KANT ON IMPENETRABILITY, TOUCH, AND THE CAUSAL CONTENT OF PERCEPTION


Abstract: It is well known that Kant claims that causal judgments, including judgments about forces, must have an a priori basis. It is less well known that Kant claims that we can perceive the repulsive force of bodies (their impenetrability) through the sense of touch. Together, these claims present an interpretive puzzle, since they appear to commit Kant to both affirming and denying that we can have perceptions of force. My first aim is to show that both sides of the puzzle have deep roots in Kant's philosophy. My second aim is to present three potential solutions to the puzzle, and show that each faces problems.