



Fig. 1
Untitled
1944

*The blood in their veins flows subtle as a poison,
Burning like lava, rarefied, it rolls,
Crackling their sad Ideal, which crumbles.
So must these Saturnians suffer
And so must die, — admitting that we are
Mortal, — their life's plan sketched out line for line
By the logic of a malignant Sign.*

- Paul Verlaine, *Poems under Saturn*

*The death we build within us is that permanent structure,
the 'subtle body', in which the soul is housed amidst the decay
of impermanence.*

- James Hillman, *Suicide and the Soul*

Know the first star, Saturn, is the purger...

- Carl Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*

SATURN IN HIDING
HEIDI GUSTAFSON

As Saturn returns home, a surrealist artist hides in war soil. In a make-shift darkroom, he places gluey substances on glass plates, creating a mysterious new medium fotografiky, to fix unsettling images of calcifying human figures, birds dying, strange structures (*Fig. 1*). Despite constant presence of terror and immediate danger of deportation, Jindřich Heisler, a little known late Czech Jewish surrealist, turned twenty-nine in 1944, producing his most profound works of art in secret and in hiding. In this secret series, "From the Same Dough," Heisler's images beckon us to imagine, "the plough that turns up time in such a way that the abyssal strata of time, its black earth, appear on the surface," (S 75). The inner landscapes, atmospheres, and process of his images portray a relationship to his influencing malignant star; a relationship with the frontiers of the mortal, the real and the deepest structurings of the psyche. We can be held captive by his guiding images of a soul suffering the dark wisdom of Saturn's return. What do his secrets 'violently torn from the night of that time,' (S 136) lay open to us? What offerings are exposed from within the terror of death; the surrealist hidden within Saturn himself?

*Every night lays bare
its smiling wounds
through which one may look
as through the peep-hole in a panopticon*

*at the white backsides
of thousands
of fleeing rabbits
that will finally be caught
each according to their taste
in the most beautiful hole
that runs over the stockings
showing depths
in which a candle never stops burning*

- Jindřich Heisler



Každá noc odkrývá
své usměvavé rány
jimiž je možno pohlédnout
jako kukátkem panoptika
na tisíce bílých zadečků
prchajících zajíců
kteří se nakonec chytají
každý podle svého vkusu
do nejkrásnějšího oka
které právě bloudí po punčose
ukazujíc svou hloubku
v níž nepřestane hořet svíčka

Fig. 2
With a Pounding Heart
1939

SATURN'S PANOPTICON

In Heisler's early poem, *With a Pounding Heart*, (Fig. 2) prophesying his later time hiding during Nazi occupation, we're immediately placed in the peep-hole of the all-knowing eye at the center of psyche's panopticon. Throughout this brief essay I will be circuitously suggesting not only how a surrealist hides during his Saturn return, identifying major aspects of this astrological influence, but also the inverse, namely, how Saturn hides within himself the surreal. Why? Archetypes are sacred structurings: illuminating, expressing and differentiating densities of meaning. They are powerful narrative trajectories which influence our lives in ways we don't always understand, yet can at least follow by their interference patterns. Saturn, as the archetype of sacred structure itself, slyly casts down a 'dreaded' intensity, which tends to make us blind to Saturn's possible vulnerability, his own shadow, his own unconscious. We are on a quest, as the surrealist poet René Daumal puts it, on Saturn's behalf :

*Name if you can your shadow, your fear,
and measure the circumference of its head,
the circumference of your world.*

'As through the peep-hole in a panopticon', we can begin by intimating the root of the Saturnian structure. We must start with what is given. Like the form of the planet itself, with its central body and its ring of smaller bodies, the panopticon is a prison designed to have a central tower which looks out all at once onto a circumference of surrounding cells (Fig. 3). Every cell is visible from the central tower,



Fig. 3
Panopticon Penitentiary

and the tower is the all-seeing eye. Saturn's sacred structure begins like the panopticon. His influence on our psyche initiates from the central, ordering tower. Each of our inner inmates —our smiling wounds, our culpable histories— are exposed, back-light, transparent, known. From our subjecting tower, Saturn enforces the limits and boundaries of the real. No more wild dreaming, no flights of fanciful imagination, no more crimes of passion. No escape.

Enforcer of gravity, isolation, confinement, constraint; necessity, mortality, calcification, death, Kronos is massive and massively dense, leaden, dark, cold, penetrating and, like the time he rules, unstoppable and unmoved by your distress. A guardian of the threshold, the gatekeeper from the center. We watch, uneasy, the ill 'first star, the purger,' with wings down, knowing our flights will gain no height in Saturn's pressurized atmospheres. Within this panopticism of psyche initiated under Saturn, we inevitably 'become the principle of our

own own subjection,' (DP 202). Our world shrinks. Thus, Saturn is a particularly difficult complex to get behind, to dig into the unconscious of its being, since he himself upholds that network which keeps the psyche in balance, keeping the structures organized, ordered, contained.

To go into the depths of Saturn, requires those, like Heisler and other surrealists among his peers, with the courage to face death directly, to find pleasure —even madness— in using Saturn's own necessity drive to dive into structure. The task of surrealism is creating the 'presentation of the unconscious, not the representation of consciousness' (DR 192). Along with them, we are on a dangerous adventure into Saturn, into the all-seeing eye itself, for, as the surrealists (SA 290) say:

*The circle
Is an alibi
For the center*

*my poor dreams have lost their wings
my poor dreams have lost their flames
they lean their elbows
on the coffin in my heart
and dream of tiny gray bits and pieces*

*day dawns once more
but my strength has gone
the sky comes down and covers me completely
I open my eyes for all time*

- Jean Hans Arp,
The Poetry of Surrealism



Fig. 4
Untitled [Birds attacking]
1944

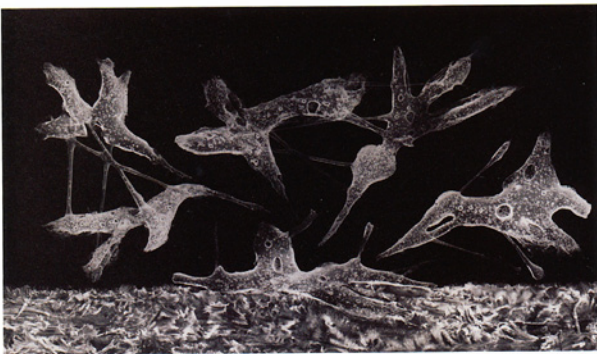


Fig. 5
Untitled [Birds attacking]
1944

Saturn isn't merely a reality star or a scapegoat; time-keeper or death gripper. How exactly do we get through Saturn's panopticism alibi, to 'open my eyes for all time'? When some structure in us dies, when others petrify. As is the case during a Saturn return, the time when Saturn fully exposes that which he touches, momentarily exposing himself in the process.

The return of the Saturnian influence, which happens around a person's 28th - 30th year, is traditionally the time when the structures of the psyche go through a kind of ordered acephalic undertaking. This can be shocking or difficult depending on what kind of relationship one has with Saturn's rights of passage to begin with, for, "Saturn is the conveyer of the hard truth: naked, unadorned, instructive, sobering, often painful," (CP 220). Not everyone is up for introspection, maturation, facing the hands of time, reality, or put more extremely: translating an old order with a karma sword, taking a a descent into oneself, and a bringing crystallization and synthesis to the inner nature of self. Why not? It is a death practice, a petite psychic suicide.

*Star
which I am
O death
thunderous star
mad bell of my death*

- Georges Bataille,
Inner Experience

In Jindřich Heisler's case, the two years he was in his Saturn return were the two years he went into hiding, the time of his death practice. During these years, his world was literally defined by the limitations set forth by Saturnian energies. Even to the point that when he did risk going outside, he resorted to 'sticking clock springs into his nostrils to Aryanise his nose,' (S 11). Heisler's death practice was channeled into his art practice, his



Fig. 6
Untitled
1944

daily dramas; his work during this period carries both poles of the Saturn gestalt, on the one hand depicting a painful death, as shown in his images of spirit like birds attacking and killing one another (Fig. 4,5); and on the other hand, depicting an effort to survive, to harden his death into a living image, depicted in the petrifying subject whose twigs signify a new growth out of this solidifying structure (Fig. 6). His process of working with the resistances of Saturn, creating new images, illuminates the side of surrealism's approach to doing justice to the death process. Marcel Mariën, a fellow surrealist, conceptually outlines it beautifully in his writing on psychology:

Thus, what is solid and concrete, what offers resistance to the eye or fingers, remains invisible, ever inaccessible, everywhere imperceptible. For if one break, pierce, breach, split, or otherwise penetrate an object, it is not its interior that is thereby reached; in the new void created, new images are created, hitherto unknown surfaces are touched.

The act of Saturn influences this breaking into the interior, creating new images in 'unknown surfaces' not touched previously. Indeed, this too describes the artistic practice Heisler used at the time of Saturn's reign. His photographic process, required using an unknown method of generating images. He used the photographic plate, placed a glue or other sticky unsolidified substances on the plate, and then 'fixed' the images in an way that to this day, art historians are unsure of. To my mind, there is hardly a more Saturnian art, then that of fixing previously unknown images on a solid plate, to calcify the subjects interior process:

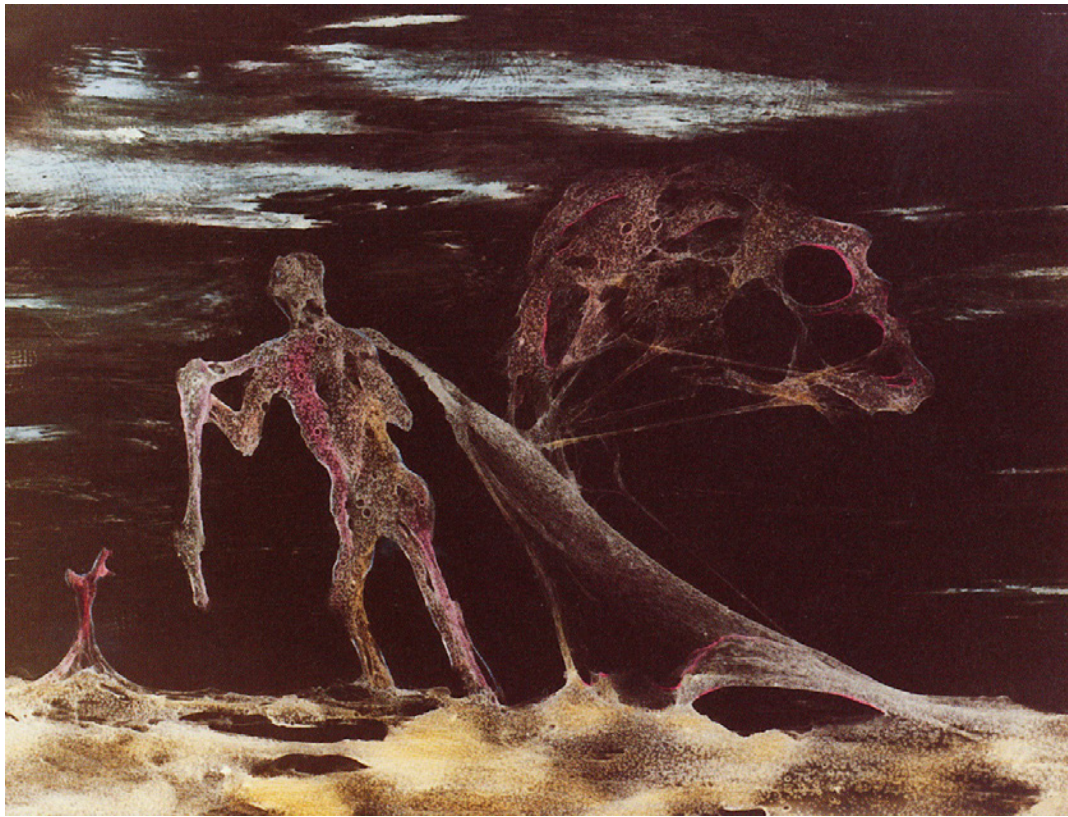


Fig. 7
Untitled
1944

illustrating the petite suicide of the self, without succumbing to it literally. The surrealist aims, as André Breton summarizes it, are “quite simply at the total recovery of our psychic force by a means which is nothing other than the dizzying descent into ourselves, the systematic illumination of hidden places and the progressive darkening of other places, the perpetual excursion into the midst of forbidden territory,” (MS 137).

What surrealism recognizes about the Saturnian influence, is the power of the ‘systematic illumination’ that both restricts and yields to the novel. Without Saturn, for the surrealists, one cannot create, For Saturn flips from that which besieges you at the reality borders, holds you up, or constipates, into the process of crystallizing the inmates, purging the borders, pulling out some, shrinking down others, forging the ‘ship of death’ for new lifetimes (*Fig. 7*). “Then man may suffer, but in the midst of his groans lives the insane taste for the extreme, to go even further into the paroxysm. Troubling boundaries beyond which life is compromised, you are the very frontiers and the source of the marvelous!” says Pierre Mabille, in his surrealist writings of 1942 (at the beginning of Heisler’s Saturn return). To die by Saturn, one turns the overlord in upon themselves, turns in upon their own unseen eye. We descend into the deep caverns, the deepest structures of ourselves. Such an exercise in death is a transformation impulse, a healing trigger, an imaginal and artistic effort, a way to call the unconscious forth and present it as is (*Fig.8*). James Hillman (64), champion of the imaginal, states, “Until we can say no to life, we have not really say yes to it, but have only been carried



Fig. 8
Untitled
1944

along by its collective stream.” Within the Saturn return, we are taught to have the courage to say no to life.

*As if the death outside of him could only henceforth collide with the death in him.
“I am alive. No you are dead.”*

- Maurice Blanchot, *Instant of My Death*, 1944

Indeed, in reverse, Saturn’s return nature, teaches us to say yes to death. Which is to say, how to celebrate, appreciate, the fringes of the real, at the borders of yourself: the boundaries of the real become the boundaries of the psyche. Lurking there within Saturn’s everlasting stranglehold of Necessity of death, hides a far stranger, wiser depth. In ancient traditions, Saturn is the first star, and also the last, in soul’s journey through the planets, as Carl Jung (277) depicts:

He can find Mercurius only through the rite of the ascent and descent, the “circular distillation,” beginning with the black lead, with the darkness, coldness, and malignity of the malefic Saturn; then ascending through the other planets to the fiery Sol, where the gold is heated in the hottest fire and cleansed of all impurities; and finally returning to Saturn, where this time he meets Mercurius and receives some useful teachings from him. Saturn has here changed from a star of ill omen into a “domus barbae” (House of the Beard), where the “wisest of all,” Thrice-Greatest Hermes, imparts wisdom.

*And my false Magic, which I did believe,
and mystic Lyes, to Saturn I do give.
My dark Imaginations rest you there,
This is your grave and Superstitious Sphaere.
Get up my disintangled Soul, thy fire
Is no refn'd & nothing left to tire,
Or clog thy wings. Now my auspicious flight
Hath brought me to Empyrean light.
I am a sep'rate Essence, and can see
The Emanations of the Deitie.*

- Henry Vaughan,
The Importunate Fortune

Wisest Guardian, at the facade of the borders of the ego, but more secretly, and on our return Saturn, the custodian of our deepest structures in the psyche.

As we know from the reality of dreams, transpersonal experiences, and non-ordinary states of consciousness, the structures of the psyche are nothing like the purported principles – solid, weighty, constricted – that Saturn induces, yet they are structures nonetheless which evoke the Saturnian alterior nature. For, when responded to with imagination and artistic practice, going deep into the unknown images Saturn himself carries within, we at last arrive at Saturn's own return to himself: a return to the surreal structures of our dark Imaginations: the other face of the limits of the real.

Referemces with Abbreviations

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|-----|--|
| IE | Bataille, Georges. 1988. <i>Inner Experience</i> . Albany: State University of New York Press. |
| | Blanchot, Maurice, Elizabeth Rottenberg, and Jacques Derrida. 2000. <i>The Instant of My Death</i> . Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press. |
| MS | Breton, André. 1969. <i>Manifestoes of Surrealism</i> . Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. |
| SPP | Caws, Mary Ann. 2001. <i>Surrealist Painters and Poets: An Anthology</i> . Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press. |
| | Daumal, René, and Kelton W. Knight. 1990. <i>Le Contre-Ciel</i> . New York: P. Lang. |
| DP | Foucault, Michel. 1995. <i>Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison</i> . New York: Vintage Books. |
| SS | Hillman, James. 1964. <i>Suicide and the Soul</i> . New York: Harper & Row. |
| MC | Jung, C. G. 1970. <i>Mysterium Coniunctionis</i> . Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. |
| CP | Tarnas, Richard. 2006. <i>Cosmos and Psyche: Intimations of a New World View</i> . New York, N.Y.: Viking. |
| S | Toman, Jindřich, Jindřich Heisler, and Matthew S. Witkovsky. 2012. <i>Jindřich Heisler: Surrealism Under Pressure, 1938-1953</i> . Chicago, Ill: Art Institute of Chicago. |
| | Vaughan, Henry, and French R. Fogle. 1965. <i>The Complete Poetry of Henry Vaughan</i> . New York: New York University Press. |

Jindřich Heisler

Birth Chart

Sept. 1 1914

12:00pm CET

Chrast, Czech Republic

Saturn Return Transit

July 1 1944

12:00pm CET

Prague, Czech Republic

