

# An Account of Truthmaking

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*So the proposition that there are no unicorns is true just because there are no unicorns!  
What sort of explanation is that? — No explanation at all, I agree.*

— David Lewis

*The correspondence theory expresses one important feature of the concept of truth . . .  
that a statement is true only if there is something in the world in virtue of which it is  
true.*

— Michael Dummett<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract.** In this paper, I both propose and discuss a novel account of truthmaking. I begin by showing what truthmaking is not: it is not grounding and it is not correspondence. I then show what truthmaking is by offering an account that appeals both to grounding and what I call ‘deep correspondence’. After I present the account and show that it is an account that unifies, I put it to work by showing how it can overcome an objection to truthmaking, how we can get truthmaking from correspondence, what it says about truthmaker necessitation, and how it can explain a connection between truthmaker maximalism and pluralism about truth.

Truthmaker theory is past its infancy. Indeed, though this was not the case fifteen or so years ago, it is now a well-entrenched part of metaphysics.<sup>2</sup> And when it comes to such a theory, there are three questions that strike me as particularly important: ‘what is this relation of truthmaking?’, ‘what is the relationship between

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<sup>1</sup>See Lewis (2001, p. 611) and Dummett (1959, p. 157).

<sup>2</sup>There are five books (Armstrong 2004; Beebe and Dodd 2005; Merricks 2007; Monnoyer 2007; Lowe and Rami 2009) and dozens of articles devoted to truthmaking. There are also books that commit large sections to discussing truthmaking (Sider 2011, §8; Heil 2012, §8, Tallant 2018) and even one which sees all metaphysical questions through the lens of truthmaking (Tallant 2011).

truthmaking and the correspondence theory of truth?', and 'what is the relationship between truthmaking and grounding?'<sup>3</sup> Now a fair amount of work has been spent answering the first.<sup>4</sup> Less on answering the second. I am going to answer the first, which will give us an answer to the second.

With respect to the third, many see in grounding a spirit identical to that found in truthmaker theory, going so far as to define truthmaking solely in terms of grounding. So their answer to the third question is straightforward: truthmaking just is grounding when what grounding relates are truths and truthmakers. But I think that defining truthmaking solely in terms of grounding is a mistake. I will therefore say something different with respect to how truthmaking and grounding relate. And as it was with the second question, my answer to the first will give us an answer to the third.

The structure of this paper is as follows: Sections §1 and §2 are negative in spirit, arguing that truthmaker theory should not be understood purely in terms of grounding or correspondence. The remaining sections are positive. In §3, I make a distinction between deep and shallow correspondence. In §4 I offer a new account of truthmaking that, by relying on what was done in §3, appeals both to grounding and correspondence. And in §5, I discuss four implications of this account. The first concerns an objection to truthmaking, the second getting truthmaking from correspondence, the third whether truthmaking is a necessitating relation, and the fourth explaining a connection that exists between truthmaker maximalism and pluralism about truth.

## 1 Truthmaking is Not Grounding

Grounding is a non-causal metaphysical dependence relation that resists analysis in terms of modal notions.<sup>5</sup> In line with orthodoxy, I will treat it as being two-place, irreflexive, asymmetric, transitive, and as holding between facts of various sorts (moral and natural, mental and physical, tensed and tenseless, biological and

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<sup>3</sup>This betrays my position on a contentious topic in truthmaker theory. I am a truthmaking theorist who accepts *truthmakers*, things in the world that make truths true. But there are truthmaking theorists who reject truthmakers. For them, there is truthmaking without truthmakers (Hornsby 2005; Melia 2005; Schnieder 2006).

<sup>4</sup>See Lowe and Rami (200, pp. 13-25) for a nice survey of attempts to define truthmaking.

<sup>5</sup>See Schaffer (2009), Rosen (2010), Audi (2012), and Bliss & Trogdon (2014). For some who want to say that grounding is very much like or is causation, see Schaffer (2016) and Wilson (forthcoming).

chemical, mathematical and logical, and so on).<sup>6</sup> Much of this fits well with both the spirit and letter of truthmaking. According to most truthmaker theorists, truthmaking is a non-causal dependence relation that resists analysis in terms of modal notions, is two-placed, irreflexive, asymmetric, transitive, and is such that facts are typically (though not always) identified as one of its relata.

Now this fit between grounding and truthmaking has prompted a number of truthmaker theorists to claim that truthmakers just are truthgrounders. Truthmaker theorists say things like “Must there not be something about the world that makes it to be the case, that serves as an ontological ground, for this truth?” (Armstrong 1997, p. 115), “To believe in truthmaking is, basically, to believe that truth is grounded in the world or reality” (Rodriguez-Pereyra 2006, p. 186), “this grounding relation must hold between a true proposition and an entity in the world, and what else could this worldly entity be but the proposition’s truthmaker?” (Dodd 2007, p. 396), “the truthmaking relation is the relation of grounding between substance and truth” (Schaffer 2010, p. 310), “In the context of truthmaking, whole grounds for truths are their truthmakers” (Baron, Miller and Norton 2014, p. 179), and “Truthmaker theory says that what is true is grounded in what there is” (Cameron 2018, p. 335).<sup>7</sup>

Since these quotes are taken in the context of trying to tell us what truthmaking is, it is implausible to dismiss them as *façons de parler*.<sup>8</sup> These philosophers are speaking strictly when they seek to understand truthmaking in terms of grounding by having it that truthmakers are truthgrounders.

Let us now get clear on what the claim that truthmakers are truthgrounders amounts to. It is widely assumed that the truthmaking relation holds between a truthmaker and a proposition. Here is Rodriguez-Pereyra (2006, p. 188)

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<sup>6</sup>As I said, all this is orthodoxy. But there are dissenters. There are some who question that grounding is two-placed (Jenkins 2011; Schaffer 2012), irreflexive (Lowe 1998, p. 145; Jenkins 2011; Correia 2014; Rodriguez-Pereyra 2015), asymmetric (Thompson 2014; Rodriguez-Pereyra 2015), transitive (Schaffer 2012; Rodriguez-Pereyra 2015), and that it holds only between facts (Cameron 2008a; Schaffer 2009; deRosset 2013; Saenz 2015).

<sup>7</sup>See also Bergmann (1961) who says “Now if S is true, there must be something that makes it true. Or, as one says, the truth of S must be grounded ontologically.” (229) Consider also Liggins (2016, 99) who finds it attractive that the fact that Rex is barking grounds the truth that Rex is barking, but not vice-versa. Though he does not mention truthmakers, what Liggins has grounding that Rex is barking is true is what we would all call a truthmaker of the proposition that Rex is barking.

<sup>8</sup>Further evidence of this comes from Armstrong (2004, p. 5) and Rodriguez-Pereyra (2009, p. 228) both of whom explicitly define truthmaking in terms of in-virtue-of (which, for our purposes, is grounding). See also Correia (2011, p. 1), who finds it plausible that truthmaking should be understood solely in terms of grounding and is clear in saying that this is not a mere manner of speaking.

For those who believe in truthmakers, truthmaking is a relation. The *relata* are truthmakers and truthbearers . . . Truthmaking is a cross-categorial relation in the sense that it can obtain between entities belonging to different kinds: an entity that is not a proposition and a proposition.<sup>9</sup>

Now this is fine as far as it goes. However, if we accept that truthmakers are truth grounders, and so analyze truthmaking in terms of grounding, then the *relata* of grounding cannot be truthmakers and propositions. In order to see why, consider what would follow if we accepted

$x$  makes true  $\langle p \rangle =_{df.} x$  grounds  $\langle p \rangle$ .<sup>10</sup>

Here we have a proposition, and not a fact, being grounded. But we are assuming that it is facts that grounding relates. So  $x$  cannot ground  $\langle p \rangle$  on pain of grounding something that is not a fact. But let us suppose, for sake of argument, that (true) propositions are facts. Let us also suppose that the fact that Pooh is stuffed with fluff makes true  $\langle \text{Pooh is stuffed with fluff} \rangle$ . Given that true propositions are facts, it is reasonable to suppose that  $\langle \text{Pooh is stuffed with fluff} \rangle$  is identical to the fact that Pooh is stuffed with fluff. From this and the above definition of truthmaking, it follows that the fact that Pooh is stuffed with fluff grounds the fact that Pooh is stuffed with fluff (since it grounds  $\langle \text{Pooh is stuffed with fluff} \rangle$  which, we are assuming, is identical to the fact that Pooh is stuffed with fluff). This, of course, is bad.<sup>11</sup> So either propositions are facts or they are not. If they are, then facts will self-ground given the above definition and some plausible assumptions. If they are not (as seems true), then they cannot be grounded. Either way, the above definition yields something problematic.

But grant, on grounds of neutrality, that we permit the grounding of propositions and so relax the requirement that only facts can stand in the grounding relation. Still, the above will not do. One reason for this is that false propositions, like true ones, can, in principle at least, be grounded (it is one thing to ground a

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<sup>9</sup>See also Armstrong (2004, p. 6) Fine (2012, p. 43), and (Liggins 2012), the last of whom criticizes truthmaker theory on the grounds that the truthmaking relation has as one of its *relata* a proposition.

<sup>10</sup>Two things: First, ' $\langle p \rangle$ ' stands for 'the proposition that  $p$ '. Second, I have it that truthmaking holds one-one. Strictly speaking, I think that this is false. It is true that the Obamas exist. But what makes this true is not a single fact but the following plurality of facts: that Barack, Michelle, Malia, and Sasha Obama each exist. Still, for stylistic reasons, I will treat truthmaking as holding one-one.

<sup>11</sup>Recall, I am assuming that grounding is irreflexive. But even if grounding is not irreflexive, we should not want to say that every truthmaker grounds itself!

proposition and another to ground that a proposition is some way). But then if we define that  $x$  makes true  $\langle p \rangle$  in terms of  $x$  grounding  $\langle p \rangle$ , the following is possible:  $x$  makes true  $\langle p \rangle$  even though  $\langle p \rangle$  is false. This, though, is absurd. Another reason is that, in the context of truthmaker theory, we are not interested in grounding propositions. This becomes obvious once we recognize that grounding either just is or backs metaphysical explanation. Truthmakers do not explain the existence of propositions, as they would if they grounded them. Rather, given that truthmakers are truthgrounders, they explain that propositions are true. And it follows from this that it is better to say that truthmakers ground, not the propositions that are true, but the fact that propositions are true. Therefore, and where what follows ‘that’ denotes a fact (and thus not a proposition), that truthmakers are truthgrounders is better understood as follows:

**Truthmakers are Truth Grounders.**  $x$  makes true  $\langle p \rangle =_{df.}$   $x$  grounds that  $\langle p \rangle$  is true.

I will now argue that Truthmakers are Truth Grounders (TTG) is false.<sup>12</sup>

I have a worry concerning the adequacy of the ground posited by TTG. Again, assume that the fact that Pooh is stuffed with fluff makes true  $\langle \text{Pooh is stuffed with fluff} \rangle$ . So from TTG we can infer

that Pooh is stuffed with fluff grounds that  $\langle \text{Pooh is stuffed with fluff} \rangle$  is true.

Now, at least when it comes to grounding atomic facts (facts which only have individuals and properties as constituents, and not other facts), I claim that the ground of facts of the form ‘ $\langle p \rangle$  is true’ that TTG gives us is not enough of a ground. In order to see why I think this, it will help to look at some intuitive claims involving one fact grounding another.<sup>13</sup>

The ball is red, and it is red in virtue of its being crimson;

An act of violence is wrong, and it is wrong in virtue of its causing pain;

Gilmore is happy, and he is happy in virtue of his being in neurobiological state N.

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<sup>12</sup>See Griffith (2014) for a different reason to reject that truthmakers are truthgrounders which is based on differences we find among examples of grounding.

<sup>13</sup>Of course, these claims can be questioned. Still, what is important is not that they are true but that they reveal what I think we need when it comes to some facts grounding another.

Notice that each of these claims have something in common. In all, the property constituent of the grounded fact is instanced because the property constituent of the grounding fact is. So, redness is instanced because crimson-ness is instanced, wrongness is because causing-pain is, and happiness is because N is. In these examples, we are providing explanations for why things are some particular *way* (red, wrong, happy). No surprise then that, in the present context, in wanting to know why the ball is red, we are wanting to descend to a level where we have an explanation of the instantiation of redness.

Let us look at some other claims involving one fact grounding another.

Eeyore is grey, and Eeyore is grey in virtue of his parts, suitably arranged, being grey;

Water is transparent, and water is transparent in virtue of oxygen and hydrogen, appropriately bonded, being transparent;

WWII is in the past, and WWII is in the past in virtue of various events (for e.g., the Battle of Dunkirk) being in the past.

Here we also find, in these claims, something in common. In all, the non-property constituent of the grounded fact exists because the non-property constituent of the grounding fact does. So, Eeyore exists because his parts, suitably arranged, exist, water exists because oxygen and hydrogen, appropriately bonded, exist, and WWII exists because certain events exist. In these examples, we are providing explanations for why particular *things* (Eeyore, water, WWII) are some way. No surprise then that, in the present context, in wanting to know why Eeyore is grey, we are wanting to descend to a level where we have an explanation of the existence of Eeyore.

Here are more such claims

The ball is red, and it is red in virtue of its parts, suitably arranged, being crimson;

Water is transparent, and water is transparent in virtue of oxygen and hydrogen, appropriately bonded, vibrating at certain frequencies;

WWII is in the past, and WWII is in the past in virtue of various events (for e.g., the Battle of Dunkirk) being earlier than now.

Again, we find something in common. In all, the non-property constituent of the grounded fact exists because the non-property constituent of the grounding fact

does *and* the property constituent of the grounded fact is instanced because the property constituent of the grounding fact is. So, the ball exists because its parts, suitably arranged, exist and redness is instanced because crimson-ness is. Water exists because oxygen and hydrogen, appropriately bonded, exist and transparency is instanced because vibrating-at-certain-frequencies is. And WWII exists because certain events exist and past-ness is instanced because earlier-than-now is. In these examples, we are providing explanations for why particular *things* (the ball, water, WWII) are some particular *way* (red, transparent, in the past). No surprise then that, in the present context, in wanting to know why the ball is red, we are wanting to descend to a level where we have an explanation of the existence of the ball and of the instantiation of redness.

The patterns exemplified by the above grounding claims are not uncommon. At the risk of repeating myself, this makes sense. In grounding a fact, we want to descend to a level where the constituents in the grounded fact exist or are instanced in virtue of the existence or instantiation of the constituents of the grounding fact. And one reason why we want to descend in this way is to, and this is important, *keep the grounding facts relevant to the facts that they are grounding*. Having it that the ball is red in virtue of its being shiny, or that Eeyore is grey in virtue of his tail being grey, results in grounding facts not being relevant (or relevant enough) to what they are purportedly grounding. That the ball is shiny is not appropriately relevant to the ball's being red precisely because that shiny-ness is instanced is not that which explains that redness is. And that Eeyore's tail is grey is not appropriately relevant to Eeyore's being grey precisely because that Eeyore's tail exists is not that which (fully) explains that Eeyore exists.

Let us turn back to our candidate grounding claim

that Pooh is stuffed with fluff grounds that <Pooh is stuffed with fluff>  
is true.

Does this grounding claim meet the above relevance conditions when it comes to one fact or facts grounding another? It would seem not. Start with the non-property constituent of the fact that is being said to be grounded in the above grounding claim, <Pooh is stuffed with fluff>. Does this proposition exist because Pooh exists? That it does seems false (and sounds bad). In order to know what it is that grounds that this proposition exists, we should want to know something about the make-up of the proposition. Are its constituents concepts, linguistic enti-

ties, properties, or worldly things like Pooh and being stuffed-with-fluff? And once we know this, we will want to know something about how they are related. <Pooh is stuffed with fluff> is not, after all, just an unstructured blob of its constituents.<sup>14</sup>

Russell's (1910, pp. 173-85; 1912, p. 92) multiple relation theory of judgement, which we can view as a theory of propositions (judgements or beliefs are, according to this account, the primary bearers of truth and falsehood), is a nice illustration of what I have in mind. He says

We spoke of the relation called 'judging' or 'believing' as knitting together into one complex whole the subject and the objects ... When an act of believing occurs, there is a complex, in which 'believing' is the uniting relation, and subject and objects are arranged in a certain order by the 'sense' of the relation of believing ... The cement is the relation 'believing'. (1912, p. 92)

We see here that for Russell, <Pooh is stuffed with fluff> has Pooh and stuffed-with-fluff-ness as parts and that what relates them is the judging or believing relation. So a Russellian inspired account of the ground of the fact that <Pooh is stuffed with fluff> exists is that Pooh and stuffed-with-fluff-ness, collectively believed on in a certain way, exist. Whether or not you like this Russellian account, it is clear that we have in it the kind of answer one should look for when it comes to grounding the existence of propositions.

There are other such accounts. Briefly, Frege (1892, p. 54) had it that propositions are structures of what he called 'senses' and that what united the senses such that they compose a proposition was one or more of the component senses saturating one or more of the others. So a Fregean inspired account of the ground of the fact that <Pooh is stuffed with fluff> exists is that the sense that picks out Pooh and the sense that picks out stuffed-with-fluff-ness, where the former saturates the latter, exist. As it was above, it is clear that we have in this Fregean inspired account the kind of answer one should look for when it comes to grounding the existence of propositions.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>But what if it has no constituents? Then it is plausible to think that nothing grounds that it exists. And if nothing grounds that it exists, then it does not exist because Pooh exists, which is precisely what I am aiming to establish.

<sup>15</sup>There are contemporary accounts of the grounds of the existence of propositions that fit the spirit of these. King (2007; 2009) gives one according to which the constituents, Pooh and stuffed-with-fluff-ness, of <Pooh is stuffed with fluff >, are bound by a complex relation involving a language L, context

How about truth, which is the property constituent of the fact that <Pooh is stuffed with fluff> is true? Is truth instanced because stuffed-with-fluff-ness is instanced? This is an odd sounding claim. Indeed, one would have thought that, in the present context, part of what explains that truth is instanced has to do with what this proposition is about, namely Pooh and that Pooh is stuffed with fluff (and not Piglet and that Piglet is stuffed with fluff). We can give content to this by looking at the following kinds of grounds someone could give of truth's being instanced. Consider a Fregean-inspired view of propositions according to which propositions are structures of concepts (or as he would have preferred, senses). We then have

<Pooh is stuffed with fluff> is true, and <Pooh is stuffed with fluff> is true in virtue of

- (i) POOH picking out Pooh,
- (ii) STUFFED WITH FLUFF picking out stuffed-with-fluff-ness, and
- (iii) Pooh's being stuffed with fluff.<sup>16</sup>

Or suppose you had a view according to which propositions are interpreted sentences. Then we have

<Pooh is stuffed with fluff> is true, and <Pooh is stuffed with fluff> is true in virtue of

- (i) 'Pooh' referring to Pooh,
- (ii) 'stuffed with fluff' referring to stuffed with fluff-ness, and
- (iii) Pooh's being stuffed with fluff.<sup>17</sup>

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c, lexical items a and b of L such that a and b occur at various nodes in the right kind of way of a sentential relation R that, in L, involves ascribing the semantic value of b to the semantic value of a where Pooh is the semantic value of a in c and stuffed-with-fluff-ness is the semantic value of b in c. So a Kingian inspired ground of the fact that <Pooh is stuffed with fluff> exists is that Pooh and stuffed-with-fluff-ness, related in the complex manner just specified, exist.

<sup>16</sup>Strictly speaking, we would need to add, as a fourth condition, that which grounds that <Pooh is stuffed with fluff> exists, namely that POOH and STUFFED WITH FLUFF, related in the right kind of way, exist. But making this explicit here is not necessary. The same holds, making the necessary changes, for the next account.

<sup>17</sup>There are other theories of propositions that we could appeal to. Some hold the view that <Pooh is stuffed with fluff> is a structure whose parts are the properties Pooh-ness and stuffed-with-fluff-ness (Rasmussen 2013). The account given for this would then be similar to the ones just given except

In the first case, truth is instanced because picking-out is instanced, where it is Pooh and stuffed-with-fluff-ness that are picked out, and Pooh is stuffed with fluff. That is, truth is instanced because various sub-propositional relations are instanced and Pooh is stuffed with fluff. Similar things can be said about the second case. Truth is instanced because referring-to is instanced, where it is Pooh and stuffed-with-fluff-ness that are referred to, and Pooh is stuffed with fluff. Again, truth is instanced because various sub-propositional relations are instanced and Pooh is stuffed with fluff. Whether or not you reject these kinds of grounding claims, it is clear that we have in them a better *kind* of ground of truth's being instanced than we have in appealing only to stuffed-with-fluff-ness's being instanced.

In light of all this, I claim that the fact that Pooh is stuffed with fluff is not, in the manner specified above, a relevant enough ground of the fact that <Pooh is stuffed with fluff> is true.<sup>18</sup> In order to get the kind of relevance we want, we need a fact or facts one or more of whose constituents are such that their existing or being instanced explains that a constituent of the fact being grounded, in the present case that <Pooh is stuffed with fluff> is true, exists or is instanced.<sup>19</sup>

We thus have an asymmetry between the kinds of grounding claims TTG gives us and the kinds of grounding claims we saw in the above lists. TTG yields grounding claims that do not conform to standard patterns found in grounding. Because of this, it fails to provide us with relevant, or relevant enough, grounds of a proposition's being true. So TTG should be viewed with skepticism. We should thus view with skepticism that grounding is the whole story to truthmaking.<sup>20</sup> To make my claim somewhat softer, we should be moved to consider alternative accounts of

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that appeal will be made to both instantiation and identity and not picking out or reference. Or take Russell's (1910; 1912) theory, where <Pooh is stuffed with fluff> is a structure whose parts are Pooh and stuffed-with fluff-ness. The account given for Russell's theory would then be similar to the ones just given except that appeal will be made to identity and not picking out or reference.

<sup>18</sup>Of course, I am not claiming that the fact that Pooh is stuffed with fluff is not relevant, *in any way*, to the fact that <Pooh is stuffed with fluff> is true. Surely it is (after all, it may be part of the essence of <Pooh is stuffed with fluff> that it is true if and only if Pooh is stuffed with fluff). I am only claiming that it is not relevant in the manner specified in the text.

<sup>19</sup>This explains why it will not do to say that what grounds the fact that <Pooh is stuffed with fluff> is true is the following: that Pooh is stuffed with fluff, that <Pooh is stuffed with fluff> exists, and truth (thanks to a referee for suggesting this potential ground). In this purported ground, we do not get the kind of relevance we want because we do not get a fact or facts one or more of whose constituents are such that their existing or being instanced explains that a constituent of the fact being grounded exists or is instanced.

<sup>20</sup>Notice that I have not said that it is not *part* of the whole story to truthmaking. The target here is only that grounding is the whole story. Indeed, I will soon push for an account of truthmaking that makes grounding very much part of the story.

truthmaking that do not commit us to truthmakers fully grounding that the propositions they make true are true.<sup>21</sup>

## 2 Truthmaking is Not Correspondence

Consider relational theories of truth: the correspondence, coherence, pragmatic, and identity theory. According to these theories, that <p> is true amounts to <p>'s corresponding to, cohering with, being useful to believe for, or being identical to something. Now from the perspective of truthmaker theory, that these accounts of a proposition's being true involve relations is a most welcome result. Given that these accounts connect true propositions to something, it is now open to claim, given any one of these accounts, that it is the truthmakers that true propositions connect to. That is, truthmakers are included in an account of what it is for a proposition to be true by standing in one of correspondence, coherence, usefulness to believe, or identity to a proposition.<sup>22</sup>

Now once we grant that truthmakers stand in one of these relations, then assuming orthodoxy on what kinds of things truthmakers are, some of these relations start to look better than others in figuring in an account of truthmaking.<sup>23</sup> Consider usefulness to believe, which relates propositions to believers. But according to orthodoxy, truthmakers need not, and most of the time are not, believers. So truthmakers are by and large not the kinds of things that can stand in the usefulness to believe relation. Or take identity, which relates every proposition to itself. But according to orthodoxy, truthmakers need not, and most of the time are not,

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<sup>21</sup>As I see it then, David Lewis in this paper's first epigraph was right, but for the wrong reason. In agreement with Lewis, the truth of the proposition that there are no unicorns is not explained, and so is not grounded in, there being no unicorns. But as I understand him, Lewis' reason for this is that the explanation is uninformative on account of its being trivial. My reason for this is that the explanation is false on account of its not being informative enough.

<sup>22</sup>Notice that neither deflationary theories nor primitivism about truth furnish us with potential truthmakers. Since deflationary theories are concerned with the truth *term* (or at least with an extremely deflationary account of the property *being true*, where this property just is, English at least, the predicate 'true') and not with truth itself (Devitt 2001), and since primitivism says that truth is a primitive and therefore undefined property, then neither provide us with even a potential truthmaker of a proposition's being true (for more on why deflationism cannot provide us with truthmakers, see Liggins 2016). As a referee points out, this is not to say that these accounts of truth are inconsistent with truthmaker theory. It is to say that such theories do not, on their own, point us to what the truthmakers are for true propositions.

<sup>23</sup>In assuming orthodoxy on what kinds of things truthmakers are, I am assuming two things: First, it is, typically at least, worldly things, and not linguistic or representational things, which make propositions true and second, these worldly things are by and large mind-independent things.

propositions. So truthmakers are by and large not the kinds of things that can stand in the identity relation to a proposition. Therefore, in wedding orthodoxy about truthmakers to the relations that figure in relational theories of truth, certain of these relations come out as worse candidates than others in relating truthmakers to propositions. Indeed, orthodox truthmaker theory fits awfully well with thinking that it is correspondence that holds between propositions and truthmakers (Acton 1935, p. 183; Bigelow 1988, p. 122; Armstrong 2004, pp. 16-7; Fumerton 2006; Cameron 2008b, p. 108; David 2009; MacBride 2013, pp. 686-87; Rasmussen 2013, pp. 174-5). Because I am a proponent of orthodox truthmaking, and because such truthmaking does not take things like believers and propositions to be the kinds of things that truthmakers typically are, I am going to confine my discussion of theories of truth to the correspondence theory.

Suppose then that an account of a proposition's being true has it that this proposition stands in correspondence to some truthmaker. So we have it that if  $x$  makes  $\langle p \rangle$  true, then  $\langle p \rangle$  corresponds to  $x$ . And if we have this, then we have the following account of truthmaking

**Truthmakers are Truth Corresponders.**  $x$  makes true  $\langle p \rangle =_{df.} \langle p \rangle$  corresponds to  $x$ .

Now this account of truthmaking (TTC) has been made before. Here is Cameron (2008b, p. 108)<sup>24</sup>

the truthmaker for  $p$  is just the portion of reality that  $p$  corresponds to: if we can find either the correspondence or the truthmaker relation we can define the other as its converse.

Audi (2012, p. 113) also accepts something along the lines of TTC. According to him, what it is for a given proposition to be true is for it to correspond to a certain state of affairs and for that state of affairs to obtain. It is the holding of these conditions that, according to him, give us the ontic requirement on truth that truthmaking seeks to capture. So according to Audi, having it that propositions correspond to states of affairs that obtain is all that is needed in order to capture the claim that truth is made true by the world.<sup>25</sup> But against Cameron and Audi, nothing like TTC can be right.

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<sup>24</sup>Cameron (2018) offers a different account of truthmaking that is much closer to TTG.

<sup>25</sup>See also Rasmussen (2013, p. 167) who says "The most common view is that truth depends upon the way things are by *corresponding to things*". This gets awfully close, insofar as the dependence relation here is the truthmaking relation, to thinking that truthmaking just is correspondence.

Now some think that TTC is false because correspondence is, unlike truthmaking, both symmetric and reflexive. This is David's (2009, p. 146) worry. And of course, if correspondence is both symmetric and reflexive, then TTC yields that a proposition makes true its truthmaker, that every proposition makes true itself, and that every truthmaker makes true itself. Clearly, these are objectionable consequences.

But this reason for rejecting TTC is not my reason. For one, there are analyses of correspondence according to which it is neither symmetric nor reflexive (Rasmussen 2013).<sup>26</sup> For two, even if correspondence is symmetric and reflexive, using this as a reason to reject TTR does not get at the heart of the matter, which has to do with the fact that truthmaking is a dependence relation.

Truthmaking is, in part, an *in virtue of* or *dependence* relation. That is, what it is for  $x$  to make  $\langle p \rangle$  true is, in part, for the truth of  $\langle p \rangle$  to hold in virtue of  $x$ . It is this fact about making in truthmaking that explains why truthmaking is neither symmetric nor reflexive and why defining truthmaking solely in terms of correspondence is a mistake. Correspondence is not a dependence relation.<sup>27</sup> It may be that  $\langle p \rangle$ 's being true in part depends on correspondence being instanced (more on this claim later). But it does not follow from this that correspondence *is* a dependence relation any more than it follows from the fact that my beating you at a game of chess depends on my capturing your king that capturing your king is a dependence relation. And if correspondence is not a dependence relation, then it is awfully hard to see how truthmaking can be adequately defined solely in terms of it. A desideratum on an adequate account of truthmaking has it that such an account can capture the *making* in truthmaking. But it is not at all clear how correspondence alone can do this. It is not, unlike truthmaking, a relation of dependence. It does not seem to give us enough of what we need in order to have the *making* in truthmaking. I therefore think that we should reject TTC. Correspondence is not the whole story to truthmaking.

This worry extends to accounts of truth's dependence on being that do not appeal to truthmaking. Consider MacBride's (2014, p. 375) attempt to explain, by

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<sup>26</sup>For those interested, here is Rasmussen's analysis: a proposition  $p$  corresponds to an arrangement  $x$  if and only if (i) for each exemplifiable part of  $p$ , there is a part of  $x$  that exemplifies it, (ii) the proposition that  $x$  exists entails  $p$ , and (iii) every part of  $x$  is part of a composition that overlaps exactly those things that exemplify part of  $p$ .

<sup>27</sup>This is why there is nothing inconsistent with understanding, as David does, correspondence as both a symmetric and reflexive relation. If correspondence were a dependence relation, then, of course, David's worry would be completely undermined.

appealing to reference and satisfaction, how it is that truth depends on being. He says

It's because the words or their propositional correlates stand in significant relations to things in the world ... that the truth of the proposition expressed depends upon how those things stand 'outside' it ...

Notice, *and this is important*, what MacBride is saying is being explained: not that a proposition is true, but that a proposition's being true depends on how things stand outside it. Take the proposition expressed by the sentence '*a* is fluffy', where *a* is both the referent of '*a*' and satisfies 'is fluffy' in virtue of being fluffy. So, if *a* is fluffy, then the proposition expressed by '*a* is fluffy' is true and if *a* is not, it is not. Now according to MacBride, it is these facts about reference and satisfaction that explain how it is that the truth of the proposition expressed by '*a* is fluffy' depends on being. But this seems false. Nothing about reference and satisfaction explain that a proposition's being true *depends* on being. Reference and satisfaction do not, in any sense, account for the world "making it" that propositions are some way. Now as stressed above, be careful not to confuse this with the claim that facts about reference and satisfaction do not explain that propositions are true. They very well may. But this is not the same as saying that these facts about reference and satisfaction alone explain that a proposition's being true depends on the world. They may fully account for the truth of a proposition. But it does not follow from this, and seems false, that they fully account for how it is that truth depends on being. So, just as there is more to truthmaking than correspondence, so there is more to truth's dependence on being than reference and satisfaction. This is unsurprising. Truthmaking is, after all, a way of making sense of the claim that truth depends on being. And appealing to reference and satisfaction are, after all, ways of making sense of the claim that truth corresponds to being.

### **3 Truthmaking, Grounding, and Deep and Shallow Correspondence**

I argued in §1 that there is reason to doubt that truthmakers ground that the propositions they make true are true. But this should not be taken to undermine the claim that truthmakers are *involved* in the grounds of such facts. In fact, I think truthmaker theory is driven by the intuition that truthmakers must appear in the

grounds of a proposition's being true. So our question now is 'what are these grounds and how should we go about finding them?'

Consider the following facts

1. <Pooh is stuffed with fluff> is true.
2. <Pooh is stuffed with fluff> corresponds to the fact that Pooh is stuffed with fluff.

There are two things we can say here about how these facts are related. We can say that 1 is 2. That is, we can say, as most correspondence theorists do, that truth *is* correspondence. But we can also say that 1 is grounded in 2. That is, we can say that truth is instanced *because* correspondence is. But which one should we choose? Well, it depends on what we mean by 'correspondence'. If by it we mean that reality is as the proposition says it is, then 1 and 2 seem to be one and the same fact. I take it as trivial that to say that <p> is true just is to say that reality is as <p> says it is.<sup>28</sup> But we can, by 'correspondence', mean something more substantial. For we can mean that the sub-propositional components of the proposition "pick out" various things where those things are ordered in the way the proposition says they are (Russell 1912; Acton 1935, p. 185; Rasmussen 2013). To have a toy case, suppose that propositions are interpreted sentences. (As made clear in footnote 17, we could have gone with a different account of propositions. But not much hangs on this. All that is required is that propositions have sub-propositional components.) Then we can say that what it is for <Pooh is stuffed with fluff> to correspond to the fact that Pooh is stuffed with fluff is for 'Pooh' to refer to Pooh, 'stuffed with fluff' to refer to stuffed-with-fluff-ness, and for Pooh to be stuffed with fluff. So understood, 2 amounts to the following

3. That 'Pooh' refers to Pooh, that 'stuffed with fluff' refers to stuffed-with-fluff-ness, and that Pooh is stuffed with fluff.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>It is on account of this that some have criticized the correspondence theory as being trivial (Sellers 1962, p. 29; Davidson 1969, p. 748). As Austin (1950, p. 115), himself a proponent of the correspondence theory, says

When is a statement true? The temptation is to answer . . . "When it corresponds to the facts". And as a piece of standard English this can hardly be wrong. Indeed, I must confess I do not really think it is wrong at all: the theory of truth is a series of truisms.

<sup>29</sup>As mentioned in footnote 16, we would need to add here that which grounds that <Pooh is stuffed with fluff> exists, namely that 'Pooh' and 'stuffed with fluff', related in the right kind of way, exist. But omitting this here makes no difference. What I say in the text will proceed just fine without it.

Given this reducing of 2 to 3, it is no longer clear that 1 is 2. After all, 1 is about a proposition. In 1, we are saying something of <Pooh is stuffed with fluff>, namely that it is true. This is not so in 3, which we are assuming 2 reduces to. 3 makes no reference to <Pooh is stuffed with fluff>. All that 3 refers to is to 'Pooh', Pooh, 'stuffed with fluff', stuffed-with-fluff-ness, and a fact. So, given that 2 reduces to 3, 1 and 2 are plausibly different facts. Indeed, the natural thing to say here is not that they are identical, but that 1 is grounded in 2: <Pooh is stuffed with fluff> is true because 'Pooh' refers to Pooh, 'stuffed with fluff' refers to stuffed-with-fluff-ness, and Pooh is stuffed with fluff. Here then, the relation that holds between 1 and 2 is not that of identity but of grounding.

Call this latter understanding of 'correspondence', where to correspond just is to have the sub-propositional components of the proposition "pick out" various things where those things are ordered in the way the proposition says they are, 'deep correspondence'. And call the former understanding of 'correspondence', where to correspond just is for reality to be as the proposition says it is, 'shallow correspondence'. So we have

2a. That <Pooh is stuffed with fluff> *shallowly* corresponds to the fact that Pooh is stuffed with fluff

2b. That <Pooh is stuffed with fluff> *deeply* corresponds to the fact that Pooh is stuffed with fluff

where that which relates 1 and 2a is identity and that which relates 1 and 2b is grounding.

I claimed earlier that truthmaker theory is driven by the intuition that truthmakers must appear in the grounds of a proposition's being true. I then asked what these grounds are and how we should go about finding them. The above has provided us with an answer to this question. Distinguish first between deep and shallow correspondence and then see that the ground of a proposition's being true is the proposition's deeply corresponding to its truthmaker. We now have, in this answer, all that we need for an account of truthmaking.

## 4 What Truthmaking Is

I have argued, in the first two sections of this paper, that there is more to truthmaking than grounding and correspondence. But in spite of these negative con-

clusions, we have found something positive. Appealing to grounding allows us to capture the dependency found in truthmaking (that TTC failed to do this was its demise). And in appealing to deep correspondence, we have a plausible ground of a proposition's being true (that TTG failed to provide us with such a ground was its demise). So why not offer an account of truthmaking that incorporates both grounding and deep correspondence? Insofar as truthmakers are involved in the grounds of a proposition's being true, and insofar as a proposition's being true is grounded in its deeply corresponding to its truthmaker, then that truthmaking should have an account in terms of both grounding and deep correspondence is a natural position to take. We thus have

**Truthmakers are Deep Corresponders.**  $x$  makes true  $\langle p \rangle =_{df.} \langle p \rangle$ 's being true is grounded in  $\langle p \rangle$ 's deeply corresponding to  $x$ .<sup>30</sup>

Notice that Truthmakers are Deep Corresponders (TDC) avoids what was problematic about TTG: its inability to provide, in the manner specified in §1, relevant grounds of a proposition's being true. But there is no such problem with TDC. According to it,  $\langle p \rangle$  is true because  $\langle p \rangle$  deeply corresponds to its truthmaker. And this, as seen in both §1 and §3, does provide us with a relevant ground of a proposition's being true. Given it, we can say that truth is instanced because deep correspondence is. That is, truth is instanced because various sub-propositional relations are instanced and some fact exists.<sup>31</sup>

TDC also avoids what was problematic about TTC: its inability to account for

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<sup>30</sup>As a referee pointed out, it is open to interpret the right-hand side of this account as giving us, not a new account of *truthmaking* (truthmaking just is grounding), but a new account of *truthmakers*. So interpreted, the real truthmaker of  $\langle p \rangle$  is not  $x$  but the fact that  $\langle p \rangle$  deeply corresponds to  $x$ . But, at least according to truthmaker orthodoxy, this gets the facts about truthmakers wrong. Truthmakers are, typically, worldly. They do not, except in certain cases, involve propositions or proposition-to-world relations. Still, if one wants to insist that according to the present account, truthmakers are proposition's deeply corresponding to facts, then I can call our account an account of truthmaking\*, where a truthmaker\* is what everyone has been calling a truthmaker. Nothing will have been lost in doing this.

<sup>31</sup>A referee has suggested the following response: an analysis of truthmaking in terms, and only in terms, of a primitive notion of grounding is better, on grounds of parsimony, than an analysis in terms of grounding and deep correspondence since deep correspondence is in need of further analysis. But if deep correspondence requires an analysis, it is open to analyze it in terms of notions that we already accept. In this case, appealing to deep correspondence would not yield something less parsimonious (if we want such an appeal to yield a less parsimonious analysis, then what is required is not that it has an analysis, but that it doesn't). Moreover, appealing to parsimony here will only do the work of making an analysis of truthmaking in terms of a primitive notion of grounding better than an analysis in terms of grounding and deep correspondence if all else is equal. But that all else is not equal is precisely the point I am making in the text.

the dependency of a proposition's being true on its truthmaker. But this is no problem for TDC. In having it that  $\langle p \rangle$  is true is grounded in  $\langle p \rangle$ 's deeply corresponding with its truthmaker, and so grounded in a fact involving its truthmaker, TDC captures the dependency of  $\langle p \rangle$ 's being true on its truthmaker that we have, and want, in truthmaking.

I began this paper by asking three questions: 'what is truthmaking?', 'what is the relationship between truthmaking and theories of truth?', and 'what is the relationship between truthmaking and grounding?' TDC is the answer to the first and gives us an answer to the second and third. TDC has it that if standing in deep correspondence to a proposition grounds that the proposition is true, then what stands in deep correspondence also makes that proposition true. So TDC tells us how we can, from a proposition deeply corresponding to something, and so for a correspondence theory of truth, get truthmaking from it (I will discuss this further below). So we have an account that answers the second question. TDC also has it that truthmakers are constituents of facts that ground that propositions are true. So TDC tells us the role truthmakers play when it comes to grounding that propositions are true. So we have an account that answers the third question.

What we thus have here is an independently plausible account of truthmaking that has unifying power, integrating into one truthmaking, grounding, and deep correspondence. Of course, much more needs to be said concerning this account (see below for some of this more). But my intention here is not to say most of what can be said. It is rather, among other things, to motivate discussion on what truthmaking is by suggesting that if we want a better grip on truthmaking, then we need a strong grip on both deep correspondence (how it is that a proposition's sub-propositional components relate to the world) and grounding. Much of the work truthmaking can do will give way to the work correspondence theories of truth and grounding can, in tandem, do. So if we want to make headway in truthmaking, then work on grounding and the correspondence theory needs to be done. The account proposed in this paper is therefore a new and suggested step in making clear the relationship that exists between these different, though obviously intertwined, domains.

## 5 Some Results

Here are four things TDC can do: overcome a worry with truthmaking, show how truthmaking can be gotten from the correspondence theory, make it that whether or not truthmaking is a necessitating relation depends on what propositions are, and explain why a certain position in truthmaking yields a surprising view on the nature of truth.

### *Overcoming a Worry*

MacBride (2014, pp. 373-4) thinks that truthmaking cannot do the job of capturing how it is that truth depends on being. He asks “What enables or equips a state of affairs to be a truth-maker for one proposition rather than another?”<sup>32</sup> His conclusion is that in order to explain this, we need to dig into the structure of propositions and facts and that the truthmaking relation cannot do that, saying

Because the truth-making relation only holds between the state of affairs that *a* is F and the proposition that *a* is F, the truth-making relation cannot itself connect the state of affairs and the proposition in virtue of their internal structure. This would involve the truthmaking relation holding amongst the constituents of the state of affairs and the proposition and we have established that the truth-making relation does no such thing. (pp. 374-5)

But this is too fast. The *taller-than* relation holds only between individuals. But it does not follow from this, and it is false, that the *taller-than* relation cannot itself connect one individual to another in virtue of facts intrinsic to them. After all, *a* is taller than *b* in virtue of *a* being 5’11” and *b* being 5’9”. So it is a mistake to think that just because truthmaking holds only between propositions and facts, it cannot, in principle, connect these two kinds of things in virtue of facts intrinsic to them, viz. facts having to do with their internal structure.

Still, just because a relation can hold between things in virtue of their internal structure does not entail that in the case of truthmaking it does. And if we want an answer to MacBride’s question, we need to show that it can. Fortunately, we can.

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<sup>32</sup>Briggs (2012, p. 13) says something similar when she says “Truthmaker theorists need a way of clarifying the nature of truthmakers, or the nature of the truthmaking relation, so that you don’t come out as a truthmaker for the proposition that there are no unicorns.”

TDC says that  $x$  makes  $\langle p \rangle$  true just in case  $\langle p \rangle$ 's being true is grounded in  $\langle p \rangle$ 's deeply corresponding to  $x$ . Now why is it that  $x$  makes  $\langle p \rangle$  true rather than  $\langle q \rangle$ ? Because  $\langle p \rangle$ 's being true is grounded in the fact that  $\langle p \rangle$ , rather than  $\langle q \rangle$ , deeply corresponds to  $x$ . So we have an answer to MacBride's question. But this answer gives way to a new question: why is it that  $\langle p \rangle$ , rather than  $\langle q \rangle$ , deeply corresponds to  $x$ ? Fortunately, this question is easily answered by TDC. For part of what it is for  $\langle p \rangle$  to deeply correspond to  $x$  is for the sub-propositional components of  $\langle p \rangle$  to relate to  $x$  and its components. That is, an account of deep correspondence is an account that involves digging into the very structure of propositions and facts (for such accounts, see Russell 1912 and Rasmussen 2013). Indeed, we can borrow much of what MacBride himself says, which is broadly Tarskian, concerning truth's dependence on being. For we can have it that what it is for  $\langle a \text{ is } F \rangle$  to deeply correspond to the fact that  $a$  is  $F$  is for  $a$  to be the referent of ' $a$ ' (or its propositional correlate) and satisfy ' $\text{is } F$ ' (or its propositional correlate), where  $a$  satisfies ' $F$ ' if and only if ' $F$ ' has  $F$  as its value and  $a$  instantiates  $F$ . This is, with some minor differences, the story MacBride gives and is a story TDC can use in order to overcome MacBride's worry.

So by appealing to deep correspondence, and so in reaching into the structure of facts and propositions, TDC gives us an answer to MacBride's question and so overcomes his worry.

### *Getting Truthmaking from Correspondence*

Many think that the correspondence theory is committed to the following truthmaker principle:

If a proposition is true, then it is made true by something in the world.

Consider Russell (1912, p. 89), who says "we have to seek a theory of truth which ... makes it a property wholly dependent on upon the relations of beliefs to outside things". And the theory that Russell thinks does this, the theory that makes, as he says, "the truth or the falsehood of a belief always depend[ent] upon something which lies outside the belief" (p. 87) is the correspondence theory.<sup>33</sup> Or take

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<sup>33</sup>For other correspondence theorists who see the correspondence theory as being committed to a truthmaker principle, see, *inter alia*, Moore (1953, p. 254), Austin (1950, p. 117), Bigelow (1988, p. 122), Armstrong (1997, p. 14), Fumerton (2006), Cameron (2008b, p. 108), MacBride (2013, pp. 868-87), and Rasmussen (2013, pp. 174-5).

Acton (1935, p. 183), who says “The correspondence theory, as I understand it, also requires the truth of beliefs to depend upon the existence of facts”. Consider also Dummett (1959, p. 14) in this paper’s second epigraph who, though he is no fan of the correspondence theory, says that it expresses an important feature of the concept of truth not expressed by the law that  $p$  is true if and only if  $p$ , namely that a statement is true only if there is something in the world in virtue of which it is true. Oliver (1996, p. 69), also no friend of the correspondence theory, echoes this when he says that “the truth-maker principle is a sanitized version of a correspondence theory of truth”.

It is not surprising that many see in the correspondence theory a commitment to truthmaking. The above truthmaker principle is thought by many to express a basic intuition about truth and fits awfully well with the thought that, as the correspondence theory typically has it, truths correspond to some portion of the world. But in spite of this, it is not easy to see how, or in what manner, the correspondence theory is committed to truthmaker theory. David (2009, p. 145) discusses this and concludes that if we are to get truthmaking from correspondence, then we need a bridge-principle that “connects the notion of truth-making to the official terminology of the theory [of correspondence]”. Why the need for such a principle? Because according to David, there appears to be no other way to get truthmaking from correspondence, claiming that it is not part of the concept of correspondence that if a proposition corresponds to something, then the latter makes the former true.<sup>34</sup> So what we need is a principle that bridges correspondence to truthmaking. The one David decides on is the following

If  $y$  is a proposition and corresponds with  $x$  where  $x$  is a fact, then  $x$  makes true  $y$ .

Now don’t focus so much on what the principle says (such as whether the only things that can correspond to propositions, and so make propositions true, are facts). Focus instead on the fact that, in the absence of a deeper story, such a principle amounts to nothing more than a brute and extrinsic fact involving how correspondence and truthmaking are related. This principle is a conditional, postulating

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<sup>34</sup>According to David, saying otherwise risks circularity. If it were part of our concept of correspondence that correspondents make true the propositions they correspond to, then since the correspondence theory is typically understood as giving us an analysis of truth, and since it seems plausible to think that the truthmaking relation, in some sense, appeals to truth, then one would ultimately be fleshing out truth in terms of truth itself, which is circular. Hence for David, the risk in understanding correspondence in terms of truthmaking.

a sufficient condition for truthmaking. But it is natural to want an explanation of this principle. Without a deeper story, this principle appears ad hoc, offered only because of the perceived link between correspondence and truthmaking. David, however, does not provide us with an explanation of this principle and so leaves it as a stand-alone postulate. But TDC provides us with an explanation. Assuming that  $\langle p \rangle$  is true in virtue of its deeply corresponding to  $x$ , TDC has it that  $x$  makes  $\langle p \rangle$  true since what it is for  $x$  to make  $\langle p \rangle$  true is for the fact that  $\langle p \rangle$  is true to be grounded in  $\langle p \rangle$ 's deeply corresponding to  $x$ . So TDC underwrites a principle taking us from facts about (deep) correspondence to facts about truthmaking on the basis of the nature of truthmaking. So postulating a bridge-principle becomes otiose. The work done by such a principle is done, and done better, by TDC in that the latter gives us an elegant explanation of the correspondence theory's commitment to truthmaking. Whether or not you accept the correspondence theory, this is a nice result.

### *Truthmaker Necessitation*

Most who work on truthmaking accept

**T-Necessitation.** If  $x$  makes true  $\langle p \rangle$ , then necessarily if  $x$  exists, then  $\langle p \rangle$  is true.<sup>35</sup>

But given TDC, whether or not T-Necessitation is true depends on the modal status of propositions. Here is why. Notice that TDC is consistent with worlds where  $x$ , but not  $\langle p \rangle$ , exists. There is nothing about it that guarantees that if you have a truthmaker, then you have the truth that it makes true. Truthmakers are not, according to TDC, fully responsible for truths. So there is no quick road from truthmakers to the existence of propositions given TDC. So there is no quick road from truthmakers to a proposition's being true.

However, insofar as deep correspondence is an internal relation, and so holds in virtue of the intrinsic natures of propositions and truthmakers, and in so far as these intrinsic natures are not had contingently by propositions and truthmakers, then once we have propositions and truthmakers, we have deep correspondence. And from this TDC commits us to the following

**TP-Necessitation.** If  $x$  makes true  $\langle p \rangle$ , then necessarily if both  $x$  and  $\langle p \rangle$  exist, then  $\langle p \rangle$  is true.

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<sup>35</sup>For two exceptions, see Parsons (1999) and Briggs (2012).

Now we can get T-Necessitation from TDC and TP-Necessitation if we assume the following

**Ts-Necessitate-Ps.** If  $x$  makes true  $\langle p \rangle$ , then necessarily if  $x$  exists,  $\langle p \rangle$  exists.

Assuming that  $x$  makes true  $\langle p \rangle$ , it follows from this principle that necessarily, if  $x$  exists, then  $x$  and  $\langle p \rangle$  exist. And from TP-Necessitation, we know that if  $x$  and  $\langle p \rangle$  exist, then  $\langle p \rangle$  is true. By the transitivity of 'if-then', it follows that necessarily, if  $x$  exists, then  $\langle p \rangle$  is true, which is what T-Necessitation says.

But why accept Ts-Necessitate-Ps? The only reason I can see, given TDC, is that propositions are necessary existents. If I am right about this, then it shows us that, given TDC, whether or not T-Necessitation follows depends upon the modal status of propositions. So if we want truthmakers to necessitate that the truths they make true are true, we cannot look just to truthmakers. We also have to look to propositions. Far from being a bad thing, this seems to be the right thing to say. An account of truthmaking should not pronounce on the modal status of propositions. Whether or not propositions must exist when their truthmakers do has very little to do with the existence of truthmakers and everything to do with the kinds of things propositions are.

### *Maximalism and Pluralism*

Truthmaker maximalism ('maximalism' for short) says that every truth has a truthmaker.<sup>36</sup> Truth pluralism ('pluralism' for short) says that truth has more than one underlying nature, and therefore that there is more than one truth property.<sup>37</sup> I will not argue in favor of either maximalism or pluralism here. What I will do is show that if maximalism is false, then we have reason to think that pluralism is true and that TDC can explain why this is so.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>For some who accept maximalism, see Sider (2001, pp. 35-42), Armstrong (2004, p. 5), Cameron (2008c), and Schaffer (2010). For some who reject it, see Melia (2005), Parsons (2005), Tallant (2010) and Saenz (2014).

<sup>37</sup>Pluralism should not to be confused with thinking that there is more than one meaning of 'true'. Pluralism, as I am understanding it, is a metaphysical thesis, not a semantic one. For some who accept pluralism, see Wright (1992), Sher (1998), Lynch (2009), and Pedersen (2010). For some who reject it, see Tappolet (1997, 2000), Wright (2012), and Dodd (2013). For a book devoted to current issues on pluralism, see Pedersen and Wright (2013).

<sup>38</sup>For distinct but similar arguments in favor of thinking that if maximalism is false, pluralism is true, see Griffith (2015, p. 1170) who favors what he calls a 'pluralist theory of truthmaking'.

Here is an argument for thinking that if maximalism is false, then pluralism is true. Assume that, although some truths have truthmakers, maximalism is false. Now according to truthmaking, if some truths lack truthmakers, then that these truths are true does not, even in part, depend on what there is.<sup>39</sup> But for truths that have truthmakers, that these truths are true is dependent, at least in part, on what there is. So in some cases truth is, at least in part, explained by the existence of something and in other cases it is not. And once we admit this, pluralism becomes attractive. For truth cannot be both dependent and not dependent on what exists, which is a contradiction. But there is no contradiction if we say that there is more than one kind of truth. For that one kind of truth fails to depend on what exists is perfectly consistent with another kind that does. So, that some truths have truthmakers while others do not motivates thinking that truth has more than one underlying nature and so motivates pluralism since it, unlike truth monism, avoids the contradiction.<sup>40</sup>

Here is a similar but distinct way of motivating pluralism from the denial of maximalism. It is natural to think that the kind of truth that attaches to those truths that are typically said to lack truthmakers — negative existential, past-tensed, counterfactual, and modal truths — is of a different sort than the kind of truth that attaches to those that are typically said to have truthmakers — positive existentials and truths about how things presently and actually are. After all, the former truths are such that they do not need the existence of things to pin truth to them. Or to put it differently, they are not about what exists but are about what does not exist,

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This theory has it that truthmaking is a variegated phenomenon wherein positive truths, negative truths, counterfactual truths, etc. are made true in different ways. So instead of thinking that there is one relation of truthmaking and different kinds of truth, Griffith thinks that there is one kind of truth and different kinds of truthmaking. Griffith's paper is thus part of a movement that has it that metaphysical explanatory relations such as truthmaking, ontological dependence, and grounding are plural in nature (Bennett 2011 & 2017; Koslicki 2012; Wilson 2014).

<sup>39</sup>This is consistent with saying that truth supervenes on being since as McLaughlin and Bennett (2014) make clear, supervenience is not dependence. Along with Baron et al. (2014), I also think that according to truthmaking, if some truths lack truthmakers, then that such truths are true is a brute, ungrounded, fact.

<sup>40</sup>Notice that I am not saying that it motivates the kinds of pluralism popular in the literature on pluralism (Griffith 2015, p. 1171 also makes this point). The kinds of pluralism currently found in the literature focus on the differences between moral, mathematical, comic, legal, mental, etc. truths. The kind of pluralism discussed here focuses on the differences between truths that depend on the existence of something and those that do not. I do not take this to be an objection to the pluralism described here. After all, why think that the kinds of pluralism popular in the literature have a monopoly on the kinds of pluralism there are?

or what did exist, or what would exist, or what could exist.<sup>41</sup> This is not so with the latter truths. But then it becomes reasonable to think that the former altogether instantiate a different kind of truth from the latter. The latter truths, unlike the former, instantiate the kind of truth that needs something to, at least in part, explain why these truths are true. They instantiate the kind of truth that is, in some sense of 'about', about what exists. Forget about the possibility of a contradiction and just notice the plausibility of thinking that we must be dealing with different kinds of truth.

So I think that if maximalism is denied, we have reason to think that truth is plural.<sup>42</sup> And TDC nicely explains this. For truths with truthmakers, TDC has it that such truths deeply correspond to something. So TDC has it that for such truths, the correspondence theory of truth is true. But on pain of having truthmakers, the correspondence theory cannot be true for truths that lack truthmakers. So TDC has it that for truths that have truthmakers, the correspondence theory is true and for truths that do not, it is not.<sup>43</sup> So if some truths have truthmakers while other do not, TDC yields that truth is plural in nature. We therefore have, because it follows from what truthmaking is, an elegant explanation for why if maximalism is false, pluralism is true.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>As Merricks (2007, pp. 64 & 166) says, they are not about what exists because they are not, in some real sense, about anything. Merricks distinguishes between a sense of aboutness on which, for example, <there are no unicorns> is about the property of being a unicorn, and a sense of aboutness on which <there are no unicorns> is not about unicorns since there are none (pp. 32-3). Since the latter has to do with what there is, it is the sense that, according to Merricks, is relevant to truthmaking. And given this sense, negative existential, past-tensed, counterfactual, and modal truths are not about anything. For a critical discussion of Merricks on aboutness, see Schaffer (2008, pp. 302-307).

<sup>42</sup>Mulligan (2007, p. 52) says something similar when he says "if truthmaker maximalism is false, ... then truthmakers will not figure in a general account of truth, as opposed to accounts of some types of truths".

<sup>43</sup>Assuming both TDC and the denial of maximalism, what theory of truth should we accept for truthmakerless truths? Perhaps primitivism will do. If the truth of <p> is not dependent, even in part, on what there is, then maybe (though I am not sure about this) we should say that <p> instantiates the primitive, undefined, property *being true*.

<sup>44</sup>Here is another way pluralism and truthmaking relate. Consider a version of pluralism according to which there are different ways of deeply corresponding (Acton 1935: 191; Sher 1998, 2004, 2005, 2013). Given TDC, what follows is a kind of pluralism about truthmaking: *x* makes <p> true just in case <p>'s being true is grounded in its deeply corresponding to *x* in way<sub>1</sub>, or way<sub>2</sub>, or way<sub>3</sub>, and so on. So pluralism about deep correspondence results in pluralism about truthmaking. Again, TDC has import in showing us the various ways that truth and truthmaking can relate.

## 6 Closing

This paper had three goals, all of which centered around the project of giving an account of truthmaking. The first was to reject competitors to the proposed account. Here I argued that truthmaking should not be cashed out purely in terms of grounding or correspondence. The second was to give the account. This involved appealing both to grounding and deep correspondence. And the third was to show some of what results once we have this account.

Let me now close by relating TDC to an existing issue in grounding. There is presently a bit of a push in favor of thinking that metaphysical dependence comes in many flavors. Some who make this push are all for grounding (Bennett 2011, Griffith 2014, Rettler 2017). Others who do are not (Koslicki 2015, Wilson 2014). And one of the flavors some of these philosophers think metaphysical dependence comes in is truthmaking (Bennett 2011, p. 84; Griffith 2014, pp. 212-3; Koslicki 2015, p. 340; Rettler 2017, §5.2).

Now the present project is not opposed to thinking that metaphysical dependence comes in many flavors. But it (or at least its spirit) is opposed to a certain understanding of how this kind of dependence can come. What I have attempted to do is understand truthmaking, in part, in terms of grounding (what Wilson (2014) calls 'big-G' grounding). So even if truthmaking is a kind of metaphysical dependence (as it surely is), it is a reduced kind. The account of truthmaking offered thus can and should be seen as going hand in hand with a project that seeks to understand metaphysical dependence relations other than grounding in terms of grounding. It goes hand in hand with a view that has it that there is one primitive metaphysical dependence relation, grounding, that in large part defines all others.

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