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Signals and Signposts of the future: Literary Festival Consumption in 2050

SIGNALS AND SIGNPOSTS OF THE FUTURE: LITERARY FESTIVAL CONSUMPTION IN 2050

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Abstract: This conceptual paper uses a scenario planning process to facilitate possible futures for literary festivals, a form of festival tourism that has grown rapidly in the developed and developing countries of the world in the early decades of the 21st Century and which continues to grow towards 2050. The paper addresses this in the context of two significant cities, Shanghai - a megacity in China, and Melbourne, the capital city of Victoria, Australia. The paper offers two scenarios for literary festivals, one drawn from science fiction and the other from a process of prognosis. The aim of this work is to contribute to research in festival tourism studies by exploring the signposts and signals that may confer the future role, form and function of literature and the format and activity of literary festivals and literary festival tourism in a changing world. Utilizing Signals and Signposts, the work contributes to the body of work which seeks strategic responses to rapid change, rapid urbanization and possible zones of uncertainty that may await literary festivals and associated tourism and community activity in the future.

Keywords: literary festivals; Melbourne; Shanghai; futures; celebrity; signals and signpost.

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Introduction:

Festivals have been identified as attractions for tourists (Insun Sunny et al. 2012; Leah Noelle and Soyoung 2013; Mayfield and Crompton 1995; Roselyne 2011). They are also identified as having potential to generate tourism that is beneficial to resident communities (Getz and Frisby 1988; O'Sullivan and Jackson 2002).

Literary tourism is a form of cultural tourism which focuses on a place which has strong associations with literary figures, authors and/or books (Carson et al. 2013; Squire 1994, 1996). Stebbins (2001) refers to literary tourism as a form of *serious leisure*, suggesting that the activity is enjoyed because of the complexity and challenge required for its consumption. Further, it is an increasingly significant example of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984) where books, place and food have significant trajectory in a daily market of experience (Mehmetoglu and Engen 2011; Pegg and Patterson 2010; Pine and Gilmore 1998) and which serve to fulfill peoples' creative needs.

As research by Future Foundation (2012a) indicates, consumers from advanced consumer societies talk about three things more than most, namely books, holidays and food. Further, these consumers can be identified as having the traits, desires and composition of the creative classes (Florida 2002, 2004). While Florida defined these creative classes as having occupations ranging from artist and software design to management and law, strongly influenced by neo-liberal economic propagative values (Pratt 2008), this conceptual paper builds on this and offers an extended view of creative class identity and the meaning of a creative city (Landry 2006) .

Literary festivals or writers festivals are public events and attract a diverse range of visitor types. These events are different to most other festivals devoted to art or other performance forms. Rather than the performance being an act of passive viewing or listening, in literary festivals most of the time is spent communicating about the performance (Johnston 2013; Ommundsen 2009). Encouraging participatory modes of interaction, they are relatively modern forms of tourism. Indeed, more than most forms of festival they facilitate a modern conception of art in which audience desire co-creative activity with the artist (Johnston 2013). This appears not only in real-time conversation during the festival but also through related magazines (often referred to as zines) or their internet based cousins (e-zines) for which artists often play a supporting role and in which audiences write. Literary festivals (also sometimes called book festivals or writers' festivals) have become a world manifestation (Ommundsen 2009), the range and scope of their form and location increasing rapidly (Stewart 2009).

This study makes reference to two urban environments: Melbourne, Australia and Shanghai, in the Peoples Republic of China. The first of these is composed of 31 councils bringing together (Metropolitan) Melbourne, Victoria. The second, Shanghai, was, in 2010, the largest city by population in the People Republic of China, and also the largest city in the world.

In applying a future studies outlook, actioned through a scenario planning method, the aim of this work is to contribute to festival tourism studies and related research by exploring the signposts and signals that may confer the future role, form and function of literature and the format and activity of literary festivals and literary festival tourism. It does so in the context of a world which shares an interest in literature as both visitor attraction and activity.

In so doing, the research contributes to the body of work seeking strategic response to social and cultural change, urbanization and possible zones of uncertainty (Shell International BV 2011) that may await literary festivals and associated tourism and community activity in 2050.

The Emerging Significance of the Literary Festival

The literature festival has emerged from a throng of festival types as cities vie for the interests of - and the cultural capital that comes with - the creative classes. Literary festivals (also referred to as writers festivals), first emerged from places like London and Edinburgh with established histories of writers, writing and publishing. Literary places arise because of their literary activity now and not necessarily because of their literary past. With this, the phenomena of literary celebrity has emerged (Carter 2011; Ommundsen 2009; Stewart 2010). For the city, association with mega star high profile authors and literary festivals offer an opportunity to build cultural capital (Landry 2000, 2006).

Literature is the one of the most obvious acts of individual creativity, and through its many forms has clear ties with liberal democracy (Giorgi 2011; Stow 2006). Literature, and the act and performance of writing and reading has a long cultural history in Melbourne, the capital city of the state of Victoria – stretching from the pictorial stories of the indigenous population of some 40,000 years ago to its array of institutions, literary events, literary awards, writers centres and, in 2008, the award of 'UNESCO City of Literature'. As a cultural form, it is not surprising that it has been less quick to grow in China. Indeed even within the first two decades of the 21st century, fiction remains a less-common and less-understood phenomenon than non-fiction in China (Youd 2010).

In the 1980s, China witnessed a number of tourism sites that made reference to architectural features or landscapes from fiction, albeit relatively few in number (Jia 2009). Nonetheless, as the literary artistic community was recognized for its capacity to bring in business (Keane 2012) so literature as cultural phenomenon has been encouraged to develop with other artistic performance. Importantly, literature is appreciated for its ability to provide rich meanings for those who view China from outside, i.e., visitors and investors. Additionally, it is not only in the literature itself that meanings are made, it is also in its many genres (Herbert 1996, 2001), i.e. the communications, travel guides and other media that accompany it. Technology and an increasing number of literary festivals have thus enabled literature a rapid and widespread narration of meaning (Ommundsen, 2009) for China. In so doing, it may be part of narrating new futures for tourism activity in 2050. Thus, stories that may have otherwise had little cognition with local or national sentiment, such as western mythologies of witches and ghosts, and which may have influenced different tourism behaviour (Rittichainuwat 2011) in the past.

As an art form, cultural tourism product and cultural leveller, the utility of literature and stories is profound. In the structures and organizations that surround them and the geopolitical and urban planning initiatives which confirm them in cities, literary festivals can be seen as points of social, cultural and political interaction and cultural expression (Giorgi 2011; Smith and Fox 2007; Waitt 2008).

Research Context: Technology and Interaction with Literature

Kernan (1990) predicted the death of literature, arguing that a revolution in technology is replacing the authority of the written word with that of television, film and the computer screen. Murray (2010) offers a prognostic discussion of the future of literature and

literary culture, identifying that from the 1990's onwards the internet and the digitizing of communication has meant 'governing models for conceptualising print culture need consequent rethinking' (p23). Some key changes include the move from hypertext novels of the 1990's to, in the first decades of the 21st Century, a second generation of electronic book readers (e-readers), such as the well-known make Kindle. These attempted, in their handheld form, to replicate the experience of opening a small book. At around the same time in history, a print-on-demand (POD) model emerges in which the internet offers a platform from which people can download and print published material in the format of their choice at their convenient time. This offers a precursor of the way in which the reader shows increasing influence in the consumption of the reading experience (Murray 2010). This is followed by a further stage of change, in which readers have been able to emerge as writers through self—publishing websites, and through the proliferation of internet logs, i.e., blogs.

More recently, readers have had the opportunity to interact with the story in a way which is more like a video game. One example of this is Device 6, a story which can be played on an iPhone or an iPad (IGN Entertainment Inc 2013) and is described as a 'meta-thriller in which the world is made almost entirely of words'. The reader interacts through the reading of the materials, and through absorption and interaction in the words and letters themselves as they appear on the screen in many directions and forms, e.g., as stairwells.. This requires the reader to pursue the story in a traditional manner and also in a way that requires some adaption to new forms and functions of words.

Research Context: Technology as Agent of Democratization and Co-creation of Literature

Technology, in its various stages of influence in the consumption of literature, and as a platform for literature, can also be viewed as democratizing influence on literary creativity. It offers a significant levelling off – of consumption opportunity and the emergent relationship between writer and performer and reader and audience (Dinnen 2012; Murray 2010). The relationship and the experience enjoyed by the reader have become more and more significant to both reader and author. Johanson and Freeman (2012) describe this as the deindustrialization of art, by which the division of art performance from other elements of life dissipates rapidly.

The co-creation of story-telling by author and the reader is further evidence of this dissipation. There is much evidence that the writer is increasingly inviting reader participation and the opportunity to share in the narrative (Dinnen 2012; Miller 2013; Murray 2010). Furthermore, research indicates that this co-creation also emerges from an increasing sense of social obligation by the artist/ author to encourage audience creativity (Boorsma 2006; Johanson and Freeman 2012). E-zines and other platforms are a response to this (Fiske 1992; Johanson and Freeman 2012; Soukup 2006).

Simultaneously the literary festivals offer a more sharing experience, encouraging communications between audiences and guest authors. In Asia-Pacific, the appearance of literary events has indeed been noted as unfurling some of cultural nuances and limitations of cultural interaction previously assumed of visitors for many of the countries in Asia (McKercher and So-Ming 2001). The trans-international networks that have emerged, then, needfully encourages writing and writers, audiences and literature to interact.

One formal representation of trans-international networking is the UNESCOs Creative City Network with a stated common mission for cultural diversity and sustainable urban development (UNESCO 2013). It has the capacity to bestow special Creative City status in seven theme areas of creativity. These are literature, film, music, crafts and folk music, design, media arts and gastronomy. In 2008, the status of 'Unesco City of Literature' was awarded to Melbourne, the second city after Edinburgh, Scotland, to receive this status. In 2010, Shanghai became Unesco City of Design. This trans-international network brings with it an assimilation of cultural consumption, and a sharing of stories that transcend significant core values, e.g., the values of individualism in the west and collectivism in China, in the east (Chang et al. 2011).

Future Studies

Future studies are a plural term. Thus, it counters the notion of there being *only one future* which would be both a conceptual limitation and example of politically determinism. A plurality of futures allows the envisioning and the creation of *alternative* and *preferred futures*.

While it may commonly be thought that futures studies is an attempt to *predict the future* based on extrapolation from present day trends, futures studies have shifted away from what Inayatullah (2002) calls single-point forecasting − as precise prediction − to scenario planning. Scenario planning embraces not only one outcome, but several, and then further it employs foresight and back-casting to map out complex, layered causal powers involved in social processes and outcomes. According to Strand (1999), forecasting can be considered as a naive scientific activity by futures scholars today. Like Blackman (1994), he also declares that futures studies is to make more informed decisions and choices when trying

to manage the processes of change, rather than as an engine for making predictions. As Bergman et al. (2010) postulate, it is not that truth which is sought but, rather, an explanation that is relevant through those 'what ifs' asked as to how an event or phenomena could or might occur. Therefore, thinking the impossible as possibilities.

Scenario Planning and Vignettes

One of the ways to express futures studies is by using scenarios or scenario planning. In the postmodern era – characterized by uncertainty and contingency, we see scenario thinking and planning used in the public and private sectors by business and government decision-making bodies. Facilitating strategic conversations of diverse stakeholders and embracing the complexity of their multiple perspectives, scenario planning promotes a broader perspective of the landscape, free thinking and action. Lindgren and Bandhold (2003) suggest several factors to ensure the success of the scenario planning method. These are fundamental in the way scenario planning is applied here. These are, first, by reducing complexity to a finite number of divergent options, scenario planning provides a complexity-reducing framework. Second, by providing a structure for thinking outside of known parameters, the scenario framework offers a means to communicate more efficiently. Third, the human brain relates easily to stories, and the narrative thinking used in scenario thinking matches the way the brain works. Finally, by forcing your mind to think in qualitatively different directions, one can train your brain to think the unthinkable.

Importantly for festivals and other activity, which often include many stakeholders (Andersson and Getz 2008; Dredge and Whitford 2011; Hede and Stokes 2009; Robertson and Rogers 2009) – and typically with historically convergent agendas, a scenario planning process has the potential to inform better (and more inclusive) policy formation. Importantly, a process of forming scenarios may ensure policy resilience for the stakeholders affected by it

exactly because of the multifarious interests that are included in scenario building and scenario thinking. The process of using stories is of particular value. One in the way it gives both freedom to think in new ways but also provides a form that all can understand, i.e., it is a format which can be readily shared. It is, accordingly, a lubricant for intra and inter organizational adaptability.

Scenario planning, then, has the capacity to inform decision-making and related policy in a prepared way rather one that is formed under conditions of great uncertainty (Volkery and Ribeiro 2009), i.e., it facilitates adaptability and possible stages or changes. Adaptability in an increasingly complex and changeable market is a core requirement of event organization (Robertson et al. 2012), and is significant element in sustainable development and practice (Getz and Andersson 2008). However, while scenario planning is already being used in public sector thinking, and indicates recognition of preparedness and adaptability, it may not always be used appropriately. There is a risk that as a methodology, scenario planning is used for single issues, i.e., it is used to frame an issue (Volkery and Ribeiro 2009) rather that ensuring its effectiveness for a multi-level or multi-stakeholder (and potentially fractious) environment with potential for multiple issues.

Eden and Ackermann (1998) use vignettes to illustrate stories of strategic management. They illustrate specific points of management as a means to focus the central point of change. Yeoman (2012a, 2012b) uses vignettes as scenario scripts, and as a means to illustrate a future position. Vignettes can be short-sketch stories that focus on one moment or they may give a trenchant impression about an idea, setting or object. These have been utilized here, and are followed by the three drivers which shaped the scenario.

Scenario 1: Shanghai 2050

Chunhua is 29 year old from Hong Kong, visiting Shanghai for the 25th international book festival. Chunhua loves culture, art, music and reading. She loves Shanghai, known as the festival city of the East and it has 357 festivals marked on the city's calendar. She is thinking, 'what festival shall I do this year?' Using her contact lens, she twitches the latest Shanghai festivals online guide movie clips. As Chunhau watches the related movie, she tags the books, concerts and events that are of interest to her. The Shanghai Book Festival intelligent agent is informed and, in response, a 4D image appears in the corner of Chunhua's eye with a recommended itinerary. Two weeks later she is in Shanghai. The festival is held outdoors at the city eco-gardens. Today, there is a 'witches and wizards' theme. She is listening to Autobot writer J. R Dallas while other famous authors (human and android) talk about the ghosts of Peking. Through the synchronization facility in her contact lens she can overlay and recall many of the author's words in a pictorial format. These can be shared with friends instantly. She finishes the evening joining a silent thought discussion panel on the history of paper and books. All in all, she has a wonderful afternoon.

This scenario presents a number of changes occurring in the scenario including the role of cities as creative hubs; the rise of the China's middle classes, the desire for new experiences and the role of technology in today's society as mobility through to imaginative futures. The following three drivers expand upon the above points.

Driver 1: Cosmopolitan Shanghai, the Creative City and the Creative Class

Shanghai is the largest city by population in the People's Republic of China (PRC) and with over 23 million residents it is also the largest city by population in the world. It is the city in China which is most associated with offering new things to the society of China,

whether it be transportation, technology or fashion. It is also the intellectual and cultural capital of writing and writers for China. Respected writers include the socialist critical realists such as Lu Xun and Nien Chenga and the more romantic and aesthetic style of writers, such as Shi Zhecum Eileen Chang.

As well as suffering the pressures of living life in a rapidly growing city, these urbanites of Shanghai can also be considered as having emerged from a long-term national policy in China (which began in 2006). This policy supported for its key cities the development of cultural creative industries (Flew 2012; Keane 2007, 2009, 2011) and offered a version of city development similar to that which had developed in the western world, i.e., one in which the experience economy (Pine and Gilmore 1998) and creative spaces, creative clusters of cultural and creative activity (Evans 2009; Mehmetoglu and Engen 2011) are promoted. Similarly a new Creative Class (Flew 2006; Florida 2004; Future Foundation 2012a) – again in many ways similar to that encouraged by western economic and political policy – has emerged from a growing middle class in China (O'Connor 2009; O'Connor and Xin 2006). While a hybrid of the neo-liberal western version (Flew 2012), the Creative Class in Shanghai does nonetheless have a similarly varied leisure portfolio. They enjoy exposure to the consumption activity and business of other nationalities – and (similarly) have an on-going need for new experiences.

The creative class in Shanghai, as in the west, enjoy a wide variety of activities, from high-brow to no-brow culture (Swirki 2005). Consumers are comfortable with a disparate and wide range of cultural activity, as varied as watching the Bolshoi Ballet while also being able to enjoy popular national comedy (Yeoman 2008).

Driver 2: The Digital Revolution

The rapid pace of development in the digital sector conditions us to demand more from our products and services (Yeoman 2012a). In many areas of our daily life we now expect continuous upgrades, better quality and reliability of experiences and products, faster operating and service times, lower energy consumption, better packaging options, and more competitive prices. Moving into the future the digital revolution is at a frenetic speed. Access to mobile network is available to 95% of the world's population, including 80% of those living in rural areas; the number of SMS messages sent each year had tripled from levels seen in 2007; those using the internet had reached one third of the entire global population (Future Foundation 2012b, 2012c). Accordingly we expect technology to offer more and more day-to-day assistance. The digital revolution has brought about a change in the lifestyle of many. A direct consequence of the shift towards mobile living is that spare moments in our life have now been eliminated. Any spare moment can now be filled with activities, whether they be escapist, fun, sociable or functional. From a behaviourist aspect (Future Foundation 2012c; Yeoman and Smith 2012), the digital revolution is about a number of behaviours. These include a *Networked society* in which millions of people enjoy access to a wealth of information distributed through formal and informal channels. At the same time, the scale of *advice, opinion* and *expertise* now freely available to consumers exerts a strong influence on their lifestyle choices and decision–making processes. Similarly, a *culture of immediacy* in which the consumer appetite (and trend) for empowering, time–saving services and devices in the context of a time–sensitive cultural landscape carries on unabated. Moreover, as the balance of power continues to shift in favour of the savvy, informed and confident global consumer of the 2010s, so the demands faced by big business grow in both number and sophistication.

Driver 3: The Transition of Liminality

Kaku (2011) suggests that in 2100 we will control computers via tiny brain sensors and, like magicians, be able to move objects around with the power of our minds. Artificial intelligence is dispersed throughout the living environment, and internet-enabled contact lenses will allow us to access the world's information base or conjure up any image we desire in the blink of an eye. As the scenario highlights, the use of 'Wizard and Witches' app to experience the Shanghai Literature Festival is driven by developments in optical computing (OC), artificial intelligence (AI), virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR), where the concept of reality and virtual is a blurred no man's land of liminality (Turner 1967). However, liminality from a cognitive perspective links to uncertainty, being both unknown and or being science fiction (Bergman et al. 2010). For some the pathway may be clear and technology better known. For them the experience is likely to be a transitional one rather than a liminal one.

In order for innovations in technology to happen as described in the scenario, a quantum leap is required to ensure capacity processing power. Researchers are now looking at the use of optical transistors to improve the efficiency of electronic computing. An optical computer, or photonic computer, is a device which replaces the traditional use of electrons with photons of visible light. As extension of this, Virtual reality (VR) is defined as 'the use of a computer-generated 3D environment – called a "virtual environment (VE)" – that one can navigate and possibly interact with, resulting in real-time simulation of one or more of the user's five senses' (Guttentag 2010: 2).

Virtual reality scenarios and real world scenarios can be found at extreme ends of a

spectrum. At one end, when a user is fully immersed in a VE, he/she does not have any interaction with the real world. Augmented reality (AR), on the other hand, is located between a VR and a real world scenario where technologies enhance rather than replace reality. Augmented reality adds graphics, sounds, haptic feedback and smells to the natural world it exists, revolutionizing the way information is presented to people (Bonsor 2009). In the future, use of AR in information provision may no longer require the use of hand-held devices such as mobile phones, but rather come in the form of wearable devices. Developments are already underway to incorporate augmented reality into contact lens – the project 'Twinkle in the Eye', undertaken by the University of Washington is one such example. The research on augmented reality contact lenses will allow texts to be displayed, speeches to be translated into captions in real time, or offering visual cues from a navigation system. This is illustrated in the case of *Chunhua* in 'Scenario 1: Shanghai in 2050'. The potential of an augmented reality contact lens will unlock a new platform of visual information, unfettered by the constraints of physical display (Parviz 2009).

Scenario: Melbourne 2050

Sheena McGaul is 56, lives in North Melbourne and is a Business Analyst. She has travelled a great deal of the world and has just completed an extramural degree in the history of technology and society. She volunteers for a number of local projects as well as contributes to the local time dollar scheme. This weekend Sheena is heading to the Melbourne Writers Festival. Started over 150 years ago, annual event has grown over the years to one of the largest literary festivals in the Southern Hemisphere (outside of China). It attracts a great many international authors. This year, to celebrate its 64th years, it is being run over the areas of each of the 31 council areas of Metropolitan Melbourne, both as staged event and also as a widely distributed virtual interactive experience. There is something

about this festival she particularly likes. It is one of the few literary festivals which have grown so large, that it has (contrarily) managed very successfully to create 11 very distinct literary events which appear, thus, small compared to some of the international book festivals of Sydney, Hong Kong and Edinburgh to which she goes. Importantly, each of the festival events retains a local community feel for her. Yet, she likes the way the festival also has a worldwide following and how, each year, the festival highlight's both celebrity authors and authors from the local community. This year, the focus of the book festival in the City Business District area is 'scandal'. From America, Monika Lewinsky, author of 'The Clinton Scandals', Ethiopia's Bettie, author of 'Big Brother, the Prison Year' and Angie Mars, the local author who wrote 'The Secret Lives of Tony Albott', will all have top billing. Sheena is an active member of the festival's book club blogging and often meets with other like-minded readers. To Sheena, there is something about books and words that are real, authentic and a focus of conversation.

This scenario highlights the physical presence of the book festival as a community event distinct to Melbourne, inside the collective suburbs that form Metropolitan Melbourne. The book festival becomes the focal point for each suburb, creating a sense of place that is authentic, has social capital and distinguishes Melbourne from other cities by both its celebrity appeal and by various links to the community each event area offer. The following drivers expand upon the above points.

Driver 1: *Authentic-seeking* is it Authenticity-seeking or authentic-Seeking, Please clarify

As much as global consumers continue to embrace the convenience and reliability delivered by globalized mass production, they also aspire to an alternative to the perceived *homogenization* of contemporary culture, food and leisure experiences. The consumer's

search for the 'real' – which we define as Authentic-seeking (Yeoman 2008) – has a number of implications for consumer-facing sectors: from the way companies package and market their offers to how they interact with their customer base. Products with a clearly communicated *hinterland* – be it cultural, historical, environmental or geographical – hold significant appeal for global consumers. Many enjoy understanding more about a product's heritage – from its cultural and historical provenance to the detail of where, how and by whom it was created, and the ingredients it comprises. Considerable status is bestowed upon those who own the original (and therefore more authentic) version of a product. As research by the Future Foundation (2012b) suggests, authentic-seeking is also associated with the accumulation of knowledge. The holiday trip, for example, has become so much more than an excuse to laze in the sun. Authentic holiday experiences and live events are key conversation topics and a significant source of social status (Future Foundation 2012a).

Driver 2: Everyday Exceptional Cultural Experiences

In Western economies where affluence rose for a sustained period, and as many material goods became more easily available, consumption-aspirations shifted to experiences that felt enriching, meaningful, and unique. The increased importance of *aspirational-experiential* consumption is underpinned by the attitude that in using new and unique experiences to improve our skill-set, our cultural knowledge, our wellbeing, and our sophistication will enhance our social status (Bourdieu 1984; Jenkins 1992) and our cultural capital. Involvement with literature and literary festivals is part of that accumulation of cultural capital. It is part of what has been recorded by Future Foundation (in Australia) as a strong desire of people to have their need for new experience satisfied (2012a) This is indicative of a wealth that is driving interest in experience accumulation, and what is referred

to as the experience economy (Mehmetoglu and Engen 2011; Pegg and Patterson 2010; Pine and Gilmore 1998).

As the experience economy matures, it will reach a point where celebration becomes an everyday event. Once upon a time we celebrated an occasional event, it was a treat. Irregularly we went on holiday. Today and in the future, celebration is an everyday occurrence. In the festival literature, one term describing this phenomena is 'festivalization' (Benneworth and Dauncey 2010; Steinbrink et al. 2011). The term is used to indicate the way in which festivals have become – or are in danger of becoming – an increasingly normal leisure occurrence. For events and festivals, the sense and feel of celebration is extremely important. The form of events and festivals has, therefore, to evolve.

Driver 3: Authors and Celebrity

From Delhi to Dubai, the glamour of the VIP world continues to be a source of fascination for the mainstream consumer. Today's film stars, actors, authors and pop stars command a prodigious amount of consumers' attention and, with it, great potential to influence brand, lifestyle and consumption choices. The cult of celebrity is one of today's most pervasive global trends. Indeed, we are hardly short of celebrities who enjoy fame of an international scale: Lady Gaga to J.K. Rowling are examples of stars who command strong attention across the globe. And while countless local celebrities may not enjoy such mass appeal, their power within their home nations is still potent. As Moran (2000) observes in her book *Star Authors: Literacy Celebrity*, the increased in interest in books has given authors capacity to appear on television talk shows or magazine covers. The modern literary celebrity actively negotiates their own celebrity rather than simply having it imposed upon them.

(**Reframe it for clarity**) They have used books to construct their celebrity, and have created social capital by their publication. With their publication(s) they can be viewed as an expert. It was Gore (2006) who discussed climate change not through the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) but through the publication – *An Inconvenient Truth.* The success of the book 'got' people talking about climate change in America, it was a book that had celebrity and became the social capital of climate change in which the average citizen could and did discuss the topic. Authors like Gore, are involved in many forms of *extra-curricular* activity - from charity to design, to politics. It has long since been a defining development of the cult of celebrity. In many ways, the digital revolution has brought fans and admirers ever closer to the thoughts, feelings and lives of their favourite celebrities (Yeoman 2012a). Today, celebrity is a key element of book festivals. They are brands that leverage a unique selling point in the crowded world of festivals.

Key issues: Signposts and Signals

According to Gilad (2003) scenarios throw off signposts, which are monitored via *signals*. Yeoman and Smith (2012) argue that *signposts* are the truthfulness, occurrence and evidence of scenarios occurring now, while the signal is an indicator of what the future could be. In order to discuss signals and signposts the authors here post a series of questions that analyse a number of signposts and signals for the future of literary festivals. These questions are drawn from the Scenarios and the drivers shown.

Defining New Social Capital

In the scenario, *the signposts* are community co-creation and social exchange. The *signals* are captured in the argument that participation, involvement and association are dynamics in the formation of social capital (Johnston and Percy-Smith 2003). Community

festivals offer an opportunity to give voice to shared cultural values (Moscardo 2007; Paiola 2008; Quinn 2003) community development and social capital (Arcodia and Whitford 2006; Whitford 2009). Moreover, the involvement of local people in local events helps create added value for both the visitor and the resident, making an event both unique and valuable for all stakeholders (including local council) (Paiola 2008).

As the scenarios suggests, the signals in the scenario are the increasing number of collaborative endeavours in which we see that participation in festivals will increase as new platforms of social engagement emerge – both technological and organizational. These accelerate the populations' opportunity to be involved. One of these already shown is the rapid growth in fanzines dedicated to writers (Moran 2000; York 2007). In the digital fanzines community environment, high levels of empathy and emulation are shared by those involved. They share in the beliefs and values shown by the celebrity (Fraser and Brown 2002; Soukup 2006). Through literary festivals, in particular, cultural engagement with literary performance will quicken and spread. Collaboration, engagement, joint and individual presentation and what is described as co-production (Adler and Kwon 2002; Powell and Dalton 2003) and co-creation (Dinnen 2012; Murray 2010; Stewart 2009) will be the hallmark of a literary festival. While, the individual author will still exist, and the power of the author as celebrity will be strong, authors and communities of fans will be less to write alone – and the majority of these will not be engaged solely as an act of celebrity.

In the scenario, the signposts are of technology changing the nature of the relationship or literary festivals visitors and audience, encouraging co-creation, and the bringing down of what is referred to as the *fourth wall* (Miller 2013). The signals for this are present in the way technology is allowing for the breaking up of narrative content in to ever small elements.

With this capacity to digitally divide to ever smaller and more rapidly assembled elements, so too it is possible to seamlessly form multiple variation of storyline. Storytelling thus can be a more authentic interactive experience (Miller 2013), more able to be formed in real time by the interaction of author and reader, a response to offer authentic experience. As such what has been referred to as the *fourth wall* (Miller 2013) will need to come down.

In theatre production (Jean 2006; Miller 2013), cinema and literature (Katherine 2007) and within education (Alraek and Baerheim 2005) the image of *fourth wall* is used to indicate an invisible/ metaphoric boundary between performer and the audience. It is the boundary between real life and a fictional sense of life. In new interactive literature, facilitated by new media (technology), the relationship between reader and character is increasingly, and contrarily, very life like. Dialogue between the audience and fictional characters, for example, becomes very natural. Emails, telephone calls, Instant-Messaging exchange all possible normal engagement in the fictional experience (Miller 2013). As avatar on screen activity or in a liminal dimension, immersion in the experience is the key to success.

Literary festivals have, similarly, aided the bringing down of the *fourth wall* in seeking to enhance the interaction between audience and the author. Conversations, workshops and other co-creative mixing of literary forms have increase in popularity. The design, the attractiveness and the capacity of these literary festivals to offer the best literary experience, already important to host cities, are of increasing importance for the success of these events and their capacity to draw tourism and cultural engaged communities. As composite of this, technology will, too, offer new interactive and liminal opportunities for the literary festival and the literary festival visitor.

In the scenario, the signal of the changed nature of consumption of literature and festival is shown in the consumption of music performance (Coyle et al. 2009; Huang 2003; Molteni and Ordanini 2003). The downloading or streaming of music (either for free or at very low cost) has become far more popular than buying. As the buying of music recording and books became less attractive and the downloading or streaming of these becomes easier and more attractive, so an increasing number of live events have become an income for both writers and musicians while also commanding greater social capital in the city (Cohen 2012). Live events have greater social capital than cloud (online) events (although these will still exist and be attractive to those can neither afford the live or liminal consumption choices).

As the scenario signposts, the social development capacity of literature and literary events (for writing, reading and collaboration) will be far more influential than economic and financial worth. In a tirade of social media, where language is whittled down its most compact and accurate form – and given further nuance by the technological platform chosen, 'long writing' in the post digital age will have added values. Needfully, it will establish a new relation between the reader and writer. Both will contribute to experience in a new social paradigm. In this trans-literacy environment, the polymodal capacity of any city population is determined by their individual and collective skills of packaging and transferring knowledge, both in the formal and social setting. Literary festivals, while entertaining also serve as festivals of literacy. *In this scenario, the signals* include literary festivals which involve innovative components of technology (Larson 2009) and a changing relationship between artist and means of distribution. These offer new organisational dynamics (DiLiello and Houghton 2008). The experience in cities of Asia-Pacific will be recognizable for their

comparability and their propensity to allow the literature of many countries to develop in ways not previously considered.

The Changing Roles of Cultural Professionals and Institutions

The signpost in this scenario indicates that emergent cultural clusters, new forms of networked consumption and new mobile information and learning professional activity will emerge in the city. In this, the cultural clusters created around literature and writing in Shanghai will form new sub-clusters and new networks (physical and liminal) as access to information breeds new forms, new trends and new followers.

In this scenario, the signals are the development of radical variations of professional roles. First of these are Librarians, who are likely to work as latter-day DJs able to set up wherever required, already supporting and enhance the literary convergences of academics, co-learners (students and teaching staff) information professionals and – of course – authors and readers. Their work looks to both digitize and synthesize information for virtual environments (Leonard and Morasch 2012; Places et al. 2007; Zhang 2010). As enablers, they too will have a new importance in the literary event future. Literary events will continue to educate, and to inform and create discussion, and utilize new urban professionals.

As the scenario signpost, new forms of creativity, culture and festival consumption converge to profile the city. In this scenario, a number of changes have served to *signal* the way a city profiles itself by its cultural consumption (Evans 2009; Flew 2010; Gibson and Kong 2005). In the west, from the 1980's onwards (Bianchini and Ghilardi 2007; Boyle and Hughes 1994), it has been the urban regeneration and the reimaging of the city. In Asia, it has been the rapid growth of cities – in the period between 2000 to 2025 (Dobbs et al. 2012;

Economist Intelligence Unit 2012). The activities and perceptions by the city visitor and the urban resident have been profoundly influenced by this.

Culture, cultural industries (i.e., providers with cultural heritage and traditionally artistic forms of creativity (UNESCO 2009) and creative industries (with an emphasis on talent and individual innovation, and production of information and/or telecommunication and copyright) receive considerable discussion as to their defining differences. However, we refer to them together here – indicating that the demarcation of cultural industry and creative industry will decrease as the relation to copyright becomes less significant.

In the scenario, literature and literary festivals aid a process of global social equalization - giving opportunity to both industrialized and development countries of the world. *The signals* are the near universal support by government and economic planners for urban projects in which creative activity and creative/cultural industries are vital components of knowledge based development (UNESCO 2007). The growth of urban culture and the growing notion of creative city as directives of competitive development is prolific (Landry 2000, 2006; Landry and Bianchini 1995; Pratt 2008). However, through time, the zoning of artistic and lifestyle (cultural) activity and the stimulation of creative industries are in danger of becoming over familiar in metropolitan cities. Similarly, there has been extensive comment on how this zoning, and the sharing of cultural and urban real estate creates tensions whereby the created spaces of consumption (and the revenues they can command) drive out the producers (O'Connor 2007). Through the 21st century, large festivals became increasingly notable for their role in this economic development process (Gibson et al. 2010; Quinn 2005a, 2005b) and in alleviating and redirecting some of the potential for the urban

familiarity. Moreover, rarely requiring permanent structures they have little or no repercussions on real estate.

In this scenario, the *signpos*t has been further signalled but Festivals and other public events had traditionally always given voice to a great range of cultural activity in the city. They can create, as Willem-Baum states, 'spaces of inter-subjectivity' (Hollands 2010: 382) in which artists, organizations and community intermingle socially and professionally. McClinchey (2008) indicates, however, many cities, which determined festivals as core and exclusive elements of place marketing, undermined their own potential for long-term success. The strategies could curtail the new power configurations necessary for genuinely creative places (Landry 2006; Luckman et al. 2009; McClinchey 2008).

Thinking beyond Reality: A Science Fiction Future for Literary Festivals

As the scenario signals explain we have already seen significant changes in the forms of reading matter from paper to tablet or e-paper in the last few years. As example of the radical nature of these changes, the latest Kindle can store more books than Melbourne City Library (Future Foundation 2012c). It can also access a whole range of multi-media formats. Furthermore, as Reid-Cunningham, Associate Director for Digital Programmes and Preservation at the Boston Athenaeum suggested at the MIT Future of the Book conference (2012),

> *Books that carry data will be dead; the phone book is already dead, he said, and drew parallels to other "dead" technologies like the daguerreotype. Digitization may be replacing the codex, but one form that Reid-Cunningham thinks may be a future of the book is art books, which are in and of themselves works of art* (Rosen 2012).

The signals in this scenario highlight the change in the consumption of literature. A series of questions arise from this. First, will the future of literature see predictive text

develop and become predictive mind reading? Will we know the end of the book before we have read it. Will 3D holograms read books for us? Could dreams be transformed into a book that is downloadable whilst we sleep? Does artificial intelligence aid the writing of books for us?

Literacy or 'visible language' is the ability to read and write. It is a transformative skill that allows consumers to act, and engage with each other. We ask, is literacy going to be displaced by something from the genre of science fiction? A signal can be found in the film *Minority Report* which illustrates the possibility of future gestural interface, where things can be controlled without any devices. Gestural interfaces will enable humans to interact with machines without having to use any mechanical devices. This is the near future of computer interface. Information in its traditional form is typically confined to print media, or digitally – and on a hard screen. However, with gestural interface information can be interacted externally with simply hand gestures. 'SixthSense' (SixthSense 2009) for example, is a wearable gestural interface that augments the physical world with digital information, and allows natural hand gestures to interact with that information. It bridges the gap between intangible digital information to the tangible world and frees information from its confined state of paper or a digital screen.

Further forward, futurist Dr Ian Pearson (2011) draws from a research paper published in *Nature* (Cerf et al. 2010) in which researchers developed a system capable of recording brain activity i.e., dreams. Pearson proposes a world where consumers will be able to upload a book as a dream. These dreams could be recorded and shared with others. For the festival director, then, consideration of a science fiction interpretation of the future, one that

moves beyond rationality will require the suspension of beliefs and thinking outside the box in order to imagine a quantum leap of change (Yeoman 2012a).

Identifying the Future Reader – Celebrity, Collaborator and Trans-literate

As the scenario suggests, the rapid rise in the number of literary festivals during the first decade of 21st Century Australia (Masson 2011; Ommundsen 2009) will continue. The number of authors who became celebrities, and the growth of books that become best sellers (and often control cinema sequels) had been significant in their attraction to new and younger markets in the first quarter of the 21st century. At first, the number of self-publishing opportunities encourages a rise in individual authorship activity. These reduce as the physical cost of paper publications, and the capacity to sell in a busy market see many fail. However as, first, digital then virtual publication become a standard, and the quality of cloud based streaming technology becomes better and less dependent on expertise, the costs decrease (with the largest cost being the license for the trans-literary publication platform being used).

As stated in the scenario, there are *signals* that the rising rate of literacy in developing countries is not only gauged by traditional measures of literacy but, equally, by measuring the numbers of those with the highest convergence of information. This is to say it measures the capacity to transfer and integrate literary skills and knowledge with other mediums, and with technological skill. Thus success in the world is determined by the capacity to synergize knowledge and converge information, i.e., trans-literacy (Thomas 2008). China will still be a national leader in the trans-literacy in 2050. However celebrity authors will be able to afford, in Australia as elsewhere, the best editorial teams to ensure their trans-literacy writing is most current. Literary festivals in Mega-cities throughout the world will aid this.

In this scenario there are *signals* of the changing form of literary consumer. While literary festivals, arts galleries and history museums each had once been seen as having an appeal that was most likely to be shared by those in higher socioeconomic groups, and that it served to enhance their social capital at the cost of the lower socioeconomic groups (Kim et al. 2007) by 2020 this has changed considerably. Similarly, countering the idea that the literature tourism is something only for consumption by older members of the family (Chappel and Brown 2006; Mintel 2011), we have watched a rapid growth of literature for children, and their increasing importance in literary/ writers festivals (Masson 2011). So while there was a time when literature for children was derided by writers and commentators alike, it is now placed as far more significant (Masson 2011). *Signalling* to the future, thus, we observe young people are more heavily involved in the production and reading of literature. But it won't just be younger people that will be reading and producing literature. Nor will they be the only ones attending literary festivals.

The continued signal of the rapid growth and transmutation of technology – as both communication and experience platform – gives further acceleration to stories, literature and writing as social phenomena. While initially this is particularly the case for the younger members of the city populace – and children, adolescents and young adults consume and produce more literature than even before. However as the years pass, and the population becomes older, so integration with technology becomes more intuitive. Not only can ideas, thoughts and actions be exercised through thought, so too the technology can add clarity to the accumulated reasoning. Thus an ageing population and the younger member of society are trans-literate. Literature is, then, a social and transforming phenomenon enjoyed by all (Hull and Stornaiuolo 2010).

Implication of Research

The paper offers a conceptual discussion which contributes to the wider discussion of management adaptability and sustainability for festivals, generally, and the future of literary festivals, more particularly. In undertaking a scenario study, the authors have not pursued the generalizable. This does not refute or ignore the significance of the generalizable. It does, however, give opportunity to discover, and perhaps to identify the anomalies which may otherwise be left to historians to explain once their affect has already been felt.

In looking at the political world Rosenau (1995: 115) states that without looking at the improbable, and allowing for what may be the dynamics of transformation, 'we are violating any trust we may enjoy as social scientists'. By being awake to developments that signal change, and to 'signposts of a cumulative of tendencies towards change' (Rosenau 1995: 114) we allow for new schemes of interpretation without being unbound from empirical fact. These signals and signposts have function in zones of uncertainty (Shell International BV 2011). The rapid development of technology now and the transition of generation to living and working in new processes of thought and interaction, now and in the future, do facilitate uncertainness. Communication and language interact with the social activities that make our lives as cohabitants grounded. As greater numbers of megacities (with populations over 10million people) and middle sized cities (with populations less than 10 million people) (Dobbs et al. 2012) form in the world, and thus more of the world is urban than ever before, the forms of our communication and celebration are particularly important.

In the socio-political environment of future society, where cities will be huge and the effect of stress in society far reaching (and potentially negative), it is important that

dislocations between communities and policy initiatives are minimized. Literature, as stated, has a particular significance in representing people in this climate. Furthermore literary events (as with all events) will have an increasing range of policy functions related to them. So in framing event tourism policy, the socio-cultural, socio-environment and economic impacts may be better managed where a representative and diverse range of stakeholders have an input. The use of a number of scenario planning methods can thus be employed. One of these methods is the application of science fiction, in the form of story-telling. The other is the identification of signals and signposts as part of a process of prognosis.

Literature and literary festivals may change as their traditional components change (i.e., text and its medium), as their physical and virtual environment change, and as the needs of the middle classes in Asia, and an aging population, more generally, increase in numbers. The pursuit of the 'other', of liminality, will give opportunity for new forms of community. Scenario planning has a variety of formats that may be applied in this process. From different paradigms of thought, Vignettes can be used to offer scripts from which to draw possible responses to possible scenarios. Science fiction and the application of what Bergman describes has been shown in this conceptual paper. In pursuit of evidence of futures, Signposts and Signals (Gilad 2003; Rosenau 1995) may provide patterns that offer capacity for suggesting directions ahead.

For event planners and directors - who will continue to have a myriad of social, economic and political stakeholder responsibility (Ensor et al. 2011; Moital et al. 2013), the capacity to involve representatives in scenario thinking will be increasingly important and may aid sustainable development (Cavagnaro et al. 2012). The involvement of specialist researchers and facilitators will equally be vital. For city planners and policy makers, for

whom sustainability in its many forms are vital, it will of course be of increasing significance for long-range planning of tourism destination (McLennan et al. 2012)

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