SPECIAL ARTICLE

The post-pandemic museum in the Philippine context

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ABSTRACT

In response to the global crisis brought about by the coronavirus pandemic, the Philippine government declared a countrywide State of Calamity, apart from imposing quarantines of different stringency across regions. As workplaces have been mandated to implement alternative arrangements, these major changes in turn have caused disruptions in, and called for adjustments to, business operations, with museums being among the affected. As museums are venues that store physical collections that call for physical presence and even the tactile involvement of audiences and visitors, their operations will have to be inevitably transformed post-pandemic, as are their visitors, whose mental health is likely to have been affected by the pandemic and resulting quarantine. Using the lens of crisis management, this paper analyzed the museum sector's response to the changes brought about by the spread of disease and the resulting imposition of quarantine. Through a review of the responses of several Manila-based museums to the crisis, the paper assessed the readiness of the museums in creating appropriate and effective measures to manage decreased foot traffic and economic impact, among others. The paper asserts that various tactics were used as reactions, instead of proactive steps, to mitigate the effects of the pandemic to museums. The analyses are juxtaposed with degrowth initiatives, which may potentially address the economic issues arising from the pandemic. These initiatives may be of help in resolving the issue of collections management and curatorship, with a focus on the quality, rather than the quantity, of the museum's collection and profits. Through postmodern and new museology theory, shifts from physical to virtual and other alternative modes of art experience are discussed as possible and effective solutions to this crisis. Overall, the paper aims to propose a revised model of operation that may be useful to museology in particular, and mental and planetary health in general.

Keywords: *museum, Crisis Communication Theory, Degrowth Initiatives, Postmodern Theory, mental health, planetary health*

Introduction

This paper is a theory-based discussion of the authors' perspectives on the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on the museum and art industries, coupled with practical recommendations. While it is undeniable that businesses, organizations, and establishments have been gravely affected by the crisis, it is nonetheless possible that the effects could have been less severe if preparations and contingency plans were made beforehand. This paper attempts to illustrate the breadth of options that museums have in terms of serving the public despite this time that people are encouraged to not leave their homes. In essence, this paper seeks to fuse theory and practice in responding to the present crisis and preparing for similar black swan events in the future.

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), a novel strain of coronavirus that causes coronavirus disease 19 (COVID-19), was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) in March 2020 [1], with the first local transmission confirmed in the same month [2]. This was then followed by the Philippine government's imposition of an Enhanced Community Quarantine with

stringent social distancing measures as a response to the crisis [3]. The lockdowns, which continue at varying levels of stringency across the country's different regions, have caused numerous job losses, supply chain challenges, travel restrictions, and business disruptions, apart from effects on mental health [4]. Given that only essential services were operational during the quarantine, museum operations were gravely affected.

While museums have been modifying the delivery of their services well before the community quarantines began, these modifications aim to present the museum as an establishment that is more than just a structure or a building. Instead, it is presented as a conceptual space made up of abstract layers such as collections that are informal, but nonetheless still valuable. Restated, attention is redirected from only the artworks to the surrounding physical and conceptual aspects of spaces [5].

The quarantines hastened the speed and widened the scope of the modification. Although different museum-related activities were suspended, museums continue to find ways to adapt to the new normal, as other establishments do. Still, implementation is iterative, which is merely a diplomatic way of saying that people go back to the drawing board when they find that something does not work out as planned.

This paper examined the responses of purposively selected Philippine museums to the pandemic immediately after the government-mandated quarantines. These approaches were then compared to the prevailing courses of action that the management of these museums were taking prior to the quarantine. To minimize institutional and personal biases, no interviews were carried out; instead, extant data both online and offline were used. Methodological triangulation was used, in that the analyses were buttressed theoretically with a view to identifying recurrent themes in the museums' responses to the crisis. Given that this journal's readership is made up of professionals steeped in the medical sciences who may have an interest in the humanities, we have written this paper with a generalist orientation.

The museum defined

For modifications to even be considered, it is important to first define what a museum really is and identify its purpose and role in society. A focus on fundamentals, as it were, prevents any further complications from an already complicated state of affairs. With clear definitions, the expected outcome is a set of appropriate solutions. The putative result is that the transition to the so-called new normal is made easier.

The museum, formerly called “mouseion,” originated in the Greek times as an institution for the practice of philosophy or a place of contemplation. The Latin derivation, “museum,” was used in Roman times, but this derivation also referred to any place of philosophical discussion. It can thus be said that the term originally referred to universities rather than institutions that preserve the heritage of peoples and cultures [6]. The 17th century saw the emergence of the idea that man's normative essence consists in his self-ownership. Having collections, whether as individuals or as a group, meant the possession of wealth and identity. These collections of accumulated property and goods were to help in remaking the people's cultural selves, apart from interrogating assumptions and resolving the paradoxes involved in any given culture. This remaking of cultural selves came about as a result of (1) a thorough process of selection and (2) a cherishing of authentic collective property using arbitrary systems of value and meaning that are always powerful and rule-governed, even as these systems are ever-changing.

Two components needed in the process of collecting are the good collector and the collection. The good collector is not only tasteful and reflective, but also able to accumulate material with an educative bent in mind. The collection on the other hand, should be put on display in shelves, boxes, or cabinets, labelled and distinguished from other less important properties. It is the job of the collector to present these materials with interesting details, making sure that there is a distinction between originals and copies [7]. This is essentially the fundamental aspect of the practices of museology, and the collection of arts and culture as it evolved in Europe.

The museum's role as an institution is to preserve and interpret the material evidence of humankind, human activity, and the natural world. For the entirety of the 19th century and most of the 20th, the use of the word museum was directed towards a structure or a building that houses cultural materials that the public had access to [6]. The traditional museum is not only defined by its physical collections, but also by its architecture. These buildings display cultural and political ideologies that add commentary to the collections inside them. Museum buildings were often modeled after Greco-Roman structures that have become the traditional image of museums people expect to see and experience. The structure urges the visitors to carry mental images and expectations for the visit. It also implicitly dictates to the public how they are expected to interact with the building and the displays inside. The image of a museum in the mind's eye is supposed to be one of profundity, sacredness, and an imposition of grandeur. The museum, being a venue

for the physical display of properties and materials, must safeguard and secure these artifacts from visitors' possibly overactive minds and hands [8]. The distance between the visitor and the visited not only has a consequence on the economy of the visited museum, but also on the mental health of its visitors, forced as they are to stay at home.

In later years, museums continued to respond to and reflect the culture of the societies that created them; however, the emphasis on the architectural structure became less dominant. Various approaches to the museum concept have emerged, some of which were manifested in new and unique establishments such as open-air museums comprising a series of buildings preserved as objects, as well as eco-museums involving the interpretation of all aspects of an outdoor environment. There is also the presence of virtual museums that exist online [6]. The concepts of museology and museum practices have evolved, and they now have a more inclusive and generalized meaning, one that allows the field of museology to adapt to the rapidly changing society and environment.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization–International Council of Museums (UNESCO-ICOM) established the official definition of the museum as: "a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates, and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study, and enjoyment." A 2019 invitation from UNESCO-ICOM towards the revision of this definition led to a proposed alternative that reads as: "Museums are democratizing, inclusive, and polyphonic spaces for critical dialogue about the pasts and the futures. Acknowledging and addressing the conflicts and challenges of the present, they hold artefacts and specimens in trust for society, safeguard diverse memories for future generations, and guarantee equal rights and equal access to heritage for all people. Museums are not for profit. They are participatory and transparent, and work in active partnership with and for diverse communities to collect, preserve, research, interpret, exhibit, and enhance understandings of the world, aiming to contribute to human dignity and social justice, global equality, and planetary well-being" [9]. Further refinements to the definition are easily accessible from the International Council of Museums website.

Service to society is the main goal of museums, insofar as they are public institutions. Part of the mission to serve society includes the goal of positively impacting on sustainable development. Financial constraints have forced museums to turn their attention towards becoming organizationally sustainable instead of sustaining the collection of artifacts. Organizational sustainability includes both institutional survival and intergenerational sustainability, the latter which is understood as the ability of a museum to fulfil a long-run cultural mission. In museums, the combination of culture, economy, society, and environment creates an ecosystem to achieve sustainable development. These individual parts of the ecosystem are resources and goals at the same time, in that they all contribute to the museum at the same time that they must be maintained for future generations.

While the definition of the museum may have changed every so often, certain aspects of the museum have remained stable. Museums are still institutions that aim to collect, preserve, exhibit, and interpret certain material aspects of society's cultural consciousness using an assortment of methods. With the looser and more inclusive meaning, it would be easier for museums to adopt adjusted practices that are more fitting for the so-called new normal during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Theoretical and practical underpinnings

Even as the word "crisis" normally carries unpleasant connotations, it is important to note that there are positive and negative crises, with the former bringing certain benefits to an organization [10]. This paper focuses on negative crises as contextualized in the COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines, specifically in Metro Manila.

Crisis management is a critical but oftentimes ignored organizational function. It is an essential action that needs to be performed by companies and organizations during the pandemic to avoid halting operations and stave off bankruptcy. Failure in this organizational function causes serious harm to stakeholders, losses for the organization, or even the cessation of an organization's very existence. Crisis management, a part of disaster management, is an organizational function that is concerned with business continuity [11].

A crisis, which may be defined as a serious incident that may threaten public safety, financial viability, and reputational loss [12], differs from an ordinary incident in that the former requires special attention and speedy response from management. A crisis hinders business operations and routines, apart from creating uncertainty and stress for the employees of the organization. A crisis may be exacerbated by the short amount of time available to make a decision that may have an outsized effect on the entire organization.

One such outsized effect is the distortion of the organization's image, a distortion that may receive undesired attention from gatekeepers and stakeholders, particularly the media. Crisis management thus leads to another organizational function: that of public relations [12]. Coombs [13] asserts that crisis response strategies have three objectives relative to protecting reputations: (1) shape attributions of the crisis; (2) change perceptions of the organization in crisis; and (3) reduce the negative effect generated by the crisis. These objectives all support the general goal of reputation protection, and crisis managers may use one, several, or all of these three in their efforts.

Crisis management has three stages: (1) the pre-crisis stage; (2) the crisis response stage; and (3) the post-crisis stage. The pre-crisis stage focuses on preventive measures that address known risks. A crisis management plan is ideally formulated before there is a crisis to begin with. Organizations are better able to handle crises when they (1) have a crisis management plan that is updated periodically; (2) have a well-supported crisis management team; (3) draft messages in preparation for crises; and (4) conduct exercises to test the plans and teams frequently enough to create a culture of readiness in the organization.

The crisis response stage is concerned with the statements made and actions taken by management in addressing the crisis as it happens. A dedicated public relations team that keeps all stakeholders in mind is an organization's best chance at getting to a post-crisis stage. Managers process their learnings post-crisis and use this knowledge to fine-tune their methods for whenever the next crisis happens. Such continuous improvement efforts may be summarized as prevention, preparation, and response [12].

The concept of degrowth is a critique of the current capitalist system and neoliberal agenda. It goes against the paradigm of infinite growth and calls for sustainable degrowth as an equitable downscaling of production and consumption that is seen to increase human wellbeing and enhance ecological conditions at the local, national, and global levels. The transformation of society is its overarching goal, to be clear, lest it be interpreted as merely economic in focus. Central components of a degrowth society are local and self-production, life extension of goods, less resource use, sharing, reciprocity work, and conviviality, among others. It can thus be argued that human wellbeing and quality of life play essential roles in this model.

According to degrowth proponents, the current consumer trends based on individualism and neoliberalism have resulted not only in economic crises but also social ones. Prosperity can be, counterintuitively, enhanced by a lifestyle focused on simplicity, a stronger focus on social relations, and voluntary, non-paid work—instead of supposed material satisfaction from consumption [14]. The degrowth initiative is a response to mounting environmental and social problems. It suggests that the only real solution is to produce and consume less—to shrink our economies to cope with the carrying capacity of our planet. It puts forth the idea that we can continue current growth patterns if we innovate products that are less resource-intensive and generate fewer waste by-products.

Degrowth initiatives can thus be summarized as pathways that are motivated by impulses that are not fixated on and limited by growth. The basic point is a call for radical change in guiding socioeconomic logics away from the premise of “exponential growth” or “endless accumulation.” While such thinking may appear utopian, economic anthropologist Serge Latouche [16] argues that there are conceptual and practical changes that can be developed and deployed to build a degrowth society. He proposes a virtuous circle of eight Rs: re-evaluate, reconceptualize, restructure, redistribute, re-localize, reduce, reuse, and recycle. Three of these, he claims, have strategic roles to play in effecting change: (1) re-evaluation, because it is the starting point of all change; (2) reduction, because it is a condensation of all the practical imperatives of de-growth; and (3) re-localization, because it concerns the everyday lives of people.

In 2010, museologist Francois Mairesse addressed the issue of museums having “too much stuff” by suggesting the consideration of Degrowth Museums. The possible effect of degrowth for collecting may lie in its emphasis on abandoning the principle of endless accumulation, 'limitless collecting', 'indefinite expansion', or 'comprehensive collecting'. The degrowth argument gives museums permission to not keep on expanding indefinitely but to consider halting or reversing growth by 'unencumbering' themselves of collection materials.

However, what these specific ideas might mean in practice has not been addressed in any sustained way. Possible museological practices include proposals to re-evaluate collections as naturalistic entities; redistribute, re-use, and recycle collections; reduce by doing more at the same time that museums go smaller and do better with less; and re-localize by connecting communities with collections [17].

Museums are created and sustained by a virtuous cycle that begins with people. First, the populace invests money and resources in the museum. Second, the museum obtains,

conserves, exhibits, and interprets cultural heritage artifacts. Third, the museum repays the community by using community heritage to create cultural vitality and economic development. Part of the creation of cultural vitality is the development of pro-environment and socially responsible behaviors among museum visitors. The value created by the museum motivates authorities, sponsors, donors, and other stakeholders to continue to support it. The cycle is then repeated, with cultural vitality being the way in which museums reward the communities' efforts [18].

In Metro Manila, in the Philippines, it is possible for some museums, private ones in particular, to engage in de-growth Initiatives because they have already explored a wider range of ways to provide curatorial services to the public. Considering this, it is an option for them to downsize and halt further development not just for sustainability purposes, but also for the museum to survive the crisis that the pandemic has brought upon them. Examples of these museums are the Ayala and Yuchengco Museums, which have been actively exploring both traditional and non-traditional curatorial practices to serve their public.

New Museology, as the name implies, challenges traditional or so-called "old school" museological training and its focus on professional practice and seeming detachment from theory. This detachment, lacuna as it were, was then filled by ideology, and discourses of cultural theory and postmodern critique. New Museology thus proposes a shift of focus from the methods to the purposes. From a single metanarrative paradigm, New Museology has enabled the coexistence of multiple paradigms by deconstructing the institution of the museum and then subsequently reconstructing it to include concepts of participation and representation in curatorial practice.

Academic curricula and practice initiatives are being informed by New Museology; it must be made clear that the latter does not necessarily replace the core functions of a museum, but complements them. Museology has become a multidisciplinary premise that is supported by sheer breadth and depth of frameworks both analytical and conceptual, as well as methods. Through the decades, the range of influences and approaches in Museum Studies has significantly widened, such that cultural theory, architecture and design, management, and marketing, among others have been taken into the fold as it were [19].

Before the concept of Postmodern and New Museology was popularized, the relationship between museums and visitors was solely at the level of visitors' visual experience of displayed objects. At present though, the requirement and focus are to establish mutual and interactive relations between the museum, its collections, exhibitions, services, and their users [20]. The museum is now a postmodern space, in a relation of permanent critique to the past, a result of progress on account of Enlightenment values of universal truth and reason [21].

These new ways of rediscovering the museum can be asserted as the products of postmodernism which, in the arts, refers to a wide category of contemporary art in the latter part of the 20th century. The highlight of this movement is its rejection of the aesthetics upon which its predecessor, modern art, was based. It rejected the idea that art is supposed to be something special and higher than popular art. It coincides with the emergence of technological developments that led to various artistic experimentations with new media and art forms. These include conceptual art, new and different types of performance art, installation art, and computer-aided movements like deconstructivism and projection art. This movement greatly expanded the definition what art is and what could be considered art [22]. Using technological resources, new concepts of art brought about by postmodernism include video art, animation art, photorealism, and projection art, and the use of virtual realities.

Given these changes and developments in the concept of museology, the new methods of curating collections and presenting these to the public during the global pandemic will either prove or disprove the effectiveness of both postmodern theories and practices—the putative intentions of which is to strengthen the ability of museums to adapt to the new normal by conceptualizing and creating various alternatives to serve the public.

Suggestions towards a revitalized museum

ICOM conducted surveys as a form of temperature check on museums all over the world. According to its findings, almost all museums were temporarily shuttered, and professionals worked remotely. While the situation for permanent employees appeared comparatively stable, contracts were terminated or not renewed in 6% of cases. Meanwhile, the situation for freelance museum professionals appeared dire: 16.1% of respondents said they were temporarily laid off, with 22.6% not having their contracts renewed. The freelance sector was likewise severely affected; 56.4% of the respondents stated that their salaries were effectively suspended because of the crisis, while 39.4% said the firms that contracted them would reduce staff.

Almost all museums around the world have reduced their activities and nearly a third of them have laid off staff. More than a tenth may close permanently. Well over 80% of the museum administrators who responded to the survey anticipate that museum programs would be reduced; almost three-tenths (29.8%) expect that the number of staff will have to be reduced. Around an eighth (12.8%) of participants fear that their museum might close. On a positive note, security and conservation of heritage in museums continued throughout the lockdown, with about four-fifths of the respondents saying that security and conservation measures were maintained or even increased to cope with the lack of staff members onsite [23].

As mentioned previously, degrowth initiatives museums could be adopted to reduce or recycle the resources being used to conserve, collect, and exhibit cultural materials acquired by the organizations. Such actions may address, albeit temporarily, any financial issues that museums currently experience. It can be argued that resorting to limitations of collection materials may be detrimental and not aligned with the purpose and role of the museum in society, but this is a temporary measure that will ultimately help in its survival. This may be a better choice than having the museum cease operations altogether.

Even before the pandemic, museums had started exploring other ways of presenting their exhibits to the people by going beyond traditional museology, to adapt to the changing environment and societal attitudes. The traditional notions of museum artifacts being considered sacred and prohibiting visitors from touching collections have become relics of an earlier, perhaps easier, time. The emergence of interactive museums and exhibits, the curatorship of performance art, the museum as venues for all art forms, and the idea of museums without walls have successfully challenged the old school of museology, stuck in the four walls of a structure. These changes embody New Museology, seemingly a successful challenge to the old ways.

The pandemic has had the result of industries being finally constrained to consider technology in their work processes. Mediated by computers and contactless interaction, businesses and other activities were somehow able to continue operations. Museums must consider these technologies if they are to even get to the new normal. The rise of virtual museums and virtual realities has already happened even before the pandemic, so it is not an entirely new concept in museology. The pandemic has managed to shake administrators into action and hasten the transition from the tactile to the virtual through technology.

Those who have moved to the virtual include: (1) The National Museum 360 Virtual Tour; (2) The Presidential Museum and Library; (3) CANVAS – Center for Art, New Ventures & Sustainable Development; (4) Martial Law Museum; (5) Ayala Museum; (6) Filipinas Heritage Library; (7) Curate Art Space; (8) FilipinoArt.ph; (9) Cartellino; (10) Filipino Street Art Project; and (11) Museo de Intramuros. While some of them have their own websites, some have partnered with Google Arts and Culture so that their collections could be posted online [24].

Some Filipino artists have also been exploring the creation of virtual museums that are not based on tangible materials but are purely created digitally. An example of this is Tatong Torres who, as Koto Nizna, debuted his works in 2010 in a newly constructed gallery called Yarn Factory Art Projects in Tochigi, Japan. This address happened to be virtual, one that could only be found in a simulator program called Second Life, a virtual platform where internet users from the world over can recreate digital versions of themselves. His show Make My Day! was visited by other avatars during its opening, with live music performances from virtual international bands. Virtual artworks were featured, such as video, installation, and sculpture based on found 3D objects arranged across a virtual gallery. People were able to explore the museum by creating their respective avatars, all of whom went inside the virtual museum. This show was reexhibited in 2011 as a video work in the real world, and it received critical attention as a form of pioneering art for the internet age [25].

Although virtual reality has helped in bringing artworks closer to the audience, there are certain limitations and lost features in the whole aesthetic experience. Being able to visit physical exhibits allows the audience to interact with the work and its environment. In this setup, almost all of the senses are involved in the experience. In virtual museums, however, one may be able to see the exhibit and hear sounds coming from the virtual scenery, but it is impossible to capture the scent and feeling of being in there physically. There are also other limitations such as the lack of usability, and incomprehensible or too-complicated navigation techniques. It is likely for users to be disoriented, lose overview, and have difficulties in relocating previously visited locations [26].

The aesthetic experience of the audience with the exhibit is not the only factor affected in the shift from physical to virtual museums. Even the organization, management, and curation of exhibits have also changed. Curators have started to work with technological experts who create virtual content. Factors affecting physical experience such as room

temperature, scent, and exhibit texture and feel have been removed from curation considerations. As for animated exhibits, the physical world will totally be out of the picture, and graphic artists and animators will play a huge role in museology [26].

To their credit, museums deftly used social media to reach their stakeholders during the pandemic. It must be noted though that the use of social media could have been started before the pandemic as opposed to during the pandemic. Aside from posting artworks and announcements on various social networking sites, they were also able to use the internet as a new platform to conduct other museum activities such as seminars and conferences. From May 20 to 22, to celebrate International Museum Day and National Heritage Month, the Ayala Museum launched a new way of showcasing their collections. Using the recently popularized Nintendo video game Animal Crossing: New Horizons as a platform, they mounted an exhibit featuring the works of Damian Domingo, Jose Honorato Lozano, and Juan Luna. Even before the pandemic, they were releasing catalogs with codes that have Philippine traditional clothing designs for the players to wear in-game. Well before this launch, the museum had been active in various platforms on the internet to reach the majority of their audiences and visitors [27].

Not only is the COVID-19 pandemic a disaster, it is also an existential threat. This can be seen in stark relief in museums, the operations of which have been gravely affected. Having activities and services that require the physical presence of visitors in the museum structures, museum plans and operations are disrupted because of the government mandate to suspend these activities. Crisis management should be top of mind for museum administrators for these museums to survive.

With crisis management and communications, coupled with degrowth initiatives, museums can survive during and after the pandemic. Hindsight is of course 20/20 vision, but the ideal course of action is to prepare for a pandemic before it strikes. Now that everyone is in the middle of one, it is not surprising to find that most, if not all, are unprepared. The major setback that this pandemic has caused is the suspension of museum-visiting activities. Most museums rely on this activity alone since they have not explored various alternative methods in museology. As a response to the crisis, and more importantly, as part of their role of being of service to the people as representatives of arts and cultural identity, museums and their administrators must take actions that would have been heretofore unthinkable.

The concept of de-growing museums has not been implemented and popularized in the Philippines yet. However, one can take the National Museum's acquisition policies as an example, as these are documented in the National Cultural Heritage Act (NCHA) of 2009. The National Museum being the repository of our heritage is responsible for the preservation, documentation, and storage of artifacts and artworks that are deemed historically, socio-culturally, and aesthetically significant. Using de-growth initiatives and the NCHA of 2009, the National Museum can and should engage in the selection and prioritization of cultural properties. This way, the museum gets to reduce preservation efforts and save storage space for the more important artifacts and artworks [28].

There are numerous ways to cope with the crisis; of this myriad of ways, this paper makes two main suggestions: (1) incorporating de-growth initiatives in museology and (2) shifting from physical museums to virtual museums. The former suggestion, while initially appearing counterintuitive because of its seemingly anti-profit motive stance, is likely to preserve profit while helping in retaining the spirit of every museum, that of safeguarding humanity's artifacts for the foreseeable future. The use of technology is indispensable if the latter suggestion is to be successfully carried out. Technology must be used proactively, that is, well before actual fires have to be put out, as opposed to reactively, which has been the modal response to this crisis.

This paper has used a “big-picture” approach, with perspectives enhanced by the lenses of three theories. While postmodern theory may continue to be “hip” in academic circles and the rarefied air of the *cognoscenti* [29], it can stand the help of practical partners such as crisis management and degrowth. Postmodern theory and New Museology may lay claim to having moved the museum from the old to the new, but the new can be made newer through the dexterous and deliberate application of crisis management and degrowth. Even so, the authors recognize the utility and validity of other approaches; it is thus suggested that future research engage with one theory at a time, in an attempt at depth instead of the attempt at breadth that is the crux of this paper. A focus on the museum's contribution to either planetary health, mental health, or both may also be considered.

Through these technological practices, museums will be able to continue to fulfill their vision of serving as sources of knowledge and entertainment. They may very well not only survive, but also thrive, in this time of pandemic. However, museum professionals should still acknowledge the importance of physical museums; after all, most of the

materials remain tangible items, irrespective of whether they are physically or virtually exhibited. Physical visits to museums will certainly be possible again in the future. Humanity, after all, is hardwired for connection and interaction. Until such time that we return to this pleasant state of affairs, both planetary and mental health will have to be addressed with the aid of adroit adjustments. The "new normal" will not just be a fashionable turn of phrase. Post-crisis management, or the lack of it, will have created the post-pandemic museum.

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