

University of Technology, Sydney

**Dave Drayton*****Staying alive: Contemporary English application of biji****Abstract*

*This article examines how the ancient tradition of biji notebook writing has been applied and appropriated in the 21st century by authors working in the English language. It traces the journey the biji, a traditional Chinese written form with origins in the third century, has taken and examines how it has been transformed in its contemporary use. Through a critical reading of three such biji collections – Douglas Coupland’s *Survivor*, a creative non-fiction hybrid that appeared in an anthology of new takes on old forms titled *Vikings, Monks, Philosophers, Whores: Old Forms, Unearthed*; Owen Kelly’s *Sexton Blake & the Virtual Culture of Rosario: A Biji*, a fractured academic essay; and Ouyang Yu’s *On the Smell of an Oily Rag: Speaking English, thinking Chinese and living Australian*, which he defines as *biji feixaoshuo* or ‘pen-notes non-fiction’ – the evolution of the biji form beyond China will be traced and examined. While there is distant tradition of biji for these contemporary authors to draw upon, there remain historical, cultural, and/or linguistic barriers between that tradition and their current practice. In this sense, they are pioneers, working to re-establish those characteristics in a radically different written world.*

*Keywords: biji, Chinese literature, genre studies*

**Staying alive: Contemporary English application of *biji***

The paper examines how the ancient tradition of *biji* notebook writing has been applied and appropriated in the 21st century by authors working in the English language. It traces the journey the *biji* form has taken and examines how it has been transformed in its contemporary use. Tracing the journey of this traditional Chinese form of writing is not easy – it is one that spans dynasties, cultures, and languages. Not only this, but there are frequent gaps in this history.

Through a critical reading of three such *biji* collections – Douglas Coupland’s *Survivor*, a creative non-fiction hybrid that appeared in an anthology of new takes on old forms titled *Vikings, Monks, Philosophers, Whores: Old Forms, Unearthed*; Owen Kelly’s *Sexton Blake & the Virtual Culture of Rosario: A Biji*, a fractured academic essay; and Ouyang Yu’s *On the Smell of an Oily Rag: Speaking English, thinking Chinese and living Australian*, which he defines as *biji feixiaoshuo* or ‘pen-notes non-fiction’ – the evolution of the *biji* form beyond China will be traced and examined.

This gives rise to further questions – how is a *biji* written when the most common definitions are of its miscellaneousness and undefinable nature? How accurately has the genre been appropriated? What form does a ‘contemporary’ *biji* take? What does an interest in traditional Chinese written forms offer writers – of both fiction and non-fiction – today?

While there is distant tradition of *biji* for these contemporary authors there remain historical, cultural, and/or linguistic barriers between that tradition and their current practice. In this sense, they are pioneers working to re-establish those characteristics in a radically different written world. There is, generally speaking, a lack of information available from the authors themselves as to what they consider to be a *biji*; which elements of this ancient literature – stylistic, thematic, organisational – they based their own versions on. Yet all have explicitly stated in their titles that they are examples of this form.

### Douglas Coupland

Douglas Coupland’s intentions are best garnered from the editors of the collection within which his *biji*, *Survivor*, appeared. Curators/editors of the collection *Vikings, Monks, Philosophers, Whores: Old Forms, Unearthed*, Darren Franich and Graham Weatherly, state in their introduction: ‘After receiving a mountain of printed material devoted to the barely translated form we’d assigned him, Douglas Coupland said “I think I was born to *biji*”’ (Coupland 2009: ii).

While it is not clarified which *biji* were presented to Coupland in that mountain of material, *Survivor* is accompanied in the collection by an excerpt from Duan Chengshi’s *Youyang Zazu* (*Miscellaneous Morsels from the South Slope of You Mountain*), which has been translated by Carrie E Reed. Reed’s prior study of the *biji* form – apparent in her book-length translation of *Nugao Ji* (*Records from Nugao*) and extensive study of *Youyang Zazu*, evident in her *Tattoo in Early China* (2000) and *Motivation and Meaning of a “Hodge-podge”*: Duan Chengshi’s “*Youyang zazu*” (2003) – should be acknowledged. Her involvement in the project, in any capacity, imparts some scholarly credibility on this attempt at ‘unearthing’ an old form.

Franich and Weatherly define the *biji* as ‘a popular style in China for over a thousand years, composed of miscellaneous observations, musings, and tall tales’ (Franich & Weatherly 2009: i). The layout of the text is also littered with factoids about the *biji* form, run in the margin alongside the story proper. This device is employed throughout the rest of the collection – which also includes pantoums, nivolas, whore dialogues and consuetudinaries [1] – and the contents have been authored by Franich and Weatherly, albeit with the warning: ‘This is not a research text: this is a paean to the weird, beautiful, missing links of literature’ (2009: ii).

The facts included in the margin of Coupland’s *biji* cite examples taken most frequently from the work of Duan Chengshi – *Youyang zazu* and *Nugao Ji* – as well as Ji Yun’s *Guwang tingzhi* (*Listen In A Rough Way*) and *Luanyang xiaoxialu* (*Record of Spending the Summer at Luanyang*) taken from his *Yuewei caotang biji* (*The Thatched Study of Close Scrutiny*). The information included ranges from common devices employed in *biji* – the inclusion of health-related advice, folkloric methods for warding off danger, the use of lists, the blunt description of death – to recurring themes, such as birds used as a symbol for death, or mythical or magical creatures, and in all instances include a brief excerpt from the relevant source.

Coupland's *Survivor* is a *biji* written in the first person, narrated by a member of the camera crew for the reality television show *Survivor*, taking place on islands in the Republic of Kiribati. This form of narration is particularly interesting – often entries within *biji* are not told from first-hand experience, but as a recollection of a tale or story heard from another source, and prefaced as such. The first-person narration allows for an immediacy and cumulative construction of a personality for the storyteller beyond that of a simple narrator who passes on stories, and the technique is also present in older *biji* like Ji Yun's *Yuewei caotang biji*.

The foreign setting allows for numerous traits of the *biji* genre to be employed: geographical information; observations on weather; and the like. Many early *biji* took the form of travel diaries – their authors compiling thoughts and impressions of new places they visited while on official postings – and Coupland's setting allows him to make use of similar devices.

True to the *biji* form, the entries comprising *Survivor* are notably brief: the longest entry around 500 words; the shortest, as follows, just 15: 'There's a part of me that loves the prospect of lawlessness, I have to admit' (Coupland 2009: 53). Other generic qualities are apparent: the use of street language – Coupland's narrator is colourfully explicit, his slang and curses creative and crass; dream motifs are also present; as are medicinal facts; recipes; and observations that can be viewed as 'unofficial histories' or more personal accounts of world events. The use of other texts within the *biji* is also present, in this instance, a transcript of a video message sent from a loved one at home to a contestant on the show, acts as a contemporary version of the letters, poems, or songs that were included in traditional *biji*.

Together, there are 49 entries in Coupland's *Survivor*; of these, 30 are written in a voice that is distinguishably that of the narrator with personal observations and a flare of character. While others are understandably devoid of personality, standing alone and colouring the world of the story – the inventorying of medicines, the tuna recipes, the flight times for a plane flying from Nauru to Brisbane, for example – there are some entries that appear to be penned by a different hand entirely. The overview of the Republic of Kiribati, for example, reads as though it could have come directly from an atlas, including as it does calling codes, Gross Domestic Output, population information and the like. Similarly, an entry explaining the concept of the television show, *Survivor*, reads as though it could have been taken directly from the network's website – I checked, it was not.

In this sense, Coupland seems to pay homage both to *biji* authored with strictly personal accounts, as in the travel diaries alluded to earlier; and *biji* that have been compiled where a large portion of content has been pulled by the author from other sources and reworked, commented on, excerpted, or simply included as is and endowed new meaning by its very presence in a wider collection.

Also included alongside *Survivor* and Reed's translation of an excerpt from Duan Chengshi's *Youyang Zazu* is a fact sheet on *biji* compiled by Franich and Weatherly:

...*biji* can contain legends, short anecdotes, scientific and anthropological notes, and bits of local wisdom... Accounts of everyday life mix with travel narrative and stories of the supernatural; tales of romance and court intrigue are interspersed with lists of interesting objects or unusual types of food. The unstable styles and irregular content ultimately

cohere between fiction and non-fiction, *biji* offer a top-down vision of a culture and its time. (Franich & Weatherly 2010: 39)

Also listed on this page are characteristics of the genre, as noted by the editors: ‘musings, anecdotes, quotations, ‘believe-it-or-not’ fiction, social anthropology’ (2010: 39).

While helpful and informative, this fact sheet is not without its problems. For example, their claim: ‘True to its polyglot form, the *biji* is known by many names, *xiaoshuo*, *zazu*, *suoyu*, *leishu*, *zalu*’ (2010: 39), perpetuates a clunky understanding of genre classification and boundaries. While some *biji* are *xiaoshuo*, and vice versa, the two are not synonymous.

The misconception stems from the traditional classification system with *biji*, as a result of its miscellaneous content, placed within the *xiaoshuo* or ‘fiction’ branch (it was widely regarded as ‘unofficial history’). Gang Liu notes: ‘The writing/compilation of *biji* have been a popular literary practice ever since the third century, but the official acknowledgment of the genre does not appear until very recent times’, and adds:

This delay in bibliographical recognition to a large extent indicates the marginalized status of the genre of *biji* in traditional Chinese literature and literary criticism. However, while this might prevent us from acquiring a better knowledge of the critical reception of the genre in the past, it also grants the genre a chance to expand and develop itself, enabling it to achieve a level of flexibility or versatility that would be otherwise unattainable had the genre become more recognized in Chinese literary history. (Liu 2010: 7-8)

As a result of the niche but fanatic readership of the McSweeney’s publishing house, Coupland’s *biji* appears to be the most broadly acknowledged take on the form in recent years, and in English.

## Owen Kelly

Owen Kelly, author of *Sexton Blake & the Virtual Culture of Rosario: A Biji*, stated via email correspondence that Coupland’s *Survivor* inspired his own *biji*:

That was the modern *biji* that I read and it reminded me that I had always intended to write one (among the many things that I had always intended to do). I was struggling to find a way of telling the history of the Marinetta project and it seemed the perfect form in that it mixed truth and fiction and contained both lists and lies. Since I didn’t want my chapter to be another academic report I seized on the form. (personal correspondence, 2012)

The editor of the collection of essays that contains Kelly’s *biji*, Stefan Sonvilla-Weiss, describes his text as a ‘non-linear narrative’ written in ‘the quasi-style of this ancient book type [*biji*],’ and proposes that ‘Kelly paraphrases the original concept that contains anecdotes, quotations, random musings, philological speculations, literary criticism and almost everything that the author deems worth recording’ (Sonvilla-Weiss 2010: 17). Kelly employs the form in this essay in order to document the results of a five-year project titled *Marinetta Ombro*, in which he, alongside a colleague at Arcada University of Applied

Science, created a virtual island, Rosario, in an attempt to examine the potential and functionality of virtual environment education.

Within *Sexton Blake & the Virtual Culture of Rosario: A Biji* Kelly's own summary of the *biji* (which he refers to as a traditional Chinese *zalu* or *zazu*) is included: 'A notebook not unlike the European commonplace book in form in that it contains many disparate kinds of content. Unlike the commonplace book, though, the content combines by stealth into a narrative or worldview' (Kelly 2010: 124). Further to this, *Sexton Blake & the Virtual Culture of Rosario: A Biji*, concludes with a copy of the *biji* fact sheet included in McSweeney's Issue 31 (2010), quoted above. This lends weight to the argument that Coupland's take on the form is the most well-known.

Kelly states that he was struggling to find a way to tell the history of Marinetta and it takes only a brief look at the project to discover why. Students at Arcada, a university of applied science in Helsinki, Finland, helped to create Marinetta – the capital city of a fictional island named Rosario – that hypothetically existed just south of midway between Greece and Tunisia. The synthetic world was used to explore the theoretical and practical pedagogical possibilities the construction, maintenance and development of such a digital world could offer, and Kelly outlines its evolution in his text.

Kelly's task is interesting considering that the earlier *biji* served as unofficial histories for a dynasty, family, or region and his is documenting the process of constructing a 'real' history for a false locale.

Like Coupland, Kelly can be seen to be taking on the role of compiler, as well as author. This *biji* contains citations from texts such as Richard Harding Davis' *In the Fog* (1901), university program documents and texts that I'm quite certain do not actually exist – but were translated during the construction of Rosario's history – such as Dek Manto's *La Marcharo Vers Hemo*. His inclusion of these citations however is often clunky at best, and while some quotes appear cleanly and clearly attributed, oftentimes they are presented ad hoc, the reader left to establish the connection between the quote or citation (only noticeable as such by its smaller font) and what is being discussed elsewhere in that particular section of the essay. Citations are littered about like epigrams haphazardly scattered amongst the body text proper, and often mid-argument, or as a non-committal technique for ending a point, where the citation is obscure enough to be potentially relevant, though certainly not clear enough to be taken as serious justification.

In defence of Kelly's technique, there is historical precedent for such a practice. In his examination of *Notes of Master Song Jin-wen*, a *biji* collection composed by Northern Song native Song Qi, Professor Igor Alimov observes: 'Far from all of the maxims cited belong to Song Qi himself, but he does not list his sources' (Alimov 1999: 42). In other instances, these allusions are used to highlight or elaborate specific themes, just as an author of a more traditional *biji* may turn to a quote from the classics in order to claim the importance or justification for his own content.

All this considered, it still seems that the strongest apparent link Kelly's *Sexton Blake & the Virtual Culture of Rosario: A Biji*, has to the *biji* form is that he includes it in its name. There are elements of the genre present, though it could just as easily be construed as the fractured and incomplete notes that form early drafts of an essay. To his credit, Kelly seems eager to associate the text with *zalu* (or *zazu*), a kind of branch of literature synonymous with *biji* that Endymion Wilkinson translates as 'miscellaneous records' (Wilkinson 2000:

611). To this end Kelly has certainly provided a collection of entries that could be construed as ‘miscellaneous’.

## Ouyang Yu

Ouyang Yu’s *On The Smell Of An Oily Rag* is the most indebted of the three to the extensive history of the *biji*. Unlike Coupland and Kelly – whose works, were they not explicitly framed by their authors/editors as *biji*, could potentially be misconstrued as fractured short fiction and essay respectively – Ouyang’s collection is closest in form to the traditional *biji* because it is just that: a collection. The concept of a ‘collection’ is central to *biji*, due to the *cumulative* effect of these stories, or entries, however seemingly disparate.

In the introduction Ouyang clarifies the contents of his text: ‘It is writing that I intend to be enjoyable, but as fragmentary as when you switch between dozens of television channels’ (Ouyang 2007: xi). With this statement, Ouyang has clearly revealed his knowledge of the ancient form he appropriates, the ‘fragmentary’ *biji*, and can readily find a contemporary point of reference for the way in which its contents are organised or laid out, a networked pastiche of information akin to the narratives created when flipping through television channels. Ouyang also goes as far as to offer his own definition of the form he has chosen to appropriate: In ancient China, there is a fiction called, *biji xiaoshuo* (roughly, pen-notes fiction), a fiction that contains disparate stories with no apparent interconnecting narrative, each on its own, each as short as a paragraph but no longer than a page (Ouyang 2007: xi-xii).

Progressing from the definition, Ouyang proclaims that his *On the Smell of an Oily Rag: Speaking English, thinking Chinese and living Australian* has been written in the style of a new genre he has created, *biji feixiaoshuo* or ‘pen-notes non-fiction’ that he says is ‘written in an accessible, readable and deliberately un-academic style’ (Ouyang 2007: xii). His suggestion that *Oily Rag* is a “seminal non-fictional book” (ibid) that creates its own genre is rather bold.

While Ouyang may have coined the term *biji feixiaoshuo* to suggest that the form of a non-fictional *biji*, even one that ‘draws references from a range of literary and cultural works going as far back as *The Book of Songs* (1122-256 BC)’ (xii), is an act of linguistic pioneering fails to recognise one of the most seminal *biji* collections of all time (and an obvious precedent to the collection Ouyang offers), Qian Zhongshu’s comparatively recent *Guanzhui bian (Limited Views: Essays on Ideas and Letters)* [2]. Like Ouyang’s *biji*, Qian’s examines “cultural, linguistic and literary similarities’ (ibid) not between China and Australia specifically, but across a broader scope that shows a profound knowledge of both European and Chinese literature and writing.

Ouyang suggests that his text blends ‘various genres of diary, fiction, non-fiction, essay, translation and poetry’ (Ouyang 2007: xii). The diary genre is apparent in the unapologetic, honest and at times crass way Ouyang recalls information for entries, reading without a doubt like a personal account. The non-fiction aspects of the text are a little harder to qualify; while Ouyang often cites ‘facts’ – whether statistical, or merely those borne of ‘common knowledge’, they are rarely quantified or properly cited.

Like the entries in *Guanzhui bian*, Ouyang includes a quote or citation from songs; a Shakespearean snowclone; old Chinese proverbs, such as the Yan Dynasty *Writers: one step higher than beggars*; and myriad other sources, and uses these as launch pads for the entries’ thematic concerns. As explanation for

the proliferation of this intertextual practice in traditional *biji* (a practice that has continued through the genres development), Kao states:

Because of the general dominance of the concept of the past in Chinese culture and the Confucian education the literati received, which favored transmission of accepted values over innovation, the kind of literature they produced is heavily intertextual and often larded with instances of self-reference. (Kao 1997: 66)

As other *biji* offer an introduction to a city, or society, crib-notes on an existence, Ouyang's *On the Smell of an Oily Rag: Speaking English, thinking Chinese and living Australian* serves as a guidebook to the rocky roads between Australian English and Chinese language, culture, and societal norms. In a 2010 interview about the book Ouyang says: 'The whole thing is an organic growth out of my combination of daily literary activities, fiction, poetry, literary criticism, literary translation and literary magazine editing, in both languages, a growth bit by organic bit, and by fits and starts' (Ball 2010).

And in the same interview reflects:

As for why I chose the style, it was as unexplainable as why a seed took roots in a particular patch of the soil and grew into a tree or a flower but part of the reason is really my disgust with the books published here and elsewhere, big chunks of stuff that I had little patience for while things could be done in fragments that are much more meaningful. It's what the pace of life demands of us, too. (Ball 2010)

## Conclusion

Returning to the point of the potential for the Coupland and Kelly *biji* to be misconstrued, it is worth noting titling as a method for classification of *biji* where collections are self-prescriptively labelled suggesting a reading, entry point, or wider collection of works within which to consider the text and better comprehend the totality of its meaning. As Cyril Birch notes: 'Expectations of form fulfilled leave us freer to contemplate the total meaning' (Birch 1974: 1).

However, a more concrete definition of 'genre' is required before proceeding to a proposition of generic defining features common to or occurring in all contemporary *biji*. Before proceeding to such a proposition it is worth noting that even in light of the analyses above, a truly contemporary definition of *biji*, or even a definition of a contemporary *biji*, is not without its problems. Huntington, too, has observed these difficulties, saying that *biji* is: 'A genre which fits uneasily into contemporary generic divisions because of its brevity, miscellaneous content, and problematic relationship to history and fiction' (Huntington 2005: 61) and as can be seen from the analysis above, her observations ring true in the three contemporary examples of the form that have been examined. That Huntington shows some awareness of the potential for contemporary examination of the form is refreshing and allows for her study of traditional *biji* to inform analyses of their contemporary counterparts.

Looking then once again at *Survivor*, *On the Smell of an Oily Rag: Speaking English, thinking Chinese and living Australian* and *Sexton Blake & the Virtual Culture of Rosario: A Biji*, is there brevity, casualness, and miscellaneous content apparent in all three? Yes. Though, is this enough to move beyond the resigned realm wherein a *biji* is only defined by, or in relation to, what it is not?

Allowing, for now, the definition of *biji* as a brief, fractured, densely allusive and intertextual, form that mixes fact and fiction, what does such a form offer contemporary writers?

David Shields suggests it offers a cultural panacea. His *Reality Hunger: A Manifesto* (2010) argues for a shift toward increasing arts engagement with the reality of contemporary life through the exploration of hybrid genres such as prose poetry and literary collage [3]. It is this idea of collage that is most intriguing in the current discussion. *Reality Hunger* consists of 618 numbered passages divided into twenty-six chapters, each titled alphabetically. Approximately half of the book's words come from sources other than the author, a working sample of Shield's declarations rejecting the laws governing appropriation and the boundaries between fiction and nonfiction, in pursuit of a modern form of art. While Shields makes no mention of *biji* – I do not wish to put words in his mouth – the art, or literature, best befitting contemporary existence as championed by him shares remarkable similarities with what we define as *biji*. Are these fragments not the same desired by Yu?

While authors such as Shields, alongside David Markson (2001), Michelle Grangaud (2006), and others, have produced texts that seem to fit the albeit broad description of *biji*, they have done so with no stated knowledge of the form or intent. Nevertheless, if a form of writing best befitting contemporary existence has so much congruence with a Chinese written form that predates it by centuries, is there not some duty to examine and explore the predecessor, even if it may be one only unintentionally?

For all the discrepancies in interpretation and reapplication of the form that exist in the contemporary examples provided by Coupland, Kelly, and Ouyang, all at least lay foundations for a more extensive study of *biji* and the potential of its contemporary English application.

## Notes

[1] A pantoum is a poem composed in quatrains, the second and fourth lines of each stanza recur, slightly altered, as the first and third lines of the next stanza, and the first and third lines of the first stanza reappear as the second and final lines of the last stanza; nivola is a nonsense-term coined by Spanish writer Miguel de Unamuno to describe the reactionary, modernist and existential plotless stories he wrote in reaction to the prevalence of realism in the early 20th century; whore dialogue, with origins in the 16th century, is an early precedent to erotic writing, a saucier *Mills & Boon*; consuetudinaries are meticulous, exhaustive inventories used to document monastic life. return to text

[2] It should be observed that I have not seen *biji feixiaoshuo* used prior to his book, nor have I seen it used since publication of the book except in reference to *Oily Rag*. return to text

[3] Shield's *Reality Hunger* serves as a sample for the kind of literature he heralds, a pastiche that borrows/steals/cites an exhaustive corpus of texts – from novels to soft news – liberally. return to text

## Works cited

Alimov, I 1999 'Song Biji Authorial Collections: Preliminary Observations', *Manuscripta Orientalia* 5, 3: 39-48 return to text

Ball, M 2010 'Interview With Ouyang Yu', *The Compulsive Reader News* 11, 5 (May): <http://www.compulsivereader.com/2010/05/09/interview-with-ouyang-yu-2/> (accessed 22 May 2012) return to text



- Birch, C (ed) 1974 *Studies In Chinese Literary Genres*, University of California Press, Berkeley return to text
- Coupland, D 2009 'Survivor', in D Franich & G Weatherly (eds) *Vikings, Monks, Philosophers, Whores: Old Forms, unearthed*, McSweeney's Publishing, San Francisco: 43-58 return to text
- Franich, D & Weatherly, G (eds) 2009 *Vikings, Monks, Philosophers, Whores: Old Forms Unearthed – McSweeney's* 31, Hamish Hamilton, San Francisco return to text
- Grangaud, M 2006 'Calendar', in D Eggers (ed), *The State Of Constraint: New Work By Oulipo – McSweeney's* 22, Hamish Hamilton, San Francisco: 71-85 return to text
- Huntington, R 2005 'Chaos, Memory, and Genre: Anecdotal Recollections of the Taiping Rebellion', *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews (CLEAR)* 27, 1: 59-91 return to text
- Kao, KSY 1997 'Self-Reflexivity, Epistemology, and Rhetorical Figures', *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews (CLEAR)*, 19, 1: 59-83 return to text
- Kelly, O 2010 'Sexton Blake & the Virtual Culture of Rosario: A Biji', in S Sonvilla-Weiss (ed) *Mashup Cultures*, Springer-Verlag, Wien: 120-35 return to text
- Liu, G 2010 'The Poetics Of Miscellaneousness: The Literary Design of Liu Yiqing's *Qiantang Yishi* and the Historiography of the Southern Song', PhD Dissertation, University Of Michigan, Michigan return to text
- Markson, D 2001 *This Is Not A Novel*, Counterpoint, Berkeley return to text
- Ouyang, Y 2007 *On The Smell Of An Oily Rag: Speaking English, thinking Chinese and living Australian*, Wakefield Press, Kent Town, SA return to text
- Shields, D 2010 *Reality Hunger: A Manifesto*, Hamish Hamilton, London return to text
- Sonvilla-Weiss, S (ed) 2010 *Mashup Cultures*, Springer-Verlag, Wien return to text
- Wilkinson, E (ed) 2000 *Chinese History: A Manual*, Revised and Enlarged edn, Harvard University Asia Center, Cambridge and London return to text

*Dave Drayton is a PhD candidate at the University of Technology, Sydney. His current research investigates Oulipo, and the contemporary English application of biji.*

---

## TEXT

**Vol 17 No 2 October 2013**

**<http://www.textjournal.com.au>**

**General Editor: Nigel Krauth. Editors: Kevin Brophy & Enza Gandolfo**  
**[text@textjournal.com.au](mailto:text@textjournal.com.au)**