

# Review of deRosset's "Grounding Explanations"<sup>1</sup>

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## 1 Abstract

Grounding assumed to be a relation which can show the relation between entities of different layers of reality. deRosset claims that grounding would face collapse if we accept the accounts of Link and CORR which he introduces in his paper. It means that there would be only one layer of entities in reality. After justifying this argument by delving into the definitions of CORR and LINK, he shows that we have to introduce a ground for grounding facts to meet the collapse challenge. He chooses the right side relata in the grounding relations to do this task. It means, if a grounds b, he claims that a grounds (a grounds b). In this paper, I will examine the plausibility of the collapse problem by pointing to some challenges that LINK and CORR have. After addressing some difficulties which those two accounts face, I will elaborate on deRosset's answer to the meta-ground question and address some of the problems his view is facing. By doing this, I will introduce Dasgupta's answer to the meta-ground question with which both an Irrealist about grounding and a realist agree. Doing this will show how deRosset is committed to numerous assumptions which have restricted the neutrality of his grounding account regarding several views, namely irrealism, metaphysical coherentism, trialism and trialism\*.

Keywords: Meta-ground, Grounding Irrealism, Metaphysical Coherentism, Trialism, Collapse problem

## 2 What is the Meta-Ground Question (MGQ)?

### 2.1 What is Grounding

Recently there are a plethora of papers publishing around the subject of grounding. Philosophers characterize grounding by using various terms, such as a non-causal dependence, an "in virtue of" relation, and non-causal priority relation. They claim that a fact or entity is prior to another entity or fact regarding the layers of reality. Grounding

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<sup>1</sup> (deRosset, 2013)

is a relation which we can use to show the structure of reality. Grounding reveals that reality comes in layers. By showing what grounds what, we can show that what entity is more basic and relates to a more fundamental layer of reality. The adherent of grounding, refer to some instances of grounding talk that we use in our ordinary conversations. To address a few, when we say that roses are red in virtue of being violet, or when we say the mental facts obtain in virtue of physical facts, etc.

I should mention that considering grounding, philosophers divide into three distinct groups. Some think we should dismiss discussing it due to being unreal or esoteric.<sup>2</sup> They are called skeptics about grounding. They think we have enough notions in metaphysics for us to do the job, hence talking about grounding would help no one.<sup>3</sup>

The second group, on the contrary, think it is one of the most important notions in contemporary metaphysics which we can trace it back to Aristotle, Plato, Leibniz, Bolzano, etc.<sup>4</sup> They are called realists about grounding. Giving an example of this view, Schaffer<sup>5</sup>, claims that the answer to the question that "what there is?" would be everything. It means that if we ask "do numbers exist?" Or "do tables exist?" Our answer to both of them would be the same, which is a simple yes. So, in metaphysics, instead of questioning what there is<sup>6</sup>, we should ask about what grounds what.

The last group, agree with skeptics objections to grounding, but they still defend the usefulness of this notion; accordingly, they claim that grounding notion is unreal yet the propositions about grounding can be true or false. Their view is analogous to antirealists about the metaphysics who claim the same about metaphysics. This position is called irrealism about grounding. For example, in this view, we can say that according to the fiction of grounding, the proposition that "a grounds b" is true.

### 2.2.1 What is MGQ?

Grounding relations are facts. So, when I say grounding fact I mean the fact that is about a grounding relation which is obtained. The Meta-Ground Question (MGQ) is the question that asks what, if anything, grounds the grounding facts? Some can answer this question by saying that these facts do not have any further grounds; however, as deRosset, as well as Sider, points out, this assumption will lead us to a problem which he calls collapse. He introduces an account that links different entities by grounding notion and another account for relating grounding with fundamentality. I will discuss these two

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<sup>2</sup> (Hofweber, 2009)

<sup>3</sup> Wilson (Wilson J. , 2014), make a distinction between small-g grounding relations and big-G grounding relations. She says that small-g relations are the familiar ones, such as supervenience, reduction, etc. she claims further that big-G relations have no use in metaphysics and she prefer to reject them.

<sup>4</sup> You can read the history of grounding in Metaphysical grounding (Correia & Schnieder, 2012)

<sup>5</sup> (Schaffer J. , 2009)

<sup>6</sup> Schaffer's solution is a response to the Quine's view of metaphysics in "on what there is" (Quine, 1948)

accounts in the following sections. Then he concludes that if we accept there is the lowest level in the layers of reality in which the entities have no further grounds, by the plausibility of these accounts, we will face collapse problem and all the entities would go into this layer. He calls this layer the fundamental layer. Therefore, there would be only one layer regarding the entities, and we cannot talk about different layers of entities by using the grounding talk. Therefore, grounding entities should reduce to only facts. He finds this view incorrect and proceeds to give an account for the grounds of grounding facts to avoid this collapse. His collapse argument goes like this:

### **Collapse argument**

- 1- LINK and CORR, which I will introduce later, are true ( he even agrees to a weaker claim that LINK or CORR is true)
- 2- Grounding facts are ungrounded
- 3- The entities, in reality, consists *only* of ungrounded entities plus grounded entities.
- 4- By definition, Grounding facts are explanations of a relation between one grounded entities to another grounded entity, or one grounded entity to an ungrounded entity.
- 5- There are some entities in reality which are grounded. (entities are layered)
- 6- 4 implies that grounded entities have a feature which is a grounding fact explaining their relation to a grounded or ungrounded entity.
- 7- 1&2&6 implies that grounded entities are ungrounded.
- 8- 3&7 implies that all the entities are ungrounded which leads to a collapse ( there is only one layer for all of the entities)
- 9- 5 and 8 contradict each other

Therefore, **2 is false** because he thinks 1,3,4 and 5 are plausible.

By this conclusion, he goes on to search for the ground of the grounding facts. He states that if a grounds b. Then the ground for that grounding fact would be the ground entity, namely a. So, the answer to MGQ would be like this: a grounds (a grounds b).

Although I agree with this conclusion, two being false, for some other reasons which I will discuss later, I find 1 and 3 questionable. In the following section, firstly, I will give some definitions which are shared between adherents of grounding, most of which assumed by deRosset. In the next section, I will point to the LINK and CORR and show the challenges these two accounts are facing. In addition, I point to the unsubstantiated presupposed view that premise three has. I think a new formulation of trialism should be considered for weakening number 3. This account would be a better solution, especially if we consider an Irrealist point of view. Then, in the next section, I will discuss deRosset's answer to the MGQ and some of the objections it faces, both by me and by Dasgupta's answer to MGQ.

### 3 Definitions and Preliminaries

Grounding, mostly, assumed to be asymmetrical, transitive and irreflexive although these views have their critics.<sup>7</sup> By asymmetry, we mean that if a grounds b, then it is not possible that b grounds a. By transitivity, we mean that if a grounds b, and b grounds c, then a grounds c. Irreflexivity means that it is not possible for a to ground itself. These features will give the proponents of this view the tool by which they can talk about a linear structure of reality. This structure is like a tree in graph theory, which has a root, in this case, a fundamental basis, from which other points will be generated. This view is called metaphysical foundationalism, who thinks that reality has a bottom layer. On the other hand, there is metaphysical coherentism in which we have a cohere structure. In this view, the grounding features are different from a linear one. Grounding there is non-asymmetrical, non- transitive and non-irreflexive. The critical character of grounding is its role in the explanation, and it can explain what obtains " in virtue of" what? It is not the case that this structure cannot be transitive or asymmetric in none of its parts; there is still some grounding relations in which we have these features. Talking about this structure is not the focus of this paper, so I will not proceed further.

I mentioned a fundamental basis in the last paragraph. An adherent of grounding, usually, defines fundamentality and derivativeness with the help of grounding. Schaffer<sup>8</sup>, and also deRosset, state it like this:

<b>Fundamentality</b>	a fact/entity is fundamental if it is ungrounded
<b>Derivativeness</b>	Something is derivative if it is not fundamental

Usually, there are two kinds of fundamentality which we talk about. The one mentioned above is absolute fundamentality, and the other is relative fundamentality. When we say that something is more fundamental than something else, we are using this notion. So, by the use of grounding, we can say that if a is grounded in b, then b is more fundamental than a.<sup>9</sup> it means that it is in a more fundamental layer of the reality. Metaphorically, an entity is more fundamental than the other if it is closer to the root of the tree of the layers of reality.

The answer deRosset gives to the MGQ has one other assumption which is shared with the most proponents of grounding. That is the feature of upward necessitation (UN). It says that if a grounds b, then necessarily if a exists, b exists. As deRosset puts it:

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<sup>7</sup> For reading about grounding being symmetrical read (Barnes, 2018), and for it being reflexive see (Jenkins, 2011)

<sup>8</sup> (Schaffer J. , 2009)

<sup>9</sup> Bennet (Bennet, 2017) discusses absolute and relative fundamentality in more details.

**UN** if a grounds b then,  $\Box (a \rightarrow b)$

On the other hand, I should mention that some philosophers disagree with the view that there is a necessitation implied by grounding. Trogdon, in her paper, points to a few.<sup>10</sup>

The last assumption in his paper is the presupposition of the truth of realism about grounding. When the grounding talk started, there were only two camps. The first one is realism about grounding in which they defend the worth of this notion in metaphysics. The others are skeptics about grounding they argue against talk of grounding. However, recently, there is another camp introduced by Thompson<sup>11</sup>, namely irrealism about grounding in which they agree with some challenges that skeptics point to regarding grounding, but they still argue for grounding due to the benefit of the usage of it in philosophy. So, they see grounding as an anti-realist, such as fictionalism about some notions. In this view, when we address a proposition in which we talk about grounding, we are addressing the fiction of grounding; therefore, our propositions can be true or false but fictionally or irrealistically. deRosset's answer to MGQ assumes a realist point of view without considering possible irrealistic answers to MGQ or its objections to his account. Although in this paper, I do not argue for irrealism specifically, I will address some challenges to deRosset's view or some answers that an irrealist can say about MGQ.

Now that we established some definitions, I will proceed to the next section in which I introduce deRosset's LINK and CORR and examine the plausibility of them.

#### **4 LINK and CORR and Their plausibility**

Some adherents of grounding agree on the relation of grounding relations to only be the facts; however, some others, think that we can talk about grounding relations between other entities too. deRosset agrees with the latter. So, in the first part of his paper, he introduces an account by which he links different entities by using grounding. He calls this account LINK, and he formulates it like this:

**LINK**  $e_1, \dots, e_n$  are the entities that ground entity  $e$  only if  $e$ 's existence and features are all explicable solely by reference to the existence and features of  $e_1, \dots, e_n$ .<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> (Trogdon, 2013)

<sup>11</sup> (Thompson N. , 2018)

<sup>12</sup> (deRosset, 2013, pp. 6-7)

He claims that this account is analogous to Schaffer's view about the grounding relations between facts. In that account, a fact is grounded in some other fact if its existence and its features depend on that fact.<sup>13</sup>

After giving this account, he introduces another account, CORR by which he shows how an entity could be fundamental, given the ungroundedness of possession of its features and its existence. Here is how CORR goes:

**CORR**            An entity *e* is fundamental if *e*'s existence or its possession of some feature is fundamental.

deRosset claims that CORR is plausible for two reasons. Firstly, LINK implies CORR. Secondly, even without accepting LINK, CORR is still intuitively plausible. By mentioning these two accounts, he goes on to justify them by answering various objections available to them. Then, when he shows the truth of CORR and LINK, he claims that accepting them will lead to a collapse if we believe the grounding facts to be fundamental. His argument is like this:

D1	Beijing is a city;
D2	Beijing is derivative;
FUND	Grounding facts are fundamental;
FACTS	Beijing is derivative only if no fact involving Beijing is fundamental.

D1 and D2 are our data and assumed to be true. Since Beijing is derivative, there is a grounding relation between Beijing and a fundamental entity. Therefore, there is a grounding fact involving Beijing. Now since FUND states that grounding facts are fundamental, there is a fact involving Beijing, which is fundamental. So, applying FACTS imply that Beijing is fundamental, which is contradictory to D2. Because we accepted D1 and D2 to be true, we must dismiss FUND or FACTS. Then, he argues for the plausibility of FACTS due to being contrapositive of CORR.<sup>14</sup> Accordingly, he rejects FUND and introduces a ground for grounding facts. You have seen an analogous of this argument in the collapse argument in section two of this paper.

Firstly, in this part of the section, I want to show that LINK faces some challenges. After that, I will mention that CORR alone is not intuitively plausible. Then I will show that even if we suppose the truth of LINK, it cannot imply CORR. In the next part, I will show that FACTS is not contrapositive of CORR due to the falsity of premise number three in the collapse argument mentioned in section two. Finally, I will argue that, by showing

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<sup>13</sup> (Schaffer J. , The Internal Relatedness of All Things, 2010, p. 345)

<sup>14</sup> (deRosset, 2013, p. 15)

these flaws, it does not follow that we should accept FUND and there are still other reasons for finding the grounds of grounding relations.

Regarding LINK, we *only* have two options for an entity to be grounded in another entity. Either its existence being explained by another entity or its features can be explained by that entity. As it is already accepted, some entities are multiply realizable. It means that they can have different grounds. So, given the set of the totality of realizers of *e*, *e* can be grounded in *b* while it can also be grounded in *c*. Therefore, although *e* is *completely*<sup>15</sup> grounded in *b*, it is not solely grounded in *b*. Some may say we can dismiss this challenge just by substituting “solely” with “completely” in LINK, and we would not face any further problems by doing so; however, the multiple realizability being granted, we have copious features for *e*, which are not explained by any other entities, such as the fact that *e* is fundamental at *w*<sub>1</sub>. The only possible way to escape this problem is by accepting monism, a view in which we accept a whole as the ground of its parts, and say that *e* is grounded in *w*<sub>1</sub> or grounded in the set of all its possible worlds. In this case, this feature can be explained by *e*’s ground.

Nevertheless, we want our theory of grounding about entities to be neutral regarding various options of which an entity is fundamental and accepting monism is a major assumption we do not want to have.

deRosset, himself, point to another objection for LINK. He states that all of an entity’s features do not need to be explained for that entity to be a grounded one; instead, we can say that if some other entities can explain the intrinsic features of an entity, then it is grounded. Therefore, the LINK would be like this:

**LINK\*** *e*<sub>1</sub>,...,*e*<sub>n</sub> are the entities that ground *e* only if *e*’s existence and *intrinsic* features are explicable by reference to those entities

Then, he answers this objection by pointing out some challenges it has. He claims that one of the areas for which grounding should be beneficial, or at least neutral, is characterizing physicalism, but if we use LINK\* for this purpose, we would have some non-intrinsic features, for mental properties, that we cannot explain. So, by accepting LINK\*, we should reject physicalism which is a big move that should not be done just by introducing grounding. He gives the example of a pain having behavioral effects for this claim. Here is how the argument goes:

- 1- physicalism is true: it says all the facts are grounded in facts about physical entities
- 2- By the application of LINK\*, pain is grounded in facts about physical objects due to its intrinsic features getting explained by them

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<sup>15</sup> Or as Fine puts it, *e* is fully grounded by *b*. (Fine, Guide to Ground, 2012)

- 3- pain has some extrinsic feature, like behavioral effects
- 4- 2 implies that pain's extrinsic features are not grounded in physical facts
- 5- 4 & 3 imply physicalism is false
- 6- 5 & 1 are contradictory

Therefore, 2 is false. More specifically, LINK\* is false. Due to 1 and 3 being plausible.

deRosset's assumes grounding to be an explanatory relation, and the LINK account has this assumption. So, this argument works if we bound grounding and explanation together; however, we can have the opposite view that grounding backs explanation. By this I mean if a grounds b, then a explains b, but if a explains b, it does not mean that necessarily a grounds b. In this example, By the help of LINK\*, we should characterize the grounds of pain. Then, we know that the effects are happening in virtue of the grounds of pain. The conditionals are like this:

- a- If the intrinsic features of e are explicable by z, then e is grounded in z
- b- If e is grounded in z, then its extrinsic features are explicable by z

Philosophers who agree with the view that grounding backs explanation can agree with a & b, but reject this:

- c- If the extrinsic features of e are explainable by z, then e is grounded in z

Now in the case in which pain causes some effects, which are its extrinsic features, by using a, we can say pain is grounded in the physical entities and by using b we can say those entities are the grounds of the behaviors and can explain them. So, by using a, b and c, we can still have LINK\* and explain the physicalism without any hesitation. However, it would be a different view from what deRosset is a proponent of, and if we want to reject his rejection of LINK\*, we should show why grounding and explanation are not bound together which is not our purpose in this paper. Additional point worth mentioning regards to his physicalism example is that it is a causation example, and most people do not accept causation as a grounding relation. Henceforth, the physical effects of pain should be explained by their cause and not their grounds. So, we still would have explanations for 3, and we should not consider this example for rejecting LINK\*.

Speaking of causation, I should point that LINK would open the plausibility of causation being a grounding relation. When we consider being explainable by other entities, we can say that an entity which is caused by another event and object, can be explained by those. Imagine that a *causes* b to exist. By application of LINK, b is grounded in a because its existence is solely explainable by a. Since philosophers take grounding to be



a non-causal relation, counting causation as a grounding relation would be a strong claim that deRosset has to justify.

Additionally, let us take the contrapositive of LINK:

**CONT LINK** if it is not the case that  $e$  is grounded in  $e_1, \dots, e_n$ , then  $e$ 's existence and its features are not explained by  $e_1, \dots, e_n$ .

Let us suppose two fundamental entities, namely  $p$  and  $q$ , which dependently coexist. So, we would have two fundamental entities which are not grounded in each other, but their existence is explainable by each other. This example is contradictory to CONT LINK. On the other hand, deRosset will not accept this objection for two reasons. Firstly, it assumes the separation of explanation and grounding. Secondly, it is rejecting the asymmetry of grounding. I agree with his first reason, and, as I mentioned before, by using this rejection, we should firstly reject the unity of grounding and explanation assumed by deRosset.

Nevertheless, I should reply to the second one that grounding can be a relation which is not an existential dependence because we can find some examples of symmetrical dependence between entities. Although I do not want to argue for a distinction between dependence and grounding in here, I point to this objection to show another assumption that deRosset's account has. Barnes delves into the symmetric dependence issue with more details.<sup>16</sup> Then again, even if we say that grounding is dependence, we can be a coherentist about the structure of reality and state that grounding is non-asymmetrical; therefore, the LINK is incorrect. Accordingly, want we LINK to be correct, we should see deRosset account as an adherent of the linear structure of reality.

Now we are going to examine CORR. Firstly, deRosset claims CORR to be intuitively correct by stating that:

"CORR says that, if one were to detail all and only the fundamental facts, then one would mention only fundamental entities: derivative entities are not part of the fundamental story of the world." <sup>17</sup>

As deRosset argues himself, the collapse problem is analogous to the Sider's argument when he mentions the principle of purity.<sup>18</sup> Bennet, in "*Making Things Up*", objects to that principle which I think we can use the same argument for the CORR too. CORR is question-begging. The collapse assumes grounding facts not being fundamental due to the fact that grounding facts have a derivative entity in them. Instead of using CORR as a justified assumption, we can assume that grounding facts are fundamental but with a

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<sup>16</sup> (Barnes, 2018)

<sup>17</sup> (deRosset, 2013, p. 8)

<sup>18</sup> (Sider, 2011)

different characterization, like how trialists characterize them, and I will give their accounts in the following paragraphs.

We should be noticed that deRosset gives another justification for the CORR by saying that LINK implies CORR. As we have seen, deRosset introduces derivativeness as the negation of fundamentality and divides entities into those categories. Then uses a reductio ad absurdum to show how LINK implies CORR. For objecting LINK implying CORR, I should define trialism about grounding. It shows how CORR have the assumptions mentioned above. Trialists divide fundamental entities into two further categories, namely basic entities and grounding entities. So, we cannot ask about the grounds of grounding facts, and these facts with basic entities build the derivative facts. In the last part of his paper, deRosset introduces the answer of the adherents of trialism to MGQ. He rejects it by giving some arguments and state that the only possible answer to his objections is by trialists responding that their view is only a theoretical move to solve the MGQ, but he claims that they are treating some facts, namely grounding facts, differently which is not necessary because the MGQ can be solved without it. I will show that trialism is not just for resolving MGQ and a refined version of it, namely trialism<sup>\*</sup>, is plausible by itself. By doing so, I will show further that LINK implying CORR rests on an unjustified assumption of rejecting trialism<sup>\*</sup>.

deRosset's reductio goes like this: "Suppose that e's existence or its possession of some feature is fundamental. Assume for reductio that e is derivative, and so grounded in other entities. If e is grounded, then the application of LINK implies that e's existence and its possession of each of its features are derivative, contradicting our supposition. QED."<sup>19</sup>

Now suppose trialism to be true. Then, its adherents would state CORR like this:

**T-CORR**      An entity e is basic if e's existence or its possession of some feature is basic.

Considering T-CORR, we cannot use the same reductio for showing how LINK implies CORR. Because, for reductio, we should assume the negation of e's being basic to be derivative; however, if e is not basic, it could either be a grounding fact or a derivative entity. So, if I give an argument for the plausibility of the trialism besides its being a good candidate for answering MGQ, I will show that there are cases in which LINK cannot imply CORR.

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<sup>19</sup> (deRosset, 2013, p. 8)

Considering the possibility of being grounded or not, we have two entities, namely grounded entities and ungrounded entities. Also, for involving in a grounding relation, an entity has two possibilities too. Either grounding another entity or not grounding anything. So, there would be four possible options:

- 1- Grounded entities which ground other entities.
- 2- Grounded entities which do not ground other entities.
- 3- Ungrounded entities which ground grounded entities.
- 4- Ungrounded entities which do not ground any entity.

The entities in numbers 1 and 2 are derivative entities. The entities in number two are in the most top layer of reality. The entities in number three are basic entities in the bottom layer which is called the fundamental layer. The remaining is this other possibility, namely number four, which deRosset assumes not to exist; however, they are possible and can justify trialism. Trialism which deRosset defines in his paper, has no entities like number four, because the grounding facts, even the ones that are not basic, help basic entities to ground derivative entities. This trialism, which I call trialism<sup>\*</sup>, believes grounding facts to be in another realm of fundamentality. Trialism<sup>\*</sup> does not take grounding facts to be in the real world; therefore, this is more consistent with the irrealists account of grounding, which I mentioned in section two.

Accordingly, CORR is unjustified by presupposing the grounding facts to be grounded by an unwarranted rejection of the possibility of trialism<sup>\*</sup>. Therefore, LINK does not imply CORR, due to the possibility of either trialism or trialism<sup>\*</sup>. CORR does not support why the trialism is not possible. Also, For the trialism<sup>\*</sup>, I showed a justification. Therefore, the burden of proof of CORR is put on deRosset again since trialism does not support CORR.

In this section, I pointed to some challenges that LINK and CORR have. So, Collapse may not follow from these accounts; however, it does not mean that the MGQ is not an important question. I mean, it does not follow that we are back to the first place in where we have no reasons for rejecting the fundamentality of grounding facts. On the contrary, Bennet<sup>20</sup> gives another reason which shows that grounding facts cannot be fundamental. This reason is the free modal recombination account. She argues that the fundamental layer can be freely recombined.

Regarding this, we would have grounding facts and other entities in the fundamental layer which we can freely recombine. According to Bennet, this view has three

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<sup>20</sup> (Bennett, 2017, p. 190)

unpalatable consequences. Firstly, The built entities would not globally supervene on fundamental entities. Also, we would have some qualitatively indiscernible entities that are non-fundamental in our world, which would be in a fundamental layer in other worlds. Lastly, the grounding facts might end up to be the only fundamental entities.

The first one is implausible due to the UN account, which I talked about in section two. On this account, nothing grounds something else only if necessitates it. So they must supervene on each other when the grounds exist. The second one is unwarranted because Bennet argues it cannot be the case that two qualitatively indiscernible entities could be in two different layers when they are in different worlds. Moreover, for the last one, she argues that it is questionable why we should treat grounding relation differently and just put them in the fundamental layer. Due to this implausible consequences, given that entities can be modally recombined, Bennet rejects that grounding relations can be in a fundamental layer.

Grounding facts being accepted to be derivative, I should briefly point to some of the flaws of Bennet's account. By doing this I will not reject the plausibility of her conclusion, and still, I agree that modal recombination can lead us to agree on grounding facts being derivative; however, I should mention that two qualitatively indiscernible objects can be in different layers, due to the possibility of the existence of epiphenomenal entities. Some of the philosophers of mind agree on the account that mental states are epiphenomenal. So, it is plausible for us to give credit to those people, and say that in some worlds there are no grounding relations between some entities of the lower level and the higher level except that the higher-level entities are epiphenomenal entities regarding the lower-level entities.

Secondly, if we agree on irrealism about grounding, then treating grounding relations differently not only is plausible but also is the task we ought to do. Another reason for treating them differently should be the same reasons that I argue for trialism's view. Although I pointed to some challenges of the Bennet account, by accepting realism about grounding and assuming UN, which both Bennet and deRosset agree on, we can conclude that we need to introduce the grounds of grounding facts.

Because of the focus of this paper on deRosset's account, and due to the limit of the space, I will not elaborate on Bennet's modal recombination account more than this. So, I will proceed to the next section in which I will examine deRosset's answer to MGQ.

## 5 Investigations on deRosset's answer to MGQ

In this part, I show deRosset's answers to the MGQ. Then, I will refer to Dasgupta's view on answering the MGQ. By doing this, I would argue for Dasgupta's view and point to some of the challenges that deRosset's version has.

After rejecting FUND, he continues to answer the MGQ. He states It is plausible to state that a true explanation is backed by an argument. So, when we say a because b, there is an argument from b to a. something like this:

b

.

.

So, a

Then, he says that if someone asks for an explanation of that argument, we should mention b again. It would be backed by such an explanation:

b

.

.

So, a

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.

So, a because b

Following this, he introduces the account of BECAUSE for answering to MGQ:

BECAUSE      If a because b, then (a because b) because b.

He further justifies his account by rejecting three options of four possible solutions to the MGQ: 1- Referring to a different entity which he finds it unsatisfying. 2 and 3- Referring to one of the entities of the grounding relation. 4- Referring to both of them. He finds referring to the derivative facts unappealing since it brings collapse problem back on the table. Accordingly, he thinks that there is only one option available and it is the option appearing in BECAUSE. On the other hand, if we accept the aforementioned arguments against the plausibility of collapse and its question-begging character which Bennet points to, we can refer to both of the entities of the grounding relations.

Therefore, he does not give us enough reason to agree on choosing one of the relations for BECAUSE.

Dasgupta's answer to MGQ uses both of the entities.<sup>21</sup> He claims that the ground of a grounding fact, for example, *a* grounds *b*, would be an ungrounded fact like [*a*] plus the general fact that it is essential to all *b*s that whenever *a* obtains *b* occurs. If we reject collapse and search for the solution of the MGQ by appealing to modal recombination, then there would be no problem with introducing this answer. In addition, it is agreeable with modal recombination that if we do not have general truths, we would not have the derivative entities at all.

Nevertheless, some may object to Dasgupta that his account is circular<sup>22</sup> due to its being partially grounded in grounding fact and then grounding facts being fully grounded in the general one; however, Wilson argues that it is not a circular kind of explanation that we reject in epistemology. This one is informative and faces no problem.<sup>23</sup> In addition, if we accept Bennett and reject Wilson's claim, we can still argue for Dasgupta's account in the camp of the adherents of coherentism about the structure of reality who argue for the codependence and symmetrical relations between entities. This view is analogous to structural realism in the philosophy of science in which philosophers argue for the priority of structure rather than the objects. We can see Dasgupta's general principles, like the prior coherent structure of reality.

The answer of the MGQ should be neutral regarding possible views. Accordingly, one other benefit of Dasgupta's account is that it is consistent with trialism\*. We can add the general grounding facts, to the set of unrealistic grounding facts. In this case, even if we accept the validity of collapse argument, this collapse will not follow since those entities are in an unrealistic fiction and they do not count as the real features of the entities; hence, FACT do not face any problems.

Arguments aside, Dasgupta's account seems more plausible if we take deRosset's example of the arguments which back the grounding relation. Usually, when we ask why *a* because *b*, we refer to *a* as being grounded by *b*s by assuming that the hearer knows that *b* is correct.

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<sup>21</sup> (Dasgupta, 2014)

<sup>22</sup> (Bennett, 2017)

<sup>23</sup> (Wilson A. , 2019)

## 6 Conclusion

In this paper, I referred to some of deRosset's background assumptions. Some unwanted consequences will follow if we do not accept those assumptions. By addressing those assumptions, I did not want to reject deRosset's answer to the MGQ altogether, I just wanted to show that collapse problem and his answer is restricted by several assumptions, namely, metaphysical foundationalism, realism about grounding and rejecting trialism and trialism\*. Therefore, his answer cannot be accepted as a universal answer in all of the grounding camps available, namely realists and irrealists. Furthermore, his answer is only consistent with the linear view of the structure of reality. This conclusion opens the possibility of other answers to MGQ, like trialism\* or Dasgupta's answer to MGQ which is not only agreeable with realism but also irrealists/realists who adhere metaphysical coherentism can argue for and opens our hands more than deRosset's solution.

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