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Im Anfang war die Tat. Philosophy of multiple simultaneous un/natural disasters V: Human action

Abstract

This paper formulates a series of questions about the nature of human action in the context of MSDs (MSD = multiple simultaneous un/natural disaster). Some questions are more important than others, and it is crucial to firstly identify the most significant ones that, if answered, would probably contribute to a more appropriate human action in the context of MSDs, namely, the clarity of actions. The paper attempts to highlight the importance of human action within MSDs and the philosophical (conceptual) questions that can contribute to such action. As for answering these questions, the paper only provides directions for the answers, while eliminating the remaining options (using a previously described model of features of human actions under an MSD, i.e. AAR = Attention, Adaptation, Response). Its overall assumption is that individual human action is crucial for proper functioning under MSDs. Firstly, the paper inquires what can be said about the subject, and then explores specific characteristics of human action within MSDs, and subsequently describes a possible elucidation of such action. Based on the aforementioned points, the paper aims to express a moderate or slightly pessimistic stance regarding the description of proper human (civilian) action within MSDs and the endeavour to make such action more suitable for possible challenges of future MSDs. This topic complements previous works dealing with the philosophy of MSDs. Such approach to human action under MSDs has not been previously explored, neither in philosophy of action nor in theory of disaster management, especially not in the context of MSDs.

Key words: AAR, appropriate human action, human action under MSDs, MSDs, primacy of human practice.

Introduction: What does *In the beginning was the act* mean?

In his *Faust*, Goethe writes: “The Spirit’s helping me! I see now what I need, and write assured: In the beginning was the Deed!” (Goethe, *Faust* I. Scene 3, *The Study*

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1984:1237, see Hendel 1949). This line encapsulates the essence of *Faust*. In *The Restless Spirit: A Scene by Scene Study of Goethe's Faust* A.S. Kline writes the following:

Faust soon experiences his usual fall from the heights of emotion to a new feeling of deficiency, but in this quieter, religious mood turns to the Bible and begins to translate. Searching to express the origin of things, he tries first the traditional translation, that of the *Word*, the ancient poet's solution, then *Mind*, the philosopher's approach, then *Power*, and we think of Nietzsche's attempt to relate all to the Will to Power, and finally, in line with Goethe's own message in *Faust*, of ceaseless activity, he seizes on *the Act*. This is in embryo Faust's journey in the play, since he will reject the word and the mind in the form of conventional learning and self-centred emotion, power in the form of magic and selfishness, and will seize on creative activity as the road to salvation. (Kline, 2004)

In his *On Certainty* Wittgenstein quotes Goethe: "Im Anfang war die Tat." (In the beginning was the deed/act.) (Wittgenstein OC 1969: 402)

On the one hand, Wittgenstein here quotes Goethe in a footnote (regardless of many mentions of Goethe throughout his works). On the other hand, the whole *On Certainty* (set of remarks on supposedly epistemological topics) glows with a kind of *primacy of practice*, *pragmatic nature of epistemic concepts*, and perhaps with *pragmatism* (Krkač, 2003, 2012; Krkač, Điri and Soldo, 2021). Therefore, the quotation does not come as a surprise. It does stand in a footnote, but perhaps it is the central idea of the whole work. In *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius* R. Monk writes: "Goethe's phrase from Faust, 'Im Anfang war die Tat' (In the beginning was the deed), might, as he suggested, serve as a motto for the whole of his later philosophy. The deed, the activity, is primary, and does not receive its rationale or its justification from any theory we may have of it. This is as true with regard to language and mathematics as it is with regard to ethics, aesthetics and religion. 'As long as I can play the game, I can play it, and everything is all right'" (Monk, 1991: 306, 578-9) Additionally, in *In the Beginning was the Deed* B. Williams writes: "Goethe's line can indeed help us to understand this Wittgensteinian theme, by reminding us in particular that the 'primacy of practice' (in a familiar exegetical phrase) is not the primacy of descriptions of practice." (...) "(Those who attempt to recast the later Wittgenstein's philosophy as a theory, or, slightly more reasonably, to accommodate it to philosophy which consists of theory, have not fully grasped this point.)" (Williams, 2005: 24)

If humans were able to retain a memory of the inception of their species as in *The Dawn of Man* portrayed in Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, it might encompass the recollection of *the initial act* or achievement of the earliest humans. For instance, it could involve the acquisition of knowledge to utilize a bone as a weapon, and subsequently, after their first hunt, using it to defend their territory at the watering hole against competing groups (as depicted in Illustration 1). In (*ape and*) essence, an event

occurred where the first humans undertook significant action. It is through this action that we became distinctly human, as it defined our nature and identity.



Illustration 1. “The Dawn of Man” in Kubrick’s “2001: A Space Odyssey”, Source: Photo YouTube, URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ypEaGQb6dJK>.

Human actions, acts, deeds, or doings are at the core of human nature. When the circumstances are unfavourable, humans do not go into hibernation like other animals, but act to change the circumstances and the conditions in order to survive. What we do determines everything else about us. The first human act was not merely thinking, such as pondering the potential mystical powers of the Monolith, nor was it solely motivated by an urge to touch the Monolith (to continue with the “2001: A Space Odyssey” metaphor). Rather, it was the very physical act of *touching* the Monolith, and the act of *grabbing* a bone and *using* it as a weapon. However, if human action lies at the heart of human nature or defines what humans are, then it becomes highly questionable what can be said about human action, because one could say *a deed denotes itself by being done* (*describing an act* and *experiencing action* differ from listening to an LP of a band and listening to the same band at a concert).

The Indo-European root *dhē-ti* suggests the act of laying, placing, putting, or setting something down; as in Kajkavian *deti*, *deni* = *to put something somewhere*. An act acts on its own (like cattle on their path; see *dhē-* in *The Free Dictionary*, URL: <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/>). So, “in the beginning was the deed” means that in the face of MSDs we have to act and lay down the patterns of appropriate action.

In the following text, I will formulate a series of questions about the nature of human action in the context of MSDs (MSD = multiple simultaneous un/natural disaster) (Krkač, 2022a, 2022b, 2023a, 2023b). Some questions carry more weight than others, and it is crucial to firstly identify the most significant ones that, if answered, would probably contribute to a more appropriate human action in the context of MSDs. In short, I am attempting to highlight the importance of human action within MSDs and the philosophical questions that could contribute to such action. In addressing these questions, I will suggest certain paths for some of the answers, while eliminating other options, using the previously described model of human action features under an MSD, i.e. AAR = Attention, Adaptation, *Response*; *response* being the topic here). The overall assumption of the text is that human action is crucial for proper functioning within MSDs. Firstly, I inquire what can be said about this subject, then I explore the specific characteristics of human action within MSDs, and subsequently describe a potential challenge in understanding such action. Finally, drawing from these points, I aim to express a moderate or slightly pessimistic view regarding the description of appropriate (sufficient) human action within MSDs and the endeavour to make such action more suitable for the potential future challenges of MSDs.

What can be said of human acts in relation to MSDs?

Given what was previously said, and in contrast to the vast amount of philosophical literature on human action, there is little that can be confidently asserted about human deeds or acts. However, the following point may be considered:

– For every x , if x is a *unit or a part of an event* and if x is *performed by a human*, then x is human action (involuntary functions such as heartbeat or eye reflex are excluded).

However, the true challenge lies in delineating the distinct characteristics of human action in contrast to actions performed by other animals or by machines. The following point may shed some light on this matter:

– For every x , if x is *not forced, instinctive, involuntary, or done as a reflex*, and if x is *not executed devoid of human facial expression, gesture, posture* (although a *motionless posture* may be significant if one thinks that a human who is *thinking or waiting for a serve* in tennis is performing an act), or *bodily movement*, then x is a human action.

- Although this description is highly restrictive, as it solely focuses on what human actions are not rather than what they are, it still presents a dilemma. The reason is that animals as well as humans are capable of performing actions that are not coerced or involuntary. This notion sparks controversy within the field of theory of mind in animals, as some speculate that animals may possess some

form of intentionality. “During conflicts, animals may perform displays that convey information about their future antagonistic behavior. Although theory once predicted that such signals of ‘intent’ would be utterly susceptible to dishonesty, empirical studies have established that animals sometimes do signal their intentions.” (Laidre, 2009)

- To claim that certain animals, such as higher primates, sometimes exhibit intentions raises the following question: Do animals engage in actions that clearly cannot be performed without some form of intention? In order to temporarily sidestep the issue of animal intentions, let us assume that intentions in human actions encompass a range of levels. These levels include *intention in action* (which appears in many habits, routines, and similar types of actions, especially in actions for which humans are trained, e.g. while preparing for an MSD), *basic intention* (a minimal level of intention assumed to be necessary), and *complex intention* (such as premeditation, forethought, plans, and the like). It is worth noting that the variety observed in human intentions may not be present among other animals (for example, animals do not gather together to discuss detailed plans for attacking another group of animals as humans do, although some of them show some basic strategies in traveling, finding water, food, and shelter, and in conflicts).

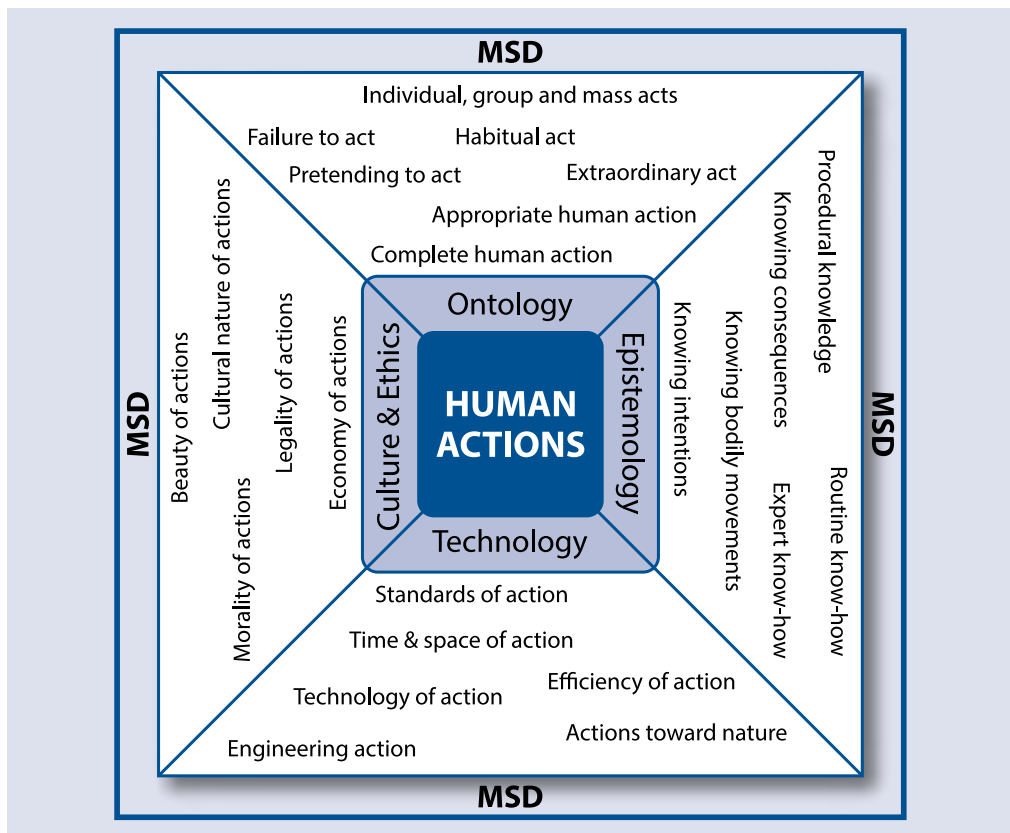
Let us consider that in the aforementioned statement, the phrase *is not forced or involuntary* can potentially be understood as *done intentionally* without any further limitations (including restrictions related to higher primates or certain forms of contemporary and future AI). There are instances where it may appear that certain human acts lack intention, particularly when engaging in habitual or routine actions. Some theories suggest that intention can still be present in such types of action, but it is not a *preexisting intention* prior to the action. Rather, it can be described as a form of *intention in action* (as discussed by Wittgenstein, Anscombe, and Searle, see Krkač, 2009).

Let us also assume that in the previously mentioned expressions, the phrase *is not forced, instinctive, involuntary, or done as a reflex* implies that, if an action (denoted as x) is not carried out completely devoid of bodily facial expression, gesture, posture, or bodily movement, it implies the presence of some form of bodily movement (or at times, significant stillness), even if it is minimal. Therefore, an initial description of a human action could be as follows:

- x is considered a human action if x involves both some form of intention and some form of bodily movement (or a *significant* lack thereof, e.g. not moving while waiting for a serve in tennis may be a *significant* lack of movement, and in fact a *good move*).

However, it is important to note that this text does not aim to encompass the entire scope of general philosophical theory of action; instead, it serves as a model of action within the specific context of MSDs. For a comprehensive overview of a general philosophical theory, there are several excellent introductions available, such as the work of O'Connor and Sandis (2010). In other words, the forthcoming discussion will address various aspects of human action within the specific context of multiple simultaneous un/natural disasters (MSDs). At present, I can only pose a set of questions regarding different facets of human action that likely intersect with MSDs or hold significance before, during, and after MSDs. The intention is that answering these questions will contribute to more appropriate human actions under MSDs (various subjects of such questions are illustrated in Table 1).

Table 1. Various aspects of human action in relation to MSDs that could be asked about, and if answered, could contribute to more appropriate action under MSDs supplying clarity of the concepts of acts (by the author).



Human acts before, during, and after MSDs

Let us proceed with the assumption that there is no ambiguity regarding the warning signals of attention and adaptation in relation to MSDs, as previously abbreviated by the two *A*'s in AAR (Attention, Adaptation, Response; Krkač, 2023b). Therefore, the focal point lies in the *Response* (represented by the letter *R* in AAR). Except for trained professionals accustomed to handling MSD scenarios, and a few minimally trained civilians, the majority of the population affected by an MSD will probably experience shock, panic, disorientation, inability to process distressing information, stress, trauma, PTSD, etc., which often hinders the ability to take any rational action.

(1) The first step evidently involves maintaining composure and attempting to address the situation rationally. When facing MSDs (in relation to one's own knowledge and abilities), individuals commonly react by either *underestimating* (nonchalance, denial or longtermism; Krkač, 2022b) or *overestimating* (apocalypticism) the situation. It is essential to avoid both these reactions. By avoiding such responses, the nature, extent, and scale of the MSD, as well as the capabilities of individuals and groups, become clearer, facilitating the adoption of appropriate actions.

Before delving into the various types of actions in the context of an MSD, it is important to acknowledge that there are evident possibilities that occasionally deviate significantly from full-fledged action (inappropriate action). Here are some of them.

(1.1) Not acting at all: Generally, this is considered unfavourable, except in cases where the nature of an MSD and one's capabilities and circumstances make non-action a better choice than action. This can be referred to as an omission to act, which is actually favourable in the aforementioned exception. Pretending to act: This is highly dangerous both for oneself and others. It involves creating an illusion of action without actually taking effective measures. This should be avoided. Failure to act: If acting is the rational course of action based on the features of the MSD and one's capabilities, failure to act tends to decrease motivation. It is important to recognize and rectify any instances of the failure to act whenever possible and as soon as possible. Mistakes while acting: Making mistakes during the course of action is generally normal (fallibility is an aspect of human nature). However, it is crucial to acknowledge these mistakes and make efforts to correct them as promptly as possible.

(1.2) All of these possibilities can lead to even more disastrous consequences. To illustrate this point, let us consider an example.

Example 1

Imagine a devastating earthquake that caused significant damage, including the destruction of a major river embankment. However, the embankment and other infrastructure were left unrepaired for more than two years. During this time, a new disaster struck the same area – a devastating flood. Due to the unrepaired embankment, the flood easily breached the defences and flooded the area. What exacerbates the situation is the series of rationalizations provided by responsible individuals at various levels of government and professional services. Some of these rationalizations include statements such as: *It is not our responsibility because the flood was too severe; People need to adapt to such disasters; We attempted to repair the embankment but faced time constraints and lengthy administrative procedures*, and so on (see source in Illustration 2). In this example, we witness an MSD where different disasters indirectly overlap through irresponsible human action, particularly the failure to act appropriately. The initial earthquake was a natural disaster, and the destruction of the river embankment was its consequence. However, the failure to repair the embankment properly and in a timely manner can be considered an unnatural disaster, perhaps classified as a social incident. The subsequent flood was another natural disaster, and the unrepaired embankment breach was its consequence. Finally, the rationalizations provided by numerous responsible individuals (politicians and professionals) can be seen as an unnatural disaster, as they reflect an unwillingness to accept political, professional, and personal responsibility for the failure to act appropriately, or to act at all (a social incident of electing such politicians and appointing such public officials).

To add a touch of reality to this example, it is worth noting that this scenario actually took place in Sisak County, Croatia, between 2020 and 2023 (as shown in Illustration 2).

In contrast to what was previously mentioned, an appropriate human act in the context of an MSD should encompass appropriate intentions and bodily movements concerning the features of the MSD in question. The individual performing the action should have full control over their actions, including the understanding of the nature of the action, the type of action, the method of execution, the duration, spatial conditions, and the relationships with others involved. In short, individuals should be trained. It is important to note that there is a distinction between *trained professionals*, such as firefighters, and *untrained or minimally trained civilians* in their ability to effectively respond to an MSD. Given that the actions of professionals are thoroughly documented, we can state that an appropriate *civilian human action* (CHA) under an MSD should fulfil the following criteria (CHA-MSD):

(2) Contributing to preparedness before an MSD, making rational judgments, decisions, and following procedures during an MSD, and facilitating the restoration of *normal life* after an MSD. Additionally, CHA-MSD should involve the necessary skills that civilians can acquire, and it should minimize various irrationalities that may occur before, during, and after an MSD.



Illustration 2. Floods in Sisak County in Croatia in 2023, the consequences of not repairing the river Sava embankment for two years (Source: Index, "Poplave" URL: <https://www.index.hr/tag/417/poplave.aspx>. Accessed 17-21 May 2023).

In recent decades, there has been a noticeable increase in the number and magnitude of globally significant natural and unnatural disasters, including accidents and incidents. Additionally, there has been a rise in sudden and unprecedented events, creating new global hotspots. However, the existing infrastructure is frequently inadequate to adapt to these changes, and human knowledge and expertise in dealing with such situations are limited, as some necessary advancements are yet to be developed.

(2.1) As a result, the gap between the knowledge and capabilities of trained professionals and civilians in responding to an MSD, as well as between the existing infrastructure and what is required, is widening and deepening. Here, as in the case of philosophy of human action (O'Connor and Sandis, 2010), there exists a philosophy of technology with noteworthy introductions (Olsen, Pedersen, and Hendricks, 2009). However, they frequently overlook specific issues such as MSDs, focussing instead on topics within the philosophy of technology such as philosophy of engineering, risk analysis, or technology and the future (Olsen, Pedersen, and Hendricks, 2009: 481-558).

The criteria mentioned previously for CHA-MSD might seem adequate theoretically, but when applied to a specific percentage of civilians required to meet it, it might prove to be insufficient. The issue of human capacity and know-how in effectively responding to an MSD is fundamentally one of the central challenges concerning human action, given the definition, nature, and types of MSDs. Until now, our focus has primarily been on the issues associated with human action under an MSD. Continuing along this line of thought, I will further elaborate on the complexities of this issue. Let us now examine the general types of human action under an MSD. While there are numerous ways to categorize human action in this context, two key variables stand out: the nature, magnitude, space, and duration of the MSD; and the capacity of both humans and infrastructure to appropriately respond in the face of an MSD.

Put simply, when describing proper civilian human action under an MSD (CHA-MSD), it is essential to consider (a) the nature, space, and duration of the MSD (for clarity, Table 2 focuses solely on the duration of an MSD), and (b) the human capacity to act effectively under an MSD (for clarity, Table 2 specifically outlines two distinctions: habitual versus extraordinary actions, and actions directed toward oneself versus actions directed toward others, as well as toward infrastructure and nature). By applying such a division, as shown in Table 2, we further complicate the categorization of actions. In many cases, the general civilian population lacks the necessary knowledge and preparedness to be considered adequately equipped for an MSD (although they may possess some level of preparedness for specific disasters, as previously exemplified by the flood scenario). Only professionals have the necessary know-how and expertise to execute proper actions, albeit limited to individual and isolated disasters. However, in MSD scenarios, such as the aforementioned flood coinciding with a devastating earthquake amid the COVID-19 pandemic, professionals may face significant challenges (due to limitations in manpower or resources). With the increasing number of MSDs, the likelihood of concurrent individual disasters also increases.

A unique situation emerges when extraordinary know-how and appropriate actions are required. While this may not be an immediate necessity, it is an imminent one. The demand for professionals is likely to surge, necessitating a larger workforce. Additionally, there will be a growing demand for civilians with advanced know-how. Moreover, innovative infrastructure solutions tailored to the nature of current and future MSDs will become imperative.

Table 2. Types of human actions under an MSD.

Human actions	MSDs				
	Toward themselves and others	Toward infrastructure and nature	Before an MSD	During an MSD	After an MSD
Habitual actions	By civilians / by professionals CHA-MSD ✓/✗	By civilians / by professionals CHA-MSD ✓/✗	AA Learning / Professional ✓/✗	R	R
			AA Learning / Professional ✓/✗	R	R
Rare actions	By professionals ✓/✗	By professionals ✓/✗	Professional and Innovation ✗	Unknown	Unknown
			Professional and Innovation ✗	Unknown	Unknown
✓ = existing actions, ✗ = non-existing actions, AAR = Attention, Adaptation, Response					

The problem of preparedness for an MSD

Given our focus is on action rather than preparedness, the relevance of preparedness lies in encompassing a series of actions considered as preparation actions for an MSD. Kohn et al. (2012) summarize the following principles through an analysis of existing literature until 2012:

In the face of pervasive environmental hazards, emerging pandemic threats, and growing population densities, personal disaster preparedness is a critical need. The importance of personal preparedness has long been recognized, with basic strategies such as stockpiling, sheltering-in-place, and citizen education dating back to the Cold War. Experts agree that individuals will require partial or complete self-sufficiency for at least the first 72 hours after a disaster. (Kohn et al., 2012: 217)

Six year later, and in contrast to the outlined principles, Kapucu (2008) recognizes in the paper “Culture of preparedness: household disaster preparedness” that individuals are generally ill-prepared for individual disasters.

This paper aims to examine household preparedness in response to disasters and the role of non-profit organizations in the public’s preparedness. The study uses the context of hurricane preparedness of Central Florida residents, using the mail survey method as a data collection tool. The findings of the study emphasize the importance of household and individual preparedness in response to natural disasters, specifically to hurricanes. If individuals are not ready, then nobody is ready. The paper finds that households, even with significant experience of disasters, can be complacent in response to disasters. (Kapucu, 2008: 526)

While 61 percent of the respondents to this survey either agreed or strongly agreed to the statement ‘my family is adequately prepared for a disaster or emergency

situation,' responses to other questions give an indication that Central Florida households could be considered ill-prepared based on the following findings: Only half of all respondents have a hurricane evacuation plan in place, but only one-fourth of those plans have been practiced by family members. (Kapucu, 2008: 531)

Such empirical research that shows lack of preparedness has quite a long history of confirmation (Gillespie and Streeter, 1987; Coppola and Maloney, 2017), spanning three decades with notably similar conclusions. However, some programs for training the general public were and still are quite successful (Coppola and Maloney, 2017: 231-47). However, during the COVID-19 pandemic natural and unnatural disasters continued. Moreover, in some regions disasters grew in frequency, suddenness, and scale. Croatia, for instance, experienced increased disaster occurrences during the 2020-2023 period (Krkač, 2022a, 2022b, 2023a, 2023a). In addition, these disasters overlapped and created MSDs. Unfortunately, the preparedness of the general public (civilians) and infrastructure was poor.

- (3) However, from this short remark, four key points emerge: (a) Preparedness of individual civilians cannot be replaced by preparedness of groups or professional services. Preparedness of individuals seems to be crucial. (b) Based on preparedness of individuals, preparedness of groups should be built. Ultimately it comes down to a simple number or percentage of prepared individuals, and the effectiveness of their organisation within prepared groups. (c) Preparedness of professional services faces a distinct problem concerning the lack of personnel and infrastructure in cases of MSDs. (d) Finally, preparedness of general infrastructure poses perhaps the biggest challenge, given that in many countries (especially in new continental or global hotspots), the infrastructure was not designed for MSDs of the current magnitude, overlapping individual disasters, duration, extensive affected areas, and suddenness. It raises significant doubts about whether services and infrastructure can adapt to these new circumstances within a short-term timeframe.

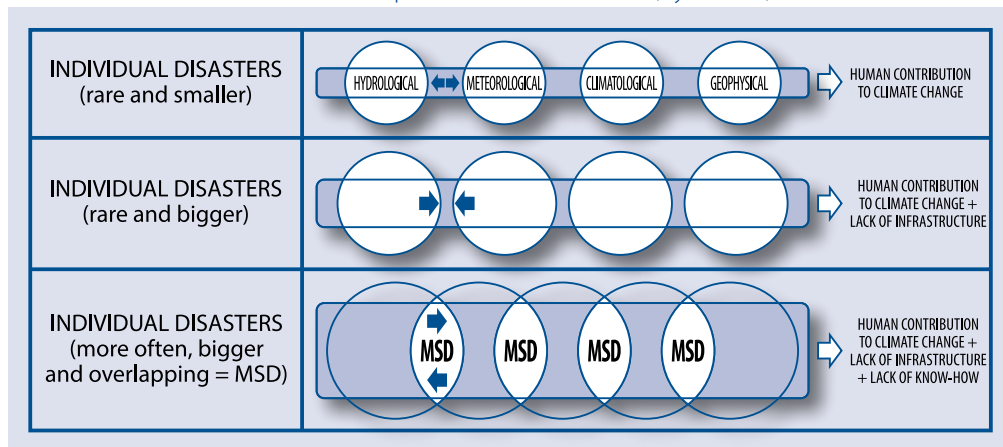
The problem of acting during an MSD

While these points may seem straightforward, when confronted with even a small-scale and localized MSD, it becomes evident that the majority of civilians lack the knowledge to respond (essentially echoing the earlier points (a)–(d)). Even professionals, although they might presume to possess some understanding or make educated guesses about managing a new type of MSD, are unlikely to be available in sufficient numbers, raising concerns about their effectiveness.

- (3) Nonetheless, inappropriate or inadequate actions can arise from a range of phenomena broadly categorized into two main groups.

- (3.1) Natural and human-induced phenomena: Natural disasters like floods, tidal waves, storms, and tornadoes are inherent natural occurrences. However, their increasing magnitude, frequency (e.g. the number of big floods in Croatia has risen from 7 in the past 70 years to at least 7 in the last 10 years), and impact seem to be influenced by human inaction (or omission to act).
- (3.2) Unnatural or purely human-induced phenomena: Despite the long-standing awareness of rapidly deteriorating climate conditions, human efforts toward adapting infrastructure and lifestyles to withstand new increasingly probable and more impactful disasters have been limited. The lack of preparedness, characterized by inadequate infrastructure and a lack of proper actions by the majority of the civilian population, leads to the convergence of multiple disasters and the emergence of MSDs, worsening the relative unpreparedness of the population (as depicted in Table 3).

Table 3. The phenomenon of MSDs (by author)



In *(ape and)* essence, the increasing prevalence of MSDs, coupled with human incapacity to mitigate their effects, inadequate infrastructure to handle the growing number and severity of MSDs, and lack of proper action (know-how), particularly among the majority of the civilian population (excluding professionals), give rise to a *paradoxical* situation.

- (3.3) The *paradox* suggests that present-day humans are relatively less equipped for contemporary MSDs and even those anticipated in the future, compared to humans from a century or two centuries ago, who were more prepared for disasters during their time.
 - Today, with a larger global population and likely more unprepared individuals, there is an increased demand for specialized professional services and their

equipment, yet a shortage of these resources exists. There is a need for new infrastructure, either non-existent or yet to be invented. Additionally, there is an increase in severe, sudden, and more powerful overlapping disasters (MSDs) without available prevention solutions. The paradox arises from the growing need for human preparedness, technology, etc., which are currently lacking, and the increasing magnitude of contemporary MSDs, many of which cannot be adequately prevented or are poorly addressed due to these deficiencies. Whether it is feasible to adequately prepare for new MSDs given the rapid increase in both an unprepared population and the magnitude of these disasters remains highly doubtful. I do not have an answer here, but I believe a thorough and rational assessment is necessary.

The deficiency in appropriate actions before, during, and after MSDs can be pragmatically categorized as follows by the absence of certain types of actions outlined below (as illustrated in Table 4).

Table 4. Appropriate actions related to MSDs (by author)

Types of appropriate human (civilian) actions related to MSDs				
Appropriate actions of individuals			Appropriate actions of societies	
↙	↓	↘	↙	↘
Actions of individuals in relation to themselves (e.g., preserving one's own life)	Actions of individuals in relation to others (e.g., saving the lives of others)	Actions of individuals within organized groups (e.g., saving the lives of entire groups)	Actions of societies towards infrastructure, particularly key infrastructure for MSDs	Actions of societies towards non-human living beings (animals and plants) and non-living nature (soil, rivers, lakes, mountains, valleys, coastlines, etc.)

There are a few general regularities or rules that can be easily described. Let us mention two of them:

- (3.4) Inadequate actions by individuals and societies before, during, and after MSDs: If the actions taken by humans and societies in preparation for, in response to, and in recovery from MSDs are inappropriate, it not only endangers lives and survival; even if lives are saved, both urban and natural environments may become uninhabitable, and essential resources may reach critical scarcity levels.
- (3.5) Importance of the number of professionals and prepared civilians, and adequate infrastructure: Another factor to consider is the number of professionals and

the percentage of the population who are adequately prepared to take proper action during MSDs (similar to the case of preparedness). With the increasing number, magnitude, and suddenness of MSDs, it is reasonable to assume that there may come a point where the number of professionals becomes insufficient. Therefore, educating the general population about proper actions becomes crucial in order to enhance the overall preparedness. A similar problem arises with the existing infrastructure, which was not built to accommodate the magnitude of current MSDs due to cost concerns (in many cases it was not *politically opportune* or *convenient* to invest in such expensive infrastructure based *solely on scientific predictions* (!)).

Concluding unscientific postscript

Thus, in the end, the outcome may resemble the starting point of this text. Under an MSD an act is insufficient, inappropriate, merely a pretence of an action, or a failure to act altogether, perhaps because there might be nothing that can be done. While this may sound *apocalyptic* and *overly dramatic*, it is indeed a reality that unfolds on continental and global scales as I write this text.

For instance, people in flood regions who know how to deal with floods, due to the magnitude of the latest floods and their suddenness (e.g. in Italy and in Croatia in spring 2023, as shown in Illustration 2) find themselves at a loss. They know what to do, they do what they can, but they also know that this knowledge is insufficient for the new magnitudes of disasters. They are doing what they can despite knowing it will not avert the flood's impact on infrastructure, the environment, agriculture, animals, and human lives.

Imagine if we were to witness a hundred such instances simultaneously in a single area—the result would be nothing short of an apocalypse. However, the possibility or even a relevant probability of such a scenario should not prevent us from taking action now to prepare ourselves and save human lives, the lives of animals, infrastructure, and nature, because some expected effects of future MSDs can be minimized. On the other hand, preparing for the future requires humans not only to learn various skills (almost as if they were acquiring a second profession) but also involves a broader transformation—a multiplication of these skills that inevitably reshape the lifestyle, societies, and cultures as a whole.

(4) It appears that humans are still reluctant to embrace such changes (be it preparedness of individuals and societies, or of infrastructure), even regarding climate change, and let alone the present and probable future MSDs (increasing numbers, suddenness, and magnitude). Perhaps *apocalyptic* predictions should not be emphasized (*overestimations* of MSDs), but a certain level of *mild pessimism* might be warranted if our earlier observations hold true (as Beckett remarked: “You’re on Earth. There’s no

cure for that.”). Such pessimism should not prevent one from taking effective action when there is a chance of failure despite earnest efforts. What seems to be necessary is the change in the way we act, and eventually in our *way of life* (a concept Wittgenstein referred to as *Lebensform*), regardless of the fact that such change may not be sufficient or timely. This seems to be *a human thing to do* because *in the beginning was the deed*.

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Im Anfang war die Tat. Filozofija višestrukih istovremenih ne/prirodnih katastrofa i ljudsko djelovanje

Sažetak

Ovaj rad postavlja niz pitanja o prirodi ljudskog djelovanja u kontekstu MSD-ova (MSD = *multiple simultaneous un/natural disaster*; višestruke istovremene ne/prirodne katastrofe). Neka su pitanja važnija od drugih i ključno je prvo identificirati najznačajnija pitanja koja bi, budu li odgovorena, mogla pridonijeti prikladnijem ljudskom djelovanju u kontekstu MSD-ova, posebice u jasnoći djelovanja. Rad pokušava istaknuti važnost ljudskog djelovanja unutar MSD-ova te filozofska (konceptualna) pitanja koja mogu pridonijeti takvom djelovanju. Što se tiče odgovora, rad pruža samo smjernice, dok istovremeno eliminira preostale opcije (koristeći prethodno opisani model karakteristika ljudskog djelovanja pod MSD-om, tzv. PPR = pozornost, prilagodba, reakcija). Opća pretpostavka jest da je individualno ljudsko djelovanje ključno za pravilno funkcioniranje pod MSD-om. Prvo, rad istražuje što se može reći o temi, a zatim istražuje specifične karakteristike ljudskog djelovanja unutar MSD-ova te opisuje moguće pojašnjenje takvog djelovanja. Na temelju navedenog, cilj je rada izraziti umjeren ili blago pesimističan stav o odgovarajućem ljudskom (civilnom) djelovanju unutar MSD-ova i nastojanju da se takvo djelovanje učini prikladnijim za moguće izazove budućih MSD-ova. Ova tema dopunjuje prethodne radove koji se bave filozofijom MSD-ova. Takav pristup ljudskom djelovanju pod MSD-om dosad nije istraživani ni u filozofiji djelovanja ni u teoriji upravljanja katastrofama, posebice ne u kontekstu MSD-ova.

Ključne riječi: PPR, odgovarajuće ljudsko djelovanje, ljudsko djelovanje pod MSD-om, MSD-ovi, primat ljudske prakse.