

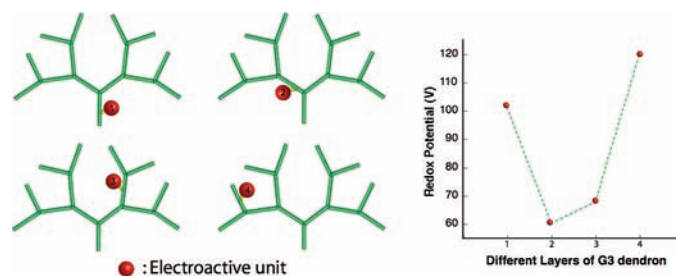
## Site-Specific Installation and Study of Electroactive Units in Every Layer of Dendrons

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Whereas encapsulation of functional groups at the core of dendrimers is well-understood, very little is known about their intermediate layers or even the periphery. Here we report on a systematic investigation of every layer of dendrimers by incorporating a single ferrocene unit in well-defined locations in dendrons. Site-specific incorporation of the ferrocene unit was achieved by utilizing the dendrimer sequencing methodology. We show here that the redox potential values of ferrocene at intermediate layers were remarkably different from those at the core and the periphery. Although redox potential values were location-dependent, no significant change in the rate of heterogeneous electron transfer ( $k_0$ ) was observed with respect to locations. This was attributed to the possibility that free rotation of dendrimer nullifies the distance between the electrode and ferrocene unit. Finally, we also show that no Faradaic current was observed for the amphiphilic assemblies of these dendrons, whereas the same dendron did exhibit significant Faradaic current in nonassembling solvent environments.

### Introduction

Dendrimers, despite their complexities, are attractive macromolecular architectures as they can be obtained with well-defined molecular weights and a precise number of functional groups.<sup>1</sup> Because dendrimers become globular at higher molecular weights, there has been an interest in

functionalizing them with photo-, electro-, and catalytically active units for a variety of applications.<sup>2–4</sup> Generally, these

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active units are incorporated either at the core, where there is significant encapsulation and protection from the environment, or at the periphery of dendrimers, where opportunity exists for loading a large number of functional moieties.<sup>2–6</sup> While there have been comparisons between the solvent-exposed peripheral functionalities and the well-encapsulated core functional groups, very little is known about the intermediate layers in these molecules. Therefore, the microenvironment variations from the core to the periphery of the dendrimers are not well understood.

Note that a significant amount of work has been previously reported on the encapsulation of electroactive functionalities using dendritic scaffolds.<sup>2–6</sup> These works have specifically focused on understanding features such as the effect of generational variations in dendrimers and the nature of dendrimer backbones upon the encapsulation efficiency of electroactive scaffolds incorporated at the core or focal points of dendritic architectures. Our work here is focused on understanding the change in encapsulation of an electroactive functionality at the periphery, focal point, and the intermediate layers of dendrons. One of the issues in comparing different locations of a dendrimer involves the variation in number density of the functional moieties in different layers. For example, in a third generation monodendron, the number of identical functional groups in the periphery would be eight compared to a single focal point moiety. There is a progressive variation in this number in the intermediate layers. This variation significantly complicates meaningful comparisons regarding the microenvironment of different locations. An unambiguous way to address this issue would be to incorporate a single active functional

group at a predetermined location of the dendrimer. To be successful in such a venture, it is necessary that we access synthetic methods that allow variations in the two Bs of an AB<sub>2</sub> monomer. In a preliminary communication,<sup>7</sup> we had incorporated a photoactive anthracene moiety at precise locations within benzyl ether dendrons using the synthetic methods we had developed previously.<sup>8</sup> In that report, we utilized Stern–Volmer quenching to probe the access of guest molecules to various locations within dendrimers, where we observed a precipitous change in the guest access at the intermediate layers of the dendrimers. While those findings provide insights in homogeneous solutions, it is invaluable to also understand the accessibility of functional groups in dendrimers in the context of heterogeneous electron transfer, since this provides more direct information on encapsulation and dendritic shielding effects. Here, we report on the design, syntheses, and electrochemical investigation of dendrons with a single ferrocene unit at different locations.

## Results and Discussion

**Molecular Design and Synthesis.** We chose to incorporate ferrocene as the electroactive unit within these dendrons, because its electrochemical behavior is well understood.<sup>5,6,9</sup> We have utilized our recently reported biaryl dendrimers as the scaffold, because of the additional phenyl ring, which provides a handle to incorporate electroactive functionalities (i.e., in addition to the AB<sub>2</sub> functionalities necessary for the dendritic growth).<sup>10</sup> The biaryl dendrimers contain a carboxylic ester functionality on one face and a decyl moiety on the other side in each of the repeat units within the dendron.<sup>10a</sup> To install a single ferrocene unit at a specific location, one of the decyl units was replaced with a ferrocene unit. The structures of dendrons up to third generation are shown in Chart 1. It is important to reiterate that, within these structures, there is only one ferrocene unit at any one time. For example, in a G3 dendron, when the peripheral layer contains a ferrocene unit (R<sub>4</sub> = Fc derivative), all other R groups in the structure are decyl moieties (R<sub>1</sub>–R<sub>3</sub> = n-C<sub>10</sub>H<sub>21</sub>). To easily follow the structures of the dendrons during our discussion, we have used the following naming scheme. We have assigned the focal point of the dendron as

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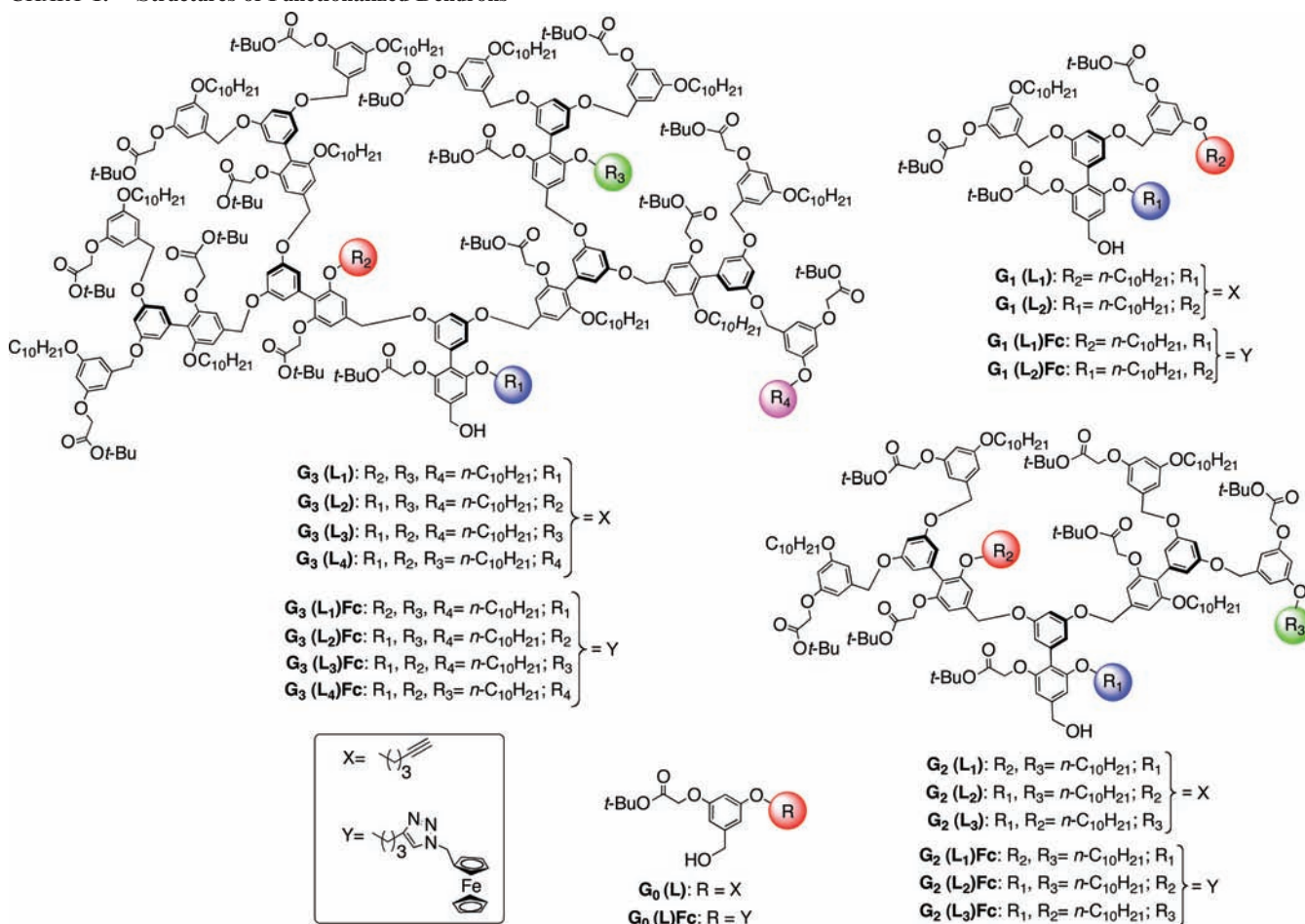
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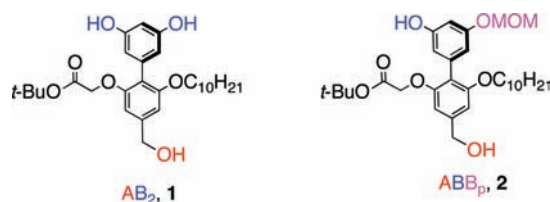
## CHART 1. Structures of Functionalized Dendrons



the first layer L1. Thus, for a G3 dendron, the focal point functionalization would be **G3(L1)**, while the functionalization at the periphery would correspond to **G3(L4)** (see Chart 1).

Although the structures targeted here are focused on incorporation of ferrocene, we envisaged that it would be useful to have a general synthetic strategy that allows for functionalization of the dendrimer with versatile active units at desired locations. Therefore, we were interested in a modular synthetic scheme, where the ferrocene unit is incorporated in the final stage of the synthesis. For this purpose, incorporation of a single reactive functionality that can tolerate the reaction conditions the syntheses of biaryl dendrimers is described. We have chosen an alkyne unit as the reactive functionality so that any desired active unit can be incorporated easily through the copper-catalyzed Huisgen 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition, which is popularly known as “click” chemistry.<sup>11</sup>

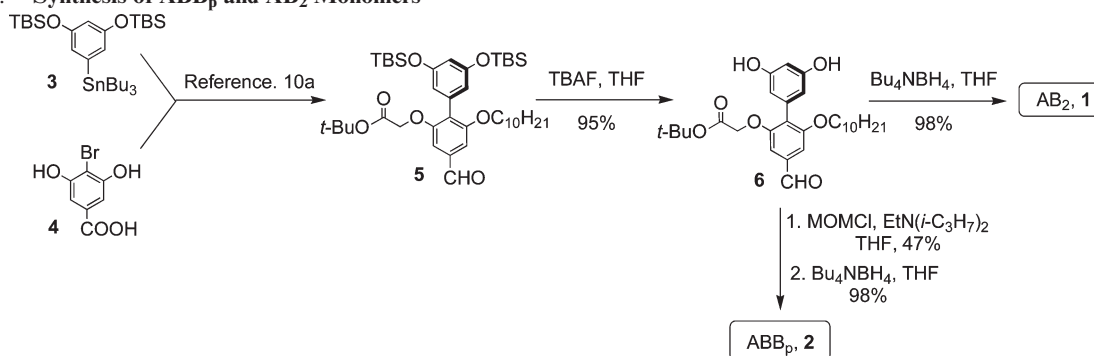
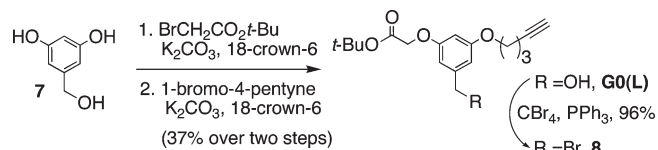
Incorporation of a single functional unit at the periphery of a dendron is more challenging than that at the focal point. This is because the focal point has only one location for

CHART 2. Structures AB<sub>2</sub> and ABB<sub>p</sub> Monomers

functionalization, whereas there are multiple identical locations in the periphery. For example, the G3 dendron (Chart 1) contains eight identical peripheral units; here the challenge resides in functionalizing only one of them. To achieve this, we utilized our dendrimer sequencing methodology that is based on protection–deprotection strategies.<sup>8b,c</sup> Since our dendrons are based on AB<sub>2</sub> repeating unit **1** (Chart 2),<sup>10a</sup> it is necessary to differentiate the two B functionalities in order to introduce sequences within the dendrimer. To execute this, one of the B functionalities of AB<sub>2</sub> should be protected and thus the targeted monomer is designated as ABB<sub>p</sub> **2** (Chart 2). After reacting the unprotected B functionality with one equivalent of A, the protected B will be liberated and then reacted with a different A's on to an AB<sub>2</sub> building block. Based on this approach for the synthesis of precisely functionalized dendrons (Chart 1),

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SCHEME 1. Synthesis of  $ABB_p$  and  $AB_2$  MonomersSCHEME 2. Synthesis of  $G_0(L)$  Dendron and Its Bromide

the main building blocks required are the  $AB_2$  biaryl unit **1**, and the  $ABB_p$  unit **2**, and the peripheral unit  $G_0(L)$ .

The syntheses of the building blocks **1** and **2** started with *tert*-butyldimethylsilyl (TBS) protected aryl stannane **3** and 3,5-dihydroxy-4-bromobenzoic acid **4**, following our previous reports to obtain the biaryl aldehyde **5**.<sup>10a</sup> Deprotection of TBS groups followed by the reduction of aldehyde provided the  $AB_2$  monomer **1**. The bottleneck here involved the monoprotection of  $AB_2$  monomer **1**. Our initial trials to monoprotect **1** using MOM-Cl in the presence of  $K_2CO_3$  had resulted in the hydrolysis of *tert*-butyl ester. When Hunig's base was used instead of  $K_2CO_3$ , there was no selectivity toward the phenolic hydroxyl group over the primary aliphatic hydroxyl group. Finally, the monoprotection was achieved on the biaryl aldehyde **6**, thereby avoiding the presence of the primary aliphatic hydroxyl group during the protection step. The final reduction on the monoprotected aldehyde yielded the monomer  $ABB_p$  **2** (Scheme 1).

The periphery  $G_0(L)$  containing alkyne moiety was synthesized by first mono-alkylating 3,5-dihydroxybenzyl alcohol (**7**) with *tert*-butylbromoacetate in the presence of potassium carbonate and 18-crown-6 (Scheme 2). The mono-alkylated compound was further treated with 1-bromo-4-pentyne to afford  $G_0(L)$ . The resultant hydroxymethyl compound  $G_0(L)$  was converted to its bromide **8** using a  $CBr_4/PPh_3$  combination. Along with these building blocks, we also require the bromides of symmetrical dendrons  $G_0-Br$ ,  $G_1-Br$ , and  $G_2-Br$  (Chart 3), which were synthesized following our earlier report.<sup>10a</sup>

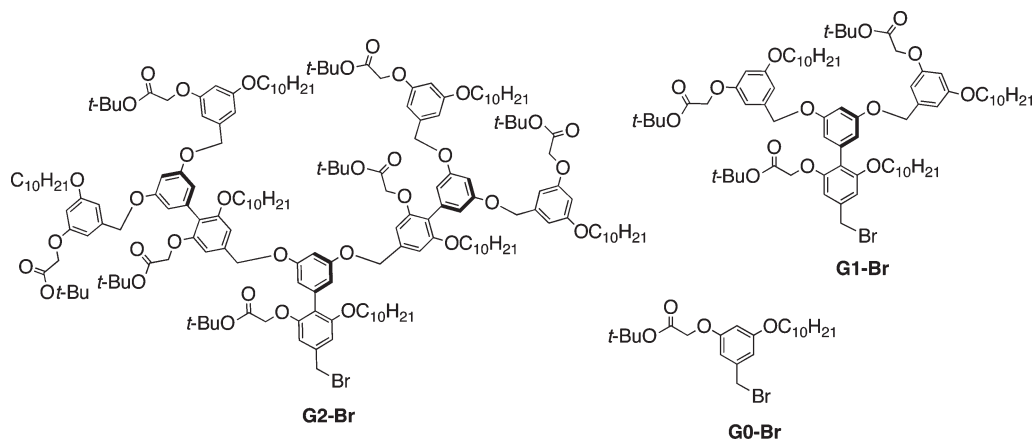
The first generation dendron  $G_1(L_2)$  (Chart 1) was synthesized by sequentially introducing two different peripheral units. The monomer **1** was first treated with a stoichiometric amount of  $G_0-Br$  to get monosubstituted compound **9**, which was further treated with bromide **8** to obtain  $G_1(L_2)$  (Scheme 3). Note that here we did not utilize our protection-deprotection strategy, because of the easy separation of monosubstituted compound from a mixture of products. However, the separation was cumbersome in the case of the second and third generation dendrons. Thus we have decided

to use the monoprotected  $ABB_p$  monomer **2**. To synthesize the second generation  $G_2(L_3)$ , monomer **2** was treated with symmetrical  $G_1-Br$  in the presence of  $K_2CO_3$  and the resultant compound was subjected to MOM-deprotection to afford the compound **10**. The phenolic compound **10** was then treated with the bromination of  $G_1(L_2)$ , to provide  $G_2(L_3)$  dendron. Similarly, treating the  $ABB_p$  monomer **2** with  $G_2-Br$  followed by the deprotection of MOM afforded the compound **12**, which was further treated with **13** to yield  $G_3(L_4)$  dendron as shown in Scheme 3.

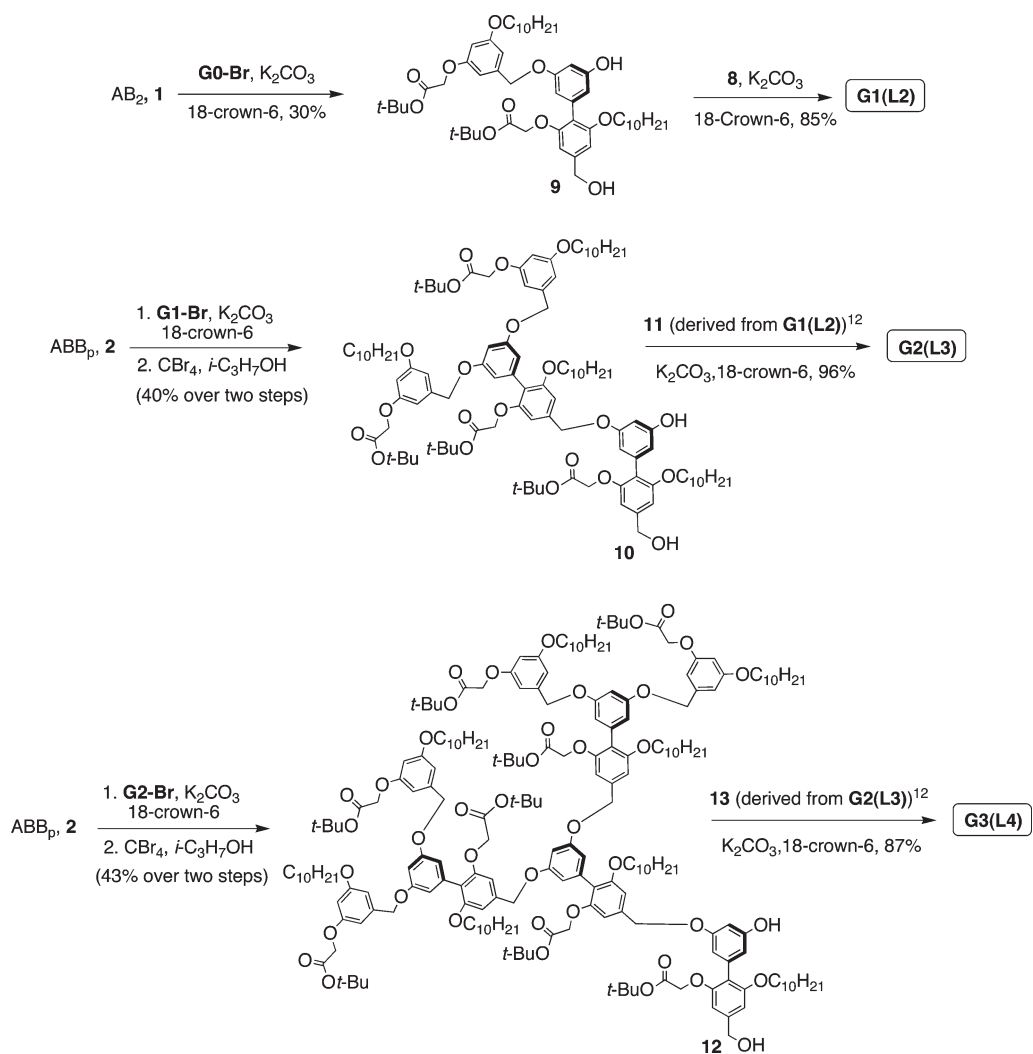
Synthesis of dendrons with the functionality at the focal point is relatively straightforward, except that it requires a central core unit **14** that contains an alkyne moiety. The synthesis of core unit **14** is outlined in Scheme 4. The key step in the synthesis of this unit is the Stille coupling between the MOM-protected aryl stannane **15** and aldehyde **16**. The aryl stannane **15** was obtained from commercially available 1-bromo-3,5-dimethoxybenzene **17** in three steps. The steps involve the deprotection of methyl groups followed by the protection of free hydroxyl groups using MOM-Cl. The resultant MOM-protected bromobenzene was treated with *n*-BuLi, followed by tributyltin chloride to obtain the aryl stannane **15**. On the other hand, the bottom ring **16** was obtained from 4-bromo-3,5-dihydroxybenzoic acid **4**, which was first converted to the corresponding benzyl alcohol, 4-bromo-3,5-dihydroxybenzyl alcohol (Scheme 4). This molecule was first treated with 1 equiv of *tert*-butyl bromoacetate to isolate the monosubstituted product. The product was then subjected to PCC oxidation to yield the aldehyde **16**. The 4-bromobenzaldehyde **16** and aryl stannane **15** were then subjected to the palladium(II)-catalyzed Stille coupling reaction to achieve the biaryl compound. The biaryl compound was further treated with 1-bromo-4-pentyne followed by the reduction of the aldehyde and the final deprotection of the MOM groups, yielding the monomer **14**. The core functionalized first generation  $G_1(L_1)$  was synthesized by treating monomer **14** with 2 equiv of  $G_0-Br$  as shown in Scheme 5. Similarly, the second and third generation dendrons,  $G_2(L_1)$  and  $G_3(L_1)$ , were obtained by treating monomer **14** with  $G_1-Br$  and  $G_2-Br$ , respectively (Scheme 5).

Functionalizing the intermediate layers also requires the sequencing methodology. It is important to note that the  $G_2$  dendron has only one intermediate layer, whereas the  $G_3$  dendron has two intermediate layers. Thus three totally different dendrons,  $G_2(L_2)$ ,  $G_3(L_2)$ , and  $G_3(L_3)$ , had to be synthesized. As shown in Scheme 6, the synthesis of  $G_2(L_2)$

CHART 3. Structures of G0-Br, G1-Br, and G2-Br



SCHEME 3. Synthesis of Peripherally Functionalized Dendrons

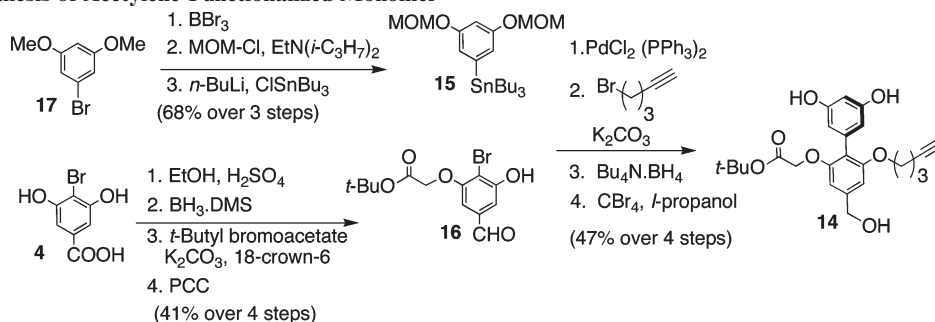


was accomplished by first converting the core functionalized lower generation **G1(L1)** to its bromide using a CBr<sub>4</sub>/PPh<sub>3</sub> combination and then treating the bromide with compound **10**. Similarly, other dendrons **G3(L2)** and **G3(L3)** were synthesized by bromination of corresponding second

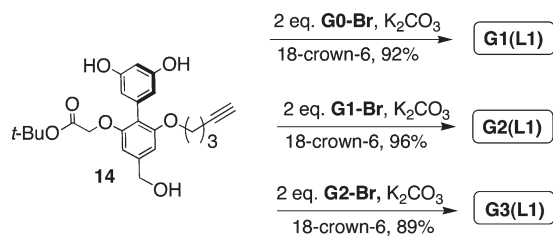
generation dendrons and subsequent treatment with compound **12** (Scheme 6).

After the site-specific incorporation of the acetylene moiety into the dendrons, we moved on to install the ferrocene unit through click chemistry. Treatment of these

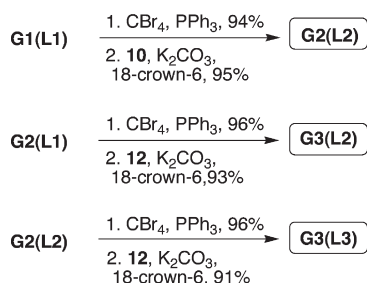
## SCHEME 4. Synthesis of Acetylene-Functionalized Monomer



## SCHEME 5. Synthesis of Functionalized Dendrons at the Focal Point



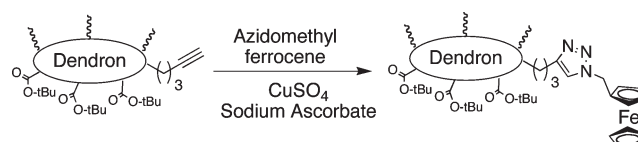
## SCHEME 6. Synthesis of Intermediate Layer Functionalized Dendrons



acetylene-containing dendrons with azidomethyl ferrocene in the presence of a catalytic amount of copper sulfate and sodium ascorbate afforded the corresponding triazole derivatives as exemplified in Scheme 7. Structures of these ferrocene-incorporated dendrons are shown in Chart 1. All these dendrimers were characterized using  $^1\text{H}$  NMR,  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR, and matrix-assisted laser-desorption time-of-flight (MALDI-TOF) mass spectrometry.<sup>12</sup>

**Electrochemical Studies.** The electrochemical properties of the ferrocene-incorporated dendrons were investigated using cyclic voltammetry. Cyclic voltammograms (CV) were recorded in DMF using  $10\ \mu\text{m}$  platinum disk as the working electrode, Pt wire as counter electrode, and  $\text{Ag}/\text{Ag}^+$  as reference electrode.<sup>12</sup> All dendrons showed the s-shaped steady state CV (see Figure 1 for example) anticipated in microelectrode-based experiments. The redox potentials ( $E_{1/2}$ ) obtained for the ferrocene unit in these dendrons are shown in Table 1. In all these cases, the nondendron molecule **G0** could be considered as the control, which exhibited an  $E_{1/2}$  of about 103 mV. The two layers in the lowest generation dendrons, **G1**, did not show any significant difference in the

## SCHEME 7. Incorporation of Ferrocene into the Alkyne Containing Dendrons through Click Chemistry



redox potential of the ferrocene unit (118 mV for the focal point and 114 mV for the peripheral layer). However, the relative  $E_{1/2}$  values of the **G2** and **G3** dendrons were interesting. In the case of **G2**, the redox potentials of the focal point and the peripheral layer were similar to those observed with **G1**. However, the  $E_{1/2}$  of the ferrocene functionality placed at the intermediate layer in this dendron was found to

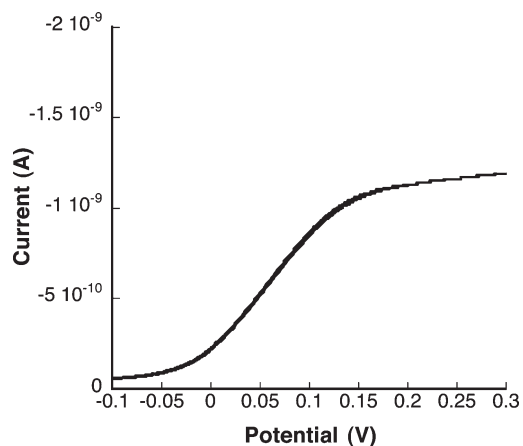
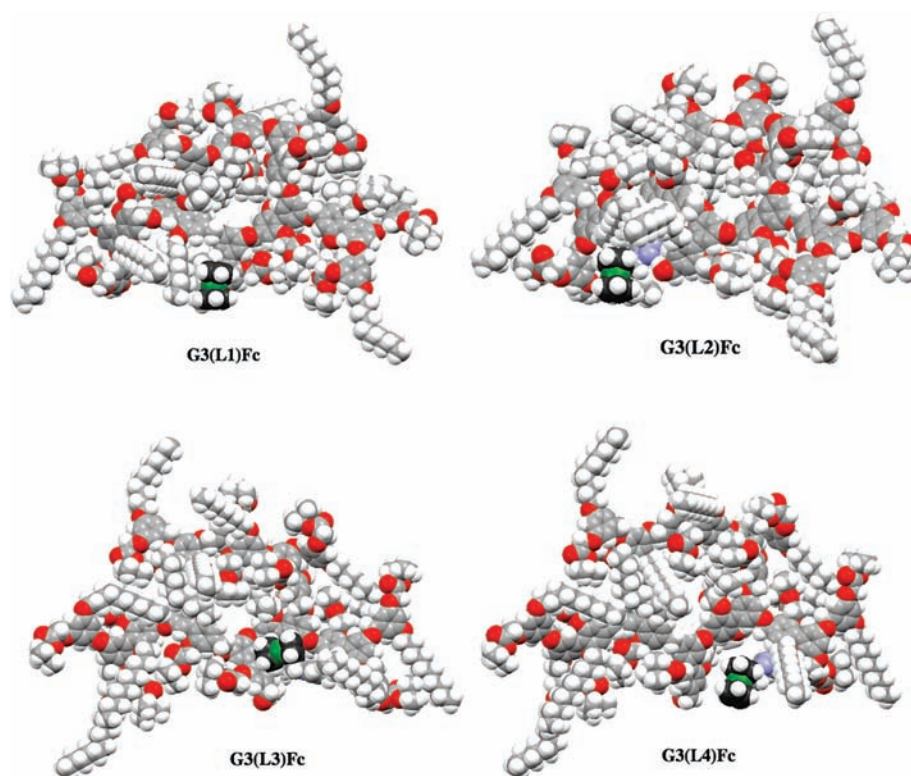


FIGURE 1. Steady-state cyclic voltammogram of **G3(L2)Fc** in DMF.

TABLE 1. Electrochemical Data for Non-amphiphilic Dendrons in DMF

dendrons	$E_{1/2}$	$D_0$ ( $\text{cm}^2/\text{s}$ )	$k^0$ ( $\text{cm/s}$ )
<b>G0(L)Fc</b>	103	$5.1 \times 10^{-6}$	$1.9 \times 10^{-4}$
<b>G1(L1)Fc</b>	118	$2.0 \times 10^{-6}$	$1.8 \times 10^{-4}$
<b>G1(L2)Fc</b>	114	$2.0 \times 10^{-6}$	$3.1 \times 10^{-4}$
<b>G2(L1)Fc</b>	113	$1.0 \times 10^{-6}$	$1.5 \times 10^{-4}$
<b>G2(L2)Fc</b>	69	$1.0 \times 10^{-6}$	$1.9 \times 10^{-4}$
<b>G2(L3)Fc</b>	117	$1.0 \times 10^{-6}$	$1.4 \times 10^{-4}$
<b>G3(L1)Fc</b>	101	$1.1 \times 10^{-6}$	$1.4 \times 10^{-4}$
<b>G3(L2)Fc</b>	60	$1.1 \times 10^{-6}$	$1.5 \times 10^{-4}$
<b>G3(L3)Fc</b>	68	$1.1 \times 10^{-6}$	$1.8 \times 10^{-4}$
<b>G3(L4)Fc</b>	120	$1.1 \times 10^{-6}$	$1.7 \times 10^{-4}$

(12) See Supporting Information for details.



**FIGURE 2.** Energy-minimized structures of G3 dendrons with ferrocene at different locations (ferrocene is shown in black and green colors).

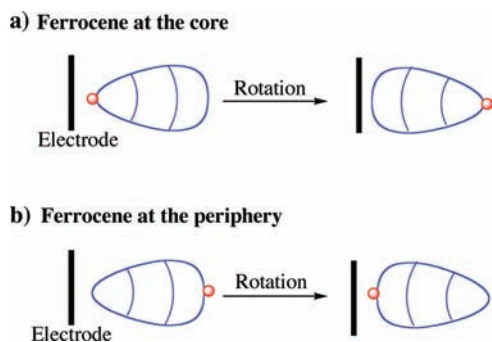
be 69 mV, compared to 113 and 117 mV for the focal point and the peripheral ferrocenes, respectively. A similar trend was also observed with the **G3** dendron. In this generation, the ferrocene unit could be incorporated in four different locations, as there are two intermediate layers. Once again, the redox potential of the ferrocene incorporated at the intermediate layer was found to be about 40–60 mV different from those observed with the focal point and peripheral functional groups (see Table 1). The  $E_{1/2}$  values of the ferrocene at the intermediate layers were found to be 60 and 68 mV, compared to 101 and 120 mV for the focal point and peripheral ferrocenes, respectively. Difference in  $E_{1/2}$  value is related to the thermodynamic stability differences between the reduced and the oxidized state of the electroactive molecule. The lower redox potentials, observed for an otherwise identical ferrocene unit at the intermediate layers, suggest that the ferrocenium ion product is more stabilized in these intermediate layers compared to the peripheral functionality. These could be taken to suggest that the ferrocene units located in the intermediate layers are less solvent-exposed compared to the focal point and the periphery. It is also likely that the ferrocenium ( $\text{Fe}^{3+}$ ) ion is better stabilized by the dendrimer backbone compared to DMF. This is an interesting observation with dendrons. Conventional wisdom about dendrons and dendrimers suggest that the focal point or core of these molecules provide significantly different microenvironments, compared to the periphery. With these studies, we clearly show that it is the intermediate layers that behave significantly differently from the focal point and periphery of the dendrons. A question is: why not interpret these results to suggest that the ferrocenes at the intermediate layers are more exposed to the solvent, because the periphery is more crowded (sterically) and the

ferrocene unit is encapsulated at the core? The fact that the  $E_{1/2}$  value in lower generation dendrons, where the ferrocene unit is clearly more solvent-exposed, are closer to the peripheral and focal point  $E_{1/2}$  values in higher generation dendrons supports our explanation that the dendrimer backbone indeed facilitates the oxidation of ferrocene units in the intermediate layers of the dendrons.

To visualize these dendrons, we obtained the energy-minimized structures of **G3** dendron using MM2 (Figure 2). Interestingly, ferrocene functionality was enclosed by the biaryl backbone in the case of **G3(L3)Fc** dendron that contains ferrocene in the intermediate layer, while it was placed out of the dendrimer backbone in dendrons that contain ferrocene unit at the core and periphery. However, in contrast to our interpretation, the ferrocene placed in the other intermediate layer of **G3(L2)Fc** dendron seems to be still presented at edge of dendrimer backbone. Note that these structures are obtained by energy minimization in the gas phase and thus do not account for the differential solvation of substituents. We suggest this as the reason for the observed discrepancy.

Considering the differences in the thermodynamics of the redox active species in different layers, we were also interested in investigating the kinetics of the heterogeneous electron transfer reactions. As a first step toward the calculation of kinetic parameters, the diffusion coefficient ( $D_0$ ) was calculated utilizing the limiting current obtained from the steady-state CV for each of the generation. We had assumed that within a generation the  $D_0$  would be identical, and thus the estimation of  $D_0$  was achieved using the more abundantly available focal point functionalized dendrons of each generation. As shown in Table 1, the  $D_0$  decreases upon increase in generation number, which is the general trend observed for dendrimers. The obtained  $D_0$  values were utilized to





**FIGURE 3.** Orientation of G3 dendron toward the electrode as a result of its free rotation.

calculate the standard rate constants for heterogeneous electron transfer ( $k^0$ ).<sup>13,51</sup>

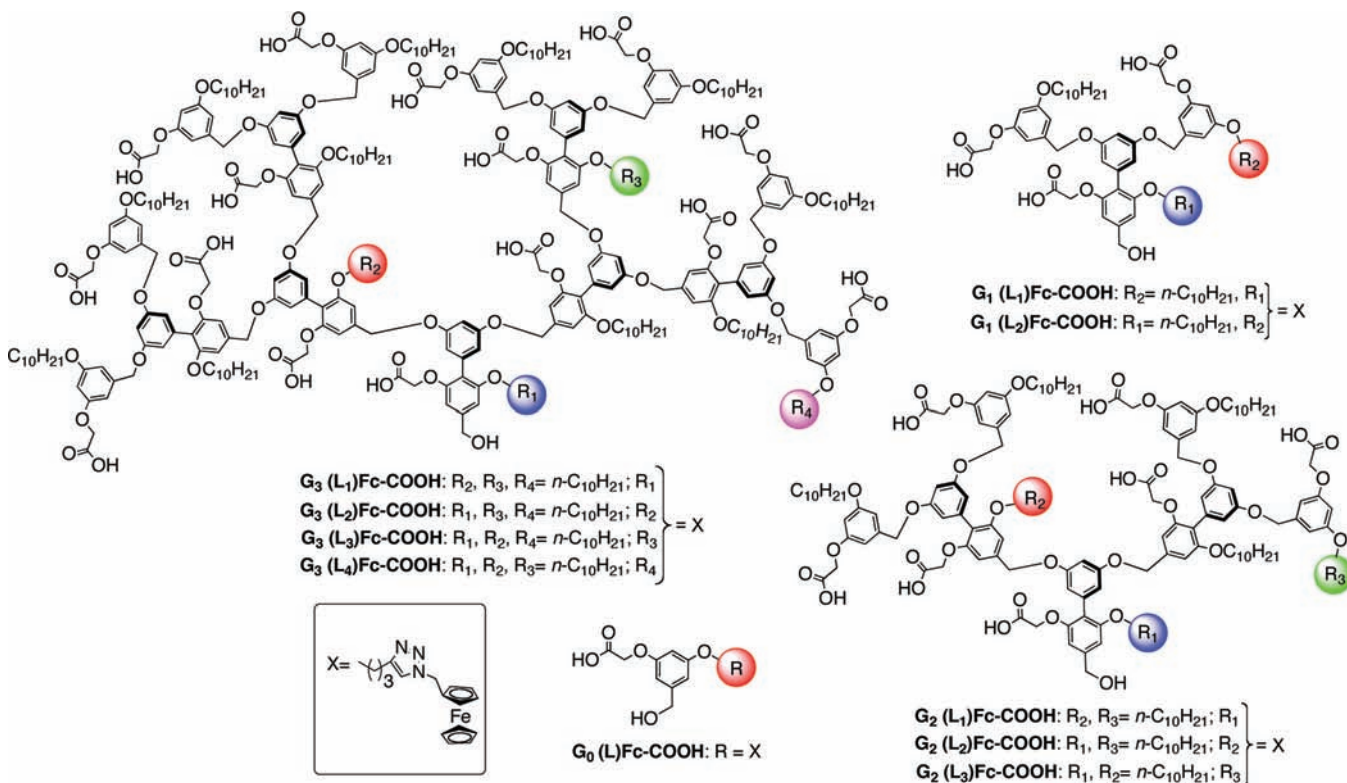
Whereas the  $D_0$  values were found to follow the general trend, the  $k^0$  values did not vary significantly as a function of generation number or the location of the ferrocene (Table 1). All rate constant values were found to be about  $(1-2) \times 10^{-4}$  cm/s. Similar  $k^0$  values for the first and second-generation dendrons is perhaps not surprising (we do not have an explanation for the slightly higher  $k^0$  for **G1(L2)Fc**). However, the insignificant changes in  $k^0$  of ferrocenes in various layers of higher generation dendrons are surprising. This is possibly due to the free rotation of the dendrons that leads to an orientation in which the ferrocene is conveniently accessed by the electrode irrespective of its location. For example, in the case of **G3(L1)Fc** and **G3(L4)Fc**, the ferrocene is at the core and at the periphery of the dendron, respectively. It is reasonable that the dendrons could rotate

rapidly near the electrode surface. Therefore, it is easy to imagine that the rotation of the dendron leads to an orientation in which the ferrocene is equidistant from the electrode in both **G3(L1)Fc** and **G3(L4)Fc** as illustrated in Figure 3. Such orientations result in similar  $k^0$  values for both **G3(L1)Fc** and **G3(L4)Fc**. The energy-minimized structures in Figure 2 further supports this hypothesis. Similarly, ferrocene in **G3(L2)Fc** and **G3(L3)Fc** are only one layer away from **G3(L1)** and **G3(L4)**, respectively. Hence, it is possible that the  $k^0$  value is essentially unchanged. These results show that the dendrimer growth does not effectively shield the ferrocene unit from the electrode, although the ferrocenium ion product is stabilized differently in various layers of the dendrons.

Finally, we were interested in studying the electrochemical behavior of these ferrocene units in amphiphilic supramolecular assemblies that could be obtained from these dendrons. An interesting feature about the biaryl-based dendrons is that the hydrolysis of the *tert*-butyl esters would provide the facially amphiphilic dendrons shown in Chart 4.<sup>12</sup> We have previously shown that these dendrons provide unique environment-dependent assemblies.<sup>10a</sup> Therefore, the carboxylic ester functional groups in the ferrocene-containing dendrons above were hydrolyzed.<sup>14</sup> To study the electrochemical behavior of the ferrocene units incorporated within these amphiphilic dendrons, these molecules were first dissolved in water at a concentration above their respective critical aggregation concentrations (CACs) to form the micellar assemblies.

The electrochemical studies of these assemblies were then performed using the platinum microelectrode as the working electrode. We were surprised to find that there was no

**CHART 4.** Structures of Ferrocene Incorporated Amphiphilic Dendrons





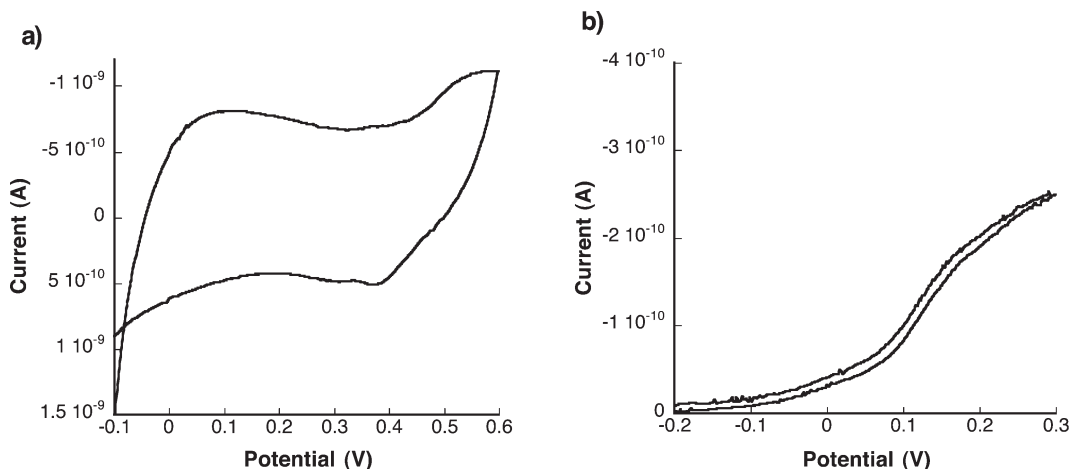


FIGURE 4. Cyclic voltammogram of (a) **G3(L1)Fc-COOH** in water and (b) **G3(L1)Fc-COOH** in DMF.

discernible features in the CV from the dendrons (Figure 4a). The behavior was found to be rather capacitive in nature. This observation could be due to one of the two following reasons: (1) ferrocene has detached from the dendron or became electro-inactive during the ester hydrolysis and work up; (2) ferrocene is buried in the hydrophobic pocket of these rather large micellar assemblies (~40–100 nm). To distinguish these possibilities, we recorded the CV of the hydrolyzed dendron in DMF. Dynamic light scattering (DLS) studies of these dendrons have confirmed that these amphiphilic dendrons do not aggregate in DMF, since the solvent is compatible with both the carboxylic acid and the decyl functionalities. Therefore, we should observe a steady-state CV if the ferrocene is intact and electro-active. Indeed, we did observe a steady-state CV for the hydrolyzed dendron, which confirms that the ferrocene is indeed electro-active and intact (Figure 4b).

It is also interesting to note that although there was no significant faradaic current from the micellar assemblies of all the amphiphilic dendrons, the small molecule surfactant **G0(L)Fc-COOH** displayed a steady-state CV. A possible explanation for this is that, in the case of small molecule surfactant **G0(L)Fc-COOH**, there exists a significant amount of free monomeric surfactant in solution due to the rather fast equilibrium between the small molecule and the micellar assembly. As a result, the ferrocene would be easily available for electron transfer in the monomeric surfactants, accounting for the observed voltammetric response. On the other hand, the dendrons form more tightly packed assemblies due to the covalent linking of the monomeric units. Thus, the concentration of monomeric dendritic units would be too low in solution to be observable. Similar observations, in which no significant electron transfer was seen when ferrocene was encapsulated in a hydrophobic host, were reported recently.<sup>14</sup> Nonetheless, these results show that the amphiphilic assemblies provides an interesting pathway for fully silencing an electroactive unit, which can then be released to become electroactive in an alternate environment, i.e., from water-like to DMF-like environment.

## Experimental Section

**General Procedure for Introducing Ferrocene Unit Using Click Chemistry.** To a solution of alkyne-functionalized dendrimers (1.0 equiv) in THF/DMF/H<sub>2</sub>O (1:1:1), azidomethyl ferrocene (4.0–8.0 equiv), CuSO<sub>4</sub> (0.1 equiv), and sodium ascorbate (0.1 equiv) were added. The reaction mixture was heated at 50 °C for 12 h. Progress of the reaction was monitored by thin layer chromatography (TLC). After completion of the reaction, the reaction mixture was partitioned between ethyl acetate and saturated NH<sub>4</sub>Cl solution. The aqueous layer was extracted twice with ethyl acetate, and the combined organic layer was dried over anhydrous Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> and evaporated to dryness. The crude product was isolated by silica gel column chromatography.

**Synthesis of G0(L)Fc.** According to the general procedure for click chemistry, **G0(L)** (0.1 g, 0.31 mmol) was treated with azidomethyl ferrocene (4 equiv) to yield 0.14 g (80%) of **G0(L)Fc**. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.19 (s, 1H), 6.51 (s, 1H), 6.47 (s, 1H), 6.34 (t, *J* = 2.4 Hz, 1H), 5.22 (s, 2H), 4.58 (d, *J* = 4.0 Hz, 2H), 4.46 (s, 2H), 4.24 (t, *J* = 1.6 Hz, 2H), 4.19–4.16 (m, 7H), 3.92 (t, *J* = 6.0 Hz, 2H), 2.81 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 2H), 2.43, (bs, 1H), 2.12–2.05 (m, 2H), 1.47 (s, 9H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 168.0, 160.2, 159.1, 147.0, 143.7, 120.4, 106.1, 104.9, 100.7, 82.4, 81.1, 77.4, 77.3, 77.1, 76.8, 69.0, 68.9, 66.9, 65.7, 65.0, 49.9, 28.8, 28.1, 22.1; FAB/MS *m/z* (r.i.) 561(M<sup>+</sup>, 40), 362(15), 307(20), 199(100); HRMS (FAB<sup>+</sup>) calcd for C<sub>29</sub>H<sub>35</sub>FeN<sub>3</sub>O<sub>5</sub> 561.1927, found 561.1942.

**Synthesis of G1(L2)Fc.** The alcohol **G1(L2)** (0.05 g, 0.08 mmol) was subjected to click reaction as per the general procedure to yield 0.055 g (92%) of **G1(L2)Fc**. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.50 (s, 1H), 6.96–6.40 (m, 11H), 5.33–5.22 (m, 2H), 4.92 (s, 4H), 4.66 (s, 2H), 4.47–4.41 (m, 7H), 4.30–4.10 (m, 8H), 3.90 (m, 6H), 2.84 (bs, 2H), 2.29–1.18 (m, 61H), 0.88–0.81 (m, 6H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 168.0, 167.8, 160.3, 160.0, 159.0, 156.9, 155.8, 147.0, 141.8, 139.5, 135.5, 119.2, 110.1, 107.0, 105.4, 105.3, 104.8, 103.5, 101.0, 100.7, 82.2, 82.0, 69.9, 69.5, 68.7, 68.0, 66.8, 66.2, 65.7, 65.3, 49.6, 31.8, 29.5, 29.4, 29.3, 29.2, 29.1, 28.9, 28.0, 25.9, 22.5, 22.0, 14.0; MALDI-TOF *m/z* 1422.9, 1445.7 (C<sub>81</sub>H<sub>111</sub>FeN<sub>3</sub>O<sub>15</sub> requires 1422.6 and C<sub>81</sub>H<sub>111</sub>FeN<sub>3</sub>O<sub>15</sub> + Na<sup>+</sup> requires 1445.6).

**Synthesis of G2(L3)Fc.** According to the general procedure for click reaction, **G2(L3)** (0.08 g, 0.3 mmol) was reacted with azidomethyl ferrocene (6.0 equiv) to yield 0.08 g (93%) of **G2(L3)Fc**. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.20 (s, 1H), 6.77–6.39 (m, 27H), 5.25 (s, 2H), 5.00–4.95 (m, 12H), 4.70–4.69 (m, 2H), 4.50–4.45 (m, 14H), 4.26 (t, *J* = 1.6 Hz, 2H), 4.19–4.16 (m, 9H), 3.97–3.90 (m, 14H), 2.86 (t, *J* = 7.6

(13) Mirkin, M. V.; Bard, A. J. *Anal. Chem.* **1992**, *64*, 2293.

(14) Podkosielnny, D.; Hooley, R. J.; Rebek, J., Jr.; Kaifer, A. E. *Org. Lett.* **2008**, *10*, 2865.

Hz, 2H), 2.15–2.13 (m, 2H) 1.92 (bs, 1H), 1.80–1.20 (m, 159H), 0.90–0.83 (m, 18H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  168.0, 167.8, 160.5, 160.4, 160.2, 159.1, 157.4, 156.1, 147.0, 141.9, 139.7, 139.6, 137.9, 137.8, 135.8, 135.7, 120.4, 119.7, 119.7, 119.3, 110.2, 107.0, 105.7, 105.6, 105.4, 104.8, 104.4, 104.2, 103.5, 101.2, 101.0, 98.2, 82.3, 82.3, 82.1, 82.0, 82.0, 81.1, 70.2, 69.9, 69.0, 68.9, 68.9, 68.1, 66.9, 66.3, 66.2, 65.8, 65.4, 50.0, 32.0, 29.6, 29.4, 29.3, 29.2, 28.1, 26.1, 22.7, 22.0, 14.2; MALDI-TOF  $m/z$  3143.1 ( $\text{C}_{185}\text{H}_{263}\text{FeN}_3\text{O}_{35}$  requires 3144.9).

**Synthesis of G3(L4)Fc.** According to the general procedure for click reaction, **G3(L4)** (0.07 g, 0.011 mmol) was reacted with azidomethyl ferrocene (8.0 equiv) to yield 0.6 g (83%) of **G3(L4)Fc**.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.21 (s, 1H), 6.79–6.43 (m, 59H), 5.25 (s, 2H), 5.03–4.95 (m, 28H), 4.70–4.69 (m, 2H), 4.50–4.46 (m, 30H), 4.26 (s, 2H), 4.20–4.17 (m, 7H), 3.97–3.90 (m, 30H), 2.86 (t,  $J = 7.2$  Hz, 2H), 2.15–2.13 (m, 2H) 1.80–1.15 (m, 359H), 0.90–0.83 (m, 42H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  168.0, 168.0, 167.9, 167.9, 160.5, 160.2, 159.2, 159.1, 157.4, 156.1, 147.0, 141.9, 139.6, 137.9, 137.8, 135.8, 135.6, 120.3, 119.8, 119.3, 110.2, 107.0, 105.8, 104.6, 101.2, 101.0, 82.3, 82.1, 82.0, 82.0, 82.0, 81.1, 70.2, 69.9, 69.0, 68.9, 68.9, 68.1, 66.9, 66.3, 66.2, 65.7, 65.5, 49.9, 32.1, 31.9, 29.6, 29.6, 29.4, 29.3, 29.3, 29.2, 29.1, 28.8, 28.1, 26.1, 22.7, 22.2, 14.0; MALDI-TOF  $m/z$  6610.9 ( $\text{C}_{393}\text{H}_{567}\text{FeN}_3\text{O}_{75} + \text{Na}^+$  requires 6612.5).

**Synthesis of G1(L1)Fc.** The alcohol **G1(L1)** (0.09 g, 0.08 mmol) was subjected to click reaction as per the general procedure to yield 0.10 g (85%) of **G1(L1)Fc**.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.02 (bs, 1H), 6.70–6.39 (m, 11H), 5.08 (bs, 2H), 4.91 (s, 4H), 4.62 (s, 2H), 4.50–4.4 (m, 6H), 4.20–4.09 (m, 9H), 3.88 (t,  $J = 5.6$  Hz, 6H), 2.63 (bs, 2H), 2.42 (bs, 1H), 1.97 (bs, 2H), 1.75–1.70 (m, 4H), 1.50–1.19 (m, 55H), 0.88–0.84 (t,  $J = 6.8$  Hz, 6H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  167.9, 167.7, 160.3, 159.0, 159.0, 156.9, 155.8, 146.6, 142.1, 139.4, 135.7, 120.7, 118.9, 110.1, 106.8, 105.3, 104.7, 103.3, 101.0, 100.7, 82.1, 81.8, 69.7, 69.1, 67.9, 67.1, 66.0, 65.5, 65.0, 49.6, 31.7, 29.4, 29.4, 29.2, 29.1, 29.0, 28.3, 27.9, 25.8, 22.5, 21.5, 14.0; MALDI-TOF  $m/z$  1423.3 and 1446.4 ( $\text{C}_{81}\text{H}_{111}\text{FeN}_3\text{O}_{15}$  requires 1422.6 and  $\text{C}_{81}\text{H}_{111}\text{FeN}_3\text{O}_{15} + \text{Na}^+$  requires 1446.6).

**Synthesis of G2(L1)Fc.** According to the general procedure for click reaction, **G2(L1)** (0.3 g, 0.10 mmol) was reacted with azidomethyl ferrocene to yield 0.31 g (96%) of **G2(L1)Fc**.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.06 (bs, 1H), 6.75–6.35 (m, 27H), 5.12 (s, 2H), 5.00–4.92 (m, 12H), 4.65 (s, 2H), 4.50–4.41 (m, 14H), 4.18–4.08 (m, 9H), 3.92–3.85 (m, 14H), 2.68 (bs, 2H), 2.01–1.10 (m, 163H), 0.90–0.81 (m, 18H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  167.9, 167.8, 160.3, 159.0, 159.0, 157.3, 155.9, 139.4, 137.6, 135.4, 119.6, 110.1, 106.9, 105.6, 105.3, 104.4, 101.1, 100.8, 82.2, 82.0, 81.9, 70.1, 69.8, 68.7, 68.0, 66.2, 65.6, 31.8, 29.5, 29.4, 29.3, 29.2, 29.1, 29.0, 27.9, 25.9, 22.6, 14.0; MALDI-TOF  $m/z$  3168.5, 3145.6 ( $\text{C}_{185}\text{H}_{263}\text{FeN}_3\text{O}_{35} + \text{Na}^+$  requires 3167.9 and  $\text{C}_{185}\text{H}_{263}\text{FeN}_3\text{O}_{35}$  requires 3144.9).

**Synthesis of G3(L1)Fc.** As per the general procedure for click reaction, **G3(L1)** (0.14 g, 0.02 mmol) was reacted with azidomethyl ferrocene to yield 0.12 g (80%) of **G3(L1)Fc**.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.08 (s, 1H), 6.80–6.40 (m, 59H), 5.13 (s, 2H), 5.02–4.92 (m, 28H), 4.66 (s, 2H), 4.52–4.42 (m, 30H), 4.22–4.08 (m, 9H), 3.97–3.88 (m, 30H), 2.74–2.68 (m, 2H), 2.08–1.09 (m, 361H), 0.90–0.81 (m, 42H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (75 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  167.9, 167.9, 167.8, 160.3, 159.0, 159.0, 158.9, 157.3, 157.0, 155.9, 146.6, 142.0, 139.4, 137.7, 137.6, 135.8, 135.6, 135.4, 120.4, 119.6, 119.5, 119.0, 110.0, 106.9, 105.6, 105.2, 104.7, 104.4, 103.4, 101.1, 100.8, 82.2, 82.0, 81.9, 81.9, 81.2, 70.1, 69.7, 68.8, 67.9, 67.3, 66.1, 66.0, 65.6, 65.1, 49.6, 31.7, 29.4, 29.2, 29.2, 29.1, 29.0, 28.5, 28.1, 27.9, 25.9, 22.5, 14.0; MALDI-TOF  $m/z$  6587.0 ( $\text{C}_{393}\text{H}_{567}\text{FeN}_3\text{O}_{75}$  requires 6589.5).

**Synthesis of G2(L2)Fc.** According to the general procedure for the formation of triazole, **G2(L2)** (0.12 g, 0.04 mmol) was subjected to click reaction to yield 0.10 g (75%) of **G2(L2)Fc**.  $^1\text{H}$

NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.00 (s, 1H), 6.78–6.39 (m, 27H), 5.08 (s, 2H), 5.00–4.91 (m, 12H), 4.68 (s, 2H), 4.49–4.41 (m, 14H), 4.19–4.08 (m, 9H), 3.95–3.85 (m, 14H), 2.65–2.58 (m, 2H), 1.97–1.15 (m, 163H), 0.90–0.78 (m, 18H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (75 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  167.9, 167.9, 167.8, 167.8, 167.7, 160.3, 160.3, 159.0, 159.0, 158.9, 157.3, 157.2, 156.8, 155.9, 146.6, 141.9, 139.4, 139.3, 137.9, 137.6, 135.7, 135.6, 135.4, 120.6, 119.5, 119.5, 119.0, 110.1, 110.0, 106.9, 105.7, 105.5, 105.3, 105.2, 104.6, 104.3, 103.3, 101.1, 100.8, 100.8, 82.2, 82.2, 81.9, 81.9, 70.0, 69.7, 68.7, 68.0, 67.9, 67.2, 66.1, 66.0, 65.6, 65.2, 31.7, 29.4, 29.4, 29.2, 29.2, 29.1, 29.0, 28.4, 27.9, 25.9, 25.8, 22.7, 22.5, 21.5, 14.0; MALDI-TOF  $m/z$  3143.6, 3166.5 ( $\text{C}_{185}\text{H}_{263}\text{FeN}_3\text{O}_{35}$  requires 3144.9 and  $\text{C}_{185}\text{H}_{263}\text{FeN}_3\text{O}_{35} + \text{Na}^+$  requires 3167.9).

**Synthesis of G3(L2)Fc.** According to the general procedure for the formation of triazole, **G3(L2)** (0.1 g, 0.01 mmol) was reacted with azidomethyl ferrocene to yield 0.08 g (80%) **G3(L2)Fc**.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.05 (s, 1H), 6.81–6.40 (m, 59H), 5.12–4.90 (m, 30H), 4.68 (s, 2H), 4.52–4.42 (m, 30H), 4.16–4.07 (m, 9H), 3.98–3.88 (m, 30H), 2.71–2.68 (m, 2H), 2.05–1.15 (m, 361H), 0.86–0.74 (m, 42H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (75 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  167.9, 167.8, 160.3, 159.0, 158.9, 157.3, 156.9, 155.9, 146.6, 141.9, 139.4, 138.0, 137.7, 137.6, 137.5, 135.7, 135.6, 135.4, 120.4, 119.6, 119.0, 110.0, 106.9, 105.6, 105.3, 104.6, 104.4, 103.2, 101.0, 100.8, 82.2, 81.9, 81.9, 81.1, 70.0, 69.7, 68.7, 68.4, 67.9, 67.3, 66.1, 65.6, 65.2, 60.5, 31.7, 29.4, 29.2, 29.2, 29.1, 29.0, 28.5, 27.9, 25.9, 22.5, 14.0; MALDI-TOF  $m/z$  6612.8, 6588.8 ( $\text{C}_{393}\text{H}_{567}\text{FeN}_3\text{O}_{75} + \text{Na}^+$  requires 6612.5 and  $\text{C}_{393}\text{H}_{567}\text{FeN}_3\text{O}_{75}$  requires 6589.5).

**Synthesis of G3(L3)Fc.** According to the general procedure for click reaction, **G3(L3)** (0.11 g, 0.018 mmol) was reacted with azidomethyl ferrocene to yield 0.08 g (74%) of **G3(L3)Fc**.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.01 (s, 1H), 6.79–6.40 (m, 59H), 5.10 (s, 2H), 5.02–4.88 (m, 28H), 4.68 (s, 2H), 4.50–4.41 (m, 30H), 4.25–4.05 (m, 9H), 3.97–3.84 (m, 30H), 2.68–2.62 (m, 2H), 2.00–1.90 (m, 361H), 0.90–0.75 (m, 42H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (75 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  167.9, 167.8, 167.8, 167.7, 160.3, 159.0, 159.0, 158.9, 157.2, 156.9, 155.9, 146.6, 141.8, 139.4, 139.3, 137.8, 137.6, 135.7, 135.6, 135.4, 120.6, 119.6, 119.5, 119.0, 110.0, 106.9, 105.6, 105.2, 104.6, 101.0, 100.8, 82.2, 81.9, 81.2, 70.0, 69.7, 68.7, 67.9, 66.1, 65.6, 65.1, 49.6, 31.7, 29.4, 29.2, 29.2, 29.1, 29.0, 28.4, 27.9, 25.9, 22.5, 22.5, 14.0; MALDI-TOF  $m/z$  6588.3 ( $\text{C}_{393}\text{H}_{567}\text{FeN}_3\text{O}_{75}$  requires 6589.5).

## Conclusion

Differential encapsulation of active functionalities in dendrimers has been previously studied in the context of generation dependence. Very little attention has been paid to the differences in the encapsulation of functional groups within different layers of dendrimers. We have designed, synthesized, and studied electroactive dendrons to investigate the possible variations. In our studies, we have shown the following: (1) We could obtain dendrons where an electroactive functionality can be incorporated at specific locations in dendrons. We have utilized the dendrimer sequencing methods and the versatile 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition (click reaction) to incorporate the electroactive moiety at different layers. This chemistry also provides an opportunity to incorporate any desired functionality at a precise location in dendrimers. (2) Whereas the redox potential of ferrocene did not vary with generation, the  $E_{1/2}$  values were significantly different in the intermediate layers at higher generation dendrons. These results suggest that the micro-environment of the intermediate layers is dictated by the dendron, while those of the periphery and the core is similar

to that of the solvent. (3) Although there are thermodynamic variations, there are no discernible differences in the kinetics of the heterogeneous electron transfer processes in various layers of the dendrons. (4) The self-assembled amphiphilic assembly versions of these dendrons do not exhibit any CV signals in aqueous solutions. We attribute to this to the burial of the electroactive functionality in the amphiphilic assembly, because when studied in a solvent where the dendron does not self-assemble, the electroactive functionality becomes very much accessible. These results suggest that our amphiphilic dendron assemblies could be used to

provide environment-dependent protection of functional groups, which could have implications in recognition, drug delivery, sensing, and separation.

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**Supporting Information Available:** Experimental details and spectra. This material is available free of charge via the Internet at <http://pubs.acs.org>.