Our current election atmosphere is profoundly confusing and disturbing—filled with hope for a new order among many, despair at the existing order among most, and indifference in a growing percentage of the population. Everywhere we look, we are confronted with seemingly insoluble, urgent problems that defy rational and humane resolution: climate change, the growing discrepancy between rich and poor, the influence of money on political and cultural life, immigration trauma on an unimaginable scale, racism, sexism, consumerism, terrorism, war—to name just a few ingredients in our cauldron of corrosive conflicts.

Has the world always been this endangered with every generation imagining itself on the brink? In such times, politics, cultural values, and the soul of both individuals and groups get inextricably mixed up with one another and perhaps at no time is this more highlighted than in the garish glare of uninterrupted media attention during modern American presidential elections.

This is the 5th consecutive Presidential Election Year Conference hosted by the C.G. Jung Institute of San Francisco, beginning with the first of this series in 2000. It brings together scholars and psychoanalysts from across the country and abroad to share their observations and seek an understanding of how the democratic ideal of a country based on respect for differences has devolved to a new low in turning differences into divisiveness.

The program will put the nation’s psychological state on the analytic couch to come up with a vision of what motivates it and how its dynamic processes create further division and separation that defies our hopes for reconciliation and wholeness. The goal of this conference is not to provide conventional wisdom, not to forecast results, not to campaign for one party or another—although that is often hard to resist—but to seek understanding of what all the sound and fury is about and what is happening to the American people and the soul of our democracy.

*People for the American Way* by Robert Kastenberg, 1991
Lithograph and screenprint on paper 48 x 35 3/4 inches (122 x 90.4 cm)
From an edition of 75, published by Gemini GEL, Los Angeles, for People for the American Way
Many of my American friends and colleagues have concluded that it is now the time to begin to address the fundamental issues of our society. The time has come to ask ourselves: What is the nature of our society? What are the roots of our society? What are the consequences of our society? What are the solutions to our society?

The roots of our society are deep and complex. They are rooted in our history, our culture, our politics, and our economics. They are also rooted in our personal experiences and our individual identities.

The consequences of our society are also complex. They are rooted in our actions, our decisions, and our policies. They are also rooted in our beliefs, our values, and our attitudes.

The solutions to our society are also complex. They require a multi-faceted approach that involves political, economic, social, and cultural changes. They also require a commitment to change, a willingness to take risks, and a willingness to learn from our mistakes.

POLITICS, CULTURE AND SOUL: A National Conference on the Psychology of the 2016 Presidential Election

So, What Did You Expect?

Personal and Depth Psychological Issues in Elections

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