

Curriculum Vitae

Meg Wallace
Graduate Student
Department of Philosophy
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Contact Information

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Education

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, M.A. 2005; Ph.D. [expected 2008]
Syracuse University, Ph.D. Candidate 2000-2003 [transferred]
University of Arkansas, M.A. (Philosophy), 2000.
University of Oklahoma B.A. (History), 1998

Areas of Specialization

Metaphysics, related areas of Philosophy of Language

Areas of Competence

Philosophy of Language, Logic, Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Religion

Presentations

"Mental Fictionalism," presented to

- Syracuse University Graduate Student Conference in Philosophy (Syracuse, NY) April 2005 and,
- the North Carolina Philosophical Society (Durham, North Carolina) February 2005.

"Rearming the Slingshot," presented to

- UNC Philosophy Department's Work in Progress Series (Chapel Hill, NC) September 2004.

"On Composition as Identity," presented to

- UNC Philosophy Department's Work in Progress Series (Chapel Hill, NC) September 2005 and,

- the Third Annual Princeton-Rutgers Philosophy Conference (New Brunswick and Princeton, NJ) February 2003.

Comments Presented

Comments on Brad Skow's paper "Are Shapes Intrinsic?" at Bellingham Summer Philosophy Conference, (Bellingham, WA) August, 2005.

Papers

In preparation (and available on-line)

- "Defending Composition as Identity"
- "Mental Fictionalism"
- "Rearming the Slingshot"
- "The Weak-willed vs. the Vicious"
- "Compulsion, Love, and the Willingness to Rule"

Teaching Experience

UNC, Chapel Hill

Metaphysics, Instructor, Fall 2008

Philosophy of Religion, Instructor, Summer 2007

Philosophy of Religion, Instructor, Spring 2007

Philosophy of Feminism, Instructor, Fall 2006

Philosophy of Religion, Instructor, Summer 2006

Making Sense of Ourselves, Instructor, Spring 2006

Making Sense of Ourselves, Teaching Assistant (for David Reeve), Fall 2005

Making Sense of Ourselves, Instructor, Summer 2005

Introduction to Ethics, Teaching Assistant (for Geoff Sayre-McCord), Spring 2005

Making Sense of Ourselves, Teaching Assistant (for David Reeve), Fall 2004

Syracuse University

Introduction to Philosophy, Instructor, Fall 2001-Spring 2003

Political Philosophy, Teaching Assistant (for Brian Weatherson), Spring 2001

Introduction to Ethical Theory, T. A. (for Samuel Gorovitz), Fall 2000

Other Professional Activities

Research Assistant to William G. Lycan, Fall 2005-present

Awards and Fellowships

UNC Departmental Fellowship, Fall 2007

Head Teaching Associate, UNC, 2006-2007

UNC Departmental Fellowship, 2003-2004

Syracuse University Teaching Award, Spring 2003

Head Teaching Associate, Syracuse University, 2002-2003

President, Syracuse University Philosophy Graduate Students, 2002-2003

Graduate Courses

Metaphysics

- Possible Worlds, Bill Lycan, UNC
- Meta-Ontology, Thomas Hofweber, UNC
- Metaphysics, Ted Sider, Syracuse University
- Abstract Entities, Ted Sider, Syracuse University
- Fictionalism, Daniel Nolan and Tamar Gendler, Syracuse University
- Possible Worlds, Daniel Nolan, Syracuse University
- Causality, Eric Hiddleston, Syracuse University

Philosophy of Language

- Philosophy of Language, Dorit Bar-On, UNC
- Syntax I (Linguistics), Misha Becker, UNC
- Definite Descriptions, Peter Ludlow, Syracuse University
- Plurals and Quantifiers, Tom McKay and Mark Brown, Syracuse University
- Propositional Attitudes, Ted Sider, Syracuse University

Logic

- Philosophy of Logic, Kenan Seminar, Keith Simmons and Thomas Hofweber, UNC
- Modal Logic, Keith Simmons, UNC
- Symbolic Logic, Michael Resnik, UNC
- Mathematical Logic, Ted Sider, Syracuse University
- Symbolic Logic, Brian Weatherson, Syracuse University

Philosophy of Mind

- Philosophy of Mind, Bill Lycan, UNC
- Mental Content, Jesse Prinz, UNC

Dissertation Abstract

Unrestricted Mereologists make the seemingly strong claim that whenever we have two things, x and y, there is a further thing, z, which is the ‘mereological fusion’ or ‘mereological sum’ of x and y. Some of the main complaints against unrestricted mereology center on the charge that its ontological costs are too expensive. For the unrestricted mereologist, if she is right, seems to be advancing an ontological thesis that would add considerably to the population of the universe. This is because for any two (non-overlapping) things in our universe that we are already committed to, the mereologist will posit a third. And once we add this third thing, then other mereological sums will abound.

To escape the charge of ontological extravagance, many mereologists have insisted that their view is ontologically *friendly*. One controversial way of doing this has been to advance the **Strong Composition Thesis**, which claims that the ‘are’ of composition is literally the ‘is’ of identity. The Strong Composition Thesis (SCT) elegantly explains how it is the mereology is ontologically innocent, but it is unfortunately counterintuitive on its face. As a result, much of the current philosophical literature on mereology and composition is dedicated to seemingly devastating criticisms of the Strong Composition Thesis (SCT).

In my dissertation, I proceed systematically, taking on the objections against SCT one by one, showing how this view can be plausibly defended. What is common to most of these objections, I argue, is that they all fail to take into account two important resources available to the proponent of SCT. First, many ignore the availability of a plural logic and language, complete with plural quantifiers, plural predicates, and (perhaps most importantly) a plural/singular hybrid identity predicate. Second, none of them consider relative counting, whereby our “counts” of objects can only be made relative to a sortal, kind, or concept. I show how these two resources can bolster a strong defense of SCT, securing that mereology *is*, after all, ontologically innocent.

In addition, I explore the connection between *composition* and *constitution*, since many of the traditional constitution puzzles—e.g., puzzles about identity over time, identity across possible worlds, puzzles about change, etc.—fail to consider the advantages of the Strong Composition Thesis and its potential contribution to traditional metaphysical puzzles.

For a more detailed abstract, please visit: <http://www.unc.edu/~megw/DisAbstract.html>