

Abstract: Embodied Agency in Kant's *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*

I argue that Kant gives a fundamental role to embodied activity in his theory of matter in the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*.

I begin by considering the Perceived Force Puzzle, according to which Kant makes two seemingly inconsistent claims about our knowledge of matter. He claims that our perception of force through the sense of touch is fundamental to our knowledge of matter. However, he also argues that all causal judgments have an a priori basis. We cannot perceive causal relations – at best, all we can see is a sequence of events or changes. As forces are causal, this implies that we cannot perceive any forces. So, it seems that Kant at once claims that we can but also cannot perceive force. I offer an original solution to this Puzzle. Kant is actually claiming that we can perceive one aspect of force through touch, the activity of our own body in relation to other bodies. The fundamentality of the sense of touch for physics lies not in providing experience of the necessity of causal relations, but in providing the empirical content for this notion of activity. I suggest that this has implications for understanding Kant's approach to three important issues: empirical cognition of substance, the nature and knowledge of causation, and the prospects of genuine human agency in the natural world of causes.