Bart Flos

OUR INNER LIMITS



Addendum X

The Last Resort: Collapse Acceptance



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<u>ADDENDUM X</u> The Last Resort: Collapse Acceptance



Previously published by Bart Flos:

Het anti-klaagboek – Het anti-sleurboek – Het perfecte project De kenniskermis – Vooruitkijken voor gevorderden

De mens als grens ('Our Inner Limits')

The Anti-Complain Book - The Perfect Project

De hoogvolwassen organisatie - De klimaatconfrontatie

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As addenda to 'De mens als grens':

Addendum I – Het begin van het einde: onwetendheid Addendum II – De frontale confrontatie: klimaatverandering Addendum III – Het grote probleem: overconsumptie Addendum IV – Het laatste taboe: ineenstorting

As addenda to 'Our Inner Limits':

Addendum V – The Beginning of The End: Ignorance Addendum VI – De Frontal Confrontation: Climate Change Addendum VII – The Big Problem: Overconsumption Addendum VIII – The Final Taboo: Collapse Addendum IX – The Next Step: Collapse Awareness Addendum X – The Last Resort: Collapse Acceptance Addendum XI – The Tough Choice: Collapse Resilience

Self-knowledge is the first step to adulthood. Jane Austen

Civilization begins with order, grows with freedom, and dies with chaos.

Will Durant

We are only allowed to live on this planet as long as we treat all of nature with compassion and intelligence.

Aldous Huxley

Second edition December 2024 (V_9)

Publisher BlijvendBeklijven Boeken Broederwal 81 5708 ZT Helmond

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www.demensalsgrens.nl

Author, final editing, correction, interior work and cover: Bart Flos Logistics and administration: BlijvendBeklijven Boeken (www.blijvendbeklijven.nl)

ISBN: 9789083207742 NUR 600, 900, 130

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Introduction

In 2015 I published my fifth book, *Vooruitkijken voor gevorderden – Hoop voor de toekomst van mensaap en moederplaneet* ('Futurology for Fanatics – Hope for the Future of Man Ape and Mother Planet'). It is an easy-to-read book with the same design as its predecessor *De kenniskermis – Overleven in een zee van informatie* ('The Knowledge Fair – How to Survive in an Ocean of Information'). Short chapters of approximately 800 words, provided with QR codes and TED(x) talks, nice pictures and numerous references to other interesting books.

In *Futurology for Fanatics*, I not only discuss humanity's major problems, but I also provide hopeful solutions. By (daring to) look ahead 100, 1.000 and even 10.000 years, I paint a picture of the limitless possibilities that Homo sapiens has to shape its own future. The final goal? Preserving our planet to prepare it as a home base for the exploration of the cosmos.

I still remember someone calling me a 'naive idealist' then. I defended this fiercely at the time and replied that I preferred to call myself an 'incorrigible optimist'. "Yeah, yeah," was the response, "Dream on." But it really was true, I was sitting on a comfortable pink cloud and I was looking through rose-colored glasses, which turned out to be a cold, metal telephoto lens and microscope. It wasn't until I got into my helicopter, flew as high as I could and started looking down that the scales fell from my eyes.

Fast forward to 2022

Since the publication of *Futurology for Fanatics* more than half a billion people have been added to the population, we have emitted another 285 gigatons of CO2 and the atmospheric CO2-level has risen from 400 to 418 ppm. That has categorically transformed me from an incorrigible optimist to a 'confrontealist', someone who confronts those around him head-on with hard science, with observation, research, facts and evidence.

My own research over the past two years has led me to write my sixth book, my Magnus Opus, which brings together all my previous work. *De mens als grens* – *Over de onbuigzame barrières van ons bestaan* ('Our Inner Limits – On the Unbending Barriers of Being') is much less hopeful as a plea, unfortunately, but it still contains solutions. These are now the last solutions we have left.

I'm sorry that this time I don't share hopeful dreams about the human species, which first preserves its planet and then seeks refuge among the stars. But it is time that we recognize, acknowledge and confess what we are: social group primates and hunter-gatherers, who are extremely proficient at surviving and reproducing. At the expense of everything and everyone. It's the nature of the beast.

Fast forward to 2024

When I delivered the final manuscript of *Our Inner Limits* to my publisher in October 2022, I could not have imagined how quickly things would get so much worse. The year 2023 is the year that we passed the 'elbow' of the exponential curve. This means that from now on, events affecting the environment,

biodiversity and climate will no longer follow a relatively linear path, but a chaotic, completely unpredictable one.

Since the publication of my sixth book, I have written almost 1.000 posts on *LinkedIn*, about 60 per month, 2 every day. In order not to let them go to waste in the endless timelines, I have included them in eleven addenda to *Our Inner Limits*: four in Dutch and seven in English. In these addenda I'm taking you on that accelerating path of decline as we embark on a journey from ignorance to climate change to overconsumption and collapse.

I would have liked to tell you something different, but it's not 2015 anymore. It is no longer 1970 either, when we could still dó something. Or 1990, pretty much humanity's last chance to avoid collapse. I was forced to give up the 'hopeful future of man ape and mother planet'. In turn, I hope you'll stick with it to work your way through the addenda, because it's a story that needs to be told. Science, truth and reality now tell us that we have actually waited too long. It is too late. Collapse is now locked into the system.

With these eleven addenda, I hope to arm you not only with facts and evidence and the latest insights from the scientific community. I especially hope that it will make you and your loved ones more collapse aware and resilient to what is coming. Because our future is no longer a few hundred years away, or in the next century, or at the end of this century, or in 2070 or 2050. Our future takes place in the next ten years.

To conclude, I don't think it would be prudent to wish you 'much reading pleasure'. I wish you lots of wisdom and strength instead.

About this book

The great thing about writing a post on *LinkedIn* is that, even more so than on Twitter and unlike Facebook, you are forced to limit your message to about 500 words (3.000 characters) for a post and about 200 words (1.250 characters) for a comment. *Schrijven is schrappen* ('To write is to delete' – thank you Simon Carmiggelt) is, as it were, enforced here, accurate to the very punctuation mark and that is good. Because it forces authors to shorten the message to a length that should be manageable even for the hurried, overloaded, *I'm-very-busy*-reader, without losing sight of the core message.

This book is an addendum, a supplement to my sixth book *Our Inner Limits*. There are a total of eleven addenda, four in Dutch and seven in English. The English addenda are not direct translations of the Dutch addenda. On *LinkedIn* I often respond to English posts in English. Sometimes I translate them into Dutch, but they also stand alone. The same applies the other way around: sometimes I translate a Dutch post into English, sometimes I do not. So, if you speak the English language – and who doesn't in the Netherlands? – and if you want to be completely informed, read all eleven. (If you don't master the Dutch language, I'm glad I am able to offer you seven English addenda. The gist of my message is just the same).

At an average reading speed of about 250 words per minute, each subchapter in this book will only take you a few minutes. So, I would like to say: do you have a little less time now? Then choose a few chapter titles that appeal to you and spend ten or fifteen minutes on them. Each post stands alone and all I did was put them into a book template and made sure that the information I referenced and responded to was not lost. So, you can pick up the addenda and

put them away whenever you want. In any case, it is best to take in the information in steps. I wouldn't want you to be overwhelmed.

Because the addenda are published as PDF books, the website links remain active. So, you can step out and take a trip to related information elsewhere and look for further depth there. In addition, you can find more links and information that apply generically in the appendices.

Each of the eleven addenda is the size of an average management book, between 30.000 and 40.000 words. The layout is like a complete book, so if you prefer to read on paper, you can easily submit the PDF as a print file to a print shop and voilà, you have a physical book in your hands, *easy peasy*.

The almost thousand posts were written from October 2022 through March 2024. All posts are presented in more or less chronological order and even though I present them in the form of a book, it is still a relatively loose collection of stories, insights and reflections. So don't be surprised by repetition and progressive insight. For a more structured foundation of my view on the coexistence and collaborating of the human species, I recommend that you read my book first or check out the website, which acts as a management summary to my book.

Each addendum is classified into 11 fixed chapters:

- 1. The frontal confrontation
- 2. The collapse
- 3. Economy versus ecology
- 4. The Almighty Algorithm
- 5. Distraction, deception, doubt and deceit.

- 6. The climate collision
- 7. About climate stupidity
- 8. Looking down from above
- 9. Pollution, waste and destruction
- 10. Global consultation doesn't work
- 11. Science, truth and reality

Please note: not all chapters appear equally in all addenda.

If you've worked your way through all eleven books, you'll have taken a journey from ignorance to climate change to overconsumption, collapse and acceptance. Not all journeys are equally enjoyable to make and this journey is one of the beginning of the end, of frontal confrontation, major existential problems and the very last, ultimate taboo: the collapse of human civilization as we know it today. That, by the way, does not necessarily mean 'the end of the world': the extinction of the human species. But it has now become a serious option indeed.

Finally: while in my book *Our Inner Limits* I leave it to the dear reader to draw their own conclusions about where the human species is going, I am much more explicit in these eleven addenda, more 'right to your face' and perhaps a bit blunt here and there. Because as a self-proclaimed *confrontealist*, I passionately believe that only a frontal confrontation with truth and reality can, perhaps, open our eyes to what is coming our way.

Good luck and success!

Bart Flos, Helmond | February 2025

Chapter 1

Looking down from above

1.1

SM769

The last mistake we will ever make

I saw a post about plastics pollution, referring to an article that nano-plastics have now even been found in our bottled water. It was quite disconcerting to read.

This was my response:

"Scary read.

If nano-plastics are in our bottled water, which is sold as just about the best thing we can possibly consume, than it is present in 'everything'. Because we can't purify it, boil it away, run it through a filter of some kind or scrape it off of the surface. This is systemic environmental pollution at its finest (pun intended).

So, apparently, micro- and nano-plastics are now found everywhere: in the skies, land and water, the holy trinity of our *vitosphere* (*), our habitat or living environment. If plastics have penetrated our living environment, than they have penetrated plants and animals. If plastics have penetrated plants and animals, then they have penetrated us. And *lo and behold*, nano-plastics are now found in our blood, our lungs, our brains and our placentas.

Now, you might be inclined to say 'Geez, this is a big problem! And global too. It's huge, one of the biggest global problems of our time!' But then you would be mistaken. Because it's not a problem per se. Plastics pollution is more of a sub-sub-symptom of something far bigger. The same goes for PFAS pollution. Or air pollution. All sub-sub-symptoms of a much bigger problem.

The decline of the global insect population is also a big global problem. Same goes for polar bears and certain tropical species of frog that are getting extinct; also big problems, so it seems. But they too are mere sub-sub-symptoms of that bigger issue.

Look at the prolonged droughts, extreme heat waves and devastating forest fires washing over the planet: all big global problems. So are violent storms, hurricanes, extreme downpours, floodings and landslides. Big shit for sure. But they're not problems either. They too are mere sub-sub-symptoms of that bigger thing that hovers over everything and casts a dark shadow over our future.

What am I talking about? All of the 'problems' mentioned above are mere *symptoms* of environmental pollution, biodiversity loss and climate change, respectively. These Big Three are also global problems. Huge issues, so it seems. But they are not. They too are mere symptoms of the overarching issue, the

Problem of Problems: *overshoot or overconsumption*, when a population exceeds the carrying capacity of its habitat (**). It should be the only thing on our minds, but it is not, because it is a vast, complex, all-encompassing problem. In the reality of our daily lives, overconsumption as an existential problem seems to be rather the furthest thing from our mind.

And that, my dear readers, might be the last mistake we will ever make.

(*) The *vitosphere* encapsulates the familiar surface conditions of Earth resulting from a complex interaction of *atmosphere* (air, clouds), *hydrosphere* (oceans, rivers, lakes), *lithosphere* (land, rocks), *cryosphere* (ice, snow) and *biosphere* (plants, animals - including humans) with the incoming solar radiation.

(**) See also Appendix IV.

1.2

SM774

The Five Stages of Accelerated Global Warming Grief

I was talking to somebody about climate change and about all the disturbing developments that are popping up in our news outlets and social media platforms (alongside other news about economic growth, a gigantic new cruise ship, sports games, funny videos about cats and dogs, cooking tips and dirty gossip about celebrities and politicians) and I mentioned that I had entered the last stage of grief: acceptance and resignation. To which I received the following reply:

"I'm at acceptance and accelerated action".

That prompted my head to make a little jolt. This was my response:

"I'm sorry and with all due respect, but that qualifies as a contradiction in terms. If you enter the final stage of grief — resignation and acceptance — actions are no longer required or no longer possible. Please allow me to clarify. These are the *Five Stages of Accelerated Global Warming Grief:*

1 — Denial

Denying that it's too late, that we've waited too long, that the collapse of human civilization as we know it today is inevitable. Not only sad people are in denial. Hopeful people are too.

2 - Anger

Wanting to fight it, combat it, actually dó something about it. Take to the streets in protest, chaining oneself to fences or glueing oneself to paintings. Maybe, at some point, blowing something up.

3 – Bargaining

Organizing international conferences and summits, trying to influence politicians to change the laws of the land, attempting to persuade others to radically change their lifestyles (or fossil fuel conglomerates to change their business model).

4 - Depression

Feeling overwhelmed, helpless, frustrated by the global warming statistics, the extreme weather and climate disasters washing over the planet in increasing frequency and intensity. Wanting to cry for humanity.

5 - Acceptance

Knowing that collapse is inevitable but being ok with it. Knowing that you've done all you could while it was still possible to do something. Being collapse aware and collapse resilient with complete resignation.

As you can see, action is done in stages 2 and 3, not in stage 5."

1.3

SM776

Comparing oceans to economies

Our oceans are heating up in an unbelievable tempo. Its quite disconcerting and scientists have even called it "gobsmackingly banana's" (just Google it and you'll find out which scientist said it and why). Sometimes you read these popular-scientific articles that help us understand these kind of extremely complex events in terms of statistics, because they are truly mind-boggling. They compare the amount of heat pumped into our oceans with X amount of Hiroshima-bombs going off every day or the amount of natural gas you would have to burn to heat that much water on the stove.

I saw a post comparing the overheating of our oceans, an ecological problem, to our global economy. Not bad. But I still thought the author didn't push it far enough. This was my response:

"Interesting statistics. Mind-blowing, in fact.

So, you are saying that with our neoliberal, capitalistic, consumeristic, growtheconomic free market we have forced the oceans to absorb 574 times as much heat as our entire global economy produces in one year. Now, let's extrapolate what that implies for the future of humankind. And because a picture says more than a thousand words, see the comment section. It really does speak for itself.

Our planet is 71% water, 29% is land, 17% is inhabitable land, 12% is habitable land. On this 12% habitable land, about 25 million square miles or 16 billion acres (*), we live: 8 billion specimen of the species Homo sapiens. But if we think we are safe from the oceans, because we live on land, we are gravely mistaken. If our oceans die, we die with them.

(*) That is about 64 million square kilometers or a little over 6 billion hectares.

1.4

SM783

Just zoom out and you will see

If you willow the news on climate change and global warming you regularly get to see graphs that represent the average global surface temperature going back tens, hundreds, thousands, hundreds of thousands or even millions of years. Sometimes they are limited to time frames that stay a bit close to home, say, from 1850 until now, or from 1923 to 2023.

If you zoom in on these graphs, especially from 1970 onwards, you will notice a specific pattern: it shows periods where it seems to level out and plateau a little bit. Then it holds and shoots up. Then it 'rests' again for a few years, like it's 'tired' of its travels and needs to take a little brake. Then it jolts and shoots up again.

You will find some example of these temperature curves here:

https://www.demensalsgrens.nl/grafieken/

Do you see? Now look at the latest couple of jolts, say, from 1990 to 2020. Do you notice the giant leaps the curve takes? That is the suprasystem shaking, jolting, vibrating, vomiting and jerking. That is our habitat on the verge of its violent transformation to a new equilibrium.

Now, the climate change denialism industry has consistently, over the years, used these short 'plateau phases' in the curve to arbitrarily draw a horizontal

line through them and subsequently isolating that part of the graph and enlarging it. For instance, the period 2000-2010, where global warming seems to 'stagnate'. They add exclamation marks to it, shouting "You see?! Global warming is a woke hoax by the leftist elite! It's all going to cool down soon and all will be swell and dandy with the fossil fuels and all. Just relax!"

But if you zoom out, all of these horizontal lines add up to one big accelerating global warming curve. Do you see?

1.5

SM819

Since you asked

Somebody on *LinkedIn* asked his followers three questions. Now I didn't follow this particular individual, but I did answer his questions:

- What does it truly mean to be human?

That we survive to procreate, collaborate to fail and coexist to get extinct.

- What is the truest expression of being human?

Exceeding the carrying capacity of its habitat for só long, that the entire system now steers towards collapse. Ignoring everything we know about our existential predicament and nót changing our behavior.

- What does my heart tell me?

That we really fucked it up this time, in real time. That we no longer deserve the designation Homo sapiens, 'the wise, modern, thinking man', but that we truly áre Homo infantilicus. (By the way, my head agrees).

- How do we re-enter a right relationship with all life?

We can't. It's too late. We've waited too long. We've had our chance and blew it. All we have done is destroy life.

- We have polluted the environment to the extent that micro- and nano plastics have now penetrated every level of our living environment: sky, land and water.

- We are causing the extinction of other species a thousand times faster than the last mass extinction event, including ourselves.

- We have caused global warming to accelerate towards suprasystemic collapse, ignoring all the warning signs along the way.

So, there you go.

1.6

SM820

I would like to say, but I won't

I saw a post from a renewables technology optimist, stating something to the effect of:

"The world added X% more renewables in 2023 than in 2022, the fastest growth rate in Y decades and we're just getting started: in just the next Z years, the world will add more renewables than has been installed - in total in the previous 100 years".

This was my response:

"I would like to yell out 'STOP IT!' — but I won't.

I would like to take that renewables technology optimism and put it where the sun doesn't shine — but I won't.

I would like to grab the techno-optimists by the shoulders and fiercely shake them back to reality — but I won't.

I would like to point at the global rise of atmospheric greenhouse gases, average surface temperature and the Earth's energy imbalance — but I won't.

I would like to emphasize the lack of causal relationship between the global rise of renewables technology deployment and the decline of global warming KPI's — but I won't.

I would like to be cynical, even sarcastic, about the development of renewables technology, saying that it seems to cause the acceleration of global warming — but I won't.

I would like to say that spreading false hope makes us false prophets — but I won't.

Not this time.

What I would like to do is to urge everybody to wake up and smell the coffee. Renewables technology applied within the old system of neoliberal, capitalistic, consumerist, growth-economic free markets, is only going to make things worse. In fact, it IS making things worse. I would like to advocate collapse awareness, resilience and acceptance instead."

1.7

SM823

Why doesn't accelerated growth or decline scare us?

What if I told you that something sinister is going on with the climate? That we are riding an accelerated curve, but we can't see it, because we're on it? That we don't grasp the concept of exponential growth or decline, because our brain doesn't work that way?

Look at the first of the seven graphs I have attached to this post (this graph was a depiction of the '365-day running mean global surface temperature anomaly', or the average global surface temperature on any given day as mean of the past year). What do you see? In order to understand what we see, we have to identify the different components of this graph, answering questions like:

- 1 What is 'global surface temperature'?
- 2 What is an 'anomaly', a 'baseline', a '365-day running mean'?
- 3 What are these numbers on the vertical axle?

Climate scientists assume we know all that. They assume that 'everybody' is familiar with these rationalities, with these aspects of climate change/ global warming. But we are not. We, the general public, don't know what we see, don't understand these variables and don't realize what it means.

Now, I'm not going to answer these questions. That's not the point of this post. You can find perfectly good information about climate change/ global warming on the websites of the IPCC, WMO and NASA, to name but a few trustworthy institutions. But what I ám going to do is spell it out. Because this graph should scare the bejesus out of you (which I'm sure it still won't, after you finish reading, because our brain just doesn't work that way).

Take a look at the highlighted data points in the graph. They represent the progression of the global average surface temperature (land and oceans combined) in specific intervals of a quarter of a degree Celsius:

(1) 0,25C - Mar. 15, 1941 (my estimate)
(2) 0,50C - Mar. 13, 1980
(3) 0,75C - Dec. 20, 1990
(4) 1,00C - Apr. 22, 2010
(5) 1,25C - Apr. 8, 2016
(6) 1,50C - Jan. 19, 2024

This is the time passed between those datapoints, rounded up in years:

(1) and (2) - 39 years
(2) and (3) - 10 years
(3) and (4) - 19 years
(4) and (5) - 6 years
(5) and (6) - 8 years

Do you see? It follows a certain pattern that you can extrapolate into the future, like so:

(7) 1,75C - 2028
(8) 2,00C - 2034
(9) 2,25C - 2036
(10) 2,50C - 2039
(11) 3,00C - 2040

Now, please note that these years do not represent the distant future, like you mostly see in abstract future predictions, such as the year 2100, or 2070, or 2050. No, the next data point is only 4 years away, and the next after that is only a decade away. That is practically in the 'here and now'. Do you see now? If you extrapolate the data, based on historical progression of these data points, this is what you get: accelerated growth.

Don't believe me? Do you think it is 'impossible' that we will reach a global average surface temperature of 2C all year around in 2034? Well, that's because we don't understand accelerated growth. We have no experience with it, simply because we have never experienced it before. And that's why it doesn't scare the bejesus out of us. But it should. It really should.

In 2015, author, public speaker and change specialist Bart Flos published his fifth book, *Vooruitkijken voor gevorderden* ('Futurology for Fanatics'). In this book he paints a hopeful picture of the limitless possibilities of the human species *Homo sapiens* to shape its own future.

Fast forward to 2022

Since the publication of that book, things have quickly gotten out of hand with the environment, biodiversity and climate. It prompted Flos to write his sixth book: *De mens als grens* ('Our Inner Limits'). It was much less hopeful as a plea, unfortunately, but it still contained solutions to turn the tide.

Fast forward to 2024

"After the publication of *Our Inner Limits*, I could not have imagined how quickly things would get so much worse. The year 2023 is the year that we passed the 'elbow' of the exponential curve. What we are left with now is chaos and unpredictability. I wrote almost a thousand posts about it and I didn't want them to get lost in the endless timelines of our social media platforms," says Flos.

This is one of the eleven addenda to *Our Inner Limits*, in which Flos's posts are included in book form. It takes you on a head-on confrontational journey from ignorance via climate change to overconsumption and collapse. We will break the last ultimate taboo together: daring to say that we have waited too long, that it is now too late and that we will have to passively suffer the consequences of our destructive collective behavior as a human species.

Want to learn more? Go to www.demensalsgrens.nl

The Last Resort: Collapse Acceptance

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