

THREE-DIMENSIONAL EXTENSION, BODYHOOD AND COLOCATION

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There seems to be a widely shared basic pre-theoretical intuition, persistent in the history of Western thinking, and customarily evoked even in contemporary metaphysical debates, that physical bodies are such three-dimensionally extended things that cannot share the same place at the same time. The paper examines the role this assumption plays in philosophical arguments, working its way backwards in time from the Hellenistic to the Classical period. Then it turns to such Presocratic texts, notably in Xenophanes and Empedocles, where the principle appears not to be respected. While fully accepting the pressure of these texts, but without trying unduly to systematise them, the paper aims to offer an alternative to the suggestion, we often find in the literature, that these texts are faltering attempts to formulate the conception of immaterial existence.