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'Real exploitation'?

To the editors:

I would like to take this opportunity to respond to the article "Your father's politics." (March 21/91) "Your father's politics" is, sadly, an accurate reflection of our culture — a culture preoccupied with the self. The author is unable to separate her sexual orientation from "commitment to community" or political activity. In a dilemma, she suggests social acceptance requires her to hide her lesbianism. But her desire to shout her sexual preference from the roof tops wins out, although marginally. She finds it a "difficult adjustment" to subdue her "politically active lesbian" feminist activities but she refuses (one is tempted to say gallantly refuses) to succumb to blatant exploitation. White males, she demands, are the source of her problems because they control all cultural interaction. This is absurd.

Political activity and a sense of community has nothing to do with personal life style because they are external activities outside of the self. "The objective reasonable person" who engages in political discourse uses a political language refusing to

hide behind sexual orientation. The author labels herself to death, wanting to be "seen" as a minority. She attacks inequality from the stand-point of her label not as an intelligent individual.

In her desire to be noticed, she associates herself with blacks, feminists and aboriginals. Patriarchal power, she suggests, denies everyone but white males an active participation in the system. Faculty and students are alluded to as if in a conspiratorial game of domination and subordination. This, again, is absurd. White males do not walk down the halls of universities and wink knowingly to each other.

Pseudo-radical arguments fail to identify real exploitation. Bias, to be sure, still exists but modernity requires neither patriarchal relationships nor a hegemony of white males. Our culture demands a preoccupation with the self — a preoccupation personified by the author of "Your father's politics." Real exploitation is a culture that creates alienation and commentary that passes as social criticism.

Sheldon Gillis

St. Mary's University

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