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# Michael Tedja

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## Brief orientation

Dutch author and artist Michael Tedja was born in Rotterdam in 1971 to parents of Suriname descent and spent his youth in the neighbouring city of Vlaardingen. Having studied at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy and the Sandberg Institute in Amsterdam, Tedja started his career as a visual artist. In 2003, two years after winning the Charlotte Köhler Prize for promising artists, he debuted with the novel *A.U.T.O.B.I.O.G.R.A.F.I.E.* (henceforth referred to as *A.B.*), an acronym that symbolizes Tedja's fictional deconstruction of the autobiographical mode. Two years later Tedja published his first poetry collection *The Aquaholist* (*De Aquaholist* 2005), in which poetry is mixed with fiction and essay.

With those works Tedja founds his poetics of aquaholism, which entails methods of mixing, or in his terms "hustling". At the onset of his oeuvre, this yields intermedial works, either art works that incorporate text, or novels, like *A.B.* and *Hosselen* (2009), that include photographs, drawings, prints, or even combinations of those media in collages. Later novels, such as *Brilliant Man* (*Briljante man* 2018) and *Meta Is Her Name* (*Meta is haar naam* 2021), substitute this intermediality for narratological experimentation.

What remains constant throughout his work, is the meta-textuality, as he persistently seeks to excavate new conceptual spaces by questioning language. This has resulted in a radically experimental style, which in turn has impacted the reception of Tedja's literary work. His novels were scarcely reviewed until 2018. The same can be said for his poetry, its complex diasporic voice first recognized in 2013 with the publication of *Up To Here And Beyond* (*Tot hier en verder*). Nevertheless, the scholar of Suriname literary history Michiel Van Kempen characterises Tedja as a leading talent of a new generation of 21st-century Dutch-Suriname voices, praising the typographical "radicality" of his "verbal universe" (2020: 293-294).

## Developments

In the years after his debut novel *A.B.* Tedja develops his literary and artistic oeuvre at a firm pace, his early works conjoining the visual and the textual. In *A.B.* and *Hosselen* Tedja conducts intermedial and intergeneric experiments fusing fiction with the essay, but also with art, photography and collage. This experiment can be read through Tedja's debut poetry collection *The Aquaholist*, which while it does not contain experiments in the same vein as other early works, centralizes the poetics of aquaholism as a method of mixing.

Following the publication of *Brilliant Man* in 2018 Tedja's oeuvre has expanded even more rapidly. Since 2019 Tedja has published a poetry collection or a novel each year, bringing the total to four novels and thirteen poetry collections (including the nine part *One Euro Poems* published from 2010 to 2011). Even though this context makes generalizations difficult, focusing on the nature of the oeuvre's development allows to distinguish recurrent themes.

In this regard, the verb "hosselen", as a component of aquaholism, characterizes Tedja's project. This Suriname-Dutch slang word is related to the English verb "to hustle" and refers to mixing, gathering, or, more informally, dealing drugs. The function and dynamics of hustling are explored in the novel *Hosselen*. Its protagonist is the Wakaman, whose name refers to a drifter (waka is a Suriname substrate word derived from the English "to walk"). He reflects on a failed cooperation for the exposition Wakaman 2.0, which was intended to deconstruct alt right ideology. Instead of giving up, the Wakaman decides to take matters into his own hands and attempts to write his own manifesto. Unfortunately, no publisher takes interest in the work and the Wakaman consequently fails. In the foreword of the novel, which mimics the performativity of a manifesto, the protagonist talks hustling into existence: "after a good hustle, specific connections are made in a precise manner and in all those layers of time a coherence, a substantive depth, yes, the bigger picture is revealed" (2009: 12).

## Avant-garde strategies

In Tedja's texts each bit of space is packed ranging from the smallest concept in language to concrete settings like an apartment in Vlaardingen: everything is full and exhausted. In this regard the "vacuum" is a key metaphor that returns in each novel. The vacuums that Tedja creates are to be understood as two-sided. On the one hand a vacuum refers to a volatile space pressure laden with oxygen, on the other hand a vacuum symbolizes a stable space devoid of air. Similarly, whilst Tedja's language evokes impotent spaces, it is also an attempt to reignite them. The vacuum epitomizes the intent to expose palimpsests, hidden sensibilities within conventional language, which is attempted formally through syntax and word play. In the novel *Hosselen* the protagonist refers to this practice as "isolating the words. Vacuuming them" (2009: 366).

By way of illustration, Tedja plays with a black-and-white contrast in the poem "a large group black-white" from the collection *The Aquaholist* (2005: 67), a game that is repeated in other works. The poem opens by scraping the layers of the word "zwart" (black), pulling the letters apart to form "zw ar t". For the lyrical subject "Z" refers orthographically to the first letter of "zwart", as "w" refers to "wit" or "white". A sharp claire-obscur contrast with racial connotations is presented here, whilst the "t" phonologically refers to "tea", which has politically conservative connotations. But the reader can also observe how within "zwart" the words "art" and "war" are excavated by the l, the second word in Dutch referring to a mess (not the English "war"). Then the speaker shuffles the letters, forming "a r t z w". He reveals "artz", a pun on the Dutch word "arts" for doctor (the speaker mentions a "sound doctor"), and a "w" that is onomatopoeically rendered as "wee". In a final turn the letters are shuffled again to "t z w a r". Read phonologically the phrase is pronounced by the speaker as "thee zet wee aa er of thee ze twa er" ("tea brews water"), which is then polished to "theewater zetten" ("to brew water for tea"). This is the poem's ironical revolution: from the politically motivated pair black-white to brewing tea water.

Whilst Tedja's oeuvre is filled with comparable examples, that sometimes even include numbers or geometrical shapes, and considering that a single illustration is far from exhaustive, "a large group black-white" is nevertheless useful to explore Tedja's avant-garde strategies further. Firstly, the poem's excavation of language allows us to explore the poetics of aquaholism that Tedja applies in his texts. Another tendency is visible in the poem's bathetic and ironic twist at the end, illustrating Tedja's complex relationship with diasporic writing (see below).

Aquaholism is coined by Tedja and, like hustling, stems from the belief in his oeuvre that everything can be connected, emphasized by the central question in the introduction of the catalogue *The Holarium*: “Can a thing ever be ‘unconnected’?” (2002: 193). The term morphologically coincides with the process it describes. As a compound noun that connects the terms “aqua” and “holism” it contains multiple semantic layers. Water serves as a metaphor for liquidity and fluidity, representing a dynamic that seeks to make conceptual boundaries malleable, but water can also represent diasporic memory and trauma (Wardi 2011). Holism then adds an all-encompassing notion to the concept, while it enables an acoustic resemblance between aquaholism and alcoholism. More than once does a character’s experimentation with alcohol and drugs lead to its all-connecting abilities.

On the level of the oeuvre the works are interconnected through repetitive intra- and intertextuality. This takes different forms, as Tedja includes the same poem in different collections, like “a large group black-white”; which is repeated verbatim in different collections or novels; or repeated in part as a scene with slight alterations in the same novel. Yet, recalling Gertrude Stein, this can be read as insistence instead of repetition. In her essay “Portraits and Repetition” Stein juxtaposes the two terms, observing that insistence never becomes repetition, as it by contrast remains alive, “never saying anything in the same way” (1935: 171). Along the same lines, repetition in Tedja’s oeuvre, whether on the level of poetics or textuality, never encompasses stasis through sameness, but is instead the index of a continued reliance upon hustling. If anything, the motion in Tedja’s oeuvre is determined by this insistence.

In textual practice aquaholism is a method of layering vis-à-vis a combination of montage and collage, with which Tedja seeks to erode and renew conventional concepts. Sometimes this is done graphically, like in the first chapter of *A.B.* where Tedja experiments with new “Forms”. In one of those forms concepts like “illness”, “modernism” and “terrorism” are scattered around a page. On the following page, whilst the relative positions of the concepts are retained, dots are added to the constellation and the concepts are connected by two types of lines, either a solid line or a hybrid line composed of dashes and dots (2003:14-15). Why the constellation is mapped in this manner, or why, for example, “modernism” is connected to “exotic cultures” and not to “intellect” remains unclear in this form. Regardless of this contingency, what appears to matter is the formal potential to create something new.

Furthermore, aquaholism crystallizes in the “brilliant” and the “Holarium”, two important motifs in Tedja’s works. A brilliant refers to a diamond cut perfectly into 58 facets, a procedure that can only be applied to the hardest of those stones. The refractory qualities of the brilliant are essential for Tedja, as can be illustrated by a metatextual statement from the anonymous first-person narrator in *Meta Is Her Name*: “It means that the light enters through those 58 facets, and is then reflected again, because that is the purity of that brilliant, through one central point” (2020: 149).

Tedja has used the brilliant as a subjectivist mould, constructing layered, multi-interpretable characters like the titular “brilliant man” in his 2018 novel, but he has also used it as a literary form. The backbone of the novel *Hosselen* is modelled on the brilliant, as the chapters are not called chapters but “facets”. Additionally, the chapters are not supposed to be read in the presented order, but the reader can choose the order in which they read the facets. On top of this the Wakaman identifies as a brilliant, because like a diamond he “is hard. The hardest stone amongst gems is a diamond” (2009: 13). The diasporic identity of the Wakaman is likewise faceted and never reducible to any existential ground. Yet at the same time the novel’s brilliant form is deconstructed in aquaholism fashion, as the novel *Hosselen* does not contain 58 facets, but 60. “Unyielding obstinacy. I undermine everything at every turn”, the Wakaman proclaims in a metalepsis (2009: 197). The practice of imposing a form and then destroying it reveals a “décollage” in the sense of Jacques Villeglé, who used to create lacerated collages by ripping up billboards (*affiche lacérée*) as a critique of public propaganda (Buchloh 2015 [1977]: 21-25), with the ironical caveat that, while Villeglé worked on billboards in public spaces he did not construct, Tedja’s “undermined” form is his creation. In this manner, however, the novel juxtaposes textual construction and destruction.

The “Holarium” on the other hand, another term coined by Tedja, functions not as a procedure but as a laboratory. The concept first appeared in the title of the catalogue *The Holarium* (2002), and refers to a space that enables aquaholism. A chapter in *A.B.* called *The Holarium* offers insight into the workings of that space in a lengthy footnote, that cites an interview with Tedja: “You can walk around the aquarium and point: there is that quote, and there that impression. The Holarium is a space where everything is given a temporary place” (2003: 193). In the image of the aquarium evoked here, the Holarium functions like a test tube, wherein the results of aquaholism experimentation can be observed.

As Tedja’s works often draw on meta-poetical and -literal language, they can be regarded as holariums in their own right, experimental spaces in which the characters experience the results. Especially Tedja’s more recent novels can be considered as narrative experiments. *Brilliant Man* consists entirely of a stream of consciousness in which an anonymous narrator obsesses over the creation of “new ways of speaking” (2018: 83), using a repetitive metalanguage he calls “experimentaal” (2018: 184; the suffix “-taal” is a pun on the Dutch word for language and the adjective “experimenteel” for “experimental”). In correspondence with aquaholism methodology, the narrator instrumentalizes language to render life malleable (2018: 177). Ultimately, this results in the manifestation of the existentially unstable “man without title and floor covering” (2018: 300).

In *Meta Is Her Name* the reader also encounters an anonymous narrator, who mourns over a lost sister called Nan. Comparing the text to *Brilliant Man*, this novel doubles down on the meta-narration, as the narrator can frequently be seen to muse over the story’s construction, which at times results in contingent and ephemeral meta-fictionality. This can be exemplified in a rather lengthy exposé in the middle of the novel, in which explicit references to aquaholism and the holarium can be found alongside quotations from *A.B.*, *Hosselen*, and interviews with Tedja (149-161). The passage, that features another example of Steinian insistence, lays bare the poetics behind the text and metaleptically involves the author with the narrative. As such the first person pronouns in the passage are destabilized, because “I” can either refer to the anonymous narrator or to Tedja himself. This textual vacuum is poignantly highlighted at the end of the exposé when the speaker asserts: “My body is pure fiction” (2021: 160). The analytical discourse of the poetical exposé moreover resonates with the narrator’s analytical propensity, who, like Camus’ Meursault, does not cry, but instead analyses his grief: “Emotions are fine, but they have to be shaped” (2020: 234). While this rationality may appear as a negative and pessimistic shift towards meta-text, approaching postmodernism, Tedja’s experiments nevertheless revitalize the avant-garde as well.

## Avant-garde thought

Tedja’s exploration of the contemporary avant-garde is firmly rooted within a notion of decentring, multiple avant-gardes. As with his usage of the vacuum, however, his endeavours are ambivalent. There is an optimistic belief in literary experimentation, but this is confronted by the threat of institutional dead ends. The Wakaman can hustle as much as he likes, but he fails to get his new language and his manifesto is printed by a publisher. Tedja’s avant-garde thinking is thus framed in subtextual questions: is it still possible to “make it new” and if so, under which conditions?

The only review of *A.B.* by Ricco Van Nierop (2003) offers a starting point to explore how Tedja engages with those issues. In his conclusion Van Nierop constructs an oxymoron, praising *A.B.* as an “old-fashioned experimental novel” that continues a tradition that “hasn’t surfaced in literature for quite some time”. Additionally, and more peculiarly, Van Nierop reads Tedja’s cultural and artistic reference frame as “postpostpostmodern”, a term with which he refers to Tedja’s loose mixing of genres. By tripling the prefix “post” the term suggests a hypermodern vanguard position that, even in 2003, has already succeeded the successor of postmodernism. An ambitious claim, but ironically Van Nierop’s term encapsulates the ambivalence within Tedja’s avant-gardism.

What could have been a potential reference for Van Nierop, is the chapter “A Paradise”. Here the narrator of *A.B.* sets the stage in a substitution for a conventionally autobiographical birth scene. Instead, he metafictionally presents five stereotypical typical Dutch names and adds an absurd predicate: Keesman Doeterpaal will be Keesman “just before his confession” (2003: 36). The titular paradise is referred to by the narrator as a “paradise of anxiety” (2003: 35), because the textual space is constituted by this absurd metafictionality, which is opposed to the diegetic safety of the autobiography (Lejeune 1975: 23-25). Moreover, the novel’s protagonist Hermanus Frietpot (who does not always coincide with the first-person narrator) is less a conventional autobiographical subject, than a fictional amalgamation like the Wakaman and the Brilliant Man, as emphasized by his name: the first name refers to a South-African town and the family name translates to “frying pan”. Here, autobiographical referentiality is deconstructed through cliché and obviously constructed names, emphasizing fictionalization instead of identifying the narrator with the author.

In later work a digital leitmotiv is added to that postmodern funhouse In the collections *Exclusive (Exclusief* 2019) and *The Finished Part (Het uitgelezen deel* 2022; the title is a Dutch homonymic pun on “selected” and “finished”), and the novel *Meta Is Her Name* references the internet feature more prominently. In *Exclusive* Hermanus becomes “Script Manus”, a digital subject determined by scripts in a “cold universe” (2019: 26) of “data” (2019: 39) and “screens” (2019: 42), a universe of “fake salvation” (schijnheil; 2019: 34). Analogously, in *The Finished Part* Tedja shapes a textual world exhausted by incessant technological development, which is formally met by the verbal density of the poem’s lengthy three-lined stanzas. Lastly, in footnotes that stretch multiple pages, the novel *Meta Is Her Name* mirrors the “layman” criticism of sites like *Goodreads*, but semantically crucial words are elided, prompting half phrases like “[i]f I not enough formally” (2021: 268).

Tedja’s works draw upon a paralyzing postmodern constructivism, as is symbolized by the prevalence of self-conscious and insecure metatextuality. But, again, this is only one side of the vacuum. Tedja’s characters are not simply apathic cynics who wallow in their textual paralysis. In fact the narrator of *Meta Is Her Name* does succeed in having a posthumous internal dialogue with his deceased mother and Nan. To this extent Tedja’s texts constitute attempts to go beyond the postmodern, not necessarily attaining Van Nierop’s postpostpostmodern, but at the very least exploring how a “beyond” postmodernism could be textually shaped.

The belief in the potency of literary experiment to envisage a space beyond “the horizon of our current globalized system” (Jameson 2015: 121), can thus be considered a cornerstone of Tedja’s contemporary avant-gardism. This optimism echoes in the novel *Hosselen*. Even though the new language of the Wakaman remains a failure from an institutional viewpoint, he insists that he recovers a utopian space. In a remarkable passage the Wakaman has a coffee machine – the icon of 21st-century work routine – repeatedly brew thick acrylic paint until it loses its prime function (2009: 429). The Steinian lens is again illuminating here, especially considering the following performative statement by the protagonist made prior to the coffee machine scene: “repeat until primal powers are released” (2009: 417).

The Wakaman repeats postmodern conditions (the routine habit of making coffee) but insists on his attempts to disrupt those conditions (adding paint to the machine instead of water). Regardless of whether this succeeds, or what dimension this act of sabotage reveals, it does allow the Wakaman to manifest himself as an “illusionary visionary” (illusionair visionair, 2009: 427), adapting the theatrical identity of an agonistic, avant-garde Einzelgänger.

## Relevance

Regarding the legacy and the projects of previous avant-gardes, Tedja’s oeuvre again assumes an ambivalent position. Even though there is regular engagement with a range of Dutch and international

avant-garde figures from the past to the present in his writing, this recuperation does not happen uncritically, as the critique of neocolonialism and co-optation of non-Western art by avant-gardes is a central motif in the oeuvre. Conversely, Tedja's literature cannot be thematically reduced to anticolonial criticism.

This hybridity can be related to the notion of "diasporic avant-gardism", which, as pointed out by Carrie Noland and Barrett Watten (2009), is a heterogenous intersection of "poets of the avant-garde" and "poets of the diaspora" (1). Notwithstanding shared "artistic practices as pertinent to the project of cultural transformation", avant-garde and diaspora poets are not necessarily "interchangeable, or even consistently in harmony with each other's understanding [of] how that transformation should take place" (2009: 1). This dynamic applies to Tedja's work, with the caveat that he investigates how to reconcile both positions in his oeuvre, instead of binarily separating them.

A first aspect is Tedja's "ethnopoetic" (Rothenberg 2008: 5) critique of co-optation of South-American and African art by Western institutions or artists. This is clear in critical citations of nativist passages from Dutch neo-avant-garde writers Sybren Polet, Lucebert, or Bert Schierbeek, but also in intertextual or iconographic identifications with Edgar Cairo, a Suriname author who tried in vain to establish himself in the Netherlands, or Jean-Michel Basquiat, who is regarded as a co-opted artist. In *Hosselen*, for example, Tedja includes a commemorative "poem for Basquiat" (2009: 24) that precedes a picture of Warhol's face painted over by black: "he said that he was the one guiding Basquiat" (2009: 25). In the following pages this procedure is applied to portraits of other Western artists, Warhol's "consorts" (2009: 25), like Pablo Picasso, Anselm Kiefer or Marcel Broodthaers. CoBrA is also regularly subjected to this critique. In his poetry collections Tedja illustratively centres on Karel Appel's primitivism, his lyrical subject retaliating by peeling Appel "with a potato knife" (2022: 33).

This fits into a broader reoccurring critique of the institutional, which is regularly represented by the art academy and the museum director or curator. In *A.B.* the narrator deconstructs the institutional as implicated in capitalist ideology, where art is thought about and taught in terms of profit. For the narrator the academy is pervaded by "Artificial Intelligence" ("Kunstmatige intelligentie", where "kunstmatig" is a pun on art, "kunst", as opposed to the artificial or fake, "kunstmatig"; 2003: 44-51), and has students do a "money presentation", assigned by a "money teacher" (geldpresentatie, Gelddocent; 2003: 196). This resonates with the Wakaman's symbolical representation of curators in *Hosselen* as "savages" looking for exploitable talent (2009: 340), a colluding herd which has beforehand "arranged" its "truth" regarding art quality (2009: 337). Here, word play, neologisms and metaphor mark the rhetoric aggressiveness as a component of Tedja's critique of the institutional

Secondly, Tedja's strategies are historically relatable to diasporic avant-garde techniques. The coinage of terms like aquaholism and the Holarium are reminiscent of Bob Kaufman's *Abomunisto Manifesto* (1959), that includes an "abomunisto lexicon", reflecting Tedja's intent to broach new conceptual spaces through lexicographical expansion. Kaufman's text is, in addition, offset by a humorous rendition of manifesto language ("ABOMUNISTS REJECT EVERYTHING BUT SNOWMEN"; 1965 [1959]: 78), a deconstruction that is also visible in *Hosselen*. Tedja's novel evokes the theatrical diction of the manifesto but replaces performativity with an insecure and self-conscious meta-discourse (Claus 2022).

Tedja's subjectivism can, furthermore, be related to Edouard Glissant's *Poétique de la relation* (1997 [1990]), where he used the term "detour" to describe the sensation "that one is not at home in one's own country and that, at the same time, there is no native homeland or ancestral homeland to regain" (Noland & Watten 2009: 5). Tedja's characters can likewise be considered as "inbetweeners" (tussenfiguren), a term coined by Van Kempen and Elisabeth Leijnse (1998: 4) that has a similar denotation as Glissant's détour. This experience is inscribed in names such as "the man without title and floor covering" from *The Brilliant Man* that reflect the existential precarity, and is also symbolized in family scenes, such as one from *A.B.* in which Hermanus is excluded from his Suriname heritage: "Dad and mom often spoke in Sranang, but never when the children were close. It was strictly forbidden to listen as a child", while he notices that

“when they spoke Sranang to each other, they were cheerful and happy” (2003: 134). This enforcement of the “hotchpotch philosophy” (stampotfilosofie, 2003: 62), as Hermanus calls it, however, fails to improve integration as much as it banishes him from an ancestral language and culture.

In this manner Tedja’s aquaholist experiments attain a diasporic side, but autonomy remains crucial for Tedja. In a recent contribution on activist lyricism, Tedja reminds the reader that he is not a politician, but a poet interested in the multiplicity of language (2021: 365-370). Analogously, in facet thirteen in *Hossele* called “Z.W.AR.T.=ZetWeeAaErThee=Theewater zetten”, which is a reference to the aforementioned poem “a large group black-white”, Tedja has the Wakaman observe the following: “The angle is never the immigrant who feels wronged by the institutions. That is a delapidated image” (2009: 75). The strikethrough discourse is indicative of the aquaholist hustle (language that is and is not) and shows the disempowered performativity of the Wakaman’s unfinished manifesto (the reader reads a sentence of a draft version that the Wakaman has forgotten to remove). The content of the sentence reflects this duality, as it can be read as a reference to the hybridity pointed out by Noland and Watten: there is more to the text than its diasporic layers.

Lastly, the reception of Tedja’s work is testament to this fluidity. In general critics read his poetry and novels dually, grasping the diasporic layer on the one hand and the “disorienting” language (Schaffer 2019) on the other. Moreover, when Tedja won the Sybren Polet Prize in 2021, a prestigious Dutch prize for experimental fiction, the jury report observed how Tedja refuses to pick a side in his writing, but rather assumes a “meta-position”, as he “refuses to speak for a black community” (2021: 2). As such, even though a figure like Warhol is often critiqued for his recuperation of non-Western art, Tedja’s characters equally identify with the American neo-avant-gardist, realizing that they are subjected to and agents of comparable mechanisms and pressures. The aggressive institutional critique can also be regarded as ambivalent when the Wakaman metaphorizes institutionality as a “prison without bars” (2009: 41), a paradoxical prison that can easily be escaped. Strikingly, while the narrator of *A.B.* describes the academy in monetary neologisms, as a colleague of “money teacher K”, he is unavoidably implicated in the institutional (2003: 196). Tedja, therefore, does not necessarily position his antagonistic characters as outsiders, but as insiders with an exclusive position. In a recent interview with Dutch art critic Maarten Buser, Tedja extrapolated that thought in relation to his collection *Exclusive*, stating that “everybody talks about inclusivity, but that does not apply to my work at all. What I do is exclusive, and that is how I want to keep it” (Buser 2022).

## Conclusion

Tedja’s still expanding oeuvre allows us to explore the potential of the avant-garde in contemporary literature and offers a context to study how the projects of the historical and neo-avant-gardes reacquire significance today. In this regard the work of Tedja can be considered as revivalist, as it stands firm within an inverse avant-garde tradition, one of ruptures and movements instead of schools and academies, but as it also expands this tradition through recuperation.

This takes place through formal meta-procedures, which shape Tedja’s oeuvre as much as his reflections on identity and diaspora, two tendencies that ingrain his novels and poetry collections in this century of decentering avant-gardes. While the contingency of methods like aquaholism and hustling, and a laboratory like the Holarium are insufficient to ontologically grasp the avant-garde, if such a thing would ever be possible, they are clear attempts to re-root avant-garde thinking in this century. If anything, that contingency and relativity could approach the specificity of a 21st-century avant-garde. A final quotation from the Wakaman can serve as an encouragement for further investigations into the contemporary avant-garde as well as into the oeuvre of Michael Tedja:

This new century has potential. Past the pessimism of the previous millennium, I will search for forsaken cultures. A new kind of consciousness. It is obviously clear. My forehead is the modern drug. It is more powerful than ever. I feel stronger and healthier. (2009: 166)

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