

## **The force of bodies.**

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In the early 18th century, in the wake of Newton's *Principia*, the question of how bodies act on one another remained puzzling. Moreover, what would constitute a satisfactory answer to this question was a matter of dispute. Two broad approaches were available. The first sought to address the question "What is the nature of bodies such that they are capable of acting on one another?" The second addressed the question "What are the rules by which these actions take place?". Philosophers differed over the relative weight and importance of each for solving the problem of bodily action. For some, answering the latter question (concerning the rules) was sufficient for answering the former (concerning the nature of bodies). Using Émilie Du Châtelet as my central source, I will discuss both approaches, and argue that the latter yields a form of structuralism concerning the nature of bodies and their powers to act.