"Disentangling Powers from Dispositions"

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A common assumption among powers realists is that ‘power’ and ‘disposition’ are co-referring terms. Most assume that the powers of objects are identical with the dispositions of objects. In this paper, I question this assumption. I aim to disentangle powers from dispositions with the goal of getting a better sense of how they relate to one another. I present and defend a modest realism about dispositions built upon a fairly standard strong realism about powers. I contend that the truthmakers for disposition-ascriptions are built into the powers of objects. Specifically, I argue that each correct disposition ascription we can make of an object picks out one of the manifestations towards which a given power of the object is directed. To ascribe an unmanifested disposition x to an object is to describe one one of the potential manifestations towards which an unactivated power y is directed. And when power x is active in the way specified by the disposition x ascribed to the object, x is manifested.

Friday, March 29th
Room: 202 Tory
Time: 1:00 p.m.

All are welcome!