

# The Dual and Possessed Personality Haunting America

In “Remembering the Right,” the second volume of collected articles from [\*Chronicles Magazine\*](#) on the lives and work of notable conservative teachers, writers, and philosophers, we find a piece about G.K. Chesterton.

Reading about this man of letters—you name the genre, and Chesterton probably wrote at least one book that would qualify for membership—always delights me, as do his army of aphorisms. In the case of this article, here’s one that caught my eye:

A nation is a society that has a soul. When a society has two souls, there is—and ought to be—civil war... For anything which has dual personality is certainly mad; and probably possessed by devils.

Given our country’s divisions, Chesterton’s observation offers both wisdom and a warning.

Most of us would agree that a properly functioning nation has a soul, a core of beliefs and customs shared by the great majority of its citizens. These vary from place to place—the souls of Russia, India, or Japan differ radically from the soul of America—but in each instance common values bind a people together.

In recent years, however, many commentators and thinkers have proclaimed the United States a house divided, a country of blue and red states increasingly separated by their stances on everything from the role of government to the relevance of the Constitution. Some have wondered whether these divisions may bring on a civil war, while others have declared we are already living in a civil cold war.

To even raise this possibility is a step toward transforming speculation into reality. We must never hope for another civil war, as these are among the most vicious of all conflicts.

But what are we to make of Chesterton's last few words, that a "dual personality is certainly mad; and probably possessed by devils"?

Madness does appear to have taken hold of some Americans. In just a few short years, some in our government and schools have exchanged our ambitions to build a color-blind society for a philosophy that explicitly judges human beings by the color of their skin. Several months ago, the [National School Boards Association](#) asked the Biden administration to label the parents who were protesting school board policies as domestic terrorists. More recently, disgraced former FBI deputy director Andrew McCabe backed up these claims about parents and [implied](#) that the conservative mainstream in general qualify as domestic terrorists. To make such an accusation after 74 million Americans voted for Donald Trump for president is surely a sign of mental imbalance.

The COVID-19 mess of the last two years perhaps best illustrates this madness. The lockdowns, closed schools and churches, vaccine mandates and passports, and constant torrent of deceptions and misinformation have left a lot of us a bit wacky.

But that lunacy may have infected a large segment of the population in ways rarely seen in the United States. In a [controversial discussion](#) with podcaster Joe Rogan about the damage done by the pandemic, Dr. Robert Malone, a key figure in the development of the coronavirus vaccine, stated that the fear and anxiety created by our government and mainstream media have resulted in vast numbers of Americans more than willing to exchange liberty for safety and to look for scapegoats as the latest variation of the virus spreads across the land. Malone termed this phenomenon "mass formation

psychosis.”

Though Malone has been canceled for these views, a whistleblower from Great Britain now reveals that the government deliberately undertook this [technique](#) to frighten its people into obedience. We can surmise other governments around the world, including our own, followed a similar strategy.

The result? We now inhabit a world of the vaxxed and unvaxxed, where the latter are regarded as selfish and evil.

Which brings us to the devils mentioned by Chesterton.

What if those who have created this COVID psychosis had other intentions besides saving lives? What if they saw themselves as high-minded gurus who know what is best for the rest of us and intended to see that we get in step and follow those guidelines to a better society?

Would they see themselves as evil?

These aren't rhetorical questions. Surely the Nazis, the Soviets, and the Maoists never thought of themselves as evil. In all three cases, they believed they were creating a new type of human being and a just society.

And like all ideologues, they were as blind as Homer's Cyclops.

When our leaders castigate and shame the unvaccinated, or when they try to make terrorists out of ordinary Americans, they may believe they are promoting good in the world. Those who support them, tripping along without discernment or reason, make themselves their accomplices. Later, when they waken from the spell cast over them, these followers might say, “We meant no harm. Our intentions were good.”

Their victims might throw this old adage back at them: “The road to hell is paved with good intentions.”

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