

**Notes on *The Indefinability of Language and Science Without Foundations***

**Wim van der Loo**



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**Wim van der Loo**  
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### **On the Origin of These Notes**

These notes were not written as an independent philosophical work, nor as a systematic commentary on *The Indefinability of Language* or *Science Without Foundations*. They emerged during a prolonged process of searching, formulating, correcting, and rethinking. Once the limit thesis had been formulated, it became clear that the real difficulty did not lie merely in its application to science, language, logic, or cosmology, but ultimately to the subject itself. The question therefore ceased to be exclusively theoretical and became existential as well: what does it mean if the one who speaks, thinks, and attempts to provide foundations cannot himself stand outside the openness of language?

Many of the conversations and notes included here arose from that tension. Not as an attempt to construct a final system after all, but rather as a way of gradually making the consequences of the limit thesis visible. As a result, these notes sometimes take the form of analysis, sometimes of self-examination, and sometimes of an attempt to find peace within questions that do not allow themselves to be fully closed.

The texts have deliberately been left largely as they emerged. Repetitions, shifts in formulation, and moments of doubt have therefore not been removed everywhere. It is precisely in these features that one can see how reflection on fundamental questions rarely develops in a linear fashion. Understanding often arises through return, correction, and re-articulation.

My role in this process has therefore been a double one. On the one hand, that of a writer and thinker attempting to articulate a structural insight; on the other hand, that of a participant within the same openness that he describes. In the end, the limit thesis could not be applied only to “the world,” but also to the one who formulated it.

These notes should therefore not be read as a definitive explanation of the books, but rather as a document of a path of thought. They reveal not only a philosophical thesis, but also the process through which that thesis gradually found its place within my own life and thinking. Perhaps that is precisely where their value lies.

Can You Explain Once Again Why an Absolute Definition Is Not Possible?

Yes. Let us do this as clearly and as soberly as possible, without drama and without overstatement.

We will take it step by step.

### **1. What Is an “Absolute Definition”?**

An absolute definition would have to be:

- complete
- self-sufficient
- in no need of further explanation
- independent of interpretation
- capable of functioning outside any context
- without any open edge

In other words:

It would have to carry itself.

---

### **2. What Happens in Reality?**

Every definition:

- uses words
- whose meanings already exist
- which can themselves be explained through other words
- and which function within a practice

For example:

“A circle is the set of all points that are equidistant from a center.”

That sounds complete.

But then:

- What is “distance”?
- What is a “point”?
- What does it mean for something to “be located”?

You can formalize these notions, but then:

- you use symbols
- and those symbols require interpretation

The chain never comes to a final stop.

---

### **3. The Problem Is Not a Lack of Precision**

This is not a matter of carelessness.

Even in perfectly formal systems:

- there are basic axioms
- there are conditions of interpretation
- there is application within a practice

That foundation is assumed.

It is not absolutely grounded.

---

### **4. Why Closure Is Impossible**

A definition can be:

- internally consistent
- practically successful
- exact in its operation

But it can never:

- completely justify itself
- stand outside all use