

# Conclusion

Let us recap: The goal of this book was to argue for the legitimacy of empty-base explanation and offer philosophically interesting applications of the idea. Aside from the overall argument, some things that I developed along the way include:

- a more solid theoretical footing for the notion of zero-grounding,
- an account of explanation by status,
- an account of ultimate explanation,
- an account of the empty-base explanation of logical truths,
- an investigation into metaphysically explanatory notions besides grounding that might allow for empty-base explanation,
- an investigation of the possibility of zero-causation (i.e. causation *ex nihilo*) and empty-base explanation by law of nature,
- a novel notion of self-explanation, and
- a study of the epistemology of empty-base explanations.

Novel philosophical ideas (especially those of the more ‘out there’ persuasion) have to earn their keep via their applications and theoretical fruitfulness. Otherwise they may turn out to be intelligible given some open-mindedness and conceptual flexibility, but remain more a curiosity than of serious philosophical interest. When I started working on this project, the only material discussing zero-ground were Fine’s original paper and Litland’s account of the grounds of ground. Since then, as reflected above, the literature has steadily grown. I hope that this book can make a further contribution in arguing that the idea of empty-base explanation really has intriguing applications.

Aside from investigating further applications of empty-base explanation, some areas in which I believe further research could be valuable are the metaphysics of multigrade and variably-adic relations, the epistemology of empty-base explanation (e.g. to better understand what lets us decide between a fact’s being unexplained and the fact’s being empty-base explained), the form of explanatory laws or generalizations that allow for instances of empty-base explanation (for a relevant recent discussion of the laws of ground see Litland and Haderlie (manuscript)).

Furthermore, the characterization of metaphysically explanatory relations besides grounding that allow for empty-base explanations could be improved (and it might be interesting to consider whether alternative notions of grounding such as Fine’s (2012) natural and normative varieties allow for their own varieties of zero-grounding). Speaking of varieties: First, Muñoz’s (2020) intriguing use of the combination of grounding contingentism and zero-ground deserves more attention; second, I have argued that Litland’s (2017) argument concerning the

grounds of ground likely generalizes to other explanatory notions; it would be interesting to further investigate whether we should embrace the generalized conclusion.

Finally, more realistic scientific examples of causation and laws of nature could be examined for potential applications of empty-base explanation. Most prominently, the suggestion by Hicks and Wilson (2021) based on Albert's and Loewer's *mentaculus* (cf. Loewer forthcoming), according to which the first event is empty-base explained by chancy law of nature, requires more detailed attention. Another starting point here could be the discussion in McKenzie (2017). Relatedly, cosmological arguments and considerations concerning the PSR could be reevaluated with the notion of empty-base explanation in hand, and for concrete proposals for explanatorily brute truths, the merits of alternative theories according to which these truths are empty-base explained could be investigated.

