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**Seminar for “The Mereology of Potentiality” group**

***Powers From the Inside***

**William A. Bauer**

*Abstract:*

Accounts of the nature of causal powers often highlight their potential triggers and manifestations. According to these accounts, powers are networked in a system where each power is linked to the potential activity of other powers. This ‘network’ characterization is not wrong -- powers are indeed networked -- but it is incomplete, for it only yields a picture of powers ‘from the outside’. It does not yield a picture of powers ‘from the inside’ and it does not address why powers do what they do. What is the internal nature of powers? That is the main question I aim to address in this presentation. I will sketch an account of powers from the inside in terms of two metaphysically significant theses: the physical intentionality thesis and the informational thesis. The first of these has a contentious history, accepted enthusiastically by some and denied by others, while some accept moderate versions of it. I will argue that the physical intentionality thesis is correct, however I offer some modifications to the essential mark of directedness as typically conceived by powers theorists. Yet the physical intentionality thesis is not enough to provide a complete account of powers from the inside. We also need an account of why powers are directed in the ways that they are, a way of filling out the content of powers. Thus, I formulate the informational thesis, a new framing of ideas already found in some accounts of powers and, more generally, nature’s workings. These two theses together give us a more complete account of the internal nature of powers and, furthermore, explain why powers do what they do. In conclusion, I briefly discuss some of the implications of this account for other key issues in the metaphysics of powers, including the power/quality distinction and the conditional analysis of powers.