

*Salvador Dalí and Maurice Sandoz:
A Fantastic Collaboration*

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In 1944, Thomas Sugrue reviewed *Fantastic Memories*, the first book Salvador Dalí illustrated for Swiss writer Maurice Sandoz (1892-1958). The critic described Dalí as clairvoyant, able to receive the author's words and transform them into intriguing and complex images.¹ From a pair of hairy hands, to a headless torso, decaying bodies, crutches, and ants, the nightmarish stories blur the boundary between the real and imagined in typical surrealist fashion. Dalí illustrated three other books by Sandoz: *The Maze* (1945), *The House Without Windows* (1950), and *On the Verge* (1950), all of them within the mystery/horror genre. Reviews were mixed. Some critics regarded the books as exciting, superb, and beautifully composed, while others referred to the texts, and to Dalí's illustrations, as deficient, lacking depth, or uninspired. Some of the original works were exhibited at Bignou Gallery in New York, along with the artist's paintings, and *The Maze* was later adapted into a feature film. These images appeared simultaneously in art galleries and in widely circulated media accessible to the general public.

While Dalí received numerous commissions for graphic work in the 1940s, the collaboration with Sandoz resulted in a cohesive body of work that aligns with the artist's thematic interests and compounds surrealist imagery with popular appeal. The correspondences between text and image reveal a shared fascination with the uncanny: rich with descriptions of grotesque rituals, death and decay, and unexplained occurrences, each story propels the reader through a series of improbable, yet fascinating scenarios. A doctor in chemistry, Sandoz's approach to storytelling was informed by his scientific knowledge and his experiences as an avid world traveler. These qualities surely resonated with Dalí, whose multidisciplinary interests and perspectives characterize his artistic production during the 1940s and beyond.

This essay examines the significance of this body of work by placing the

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Dalí/Sandoz projects in context. It provides a close analysis of Dalí's illustrations in relation to the texts and considers their place within his production in the United States in the 1940s. Although these books are often grouped together with other illustration projects, my goal here is to provide an in-depth analysis that sheds light on the dialogue between Dalí's images and each of the stories. I will consider how the artist deploys emblematic Dalinian motifs and traditional compositional elements in tandem with the narratives. Informed by period reviews, correspondence, and primary sources, this essay explores the nature of the collaboration between artist and author and seeks to provide a more nuanced understanding of each of the four books individually and as a body of work.

Salvador Dalí's Beginnings as an Illustrator

Dalí's earliest book illustration projects date to 1924 when he illustrated *Les Bruixes de Llers*, a book by the Catalan poet Carles Fages de Climent.² The following year Dalí was commissioned to illustrate *L'Oncle Vicents*, a novel by J. Puig Pujadas who had been the editor of the newspaper *Empordà Federal* and who had publicly praised Dalí as a great artist when he was only sixteen.³ Following these commissions Dalí worked on numerous other projects illustrating books by contemporary writers and poets as well as masterpieces of world literature. A meeting with Swiss editor Albert Skira in 1933 resulted in a significant commission for the artist to illustrate the Comte de Lautréamont's *Chants de Maldoror*.⁴ Creating illustrations for Maldoror was an important endeavor for Dalí since Lautréamont was considered a literary precursor of Surrealism. The project consisted in creating forty-one plates for Maldoror; of these, four were reproduced in *Minotaure* next to Maurice Heine's article "Note on a Psycho-Biological Classification of the Sexual Perversions."⁵ Dimitri Tselos argues that the iconography of these illustrations is unrelated to the text:

Dalí's etched vignettes for Lautréamont's *Chants de Maldoror* variously disposed in the book as headpieces or tailpieces are physically well related to the printed text but their iconography seems to have little to do with the content of the book. The illustration consists of the familiar Dalí motifs of beans, bones, crutches, phallic bars and decay, but done in that near magic of his style which makes up for the suggestions of insincerity which threaten his reputation.⁶

As I hope to show here, this is not the case with Dalí's illustrations of Sandoz's books. Although he often includes emblematic motifs of his artistic vocabulary (the young boy in a sailor suit, the girl with the hoop, grotesque figures, etc.), Dalí creates images that relate closely to the mood and atmosphere of each text and that can often be tied to specific scenes and characters in the stories. Dalí enthusiastically seized the opportunity these projects allowed him in the American context: a source of

income, and perhaps more importantly for him, a platform to reach the masses and appeal to a broad consumer, culture, and public.

Dalí in America: the 1940s

Dalí's conscious immersion in the world of popular culture in America allowed him to transgress the institutional limits inherent to the world of museum exhibitions, and provided new and fertile ground to engage with a much broader audience. The visual vocabulary of his surrealist imagery easily translated into compelling images for advertisement campaigns and magazine and book illustrations that were reproduced and circulated in American society. By collaborating with contemporary authors, designers and filmmakers, and publishing his own works in widely available media, Dalí challenged the traditional role of the museum, questioned the boundaries between high art and mass culture and complicated the notion of the individual artist as creating exclusive, original, and unique works of art. His practice, expanded by the possibilities encountered in his new socio-cultural context, reflected these very notions while at the same time speaking to the artist's identification with classical traditions. As Montse Aguer explains:

Dalí, like the artists of the Renaissance, did not wish to limit himself to one sole means of expression: that of painting. He wanted to go beyond, to carry out new discoveries, to try out new methods and techniques. He wanted to emulate the Renaissance artists, his artistic expression is diversified and he becomes polyhedric. Painter, writer, producer, designer, drawer and illustrator, in all these spheres Dalí is ever present.⁷

It is this impetus to experiment and innovate that Dalí balanced so successfully in the American context and that was possible, in great measure, through engagement with massively reproduced media. In fact, commissions for book illustrations increased during his stay in the United States in the 1940s. He illustrated masterpieces of literature such as Cervantes's *Don Quijote* (1946), Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (1946), *The Essays of Michael de Montaigne* (1947) and *The Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini* (1948), among others. These projects were parallel to the publication of several of Dalí's own writings—his first autobiography *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí* (1942), his novel *Hidden Faces* (1944) and *Fifty Secrets of Magic Craftsmanship* (1948). At the same time he collaborated with contemporary authors, illustrating their novels and short stories.

The 1940s was a fertile period in American literary production, and it is in this context that Dalí's book illustrations operate in dialogue with a rich and rapidly evolving literary culture that reflected the legacy of the prior decades as well as the gravitas of the contemporary moment. With the rise of Nazism in Europe,

the center of the art world shifted from Paris and London to New York City, which quickly became an important cultural capital. The literary panorama—what literature scholar George Hutchinson calls “the literary ecology of this extraordinary period”—encompassed a notable increase in works by American authors, as well as the influx of European writers, publishers, and artists, the rise of film noir, and the popularization of the paperback, among other factors that greatly contributed to the proliferation of books and reading as a popular pastime.⁸ The legacies of Whitman, Melville, and Poe were interpreted in a new light, while modern authors such as Truman Capote, Richard Wright, and Arthur Miller, only to name a few, produced significant works that still resonate today.

The socio-cultural conditions in the United States fostered collaborations between writers, artists, filmmakers, and publishers that enabled literature to become popularized and accessible in a relatively short period of time. This presented for Dalí numerous possibilities to assert his identity in this new context, and perhaps more boldly as a writer, through the publication of his *Secret Life*. As Carmen García de la Rasilla has noted, Dalí establishes several parallels with Edgar Allan Poe in the narrative of his autobiography, with passages charged with double meaning and accompanied by symbolic images that create close connections between artist and writer.⁹ These dialogues with earlier authors, and the deployment of classical tropes in the artist’s visual output as well as in some of his writings, underscores the central and enduring role of the past in the present: “In combining polemics and narrative, ideas and events, Dalí was putting into practice his own theories about the need to reinvigorate modern expression with traditional perspectives.”¹⁰ He was well aware of the philosophers, scientists, and theorists whose works transformed and shaped popular thought in pivotal historical moments. Moreover, he was very much in tune with the possibilities for creation and transformation that the American context afforded. The booming publishing industry engaged artists and designers whose works proved to be exciting, provocative, and experimental. As Hutchinson explains, literature became a ubiquitous phenomenon:

In the 1940s, literature mattered. Popular radio shows featured literary critics talking about recent poetry and fiction. The *New Yorker’s* book-review editor hosted one of the most popular radio shows in America, and his anthology, *Reading I’ve Liked*, ranked seventh on the bestseller list for nonfiction in 1941. [...] Writers were celebrities. Literature was popular. The 1940s was the most intensely literary decade in American history, perhaps in world history. Books symbolized freedom. [...] To buy a book, particularly a “modern” book, was to defend liberty.¹¹

Dalí seized these opportunities and explored them as avenues to disseminate his

version of surrealism to the American public. The collaboration between Dalí and Sandoz embodies the artist's awareness of his contemporary moment and his engagement with history and with European traditions and themes, which are evident throughout his work.

Dalí as Illustrator for Maurice Sandoz

The relation between Sandoz and Dalí is somewhat obscure; the lack of substantial information on the author makes it difficult to draw connections between the two beyond what the product of their professional collaboration allows us. Sandoz (1892-1958) held a doctoral degree in chemistry from the University of Lausanne (1920); he was a musical composer, art patron, writer, collector, and world traveler.¹² Dalí and Sandoz met in Rome in 1938 where Dalí and Gala spend several months before returning to Paris and eventually making the journey to the United States. Countess Anna Laetitia Pecci Blunt, a socialite, art patron, and member of the Zodiac group, introduced Dalí to the Swiss author, who at the time was living in Vigna Pepoli in Caracalla.¹³

The four books by Sandoz that Dalí illustrated could be considered surrealist texts.¹⁴ Many of the themes that interested the Surrealists permeate these stories—visions, rituals, fantasy, childhood memories, chance meetings, nightmares/dreams, death, decay, imaginary and remote settings, transformations, and occurrences in mental asylums. Often the stories take a turn to the unexpected and usually to the unexplainable. Overall, the illustrations are connected to the narratives and represent specific identifiable scenes of each story. The images produced by the artist to illustrate these books are directly related to his paintings; Dalí uses some of the same motifs and draws on themes that are characteristic of his work. As Montse Aguer notes:

In the particular field of graphics Dalí carried out a very personal, creative design, aloof from the latest styles, but always related to his iconography which developed in keeping with the rest of his works, especially with his painting.¹⁵

This consistency in the visual vocabulary of his paintings and the iconography of his illustrations allowed him to assert a distinctive and easily recognizable style that translated well from the oil paintings in fine art museums to the pages of the books published by popular presses and widely available to the masses. This coalescing of high art and mass culture possible in the cultural context of the U.S. was key for Dalí in the 1940s:

Dalí soon grasped the American spirit and felt that it was the ideal country in which to become a total artist and be praised by the mass-

es, over and above European elitist cultural circles. This is why he devised wardrobes, sets and choreographies for ballets, ventured into the world of cinema, illustrated the covers of large-circulation magazines and took advantage of the press's interest to make himself the centre of attention day after day. A simple examination of the 20,000 press dossiers in the archives of the Centre d'Estudis Dalinians confirms the idea that throughout the forties and fifties Dalí's name or the adjective 'Dali-esque' appear every day in some North-American publication or other.¹⁶

The four Sandoz books considered as case studies here are the product of a much different context than perhaps *Maldoror* and other earlier texts, and show the artist's commitment to his style and iconography while appealing to a sector of the American public who could now own Dalí images and experience surrealist fantasies in the pages of illustrated books.

The Maze

Published by Doubleday in 1945, *The Maze* is a mystery story that takes place in a Scottish castle at the turn of the twentieth century (Fig. 1).¹⁷ Filled with unexplainable events and strange occurrences, the mystery is solved in the last pages of the book where the author provides an explanation for what has taken place. The story is told from the point of view of one of the visitors to Craven Castle in fifteen short but interrelated sections. The castle seemed to be hunted for many years and the narrator experienced some of the strange events while staying there. Each section builds on the previous one, adding to the suspense as it evolves and reaches a resolution. The story culminates with the revelation that one of the barons who lived in the castle in the eighteenth century was still alive in the 1910s and therefore had to be kept locked in a room where no one could see his current state.

There are thirteen black and white full-page illustrations that represent specific moments in the narrative. Here the literary and the pictorial are unified to provide the reader with a vivid image of the sequence of events; they heighten the suspense and expectation prevalent in the text. The iconography of these images is associated to Dalí's paintings; elongated and faceless figures, grotesque characters, desolated landscapes, oneiric interiors and nightmarish scenes are juxtaposed with detailed descriptions that make the images come alive. Dalí includes specific elements and details to enhance the understanding of the scene and allow the reader to be able to identify the part of the story and characters associated with important moments in the text.

The dust jacket illustration of the book is the only one in color and includes characteristic elements of the artist's visual vocabulary. A structure in the background is set against a desolate landscape where anthropomorphized trees

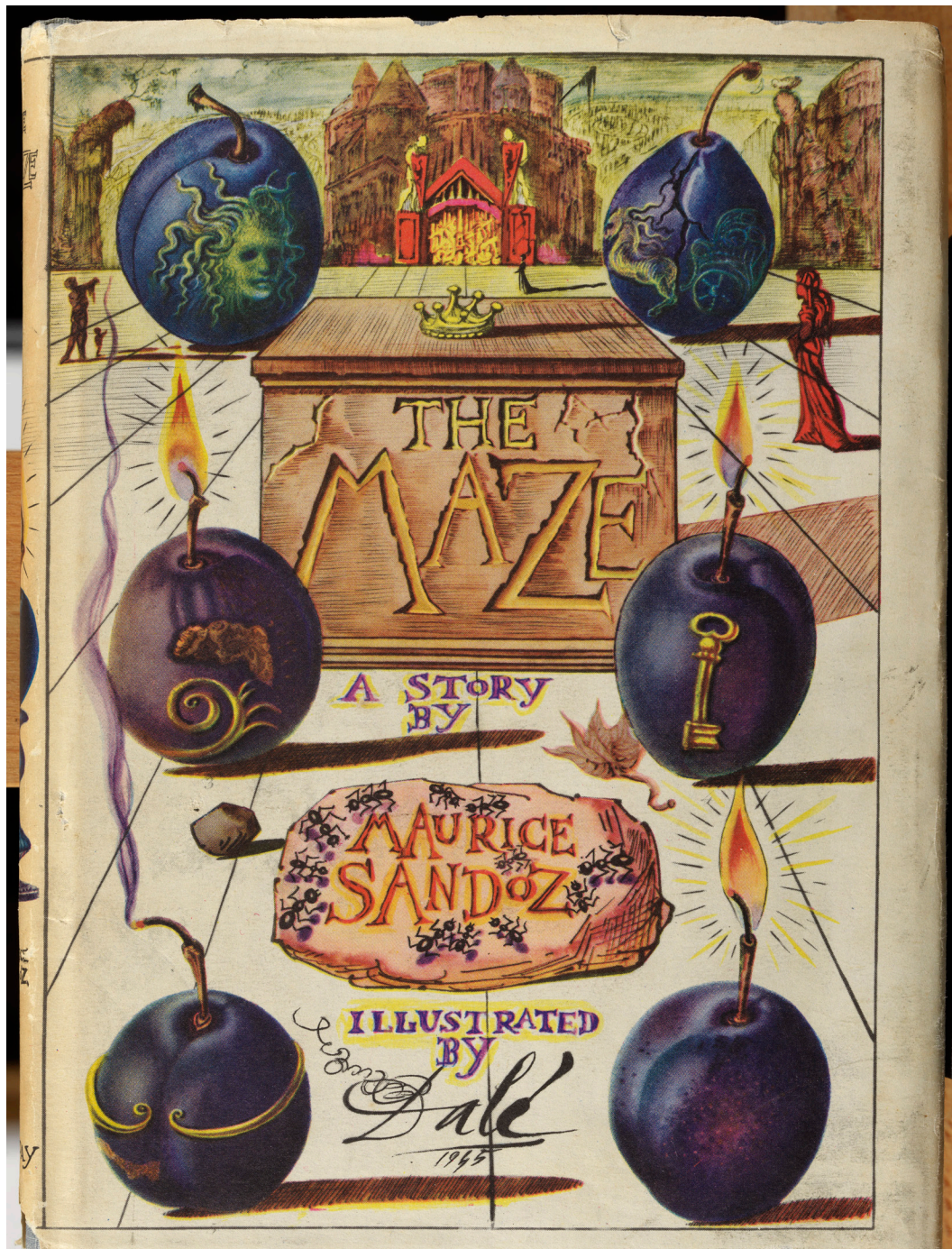


Fig. 1. Maurice Sandoz, *The Maze* (color dustjacket cover; New York: Doubleday, 1945, 110 pp.), illustrations by Salvador Dalí © 2022 Salvador Dalí, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí / Artists Rights Society (ARS) New York 2022

and rock formations set the stage for the presentation of the book's title in the foreground. Centered in the composition, what looks like a sort of pedestal or box is inscribed with the words "The Maze;" its old appearance denotes the passage of time and echoes the eighteenth century castle in the background. The author's name appears carved on a stone below surrounded by ants, a typical Dalinian motif included in many of his paintings and in illustrations for other books. These elements are flanked by fruits, candles and other objects such as a key, a face and a carriage, which are important objects in the story. Overall, the image conveys the eeriness and isolation that the characters experience in the castle.¹⁸ Removed from the realm of the viewer, the castle in the background reinforces the notion of its setting as remote and inaccessible.

The frontispiece of the book is a haunting double image that shows the portrait of an old man; his eyes are closed and his facial features exaggerated and grotesque. Close observation reveals that the man's collar is made of an image of the castle's tower and surroundings turned upside down. This depiction coalesces figure and architecture into a single representation that provides readers with a presage to the mysterious events that take place in the story. The image is duplicated; it appears again at the end of the book facing the first page of the last section, which reveals the resolution to the story. In this short section the narrator explains that the man in the illustration is Sir Roger Philip McTeam, baronet of Craven castle who lived from 1730 to 1905.¹⁹ In this case the image is turned upside down with the castle at the top and the face of the old man as the entrance to the architectural structure, summarizing visually the symbolism of the symbiotic relation between the character and the setting.

Craven castle is the subject of the third illustration in the book; it is placed within the narrative of the first chapter "The Photographic Album," where the narrator describes the terrifying events that take place inside. Here the castle is at the center of the composition; its high walls and tower surround a courtyard and fountain. Rays of light descend from the upper left and pierce the dark clouds that hover over the structure. Plant forms grow but are not able to flourish—the curse of Craven castle prevents them from becoming bright and beautiful organic forms. Covered in moss, the dark and gloomy walls convey a sense of mystery and suspense. These elements emphasize the slow passage of time and decay associated with the setting which are prominent characteristics throughout the text. Through detailed descriptions and visuals, the castle quickly emerges as a protagonist in the book.

A solitary female figure walks through the enclosed courtyard; her back turned to the viewer as she explores the surroundings and investigates the area in her quest to solve the mystery. The enclosing walls on either side of the composition draw us in; Dalí places the viewer in the path that leads directly to the castle's entrance. The illustration is as engaging as the text. In the latter, the narrator invites us to relive with her the mysterious events she witnessed. She asks us to consider her

firsthand account of the nightmarish episodes she experienced while staying there. Once again Dalí foreshadows in the image what Sandoz reveals in the text. Both author and artist encourage us to become close observers of the odd events of the story.

Dalí again uses double figuration to depict a woman in the fourth illustration of the book, which also corresponds to the first chapter. A portrait of a young woman in profile relates to a description of a photograph of the figure included in the narrator's album. The narrator describes the moving quality of the image:

The last was the portrait of a young girl. I gazed at an almost child-like face framed in curls, and a smile that revealed dimples in the round cheeks. I could see the outlines of her neck through the severe, high collar of a thin blouse. It was a rather plump little neck, well made and gently filled out at the base like the throat of a pigeon. There are certain smiles, even in pictures, that one cannot help returning. I smiled back.²⁰

Dalí captures her long wavy hair and delicate smile, and emphasizes her breasts, which are made of the bodies of two pigeons whose wings stretch back to her shoulders. Resembling the composition of a photographic portrait, this image is perhaps the most delicate, serene, and less daunting in the book.

Another image that deserves close attention is one that corresponds to the chapter titled "An Unusual Occurrence" in which the narrator describes unexplained noises in the hallways of the castle after dark. The vivid textual descriptions encourage the imagination to conjure evocative scenes that heighten the sense of the unfamiliar and unpredictable. One of the suspenseful scenes involves a servant who failed to clean up the trace left by a creature that roams the hallways at night:

'Look at the floor,' Margaret said. A greenish-brown spot, about the size of the palm of a very large hand, could be seen on the carpet. It had apparently escaped the notice of the two servants who had swept the corridor at five in the morning. I wondered why they had done their cleaning before it was light enough to see. [...] I got down on my knees to see better. A delicate network of fibers showed up, clear cut and graceful. 'It's the impression of a maple or plane-tree leaf,' I thought. 'The leaf must have stuck to the sole of the shoe.' I was going to continue the examination, when footsteps and voices sounded in the hall and grew louder. Two servants were climbing the stairs. I didn't care to be caught indulging my curiosity and fled to my room before I could be seen.²¹

A figure cleaning the floor and another holding a large candelabrum are shown in the illustration. It depicts the moment when the servants are working in the middle of the night to erase the trace of what had happened in the hallway. The image is severe and its elements out of proportion. A male figure extends his left arm to hold the candelabrum above the spot on the floor, candlelight illuminates his grotesque face and costume as he looks out for any guests who might walk in and discover them. The man's facial features are exaggerated, his eyes wide open and his gesture bold and dramatic. Conversely, the second figure is bent down on his knees cleaning the floor, his hands and feet are disproportionately large emphasizing his status as a lower ranking servant. Although the image is a visual representation of a particular moment in the narrative, it is not revelatory if considered independently from the text. It is indispensable for the reader/viewer to be familiar with the text in order to understand and to contextualize this image. In this sense the illustration functions in conjunction with and in close relation to the scenes described throughout the narrative.

Descriptions of nightmarish events abound throughout the stories in *The Maze*. The high points of the narrative are highlighted by pictorial renditions that are as intricate and enigmatic as is Sandoz's writing. Often the images are all encompassing; they summarize visually scenes whose descriptions fill several pages in the book. However the artist has given particular attention to those features in the images that are easily identifiable with a specific moment in the story. As Diana Klemin states in her discussion of the role of the artist in the production on an illustrated book: "The supportive artist does not confine himself to specific incidents. He prefers to synthesize all that the author has said, to convey the essence of the book, and to supplement it in a provocative and rewarding way."²²

For instance, in the chapter titled "One More Strange Observation," the last paragraph consists of a dialogue between two of the castle guests. They discuss what they have seen and heard but their conversation does not provide a conclusion to the strange events:

A coach was passing, close to the castle, 'a real coach drawn by two horses, like the ones in museums,' she said. In the light of the lanterns she saw the coachman, whom she recognized as the chauffeur, but she couldn't see anyone else through the thick curtains stretched over the windows. The wheels and horses' hoofs made hardly any noise. They must have been covered with rubber or some special material. Ellie said that only an extremely light sleeper with unusually keen hearing would have heard anything. 'Is that all you noticed?' I asked, wondering if she were quite sane. 'No,' she said. 'There was something else. You know my room is the last on the corridor. As the coach was turning the corner of the castle someone gave an order

to the coachman, and I recognized your cousin's voice. But he wasn't alone inside. I heard...' She hesitated. Then she said: 'I heard a noise, a sound. It was a voice. And yet it wasn't a voice. That's what frightened me.'²³

The chapter is then inconclusive; it invites the reader to continue exploring the text in order to find out who this other character is. Similarly the illustration that corresponds to this scene is elusive. A horse carriage transports two figures whose identity is unclear. A man in the back, perhaps the chauffeur, seems to be in control of the carriage. His features are outlined lightly; his face blends with the background and with the effects of light and shadow produced by the lantern in front of him. The second figure, a man in the front of the carriage, turns his head to the side hiding his identity from the viewer. The two large wheels of the carriage at the bottom and the two lanterns at the top frame the composition; circling lines and light and dark outlines shape the figures and suggest their motion as they advance in the space. In the background, the castle looks distant and small. One is not able to identify its exact location from the elements provided in the illustration. Unlike Sandoz's text, which is rich in details about the time period and geographic area where the story takes place, Dalí's visualization of the scene is generalized and lacks factual specificity.

As the story progresses, the images shift with it; they become more specific and emphasize the dramatic moments of each scene. The last four illustrations of the book show the artist's interest in conveying a sense of conclusion to the mystery in the same way that the text develops towards its resolution. It is only towards the end of the book that the castle's maze takes an important role in the narrative. The chapter titled "An Honest Account" describes how the narrator followed some of the guests and the baronet through the woods and into the maze in order to find out what was the motivation for the strange occurrences she had experienced. She found a group of men around the pond at the center of the maze who seem to be hiding something from her. It is precisely this act of veiling which is depicted in the illustration.

Three men, one in front of the other, cover their eyes and ears as they witness the spectacle taking place behind the piece of cloth they hold. They illuminate the scene with a candlestick; the light reveals the head of a human figure behind the cloth but keeps the reader/viewer excluded from the action. A woman peeks at the men from behind a tree; she is shown in profile and although her features are not necessarily individualized, we are able to identify her from the narrative:

I turned a corner and stopped, dumfounded. A wall of yews blocked the view, but between the branches wild sparks came and went like fireflies. In a burst of light I saw a silver streak between the tree

trunks. There was a fresh-water pond hidden in the maze. The confused murmur was now the sound of frightened agitated voices. What was going on behind the wall of trees?²⁴

Dalí portrays a small bush at the lower right hand corner of the composition and the wall of trees. He selects the most important elements in the description of the landscape and atmosphere to convey a comprehensive view of the scene.

In the second to last chapter “A Change Occurs at the Castle,” a procession takes place at night where the men walked out of the castle carrying a large wooden chest. Men of all ages helped in the secret and burdensome task. Dalí draws in the illustration the men carrying the box and holding torches to be able to see the path through the woods. In the background a barren landscape surrounds a body of water where only the remains of an old ship can be identified. Behind it, the ruins of an anthropomorphized structure suggest a dilapidated brick building or fort.²⁵ Juxtaposed, the landscape, figures and overall environment of the illustration evoke the isolation of Craven castle, its long history and nightmarish quality. In the foreground, six figures are outlined; their faces are once again concealed except for one of the figures on the left whose features are those of a creature that seems to be part human and part animal. As the procession advances, so does the story as it climaxes and continues to the last chapter where the explanation for the scenes described is finally revealed to the reader.

After a number of chapters where the text in conjunction with the illustrations takes the viewer through a dream-like and eerie journey, the narrator finally provides a clarifying explanation. Throughout the story, the noises, apparitions, shadows and strange behavior of the baronet and guests at the castle were provoked by the dying Sir Roger Philip McTeam who was the first baronet of Craven Castle. A mirror image of the frontispiece appears here upside down. Dalí manipulates the image to show the castle at the top center; the baronet's face becomes the entrance path and door to the structure. In addition, Dalí added an inscription: “Sir Roger Philip McTeam 1730-1905.” The fusion of the baronet and the castle in this illustration functions as an image within the image; both become one at the moment of the character's death. The unusual positioning of this image transforms it into a revelation—one that takes place not only visually but also in the text. Throughout the book the author engages the reader in a process of discovery; the reciprocity between image and text in the context of this book becomes the common ground where the interaction between the pictorial and the textual converge to enhance the impact of the story.

Whether Sandoz asked Dalí specifically to draw these illustrations to be multilayered (double figuration) is, to my knowledge, uncertain. Did Dalí have the autonomy and freedom to depict the castle and the baronet in the way he

did or did Sandoz point him to a certain visual vocabulary? Unfortunately, not enough information has come to light to determine the conditions in which this collaboration was undertaken. However, a few sources on the creation and publishing of illustrated books suggest that it is not always the case that artist and author work together. As Klemin explains,

The artist assumes many roles. He gives the illusion of working simultaneously with the author even though he rarely starts to draw until a manuscript is completed or, with the classics, until centuries have elapsed. He is often a storyteller who recreates a moment or scene and brings the characters to life with an intensity and insight equal to the author's. In this illustrative style he (the artist) allows his imagination to take up where the author has left off and thereby adds another dimension to the book.²⁶

Writing much earlier about the role and technique of book illustrations, R.P. Gossop states that:

Illustrations are often essential. They describe when words are likely to fail. Or at the worst, they can describe with a more economic use of space.[...] For clear description, for conveying a visual impression of a thing seen, or stirring the imagination with a poetic idea of things that cannot be seen, or that are seen only in the mind of an imaginative writer, we look to the artist, the illustrator.²⁷

In 1945 Doubleday published a book about their company's history. It describes their various departments and the process of selection of the books they considered for publication.²⁸ Writing on the importance of "Book Packaging," the author states that:

Doubleday is the only house in the United States which maintains its own complete art department for the design of book jackets, title pages, bindings, illustrations. Many of the country's outstanding artists are commissioned to do book illustrations, jacket paintings, and lettering. The late Grant Wood, for instance, did the painting for the jacket of Kenneth Roberts' *Oliver Wiswell*. Edward A. Wilson, Francis Criss, John Alan Maxwell, Salvador Dalí, Jon Corbino, and many other famous artists have done illustrations for our books and jackets.²⁹

Dalí's work as an illustrator presents us with one more opportunity to consider the artist as active agent in an age when mass production and wide circulation are an intricate part of society. A year after *The Maze* was published, there were press reports about producers in Hollywood interested in buying the rights to the story for a future film. Dalí's illustrations for this book and his design for the dream sequence in Hitchcock's *Spellbound* were described as scary and suspenseful, and anticipated what a film based on a book illustrated by the artist may look like. Reviewers praised the film *The Maze* and Dalí's images as the source for successful settings for the movie.³⁰

Fantastic Memories

Fantastic Memories consists of fifteen unrelated short stories, twenty-one illustrations and a dedication to "To Miss Elizabeth Arden who fought to make beauty eternal" (Fig. 2).³¹ Told in the first person, the stories in *Fantastic Memories* recall the author's childhood memories. In the preface, the author makes the reader aware of the inconclusive character of some of the stories in the book and describes them as dreams, as instances where the individual gets intimately involved but that at the time of awakening the sequence of events is interrupted and so the narrative remains unresolved. A consideration of some of these stories and their illustrations might shed some light on the artistic dialogue between Dalí and the author.

In "The Limp-Paged Album," the second story that appears in the book, the narrator tells us that his great-grandfather is a "doctor, surgeon, chemist, botanist and perhaps even something of a sorcerer."³² He worked in hospitals in seaports providing care to sailors, and developed an interest in strange things and practices that he often recorded: "He passed his nights in recording his observations, surrounded by retorts, crucibles, human skulls, and strange instruments.[...] Among his legacies to us is an old album." Shortly after these words, the album becomes the center of the story. The narrator explains that as an adult he still conserves the album for it reminds him of his childhood. It contains twelve very thick and strange pages and the object itself stimulates in him a physical reaction when examined:

The thickness of the pages is unusual and their odd limpness disconcerting to the fingers that turn them. They curl back on themselves like the buckskin that is still used in the burnishing of gold. But the most potent quality of this album is the softness, the actual warmth of its pages. I have found myself holding them to my face, closing my eyes and wandering whether I was not pressing my cheek against that of a human being. And that impression was so strong that I could almost catch the sigh of a quick breath or the faint beat of a heart. As for the pictures themselves, in spite of a similarity of technique they are certainly the work of various amateurs and the subjects have no logical continuity.³³



Fig. 2. Maurice Sandoz, *Fantastic Memories* (New York: Doubleday, 1945, 128 pp.), illustrations by Salvador Dalí © 2022 Salvador Dalí, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí / Artists Rights Society (ARS) New York 2022

The narrator's father had prohibited the children from handling the object. After it was found, the father had no option but to explain to the child that the album consisted of a collection of tattoos: "twelve pieces of human skin, taken from the chests of twelve sailors who had died in the hospital." The explanation for the existence and conservation of such a shocking object is, according to the narrator, his great-grandfather's interest in finding the secret of eternal youth. One of the images included in the album is described as that of a woman with a headdress and pearl earrings. At the end of the story the narrator realizes that the image was formed by the nipples and chest of a dead sailor.

The illustration that accompanies "The Limp-Paged Album" contains multiple layers of meaning that relate to the text as well as to Dalí's paintings. The image is that of the torso and thighs of a male figure. Pierced nipples and chest hair along with a drawn pair of what seem to be female eyes make the figure of the woman with the headdress that the author describes. The figure's arms are lifted and his genitals covered with a simple piece of cloth; his face is outside of the composition and his identity remains out of reach. The figure's pose evokes that of the crucified Christ in traditional representations. The relation between this last observation and the text might not be apparent at first. However, the narrator has provided the reader with the explanation for the album—a search for eternal youth which is also related to eternal life. After 1945 and especially during the 1950s Dalí's paintings show the artist's interest in religious subject matter.³⁴ Paintings such as *Christ of St. John of the Cross* (1951) and *Corpus Hypercubus Crucifixion* (1954) show a crucified Christ in a similar pose and composition that rely on conventional representations of the scene.

Connections between Dalí's illustrations for *Fantastic Memories* and other of his projects are evident also in the illustration for the fourth story in the book. "The Lady of the Cornflowers" is, according to the author, one of his childhood memories. The story takes place in 1896 in Lausanne. His parents, who lived with the children in the shores of the Lake Constance, had gone to North Africa for a period of three months and left the narrator in the care of his nurse. During his stay with his nurse, the child receives an invitation from a friend of his mother's, Madame de Bellerive to have tea with her in her château. Here the author describes the invitation and states that in it Bellerive refers to him as Monsieur Maurice Sandoz. This is the first instance in the book where the narrator reveals his identity to the reader. The author describes vividly the envelope that contains the invitation. He is most intrigued by the seal on its exterior which causes in him a physical reaction: "I am not sure that I did not lick it, in the hope of combining the pleasures of both tongue and eye!" Dressed in a sailor suit (an image that appears often in Dalí's paintings), the young Sandoz boarded the steamboat which was to take him to the Château de

Hirtzheim.³⁵ Upon arriving, a sequence of strange events and discoveries make this visit a traumatic experience for the child.

While at the chateau, a group of children got together to play “The Black Beast” which is described as a very similar game to hide and seek. Soon after the narrator (Sandoz) was chosen to be the Black Beast; he had only minutes to find a place to hide. It is at this point that there is a leap in the narrative from what seems to be a story from childhood to what would be best described as a nightmare. After trying to find a hiding place in the park around the château, the child found an orangerie and a small structure partly buried in the ground. He entered the structure and hid there for a moment. As in a dream, a small door appeared in front of him but it was locked and after attempting to open it, a large key fell off his head. The key was of course to open this door and find a place to hide. What he finds is described as a terrible nightmare and a moment of panic. Inside the room was the body of Marie de Bellerive’s grandmother seated in an armchair upholstered in pastel blue. She held a book in her right hand and her eyes seem to stare into space. In front of her was a small table and a bouquet of artificial cornflowers. The child ran out in panic; he found out later that the old woman was dead and had been there for many years preserved in alcohol as she had wished. Forty years after the experience, the narrator describes his memory of the gruesome appearance of the lady of the cornflowers:

At the time of my adventure the stale alcohol had become opalescent; the eyeballs of the Lady of the Cornflowers, grown a little stale herself in spite of the alcohol, had become discolored and, a detail which had done much to increase my terror, the whole of the eyelashes of her left eye had slipped on to the center of her cheek. As for the glass, its perfect transparency rendered it invisible. The whole effect was calculated to frighten more valiant people than myself. Even today, after a lapse of forty years, I prefer not to dwell on the appearance of the Lady of the Cornflowers. And the reader may be grateful to me.³⁶

Although the description of the woman’s appearance is shocking and frightening, the illustration represents the first encounter between the child and the Lady of the Cornflowers without depicting the gruesome details. In the image, the woman sits in her armchair, we see her from the back at a slight angle that only reveals her long left arm. Covered in a soft and fluid fabric, the chair resembles a woman’s long hair. As described in the story, there is a small table in front of her while several ants seem to come out from under the chair, further suggesting the body’s decay. This element is not part of the textual description of the scene, however it is a recurrent motif in the iconography of Dalí’s paintings. Signaling the viewer to the decay of the woman’s

body, one of the ants steps out of the composition and into the space of the reader on the margin of the page. Dalí captures here the encounter between the boy and the woman and between innocence and death.

A very similar version of the illustration for the Lady of the Cornflowers appears in Dalí's *Secret Life*, published prior to *Fantastic Memories* in 1942. In Dalí's *Secret Life* the illustration is accompanied by a short handwritten text that reads: "Project for spectral furniture, with live jewels provided with reflectors for alternative and decreasing lighting."³⁷ As he describes it, the image is a study for one of Dalí's own inventions:

This was the discouraging period of my inventions. More and more the sale of my paintings was coming up against the freemasonry of modern art. I received a letter from the Vicomte de Noailles which made me foresee the worst difficulties. I therefore had to make up my mind to earn money in another way. I drew up a list of the most varied inventions, which I considered infallible. I invented artificial fingernails made of little reducing mirrors in which one could see oneself. Transparent manikins for the show-windows, whose bodies could be filled with water in which one would put live gold fish to imitate the circulation of the blood. Furniture in bakelite molded to fit the contours of the buyer.³⁸

In this sketch Dalí emphasizes the jewels in the woman's hand and the reflection of light. On the other hand, the illustration for Sandoz's text is much more elaborate; it has been adapted to represent a crucial moment in the story. Dalí is not only making reference to previous works but is also looking into the familiar imagery that had sprung from his efforts to create innovative objects and reworking them in dialogue with Sandoz's texts.

The sixth story in *Fantastic Memories* is titled "The Crutches of Uncle Celestin."³⁹ Crutches as a visual motif abound in Dalí's painting and they are, according to his *Secret Life*, important objects that appear to him early in his childhood. In Sandoz's story, Celestin is the narrator's uncle; he is described as a small, bald and ugly man. Celestin lived in the narrator's house and because of a physical ailment was not able to walk without his crutches. These objects fascinated the boy who was only six years old when the uncle died. The family decided to bury Celestin without his crutches; they believed that death had finally liberated the man from the burden of these objects. Right before the wake, the boy mischievously opened the coffin and placed the crutches under the uncle's arms where he thought they belonged. For the boy's family the appearance of the crutches in the coffin was a mystery; none of them suspected a young child like him would have committed

such a defiant act. At the end of the story, the narrator reveals to us that it was him who was behind the mystery his family was never able to solve.

A recurring motif in Dalí's iconography, crutches embody layers of meaning in the artist's visual vocabulary.⁴⁰ According to the *Secret Life* he encountered them in his childhood during a stay with friends of his family. In "The Story of the Linden Blossoms Picking and the Crutch" Dalí describes his encounter with the object:

The object, which struck me as being terribly personal and overshadowing everything else, was a crutch! It was the first time in my life that I saw a crutch, or at least I thought it was. Its aspect appeared to me at once as something extremely untoward and prodigiously striking. [...] This object communicated to me an assurance, an arrogance even, which I had never been capable of until then.⁴¹

The crutch became for Dalí a symbolic extension of himself, a tool for the exploration of his appetites and urges. In the *Secret Life* Dalí narrates an encounter with a dead hedgehog to which he is immediately drawn. When the artist first notices it, it is already being eaten by worms, a spectacle that simultaneously attracted and repelled the boy. Compelled to alter the decay cycle taking place, Dalí used a crutch to disturb the mass of worms, using the object to mediate his contact with the decaying animal. It is with this same instrument that he envisions himself touching the breasts of the blossom picker. Unable to do this, he finds her breasts—the motivation of his fantasy, doubled in a pair of melons hanging from a window. Using the crutch as an extension of his own body he feels the fruits as he indulges in his sexual fantasy:

While I looked at the breasts I would exercise a caressing pressure by means of my crutch's bifurcation upon one of the hanging melons, while attempting to have a perfect consciousness of its weight by slightly lifting it. This operation suddenly appeared to me as a hundred times more distracting and desirable than the first version of my fantasy, which simply consisted in directly touching the breasts. Indeed the weight of this hanging melon seemed to me now to have absorbed all the ripening gravity of my desire, and the supposition that this melon must be marvelously sweet and fragrant blended in my imagination in so paradisial a fashion with the turgescence of the blossom-picker's real breasts that it already seemed to me that by virtue of the subterfuge of my substitution I could now not only press them tenderly with my crutch's bifurcation, but also and especially I could "eat" them and press from them that sugared and fragrant



Fig. 3. Salvador Dalí, *The Visitation*, in Maurice Sandoz's *Fantastic Memories*, p. 112 © 2022 Salvador Dalí, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí / Artists Rights Society (ARS) New York 2022

liquid which they too, like the melons, must have within them.⁴²

Dalí finds in the crutch a tool that facilitates for him the fulfillment of his desire. The illustration for “The Crutches of Uncle Celestin” does not directly represent the story nor his own sexual interest/connection with the object. In the illustration, the scene takes place outdoors and there is no direct allusions to death. A large crutch crosses the composition diagonally; the figure either reaches for it or is threatened by it. The desolate landscape provides the setting for the confrontation between the object and the figure while the vibrating clouds suggest a prelude to an impending storm.

Let us consider one last instance where the correspondence between the images of this text and those of Dalí are evident. The second to last story of *Fantastic Memories*, “The Visitation” is a short description of Gabrielle, a friend of the (adult) narrator who he describes as an angel. She is an older woman who brings food to the poor and medicine to the sick. Everyday she fulfills her task by aiding those who are most in need. In return, she tells the narrator, Saint Theresa made an appearance in her apartment and as an appreciative gesture for her kindness, left her a white rose. The rose was the symbol of Saint Theresa’s presage. “I remembered then the words of Saint Theresa on her deathbed” Gabrielle said to the narrator, “After my death I will cause a rain of roses to fall upon the earth.”⁴³

The illustration portrays the angel as she approaches an older man, who is leaning on a crutch, and a child who seems to be in need (Fig. 3). She hands something to the old man perhaps a medicine or a coin to buy some food. Her facial features are indistinct and her body is only suggested by the repetition of circling lines that give her the quality of an ephemeral being. In the background a domed structure is crowned by a cross while two smaller angels with trumpets flank both sides of the building’s façade. This image is a variation of Dalí’s *The Angel* (1945), which appeared on the cover of the December 1945 issue of *Art News* on the occasion of the artist’s one-man show at the Bignou Gallery in New York (Fig. 4). The works included in this exhibition were praised in a short article in the magazine although the author criticized Dalí’s thirst for publicity by putting out the *Dalí News* as a stunt to gain attention.⁴⁴

Although both images, *The Angel* and the illustration for “The Visitation” are very similar, the mood in each of them is quite different. In “The Visitation” the angel is presented in a gesture of giving; she stretches her hand to give to the poor and sick. With her right hand over her heart and her bowed head, the figure evokes traditional representations of religious imagery. On the other hand, *The Angel* conveys the opposite message. Here the old man is replaced by a younger figure. The angel doesn’t appear to be giving to the children; instead both hands are thrown to the left while her right hand covers her face almost completely. The extended hands



Fig. 4. Salvador Dalí, *The Angel*, in *ARTnews*, December 1 – 14, 1945 © 2022 Salvador Dalí, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí / Artists Rights Society (ARS) New York 2022

of the expectant children emphasize the ambiguity of the image as a symbol of punishment or rejection.

Fantastic Memories appeared quite frequently in newspapers; reviews range between praise for the artist's skill enhancing Sandoz's text, and criticism for their deficient quality. By the time of its publication, Dalí was well-known in the American context having published his *Secret Life* only two years prior and showing in major museums and galleries. Reviews appealed to the readers' sense of familiarity with Dalí's extravagant public persona. Some reviews assert the illustrations had little relation to the text while others argued the exact opposite, claiming Dalí must have read the texts closely to be able to illustrate the scenes so accurately. Often reviewers commented on Sandoz's clear and matter of fact style of writing and characterized Dalí as the right choice to make sense of the fantastical stories:

Mr. Dalí has stepped up the total charge of fantasy in the book very materially with a series of plates that waver between Dürer and Doré, with occasional suggestions of Aubrey Beardsley and, of course, the usual strong influence of Bedlam. The remarkable thing, though, is that the illustrations afford incontestable evidence that he has read the text. He diverges from it frequently, but that was to be expected. No doubt is left, however, that it is this particular book, and no other, that he is illustrating; which is, for Mr. Dalí, noteworthy adherence to the normal or, if you prefer, to the commonplace.⁴⁵

Several reviews in the *New York Times* were not so favorable to the texts, the images accompanying them, or even the publisher's references to Sandoz as "internationally known." Mark Schorer's criticism targeted many aspects of the book: "The works of Sandoz and of Dalí are as deficient in genuine irony—which is all the 'explanation' one wishes of fantasy—as the works of Miss Arden herself." He goes on to say about the stories: "These anecdotes have a kind of charm, evanescent and of the surface, to be sure, like the charm of all efforts which are intended merely to divert. Since no greater claims are made for them, one can not fairly object that they have nothing to say on the subject of human life, sometimes thought to be the concern of literature." Although at one point Schorer asserts that "His art is to painting what the bad pun is to language," he later acknowledges the quality and nuance of Dalí's drawings:

Viewed not for their literary but for their graphic qualities, they are, to this reviewer's somewhat jaundiced eye, more satisfactory than Dalí's paintings. They are no less precise in their draftsmanship than the paintings are in the use of color, but for reasons which are apparent in the drawings, especially in a wiry, spiral line, they have

larger effects than merely that of precision. Since they don't duplicate the material of the stories, but, rather, extend it, they might better be called amplifications than illustrations.⁴⁶

Another reviewer writes in the *Times* about the effectiveness of the illustrations even when they are not as well-connected to the text and acknowledges that they will resonate with Dalí's admirers:

But, strange as it may seem, Mr. Dalí has made a real effort to be an illustrator of another man's ideas. His illustrations are not immaculately lacquered and polished like his most famous paintings. They are bold line drawings filled with rotating spirals and murky symbolism. They all bear a direct relationship to Mr. Sandoz's stories, but not a close one. Mr. Dalí has evidently read the text of "Fantastic Memories" and found it not quite fascinating enough. So his pictures are exaggerations inspired by Mr. Sandoz, not visualizations of the author's themes. They are undoubtedly effective in a perverse way and doubtless will be admired by Mr. Dalí's usual admirers.⁴⁷

Some even addressed the fact that the books' concern with strange events is characteristic of those who travel to Europe and try to embellish commonplace experiences, sarcastically inviting the narrator to consider the strangeness of the current moment: "Perhaps he should get back to earth, there are stranger, and truer, things going on down here today!"⁴⁸

The House Without Windows

Published in 1950, *The House Without Windows* consists of seven related sections, a preface and an epilogue. This is the only one of the four books considered here that includes color illustrations (Fig. 5). Each of the seven stories is accompanied by a full page illustration that corresponds directly with the main events described in the text. Narrated in the first person, the story begins in the 1910s in the fictitious setting of the Villa Nirvana located in Lake Constance, bordering Germany and Switzerland. The narrator, a young boy named Oliver, takes us on a journey that spans several decades and that culminates with flashbacks of a tragic event and its explanation.

Full of fantastical occurrences that weave in current events, *The House Without Windows* reads like a personal account of lived experiences and childhood memories, a sort of journal, peppered with characters and places that often seem implausible. Oliver's descriptions of his childhood visits to the Town of X in Villa Nirvana, first accompanied by his mother and a friend to see a piano that was for sale there, include things that seem to defy the laws of nature. From doors that would slide

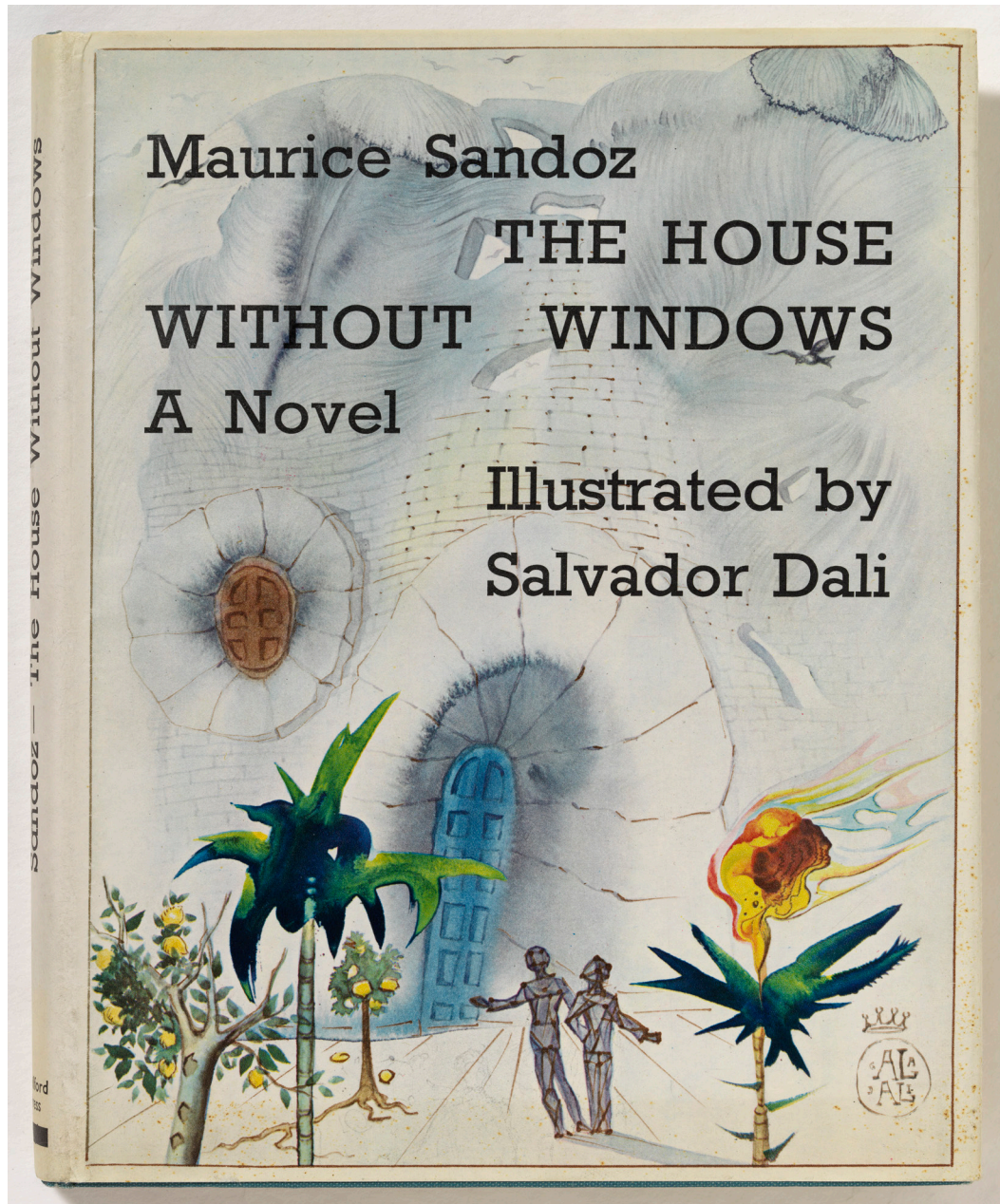


Fig. 5. Maurice Sandoz, *The House Without Windows* (color dustjacket; London: William Campion, 1950), illustrations by Salvador Dalí © 2022 Salvador Dalí, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí / Artists Rights Society (ARS) New York 2022

to reveal hidden rooms, to tamed panthers, and snake sculptures that come to life, to the eccentric Prof. Kacha, “a Hungarian Jew” who owns Villa Nirvana, and the young ladies that accompany him. As in *The Maze*, the setting of this mansion plays a large role in establishing the tone of the story and maintaining a sense of suspense and anticipation. However, the narrative in *The House Without Windows* moves quickly, and in a few pages we are taken from Villa Nirvana to Berlin, and Geneva and through a series of events that add to a suspenseful atmosphere in each of the locations.

Death is a constant theme throughout the book—murder, suicide, and the gruesome accidental death of Prof. Kacha are described in detail. Each of these events is reflected in specific details Dalí included in the illustrations. In the chapter “The Key to the Dreams,” the narrator reveals that Prof. Kacha was killed by a truck in Geneva:

This news gave me a severe shock. A strange vision passed before my eyes—I saw a carriage wheel splashed with scarlet, it was crushing not a head but test tubes corked with tufts of cotton, and dragging through the mud wide open books and geraniums whose flowers were as red as pools of blood; the wheel was cutting a furrow into marble pavements the way a circular saw would cut into a wooden floor.⁴⁹

As with others in this book, the illustration for the scene is characterized by Dalinian motifs: winged figures, dilapidated structures, crutches, and a mostly desolate landscape. The carriage’s wheel turning over a mass of reds and purples is the most prominent element in the image. The specificity of the imagery creates a dynamic dialogue between author and reader in which the colorful and surreal depictions reinforce the text. Beyond functioning as mere illustrations, these images open the door to the imagination, encouraging us to visualize the macabre scene and evoking the shock felt by the protagonist. Each of the elements Dalí depicted in these scenes combines the surreal and dreamlike elements emblematic of his style, while emphasizing the disorienting aspects of a traditional suspense narrative.

Throughout the book, Sandoz makes references to social issues of relevance at the time such as anti-semitism, immigration, the mixing of races, and the functioning of governments. Ultimately, the novel reflects morality on an individual and collective level with the character of Prof. Kacha functioning as a metaphor for the complexities of human beings who are not all good or all evil. At one point the narrator tells us “I walked along the deserted road which to me seemed illuminated by the brilliant and revolutionary ideas of this Jew. He had given me new knowledge—the subjectivity of good and evil.”⁵⁰ Perhaps one of the books considered here with the most traditional structure, *The House Without Windows* does

not seem to have been as popular as the others. Nevertheless, the images are in close dialogue with key moments in the sequence of events. They show Dalí's inimitable style and visual language, while acknowledging specific clues in the narrative that key the readers into what has occurred and what may come next.

On the Verge

Published in 1950 by Doubleday and Co., *On the Verge* consists of four independent sections and a preface. In this case, only the cover and the frontispiece are in color and the rest of the images are reproduced in black and white (Fig. 6). Unlike the illustrations for other of Sandoz's books, these are simple compositions, with perhaps one or two exceptions, that show the artist's focus on an elegant, minimalist approach that moves away from the intricate images in *The Maze* or *The House Without Windows*. Each section recounts the narrator's visits to mental asylums and his interactions with patients. The author includes a common disclaimer at the beginning of the book: "The characters and the incidents in this book are entirely the product of the author's imagination and have no relation to any person or event in real life." However, he tells the reader in the preface that the stories that follow are true: "Thanks to my doctor friends, I have been allowed to move from asylum to asylum, and from one "sanatorium" to another, and in this way I have been able to collect the true stories which are recorded in the pages that follow. I tell them without comment; that is the province of the psychiatrist."⁵¹

For the dust jacket and frontispiece illustrations, Dalí focuses on the subject of the first story: the *tsantsa*. Common war trophies in certain regions of South America, tsantsas involved severing and shrinking the head of an enemy by removing the skin from the skull, preparing it, and shaping it around a sphere about the size of a fist. The shrunken head was sometimes worn around the neck as a prize, used in ceremonies, or displayed as shown in the image on the cover of Sandoz's book. The objective of this ritual was to contain the spirit of the enemy and prevent it from causing harm from the afterlife: "It was believed that *tsantsas* contained the spirit of the victim and all their technical knowledge and thus were considered to possess supernatural qualities and represent a source of personal power for the owner."⁵² This first story, which dwells on the unsettling and macabre practice of shrinking human heads, sets the tone for the other three included in the book. The cover image, which combines the tsantsa and Dalí's emblematic butterflies, brings together the familiar and the nightmarish in typical surrealist fashion.

Peppered with anecdotes that sound like factual accounts mixed with improbable events, *On the Verge* layers science, mystery, horror, dreams, and the insane. Each of the stories takes the reader on a journey from the perspective of the narrator/doctor and the tales relayed by the patients he visited in mental institutions. The following stories address questions about the existence of God, the perception of reality versus the imagination, and the attempt to explain the unexplainable. Dalí's

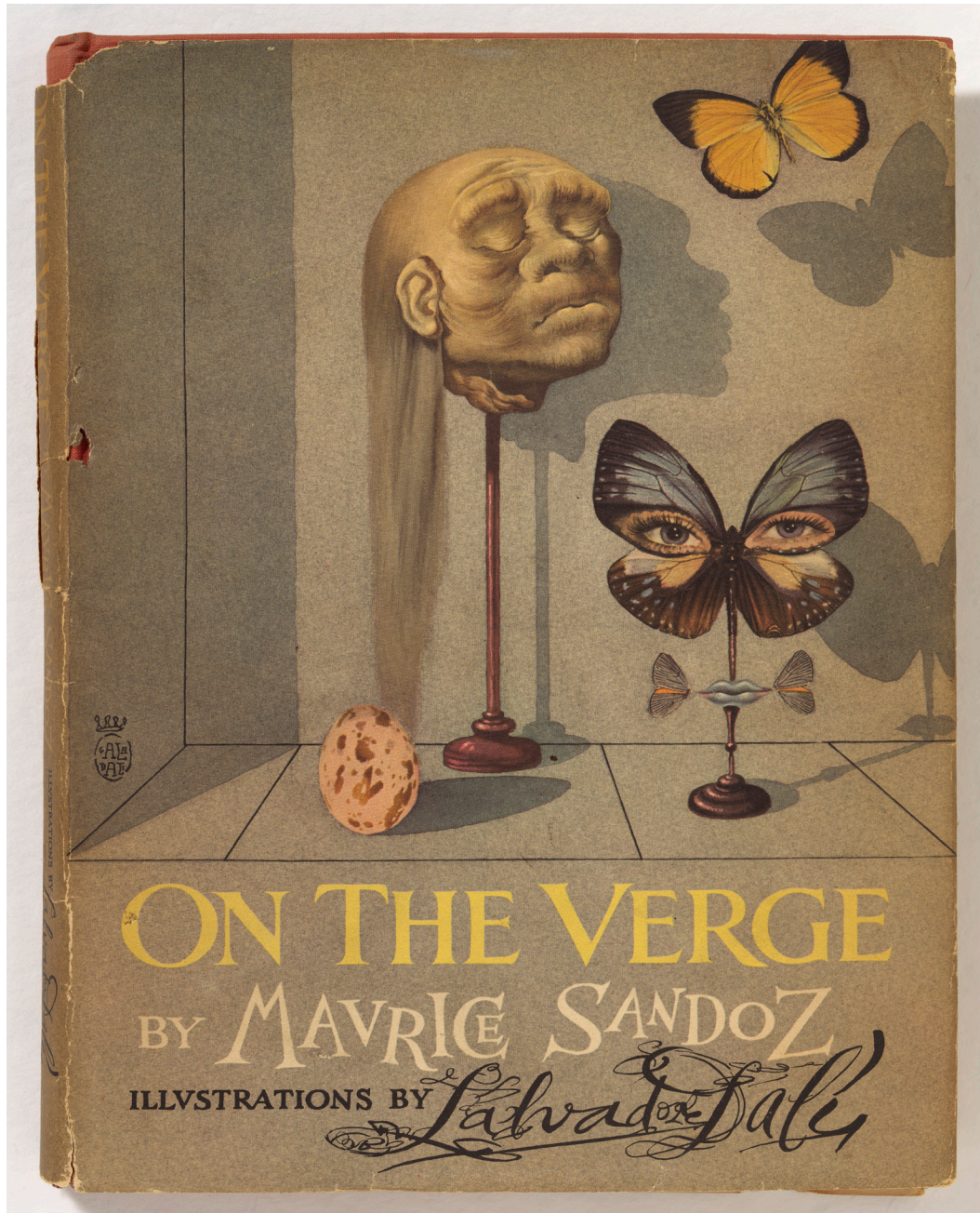


Fig. 6. Maurice Sandoz, *On the Verge* (color dustjacket; New York: Doubleday, 1950, 127 pp.), illustrated by Salvador Dalí © 2022 Salvador Dalí, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí / Artists Rights Society (ARS) New York 2022

illustrations for *On the Verge* show a simplicity of form and directness not found in the others discussed here. Most of these images are economical; they are reduced to the essential visual elements necessary to clue the reader in to a feeling, a moment, or an experience as expressed in the story. Period reviews praised the clever use of ambiguity in the text as well as its originality and effective illustrations: “Dalí’s superb illustrations are in perfect key with the text, which will guilefully assure you of bad dreams and pleasant shudders.”⁵³ Referring to the types of stories included in this book: “They belong in a small and specialized genre in which many a notable writer has tried and failed. These four examples deserve to survive, since Dr. Sandoz possesses the three qualities necessary for a good horror story: a striking plot, an expert hand with mood, setting and atmosphere, and a gripping narrative style in which suspense is the uppermost element.” It goes on to say: “The only real criticism that can be leveled against the book is its price, which is high for four short stories, even good ones. But Dalí always comes dearly.”⁵⁴

Louise Townsend Nicholl writes in the *New York Herald Tribune* about the nuanced themes embedded in the stories and the images that accompany them: “So in closing may I say, that in dealing with thoughts that not “often” but always, except when Sandoz and Dalí get to work on them, lie too deep for tears, they are attempting to convey the message that there is more to insanity than meets the eye.”⁵⁵ Finally, in a few instances, Sandoz’s imaginative style and his ability to create a sense of unease and ambiguity, which no doubt was heightened by Dalí’s images, becomes key: “He is at his best when he maneuvers the reader into the twilight region between the sane and the insane, the real and the unreal. Mr. Sandoz’s stories belong to a genre in which incident is more important than character. Into these people, divorced by their maladies from the pressures and embarrassments of ordinary life, the reader cannot project himself and his concerns. Instead, he takes a detached pleasure in watching the strangeness of their marionette movements.”⁵⁶

Conclusion

On the Verge as well as the other books by Sandoz discussed here are a testament to a timely and fruitful collaboration that although not as widely known, has endured as a cohesive body of work with popular appeal. Although Dalí’s collaboration with Sandoz contributed to his sustained, successful engagement with the American public, to my knowledge, there is no evidence of additional projects in which they both participated. Unpublished correspondence preserved in the archives at the Centre for Dalinian Studies at the Gala-Salvador Dalí Foundation shows exchanges between Sandoz and the Dalís well into the 1950s.⁵⁷ There seems to have been conversations regarding a possible collaboration for theater and ballet settings that were never realized. Dalí’s return to Europe in 1948, his embrace of religious subject matter and classicism, and finally, Sandoz’s death in 1958 curtailed any possibility of additional engagements. However, the illustrated books mark a

moment in Dalí's artistic production in America that cement the continuity of his interest in creative expression across media dating back to his early commissions to illustrate works of Catalan literature in the 1920s. Sandoz's writing style, his background as a chemist, collector, and world traveler, and his fascination with suspense and the uncanny were a fruitful match for Dalí's own interests.

Against the backdrop of political upheaval, shifts in American society and culture, and changing tastes in art and literature, these book projects manifest the intellectual curiosity of artists and writers that transcend one specific moment. The interconnectedness between different types of artistic creation is perhaps most evident in those media that have wider reach: books, magazines, film, and music. Enriched and informed by diverse perspectives, although by no means fully inclusive, many of the books published contemporaneously with Sandoz's were adapted into films that reflected the attitude of the times. As Kimberly Truhler explains about the shifts in the film industry: "In many cases the directors and cinematographers were émigrés who had fled Eastern Europe during the rise of Nazism. Not only did their artistic vision help shape the look of the noir, their suffering and alienation brought even more realism to the genre. As a result, the two types of movies that would make up film noir—crime thrillers and murder dramas—stood in sharp contrast to the romantic fantasies of earlier decades and reflected that it was hard, if not impossible, for many to achieve the American dream."⁵⁸ Sandoz's nightmarish stories, including *The Maze*, the only one that was made into a film, speak to experiences of trauma, displacement, power dynamics, physical distortions, death, transformation, and the grotesque. Addressing events past and present, they build on the familiar in order to create fantastical scenarios that question our perception of reality. Hutchinson summarizes the synergy between European and American styles in this context:

In the months and years to come, the experience of World War II baffled realist narrative and description, but other modes were at hand. Surrealism, futurism, imagism, and abstraction entered the mainstream consciousness as modes of registering the extreme experiences of regular Americans from all walks of life—and surrealists themselves migrated to America in force. This does not mean that European abstract styles were imposed from "above" by a cultural elite; they were absorbed and redeployed in the new environment. [...] European avant-garde styles became "American," and American literature gained its greatest international prestige just as Americans became readers on a scale never known before.⁵⁹

The demand for high quality illustrated fiction, the number of film adaptations, and the frequency of the press coverage underscores the impact of the medium during the 1940s. Whether viewed as objects to be consumed or as artifacts belonging to a

historical turning point, these works embody cultural practices that encompass and overlap social, literary, and artistic engagement. Like other works by Dalí produced during this period, the collaboration with Sandoz challenges the conventional parameters of artistic creation, proposes new avenues for approaching the relationship between text and image, and test the boundaries and expectations of new audiences. The dialogue between artist and author embodied in the pages of the books discussed, show a profound commitment to experimentation and creativity, and reiterate the enduring legacy of surrealism in popular culture.

I would like to thank Rachel Walton, Digital Archivist and Records Manager, and Dr. Deborah Prosser, Director at Olin Library at Rollins College for their assistance researching sources on Maurice Sandoz and period literature. My gratitude also goes to Shaina Buckles Harkness, Collection Database, Image Manager and Librarian at The Dalí Museum in St. Petersburg, FL, as well as to Peter Tush, Curator of Education. Special thanks to Carme Ruiz, Senior Curator at the Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí for her expertise and for confirming and clarifying archival information.

1 Thomas Sugrue, "In a Fortunate Collaboration," *New York Herald Tribune Weekly Book Review*, December 31, 1944.

2 The book was published by Editorial Políglota, Barcelona. See Eduard Fornes, *Dalí y los Libros*, Departament de Cultura de la Generalitat de Catalunya, 1982: 85. Dalí's paternal ancestors were from the small Catalan town of Llers to which Fages de Climent refers in his book. The town was once believed to be inhabited by witches and was known for suffering the devastating effects of the winds of the Tramuntana. See Ian Gibson, *The Shameful Life of Salvador Dalí* (New York, 1997), 98. See also Daniel Giralt-Miracle, "The Story of a Fascination" in *Dalí: A Life in Books* (Destino, Barcelona, 2004), 343.

3 Gibson, 98.

4 There is some dispute as to how Skira became interested in Dalí for this project. According to W.J. Strachan it was René Crevel who suggested Dalí as the illustrator for the *Chants de Maldoror*. See W.J. Strachan, *The Artist and the Book in France: The 20th Century Livre d'Artiste* (New York, 1969), 72-73. However, Fornes claims that Dalí met Skira in Picasso's studio and that it was Picasso who recommended Dalí for the project. Fornes, 91. Gibson attributes this confusion to the fact that Dalí in his *Diary of a Genius* (1964) claims that "Picasso había pedido al editor Skira que yo ilustrara Los Cantos de Maldoror." Salvador Dalí *Diario de un Genio*, Editores Tusquets, Barcelona, 1964: 32. According to Gibson, Skira stated in 1948 that it was Crevel who suggested him to consider Dalí. Gibson, 363.

5 David Lomas, *The Haunted Self* (Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut, 2000), 157. In discussing Dalí's illustrations for *Maldoror*, Renée Riese Hubert suggests that the images are not related to the text and like Gibson she suggests these are modified repetitions of typical motifs of Dalí's work. Renée Riese Hubert, *Surrealism and the Book* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1988), 205-206. See also Gibson, 486.

6 Dimitri Tselos, "Modern Illustrated Books," *Modern Illustrated Books from the Collection of Louis E. Stern*, The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, (1959): 39.

7 Montse Aguer, "Dalí and the Force of the Imagination," *Dalí and the Force of the Imagination* (Nordiska Akvarellmuseet and Gala-Salvador Dalí Foundation, 2001), 92.

8 George Hutchinson, "Introduction," *Facing the Abyss: American Literature and Culture in the 1940s* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2018), 6-7.

9 See Carmen García de la Rasilla, "La aventura surrealista americana de Salvador Dalí," *El impacto de la metrópolis: La experiencia americana en Lorca, Dalí y Buñuel*, José M. Del Pino, ed. (Madrid, Iberoamericana Vervuert, 2018), 183-201.

10 García de la Rasilla, "Introduction," *Salvador Dalí's Literary Self-Portrait: Approaches to a Surrealist Autobiography* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2009), 18.

11 Hutchinson, 15-16.

12 Few biographical facts about Sandoz appear in the Foundation Edouard-Maurice Sandoz's Internet page <http://www.fems.ch/english/mys.html>. A short entry on Sandoz also appears in Roger Francillon, *Histoire de la Litterature en Suisse Romande II*, Series Territories (Lausanne, Switzerland, 1996), 396-397.

13 Rosa Maria Maurell and Lucia Moni, *Chronology of Dalí in Italy* (Figueres: Centre of Dalinian Studies, Gala-Salvador Dalí Foundation, 2012).

- 14 At the time Sandoz's books were published in America, they received many negative reviews in the press. His 1945 novel *Fantastic Memories* was particularly criticized. Several reviewers thought it was superficial and its prose unembellished. Of the four books illustrated by Dalí, *Fantastic Memories* is the one that appears most frequently in the press. For a review on *Fantastic Memories* see Mark Schorer, "Mr. Sandoz, Mr. Dalí," *New York Times* (January 28, 1945): 128.
- 15 Montse Aguer, "Dalí as Graphic Artist in the Gala-Salvador Dalí Foundation Collection," *Dalí Grafista*, Casa-Museu Castell Gala-Dalí de Púbol del 19 de Març a l'1 de Novembre de 2003 (Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, 2003), 89.
- 16 Ricard Mas, "Dalí a life in books: The American Adventure (1941-1948)," *Dalí: A Life in Books* (Barcelona: Destino), 359.
- 17 Maurice Sandoz, *The Maze* (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Co., Inc., 1945). In 1953 filmmaker William Cameron Menzies directed a full-length feature film titled "The Maze," based on the book of the same title by Maurice Sandoz. David Milton, the film's art director, based the sets on Dalí's illustrations for the book. Anon., "3-D Thriller Wins Acclaim in Race for Film Novelty," *News & Courier* (November 8, 1952): 49.
- 18 The castle's maze where the mystery of the story is solved does not appear in the cover illustration or in any of the illustrations of the book.
- 19 Sandoz, *The Maze*, 105.
- 20 Ibid., 17.
- 21 Ibid., 57-59.
- 22 Diana Klemin, *The Illustrated Book: Its Art and Craft* (New York: Bramhall House, 1970), 22.
- 23 Sandoz, 66.
- 24 Ibid., 92.
- 25 This element resembles a variation of the figures in Millet's *Angelus* which recur in many of Dalí's paintings. In 1963 Dalí published *El Mito Trágico de "El Angelus" de Millet* where he theorizes the images of Millet's painting in terms of Dalí's "paranoiac critical method." Salvador Dalí, *El Mito Trágico de "El Angelus de Millet,"* (Barcelona: Tusquets Editores, 1978; first published in 1963). Dalí claims that he had originally written this text in 1938. See also Jordana Mendelson, "Of Politics, Postcards and Pornography: Salvador Dalí's *Le Mythe Tragique de l'Angelus de Millet*," in Raymond Spiteri and Donald LaCoss, eds., *Surrealism, Politics and Culture* (Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2003), 161-178.
- 26 Klemin, 21.
- 27 R.P. Gossop, *Book Illustration: A Review of the Art as it is Today* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937), 12-13.
- 28 A photograph of the Art Department at Doubleday in New York was included and published on the same year as Sandoz's *The Maze* shows the dust jacket of the book on the background wall at the right of a large window. Perhaps the photograph was taken at exactly the same time that the department was reviewing the cover and illustrations for the book before publication. See *Doubleday: The Story of a Combined Operation in Book Publishing* (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1945), 13.
- 29 Ibid., 12.
- 30 Anon., "3-D Thriller Wins Acclaim in Race for Film Novelty," *News & Courier* (Charleston, S.C.), November 8, 1952.
- 31 Sandoz, *Fantastic Memories*.
- 32 Ibid., 21.
- 33 Ibid., 21-22.
- 34 Robert Descharnes and Gilles Néret, *Salvador Dalí 1904-1989: The Paintings*, Vol. II, 1946-1989 (1994): 407.
- 35 The boy's figure in the sailor suit looks very similar to the boy that appears in Dalí's *Spectre of Sex*

Appeal (1934) and later in *Hallucinogenic Toreador* (1969-70).

36 Sandoz, *Fantastic Memories*, 40.

37 Salvador Dalí, *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí* (New York: Dover Publications, 1942), 291.

38 Ibid., 290.

39 Sandoz, *Fantastic Memories*, 51.

40 Crutches appear in many of Dalí's paintings of the 1930s and 1940s such as *Meditation of the Harp* (1932-1934), *The Spectre of Sex Appeal* (1934), *Sleep* (1937), and *Soft Self-Portrait with Fried Bacon* (1941).

41 Dalí, 90.

42 Ibid., 98.

43 Sandoz, *Fantastic Memories*, 115.

44 Anon., "Dalí: New and Old Surrealism," *ARTnews* (December 1-14, 1945): 24.

45 Gerald W. Johnson, "Books and Things," *The New York Herald Tribune* (December 14, 1944).

46 Mark Schorer, "Mr. Sandoz, Mr. Dalí," *The New York Times* (January 28, 1945).

47 Orville Prescott, "Books of the Times," *The New York Times* (February 12, 1945).

48 V.S., "Fantastic Memories Are Too Precious for These Times," *Pasadena Star News*, (July 1, 1945).

49 Sandoz, *The House Without Windows*, 77.

50 Ibid., 73.

51 Sandoz, *On the Verge* (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Co., Inc., 1950), 13.

52 Craig D. Byron, et. al., "The authentication and repatriation of a ceremonial *tsantsa* to its country of origin (Ecuador)," *Heritage Science Journal* (2021) 9: 50.

53 Nancy Barr Mavity, "Who's Looney Now?," *The Oakland Tribune*, (January 14, 1951).

54 Anon., "Four Chillers," *The San Diego Union*, (December 17, 1950).

55 Louise Townsend Nicholl, "Dalí and Sandoz in a Swimming Pool With No Exit," *New York Herald Tribune* (December 24, 1950).

56 Horace Reynolds, "Assorted Neuroses," *The New York Times*, (November 19, 1950).

57 There are several letters and telegrams preserved at the archives dating to 1947, 1953, and 1956, and referring to what seem to be different aspects of a possible project that remained unrealized, only a few years prior to Sandoz's death in 1958.

58 Kimberly Truhler, "Introduction," *Film Noir Style: The Killer 1940s* (Pittsburgh: GoodKnight Books, 2020), 2.

59 George Hutchinson, "Popular Culture and the Avant-Garde," *Facing the Abyss: American Literature and Culture in the 1940s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 55.