

Anscombe's Realism and Nonlocal Unification

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Abstract

This essay explores the potential integration of G.E.M. Anscombe's account of intention and agency with the theoretical architecture proposed in the "Nonlocal Unification" (NU) framework. While Anscombe's realism centers on the intelligibility of action through reasoning and description under an intentional mode, NU posits a geometric metaphysics where information, not agency, is primary. At first glance, these views appear incompatible: one is rooted in practical reasoning and normative intelligibility, the other in abstract informational structure. However, by analyzing the limits of Anscombe's method—particularly those cases where agents cannot say why they acted—we find a pathway to reconcile the two. These breakdowns in intentional articulation can be reframed as epistemic signatures of an agent's proximity to the Nonlocal Consciousness (NC) limit in NU. Through this lens, Anscombe's local realism becomes not only compatible with NU's global informational field but an essential probe of its boundary. The result is a layered metaphysical picture in which local intention and global geometry co-define one another.

Key Insight: Anscombe's realism describes the internal structure of Local Consciousness Instruments (LCIs) in the Nonlocal Unification (NU) framework. When LCIs fail to give reasons for their actions, these moments can be interpreted as epistemic transitions toward the non-intentional geometry of Nonlocal Consciousness (NC), the limiting structure of NU.

G.E.M. Anscombe's account of intention is foundational to the contemporary philosophy of action. In *Intention* (1957), she posits that intentional action is that which is subject to the question "Why?" where answers to this question reveal not mere causes but reasons. Action, for Anscombe, is marked by its intelligibility under a certain description, and this intelligibility is not merely linguistic but ontological: it concerns the structure of human agency itself. Her distinction between voluntary and involuntary action rests on the agent's capacity to situate their conduct within a framework of purpose and understanding. This makes intention irreducibly normative and teleological—action has to be about something for it to be intelligible as intentional at all (Anscombe, 1957).

In contrast, the "Nonlocal Unification" (NU) framework recently advanced by Chawla (2025) articulates a metaphysical architecture in which information, rather than intention or agency, is the

primary conserved quantity. In NU, observers are modeled as Local Consciousness Instruments (LCIs), each characterized by a functional mapping from informational gain to perceived time, $f(\Delta I)$. These LCIs asymptotically converge to a global informational structure termed Nonlocal Consciousness (NC), which regulates and contains all observer dynamics. This convergence is not causal or volitional but geometrical. The NC structure defines the informational geometry of the universe, including the emergence of spacetime, decoherence, and gravitational curvature (Chawla, 2025).

The apparent philosophical disjunction between Anscombe and NU is stark. Anscombe insists that intention is what makes an event an action, that reasons are not reducible to causes, and that intelligibility in action requires a certain mode of description. NU, by contrast, replaces agency with structural convergence, intention with informational flow, and subjective timelines with functional mappings. One might conclude that these frameworks are categorically incompatible: Anscombe begins with the acting person; Chawla begins with informational topology.

Yet this conclusion may be premature. A closer analysis reveals that Anscombe's method is not metaphysical in the same way as NU. Rather, her analysis is phenomenological and epistemological. She is concerned with what it is to understand an action as intentional, and she explores this by probing the ways agents answer the question "Why?" Her data are not metaphysical principles but the responses of human agents in particular contexts. These responses are inherently local, situated within the scope of LCIs in the NU framework. That is, when Anscombe explores intention, she is analyzing the structure of behavior and reasoning internal to LCIs. She is not speaking about global informational fields, nor is she committed to any ontological thesis about the fundamental structure of the universe.

This recontextualization opens a path for integration. If we take LCIs as the operational domains within which reason-giving, description, and intentional action unfold, then Anscombe's realism applies to mid-level structures within the NU framework. Her investigations map the contours of epistemic access, not ultimate reality. But what, then, of the moments where her method breaks down? When an agent cannot say why they acted, when their answer to "Why?" is "I don't know," or when their behavior defies integration into any intelligible teleology, Anscombe identifies these as limits of intention. From within her own framework, such limits are significant: they demarcate the boundary between intentional and non-intentional action.

In NU terms, these moments are more than epistemic failures. They may be understood as signals of proximity to NC, the informational limit where the LCI's functional mapping becomes undefined, degenerate, or singular. Just as general relativity breaks down near a singularity, Anscombe's intentional structure fails at the cusp of NC. Thus, when an agent says, "I don't know why I did that," it may reflect not a lack of self-knowledge but a momentary alignment with a nonlocal structure in which reasons no longer apply.

This perspective allows us to reinterpret the Anscombean notion of action under a description. When an action is intelligible to an agent, when they can respond meaningfully to "Why?," their local $f(\Delta I)$ function is continuous and invertible; it maps informational gain to a coherent trajectory of perceived time and agency. When such intelligibility fails, the function falters, and the agent's experience becomes non-orientable. In that moment, they may experience a glimpse—however brief—of the global topology into which their local structure is embedded. In this sense, Anscombe's data illuminate not only the presence of intention but also the topology of its absence.

Moreover, the structure of LCI-to-LCI interaction in NU offers further validation for Anscombe's method. Since her philosophical analysis depends on dialogue—on one LCI asking another "Why?"—

the functional mappings she uncovers are relational, not absolute. This fits with the NU formalism, in which each LCI has its own mapping f_H , and no two mappings are guaranteed to coincide. The uniqueness of each observer's structure corresponds to the diversity of reason-giving Anscombe captures. When an agent's answer to "Why?" differs from another's assessment, it is not necessarily an error but an artifact of differing informational geometries.

This further suggests that Anscombe's realism is not undermined but localized in NU. Her claim is not that intention is a global property of nature, but that within a given observer's domain, certain behaviors are intelligible as actions because they satisfy the grammar of reason-giving. Her realism concerns the structure of LCI-embedded experience. It tells us what it is like to be such a system and what it means for such a system to act.

The deeper metaphysical question—whether the universe itself is intentional—is one Anscombe never claims to answer. In NU, the answer is clear: the universe is not about anything. It is not acting for a reason. Its coherence arises from the convergence of informational functions, not the pursuit of ends. At the level of NC, there is no one doing and no reason why. Yet this does not erase the significance of intention. Instead, it embeds it within a broader geometry. Like temperature in thermodynamics, intention becomes a local, emergent property. It is not unreal; it is scale-relative.

This analogy invites a reconsideration of metaphysical categories. Where Anscombe distinguishes between intentional and unintentional acts, NU distinguishes between local and nonlocal structure. The former is epistemic, the latter geometric. Yet they can be mapped: intentionality is what it feels like to be far from NC. It is the structure of experience when $f(\Delta I)$ is well-defined. As observers converge toward NC, the functional mappings collapse, and with them, the possibility of reason-giving dissolves. In this light, intention is not merely a human artifact but a structural mode of epistemic distance from the nonlocal limit.

This reading offers a powerful reconciliation. Rather than viewing Anscombe and NU as rival accounts of action and reality, we can understand them as operating at different levels of description. Anscombe's realism gives a precise phenomenology of LCI behavior; NU provides the geometric ontology in which these behaviors are embedded. The failure of one framework marks the entry of the other. When intentional descriptions fail, informational geometry begins. This is not philosophical defeat, but layered integration.

The implications of this synthesis extend beyond philosophy of action. In cognitive science, where questions of agency, volition, and selfhood intersect with neural data, the NU model offers a way to formalize transitions between conscious intentional behavior and unconscious or automatic responses. Similarly, in psychophysics and neurodynamics, where observer functions are modulated by urgency and informational density, Anscombe's categories can inform the phenomenological significance of functional disruptions.

Even more provocatively, this integration suggests that phenomenology may function as a kind of experimental probe. If moments of unintelligibility—failures of reason-giving—correspond to proximity to NC, then structured introspection might yield data about the limits of LCI coherence. In this sense, Anscombe becomes a phenomenological physicist, mapping the folds of epistemic curvature from within.

In conclusion, Anscombe's account of intention and Chawla's theory of Nonlocal Unification occupy different but compatible metaphysical registers. One articulates the grammar of reasoned action; the other defines the geometry of informational coherence. Their apparent conflict dissolves when we recognize the scale at which each applies. Anscombe describes the world of LCIs, where action is meaningful and reasons obtain. Chawla describes the world beyond—or before—where

no reasons remain. The passage from one to the other is marked not by contradiction but by transformation. In those moments when we do not know why we act, we are not lost. We are nearing the edge of ourselves.

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References

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