

Contents

Acknowledgements — V

Introduction — 1

1 Preliminaries — 10

- 1.1 Explanation — 10
- 1.2 Sources and links — 17
- 1.3 Answers to why-questions — 19
 - 1.3.1 Schnieder's proposal — 21
 - 1.3.2 Skow's theory — 23
- 1.4 Discussion — 26
 - 1.4.1 On the merely linguistic point — 27
 - 1.4.2 On the metaphysical point — 30

2 Introducing Empty-Base Explanation — 36

- 2.1 Defining the notion of *empty-base explanation* — 37
- 2.2 Legitimizing empty-base explanation — 39
 - 2.2.1 Candidates for links: unconditional explanatory laws, essences, and zero-ground — 40
 - 2.2.2 Intuition and metaphor — 44
 - 2.2.3 Explanations trace explanatory links — 45
 - 2.2.4 Explanatory arguments without premises — 48
 - 2.2.5 Explanation by status — 49
- 2.3 Empty-base explanation, explaining why, and why-questions — 51
- 2.4 Understanding why and epistemic features of explanation why — 55
- 2.5 On the potential and limit of empty-base explanation — 59
 - 2.5.1 What is the epistemic value of empty-base explanations? — 59
 - 2.5.2 Empty-base explanation and ultimate explanation — 61
 - 2.5.3 Some applications of empty-base explanation — 63
- 2.6 The plan for the remainder of the book — 63

3 Explanation by Status — 70

- 3.1 Introductory considerations — 72
- 3.2 Against explanation by modal status — 73
- 3.3 In favor of explanation by modal status — 78
- 3.4 Generalization and reactions — 81
- 3.5 Explanation by status as empty-base explanation — 85

3.6	Two more applications of the account —	90
3.7	Conclusion —	92
4	Explanation of Logical Theorems —	97
4.1	Ordinary grounding explanations and why they might be unsatisfactory —	98
4.2	On extraordinary grounding explanations —	100
4.3	What to do? —	102
4.4	Explanation by reductive truthmakers —	105
4.5	Explanation by essence and metaphysical law —	113
4.5.1	Considering downwards essence —	120
4.5.2	Considering upwards essence and other localizations —	121
4.6	Remaining options and conclusion —	123
5	Causation Ex Nihilo: Could There Be Empty-Base Causal Explanations? —	125
5.1	Generalizing Litland's argument for zero-grounding of non-factive grounding facts? —	127
5.2	Is zero-causation possible? —	134
5.2.1	Explanation by law of nature and general principles —	136
5.2.2	Causal powers, dispositions, and essences —	139
6	Self-Explanation —	143
6.1	Approaching self-explanation —	144
6.2	Two notions of (self-)explanation —	146
6.3	On a circularity problem for Humeanism about laws of nature —	148
6.4	Empty-base <i>self</i> -explanation —	150
6.5	Candidates for empty-base self-explanations —	153
6.5.1	Irreducibly plural grounding —	155
6.5.2	Generalized explanatory links —	156
6.6	Empty-base self-explanation meets philosophical theology —	159
6.7	Conclusion —	160
7	The Epistemology of Empty-Base Explanation —	161
7.1	Abductive modal epistemology and a dilemma for Biggs' account —	163
7.2	Towards an abductive epistemology for grounding —	170
7.3	The case of identity —	172
7.4	Fleshing out the account —	176

7.4.1	Can Biggs' account deal with these questions? —	178
7.4.2	Grounded, zero-grounded or ungrounded? —	180

Conclusion —	184
---------------------	------------

Bibliography —	187
-----------------------	------------

Index —	193
----------------	------------