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### Not Your Father's Playboy, Not Your Mother's Feminist Movement: Feminism in a Porn Culture

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[Rebecca Whisnant](#), *University of Dayton*

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Freedom Fallacy: The Limits of Liberal Feminism

#### Abstract

This chapter is about the state of contemporary feminism and how it relates to the porn culture that surrounds us. This is important because whatever porn culture is, and there are a variety of definitions, it's not what feminists, or women, or anybody with a lick of sense, ever meant by "sexual liberation." There have, however, been contentious debates between radical and liberal feminists about the relationship between pornography, power and choice. I aim to unravel some of those debates here and highlight how liberal notions of "choice," favored by self-proclaimed "third-wave feminists," confuse and undermine our thinking not only about pornography, but about women's oppression and patriarchy generally.

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In recent months, Playboy has begun producing some surprisingly feminist content, including an impassioned plea to readers not to click on stolen pictures of naked celebrities and a "Should you Catcall Her?" flow-chart (Punch line: Only if you've "consensually agreed to should sexually suggestive comments to each other in public." Or if she's an actual cat.) In an age of online porn, the company clearly needs an approach that goes beyond "here are some pictures of naked women." But Playboy's interest in identifying, at least somewhat, with feminism isn't a new thing. In the *Journal of the History of Sexuality* in 2008, Carrie Pitzulo traces the ways that the Playboy brand latched on to some aspects of feminism while picking fights with feminists in other areas. Not Your Father's Playboy, Not Your Mother's Feminist Movement: Contemporary Feminism in a Porn Culture A talk delivered by Rebecca Whisnant at the conference "Pornography and Pop Culture: Re-framing Theory, Re-thinking Activism" (Boston MA, March 24, 2007). I've been asked to speak this morning about the state of contemporary feminism, particularly in relationship to pornography and the porn culture that surrounds us. What's meant by a porn culture will be explored in a number of ways over this weekend. But if you are here, it's presumably because you already believe that, whatever a porn cul... Playboy's recent attempts to incorporate "feminist" content into their online magazine are part of a longstanding effort to sell a version of "women's lib" that really only benefits men. Already have an account? Login and link the existing account with your social account. Email. While many saw this as an effort to rebrand, Playboy's efforts to coopt the feminist movement are ingrained in the magazine's history. Cory Jones, senior vice president for digital content told the *Columbia Journalism Review*, the brand has always been "inclusive," "pro-consent," and "pro-women". In a recent piece, Berlatsky wrote, erroneously, that radical feminists who criticise the notion that empowerment is achievable through male-dictated beauty standards were cruel and exclusionary.