Commitment for Change

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Five years ago, we started the editorial adventure of *Human Arenas* with the purpose of innovating the academic writing and cultivating new ideas in human and social sciences, beyond the geographical and disciplinary borders (Tateo & Marsico, 2018). Anniversaries are but symbolic, conventional ways to organize our individual and collective narratives in a temporal dimension. Yet, human symbolic production is the core interest of *Human Arenas*. Therefore, we decided to celebrate the fifth year of our publications with an outlook towards the current challenges and future directions we want to explore.

We imagined the journal as way to overcome the constraints of a scientific and academic editorial landscape characterized by overproduction of inductive evidence with scarce theoretical relevance; accumulation of reproductive concepts, without historical awareness; disciplinary walls; self-referential publishing networks; scarce opportunities for young researchers and students; lack of innovative formats to facilitate production and circulation of new ideas; and peer-review process that was castrating instead of promoting novelty (Tateo & Marsico, 2019). Have we been successful in the endeavor? Some figures seem to lead to a positive evaluation. During the years, the number of manuscript submissions and article downloads has been constantly increasing. *Human Arenas* has been indexed in all the major databases, and the duration of our cultivation peer-review process has become even shorter. We have published authors from 54 different countries covering all continents. Our quest for a global psychology and a borderless academia seems to improve significantly (Tateo & Marsico, 2021). The number of article downloads literally escalated to 126,600 in the year 2021, four times the magnitude of the previous years. We are deeply grateful to all the editorial team, the associate editors and the scientific board, the editorial assistant and the whole Springer editorial team, and the incredible number of reviewers that allowed us to cultivate ideas.

A scientific journal is not only a channel of academic dissemination, but also a window that opens on the topics, issues, concerns, and wishes engaging scholars during our troubled times. A pillar of our editorial vision is the overcoming of disciplines and the focus on real existential preoccupations. Articles are thus revolving around “arenas” of human existence and activity. A closer look at the arenas we have published over

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the years will also give a perspective on the intellectual avenues our authors have been opening.

Human beings constantly make sense of their life worlds (De Luca Picione, 2020), looking for continuity where life is marked by change and looking for constantly renovating the sense of the past and their rooting in the collective history. Becoming is the mark of living systems but also the existential dread of humankind who tries to govern time through symbolic activity. The articles published in *Human Arenas* have been dealing with this fundamental existential problem in many ways, by dealing with issues of becoming, changing, development, movement, and crisis (Castorina, 2021). These dimensions characterize many human activities and institutions such as schooling (Peltola et al., 2021). However, human beings try to manage change through symbolic and material inventions that organize and shape our experience. Hence, the interest of our authors for phenomena such as borders; dwelling; technology (Weme & Madsen, 2018). By weaving a web of meanings, human beings try to not only segment, hierarchize, and thus organize and control the environment in an intelligible way. They also try to build a stable and transferrable sense of personal and collective identity (Savarese et al., 2013). Our authors have often discussed the sense of subjectivity, its relation with the body, but also the deep existential need for going back to the moment of creation, to the origins, and to the myth in different cultures (Pattanaik, 2018). Human beings, as *homo faber* (Arendt, 2013), are committed to the future by making, creating dramatizations, and imagining. The future is not emerging from a mechanical direct causality chain as hardwired response. Our authors are often referring to Valsiner's idea of human meaning-making as unfolding in irreversible time and constantly moving towards the next moment (Gamsakhurdia, 2021; Xu & Wu, 2021). Such a movement forward—goal-oriented symbolic production in which the past is asymmetrically subjugated by the future—is regulated by systems of values, implemented in ethical and spiritual practices. From a rapid review of the topic discussed in the volumes of *Human Arenas*, it is clear that our authors do not pursue an evidence-based, inductive accumulation of data but try to develop theoretically significant ideas to understand human condition. This requires a constant epistemological and methodological reflection, which is often present in our published articles.

Half of *Human Areas'* life has been characterized by one of the most relevant events affecting humankind in the new century. We have intensively published on the issues related to health and the pandemics. We have a long thread of articles dealing with the concept of crisis in our times (Strasser & Dege, 2021). However, we need to discuss and learn more about the existential themes, both personal and collective, which the pandemic has raised. The COVID-19 pandemic has indeed exposed a number of concerns and injustices that characterized the present state of the planet. It has been often said that facing this event, we have realized to be all in the same boat. Actually, we are not on the same boat. As humankind, we are in the same ocean—together with non-human creatures—but we are sailing on very different types of ships. Some people are sailing on luxury yachts, some on warships, some people are sticking together on crowded ferries, some on makeshift life-boats, and, finally, some are just left drowning in the water without any help. The pandemic has not generally made us more aware and better human beings. We have not learnt our lesson yet. Seldom psychology has critically considered the systemic relationships between the systems of values, the naturalization of oppression, and the reproduction of injustice as factor of the current environmental crisis (Malm, 2020). When psychology has considered environmental issues, it has focused on the individual level recognizing injustice as a source of distress and ecoanxiety, yet not taken a radical critical stance against the way

the Global North and the new colonialism of capitalism are spoiling both human and non-human parts of the global ecosystem (Normann, 2021).

Neither the pandemic has questioned the way human beings collectively relate to each other. *Human Arenas* is extensively covering the impact of pandemic and crisis in the current times and will continue to publish articles related to the way human beings make sense, both individually and collectively of the future uncertainty. Instead of promoting altruism and awareness of a common fate (Cimagalli, 2020), the metaphor of “war on virus” led to polarization and raise of new borders. It seems that we have not learned to create generalized harmony and functioning relationships with our fellow humans and with the non-human part of the planet. Rather, winds of war seem to blow again in different parts of the world. A new version of the iron curtain is built at Europe’s Eastern borders in the form of “walls”—against people who legitimately exert their right to mobility and to seeking for a better life—and of armed conflicts such as the ones unfolding in Ukraine or in the Setumaa region, between Estonia and Russia, that seems again on the edge of open conflict (Tateo et al. 2018).

What will thus be the role and the editorial vision of *Human Arenas* in the next years? Our journal will be more committed to be a space for critical debate of the elaboration of new ideas of social and environmental justice. We will continue to give voice to those scholars who are often excluded by compartmentalized publication channels because they do not “fit” into some already existing “pigeon hole” (de França Sá & Marsico, 2022). We will continue to voice the “peripheral” areas of a round planet, mindful of the fact that a sphere has no periphery. Novelty comes from the margins, and we will continue to dwell the margins between different knowledges, epistemologies, methodologies, and worldviews.

The first issue of our fifth volume contains works about health, education, and development in different perspectives. All the articles present a psychology struggling to find a way to well-being but seem to point at the fact that this is a hopeless effort unless it stays at the individual level. No one heals alone, no one is safe alone, no one thrives alone, and no one survives alone. However, we are told that isolation and selfishness, greed, and inward looking are the way to safety. The emerging of phenomena such as ecoanxiety shows how instead we are still able to feel the whole/parts relationship; we have a sense of loss for our ecosystemic connection (Degen et al., 2020).

The science we support through *Human Arenas* is thus a science of connections, a borderless science, and an ecosystemic approach to knowledge. We want to embrace a global perspective to promote the advancement, communication, and application of psychological science and knowledge to benefit society and improve lives. Hopefully, we will not be alone but will continue to work with a wealth of authors, reviewers, and readers committed to change.

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