

PART 1

From Parmenides to Wittgenstein

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ANSCOMBE'S ARISTOTELIAN METAPHYSICS

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Elizabeth Anscombe's philosophy stands at the intersection of two ostensibly incongruous traditions: (i) a strain of analytic philosophy that originates in Frege and is developed in the work of Anscombe's teacher, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and (ii) the Aristotelian-Thomist tradition¹. To chart these two influences in their entirety would be to recapitulate far too much of Anscombe's thought. But there is a surprising occupant of this Anscombean middle ground that is especially illustrative of her attempt at reconciliation—Aristotle's metaphysics of substance. This topic is located at the nexus of these movements in two ways. First, Wittgenstein's influence is manifest in Anscombe's historical engagement with Aristotle's theory—in the idiosyncratic interpretation she offers of his metaphysical texts. Second, Anscombe accepts and employs several core elements of Aristotle's theory of substance throughout her contemporary writings, but these positions are, once again, inflected by her Wittgensteinian commitments. In this essay, I will discuss several aspects of Anscombe's Aristotelian metaphysics in both its historical and contemporary registers. In doing so, I aim to illuminate how unique the variety of Aristotelianism she adopts is.

Few would describe Anscombe's attitude towards her philosophical predecessors as hagiographic and Aristotle receives the same kind of sharp and terse dismissals she infamously levels against other historical figures. For example, she claims that Aristotle 'misconceived the importance of the categorical syllogism' and that the theory of scientific explanation he builds upon this misconception in 'his worst book', the *Posterior Analytics*, is fundamentally flawed.² More generally, she deems Aristotle's formal logic 'to be of no more than scholarly and historical interest' (7).

But Anscombe's dismissiveness doesn't extend to all of Aristotle's views. In particular, she notes the importance of Aristotle's metaphysics. She says,

his theory of substance, predication and existence [...] seems to be the most fundamental and the most central topic in his philosophy; so much so that, apart from Aristotle's account of syllogisms and his ethical, aesthetic and political writings, most of his philosophical work can hardly be understood at all without it.

(5)

This acknowledged centrality doesn't inoculate Aristotle's metaphysics from criticism. For example, Anscombe confesses that 'I do not understand Aristotle's "form", and I do not yet know whether he got clear about it himself' and her response to Aristotle's claim that matter and form are the same, the former in potentiality and the latter in actuality, is simply that 'this is still Greek to me'.³

But there is much in Aristotle's theory of substance that Anscombe finds compelling.⁴ I will focus on her understanding of three of the theory's central elements: Aristotle's conception of substance as he presents it in the *Categories* (§1), Aristotle's account of matter and its role as a principle of individuation (§2), and the concept of essence (§3).

1 Categories and substance

Consider the totality of things that we can sensibly say about a subject, for example, a particular human being: 'She is a human being' (or 'She is an animal'), 'She is six feet tall', 'She is tanned', 'She is twice the height of her desk', etc. According to Anscombe, there are 'significant logical differences between' the 'fairly simple kinds of things [...] that might be said about a subject' and it is these logical differences that ground Aristotle's list of categories: substance, quality, quantity, relation, etc. (15).

What is it for predications, or what they signify, to be significantly logically different from (or significantly logically similar to) each other? Elsewhere, Anscombe calls the sense of logic at issue here *grammar*. To understand something's grammar is to grasp its 'structure', 'general form', or 'logical shape'.⁵ Something's logical/grammatical form is manifest in the intelligible statements in which it can figure, the reasonable questions we can ask about it, and the appropriate answers someone can give in response to such questions. As an example, Anscombe notes that '[a] quality of a body like "white" or "hot" differs from a quantity in that, for example, you can ask whether it is white or hot *all over*, whereas such a question hardly makes sense for predications of quantity' (15). There are presumably dozens of similar differences and, if they collectively meet some threshold of significance, they warrant our making a categorial distinction. To possess the grammatical understanding that would constitute knowledge of what a category is, one has to be fluent in the linguistic practices that surround the relevant variety of predication. This grammatical understanding is the common possession of those who can competently participate in the practice of making such sensible statements and asking and answering such questions intelligibly. Indeed, this grammatical understanding constitutes the practice itself and gives the statements, questions, and answers their unique senses.

Is Aristotle's list of categories, or any such list, complete? Why these ten categories? Why not additional categories, e.g., weight or shape? Anscombe's appeal to a threshold of significance for the logical difference is (appropriately) imprecise and she is consequently pessimistic that we can answer these questions clearly and determinately. If this is correct, then 'it looks a hopeless task to construct a complete list of categories' and Anscombe concedes that Aristotle's doctrine is, at best, 'a relatively crude sketch' (15, 16).⁶ Nevertheless, 'the idea of a category-difference [...] is certainly a useful one' and Anscombe appeals to the logical differences we find between Aristotle's preferred categories to elucidate central features of his theory of substance (15). We can see this if we follow Anscombe and contrast her interpretation of Aristotle's account of substance with a broadly Lockean view that she opposes.

The Lockean account of substance goes hand in hand with the rejection of nominal essences for individuals and comprises two principal commitments.

(L1) One can (re)identify a proper name's referent without identifying it as being some kind or other.

(L2) Simple, non-relational predicates signify qualities.

Aristotle and Locke agree that particular substances (what Aristotle calls *first substances*) are subjects of predication that are not themselves predicated of anything else. Given this, we can designate a particular substance with a proper name since 'a proper name is never, *qua* proper name, a predicate' (7). But if we follow Locke and accept (L1), then a substance's identity will in no way depend on it being the kind it is. That is, we can grasp what it is for a proper name to refer to a particular substance and can know when different uses of the proper name refer to the same particular substance without its being already determined whether it is the proper name of a human being, or a dog, or any other kind of thing.

The claim that we can 'identify a *thing* without identifying it as a *such-and-such*' fits naturally with the Lockean account's second principal commitment (10). A kind term, say 'human being', and a quality term, say 'white', are both non-relational predicates. Now 'human being' isn't simple; presumably, it takes many properties for something to be a human being. But the Lockean view can accommodate this; 'human being' will signify 'a complex of qualities'.⁷ Given this, (L2) entails that both predicates ultimately signify qualities.

If kinds are just another variety of quality, then what it is to be a substance can't depend on predications of a kind. For we must distinguish what it is to be a substance—the referent of a proper name and a subject of predication—from what it is to be a quality—what is signified by the non-relational predicates we attribute to such a subject. We can extend this reasoning to any characteristic we might attribute to a substance. Consequently, on the Lockean view, a substance 'becomes a thoroughly mysterious entity which *in itself* has no characteristics: a "somewhat we know not what" which is postulated as *underlying* the characteristics that it is said to "have" and which alone enable us to conceive it' (10–11). Perhaps, '*we* are incapable of conceiving substance except as having some qualities' (10). But our conceptual limitations have no bearing on what it is to be a substance. So, on the Lockean view, the particular substance that a proper name designates is 'an unintelligible "bare particular" which underlies the appearances and is the subject of predication but just for that reason can't *in itself* be characterized by any predicates' (Anscombe 1964, 37).

Anscombe's opinion of the Lockean account of substance is not in doubt. She says that the account 'is clearly false', she finds the 'considerations brought forward in erecting this notion [...] so idiotic as to be almost incredible', and she is perplexed that anyone could, upon considering it, 'do anything but reject it with contempt'.⁸ Nevertheless, it often serves as an 'unconscious assumption' that guides the efforts of many interpreters of Aristotle. Indeed,

a very great deal of devoted—and extremely valuable—scholarly work in the form of producing texts, commentaries and translations of Aristotle, has been done by scholars impeded by a Lockean conception of substance and an interpretation of "quality" as "non-relational predicate".

(11)⁹

It is here that Anscombe employs the notion of logical or grammatical differences to avoid the Lockean assumptions that infect, either consciously or unconsciously, so many other interpretations. Anscombe recognizes that questions of the form 'What is it?' can apply to things that belong to any of the categories. But 'we can pick out a sharp and determinate

question, to which the required answer is the name of a kind of thing', namely, a substance (12).¹⁰ Similarly, 'not every answer to the question "What like?" or "What kind?" is a predication in the *category of quality*' (11). Many answers to these questions may appear to signify qualities, e.g., 'is bipedal' or 'has six legs', but are in fact predications in the category substance.

Predications of kinds and their differentiae involve either simple, non-relational predicates or complexes of such predicates. But they don't thereby signify qualities or other accidental properties. Consider kind predications first. Proper names designate first substances and Aristotle calls the kinds one predicates of them *second substances*. A second substance 'is so associated with the proper name of an individual that the proper name has the same reference when it is used to refer to the same X' (8). That is, contrary to (L1), a second substance picks out 'the kind X such that being the same individual means being the same X' (8). The connection is so close that the second substance's definition, as well as the definition's parts, are correctly predicated of the individual. For example, 'animal' is part of the definition of 'human being' and we are not only correct to attribute both of these predicates to an individual, say Socrates, but we can also attribute both of their definitions to him. To be Socrates is, among other things, both to be what it is to be a human being and to be what it is to be an animal. In contrast, the definitions of the qualities and other accidents that exist in an individual are never predicated of the individual. For example, if a piece of paper is white, it is not the case that to be a piece of paper is to be what the colour white is. So,

the genus (e.g. "animal") or species (e.g. "man") tell us *what kind* of thing a thing is *as far as concerns substance*: thus the fact that a certain predicate may be the answer to the question "what kind" ("what like?"), which is given a restricted use as a label for predications in the category of quality, does not prove that the predicate in question is a predicate in the category of quality.

(11)

Anscombe draws similar conclusions about predications of differentiae. Against (L2), Anscombe argues that a simple, non-relational predicate such as 'is bipedal' need not signify a quality. If the predicate signifies a differentia, it belongs to the category substance. It is, says Anscombe,

disastrous to an understanding of Aristotle [...] to take the "quality" of being winged, say, as an example of a predication in the category of quality as opposed to substance; and in general to suppose that any word signifying a non-relational characteristic or range of characteristics signifies in the category of quality.

(13)

It is for this reason that the definitions of differentiae, like the definitions of kinds, are necessarily predicated of their subjects.

So two syntactically indistinguishable questions, 'What is it like?', and two syntactically indistinguishable answers, 'It is bipedal', can nevertheless differ grammatically and therefore involve predications that belong to different categories. When the question asks for a differentia and the answer provides one, it belongs to the category substance. When the question asks for an accident and the answer provides one, it belongs to the category quality. So we don't, as the Lockean would insist, discover whether an individual substance, *A*, is 'a man or a cassiowary, by looking to see if *A* has the properties of man or cassiowary' (8). On

Anscombe's interpretation of Aristotle, '[o]ne does not establish that these things are substances by noting anything about them; the description of their properties is already in the form: description of the properties of substance' (12).¹¹

2 Matter and individuation

Aristotle's account of substance is hylomorphic; individual substances are composites of matter and form.¹² Anscombe contends that Aristotle's concept of form is posterior, in a way, to his concept of matter. You reach the concept of form 'if you succeed in thinking matter away from substance'.¹³ And this is all to the good, as far as Anscombe is concerned: 'I am always uncertain what it means to call a concept "metaphysical". But the concept of matter which Aristotle works on is at least an everyday one' (Anscombe 1953, 57–58). That is, if we begin with the concept of matter, then we begin with a concept that is 'clear or obvious' and is expressed in ordinary statements whose meaning one 'can understand very well'.¹⁴ Though put to technical ends, it is 'not any kind of hypothesis' but is rather 'the very notion of matter, or stuff, which we employ when we ask e.g. whether a certain chemical change takes place with or without the addition or loss of any matter' (47). Given this, Anscombe's discussions of matter and material difference are an attempt to elucidate the 'metaphysical' deployment of an ordinary concept.

I will discuss Anscombe's account of matter as such (§2.1) and her views about matter's purported role as the principle of individuation for conspecifics (§2.2).

2.1 Matter and change

Matter is something that 'has to be understood in what changes' (*Metaph. a.2*, 994b26). Matter, in this sense, can pick out what undergoes an accidental change. Typically, in such cases, what changes is a fully characterizable and nameable member of a specific kind (or a class thereof) and this subject of change persists *as such* (i.e., it retains its identity) during the entire time the change occurs. For example, Socrates persists as the human being he is when he rises up from his couch and is the subject of a change from sitting to standing. Similarly, each of the bricks in a pallet persists as the brick it is when they collectively become a house through the movements a housebuilder brings about in them.

But 'the origin of the notion of matter' that is relevant to understanding substance is not accidental change; rather, it 'is to be found in considerations about substantial change' (47). Anscombe has us consider a bottle of wine. The wine can undergo accidental change—we can heat it and it will expand. But the wine can also undergo substantial change—it can, over time, turn into vinegar. Regarding this substantial change, it is perfectly sensible to say (i) that there is some stuff that is in the bottle, (ii) that this stuff, or matter, is wine at an earlier time and is vinegar at a later time, and (iii) that no matter was added and no matter was lost during the change (assuming the bottle is properly sealed).¹⁵ But Aristotle insists that the matter involved in this change, unlike the subject of an accidental change, is not something with a determinate identity that remains constant throughout.¹⁶ Anscombe agrees and says that 'there isn't anything which it is all the time. It *was* wine, and *is* vinegar, and there isn't some third thing that it is all the time' (Anscombe 1953, 58).

If this is correct, that is, if nothing determinate persists through substantial change, then matter is, as such, indefinite (*ἀόριστος*). As Anscombe explains,

We can now see why this matter (e.g., the stuff I have got in this bottle) is not as such a given kind of stuff (*τῖ*): for the same stuff was wine and is vinegar. Nor can we say that it is as such *not* a certain kind of stuff—for that would mean that it could not be, e.g., wine,

and of course, when it is wine, it *is* wine. Similarly, there are not any properties, either qualities or dimensions, which you can say it has—or lacks—*qua* this bit of matter.

(*ibid.*, 58)

So matter, as such, is ‘not of any kind, any particular quantity, nor anything else, nor their negations’ (47). For if it were any of these things, this would require both that it remain whatever it determinately is and that it cease to be whatever it determinately is when it is the subject of substantial change.

This conception of matter as existing only ‘as *somehow* designate’ enables us to use the expression ‘this matter’ when speaking of an individual where “‘*this* matter” is matter *thus* designate’ (Anscombe 1953, 60). This corresponds to ordinary usage since we say that ‘what something is made of is its matter’ (48). So, if there is a glass of milk in front of us, we can consistently say (i) that milk is white and liquid, (ii) that this stuff is milk, and (iii) that this stuff may be changed from milk into junket. But ‘apart from such changes’, we would not ‘have any such concept as “this stuff”, as opposed to “this milk”’ (Anscombe 1953, 60). For if we take the (proximate) matter of milk to be, say, water, we can say that the milk before us is made of water and use the expression ‘this water’ to pick out this milk’s matter. Moreover, after the substantial change occurs, we can say that this junket before us is made of water and that this junket is materially the same water as the milk from which it came to be. Nevertheless, if the coming to be of junket from milk is a substantial change, and not just some water persisting as such through an accidental change, then while we can say that this matter is actual in respect of those properties that make it in some sense identifiable as water, we can neither say that it is actual in respect of the kind water nor say that it possesses those properties that make what is before us at any time the kind of thing it is, viz. milk or junket.¹⁷

This does, however, lead to a *prima facie* contradiction: without any kind, this matter does not exist, but what first is this kind and then is that kind cannot be nothing. Aristotle is able to accept both of these claims by employing the distinction between being something in potentiality and being something in actuality. What we pick out as ‘this matter’ in both the milk and the junket is ‘a potential existent’; depending on its circumstances, the matter can be either milk or junket in potentiality (50). This matter is milk in actuality and junket in potentiality before the substantial change, and it is junket in actuality after the substantial change, but is not, *qua* junket in potentiality, any kind of thing in actuality.¹⁸ As Anscombe says, matter ‘cannot itself be characterized except as the possibility of being or becoming such and such’ (54).

On this interpretation, matter cannot be substance ‘because what belongs to substance [(οὐσία)] is being separate and being a “this something” (τὸδε τι).¹⁹ Regarding the latter, though *this matter* is a this (τὸδε)—it is designatable, and identifiable—it is not something (τ)—‘it is not as such of any specific kind or necessarily possessed of this or that property or dimensions’.²⁰ Regarding the former, *this matter* ‘is of course not separable: that is, you could not entertain producing a specimen of it, which contrived to be of no kind (to be not τ)’ (Anscombe 1953, 59). Consequently, according to Anscombe, a claim about something’s matter ‘is a conceptual statement’ (*ibid.*, 59). For ‘of course matter never exists except in one form or another’ (47). So,

if I tell you that the stuff in this apparatus has changed from being water to being hydrogen and oxygen, you will show yourself quite at sea about the sense I am using the word “stuff” in, if you ask me to show you the stuff as it really is in itself, apart from being the various things it can be.

(Anscombe 1953, 59)

For

only the words which express form enable us to pick out real existences, and what they express is what makes things be what they are; there is indeed such a thing as what in them is *made to be* what they are, but this is the matter, which cannot itself be characterized except as the possibility of being or becoming such and such.

(54)

2.2 Matter and individuation

Given Anscombe's interpretation of matter, how are we to understand Aristotle's hylomorphism more generally? For example, if matter is, in itself, indeterminate and can only be characterized as being a specific kind of thing in potentiality, how can we say, as Anscombe wishes to, that individual members of the same species are 'identical in species or kind but different in matter' (46)? Does Anscombe's account of matter provide us with an understanding of what it is to be materially different that could serve this (or any other) explanatory role?

Before we can answer this question, we must first recognize that there are in fact several importantly different questions that are all too easily conflated in discussions of matter's purported role as the principle of individuation for sensible substances. First, we must distinguish appeals to principles of individuation that are primarily epistemological from those that are primarily metaphysical.

If someone asks, 'How do we distinguish one individual member of a species from another?' ('How do we know?' 'By virtue of what can we tell?'), they seek an answer that will solve an epistemological problem. According to Anscombe, we express the same epistemological concern when we ask, 'What description (or any other expression) would enable us to uniquely identify an individual of a given kind?' For some kinds, we can achieve this by giving a definite description.

Q: Which number is X?

A: The smallest integer, greater than one, that is both a square and a cube.

But for the kinds that presently concern us, namely, kinds of sensible substance, even if we are satisfied that a definite description applies to one of the kind's members, it doesn't follow that it is either nonsensical or contradictory to consider whether another of the kind's members might also satisfy the definite description (e.g., if we answer 'The philosopher who wrote *Republic*' to the question 'Which man?'). And alternative expressions fare no better. A mere demonstration won't do. For if one performs two acts of demonstration, even if one takes each as an occasion to introduce a name for what one demonstrates—'that (let's call it X)' and 'that (let's call it Y)'—one hasn't done anything that would preclude X and Y from being names of a single individual. And appeals to place and time will also fail. For without prior definitions of the individuals you attempt to differentiate in this way, the point of origin that the specified times and places fix won't privilege any individual as being the relevant occupant. Even if we supplement any of these methods with the specification of a kind, e.g., 'that man', we would still fail to identify an individual because the expression would apply equally to any two of the species' individual members.

It appears that we cannot overcome the epistemological problems behind these questions unless we first answer a different and primarily metaphysical question about specifically

identical individuals. But even if we restrict ourselves to metaphysical concerns, appeals to principles of individuation can serve importantly different aims. For example, one can ask a question of unity—‘What makes a member of a given species a unity, i.e., an individual, as opposed to a heap (a multiplicity) or a stuff (a uniform mass that is not, as such, countable)?’ Alternatively, one can ask a question of identity—‘In what does the identity of an individual of a given species consist?’ An appeal to matter would fail as an answer to either of these questions. For Aristotle is clear that form ‘is what makes what a thing is made *of* into that thing’ and Anscombe emphasizes that the ‘statement that matter is the principle of individuation does not mean that the identity of an individual consists in the identity of its matter’.²¹

A third metaphysical question concerns diachronic identity: ‘What makes an individual of kind *F* the same *F* at different times?’ or ‘What makes an individual of kind *F*, persist as the same *F* throughout the changes it undergoes?’ As before, an appeal to matter would fail as an answer to either of these questions. Anscombe says that if one asks the question, ‘What makes a man the same man at different times?’, then ‘the answer “matter” is an absurd one’ (Anscombe 1953, 64). Matter is an absurd answer to this question because, for many things, e.g., living organisms, identity over time consists in the persistence of form in a matter that is in continual flux.²²

There is, however, a metaphysical question of individuation that Anscombe thinks Aristotle can answer by invoking matter, but it ‘concerns only contemporaries’ (55). In asking this question, we don’t seek to explain what it is for anything to be (or to persist as) what it is. Instead, we seek to explain what it is for two simultaneously existing and specifically identical individuals to differ from each other (i.e., to be ‘two’). We want an answer to the metaphysical question ‘What makes this individual of kind *F* different from that one, here and now?’

I have already mentioned Anscombe’s answer to this last question: ‘where there are many things of *the same species* coexistent then the difference is a difference of matter’ (55). She takes herself to be following Aristotle when he says,

And when we have the whole, such and such a form in this flesh and in these bones, this is Callias or Socrates; and they are different in virtue of their matter (for that is different) [καὶ ἕτερον μὲν διὰ τὴν ὕλην (ἕτερα γάρ)], but the same in form; for their form is indivisible.

(*Metaph. Z.7, 1034a5–8*)²³

This appeal to matter as that which grounds differences among individuals of a specific kind is the traditional (and still most common) interpretation of Aristotle’s position.²⁴ But it faces significant challenges and the peculiarities of Anscombe’s account of matter make these challenges especially forceful.

It is commonly thought that matter can only play the explanatory role Anscombe assigns to it if there is something internal to matter in virtue of which any two of its parcels are numerically distinct. That is, specifically identical individuals differ numerically in virtue of having numerically distinct matter, but there is not a more explanatorily fundamental principle that is the source of the matters’ numerical difference. But it is not even clear that matter *can* differ numerically on Anscombe’s interpretation, let alone differ so in a way that is explanatorily basic. For there is no way to be numerically one or numerically many without reference to a kind, broadly construed, i.e., a category, or a genus, or a species. We can say of something before us that it is one substance, one animal, or one human being. But we cannot say that it is one full stop. And we can say there are many substances, or many animals, or

many human beings. But we cannot say there are many full stop. For 'that which is different from anything is different in some respect so that there must be something identical whereby they differ. And this identical thing is genus or species' (*Metaph.* I.3, 1054b25–28).²⁵ But matter, as Anscombe conceives it, is entirely indefinite. We cannot say that matter as such either has or lacks any determinate property and we cannot say that it either does or does not belong to any determinate genus or species. So Anscombe must accept that attempts to attribute numerical difference to matter are nonsensical. Consequently, contemporaneous individuals of a given species can't be numerically distinct in virtue of having matter that is numerically distinct.²⁶

One way to respond to this problem is to claim that there is something else that can play the explanatory role of a principle of individuation that isn't burdened by the difficulties that beset matter. Many interpreters maintain that, in addition to specific forms, there are individual forms, and that specifically identical individuals are numerically distinct in virtue of having numerically distinct individual forms.²⁷ Another way to respond to this problem is deny that numerically distinct matter, numerically distinct individual forms, or anything else which is numerically distinct is needed to explain the numerical distinctness of specifically identical individuals. On this approach, the numerical distinctness of specifically identical individuals at a time is not derived from anything else; there is no 'principle of individuation' for conspecifics because their being numerically distinct is already explanatorily basic.²⁸

Anscombe rejects both of these alternative paths. According to Anscombe, there are no individual forms; the only form that belongs to the category of substance that is immediately predicated of an individual is a specific form and every such predication is synonymous. There is no real definition of an individual substance beyond the definition of its specific kind and this definition is common to each of that species' individual members. Anscombe also denies that the differences among individual conspecifics are underived. Indeed, she thinks that once we properly understand the traditional interpretation's appeal to material difference, the explanation it offers will seem both 'clear and evident' (Anscombe 1953, 64).

So how, then, does Anscombe escape the argument that matter, as she understands it, can't explain the differences between contemporaneous, conspecific individuals? In large part, she does so by rejecting the way her opponents frame both her answer and the problem that prompts it. That is, Anscombe rejects *both* the idea of numerical identity/difference and the idea of a principle of individuation. The following two quotes capture her radically dismissive attitude towards each of these ideas, respectively.

But while 'specifically different' is genuinely explanatory, 'numerically different', which has an air of being explanatory, is not so at all: it is a mere, as opposed to a suitable, label. A genuinely explanatory label here is 'materially different' as opposed to 'specifically different.'

(46)

I don't think that 'principle of individuation' is an expression any counterpart of which is in Aristotle. As far as I know, the statement that according to Aristotle matter is the principle of individuation is based only on his saying that Callias and Socrates are 'different in matter, for it is different' (sc. in each of them).

(Anscombe 1953, 64)

By rejecting these pillars of the common framework, Anscombe makes room for attributing an unproblematic explanatory role to matter. Aristotle, as Anscombe interprets him,

isn't trying to explain numerical differences among individual conspecific substances. The question of whether conspecific individuals differ rarely arises and Aristotle isn't trying to provide a general answer that would require a principle of individuation.²⁹

We need not, Anscombe contends, explain how specifically identical individuals are numerically distinct. When, on that rare occasion, a question about whether two such individuals differ arises, it is enough for us to respond positively by saying that they differ materially. And to claim that they differ materially in this way neither presupposes nor involves any conception of numerically distinct matter. The question we are asking, Anscombe insists, is quite ordinary: 'What is the difference between two individuals of the same specific kind?' Anscombe's similarly unencumbered answer is also quite ordinary: 'It is a difference of matter'. And if someone presses her to further elucidate the notion of material difference she employs, her response will be terse:

if I am asked to explain that, all I can do is, e.g., to cut something up and show you the bits. That is what is called material difference. This is what is meant by calling matter the principle of individuation. To me this truth seems clear and evident.

(Anscombe 1953, 64)

This appeal to material difference involves our ordinary concept of matter which, as we have already discussed, Anscombe grounds in our ordinary observations of change. Nothing else is needed to answer the actual questions of difference we can intelligibly ask about the sensible substances we encounter as we navigate the world.

3 Essence and grammar

We now turn to one of the more surprising elements of Anscombe's interpretation of Aristotle's metaphysics of substance, namely, her contention that, "essence" is not really a notion of Aristotle's, and there is not even any place for it in his thought' (43).³⁰ Anscombe appeals to essence often in her own work. But the philosopher that guides her understanding of essence isn't Aristotle; it is Wittgenstein. The cornerstone of her account is the Wittgensteinian pronouncement: 'Essence is expressed by grammar'.³¹ Nevertheless, in the end, as we will see, Anscombe's conception of essence doesn't stray entirely from what Aristotle says. For though she admits it is '[s]trange to say', she thinks that 'Wittgenstein's conception of the grammatical is far closer to the Platonic-Aristotelian tradition than that of the linguistics which seem to hold field at the present day' (Anscombe 1981c, 201).

We have already encountered Anscombe's invocation of grammar in our earlier discussion of Aristotle's categories. According to Anscombe, a word's grammar is its 'technique of application' (Anscombe 2011b, 132). That is, a word's grammar is reflected in its intelligible uses, especially within the linguistic practice of offering appropriate answers to meaningful questions in which the word figures. The question 'Is it white all over?' is meaningful whereas 'Is it five feet all over?' is nonsensical. Categorical distinctions mark broad but significant differences among the questions we can ask sensibly and Anscombe calls these kinds of differences grammatical.

For Anscombe, the essences of substantial kinds are also to be understood grammatically. 'That essence is expressed in grammar', she says, 'is also fairly clear in most cases of familiar concepts of substances and kinds of stuff. Examples: animal, plant, peacock, man, flea, bougainvillea, banana-tree. Also: acid, wood, metal, milk' (Anscombe 2000, 216–17).

Anscombe develops this connection between grammar and intelligibility as it concerns essences by having us consider a series of 'absurd' questions concerning kinds and stuffs (Anscombe 2005, 28):

Where does this pencil's uncle live?
What is the shape of dust?
What is a rainbow made of?
How many legs has a tree?
Where does a chair feel?
Do bacteria think?

There are several ways to respond to questions like these. One common approach denies that they are absurd; they are intelligible questions with perfectly clear answers. We all know what uncles and legs are. The pencil doesn't have an uncle, so there is nowhere for its uncle to be. Trees have zero legs. But while these answers may seem appropriate to the questions on the page, they would be odd to give as responses to someone actually asking these questions. Why would someone who understands what legs are ask whether trees have some number of them? The answer would be obvious and simple charity suggests that an intelligent questioner isn't seeking an answer they already know.

A better approach is to lean into what we 'may be vaguely assuming', namely, that there are no appropriate answers because the questions 'sin against the grammar of their terms'.³² To sin against grammar is not simply to violate rules that would belong to 'a "formal" science of grammar' (Anscombe 1981c, 201). Formal grammarians, as Anscombe describes them, 'try to characterize as "ungrammatical" various forms of statement, such as "I mean to punish the mountain", or "The mountain devoured the boy" where there is for example an inappropriate object for a verb or the like' (*ibid.*, 203). But they are only 'interested in the structures of language for their own sake' and attempt 'to formulate rules and explanation of [sc., the ways that words occur together], always in terms of purely linguistic structures' (*ibid.*, 202 and 201). But these attempts by formal grammarians to capture what it for a sentence to 'sin against grammar' are 'bound to fail' (*ibid.*, 203). For the method they adopt blinds them to 'the pictoriality of our use of language, the endless possibilities of metaphor and picturesque new applications of words' (*ibid.*, 203).

These aspects of language use allow for a very different kind of response to the series of questions. As Anscombe notes, '[w]e might of course make up meanings' (Anscombe 2005, 28). That is, we can always interpret the questions as comprising terms employed metaphorically. A tree's roots are, in some salient respects, like an animal's legs. So how many legs has a tree? Simply answer by counting its roots. This answer is similar to the answer that Wittgenstein considers in the following passage.

'A new-born child has no teeth.'—'A goose has no teeth.'—'A rose has no teeth.'—This last at any rate—one would like to say—is obviously true! It is even surer than that a goose has none.—And yet it is none so clear. For where should a rose's teeth have been? The goose has none in its jaw. And neither, of course, has it any in its wings; but no one means that when he says it has no teeth.—Why, suppose one were to say: the cow chews its food and then dungs the rose with it, so the rose has teeth in the mouth of a beast. This would not be absurd, because one has no notion in advance where to look for teeth in a rose.

(Wittgenstein 1953, II llxi)

The question ‘Does the rose have teeth?’ can be answered either negatively or positively. One could, as in the first approach described above, respond to the question under the assumption that it uses the term ‘teeth’ in exactly the same way it is commonly used in other questions like ‘Does a newborn child have teeth?’ If so, the answer is obvious: ‘No. The rose has no teeth’. But we could, alternatively, take the use of ‘teeth’ in the question to involve the ‘picturesque new application’ Wittgenstein describes. If so, we ought to give the opposite answer: ‘Yes! The rose has teeth in the mouth of the beast’. In both approaches, the question is perfectly meaningful and intelligible and the answers are appropriate and sensible.

But what, then, is it for the series of purportedly ‘absurd’ questions to ‘sin against the grammar of their terms?’ For there is nothing the formal grammarian has to offer that could explain the notion of grammar supposedly being violated, let alone anything that could determine whether a given sentence is or isn’t absurd or nonsensical.

The relevant understanding of grammar doesn’t arise from the practice of a ‘formal’ science of grammar. The conception we need, Anscombe contends, belongs to a ‘philosophical class of grammatical investigations’; a ‘study of what a given use of words amounts to or achieves or tells us’ (Anscombe 1981c, 202).

Anscombe highlights two impediments to properly understanding both what Wittgenstein and she are up to when they invoke *grammar* and reflecting on the assumptions that lead to these impediments will help elucidate the preceding claims. First, many misunderstand Wittgenstein because they assume that he is using ‘grammar’ in an entirely novel sense and complain that he fails to sufficiently clarify this technical usage. But Anscombe insists that the concept of grammar he employs is ‘being used in its ordinary sense’ (Anscombe 1965, 9).

Wittgenstein is thought to have meant something different by the word ‘grammar’ from what the rest of us mean. He did not; it is only that ‘grammar-school’ grammar is very narrow and thin and doesn’t cover, doesn’t take note of, a lot of differences.

(Anscombe 1993, 210)

We can see what Anscombe means even if we focus, as Anscombe herself does, on an elementary grammatical concept that is familiar to us all, namely, the grammatical concept of a direct object.³³

If one considers the sentence ‘John sent Mary a book’, one will offer the same answer, ‘a book’, to both the question ‘What is the direct object of the sentence’s verb?’ and the question ‘What does the sentence say John sent Mary?’ But this answer, Anscombe argues, can be neither a bit of language nor something a bit of language refers to. The direct object can’t be a bit of language since John did not send Mary a bit of language. And the direct object can’t be what a bit of language refers to since the description, ‘a book’, remains a correct answer to the question ‘What is the verb’s direct object?’ even when the sentence is false or when it is merely made up so as to illustrate a point. So ‘[w]e must conclude of “objects” (direct, indirect and likewise intentional) that the object is neither the phrase nor what the phrase stands for’ (Anscombe 1965, 8).

This invites a natural question: ‘If a direct object is neither a bit of language nor what a bit of language stands for, *what is it?*’ (*ibid.*, 8). Though natural, ‘this question is based on a mistake’. That is,

though the question is answered (like many questions) by uttering a phrase—in this case ‘a book’—the phrase has a special use in answer to that question ‘What does the sentence say John gave?’ It can name neither a piece of language, nor anything the piece of

language names or otherwise relates to, **nor indeed anything else**. The interest of the question and answer is the rather special interest of getting grammatical understanding.
(*ibid.*, 8, *boldface added*)

Direct objects are not a special class or kind of object and to possess the concept of a direct object doesn't involve an ability to pick direct objects out from among the many things that are. In general, grammatical concepts are not referential or classificatory concepts. That is, grammatical concepts don't (purport to) pick out some individual, stuff, property, relation, event, etc. or (purport to) pick out a subset of such things as belonging to a kind or class by virtue of its members' exemplification of some feature or their satisfaction of some criterion.

So 'direct objects as such are not a special type of entity' (*ibid.*, 9). But this is a feature of grammatical concepts generally. So it is true of essence as well. To be an essence is not, according to Anscombe, to exemplify some property or satisfy some criterion that would mark it off or differentiate it from the members of some broader kind. Essences as such are not a special type of entity. Consequently, an essence is not a genus, which is, for Aristotle, a classificatory concept. Nor does essence correspond to any of the other meanings of substance (οὐσία) that Aristotle countenances, viz., matter, form, or the individual composed of matter and form. Essence, as Anscombe understands it, is not something that belongs to any of the categories, including the category substance, but is expressed in the same sort of grammar that makes categorial predication possible. The significance of both the categories and essences does not stem from the contents of sentences or thoughts; it derives from the grammatical structure of language and thought itself.

The second impediment to understanding the relationship between grammar and essence that Anscombe highlights stems from the assumption that grammar is 'an *arbitrary* and superficial invention which we could change at will' (Anscombe 1993, 211). Some essences *are* products of human intelligence. For example, the essences expressed in the grammar of mathematical sentences are, for the most part, the inventions of mathematicians.³⁴ Mathematicians have '*produced grammars* in which essences are expressed' (Anscombe 2005, 32). But this is not so for the essences corresponding to most of our familiar terms.

We can, over time, 'build grammar'.³⁵ And Anscombe says that 'if we change grammar in some ways, we shall change the essences that are expressed in it: I mean that we shall make it express—if it does express anything—different essences' (Anscombe 1993, 210). But language as such is not a human invention. To be human is to already have language; we neither construct its grammar from without nor have complete dominion over its grammar from within. The question 'What produced the genuine essences in the languages of mankind?' is, for Anscombe, equivalent to the question 'What produced language-learning man?'³⁶

Anscombe's answer to these equivalent questions points beyond mankind:

For many people of the present day, this answer will be equivalent to 'Evolution'. But that is only a way of saying 'Well, it happened'. A more rational answer would be 'Intelligence (or intelligences) which make men and other things through the logos of its wisdom.' That logos comprises an infinity of logoi of possible and actual things, and also of *human* inventions.

(*Anscombe 2005*, 33)

On pain of regress, such an intelligence will be of a different kind from that which humans possess. But '[t]he intelligence (or intelligences) must be capable of inventing language even if it is not a language-user as human beings are' (*ibid.*, 35). This presumably 'divine' logos is

the source of ‘the grammars in which the essences of objects are expressed in so many human languages’, languages that are ‘so important a part of the life of mankind’, and ensures that in all such languages, ‘[t]rue objects have essences expressed in the grammars of their names precisely as names of kinds of thing’.³⁷ In this way, Anscombe’s account of essence straddles the line between realism and idealism.³⁸ Essences are real and prior to human intelligence; essences are ideal and posterior to the infinite logoi present in an intelligence whose wisdom transcends our own.

This last argument is underdeveloped in Anscombe’s writings. But it marks one final respect in which her account of essence, though quite different from what we find in Aristotle, nevertheless captures echoes of his thought. For according to Aristotle, the intelligible forms of substances are cognized through our capacity of understanding ($\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$). Nothing that can be understood lies outside its ken; it is, in potentiality, all that can be known. Moreover, the activity of understanding is divine. It is the sole vital activity of Aristotle’s living god. The extent to which we are able to understand the essences that are in principle available to this eternal and divine intelligence is the extent to which we transcend our merely human limits and partake in the divine.³⁹

Notes

- 1 I presented a previous draft of this paper at a graduate seminar at Florida State University. I’d like to thank the participants, especially John Schwenkler, for many helpful comments.
- 2 Anscombe/Geach 1961, 6. Throughout this paper, page numbers in isolation are references to this text.
- 3 Anscombe 1953, 61 and 62. In addition, she says: ‘Certainly I feel only impatient when he considers calling units the matter of numbers. Nor, for instance, can I make anything of such an idea as “place-matter”’ (*ibid.*, 59). She claims also that “‘intelligible matter” is an absurd and useless device’ (*ibid.*, 63).
- 4 Indeed, her chapter on Aristotle in *Three Philosophers* bears the subtitle ‘The Search for Substance’ and the essay focuses overwhelmingly on this topic.
- 5 See Anscombe 1965, 1981c, 2000, 2005, and 2011b for discussions of logic/grammar. See also Acourier 2015 and Frey and Frey 2017 for interpretations of Anscombe that emphasize the importance of logic/grammar’s role in several areas of her philosophy. We will explore what Anscombe means by grammar more thoroughly in §3.
- 6 Anscombe does occasionally offer partial lists of categories that she accepts and these differ significantly from Aristotle’s. One reason for the divergence is that Anscombe, unlike Aristotle, maintains that there are various levels of categorial predication. For categorial ‘division is so generic that it covers an immense variety of diverse structures’ and so ‘there are “categorial” differences’—i.e., ‘more specific patterns’ that are nevertheless ‘somewhat generic’—within the broadest and most generic categories (Anscombe 1981c, 201). So her lists will include grammatical categories such as name and verb (or subject and predicate), proper name, numeral, colour name, psychological verb, etc. (*ibid.*).
- 7 Anscombe captures the common reasoning behind this move:

what can being wax be except: being white and solid at such and such temperatures, melting at such and such temperatures ... etc., etc.? Are not the ideas of kinds of substances given by more or less arbitrary lists chosen from properties found by experience to go together?

(Anscombe 1964, 37)

She notes that in addition to the Lockean position (which we will soon describe) that there is a ‘bare particular’ that underlies these properties, one can, alternatively, take kind terms to be equivalent to such lists and particular instances of a kind to be the totality of its sensible appearances.

8 At 8, Anscombe 1964, 38 and 11, respectively.

9 She provides W. D. Ross as an example of an interpreter who has been compromised in this way, insofar as he says that

Quality no doubt cannot exist without substance. [...] But no more can substance exist without quality. [...] The differentia of any substance is a quality. [...] The substance is the whole thing, including the qualities, relations, etc., which form its essence.

(Ross 1924, Vol. 1 xci).

- 10 Aristotle clearly maintains that 'What is it?' has application across categories:

when a man is set before him and he says that what is set there is a man or an animal, he states what it is and signifies a substance; but when a white color is set before him and he says that what is set there is white or is a color, he states what it is and signifies a quality. [...] Likewise, also, in the other cases.

(*Top.* I.9, 103b29–35).

Nevertheless, he recognizes the special sense of the question that Anscombe highlights: 'We should treat as predicates in what a thing is all such things as it would be appropriate to mention in reply to the question, "What is the object in question?"; as, for example, in the case of man, if asked that question, it is appropriate to say "He is an animal"' (*Top.* I.5, 102a33–35).

- 11 Again, Anscombe attempts to clarify this claim by noting the logical/grammatical differences it involves:

if we ask in virtue of what characteristics these things [sc., men, horses, cabbages, gold, sugar, soap] are substances, as we might ask in virtue of what characteristics apples and pears are both fruits, it becomes clear that the cases are quite different.

(12)

The question of which predications are in the form 'description of the properties of substance' and are thereby *asserted* of a subject and which predications are not in this form and are thereby accidents that *exist in* a subject is 'settled by finding out the real definition of the substantial kind in question' (14). Regarding the former class, she says, 'Whatever differentia is stated in this [sc., real definition] will be predicated in the category substance' (14). Regarding the latter class, she says that that the non-substantial categories are 'different kinds of predicate of a certain very vaguely indicated type—roughly, predicates a change in which is a change in the subject, and the explanation of which does not involve any generalization over other attributes' (18–19).

- 12 Anscombe warns us (correctly) about this largely unavoidable terminology: 'in expounding Aristotle's theory of material substances, we should use the expression 'composed of form and matter' only with the greatest caution, commonplaces of Aristotelian philosophy as such expressions are; for the expression 'composed of' properly relates only to the matter' (49).
- 13 Anscombe 1953, 61. Anscombe is following Aristotle when he says that 'by form I mean substance without matter' (λέγω δὲ οὐσίαν ἄνευ ὕλης τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι, *Metaph.* Z.7, 1032b14) and points to Aristotle's earlier claim that 'by form I mean the essence of each thing and its primary substance' (εἶδος δὲ λέγω τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι ἐκάστου καὶ τὴν πρώτην οὐσίαν, 1032b1–2) to justify her unusual translation of τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι as 'form'. Anscombe frames W. D. Ross as someone 'for whom matter is most difficult' because he adopts the opposite orientation wherein the concept of matter 'is a concept reached by mentally stripping away all forms until you get to a characterless substrate' (Anscombe 1953, 61).
- 14 At 53 and Anscombe 1953, 58, respectively. In support, Anscombe cites Aristotle's declaration that 'In a way, matter is obvious, but [...] form] is frightfully difficult' (*Metaph.* Z.3, 1029a32–3).
- 15 If this is correct, then our ordinary concept of matter is tied to the concept of a closed system. In thermodynamics, a closed system refers to any system in which energy can be exchanged with what is outside the system, but matter cannot. Perhaps the concept of a closed system associated with the concept of matter is not so precise that it can be distinguished from that of an isolated system, namely, any system in which neither energy nor matter can be exchanged with what is outside the system. Anscombe's claim that our concept of matter 'is necessarily based [...] on our having the idea of 'nothing added and nothing taken away', doesn't decide between the two (Anscombe 1953, 58).
- 16 Cf. *Phys.* I.4, 188a15–16.
- 17 Cf. 'the form can be spoken of, and anything can be spoken of *qua* having a form, but the material aspect as such, never' (*Metaph.* Z.10, 1035a7–9). As Anscombe interprets him, Aristotle is saying that there 'is no answer to the question what this material aspect is; for you say what something

is precisely by giving its form' (53). That is, if you call something's material aspect 'water', you are speaking of 'matter already in the form of [water]' (53) and, in the case of substantial changes among simple bodies, the matter 'is not in itself intelligible, but has to be understood as what is capable of this change; for there is nothing to it but the capacity of being now of this, now of that substantial kind' (52–53).

- 18 Anscombe elucidates this conception of proximate matter with a more familiar example: 'the bronze of the statue, which is actualized in respect of shape by the shape that makes it into this statue, is already actual in respect of other properties—e.g. those that make it to be bronze' (53). She goes on to note:

That is not to say that the *concept* of matter is an unintelligible one; on the contrary it is, Aristotle says, clear or obvious; the *concept* of form is far more difficult to understand. But the material aspect of a thing cannot be spoken of at all without characterizing it somehow—e.g. we can speak of the matter of a statue because it is bronze, i.e. matter already in the form of bronze.

(53)

- 19 Anscombe 1953, 59; cf. *Metaph. Z.3*, 1029a26–30.
20 Anscombe 1953, 59. Anscombe's claim that a substance's matter is a this (τόδε) is controversial insofar as Aristotle seems to deny it this status explicitly at *DA II.2*, 412a7 and *Metaph. H.1*, 1042a27.
21 Anscombe 1953, 49 and 64, respectively. Cf. *Metaph. Z.17*, 1041a34–b34.
22 Anscombe remarks that 'Aristotle compares the form to, say, the mile that we speak of when we say "this mile of river", into which and out of which different water is constantly flowing' and while 'we mark "this mile of river" by landmarks, as water does not change on entering and leaving it' the matter that enters a living organism (viz. what begins as food) does change substantially upon doing so, an organism's 'form (the flesh and bone of a living man, to put it roughly) does the marking off; and corresponds to the mile of river' (Anscombe 1953, 65).
23 Charlton interprets this passage as providing an answer to an epistemological question. On his interpretation, Aristotle is describing the marks by which we properly distinguish one man from another (Charlton 1972, 244–5). But the passage is typically interpreted with Anscombe as an answer to the metaphysical question presently under consideration.
24 This is, for example, the interpretation defended by Aquinas and Avicenna. Notable among the many contemporary defenses of this position are Lloyd 1970, Furth 1978, Loux 1991, and Scaltsas 1994.
25 Cf. *Metaph. I.2*, 1053b27–1054a18. Peterson 2007 contains a very clear discussion of these Aristotelian commitments.
26 Jennifer Whiting expresses this tension well:

This priority of unity threatens the view that matter is *the* principle of individuation; if form is the principle of unity, and if individuation presupposes unity, then individuation presuppose form. This suggests that only informed matter can individuate and thus that form is at least a necessary condition for individuation.

(Whiting 1986, 362)

- 27 Cf. *DA I.3*, 407b23–4, *DA II.1*, 412a8–9, *Metaph. Z.17*, 1041b7–8, *Metaph. H.1*, 1042a26–30, and *Metaph. Λ.3*, 1071a18–29. Prominent discussions and defenses of individual forms and their role as a principle of individuation include Frede and Patzig 1988, Whiting 1986, and Witt 1989.
28 Both Regis 1976 and Peterson 2017 defend the view that numerical difference among conspecifics is explanatorily primitive.
29 This belongs to a general scepticism Anscombe harbors towards questions of identity concerning matter:

If, that is, a given bit of matter is mixed and fused with, or absorbed by, another mass of matter, must we *a priori* suppose it to consist of particles retaining their identity? Aristotle's view of matter is a rejection and criticism of any such belief. [...] Suppose I throw a cupful of milk into the sea. It is no longer this milk, and if I ask where and what the stuff that I threw into the sea is, there is no need for there to be an answer beyond that it became a part of the sea, [...] no one wishes to say that the stuff itself has been destroyed.

(Anscombe 1953, 60)

- 30 She does discuss the two expressions Aristotle employs that are most commonly translated as 'essence', namely, τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι (the 'what it is to be that' of a thing) and τὸ τί ἐστὶ (what something is). But neither expression, Anscombe contends, corresponds to what we mean by 'essence'. This disconnect is due in part to the narrowly modal account of essence that was widely accepted at the time Anscombe was writing. For most of her contemporaries, the 'essence of a thing would seem to be constituted by any characteristics that it necessarily has' (34–35). But this couldn't capture Aristotle's view given that he countenances what came to be known as *propria*: necessary, convertible, non-accidental predicates of a thing or kind that nevertheless fail to belong to its definition. The modal account of essence wasn't dislodged until the mid-1990s with Kit Fine's influential essay 'Essence and Modality' (Fine 1994). But even if we adopt an analysis of essence that jettisons the centrality of necessity, Anscombe still wouldn't recognize its presence in Aristotle's work. She claims that essences are what we express by 'abstract nouns (e.g., "caninity") corresponding to substantial predicates' and

[s]uch formations do not occur in Aristotle, who has simply 'form', 'matter' and 'substance' which last may be understood as matter, as form, as genus, or as the individual composed of matter and form, and no notion of 'essence' or 'nature', which is a kind of universal *man* or *humanity*.

(43)

- Anscombe does note, however, that the concept of essence 'was developed in later Aristotelian philosophy, which distinguished between "essence" and "form"' (43).
- 31 Wittgenstein 1953, §371. Cf. 'Grammar tells us what kind of object anything is. (Theology as grammar.)' (*ibid.*, §373).
- 32 *Ibid.*, 28. This vague assumption is, I presume, what Ofra Magidor points to when she says that some sentences 'resemble each other by exhibiting a very similar phenomenology of infelicity' and 'it is precisely this distinctive phenomenology' that we use to characterize them as category mistakes (Magidor 2013, 2).
- 33 I discuss the grammatical concept of a direct object more thoroughly in Frey and Frey 2017, 219–21. Another worthwhile discussion of Anscombe on direct objects is Teichmann 2008, 129–37.
- 34 Cf. Wittgenstein 1956, Part I §32. This also occurs occasionally outside mathematics: 'In natural philosophy (which we nowadays call "science") there is *sometimes* a production of essences, like, for example, the essence expressed in the grammar of the term "element"' (Anscombe 1993, 211).
- 35 Anscombe remarks that 'the first formulator of the geometrical notion of a square was presumably extending and adding to a grammar already in use. It is a curious thing that people can build grammar without knowing what they are doing' (Anscombe 2000, 218).
- 36 Cf. Anscombe 2005, 34.
- 37 *Ibid.*, 34.
- 38 She says, 'It is a queer fact about philosophy that it so often seems to hold a gun to our heads and say: "Come now! Idealist or Realist? Which are you?" Why should one not be partly one, partly the other?' (*ibid.*, 33).
- 39 Cf. *DA* III.4, 429a18, *DA* III.8, 431b21, *PA* I.1, 641a32–b4, *Metaph.* Λ.7, *Metaph.* Λ.9, and *EN* X.7, 1177b27–1178a8.

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