

Between photograph and poem: a study of Štyrský and Heisler's *On the Needles of these Days*

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Abstract

The book *On the Needles of these Days* was first produced by the Czech Surrealists Jindřich Štyrský and Jindřich Heisler during the Nazi occupation in 1941 and republished in 1945. Bringing together Štyrský's photographs and Heisler's poetry, it deserves to be better known as one of the most important of Surrealist publications combining image and text. This essay provides a close reading of a number of different aspects. The book's design by Karel Teige produces a very finely balanced relationship between the two elements so that neither dominates the other. The connections we might create between them fluctuate between the evident and the willful, their proximity often creating layers of additional meaning. Whether the book is ultimately an impassioned call to arms or a rejection of action is open to question. Indeed, the two seem to co-exist in that dialectic of rebellion and pessimism so important to Surrealism.

Painter, poet, collagist, biographer, theorist, editor, designer – Jindřich Štyrský worked in many different media in the twenties and thirties. He only made photographs with any seriousness for a brief time – throughout 1934 and the first half of 1935 – but it was a period of intense exploration of the medium. In retrospect, the work he made then can be seen both as one of the most complete examples of surrealist documentary photography and as a foundation for the long standing tradition of Czech work in that field. There have been some penetrating analyses of the overall nature of these pictures.¹ But what remains to be undertaken is a close examination of the ways that Štyrský placed his photographs through exhibition and publication, culminating in the book *On the Needles of these Days*, which he co-authored in 1941 with Jindřich Heisler. Such an examination should enable us to better appreciate how Štyrský understood this work.

Initially, the photographs were shown in a surrealist context. When, in March 1935, the Czech surrealist group presented their first exhibition at the Mánes Gallery in Prague, Štyrský showed two full cycles: *Frog man* and *The Man with Blinkers*, consisting of thirty-six and thirty-four photographs respectively. Subsequently, in the late thirties, he exhibited the work in a wider context. He showed five of the photographs in the large *International Exhibition of Photography* in 1936 also at the Mánes Gallery and this was followed in 1938 by another exhibition at the Mánes which he shared with a number of other



important Czech photographers, including Josef Sudek, Funke and Vobecký. These three exhibitions placed Štyrský's work not only in the context of surrealism, but also in relation to a broader range of photography.

The publication of the work was more fragmentary. In 1936, four photographs were reproduced with an essay by Vítězslav Nezval on surrealism and photography, and when a handsome anthology of the work of Štyrský and his partner Toyen was published in 1938, it included nine photographs alongside their paintings and collages.² However, it seems that Štyrský wanted to take the work further and, according to Nezval, the two men planned to work on a book that would bring together photograph and text.³ Within the Czech group, Nezval was the closest to Štyrský in terms of their thinking about photography and he himself illustrated several of his books with photographs.⁴

However, this plan had got no further when Nezval split from the Czech surrealist group in 1938, moving towards Stalinism. Eventually, though, the idea did achieve a resolution (though we cannot know if it was the one that Štyrský originally intended) when, in 1941, twenty-nine of Štyrský's photos were juxtaposed with a poetic text by another member of the group, Jindřich Heisler, in the book *Na jehlách těchto dní* (*On the Needles of these Days*). Heisler had taken Nezval's place in the surrealist group in 1938, and like Štyrský, he worked in a range of media, both visual and verbal. He was much younger than the rest of the group; in 1941, Heisler was twenty-seven and Štyrský was forty-two.

The point at which the book was produced was of course a dark time in Czech history – the period of Nazi occupation. That was the year that Heydrich was appointed *Reichsprotector* and many arrests and deportations followed. *On the Needles of These Days* was initially produced in a small edition, almost handmade with actual prints tipped into the book.⁵ It would be hard to overestimate just how difficult, indeed dangerous, it would have been at that point in time to produce such a work. As well as the obvious need for secrecy, there were the physical circumstances of the two authors.

Heisler, who was Jewish, was in a doubly dangerous situation and spent most of this period hiding in Toyen's apartment. (The book is dedicated to her.⁶) Meanwhile, Štyrský was in bad health, following a cerebral embolism in Paris in 1935 when he had been admitted to hospital in a semi-paralyzed state. Restricted in his ability to make any more work, he devoted himself mainly to the reformulation of his previous work and we can see *On the Needles of These Days* as part of that process. He would die



from pneumonia a year after the publication of the book at the age of forty-three.

Some commentators have read these circumstances into the book. Vince Aletti, for example, calls it a 'Surrealist meditation on war and resistance' adding that 'the book's aura of alienation, repression, and anxiety ... captured the war's home front theater of the absurd,' while Gerry Badger sees it as 'an oblique, poetic meditation on war and the Nazi occupation.'⁷ Indeed, it is impossible not to read those circumstances into the book, but we need to ask whether, if we didn't know the narrative of its making, we would be able to tell all this from the book itself.

There is perhaps the image on the cover (fig. 1) – a scrap of paper over a window – which suggests secrecy, something hidden, as well as poverty and disintegration. But these are qualities one finds throughout the photographs which Štyrský, after all, had made five years before the start of the war. (Moreover, such a concern for the processes of decay and entropy are to be found throughout surrealist documentary photography. It is there in the interest of interwar Parisian photographers in the 'terrain vague';⁸ it would be a major element in the work of post-war Czech photographers.⁹)



All images are from Jindřich Štyrský and Jindřich Heisler, *Na jehlách těchto dní* (*On the Needles of these Days*), Borovy, Prague, 1945.



Then there is the title, *On the Needles of these Days*, a phrase that is indeed resonant of tension and danger. But again it originates in the decade before. Many of Štyrský's photographs were only ever realised as contact prints which he then mounted together in groups on sheets of cardboard. (The status of these sheets of images is intriguing. Probably not meant for exhibition, they may best be seen as part of a process of research.¹⁰) In one set, it looks as if Štyrský and his companions have gone out into the countryside near Prague and written various poetic phrases on rocks. One of them is 'Na jehlách těchto dní' – a phrase which, as it were, would sit there waiting to be used seven years later.

So both title and photographs predated the war. But the same cannot be said of Heisler's text, and Badger has more justification in seeing this as a 'direct and repeated call to rise up against the occupying Nazis.'¹¹ Of course, it is quite possible that Heisler had written the poem before the war itself – as early as 1938, perhaps. But even then, the year of Munich, the atmosphere in Europe and specifically Czechoslovakia would have been very different from the point at which Štyrský had taken the photographs in 1934. The text is far more elusive than any direct exhortation to resistance, yet nevertheless, it has an urgency, a passion and a violent undertow which is set off against the restraint of Štyrský's photographs. What is implicit in the images is cut open by the text, but in ways that never offer the hope of a simple resolution.

What is most often emphasised in discussions of the book is the equality of the relationship between the two elements of photographs and poems and the deliberate space that is left between them. As Anna Fárová emphasised, it is not a case of 'images illustrated by poetic texts or vice versa;' rather, 'the two elements are juxtaposed in a way that is complementary but autonomous.'¹² Věra Linhartová describes it as 'an analogous process where the word reiterates the image and modulates it by its own means.'¹³

In this, the design of the book plays an important part. A regular and insistent pattern is maintained throughout with the photographs at the top of the right hand page while the fragments of poetry sit low down on the left. The admirably clear design was by Karel Teige, who was not only the leading theorist of the Czech group but also an accomplished artist and designer.¹⁴ (This indicates something quite distinctive about the collaborative way that the Czech group worked; one cannot, for example, imagine André Breton doing the layout for one of Max Ernst's books.)

The restraint of the design can mask its precision, and the contribution it makes to the effect of



the book is such that in some ways Teige deserves to be credited as the third author. There is a balance between image and text which operates on a number of different levels. First, there is a visual balance set up between the block of the photograph and the line of the text, reminiscent almost of the way that Mondrian would balance a solid colour – a red or a blue – against a black horizontal line. That may seem like a surprising comparison to make within a surrealist context, but it is a reminder that the interwar Czech avant-garde had connected as much with what was happening in Germany or Russia as with France. This is a modernist design – put however at the service of surrealism.

Secondly, this layout plays very acutely with the apparent hierarchy of the two media and the psychological relationship we create between them. The text comes first and the picture follows it. But the picture is above the text and in some respects dominates it. As we open the page of the book, we see the right page with the picture on it first. When the book is fully open, we are drawn back to the left to read the text. Then we move back right to look at the picture again, this time with the words in mind.

This connects to a third balancing act, which relies upon the respective cultural values we put on photographs and poetry. Seeing we think of as primarily a physical act, while reading is cerebral. Indeed, photography can seem to be the most purely, even brutally, physical of visual media and poetry the most refined of verbal expressions. The visual aspect of the design interlinks with the psychological – the block of the photograph gives it a solid reality, where the line of the text seems more elusive. (This effect is enhanced here by the particular qualities of images and text. Štyrský's photographs are in themselves rather inert and passive, while Heisler's lines crackle with a nervous energy.)

The particularity of this layout becomes much clearer if we place it in relation to some other surrealist publications. The field of surrealist work with image-text is wide-ranging and has been well documented.¹⁵ But when we look specifically for books that bring together poems and photographs, a few works stand out. I want to briefly describe four of them, which each offer a different model of how the two media can work together. They are Georges Hugnet's *La Septième face du dé* (1936), Paul Eluard and Man Ray's collaboration *Facile* (1935), Roland Penrose's *The Road is Wider than Long* (1939) and René Char's *Le Tombeau des secrets* (1930).¹⁶

La Septième face du dé is the most integrated of these books, with fragments of images and poetry sprayed across the pages in a way that recalls the shattered typographical arrangements of dada



(which Hugnet was writing about at that time).¹⁷ His imagery is almost completely taken from the pages of popular magazines. The tone of *Facile*, on the other hand, is much softer, lyrical and sensuous. Made as a tribute to Eluard's new wife Nusch, both poems and photographs are evocations of her presence and the book is designed so that image and text interweave, flowing back and forth. Roland Penrose called *The Road is Wider than Long* an 'image-diary' of a journey he made across the Balkans with his new love, Lee Miller. The landscape through which they passed is depicted in Penrose's own personal snapshots, set within playful flourishes of typography and layout. Finally, in René Char's almost unknown book, *Le Tombeau des secrets*, there is a clear separation between the photographs on the left page – largely pre-existing images found by Char – with the brief, enigmatic poems on the right. The poems and the photos have nothing to do with each other, yet we read between them and an undertow of meaning inevitably emerges.¹⁸

Each of these four examples demonstrates a different approach to the relationship of poem and photograph. *La Septième face du dé*, *The Road is Wider than Long* and *Le Tombeau des secrets* are all books by a single author, co-ordinating text and image, while *Facile* was a collaboration between two artists of equal stature. Hugnet and Char used found imagery, while Man Ray and Penrose made pictures specifically for the book. Finally, while Hugnet, Penrose, Eluard and Man Ray sought in different ways to integrate the photographs and the poetry, Char set them against each other, the meaning coming out of their opposition.

What Štyrský and Heisler did with *On the Needles of these Days* was different yet again. Like Char, they juxtapose image and text on opposite pages, rather than integrating them. But, as with *Facile*, this is a collaboration between two authors each producing half the work, though with a greater degree of independence between them than between Eluard and Man Ray. We can only guess at how the book was actually produced. Štyrský's photographs had come first and obviously Heisler knew them before he wrote his text (which is in fact one long, free flowing prose poem). But did he have them in front of him as he wrote? Or were they only brought out afterwards and matched with a completed text, which was then divided up to form short sections opposite each photograph? Were the individual juxtapositions carefully arranged or were they random, producing connections as and when they occurred?

In many ways, the text reads as if it had been produced using the techniques of automatism and



this would suggest a deliberate distance between pictures and words. But even with the purest sort of automatic writing, images cannot be completely free-floating but must come from the writer's store of remembered experiences (as Heisler had experienced Štyrský's pictures). By this point in time, though, 'pure' automatism was no longer central to surrealism (and was in fact a technique never much favoured by the Czech group). The production of the text for *On the Needles of these Days* was probably a hybrid process, where automatism was initially employed, the results being then reworked to create, for example, the many repetitions and echoes of phrases that flicker through it. The bringing together of photograph and poem was also probably not the result of any rigorous conceptual process, but rather a matter of trial and error, shifting and reshifting the elements till they fell into place.

However arrived at, the relationship between image and text can rarely have been so finely balanced. But it is precarious and was probably meant to be. The effect is of an incipient and ever threatening imbalance – a situation where the relationship between poem and photograph is always in doubt, never resolved and therefore always productive.

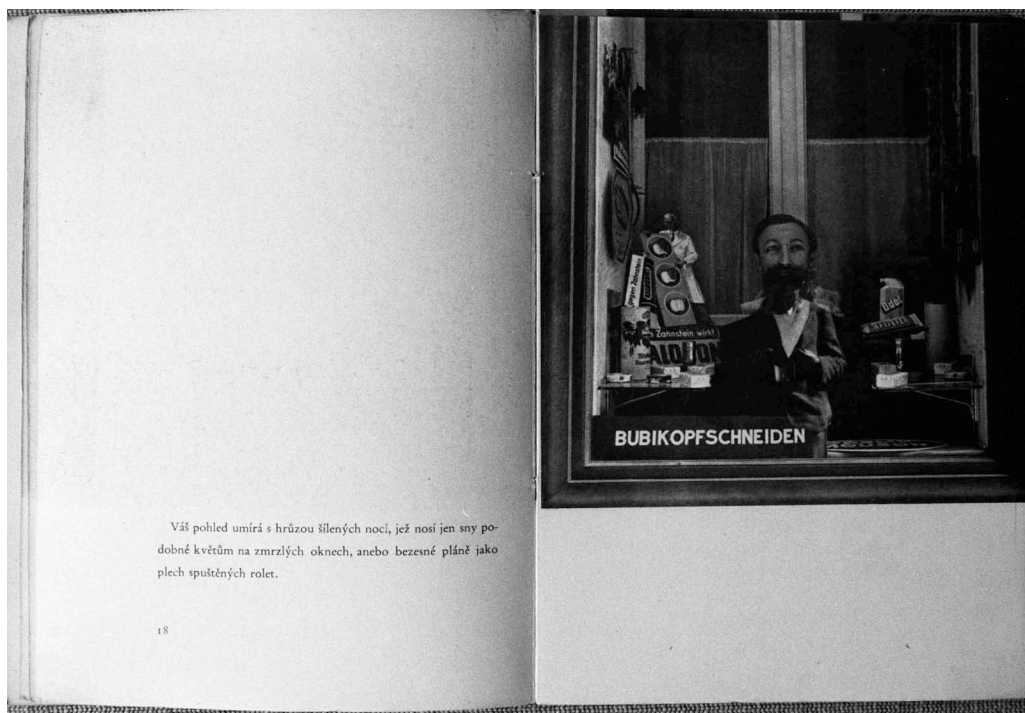
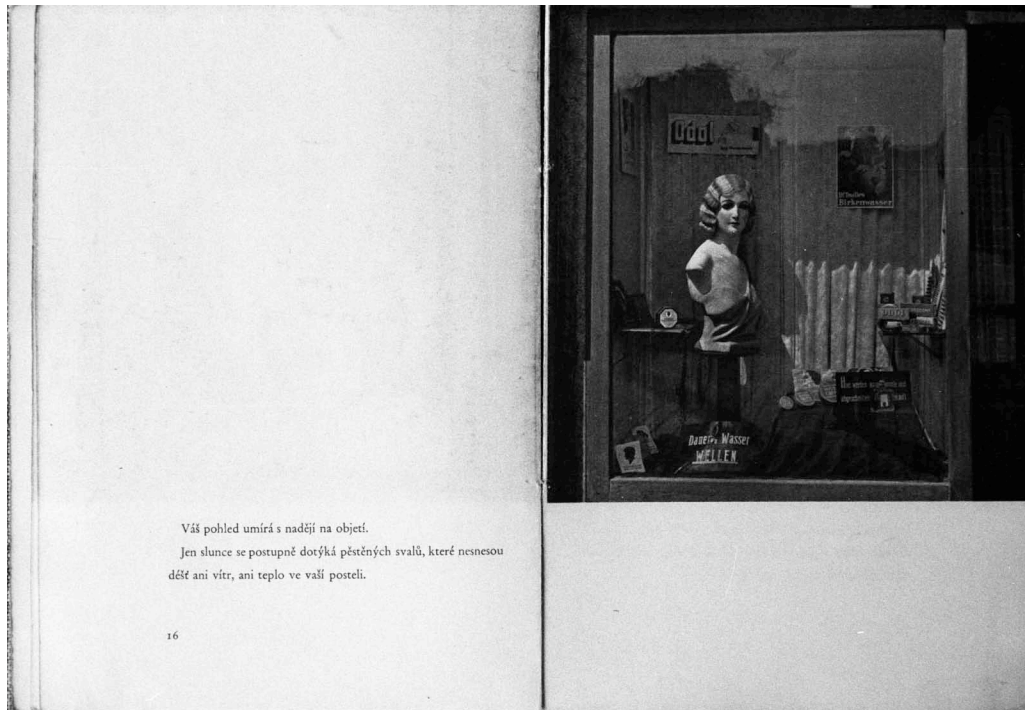
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It is time to test these general observations against a reading of some of the particular juxtapositions in the book. But this needs to be undertaken with one or two caveats. The first is that of course I can only examine here a few pages, ones that represent the most extreme closeness and extreme distance between text and image. But Heisler's text runs on from page to page and Štyrský's pictures are often deliberately ordered; any selection will inevitably distort the overall shape of the book. Moreover, I am using here an English translation, produced in 1984 by Jean Boase-Beier and Jindřich Toman.¹⁹ A translation may give us the meaning of a text, but it can't reproduce other elements, essential to the poetic effect in the original language.²⁰

The book starts in the city, with photographs of shop signs and window displays. (Generally, though inconsistently, the move through the book will be outwards, from the centre to periphery, through the fairground and the flea-market to end in the cemetery.) The sixth and seventh images show a female and a male mannequin, who are respectively distantly aloof and smugly bourgeois (figs. 2 and 3).



Opposite the female mannequin, we read: 'Your look dies in the hope of an embrace. Only the sun touches gradually upon well-tended muscles which can stand neither rain nor wind nor the warmth of your bed.' And opposite the male: 'Your look dies in horror of the nights of madness which bring only dreams like the flowers on frozen windows, or dreamless plains like the sheet-metal of lowered blinds.'



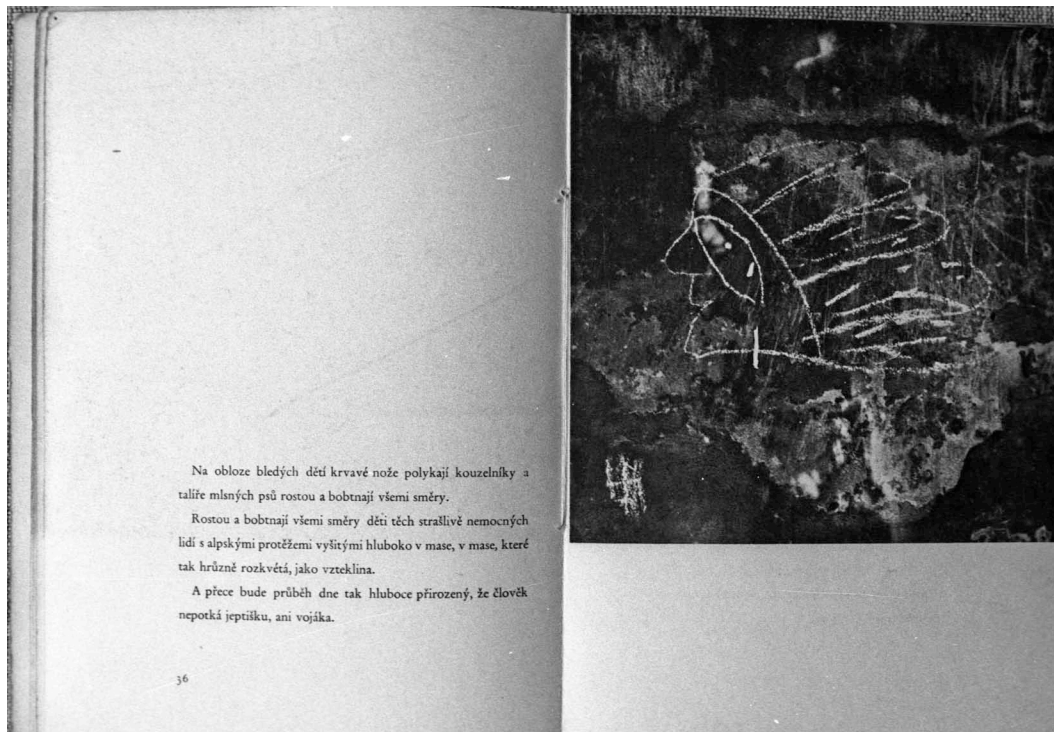
The parallel between the two images is echoed in the text, with the sudden address to 'you,' as if talking directly to the mannequins. (These pages follow and are followed by sections which are more meandering, less direct.) The text seems to specifically connect with the connotations of the figures – the sexual frigidity of 'your look dies in the hope of an embrace' or the bourgeois repression of 'the sheet-metal of lowered blinds.' Though neither image nor text can be exactly contained within this parallelism – the pictures and the dummies within them remain insolently dumb, the text keeps threatening to escape from a literal reading – nevertheless it is hard to believe that the juxtaposition here of photographs and poem was purely fortuitous, driven solely by hazard.

That is perhaps as close as image and text get in the book. At the other extreme, there are points where there is apparently no demonstrable connection. On page 37, there is a photograph of a graffito of an American Indian, drawn on a wall in chalk (fig. 4).²¹ It is photographed very directly and centrally, somewhat in the manner of Brassai's pictures of graffiti. Opposite it sits this text:

in the sky of pale children, bloody knives swallow up magicians and the plates of the
gluttonous dogs grow and swell in all directions. They grow and swell in all directions,
children of these people horribly ill with edelweiss flowers embroidered deep in the flesh, in
the flesh which breaks forth into blossom so monstrously, like rabies. And yet the daily
course of events will be so deeply natural that one will meet neither nun nor soldier.

It is difficult to read any connection here between text and image. Indeed, it seems as if it is the very lack of connection that is intended. The image shows a wall while the text evokes a sky, the text is about illness and disease while the graffito is full of a healthy hilarity, the image is American in origin while the mention of 'edelweiss' embeds the text in middle Europe. Yet of course, it is impossible not to move between image and text creating the web of analogical connections so fundamental to surrealist poetics ever since Lautréamont's umbrella and sewing machine met on the dissecting table. The children of the text may well have scrawled the 'magical' image of the Indian, whose face also swells 'in all directions.' The process of disease is described almost as a form of creation 'which breaks forth into blossom.' (In his essay on graffiti in *Minotaure*, Brassai had incidentally described it as an 'early-blooming flora.'²²) It may be that 'one will meet neither nun nor soldier' but it seems one might, on any street in Prague, meet an Indian chief.



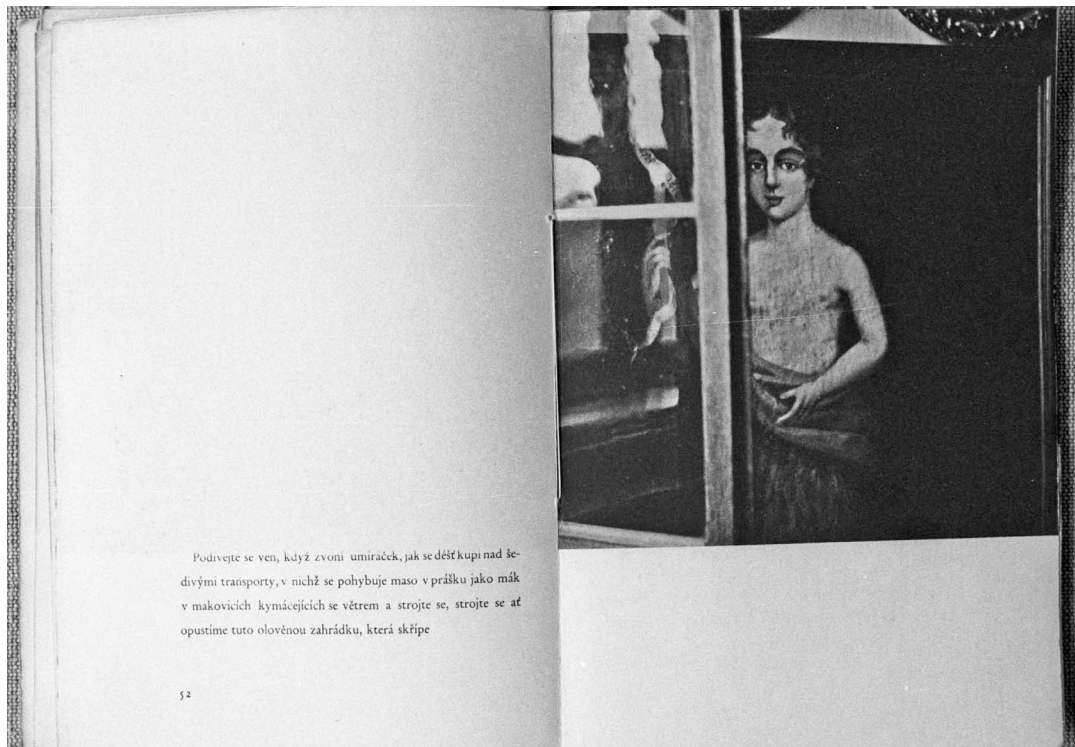


These examples represent the two extremes of connectedness and opposition that one finds in *On the Needles of these Days*. But there is no definite pattern in the book and the relationship between image and text fluctuates and shifts. Sometimes the two are tilted closer together, sometimes they are thrown apart. However, most of the juxtapositions in the book sit somewhere between these extremes, with certain phrases connecting loosely to the image. The photograph on page 53 shows a painting of a semi-nude boy who seems to look at the camera past the edge of an open glass door (fig. 5). Opposite it, the text reads:

Look outside, when the funeral-bell tolls, at how the rain piles up over the grey transports, in which moves the powdered flesh like poppy seeds in the poppy-heads shaking in the wind, and get dressed, get dressed, so we can leave this small leaden garden which creaks.

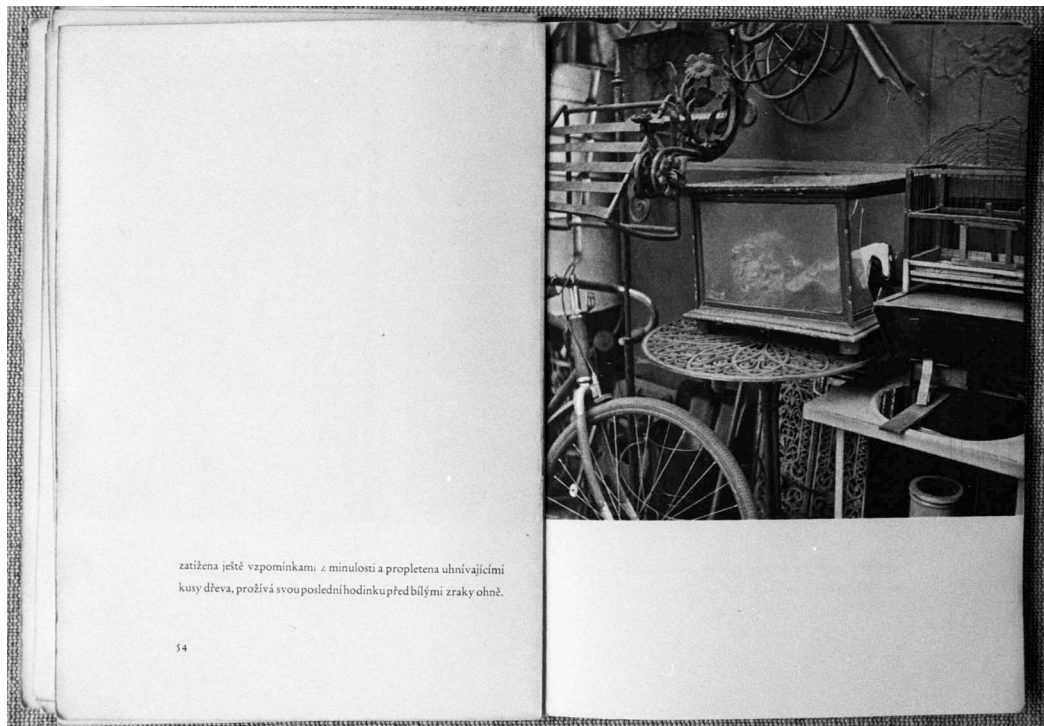
Here, while the overall lack of connection is evident, there are particular phrases which are resonant with the photograph – ‘Look outside’ as the boy gazes past the door, ‘the powdered flesh’ referring to his nudity and, above all, the double exhortation ‘get dressed, get dressed’.





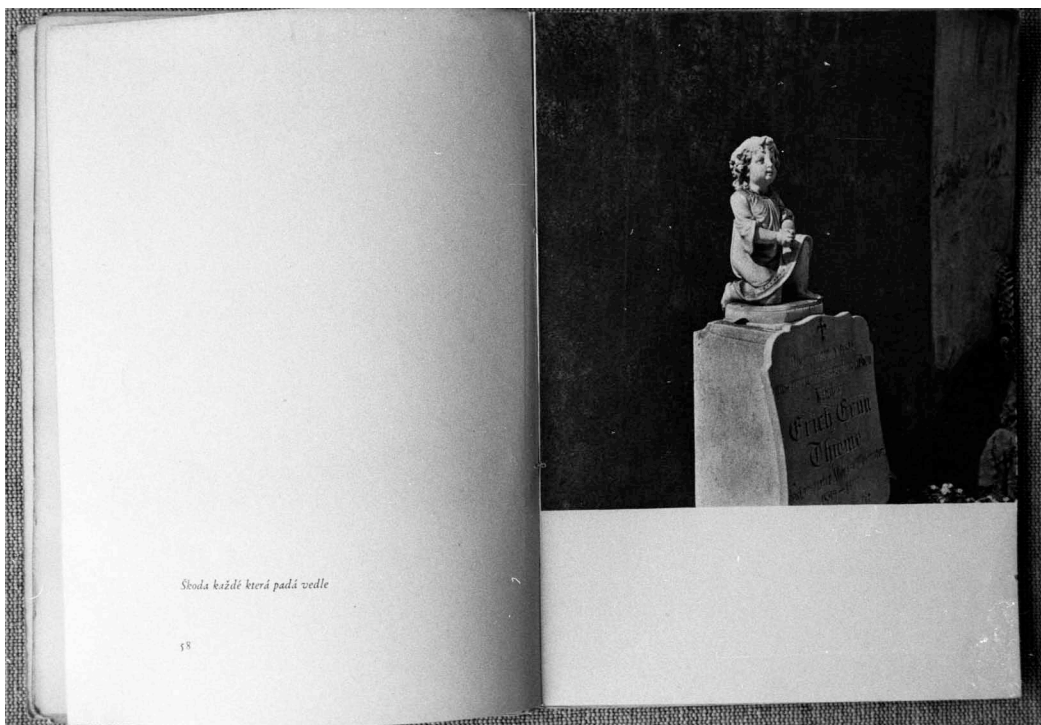
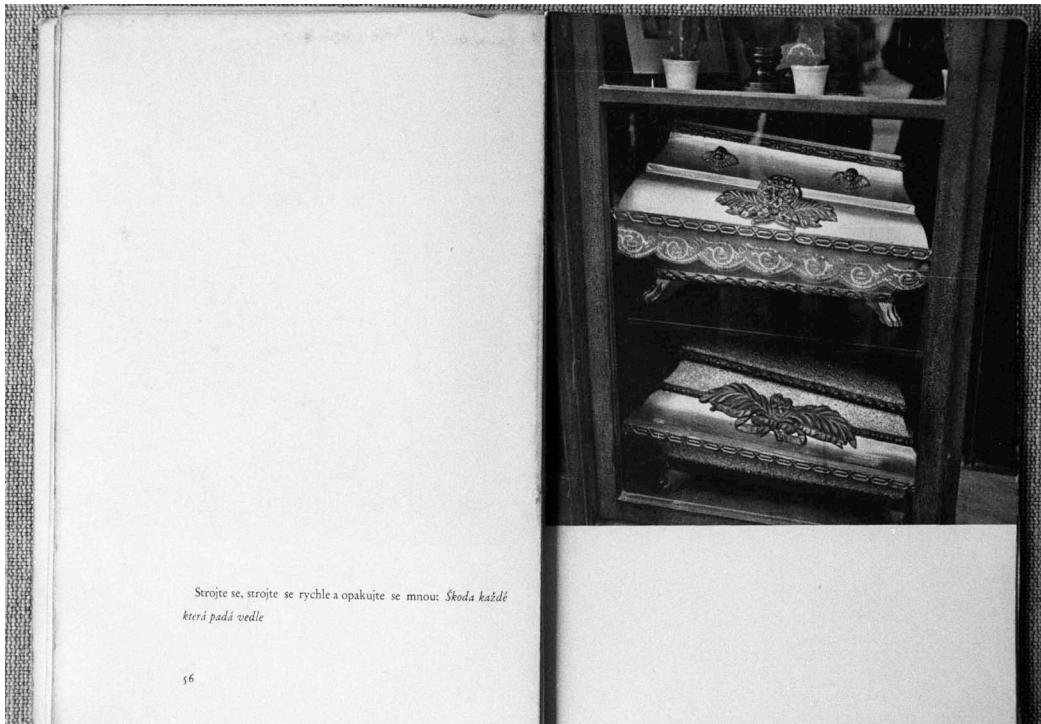
We are moving towards the end of the book. The next picture is one of Štyrský's most potent images of decay – an old, cracked fishtank sitting on a table in a junkyard (fig. 6). The text provides both a confirmation of its melancholy and, via a series of metaphors, a sort of transfiguration: 'still weighted down with memories from the past and, woven through with mouldering pieces of wood, lives its last hour before the white eyes of the fire.' The wood and the fire in the text seem opposed to the metal and (by implication) the water in the image; in fact, the elements fuse to create a poetic effect neither image nor text could have achieved alone.

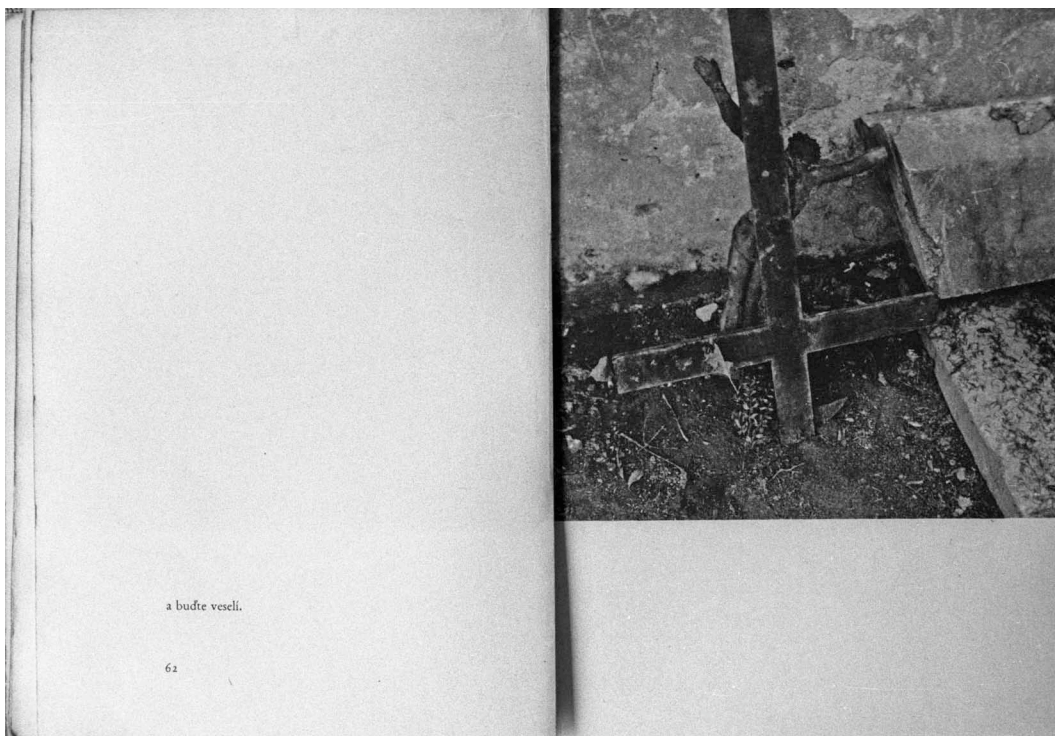
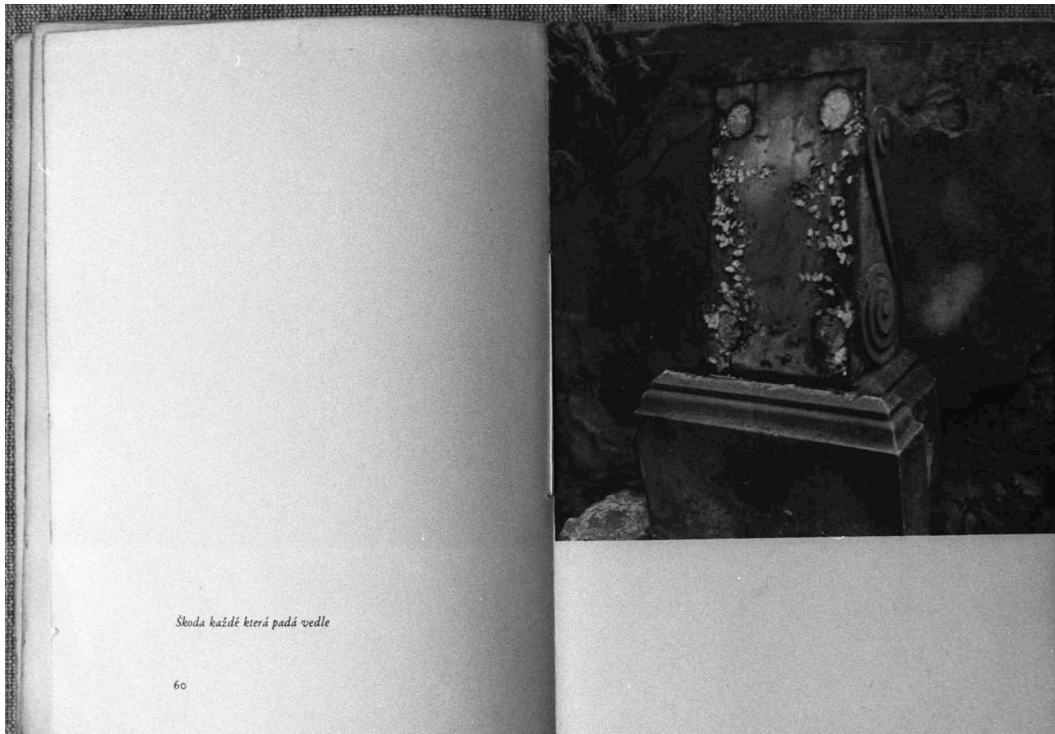




From that moment of stasis, the text picks up speed, using fragmentation and repetition to propel us to its end. The next image is of a display of coffins (fig. 7),²³ opposite which Heisler repeats a phrase from two pages previously and throws it forward: 'get dressed, get dressed quickly and repeat with me: *Regret each blow that fails to hit the mark.*' The coffins can of course be read as another (and final) way to get dressed and this irony can make one read the juxtaposition as an image of bitter failure, a caustic commentary on the inevitability of defeat. It is followed by two more images of graveyard monuments – a rather sickly looking child and a blank stone invaded by ivy (figs. 8 and 9) – against which is repeated the same phrase: '*Regret each blow that fails to hit the mark.*'²⁴ After that three-fold repetition, the final photograph is one of Štyrský's most acute comments on the hopes of redemption offered by Christianity – an upside down crucifix from which the broken body of Christ has become detached (fig. 10). The text simply adds: 'and be merry.'







One way, then, to read the end of the book is as a caustic and deeply ironic rejection of hope and transformation, firmly in line with the persistent surrealist rejection of any belief in redemption. But it is not the only way it can be read. For Gerry Badger, the repetition of the phrase '*Regret each blow that fails to*



hit the mark is a final 'exhortation to rebellion' against Nazi tyranny, not ironic at all but a direct call to action.²⁵ That more positive reading is encouraged when one turns to the final page, where the book finishes on a text with no photograph. Echoing once again an image from an earlier page, Heisler proclaims: 'The fire, today so carefully locked up, will open out wide and will pass from hand to hand.'²⁶ In fact, I do not think one needs to choose between these two readings of the book. *On the Needles of these Days* is both a regretful evocation of disintegration *and* a call to arms, a simultaneous espousal of the pessimism and the activism that has always formed an essential dialectic within surrealism.

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In an essay of 1990, Antonín Dufek articulated a problem raised by the placement of Štyrský's photographs in *On the Needles of these Days*. He began by arguing that:

in direct photography of found objects, the object is extracted – by photography or in fact – from its original place in reality and transferred into a new context without entirely losing its original place nor entirely adjusting to its new affiliation. It oscillates between the two contexts in an exciting encounter between *Wahrheit* and *Dichtung*, between reality and fiction, and in photography between the document and the vision.²⁷

For Dufek, what happened in *On the Needles of these Days* was that the tension which Štyrský's 'direct' photographs held in themselves has been disrupted 'by the addition of another *Dichtung* weight' and he suggests that the intention was 'to prevent their acceptance on a documentary level.' Štyrský had perhaps been nervous that the pictures on their own would have been read in too straightforward a manner and had intended Heisler's poetry to counteract that literalism; in fact, argues Dufek, this overbalances the book in favour of *Dichtung*.

The warning is well made, but it points to the necessity of understanding *On the Needles of these Days* not as the resolution of the questions raised by the photographs, but as one stage in an ongoing process of interrogation. It is surely quite possible to admire *On the Needles of these Days* – to think of it as one of the most important and powerful of surrealist books – while at the same time recognising that our understanding of Štyrský's photographs should not be limited by their placement in the book, for we



are now more able to understand the ambiguities of the photographs in themselves as both external documents and poetic reflections.

But in affirming this, it is also useful to remember the historical afterlife of the book. The first edition of the book was necessarily small scale, clandestine and private, but it was more conventionally reprinted in 1945 and this is the copy one will find today.²⁸ It was this edition of *On the Needles of these Days* which for a long period of time represented Štyrský's photography. Toyen had taken the mass of his prints with her when she emigrated to Paris in 1947 and she did not return them to Czechoslovakia until 1966, when they were exhibited posthumously for the first time in Brno. In 1972, Anna Fárová, then curator of photography at the Museum of Applied Art in Prague, bought them for the collection. It was then another ten years before Fárová published the first monograph on Štyrský's photographs in 1982.

So through that whole period – from 1945 till 1982 – *On the Needles of these Days* was the vehicle through which Štyrský's photography was publicly known, and it was this book that influenced the post-war generation of surrealist photographers such as Reichmann, Medková, Hák and Sever. Moreover, the book had an established place in Czech culture. As Pavel Buchler noted, *On the Needles of these Days* 'has been appropriated by artists, writers and journalists on so many occasions that it has gained, on a local scale, something of the cultural ubiquity of *Casablanca*. As with the 1942 film, the political commitment of the original work has been obliterated by nostalgia.'²⁹ (It seems that the evocation of rebellion in the book and its air of melancholic inadequacy still could not be readily disentangled.)

I cannot speak here of the importance of *Na jehláč těchto dní* in Czech culture, nor can I really do more than evoke the circumstances of its making. What I do want is to argue for the importance of the book as a major surrealist artifact, a work which had it been published in English or French would have long been established as such. Of course, we must not take it to represent Štyrský's photography as a whole but as a demonstration of one important way in which he wanted the work to be seen - indeed as an illustration of the way that the meaning of images can be shifted by the circumstances of their publication. But, while the photographs are the most immediately accessible part of the book, they are indeed only a part. I have approached it via the images, but others may well come to it as an illustrated prose poem. In truth, though, *On the Needles of these Days* is an extraordinary (and extraordinarily



equal) collaboration between image and text to produce a work both of its time and with continuing resonance.

1. The first book-length study of Štyrský's photographs was by Anna Fárová, *Jindřich Štyrský , fotografické dílo, 1934-1935*, Prague 1982 (published under the pseudonym Annette Moussu). An extract was published in French as 'Un Tcheque: Jindřich Štyrský' in Pierre Barbin, ed., *Colloques Atget*, special number of *Photographies*, March 1986, 74-81. More recently, see Karel Srp, *Jindřich Štyrský*, Prague 2001 (with text in Czech and English) and my own essay 'On the Needles of these Days: Czech Surrealism and Documentary Photography', *Third Text*, no. 67, March 2004, 103-118.
2. Vítězslav Nezval, 'Surrealismus a Fotografie', *Světlozor*, no. 29, 1936, 288-9; *Štyrský a Toyen*, Prague 1938, with texts by Nezval and Karel Teige.
3. See Srp, *Jindřich Štyrský*, Prague 2001, 22.
4. See Walker, 'On the Needles of these Days', *Third Text*, no. 67, March 2004, 103 for an example of Nezval's use of photography in his book *Ulice Gît-le-Coeur* and page 106 on the closeness of Štyrský and Nezval's ideas on photography.
5. The publisher is credited as 'Edici Surrealismu'.
6. This simple inscription perhaps indicates her invisible role in their collaboration on the book (as well as suggesting the complex relationships between the three people). Also in 1941, the 'Edici Surrealismu' produced another small book *Z kasemat spánku (The Casemates of Sleep)*, this one a collaboration between Heisler and Toyen, dedicated to Štyrský . My thanks to Eva Effenbergerová for showing this to me.
7. Vince Aletti in Andrew Roth, ed., *The Book of 101 Books: Seminal Photographic Books of the Twentieth Century*, New York 2001, 116, and Gerry Badger in Martin Parr and Gerry Badger, *The Photobook: a History, Volume I*, London, 2004, 197. Given the previous neglect of *On the Needles of these Days*, it's encouraging to see its appearance in these two recent volumes celebrating the importance of the book in photographic history.
8. See Ian Walker, *City Gorged with Dreams*, Manchester, 2002, especially Chapter 6: 'Terrain Vague', 114-143.
9. On post-war Czech photography, see Walker, 'On the Needles of these Days', *Third Text*, no. 67, March 2004, 111-118, and Krzysztof Fijalkowski, 'Objective Poetry: Post-war Czech Surrealist Photography and the Everyday', *History of Photography*, Summer 2005 (forthcoming).
10. These sheets are now kept, along with Štyrský's surviving prints, in the collection of the Museum of Applied Arts in Prague.
11. Badger, in Martin Parr and Gerry Badger, *The Photobook*, London, 2004,.
12. 'Un Tcheque: Jindřich Štyrský,' in Pierre Barbin, ed., *Colloques Atget*, special number of *Photographies*, March 1986, 80.
13. 'Jindřich Heisler', in *Štyrský-Toyen-Heisler*, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris 1982, 76.
14. See Eric Dluhosch and Rostislav, eds, *Karel Teige 1900-1951: L'Enfant Terrible of the Czech Modernist Avant-Garde*, Cambridge, Mass. 1999.
15. See, for example, Renée Riese Hubert, *Surrealism and the Book*, University of California Press 1988,



and Judi Freeman, *The Dada and Surrealist Word-Image*, County Museum, Los Angeles / Cambridge, Mass. 1989.

16. Georges Hugnet, *La Septième face du dé*, Paris 1936; Paul Eluard and Man Ray, *Facile*, Paris 1935; Roland Penrose, *The Road is Wider than Long*, London 1939; René Char, *Le Tombeau des secrets*, privately printed, Nîmes 1930.

17. Hugnet's essays on dada appeared in *Cahiers d'Art* between 1932 and 1936.

18. For an analysis of an example from *Le Tombeau des secrets*, see Walker, *City Gorged with Dreams*, Manchester 2002, 76-77. On *La Septième face du dé*, see Robert Sobieszek, 'Erotic Photomontages: Georges Hugnet's *La Septième face du dé*', *Dada/Surrealism*, no. 9, 1979, 66-82. On *Facile*, see Hubert, *Surrealism and the Book*, University of California Press 1988, 73-83.

19. This translation was for an English version of *On the Needles of these Days*, Edition Sirene, Berlin, 1984. The book was simultaneously published in German as *Auf den Nadeln dieser Tage* and in French as *Sur les aiguilles de ces jours*. The English text was also reproduced in full in a brochure published by the Ubu Gallery, New York, on the occasion of an exhibition of Štyrský's photographs in 1994. My thanks to Richard Sun for bringing this to my attention and sending me a copy of the brochure.

20. Introducing a collection of his own translations, Robert Lowell cited Boris Pasternak's comment that 'the usual reliable translator gets the literal meaning but misses the tone, and that in poetry tone is of course everything' (*Imitations*, London, 1962, xi).

21. One might see this image as an expression of the central European fascination with the American West, most fully expressed in the popular novels of Karl May. Štyrský seems here to be both celebrating its otherness and parodying its kitschness.

22. Brassai, 'Du mur des cavernes au mur d'usine', *Minotaure*, no. 3-4, 1933, 7, translated as 'From Cave Wall to Factory Wall' in Alain Sayag and Annick Lionel-Marie, *Brassai: 'No Ordinary Eyes'*, London 2000, 292.

23. As Fárová notes ('Un Tcheque: Jindřich Štyrský', in Pierre Barbin, ed., *Colloques Atget*, special number of *Photographies*, March 1986, 79), this display of coffins was photographed in Paris shortly before Štyrský's medical crisis and therefore probably had a great significance for him.

24. My thanks to David Short for providing me with a note on this phrase (which in Czech is 'Škoda každé která padá vedle'): 'The part in italics is a slight deconstruction of the proverb "Škoda každé rány, která padá vedle", which literally means "It's a waste of every blow that lands wide (of the mark)" and is taken as equivalent to "Spare the rod and spoil the child".'

25. Badger, in Martin Parr and Gerry Badger, *The Photobook*, London, 2004.

26. This image of the cleansing power of fire was a common one in the poetry of the Second World War. Though in other respects an altogether unconnected example, one might be reminded here of T. S. Eliot's desire in *Little Gidding* 'to be redeemed from fire by fire.'

27. 'Imaginative Photography' in Jaroslav Anděl, ed., *Czech Modernism 1900-1945*, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston / Boston 1990, 138-140. Dufek is here borrowing and adapting the dichotomy set up by Goethe in his autobiography *Dichtung und Wahrheit (Poetry and Truth)*, 1809-31.

28. *Na jehláč těchto dní*, Borový, Prague, 1945. I was first shown this book by Anna Fárová and I want to thank her for her generous help in this respect.

29. Pavel Buchler, 'A Snapshot from Bohemia' in David Brittain, ed., *Creative Camera: Thirty Years of Writing*, Manchester 1999, 202.



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