s speech, “Ain’t I a Woman?”: “That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain’t I a woman?” Far from protecting the innocence of Black women, the White patriarchy has perpetuated the myth that Black and brown women are hypersexual and, thus, unrapeable (Davis 1981; Srinivasan 2021). Amia Srinivasan cites a 2017 study from the Georgetown Center on Poverty and Inequality that found this myth is still alive and well: “Americans of all races tend to see black girls as more sexually knowing and in less need of nurture, protection and support than white girls of the same age” (Srinivasan 2021, 13; citing Epstein, Blake, and González 2017). There is no purity or childlike naïveté possible for Black and brown girls who are seen as hypersexual.

When they *have* been subjected to infantilization narratives, Black, Indigenous, and other women of color were not protected, coddled, and avenged as White women often were; instead, their infantilization was used to reinforce and justify their oppression and abuse. This is, of course, not to say that White women were never abused in the name of paternalistic infantilization. Rather, it aims to illustrate that while the narrative of the childlike purity of White women was often used as a reason to avenge “wrongs” supposedly perpetrated against them, the infantilization of Black, Indigenous, and other people of color was used to justify their inhuman treatment at the hands of both individuals and the government. Law Professor Dorothy Roberts’s book *Killing the Black Body* describes the United States’ history of controlling Black women’s reproduction from plantation enslavement up to modern policy decisions that suggest requiring a Norplant contraceptive implant to receive welfare aid (Roberts 1998, 12). Roberts describes how the explosion of sterilization practices in the 1970s gave birth to the phrase “Mississippi appendectomies”—the practice of performing unnecessary hysterectomies on poor Black women without their informed consent (101). Forced sterilization and contraceptive requirements for Black women (especially poor and uneducated Black women) would not be possible without the type of paternal infantilization that frames them as incapable of making

important decisions for themselves. This inconsistent application of the infantilization narrative for Black women—alternatively denied entirely or used to justify their horrendous abuse—should give us pause to reconsider the ways this exculpatory narrative is used in modern US contexts.

3.1. Infantilization and Moral Responsibility

On the standard view of moral responsibility, the infantilization narrative holds that women do not have sufficient knowledge or control to be responsible for their behavior—it reverts them to the status of children, underdeveloped in knowledge capacities and under the protection of others in their choices (thus lacking control as another will act on their behalf). The infantilization narrative is used as exculpation either when it is invoked by those around a White woman who view her in the light of this narrative and remove her from the possibility of being an appropriate target of responsibility *or* when a White woman invokes the narrative on her own behalf in an effort to escape responsibility. To illustrate, I will use both unconscious and conscious examples of the phenomenon of “White women’s tears” and evaluate how both standard and nonvolitionalist responsibility practices work in these instances.

Discussing White women’s tears in a chapter on “Political Whiteness,” Alison Phipps writes:

White women’s tears are powerful, the ultimate symbol of femininity. They evoke the damsel in distress and the mourning, lamenting women of myth. . . . In an article on #MeToo, Jamilah Lemieux commented: “White women know how to be victims. They know just how to bleed and weep in the public square, they fundamentally understand that they are entitled to sympathy.” (Phipps 2020, 71; quoting Lemieux 2017)

The infantilization narrative provides a ready-made social response to White women’s tears. The damsel in distress, like a crying child, must be rescued and comforted by another. They are too vulnerable to deal with their distress on their own, so those around them must cater to their emotional, social, and physical needs. While this narrative is available to basically *all* White women, it is crucial to note that this view of White woman as victim is especially salient to the political right and its emphasis on traditional (and White supremacist) femininity. The more strongly entrenched the vision of White women as vulnerable, pure, childlike, and good, the greater the protective reaction will be. As with the first Klan, White women’s tears license White men’s violence against racialized others.

Returning to the evaluation of White women's tears by the standard view of moral responsibility, I will begin with its unconscious uses. Unconscious uses of the White-women's-tears phenomenon occur in instances such as a conversation where a person of color is trying to hold a White woman responsible for their racism or racist actions. If the White woman starts crying, it invokes in others (particularly White men, who will often have more situational power than either of the women) the infantilization narrative, and it prompts them to pay attention to and address the White woman's needs *instead* of the problematic behavior that the person of color is trying to call out (Accapadi 2007). Consider the following example, adapted (and shortened) from Mamta Motwani Accapadi's "When White Women Cry":

A group of student affairs professionals were in a meeting to discuss retention and wellness issues pertaining to a specific racial community on our campus. As the dialogue progressed, Anita, a woman of color, raised a concern about the lack of support and commitment to this community from Office X . . . , which caused Susan from Office X, a White woman, to feel uncomfortable. Although Anita reassured Susan that her comments were not directed at her personally, Susan began to cry while responding that she "felt attacked." . . .

Upon seeing this reaction, Anita was confused because although her tone of voice had been firm, she was not angry. . . . Anita was very clear that she was critiquing Susan's office and not Susan, as Susan could not possibly be solely responsible for the decisions of her office.

The conversation of the group shifted at the point when Susan started to cry. From that moment, the group did not discuss the actual issue of the student community. Rather, they spent the duration of the meeting consoling Susan, reassuring her that she was not at fault. (Accapadi 2007, 210–11)

In this scenario, it seems likely that Susan is not conscious that her crying will relieve her of the moral responsibility Anita is attempting to invoke in her as a member of Office X. (In the longer version of this scenario, Susan gives a detailed account of her commitment to and actions on behalf of diversity efforts.) Nevertheless, Anita's attempt to hold Office X responsible for their lack of support to a specific racial community was hijacked the moment Susan began to cry. This attention to Susan's emotional state as opposed to Anita's critique serves not only to make Anita's critique invisible and irrelevant but to make Anita into the villain responsible for Susan's discomfort.

Let me turn to a real-life example from the far right to illustrate the heightened response that can be provoked when both the stakes are higher and the infantilization narrative more entrenched. Sheila Beam, fourth wife of White supremacist leader Louis Beam (a prominent figure in the 1987 Fort Smith trials for seditious conspiracy to overthrow the government [SPLC, n.d.2]), presents an example of the infantilization narrative in action. As described by Kathleen Belew in *Bring the War Home*, Sheila was a pretty, blond Sunday School teacher, twenty-one years Louis's junior. Sheila and her family belonged to a Christian Identity congregation (an anti-Semitic, racist theology popular with White supremacists in the 1980s [SPLC, n.d.1]), making her a perfect symbol of vulnerable White femininity, passed from the protection of her father to the protection of her husband (Belew 2018, 174). The invocation of the infantilization narrative from within and without the movement came into play when Sheila was jailed for shooting a Mexican police officer who was attempting to arrest her husband. The couple had fled to Mexico following Louis's addition to the FBI's Ten Most Wanted list, and when Mexican authorities arrested Beam for extradition to the United States, Sheila shot a Mexican federal officer three times, claiming self-defense (Belew 2018, 174–75). Though Sheila was only held for ten days and was released and deported back to the United States, a highly publicized affidavit highlighted Sheila's status as victim: "I was physically and psychologically mistreated. . . . Officers would come into my cell and leer at me. . . . I was chained to the bed, which had a filthy, rotten mattress. . . . I was denied medical attention for my abdominal injuries. . . ." (Belew 2018, 175).

As Belew writes in *Bring the War Home*, just as the state moved to prosecute the White power movement, Sheila Beam became not just a sympathetic figure to the mainstream media but a martyr to the White power movement (2018, 176). Articles about Sheila emphasized her "swollen abdomen" and "pronounced limp" and described her as "break[ing] out in tears," and photographs emphasized her small, vulnerable femininity (176–77). In her husband's sedition trial, his lawyer would regularly invoke her injuries; anytime Sheila was interviewed she made sure to proclaim her husband's innocence (177). Belew states: "Sheila Beam played her part as a movement activist by creating and embodying a particular narrative of her innocence . . . one persuasive enough to be accepted uncritically by journalists and academic observers" (178).

It is impossible to know whether Sheila's invocation of the infantilization narrative by playing the (White) damsel in distress was conscious or unconscious. As we cannot read her mind, and know that she was raised in a highly patriarchal (and thus misogynistic) environment, I would suggest we err on the side of unconscious interaction or invocation. However, this will complicate our ability to hold Sheila responsible on the standard view, as unconscious interaction with the infantilization narrative will call into question not only the knowledge requirement (if her interaction

is unconscious, it is outside her awareness) but also voluntary control (if it is unconscious, she did not *intend* to do so). In the cases of both Susan and Sheila, there is little evidence to suggest that they truly *knew* that calling attention to their distress and vulnerability would result in their escape from responsibility—and how can we expect them to control other’s reactions to them? On the standard view, holding them responsible for their instances of White women’s tears would be exceedingly difficult.

At the same time, both Susan’s and Sheila’s actions have resulted in varying levels of harm that should be addressed. If we reject the standard view, we can ask on Smith’s (2008, 2012) rational relations account whether either Susan or Sheila are *answerable* for the harms they have caused.⁹ As Smith explicitly accounts for our patterns of awareness (and what is omitted from them), we can ask Susan to answer for the resulting harm to Anita and to address the behavior Anita was originally attempting to call out (the marginalization of a racial group by Susan’s Office). We can ask Sheila to account not only for her part in the White power movement but for her use of her own vulnerability to help her *husband* out of responsibility for his leadership role in the White power movement. (Louis Beam was acquitted of all charges and himself called on “Little Sheila’s” vulnerability in his opening statement in his own defense [Belew 2018, 182].) While the harms are obviously greater in the far-right case, I believe there is also a great value in being able to hold Susan responsible for her actions as well—I will address this briefly in the conclusion.

Conscious uses of the White-women’s-tears narrative tend to be more obviously problematic and will often still be responsible on a standard account of moral responsibility. Using what Phipps (2021) calls “sanctioned victim status,” White women can intentionally call on the infantilization narrative via use of the White-women’s-tears narrative or damsel-in-distress routine to provoke the sympathy of other White people.¹⁰ One frequently cited (fictional) example of White women using

⁹ And remember, as I am remaining neutral on blame in my account, Susan and Sheila need not be *blameworthy* even if we do ask them to be *answerable* for what happened. While this may feel like splitting hairs, there is a difference between *blaming* Susan for her reaction in the meeting and asking her to answer the question of *why* she acted the way she did. This is perhaps the difference between assuming she could have done differently and asking her to reflect on why it happened so that it will not be repeated in the future.

¹⁰ One objection I want to address here is whether identifying conscious uses of the White-women’s-tears narrative plays into the perpetuation of misogynistic stereotypes of women as manipulative or conniving. While I want to be sensitive to this concern, I do not wish to do so at the expense of a harmed community’s ability to hold a perpetrator responsible for the harm they have caused—especially as the

these false victim scripts is the case of Tom Robinson's trial in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, used by Miranda Fricker (2007) and José Medina (2013) to illustrate testimonial injustice. During his trial, Tom Robinson is denied credibility due to his race; Mayella Ewell is given excess credibility due to hers. The White Mayella escapes all responsibility for crossing racial norms by coming on to the Black Tom Robinson; Tom pays the price by being convicted without evidence and, later, dying in jail. Mayella and the prosecutor know just how unbelievable Tom's (true) story sounds to the all-White jury; instead, their presentation of Tom as the mythical "Black male rapist" is used to relieve Mayella of responsibility.

In these instances, a White woman can intentionally *weaponize* her emotions to invoke the infantilization narrative and the protection of White patriarchal structures. Consider the case of the White Amy Cooper calling the police and accusing the Black Christian Cooper of threatening her life—Christian was simply birdwatching in Central Park and had asked Amy to leash her dog, as per park rules (Hamad 2020). This practice has a bloody history in the United States: White women's tearful accusations have been used as an excuse for lynching. One of the most famous examples is that of Emmett Till, lynched after accusations by Carolyn Bryant that he had grabbed her. In 2017, it was revealed that the then eighty-two-year-old Bryant had confessed that the allegations had been false ten years earlier to Till researcher Timothy Tyson (Weller 2017). Sociologist Jessie Daniels (2018) called Bryant the "foremother of contemporary white women who call the police on black people sitting in a Starbucks, barbecuing in a park or napping in a dorm. These white women know their accusations have power, are readily believed and face few consequences for words that can and do end lives."

These conscious invocations of the infantilization narrative via White women's tears show that women like Amy Cooper have clear knowledge of the consequences of their actions—in fact, they are betting on them. This fulfills not only the knowledge condition but the control condition as well—they are choosing to invoke the

examples cited here (such as Carolyn Bryant's accusations against Emmett Till) are ones that have had disproportionately large harms on communities of color. What I do think is relevant in this objection, and that I do not have adequate space to address in this article, is the *standing* of those asking for these White women's answerability. It is not hard to imagine that White men may simply use the fact of some women's manipulation as a cudgel of misogyny meant to keep women in line with patriarchal standards. At the same time, both the direct victims (such as Christian Cooper and the family of Emmett Till) clearly have a right to call out that behavior and ask for those White women to be held responsible for their actions. Other White women may also have a derived standing resulting from the harm that the perpetuation of the "manipulative woman" stereotype does to them.

infantilization narrative on their own behalf. Thus, they are standardly responsible. But if the standard view is false, they will still be responsible on Smith's (2008, 2012) view: we certainly have the right to demand that they answer for their attempts to weaponize the infantilization narrative (especially as it is most often deployed against people of color).

4. Conclusion

This article has argued that far-right women are often relieved from moral responsibility on the basis of the false social narratives of misogyny and infantilization. The first narrative of misogyny as exculpation holds that far-right women are themselves victims of oppression (of the misogyny of their own movements) and thus not blameworthy for their actions as misogyny undermines their control and knowledge on the standard view of moral responsibility. I argued that while our fictional victim of far-right misogyny, Kathleen, may not be responsible on a standard model of responsibility, if we turn to a nonvolitionalist view like that of Angela Smith, we *are* able to hold Kathleen responsible for buying into the far right's White supremacist narrative. Further, I argued that we have evidence that many far-right women are *not* in fact like Kathleen; Lauren Southern gives us an example of a far-right woman who, while clearly suffering from virulent misogyny, nevertheless shows enough knowledge and control to be responsible for her continued promotion of the far right on *both* the standard and nonvolitionalist account.

The second narrative of infantilization positions (White) women as perpetually naïve children who must be cared for by White male paternalism. I argued that the phenomenon of White women's tears invokes the infantilization narrative in others, prompting them to treat the White woman as one would a crying child; comforting them in their distressed state, taking action against whoever caused their distress the way a parent would for a child incapable of taking care of themselves. I argued that while unconscious uses of White women's tears—by Susan and by Sheila Beam—are not standardly responsible due to a lack of knowledge about the narrative they are invoking and their lack of control over the responses of others, adopting a nonvolitionalist stance *can* hold them responsible. We can ask Susan to answer for her hijacking of the conversation when Anita was criticizing her office; we can hold Sheila to account for her involvement in the White power movement and her help in getting her husband acquitted of charges of sedition. I also argued that we have seen many examples of *conscious, intentional* uses of White women's tears—such as Amy Cooper and Carolyn Bryant—and that these weaponized uses of the phenomenon will be both standardly and nonvolitionally responsible.

Further, I want to suggest that adopting a nonvolitionalist position, which allows us to hold *all* the women discussed here accountable for their actions, *can itself be a feminist response*, by appreciating the social nature of racial power dynamics and

returning to White women the agency and power that accompanies their Whiteness. While I do not have the space to fully do this point justice in this article, I would be remiss in not at least outlining the argument for this implication. As mentioned in the very first paragraph, intersectional and Black feminist theory (Crenshaw 1989, 1992; Collins 1990) highlights the fact that not all oppressed agents are oppressed in the same ways and to the same degree. As we have seen (particularly in the way that the infantilization narrative's protection—while ostensibly applicable to *all* women—was only consistently applied to *White* women), this means that the licenses and restrictions agents face will vary based on their social location. As intersectional feminist views reveal power as a relational quality (Collins 1990), varying levels of oppression imply varying levels of power. Appreciating the relative levels of power some agents (such as White women) may have under oppression justifies a robust responsibility practice—especially for those with relatively higher power—that is, the White women who are the subject of this article. I believe that using the example of far-right women gives us good reason to think that we have, perhaps, let White women get away with far too much for far too long.

Using the example of far-right women makes it easy to understand who exactly we are exempting from responsibility when utilizing the exculpatory narratives of misogyny and infantilization. The introduction's use of Sarah Clendaniel, for instance, highlights just how absurd it is to dismiss the actions of a paramilitary extremist simply because she happens to be a woman. After all, a gun held by a woman is just as deadly as one held by a man. But this article also did not simply stop at far-right women—performers of White women's tears, such as the fictional Susan and the real-life Amy Cooper, can be any White woman at all; even, in Susan's case, one who professes to be progressive and pro-diversity. By insisting that these women, too, are answerable for their actions—in Smith's rational relations view of responsibility—we can say that any woman, regardless of whether or not we agree with her ideology, has the potential to be called upon to answer for her actions that harm others. In this way, I believe that endorsing a nonvolitionalist account of responsibility can itself become a feminist response to an unjust and unequally oppressive world. Instead of the paternalistic denial of women's agency of the infantilization narrative, or the misogyny narrative's refusal to acknowledge that victims of misogyny can still perpetuate that misogyny themselves, a nonvolitionalist account of responsibility allows us to hold these women up as rational agents who are capable of answering for their behavior.¹¹

¹¹ Special thanks to Heather Battaly and Tracy Llanera for their constant and detailed feedback as this idea developed and took shape. Also, many thanks to Lynne Tirrell, Reviewers 1 and 2, and the University of Connecticut's Philosophy Department Brown Bag for their thoughtful and deep engagement and responses.

References

- Accapadi, Mamta Motwani. 2007. "When White Women Cry: How White Women's Tears Oppress Women of Color." *College Student Affairs Journal* 26, no. 2 (Spring): 208–15.
- Appiah, Kwame Anthony. 2020. "The Case for Capitalizing the B in Black." *Atlantic*, June 18, 2020. <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/06/time-to-capitalize-blackand-white/613159/>.
- Belew, Kathleen. 2018. *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Belew, Kathleen (@kathleen_belew). 2023a. "Also: 'and girlfriend'—this is the girlfriend." Twitter, February 6, 2023, 3:59 p.m. https://twitter.com/kathleen_belew/status/1622701545191088128?cxt=HHwWgIC9maed_4QtAAAA.
- . 2023b. "'And girlfriend' comes from a long, long issue in journalism, movies, and the academy, in which women aren't recognized as political actors when their beliefs don't align with a feminist mode (4)." Twitter, Feb. 8, 2023, 4:27 p.m. https://twitter.com/kathleen_belew/status/1623433309958160384.
- . 2023c. "As promised, here is a thread about the history of the 'and girlfriend' trope. If you're new to this conversation, we're talking about the arrest this week of Atomwaffen leader Brandon Russell 'and girlfriend' Sarah Clendaniel. WaPo has since updated to call her his partner (1)." Twitter. February 8, 2023, 4:00 p.m. https://twitter.com/kathleen_belew/status/1623426514308964353?cxt=HHwWgoCxhYj0ylctAAAA.
- . 2023d. "Atomwaffen is a White power terrorist group modeled on The Order, which carried out a string of infrastructure attacks (along with other violence) in the 1980s (2)." Twitter, February 6, 2023, 1:15 p.m. https://twitter.com/kathleen_belew/status/1622660257326551040.
- . 2023e. "In other words, when women say 'I'm just a wife and mother,' or 'I'm not political,' we have usually taken them at their word—even when, in the case of White power women, they were in fact activists as they said these things (6)." Twitter, February 8, 2023, 4:28 p.m. https://twitter.com/kathleen_belew/status/1623433641081839617.
- Blee, Kathleen M. 1991. *Women of the Klan: Racism and Gender in the 1920s*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 1996. "Becoming a Racist: Women in Contemporary Ku Klux Klan and Neo-Nazi groups." *Gender & Society* 10, no. 6 (December): 680–702. <https://doi.org/10.1177/089124396010006002>.
- . 2002. *Inside Organized Racism: Women in the Hate Movement*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Card, Claudia. 1996. *The Unnatural Lottery: Character and Moral Luck*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

- Ciurria, Michelle. 2020. *An Intersectional Feminist Theory of Moral Responsibility*. New York: Routledge.
- Collins, Patricia Hill. 1990. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Routledge.
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé. 1989. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics." *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, vol. 1989, article 8: 139–67. <https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8>.
- . 1992. "Race, Gender, and Sexual Harassment." *Southern California Law Review* 65: 1467–76. https://scholarship.law.columbia.edu/faculty_scholarship/2867.
- Daniels, Jessie. 2018. "The Word of a White Woman Can Still Get Black People Killed." *Huffington Post*, July 18, 2018. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/opinion-daniels-emmett-till-case_n_5b4e4aace4b0b15aba8972d4.
- Davis, Angela Y. 1981. *Women, Race & Class*. New York: Random House.
- Epstein, Rebecca, Jamilia J. Blake, and Thalia González. 2017. *Girlhood Interrupted: The Erasure of Black Girls' Childhood*. Washington, DC: Georgetown Center on Poverty and Inequality. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3000695>.
- Fiallo, Josh. 2023. "Neo-Nazi Girlfriend Accused of Plotting Power Grid Attack Was Lifelong Radical." *Daily Beast*, February 8, 2023. <https://www.thedailybeast.com/sarah-clendaniel-neo-nazi-girlfriend-accused-of-plotting-baltimore-power-grid-attack-was-lifelong-radical>.
- Fricker, Miranda. 2007. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Frye, Marilyn. 1983. *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory*. Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press.
- Garcia, Manon. 2021. *We Are Not Born Submissive: How Patriarchy Shapes Women's Lives*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Hamad, Ruby. 2020. "A White Damsel Leveraged Racial Power and Failed." *New York Times*, May 27, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/27/opinion/amy-cooper-central-park-racism.html>.
- Haslanger, Sally. 2012. "Oppressions: Racial and Other." In *Resisting Reality: Social Construction and Social Critique*, 311–38. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199892631.003.0011>.
- Hutchison, Katrina, Catriona Mackenzie, and Marina Oshana, eds. 2018. *Social Dimensions of Moral Responsibility*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Isaacs, Tracy. 2002. "Feminism and Agency." In "Feminist Moral Philosophy," special issue, *Canadian Journal of Philosophy, Supplementary Volume 28* (vol. 32, supplement 1): 129–54. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00455091.2002.10717585>.
- Jaggar, Allison M. 1983. *Feminist Politics and Human Nature*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

- Lee, Harper. 1960. *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Philadelphia, PA: J. B. Lippincott.
- Lemieux, Jamilah. 2017. "Weinstein, White Tears and the Boundaries of Black Women's Empathy." *Cassius*, November 2, 2017. <https://cassiuslife.com/33564/White-women-dont-look-outfor-black-victims/>.
- Llanera, Tracy. 2023. "The Misogyny Paradox and the Alt-Right." *Hypatia* 38, no. 1 (Winter): 157–76. <https://doi.org/10.1017/hyp.2023.4>.
- Lombroso, Daniel, dir. 2020a. *White Noise: Inside the Racist Right*. Documentary, produced by Kasia Cieplak-Mayr von Baldegg. *The Atlantic*. 94 min.
- . 2020b. "Why the Alt-Right's Most Famous Woman Disappeared." *Atlantic*. October 16, 2020. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2020/10/alt-right-star-racist-propagandist-has-no-regrets/616725/>.
- Lugones, Maria C. 1990. "Structure/Antistructure and Agency under Oppression." *Journal of Philosophy* 87, no. 10 (October): 500–507. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2026867>.
- Manne, Kate. 2017. *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Medina, José. 2013. *The Epistemology of Resistance: Gender and Racial Oppression, Epistemic Injustice, and Resistant Imaginations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mills, Charles. 2007. "White Ignorance." In *Race and epistemologies of ignorance*, edited by Shannon Sullivan and Nancy Tuana, 13–38. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Nguyen, C. Thi. 2020. "Echo Chambers and Epistemic Bubbles." *Episteme* 17, no. 2 (June): 141–61. <https://doi.org/10.1017/epi.2018.32>.
- Norris, Sian. 2023. "Frilly Dresses and White Supremacy: Welcome to the Weird, Frightening World of 'Trad Wives.'" *Guardian*, May 31, 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/may/31/white-supremacy-trad-wives-far-right-feminist-politics>.
- Phipps, Alison. 2020. *Me, Not You: The Trouble with Mainstream Feminism*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.
- . 2021. "White Tears, White Rage: Victimhood and (as) Violence in Mainstream Feminism." In "The Logic of Victimhood," special issue, *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 24, no. 1 (February): 81–93. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549420985852>.
- Roberts, Dorothy. 1998. *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Ronson, Jon. 2023. *The Debutante*. Read by the author. Audible Original audio edition, 3 hr., 11 min. <https://www.audible.com/pd/The-Debutante-Audiobook/B0BV13NMBK>.

- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. 2020. *Émile, or, On Education*, book 5. Translated by Barbara Foxley. In *Philosophy of Education*, edited by A. LeGrand. Richards. EdTech Books. https://edtechbooks.org/philosophy_of_education/emile_5.
- Sher, George. 2009. *Who Knew? Responsibility without Awareness*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Smith, Angela M. 2008. "Control, Responsibility, and Moral Assessment." *Philosophical Studies* 138, no. 3 (April): 367–92. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-006-9048-x>.
- . 2012. "Attributability, Answerability, and Accountability: In Defense of a Unified Account." *Ethics* 122, no. 3 (April): 575–89. <https://doi.org/10.1086/664752>.
- SPLC (Southern Poverty Law Center). n.d.1. "Christian Identity." Accessed February 7, 2024. <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/christian-identity>.
- . n.d.2. "Louis Beam." Accessed February 7, 2024. <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/louis-beam>.
- Srinivasan, Amia. 2021. *The Right to Sex: Feminism in the Twenty-First Century*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Talbert, Matthew. 2016. *Moral responsibility: an introduction*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Truth, Sojourner. (1815) 1972. "Ain't I a Woman?" Speech delivered at the 1851 Women's Convention in Akron, Ohio. Transcribed by Frances Dana Barker Gage (1863). Edited by Miriam Schneir. In *Feminism: The Essential Historical Writings*, edited by Miriam Schneir, 93–95. New York: Vintage Books. Text also available at https://thehermitage.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Sojourner-Truth_Aint-I-a-Woman_1851.pdf.
- Violence Project, The*. n.d. "Mass shooter database." Cofounded by Jillian Peterson and James Densley. Accessed February 7, 2024. <https://www.theviolenceproject.org/>.
- Weiner, Rachel, Jasmine Hilton, and Dan Morse. 2023. "Duo Accused of Neo-Nazi Plot to Target Maryland Power Stations." *Washington Post*, February 6, 2023. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2023/02/06/maryland-power-grid-neonazi-brandon-russell/>.
- Weller, Sheila. 2017. "How Author Timothy Tyson Found the Woman at the Center of the Emmett Till Case." *Vanity Fair*, January 26, 2017. https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2017/01/how-author-timothy-tyson-found-the-woman-at-the-center-of-the-emmett-till-case?mbid=social_twitter.

Westlund, Andrea C. 2018. "Answerability without Blame?" In *Social Dimensions of Moral Responsibility*, edited by Katrina Hutchison, Catriona Mackenzie, and Marina Oshana, 253–74. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190609610.003.0011>.

KATIE PETERS (she/her) is a PhD candidate in philosophy at the University of Connecticut. She works on extremism, moral responsibility, and virtue and vice epistemology.