opinion

Dazed voters treat politics as soap opera

(Continued from page 4)

President Reagan continues to rant and rave the recent outlets of Gary Hart's and Joe Biden's lives — and the Democratic backlash — have succeeded in quieting the public's attention from the current administration's gross violations of the law to what one can only describe as the litigations of the not-so-rich and not-so-famous.

At a time when this nation should be discussing the hypocrisy of Reagan's brand of conservatism — small government when it comes to the private sector, but big, secretive, unaccountable government when it comes to foreign policy — it is instead being directed to the dirty laundry of Democratic leaders.

At a time when we should be trying to understand very complex issues involving war in the Persian Gulf, arms control, the Strategic Defense Initiative, question of racial and sexual discrimination, foreign interventionism, we are instead more interested in sex involving Hart and video involving Biden.

Yes, wouldn't it be more serious if national issues could be boiled down to sex and video — things that can exist without context? Wouldn't the law of the land be more "objective" if the court interpreted the Constitution without heeding social changes that uncover inequalities and intrusions? Wouldn't capitalism — the "foundation" of this country — threaten if liberals did not have to concern itself with social consequences?

Why get so worried, so worked up about it?

In fact, it is possible that Americans are pursuing liberalism not just out of self-interest, but because liberalism comes so bundled and forged with social concern and solemnities. It is possible that liberalism is distaste gratifying because some of its leading advocates choose not to act like sad sacks, but rather like human beings — feeling all — who actually give a damn about their fellow citizens and the consequences of governmental action.

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First Amendment protects all expression of ideas

To the Editor: Alexander Barenblat clearly demonstrates that he does not understand the US Constitution ("Porography debate sees flawed reasoning, Oct. 6"). He says that only speech is protected by the First Amendment. Is the deed of playing a recording or videotape of a speech made earlier protected? Are the deeds of writing or putting up posters protected? Does the First Amendment only apply to laws made by Congress as it says literally?

The Supreme Court has interpreted the Constitution to answer these questions. The First Amendment applies generally and not only to Congress, as Barenblat realizes by saying: "Freedom of speech," which, as an indisputable right..." ...in decision after decision the Courts have held that "speech" means not only verbal speech, but conveyance of ideas and inclusion audio tapes, video, posters, movies and writing.

Adam L. Dershowitz '89

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