ANNOUNCED CRISES, FORGOTTEN CRISES

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Crisis? What crisis?

Abstract. Our world is a world of crises, in a disconcerting variety and manifestations: announced, reported, advertised, analysed, silent, but also, forgotten and ignored. The paper's argument is that there are definitely many more crises than solutions as the climate of uncertainty in Europe and in the entire world is not beneficial for the solutioning of crises. The water crisis is announced, but recurrent and tends to be forgotten. The educational crisis is silent, as is the ecological one, for the most part. *Crisis* is a current reality, aggravated by the ever-greater expectations from the people. The deficit of attention in terms of finding solutions, agreeing on solutions and implementing solutions goes hand in hand with people's impatience with politics and paradoxical support for populism. Other crises, such as familial violence, marginality and even the loneliness crisis identified since 2019 seem pale in front of war, famine, disease and hurricanes. However, they are all seriously affecting our peers and diminish everyone as a true human being – the ones in suffering and the others, turning a blind eye.

Keywords: announced crises, silent crises, forgotten crises.

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Our world is a world of crises, in a disconcerting variety and manifestations: announced, advertised, reported, analysed, silent, but also, forgotten and ignored. Anyway, there are definitely many more crises than solutions. The climate of uncertainty in Europe and the entire world is not beneficial for the solutioning of crises. Crisis is a current reality, aggravated by the ever-greater expectations from the people. The deficit of attention in terms of finding solutions, agreeing on solutions and implementing solutions goes hand in hand with people's impatience with politics and paradoxical support for populism. The fact that everywhere the middle class is endangered and poverty is aggravated, sets the stage for unsustainable development and diminished resources for adequate reactions and solutions in front of climate challenges and crises. ¹

¹ See also the UN reports site reliefweb.int/report/world/12-forgotten-crises-remember? gclid=CjwKCAjw5dqgBhBNEiwA7PryaM5U0P9_gXMAAxkR2yv8B1tDoyZovtUZaaWMyRfW-iZWEorC2wZTjxoC9EIQAvD_BwE. Accessed February-March 2023.

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Anthony Giddens warned almost two decades ago that our world is a runaway world (Anthony Giddens, 1999). And we may add, emphasizing that this is a runaway world craving for simple and instant solutions: an impossible, tempting and dangerous mission for politics and politicians. As we might have previously underlined as well, we have left behind a modern world which was fighting inertia (Nicolae Labiş, 1958) and moved instead into the middle of the accelerating world (Paul Virilio, 1977) where time has lost patience (Marin Preda, 1955).

In this accelerating world civilization is reshaped in turmoil, society is increasingly militarized and democracy is distorted and shrunk. Democracy is still resilient, though, a perpetual quest, a work in progress, a perpetual source of questions. The series of studies initiated by the Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations "Ion I. C. Brătianu" of the Romanian Academy on the topic of "The Perfect Storm in Europe" follows and analyses the multiple facets of European crises and their irreducibility to the bulk of problems and developments which fall under the collective heading of economic crisis.² The EU identity construct, Brexit, migration, terrorism, constitutionalism, accession to the European Union and federalization, the military and economic security are still topics of interest capturing the European vulnerabilities that sustain and nourish the European crises as they emerge.

The crisis is the Latin form of the Greek term *krisis* which means "a turning point in a disease". Currently, we can define the notion as a moment of difficulty and danger which calls for a rapid solution. In the case of a natural disaster or war often people donate to alleviate the hardship, to make it easier for the ones in need to keep on living and repair the damage called by the elements or military attacks. The pandemics brought the reality of crisis in our globalized world and in every life. However, when we conceive the crisis as a turning point, we may conceive opportunities to change things for the better. This is the reason why scientists are prone to use scientific data, the perceived trends and the scientific imagination to accurately prognose which crises threaten to emerge in order to give the nations, institutions and people, their best chance to prepare (the best), undertaking the most appropriate counter-measures for those crises. These are the "announced crises".

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² Ruxandra Iordache, Dan Dungaciu (eds.), *The Perfect Storm of the European Crisis*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017; Ruxandra Iordache, Dan Dungaciu (eds.), *The European Union and the New Perfect Storm. The Pandemics, Geopolitics and Populism*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2022. See esp. Henrieta Anișoara Șerban "Tests of Real EU Unity: 'Westxit', China and the Pandemic Crisis, among Others", Ruxandra Iordache, Dan Dungaciu, *The European Union and the New Perfect Storm. The Pandemics, Geopolitics and Populism*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2022, pp. 74-90.

The crisis is a central concept of modernity. Recently, there are thinkers who look at phenomena from the perspective of the digital analysis³ of historical concepts and big data analysis, this way emphasizing that the concept attains a constellation of contextualized meanings. At first, the notion of "crisis" sent to political events, to conflicts and to emergency states, while nowadays it seems to be used more for economic and natural disasters. In time, meanings have fused into one complex intellectual construction that functions as an antonym for stability, security and continuity. Paradoxically, crises are both emergency states and part of routine life, despite their origin (natural, man provoked, (geo)political or socio-economic). Fact is that crises are perceived or not, defined or not, but they nevertheless have their evolving reality. Often, they call for local, national and international attention and for both individual and collective (re)action. Any new crisis arrives within a nexus of current crises found more or less in course of solving or alleviation. The global economic crisis that began in 2008 has for sure still effects to this day that no one follows anymore. The discussions were vivid, yet, the measures were slim to none and the leaders and governments were in time replaced, as the crisis itself became a forgotten crisis.

Climate change has become a silent crisis. Some measures concerning pollution and the preservation of bio-diversity are in place with some efficiency. However, even these are not consistently applied. Certain aspects gather more attentions than others.

"Climate change is here. It has a human face. This report details the nevertheless silent crisis occurring around the world today as a result of global climate change. It is a comprehensive account of the key impacts of climate change on human society. (...) Today, millions of people are already suffering because of climate change. The deathly silence of this crisis is a major impediment for international action to end it. This report tries to document the impact of climate change on human life globally. Science is only beginning to address the human impact of climate change. However, dozens of research organizations and experts contributing to this report can agree on the widespread damage it causes. We feel it is the most plausible account of the current impact of climate change today."

³ See Kees Ribbens and Piersma, Hinke, "Digital Historical Research. Context, Concepts and the Need for Reflection", *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* [Contributions and Communications Concerning the History of the Netherland], Vol. 128, 2013, pp. 78-102, 10.18352/bmgn-lchr.9352; Silvia Maria Allesio, Digital Signal Processing and Spectral Analysis for Scientists: Concepts and Applications, Springer, 2015; M. P. Bishop et al, "Geospatial technologies and digital geomorphological mapping: Concepts, issues and research", Geomorphology, Vol. 137, 2012, pp. 5-26.

⁴ Kofi A. Annan, President of the Global Humanitarian Forum, at the Global Humanitarian Forum Geneva, *Climate Change the Anatomy of a Silent Crisis*, Human Impact Report, 2009, https://www.preventionweb.net/files/9668_humanimpactreport1.pdf. Accessed March 2023.

On the other hand, the current and imminent crises take all the attention and resources away from the announced ones and there is also the case where a crisis is stringent and calls for some measures that are not extremely efficient and do not solve it so they become prolonged somehow woven into the continuous present as a part of an imperfect reality, insinuated in a normality that societies and citizens "maturely" arrive to accept. Resilient and unsolved crises become "silent crises" silent crises. and many of them fall soon in the category of "forgotten crises". The educational crisis is a good example of forgotten crisis which was not solved. The negative effects of the semi-literacy and drop-out phenomena engaged by contemporary schooling are urgent to be responded efficiently and they are as dangerous as a natural catastrophe, although the measures taken are not implemented with the same rapidity and empathy. Nevertheless, the measures to be taken in the case of the educational crisis are necessary and important, although the necessary increased funds and the necessary increased number of vocation, talented and better prepared teachers are not so easy to be provided.⁶ Not only that the education crisis is continuing, but it became silent, falling in and out of attention, strictly according to political interest.

"Radical changes are occurring in what democratic societies teach the young, and these changes have not been well thought through. Thirsty for national profit, nations, and their systems of education, are heedlessly discarding skills that are needed to keep democracies alive. If this trend continues, nations all over the world will soon be producing generations of useful machines, rather than complete citizens who can think for themselves, criticize tradition, and understand the significance of another person's sufferings and achievements. The future of the world's democracies hangs in the balance. What are these radical changes? The humanities and the arts are being cut away, in both primary/secondary and college/university education, in virtually every nation of the world. Seen by policymakers as useless frills, at a time when nations must cut away all useless things in order to stay competitive in the global market, they are rapidly losing their place in curricula, and also in the minds and hearts of parents and children. Indeed, what we might call the humanistic aspects of science and social science—the imaginative, creative aspect, and the aspect of rigorous critical thought—are also losing ground as nations prefer to pursue short-term profit by the cultivation of the useful and highly applied skills suited to profitmaking. This crisis is facing us, but we have not yet faced it. We go on as if everything were business as usual, when in reality great changes of emphasis are evident all over. We haven't really deliberated about these changes, we have not really chosen them, and yet they increasingly limit our future."7

⁵ Contemporary topics need mostly contemporary references and arguments. For the topic of silent crisis see the topical recent study "The Silent Crisis", document published at http://assets.press.princeton.edu/chapters/s9112.pdf.

⁶ Ibidem.

⁷ Ibidem.

The mankind is going to be transformed by such measures in both conceivable and unconceivable ways. A short-term profitmaking education shapes a profitmaking human being, society and the mankind's future that allows no room for empathic values, ethics and a fulfilling, qualitative life. To classify disciplines in useful and less useful is to eventually impoverish human life and to narrow the horizons of development in the future for humanity. Could literature, cinema and online podcasts cover this gap?

"In March 2004 a group of scholars from many nations gathered to discuss the educational philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore—winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913, and leading innovator in education. Tagore's educational experiment, which had wide influence in Europe, Japan, and the United States, focused on the empowerment of the student through practices of Socratic argument, exposure to many world cultures, and, above all, the infusion of music, fine art, theatre, and dance into every part of the curriculum. In India today, Tagore's ideas are neglected, and even scorned. Participants in the conference all agreed that a new conception, focused on profit, has taken over—in the process side-lining the whole idea of imaginative and critical self-development through which Tagore had formed so many future citizens of India's successful democracy. Would democracy in India survive today's assault upon its soul? Faced with so much recent evidence of bureaucratic obtuseness and uncritical groupthink, many participants feared that the answer might be 'No'."

Even as a pragmatist, philosopher John Dewey has privileged imagination in thinking and learning, as well as for teaching, because this deeply human imaginative specific can only support the grand principles of Unity, Interest, Experience, and Integration in learning in a specific human way. The current orientation is for efficiency in test-passing and not in a true unitary integrated imaginative knowing. No ideals are currently necessary, formulated or taken into attention. Nowadays, education is for right-now: efficiency and profit for "the immediate". It is clear that the once world shaping teachings of Tagore and John Dewey are now obsolete... But with what cost?

⁸ Ibidem.

⁹ The Romanian philosopher Lucian Blaga (1895-1961) shows that the human specificity does not belong to "existence in the world", *i.e.*, it is not deeply dependent either on the biological datum or on the (social economic, ecological) environment, nor on the behaviour, nor on the suitability or reaction to the contexts. Although these may have their role and importance in human life, the human being tends to be aspirational and in a certain sense "restless" and to not stop at that. "No, human existence is, as a fundamental aspect, 'existence in mystery', *heightened* existence [emphasis added. ns.] in a horizon, thanks to which *eo ipso* [through that] the world [seen] as a web and/or nexus of immediate data is surpassed and falls like the soil from the heels, in walking. To exist as a human means from the very beginning to find a distance from the immediate, by choosing a situation in the perspective of mystery. The immediate does not exist for a man except to be overcome. The immediate exists for man only as a passage. As a symptom of something else,

In Romania, the pedagogical school has had deep humanistic and classicist roots. To provide just one example, Ion Găvănescu contributes to modern humanist pedagogy in Romania at the University of Iasi/Jassy, publishes revised editions of Ethics, General Pedagogy and History of Pedagogy. Also, he publishes new works such as Heroic Education (1928): Pedagogia Militans (1932); For moral education (1932) and other articles, in which he follows the ideas of humanist pedagogy, but also discusses aspects related to the advances in the psychology of the ages, bringing adaptations to active school pedagogy, as well as pronounced ideas on national education. In a special article, Orientation of national culture and education in the new world after the wars ("Buletinul Semestrial de Pedagogie Universitară" ["The Semestrial Bulletin of University"], 1922-23, Year I, No. 2) deals with the orientation of national education, the need for ideals to guide the development of culture national, especially at the turning points of history, and the Romanian philosopher draws attention to the need to meditate and retreat, in order to find through ideals that thread of historical development, to be able to fix reference points.

The revision of the benchmarks and ideals of education is found by this Romanian author in correlation with the clarification of the possibility of talking about a national ideal, with the clarification of the form and content of such an ideal, with the clarification of the attitude of the Romanian people towards the foreign populations living with it, and the "attitude towards the Latin and Anglo-Saxon culture, on one side, and the German culture, on the other", in order to "raise the question of the cultural and material progress of our people".

In an approach of ethnic psychology, The Romanian philosopher of pedagogy, Ion Găvănescu analyses the characteristics of the Romanian nation "as directives in formulating the ideal", identifying the political sense (with praising characteristics such as the common sense, the humanity, sense of justice and the balance of social forces), tolerance towards other nations (with commendable traits such as hospitality, mercy, chivalry), true moral ornaments, therefore recommending caution against the bad influences of some of the populations with whom Romanians live. Găvănescu identifies the possibility of a national ideal, in the "national soul unification", possible to achieve by "consolidating the union and by allowing the particularities of the time". This orientation recommends the identification of national characteristics able to increase the value of the nation, the avoidance of disruptive influences of the process of "clean crystallization" of the ethical type, the search for those influences that can guide the development of the "ethnic soul", interpreting the importance of preserving ethnic identity in this process of cultural orientation, which can be achieved either towards Latin and

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as a signal of a 'beyond'". This is our translation. See Henrieta Anișoara Șerban, "Despre singularitatea omului în continuitatea (relativă) bio-ontologică și meta-biologică, pornind de la Lucian Blaga", *Revista de filosofie*, Vol. LXIX, No. 1, București, 2022 pp. 21–39 (26).

Anglo-Saxon culture exclusively, rejecting any orientation towards German culture, or towards German culture in the tradition left in Romanian culture by Mihail Kogălniceanu, Titu Maiorescu, Mihai Eminescu and others, which the thinker want however to reform, under the fresh impression of the First World War. Nowadays all these seem so foreign and ancient. We are rapidly becoming "strangers to ourselves", in terms of betrayed human nature, aspirations, values, principles and ideals.

As the study on the topic of the silent crisis has emphasized:

"The profit motive suggests to many concerned leaders that science and technology are of crucial importance for the future health of their nations. We should have no objection to good scientific and technical education, and I shall not suggest that nations should stop trying to improve in this regard. My concern is that other abilities, equally crucial, are at risk of getting lost in the competitive flurry, abilities crucial to the health of any democracy internally, and to the creation of a decent world culture capable of constructively addressing the world's most pressing problems. These abilities are associated with the humanities and the arts: the ability to think critically; the ability to transcend local loyalties and to approach world problems as a "citizen of the world"; and, finally, the ability to imagine sympathetically the predicament of another person.2 I shall make my argument by pursuing the contrast that my examples have already suggested: between an education for profitmaking and an education for a more inclusive type of citizenship."10

The education for a more inclusive type of citizenship leads bottom line to an education for empathy, responsibility and respect for others and for a habit of Socratic self-examination as a foundational starting point for a fulfilled life, for a more valuable social contribution and for a more effective solutioning of crises.

"Education is not just for citizenship. It prepares people for employment and, importantly, for meaningful lives. Another entire book could be written about the role of the arts and humanities in advancing these goals. All modern democracies, however, are societies in which the meaning and ultimate goals of human life are topics of reasonable disagreement among citizens who hold many different religious and secular views, and these citizens will naturally differ about how far various types of humanistic education serve their own particular goals. What we can agree about is that young people all over the world, in any nation lucky enough to be democratic, need to grow up to be participants in a form of government in which the people inform themselves about crucial issues they will address as voters and, sometimes, as elected or appointed officials. Every modern democracy is also a society in which people differ greatly along many

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¹⁰ "The Silent Crisis", document published at http://assets.press.princeton.edu/chapters/s9112.pdf. Accessed February 2023.

parameters, including religion, ethnicity, wealth and class, physical impairment, gender, and sexuality, and in which all voters are making choices that have a major impact on the lives of people who differ from themselves. One way of assessing any educational scheme is to ask how well it prepares young people for life in a form of social and political organization that has these features. Without support from suitably educated citizens, no democracy can remain stable."¹¹

Almost as a rule, the announced crises become forgotten afterwards, left with imperfect solutions or without solution.¹² The European Union attempts to undertake as well the role of a resent and conscious factor following the world forgotten crises for a more balance global development and as a counter measure to the immigrational unbalance. On UE websites and documents, we find a terrible image of the situation of humanity.

"The EU as a global, principled donor, allocates at least 15% of its initial annual humanitarian budget to forgotten crises. The EU's Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations department defines a 'forgotten crisis' as a severe, protracted humanitarian crisis where people receive insufficient or no international aid. There is often also no, or not enough, political commitment to solve the situation due in part to a lack of media interest. The term 'forgotten crises' refers to protracted conflict situations. It can also refer to crises resulting from the cumulative effect of recurring natural hazards or a combination of the two. According to the INFORM Severity Index, there are various types of forgotten crises such as conflict, drought, epidemics or floods. Some crises are considered "complex crises" when natural and/or human-induced causes interact and overlap, making it often impossible to isolate the impact of each cause. The 'forgotten crises' often concern minorities within a country. The living conditions of these groups of people tend to be below the country average. The Forgotten Crises Assessment is based on evidence, including a combination of the following factors: Risk represented by the INFORM Risk Index; Crisis severity represented by INFORM Severity Index; Media coverage assessed via the Europe Media Monitor; The level of humanitarian aid per capita assessed via the Financial Tracking Service (UN OCHA); Qualitative assessment by the Commission's experts located in the field and headquarters. The EU balances this type of "top-down" approach, based on global indices and other quantitative information, with the "bottom-up" approach of analysis by experts on the ground. They can identify pockets of humanitarian crisis and back up their proposals for action with a needs assessment that is as recent and comprehensive as possible. For 2022-2023, the Assessment identified the following crises, including a range of country-specific and regional crises:

¹¹ Ibidem.

¹² See also https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/ro/headlines/eu-affairs/20221013STO43023/bugetul-pe-2023-vizam-criza-energetica-razboiul-si-economia and https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid. Accessed February-March 2023.

Africa

• Complex crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

- Complex crisis in Cameroon
- Complex crisis in Burundi
- Complex crisis in South Sudan
- Violence in West Darfur
- Complex crisis in the Central African Republic (CAR)
- Refugee crisis in Sudan
- CAR refugees in Chad
- Banditry in Northwest Nigeria
- Saharawi crisis in Algeria.

Asia

- Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh
- Socio-economic crisis in Lebanon

Latin America and the Caribbean

- Displacements of Venezuelans in Ecuador
- Displacement of Venezuelans in Peru
- Complex crisis in Colombia."13

To complete this harsh picture on a dramatic situation of mankind we should also consider the most under-reported 10 humanitarian crises. ¹⁴ In Angola people confront drought, hunger and displacement, under continuously rising temperatures. In Malawi there is a climate crisis; the country is often hit by cyclones and their effects, such as drought and the scarcity of food. In Central African Republic has fertile soils, but the climate crisis is ravaging the crops. In June 2022, there were terrible floods that have destroyed 2,600 houses and 18,500 hectares of agricultural land. In Zambia the poverty is the main challenge (the average income of half of population is less than 1.9 dollars per day. On this background, HIV and violence are rampant and deadly. In Chad, the poverty is as well an issue: 6.1 million people need humanitarian aid. Poverty feeds a climate of insecurity and violence, causing maximum problems especially in the Sahel region and around the Lake Chad. Burundi dramatically struggles between natural disaster and the economic crisis. 70 percent of the population lives under the poverty line. Zimbabwe fights without any results weather extremes: long

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¹³ Ibidem.

¹⁴Cf.<u>https://reliefweb.int/report/world/suffering-silence-10-most-under-reported-humanitarian-crises-2016?gclid=CjwKCAjw5dqgBhBNEiwA7PryaKYNEamyim3fco79NeHYaqTkQHg
DhwktfizgP0sAvdFrPMk9X_iFGhoCL7UQAvD_BwE, accessed March 2023. See also
https://www.care-international.org/resources/breaking-silence-report-ten-humanitarian-crises-didnt-make-headlines-2022, accessed March 2023.</u>

droughts and the following heavy rains destroying the soils. The, known as climate shocks, devastate the livelihoods of large segments of the population. In Mali, people have to face famine, conflict and climate crisis. Cameroon faces ripples of humanitarian crises, natural disasters, cholera epidemics, COVID-19. 3.9 million people are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. Niger is the country with the highest fertility rate within a very hot climate, circumstances that send the country to the bottom of the UNDP Human Development Index, which evaluates countries mainly after 3 parameters: health, knowledge and income.¹⁵

And, finally, the picture would not be complete without the luminous lessons of the "quiet heroes". When the crises become quiet, the quiet heroes are the main fledgling hope. For instance, Elena Sorokina, a Red Crescent Society of Kyrgyzstan volunteer, rides door-to-door to help TB patients recover and to stop this terrible disease. "The most important thing in my work is that every patient who started treatment does not quit," she says. "In order to be cured, they need to go through the entire course of treatment." "17

Presenting a comprehensive, but incomplete picture of our challenged global world we see that even the most developed countries are hit by announced, forgotten, and/or silent (quiet) crises, which all have human suffering faces. Even in the United States, there are powerful storms and severe water shortages, which produce crop loss, un employment, fires and death.¹⁸

The variety, persistence and multitude of crises is disconcerting. Is humanity failing? The forgotten, un-reported and silent crises of humanity beg the question. An already unsustainable, vast humanitarian mandate seems to be set on a course of continuous growth, which cannot be stopped unless we see more international coordination devotion and solidarity in terms of funding and consistent measures applied for the solutioning of problems.

The dialectics announce-forgotten crises only shows that the risk analyses are useless if the humanity itself does not sustain the necessary efforts to solution the catastrophes of our world. Every human being has a right to life and to the aid of the fellow human beings which have no right to turn a bling eye to the suffering of others. Good and continuous information on crises and solutions should be continuously on attention of governments and international organisations, as well as the discrete individuals who cannot compensate the inaction or the ineffectiveness of the former or act instead of the governments and international organisations.

 $^{16}\ https://www.rcrcmagazine.org/series/quiet-crises-quiet-heros/.$

¹⁵ Ibidem.

 $^{^{17}}$ Ibidem.

¹⁸ "The Anatomy of a Silent Crisis", Geneva Humanitarian Forum Report, https://www.preventionweb.net/files/9668 humanimpactreport1.pdf. Accessed March 2023.

Indeed, as Kofi Annan noticed, the international community should strengthen; it is only natural in a globalized world. The crises of humanity seem to perpetuate and they seem permanent, as if sustained by their own power and the solutions are chaotic and isolated. Sustainable development was a successful phrase that did not impose solutions, although it led to the identification of certain solutions.

Why is not sustainable development in present and continuous attention for governments and international organizations? War on the EU coast, the energy crisis vs. ecological crisis, these emergencies are capturing all the attention. Africa's food crisis, water/drought/desertification crisis, and health crisis should be at least monitored and alleviated better since 2020, despite the post-truth crisis identified since 2016. Other crises, such as familial violence, marginality and even the loneliness crisis identified since 2019 seem pale in front of war, famine, disease and hurricanes.

However, they are all seriously affecting our peers and diminish everyone as a true human being – the ones in suffering and the others, turning a blind eye. The gap between the scientific realm, the academia, and the input of genuine and unencumbered studies, on the one hand, and the political realm, on the other, which takes these scientific accomplishments merely as legitimating tools and as means to an end represent the main failure of mankind in front of its aspirations, values and ideals.

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