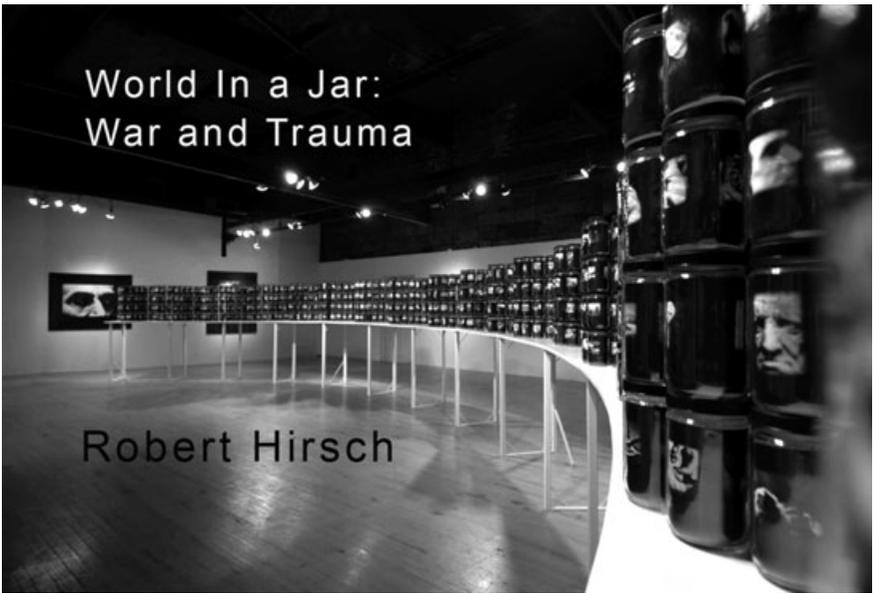# World In a Jar:
War and Trauma

Robert Hirsch

World In a Jar: War & Trauma[1]

ROBERT HIRSCH

Following an aesthetic strategy of search and discovery, **World In a Jar: War & Trauma** utilizes the camera as a cultural tool to curate and re-imagine key components from historical and original images to explore the workings of our collective societal memory involving loss, popular culture, religion, tragedy, and the nature of evil over the past four centuries. *World In a Jar* evolved out of my immediate response to the events of 9/11 and has allowed me to use camera vision to personalize large themes by dislocating the specifics in favor of the general. It is shaped by my re-examination of visual sources of history, which allow me to rework and reinterpret images to explore life's Big issues and to ponder what history and images can and cannot teach us.

World In a Jar is a free-form sculptural montage that rethinks the customary linear narrative by offering a supermarket of moveable images. The installation consists of over 1,000 individual image jars, stacked 4 high on a $50 \times 4 \times 2$ foot serpentine display pedestal and surrounded by ten individually framed 40×60 inch prints. Each glass jar contains the same picture, a twin printed twice on a black field (akin to a 19th century stereo card), which lets the image be seen from multiple points of view. Each jarred image serves as an interchangeable viewing block, allowing it to be a perpetual work in progress that recreates itself each time it is installed. This permits each photograph to not only present its own split-second historical reference, but also informs the context and interpretation of the surrounding images. There are no captions or text references to anchor the images to particular events, which allow the images to transcend their specific time-based circumstances. Rather, images freely float in an ambiguous and enigmatic space, encouraging viewers to interact and expand meanings based on their own

experiences. This engagement is a reminder how photographs continue to seduce us into believing that they are objective records, when in fact all images are *not* what they initially appear to be and require thoughtful interpretation. This open-ended production, emulating how the puzzles and paradoxes of our own memories are constructed, can convey an endless tale about the human condition that exists outside of chronological time.

Where Does Art Come From?

Through the process of making representations of representations, I contemplate issues of reality, originality, and reproduction. Photography is an ideal medium for exploring such questions because it recycles the Real. A camera is not judgmental about what is in front of it, capturing anything touched by light. It is our human direction that can imaginatively guide the pictorial results to invest meanings into the outcome. Thus, originality is the capacity to think and act independently and in turn to express ideas differently from previously recognized views of a similar subject. Inventive ideas come from re-contextualizing the past. We constantly draw in memories of things we never directly experienced through the arts and the media. The more one knows about how art is made, the more derivative and evolutionary one realizes art is. For creative people in any field, everything is grist to be transformed into something else, thus nothing has to cease to exist but may endure in an alternative form.

Our society's cultural heritage is founded on a practice of transformative art – one of borrowing, sharing, re-borrowing, and amending – the full range of ways new art learns from, builds on, and emerges out of the old. In music one can hear how Scott Joplin borrows from W.C. Handy, George Gershwin borrows from Joplin, Igor Stravinsky and Miles Davis from Gershwin, Aaron Copland from Stravinsky and Davis, and now movie composer John Williams, who has scored all of Steven Spielberg's blockbuster movies, from Copland. Consider one of America's popular cultural icons: *Steamboat Willie*, the 1928 Walt Disney cartoon that introduced Mickey Mouse. *Steamboat Willie* is based on Buster Keaton's 1928 silent film *Steamboat Bill, Jr.*, which itself borrowed from a 1910 song, *Steamboat Bill.* Disney snatched creativity from the life around him, mixed that with his own talent, and then imprinted that mixture into the character of our society. Select an art form and you will find this 1-2-3 combination of snatch, mix, and imprint. As Pablo Picasso quipped, "Bad artists copy; Great artists steal."

Thing in Itself

My motivation is to ***evoke*** an interior state of consciousness and grapple with a subject beyond its external physical structure. This approach can be likened to the Japanese concept of ***shashin***, which says something is only true when it integrates the outer appearance with the inner makeup of a subject. American writer Herman Melville referred to the purely surface view of reality as "a pasteboard mask." Such a multi-sheeted mask conceals the intuitive world of the "***thing in itself***" – a deep structure of cultural, political, and psychological models that inform the realities "behind" or beyond what we can observe with our five physical senses – an idea dating back to Plato's concept of delving into the complex, many-sided, interior panorama of the world.

What do Pictures Mean?

Most of the project's images were made from other photographs, as well as from drawings, paintings, and prints for the purpose of questioning the nature of the photographic image. It is a Socratic process allowing me to engage in a philosophical and visual dialogue with other times, places, and makers, springing from the principle there is no correct first version of how an image should look. I am not redefining an image as much as I am inquiring into the metaphysical contradictions and opposing social forces that swirl around each image. I am asking each picture a question while examining the origin of the image and how it's significance has changed over time. In a conceptual sense, I am on a photographic etymological quest, examining how meanings have developed and changed over time.

Plato understood the importance of this communication practice when he observed, "those who tell the stories also rule." Plato also believed most people were not exceptionally intelligent. He thought most people would follow a self-destructive path and therefore needed a Big Noble Lie to maintain social order and moral behavior. Under this paradigm, the falsehood is the means of achieving the principal objective of a well-ordered and ethical society.

The power elite appreciates that images, as well as words, rule dreams and dreams rule actions. Such endeavors are not necessarily benevolent and can, in fact, be malicious. Evil can manifest itself as an obligatory fairy-tale in which one-group concocts a self-glorifying narrative that de-humanizes another group. Such myth formation converts *Those* people into powerful enemies whose

existence is responsible for society's ills and pose a terrible danger to the future of the group seeking power, thus justifying their elimination from the society to save it. The Nazis produced a culture of cruelty by fabricating giant lies, such as the 1940 film *The Eternal Jew*, which portrayed people of Jewish origins as wandering cultural parasites, who were referred to as cancer, excrement, and plague. In 1994 a similar campaign of dehumanization was carried out in Rwanda where the Hutus demonized the Tutsis as "cockroaches" who had to be evicted or destroyed and then preceded to indiscriminately murder 800,000 of them in a 100-day genocidal campaign. Today Hezbollah, the radical Shiite terrorist organization in Lebanon, owns or controls at least two advertising companies (Ressalat and Media-Publi Management) who lionize slain terrorists while vilifying Zionists, a code word for Jews, by promoting notorious anti-Semitic conspiracy theory hoaxes and lies like *The Protocols of Zion* (1905). In Chinese the word for propaganda and publicity is the same, making it linguist easier for the government to control the media content of issues from the 2008 Olympics to Tibetan autonomy.

The more outrageous the lie; the more the perpetrators seem to be motivated by it. Eventually these lies become ubiquitous, contaminating and bogging down the entire society with falsehoods. As the poet Edna St. Vincent Millay pointed out, "It's not true that life is one damn thing after another. It's one damned thing over and over."

Although Photoshop has become a verb people still want to trust their own eyes, even when they are aware they are only seeing pixels, thus validating Groucho Marx's observational wisecrack, "Who you going believe – me – or your lyin' eyes?" Yet people continue to expect photography to render reality transparent and understandable rather than acknowledging its inherently devious nature and ability to make falsehoods visible.

Illness

When I was five I became deathly ill with Rheumatic Fever for months. I recall lying in bed at night fearfully crying because I thought I was going to die. I realized my parents couldn't help me and I was alone in the world. The disease left me physically weakened and acutely aware of my mortality, moving me into another world far from my cohorts. I lost my child-like sense of indestructibility, which further disconnected me mentality and physically from my peers; making me to feel like a tiny vulnerable island in a large impervious sea.

Religious Training

While recovering from Rheumatic Fever I wintered with my mother's parents in Miami Beach, Florida. My grandfather was a religious man and I went to Hebrew school three times a week including Saturdays, which was "Shabbat" or the "Sabbath." Yet I didn't feel like one of God's Chosen children. My youthful challenging of the stories in the Torah or Hebrew Bible (doctrine and teaching that is revered as the inspired word(s) of God) lead me to be placed in a class for disruptive boys that was ruled over by the lumbering and pockmarked Mr. Stein, who we referred to, rather uncharitably, as Frankenstein. Eventually, I did make my Bar Mitzvah, singing off-key a Hebrew passage from the Torah, and thus in the eyes of Judaism, officially becoming a man at the age of thirteen. Ironically, this empowered me to drop out of the Conservative Synagogue, which I did, leaving behind the religious trappings of Judaism. Nevertheless, I remain a member of the Tribe whether I want to or not, for it is imposed upon me from both within and by the outside world. Given the state of cultural identity politics, I am potentially pinned down to what my worst enemy says I am, simultaneously both an heir to the Auschwitz nightmare and to the kid on the street who wants to feel my horns. In the end, when push comes to shove, I will always be identified as a Jew. That said, I do not believe in an afterlife nor do I think that moral principles or the meaning of life are contingent on the policies and regulations of any organized religion. What matters are actions we take in this *ONE* life we have to live in the here and now.

The Atomic Bomb

Attending elementary school during the Atomic Age of the Cold War I was subjected to the "Duck and Cover" drill. A siren would sound through the school's PA system. Without explanation, our teachers would led us to our hallway lockers where we were instructed to silently get down on our knees and put our hands over our heads as we heard the bomb doors being closed and locked behind us. I knew the United States had dropped two atomic bombs on Japan and had watched *Godzilla* (1954), a monster created by atomic testing who ravished Japan. Popular magazines printed photos of people building and stocking fallout shelters as well as arming themselves to fend off unwanted visitors. Soviet Premier

Nikita Khrushchev pounded his shoe on a United Nations desk and shouted, "We will bury you (USA)." The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis took the world to the brink of nuclear war. Global, above ground, atomic testing produced such high levels of strontium 90 that milk was no longer served in our school cafeteria. Living through such everyday threats of nuclear terror made me an existentialist before I even knew what one was.

The Black-and-White Post Holocaust World

In 1961, I watched, on a black-and-white television, the trial in Jerusalem of Nazi official Adolf Eichmann. He was accused of crimes against humanity for his role in administering the mass deportation of "undesirable" people to ghettos and extermination camps. Watching with me was with my mother's father whose family had vanished up the death camp's chimneys. I was stunned. My family never talked about it. I knew my father had left college to enlist in the U.S. Army Air Corp *before* Pearl Harbor and spent 5 years in military service during World War II, but I had no perception of the enormity of the Nazi atrocities. I could not comprehend systematically murdering people, including one million children, based on no more than faith in a fictitious, racist viewpoint. I wondered how anyone, including my religious grandfather, could believe in an angry God that would allow such monstrous things to happen. It seemed most people would rather believe in an invisible, all controlling but volatile God rather than face the unpredictability of human beings who thoughtlessly repeat the same learned behaviors over and over again. Russian writer Anton Chekhov wrote, "Man will become better when you show him what he is like," emphasizing the connection between the necessity of honest commentary and a flourishing free society.

Seeing the black-and-white photographs made after the Allies liberated the concentration camps, naked corpses of women and men with numbers tattooed on their arms, degradingly piled like so much kindling, made me feel as if my head had been split open and filled with monstrous fiends who pursued total annihilation. No images, before or since, have so profoundly affected me. They left an indelible streak of anxiety upon my psyche. Clearly, everything I had previously been taught to believe about the world was wrong. Suddenly, I found myself bound up with ancient hateful beliefs, a

rapidly spreading mental plague that resulted in the horrific deaths of millions of people whose crime was being different from the group in power. Their anguish, sorrow, and terror, like undeveloped film, were latently tattooed inside me.

These appalling, grainy, black-and-white photographs of the Shoah subconsciously influenced my future direction to work in black-and-white photography, which seemed to me to be more authentic and essential than the glossy patina of color photographs. I began making interpretive images about the Holocaust in my mid-twenties, but it took me 30 years of aesthetic and intellectual wresting with the enormity of these ghastly crimes before I was satisfied I was not trivializing the subject. Although I have taught and extensively written about color photography, it has only been since completing this project that I have begun to make color pictures.

As a member of "the hinge-generation," Jews living between the experience of the Holocaust and its memory, I believe that as last of the Holocaust survivors' die it is essential for artists to find innovative ways of remembering what happened. Memory is mutable. It is only as real as the last time it is remembered and the failure to renew these memories is akin to a belated Nazi victory because what they did will quickly and deliberately be concealed and forgotten. Therefore I think about the village (shetl) where my grandmother's family (the Auerbachs) lived in Lumja Poland, which was physically obliterated to erase any cultural memory of the Jewish life that once informed that culture. Yet even now Holocaust deniers, such as the President of Iran, cynically attempt to rewrite history and edit out the Shoah. Such fundamentalist fascists want to eradicate Jewishness, the core of all Abrahamic monotheistic faiths, from the region where it originated and to weaken and undermine the humanist values of the rule of law, tolerance, and respect for core rights, such as free expression and protection of minorities, that we have fought to expand over time.

That said I reject the notion of myself as a victim of victims, damaged by calamities committed on someone else by unknown demons in another time. I don't believe that actual trauma is transgenerational. I do think the complex web of cultural inheritance, involving mandates, prohibitions, and values do permit a wounded spirit to be passed on to the next generation. However, what is paramount is recognizing and confronting those who are responsible for humanitarian offenses and bringing them to justice.

In a world that often displays its distain of the intellect, the key problem remains: Is it still possible to believe people will "do unto others as you would have them do unto you"? Ideally, laissez-faire societies do not appeal to a higher authority or legislate deep

disagreements about what constitutes virtuous behavior. Instead they agree to leave each of us the personal social space to do as we please as long as it does not hinder other members of the society. When this open space to exchange and debate ideas is obstructed, and beliefs are mandated, social peace becomes unachievable.

Kitty Genovese: The Bystander Effect

My rude awakening to the Holocaust sensitized me to how people react to others in life or death situations. In 1964 a young woman named Kitty Genovese was chased and stabbed to death over a 30-minute time span in Kew Gardens, Queens, New York where I had lived as a child. Reportedly dozens of her neighbors did not respond to her screams for help. I was fascinated by this collective failure to act, a psychological phenomenon now called the *bystander effect*, in which someone is less likely to intervene in an emergency when other people are present and able to help than when a person is alone. Years later I aided a man who suffered a heart attack. After calling 911, my wife and me gave this stranger CRP while onlookers told us to leave him face down in the icy gutter or his family would sue us. Even when the ambulance did not come in a timely manner, none of these onlookers offered to help and the man died. Such a display of impassiveness prompts me not to count on the kindness of strangers and serves as a reminder to make the effort to overcome apathy and ennui when I have no apparent self-interest at stake.

The Double Image and The Uncanny

Photography is the act of seeing double. A photograph becomes a stand-in for the original. The photographic process is part of our cultural quest for no-hassle experiences and affordable status items, from the simulacra of Las Vegas to art and fashion forgeries. In the project's catalog essay (available at: www.lightresearch.net), Dr. Gary Nickard discusses Otto Rank's *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study* (1925), in which the uncanny – that is the seemingly intense sensation of the supernatural, strange, unfamiliar, weird, and unsettling – arises from the doubling of reality in the form of ghosts, reflections, shadows, and twins, and how this eerie notion can include photography. In one sense, a photograph is a shadow or reflection that is formed by a lens and captured onto

light-sensitive material. If a photograph can be identified as a category of Rank's "double," then it can also serve as an example of the "uncanny," an "energetic denial of the power of death."

In *Camera Lucida* (1981) Roland Barthes concluded that the relationship of the photograph to the double, its confusion with reality and time, constitute an uncanny concern with death. Thus it is precisely the direct and real connection between the subject and its image – the certainty of a physical existence within the past – that death and photography became inextricably bound, providing a human-made process for both circumventing the grim reaper and confronting the transience of life.

I held my dog Koko as the vet "put her to sleep," and heard her cry out as her life force vanished. I leaned into my father's deathbed and photographed him moments after he died. We are motivated by death. Death can enrich and sharpen our focus by teaching us we only have a short time to figure out how to make a personally fulfilling and meaningful life.

The Depiction of Suffering

Since the 1980s, the sharp reproach about photographic representation by critics, such as Martha Rosler, Abigail Solomon-Godeau, and Allan Sekula, left little opportunity in the academy for documentary style work. One of their principal criticisms swirled around the depiction of suffering, a critique rarely applied to the other arts. These academics contend photographs, such as those by Sebastião Salgado and James Nachtwey, should not make their subjects artistically pleasing for this practice contaminates the so-called "real" with visual pleasure, thus beautifying pain for viewers. These academic critics label such images as being detrimental to constructive social engagement rather than recognizing they might awaken one's compassion, and that such an acknowledgment could be a first step toward social justice. Pictures can be exploited, but de facto censorship is worst. Yes, the act of picture making involves applying aesthetic principles to a subject, but more importantly it transforms a subject. A good photographer can capture and transmit a subject's sensibility to viewers. Although there are limits on what photography can represent, and any emotional attachment to an image is unstable and subject to manipulation, it is necessary to feel and acknowledge the suffering of others before we can act to alleviate it. Often we humans seem to

be hopelessly overwhelmed and powerless when confronted with the suffering of individuals other than ourselves. One way we can overcome this is by recognizing the anguish of others by seeing it in pictures. Such a multiplicity of images, as in *World In a Jar*, makes one conscious of the complexity of the process of representation in a more active and inquiring way. Thus suppressing such images curtails intellectual, emotional or social engagement.

Since 9/11 some critics have revisited their previous positions. In her book, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2003), Susan Sontag changed her stance about the power of photographs to represent deprivation, humiliation, and suffering in a positive manner. Why? Perhaps Sontag realized that pictures are more accessible and visceral than words. People do not seem intimidated by images they privately view at their own pace. This experience encourages an immediate, personal response in which individuals can examine and reflect what these photographs show them. Pictures can make us feel and even think, but only if we develop the creative power to imagine ourselves in situations besides our own. Using the mind's eye we can identify with the suffering of the person being pictured and substitute our image for theirs. In spite of this, neither art nor artist is protection against cruelty and bestiality. Nonetheless I do think there is the prospect, if not for redemptive liberation, at least for some kind of solace in process of making and viewing pictures.

In the United States the defining public image of the Iraq invasion has shifted from the official, orchestrated media moment of the toppling of a statue of Saddam Hussein to the sadistic amateur snapshots made in Abu Ghraib Prison to videos of roadside bombings posted by insurgents on the Internet. Now in 2008 there is a curious absence of significant new images. Could it be the war has been visually defined by the Abu Ghraib images or to the general malaise and collapse of support for the war? The circulation of such horrid pictures, or the lack there of, plays a crucial role in whether or not people bring into being a simultaneous protective indifference and an inculcation of compassion. How come? An image's authority is determined as much by imagination and memory as by its indexical relationship to the real. Engaging images acknowledge the complexity of life through their capacity to sensitize and stimulate our latent exploratory senses that can generate *empathy*. Such photographs assert ideas and perceptions that we recognize as our own, but could not have given concrete form to without first having seen those images. These visualizations can bear witness, which may help us think about a situation and raise our consciousness about our own apathy, thus fostering constructive action.

The Nature of Evil

For ages philosophers have wrestled to define the nature of Evil with little success. This is because evil threatens human reason by challenging our expectation that the world makes sense. The West largely failed to comprehend Nazi Germany's extreme policies of elimination because rationalism is ingrained in our thinking. Rationalism does not permit us to recognize such evilness because we think all problems can be solved through talk and comprise. In actually evil is often absurdly illogical and irrational. This failure to comprehend how differently others operate and manipulate allowed Hitler to make fools of those who earnestly tried to logically negotiate with him, unintentionally giving him more time to build his lethal war machine. Continuing to pursue such failed strategies brings to mind Albert Einstein's definition of insanity, which is "doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results."

In 1651 Thomas Hobbes wrote (*Leviathan*) people were naturally wicked and basically selfish creatures who would do anything they find pleasurable or that would increase their economic and/or social position. Left to their own devices people would act on their foul impulses. Individuals commit vile deeds that are within their reach, making the most of their opportunities, and doing what they think they can get away with. Evil can also be contagious with people taking their clues from their peers about what constitutes acceptable behavior. Thus Hobbes thought a strong government was essential to protect people from their own odious, self-centered deeds, which can be the result of anarchical chaos as well as a failure of imagination, that is the inability to see beyond one's own circumstances and the reluctance to openly think for oneself. Without a legitimate and rational Authority there would be no security. According to Hobbes people would constantly be in a "state of nature" – that is – a "war of every man against every man," making life "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short," and leaving no place for art or culture.

Human Evil

In the past people believed in Natural Evil, such as earthquakes, floods, tsunamis, and tornadoes, which were brought on by a vengeful God to punish the wicked. Although fundamentalists may still believe events such as 9/11 are the result of America's wicked ways,

most people acknowledge evil in terms of human cruelty with Auschwitz as an extreme manifestation. Whether expressed in secular or theological terms, history makes it clear that goodness and evil are human constructions and there is no intrinsic code of ethics.

In her book *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1963) Hannah Arendt postulated that evil, regardless of where it takes place, could simply be a function of banality – the tendency of ordinary clerks and teachers to conform and carry out despicable acts without critically thinking about the results of their action or inaction. History tells us that the suffering of the innocent is *not* the result of individual power hungry, paranoid, sociopathic, mass-murderers like King Leopold II, Hitler, Stalin, Mao, or Pol Pot. Rather, the mass catalog of evil is made-up by average, street-level bureaucrats who actually implement the horrendous policies and the general populace – all who benefit in some way from these death-worshipping ideologies. This sort of self-deception, where people compartmentalize and rationalize their actions, allows ordinary people to carry out acts of extraordinary evil. In Eichmann's case, he purposely ignored the "Golden Rule" and its principle of humane reciprocity. Rather, he claimed no responsibility because he was just "doing his job" – "He did his *duty* . . . ; he not only obeyed *orders*, he also obeyed the *law*," demonstrating how deception is evil's servant.

Immanuel Kant advocated that people are their own moral legislators; in Eichmann's case, he knowingly forfeited being the "master of his own deeds" and made Adolf Hitler his personal legislator. By default, creatures like Eichman become functionaries of death due to their personal and societal prejudices plus their reluctance to openly question their so-called patriotic duties that could jeopardize their own self-interests.

Arendt insisted that moral choice remains even under totalitarian conditions, and that this choice has political consequences even when the chooser is politically powerless stating: [U]nder conditions of terror most people will comply but *some people will not*, just as the lesson of the countries to which the Final Solution was proposed is that "it could happen" in most places, but *it did not happen everywhere*. Humanly speaking, no more is required, and no more can reasonably be asked, for this planet to remain a place fit for human habitation.

Conclusions

Just as most black-and-white photographs are shades of gray, people are rarely one thing or another. Rather we are a continuum

of numerous biological and cultural elements, which allows us to pigeonhole contradictory viewpoints. This is gives us the capacity to continually ignore, change and/or diminish the real-world affects of our actions and inactions.

Evil is more encompassing than being a murderer or rapist. Evil also occurs in whose of us who are Sierra Club members and recycle our trash, but who on occasion realize that the idealism we have chosen to pursue is also selfish and such self-centeredness seems to be hardwired. In his book, *The Selfish Gene* (1976), evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins asserts a gene will operate in its own interest even if that means destroying the organism it inhabits, thereby making Selfishness the core of human existence. Dawkins' position supports Hobbes's case for a strong central authority to curb human self-interest and maintain societal order. As American President James Madison wrote in the Federalist Papers, "But what is government itself, but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary."

The combination of biological pre-determinism and the random action of quantum physics makes Swiss cheese out of classical religious notions of predestination, heaven and hell, as well as such utopian political ideologies of communism and fascism. These belief systems have their roots in the authoritarian impulse of Faith, which criminalizes Thoughts as well as actions. Their common denominator of submission makes no distinction between public and private life and insists on arbitrating everything from diet to sex, always asking the same question: Are you one of *US* or are you one of *THEM*? Such imposed orthodoxy makes pluralism – the tolerance of difference – impossible to achieve.

People ask me if working with such foul subject matter is depressing, but just as darkness is another shade of light, this state of mind can be a compelling motivator to commune with one's own soul. Darkness can bring a silent calm that restores our mental, physical, and spiritual well-being. Often, compelling art is the result of angst and tears. Regardless, it is better to candidly examine the human character so as to be more prepared for what life might deliver to our door. Much of my contentment grows from being fully engaged in thinking, making pictures, and writing about the world. I reflect on what the ancient Israelites called **hochma** – the science of the heart – the capacity to see, to feel and then to act as if the future depended on you.

This dovetails into what I call the "***Possibility Scale,***" which proclaims: "If I can imagine it, there could be a way to make it happen." It is transcendent artistic thinking – one that seeks to

reach beyond the range of known experiences – encouraging one to adventurously visit regions once deemed out of bounds or inhabited by demons to push the limits of our understanding. Consider Leonardo da Vinci, Mary Shelly, Jules Vern, H. G. Wells, Arthur C. Clarke, and now William Gibson, the father of the cyberpunk science fiction, all whose fantastic works, created outside the margins of their times, anticipated future inventions and societal transformations.

Time is the key. Time calls all of us and measures change. If there is no time, there is no change. If there is no change, there is no action. If there is no action, life stagnates. And we need action to foster creation, for creation propels life and provides hope. Where there is no hope, people despair and evil takes hold. The real struggle is between hope and evil, for it is at this juncture in time that one's imaginative pathways can offer up possibilities for new and innovative realities. Can artists and intellectuals play a role in this process? I think it is a possibility . . .

This paper, a variation of a paper featuring a PowerPoint presentation of hundreds of project images, was delivered at Ethnographic Dreamworlds 2008, the 9th Annual Sociology Conference at Buffalo State College, Buffalo, NY USA on April 16, 2008. Installation and project images are available at: www.lightresearch.net

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