Letter

Dear Feminist Review

I am glad that there is a letter page in *Feminist Review* now, where readers can give their opinion on the editorial policies of the journal. It was a pleasant surprise to read Christina Griffith's letter in no. 49 (Spring Issue, 1995) as it reminded me of my own reaction to the same issue, 'Sexualities, Challenges and Change': I am referring to Della Grace's lesbian erotic photographs. They reminded me of display windows at strip joints and peep shows found in every big city in the West. How do we know the figures in the photographs are not models who were paid, most probably badly, for the job much in the same way women are employed in the production of peep shows' porn magazines? And even if they are genuine lesbian sadists and masochists, should their display become a necessary part of feminist education for *Feminist Review* readers?

I remember wondering whether *Feminist Review* has any editorial policy over such female representations, which certainly seemed to me out of place in the journal. Sadism and masochism as forms of sexual drives legitimately demand attention from

those concerned with the expression of sexuality, but their oppressive and exploitative elements should not be accepted without criticism and questioning. Is it that heterosexual feminists suffer from such guilt about the oppression of lesbians in the past that now, as compensation, they are prepared to bend over backwards to accept all its expressions, including even racism? Ironically, while for heterosexual feminists anything goes as far as lesbian expressions are concerned, quite sharp questioning about oppressive elements in sadistic and masochistic behaviours is coming from the gay community itself.

All I want to say is that accepting differences – sexual or cultural – among women should not amount to becoming *laissez-faire* and reluctant to raise questions of oppression even though no man be involved.

Yours sincerely,

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