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Savage Sight / Constructed Noise: Poetic Adaptations of
Painterly Techniques in the French and American Avant-Gardes
(review)

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vider' (p. 114); hence the phallic virility of Colette's women, represented repeatedly by a textual focus on laughing mouths full of strong, white teeth, and 'erectile substitutes' such as the clitoris and the nipple. Dupont makes a compelling case for the intimate, probing vision of Colette that obsessively documents and evaluates the body's tropistic responses. The deductions she bases upon this material evidence are partly Balzacian physiognomy, partly a quasi-medical response to bodily symptoms, partly the attribution of a phantastic understanding of the body that is unique to Colette. Although some might be disappointed that this critique does not take the extra step of analysing the phantastic body created in and through Colette's texts, there is an abundant wealth of textual detail to be enjoyed here that reminds us of Colette's extraordinary literary inventiveness, and her original representation of being-in-the-world.

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Savage Sight|Constructed Noise: Poetic Adaptations of Painterly Techniques in the French and American Avant-Gardes. By DAVID LEHARDY SWEET. (North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures, 276). Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2003. 318 pp., 24 b&w plates. Pb \$54.95.

David LeHardy Sweet selects Apollinaire, Reverdy, Breton, Frank O'Hara and John Ashbery for his discussion of Modernist poetry's assimilation and adaptation of the concepts and techniques of nonrepresentationalist painting, particularly Cubism. Acknowledging Marjorie Perloff's brilliant work on Franco-American synergies, Sweet opts for a technical and philosophical treatment of the transnational confluences and divergences between visual and verbal media. With a steady focus on writerly processes and strategies, Sweet discusses French poetry's mediation of collage technique, and the American poets' dispersed debt to their French Modernist forerunners. Sweet begins with an analysis of Apollinaire's art criticism, reading it as a site of the tensions played out in the poetry between abstractive drive and humanizing impetus. Reading 'Un fantôme de nuées' (pp. 50–51), he demonstrates the slippages between Symbolist and Modernist impulses, between music/memory and painting/immediacy. There follow persuasive readings of linguistic texturing and framing devices in 'Les Fenêtres', and of the 'cultural contingency' of 'Lundi Rue Christine', the latter viewed as a hybrid of chance and aesthetic necessity. Sweet's exploration of the ideological strains articulated in the *calligramme* 'Lettre-Océan' emphasizes tropes of technological, affective and political resistance, and celebration. Sweet's meticulous readings integrate the critical tradition in Apollinaire studies and take forward perspectives informed by Derrida and Compagnon. Reverdy as a major theoretician of the image receives his due place in Sweet's study, linked more to late Cubism than to Surrealism. For Sweet, Reverdy's definition of the image founded on 'deux réalités lointaines et justes' performs the balance of audacity and moderation that is key to Modernist image-theory. Keen insights into the hermeneutic potential of Reverdy's poetry are provided as Sweet examines typography, layout, syntax and signifiers, and concludes that the purity synonymous with Reverdian style

is rivalled by the poetry's darker atmosphere, analogous to the disturbing ellipses to be found in the metaphysical painting of De Chirico. Sweet considers Breton's idiosyncratic reading of Apollinaire's *calligrammes* in its critique of their aesthetic quality and its approval of their mimetic aspect. He goes on to chart Breton's developmental with the visual arts — from resistance to the rationality of constructivist modes to immersion in the interior impulses shaping Surrealist painting, particularly that of Ernst. Frank O'Hara, with his playful assimilation of Symbolist, Cubist and Surrealist strains, emerges as a postmodernist practitioner. O'Hara is shown to move on from French influences, notably that of Reverdy, both to Abstract Expressionism and to Larry Rivers's 'smorgasbord of the recognizable'. Sweet reads John Ashbery's writings on French *avant-garde* art as the 'proto-poetics' of a writer usually more intent on obscuring his debt to French poets and painters. At a time when domestic and disciplinary specificities are being rethought in productive fusions, Sweet's probing of variable verbal–visual interactivity contributes substantially to the critical negotiation of transnational currents in modernist/postmodernist cross-over.

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FRANÇOIS MAURIAC and JEAN PAULHAN: *Correspondance: 1925–1967*. Édition établie, présentée et annotée par JOHN E. FLOWER. (Correspondances de Jean Paulhan). Paris, Éditions Claire Paulhan, 2001. 371 pp. Pb €28.00.

This collection of 293 letters, only fifty of which have previously been published, charts in admirable detail the relationship between the leading Catholic writer of his generation and the editor-in-chief of the prestigious *NRF*. Flower's introduction usefully surveys the most important aspects of the men's exchanges, and his excellent notes provide a wealth of contextual detail that enables the reader to grasp fully the ins and outs of their discussions (although I would suggest that Paulhan's reference in letter 109 is, in fact, to Mauriac's articles 'Critique de la critique' and 'Nouvelles notes sur la critique', published in *Journal II*). Because most of the letters are not clearly dated, Flower makes careful use of unpublished diaries to reconstitute a plausible chronology, correcting a number of unlikely dates given for letters previously published elsewhere. It seems probable that Mauriac and Paulhan first met in the early 1920s when the latter was employed as Jacques Rivière's secretary at the *NRF*. Flower draws on his earlier edition of Mauriac and Rivière's correspondence (see *FS*, XLIV (1990), 82–83) to illuminate the background to Mauriac's strong desire to contribute to the *NRF* (his 'évangile'). This objective was achieved in December 1922, but Flower demonstrates how Mauriac's association with the journal was to remain uneasy thanks to events such as Gide's open letter of June 1928, an article by Jean Prévoist published in March 1930, Gide's praise of atheistic Communism in the early 1930s, Sartre's devastating attack of February 1939, and the evolution of the journal once it fell under the control of Drieu La Rochelle during the Occupation. The *années noires* saw a friendship develop between Mauriac and Paulhan as they contributed to the *résistance des écrivains*, with Paulhan working behind the scenes to bring about the publication of Mauriac's *Cahier noir* by the Éditions de Minuit in 1943. They were also both opposed to the excesses of the *épuration* and to the blacklists drawn up by the