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## Education

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, PhD. [expected: 2009]  
Dissertation: *Composition as Identity*  
Committee: Keith Simmons (chair), William G. Lycan, Jay Rosenberg, David Reeve

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, M.A. 2005  
Master's Thesis: *Rearming the Slingshot*  
Committee: Keith Simmons, William G. Lycan, Dorit Bar-On

Syracuse University, PhD Program 2000-2003 [transferred]  
University of Arkansas, PhD Program, 1998-2000 [transferred]  
University of Oklahoma, B.A. (History), 1998

## AOS

Metaphysics

## AOC

Philosophy of Language, Logic, Philosophy of Mind

## Awards and Fellowships

UNC Department of Philosophy, Horace Williams Fellowship, Spring 2009  
UNC Department of Philosophy, Horace Williams Fellowship, Fall 2007  
Head Teaching Associate, UNC, 2006-2007  
UNC Department of Philosophy, Horace Williams Fellowship, 2003-2004  
Syracuse University Teaching Award, Spring 2003  
Head Teaching Associate, Syracuse University, 2002-2003  
President, Syracuse University Philosophy Graduate Students, 2002-2003

## 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 2005.

“On Composition as Identity,” presented to

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

Comments on Joe Salerno's paper "Must and Can" at the Eastern APA, December 2008.

### **Papers Available On-line and Under Review**

"Defending Composition as Identity"

"Mental Fictionalism"

"Rearming the Slingshot"

### **Other Professional Activities**

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

### **Teaching Experience**

UNC-CH

*Philosophy of Religion*, Instructor, Summer 2008

*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 Weatherston), Spring 2001

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

### **Courses Prepared to Teach**

Introductory Introduction to Philosophy  
Experience and Reality

Philosophy of Feminism  
Logic

Intermediate    Philosophy of Religion  
                         Philosophy of Mind  
                         Philosophy of Language

Advanced        Puzzles of Objects and Persons  
                         Composition and Constitution  
                         Metaphysics and Language

### **Graduate Courses Taken or Audited**

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, 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  
Philosophy of Language, Dorit Bar-On, UNC  
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, Bill Lycan, UNC  
Mental Content, Jesse Prinz, UNC  
Epistemology, Jay Rosenberg, UNC  
Virtue Ethics, Thomas Hill, UNC  
Ethical Theory, Geoff-Sayre McCord, UNC  
Plato's Republic, David Reeve, UNC  
Aristotle, David Reeve, UNC

### **Dissertation Abstract: Composition as Identity**

Unrestricted Mereologists claim that whenever we have two things,  $x$  and  $y$ , there is a further thing,  $z$ , which is their 'mereological fusion' or 'mereological sum'. Some of the main complaints against unrestricted mereology center on the charge that its ontological costs are too high: for any two (non-overlapping) things in our universe, the mereologist will claim that there is a third, namely, their fusion. And once we add fusions, we can also add fusions of fusions, and so on.

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 Composition as Identity (CI), which claims that the ‘are’ of composition is literally the ‘is’ of identity: the fusion of x and y is not a third thing, distinct from x and y, but is identical to x and y, taken together. But, we might wonder, how on earth could the fusion of x and y fail to be a third thing, distinct from x and y?! Much of the current philosophical literature on mereology and composition is dedicated to such seemingly devastating criticisms of CI.

In my dissertation, I proceed systematically, taking on the objections against CI one by one, showing how this view can be defended and plausibly developed. 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 CI. 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 considers what I call “plural counting,” whereby our “counts” of objects are not constrained by singular quantification and singular identity statements. I show how these two resources can bolster a strong defense of CI, securing that mereology *is*, after all, ontologically innocent. In the course of doing so, I engage in substantive reflection on the norms that govern the activity of counting, as applied to things with parts.

In addition, I show how CI has the advantage of providing elegant solutions to wide array of problems in philosophy: perception puzzles, the exclusion problem in philosophy of mind, problems of prevention and causation, shadow puzzles, and Frankfurt puzzles about moral responsibility. I then explore the connection between *composition* and *constitution*, and introduce a metaphysics of objects that, together with CI, solves traditional constitution problems such as the Statue and the Lump, Tib and Tibbles, etc.

## References

Keith Simmons ([ksimmons@email.unc.edu](mailto:ksimmons@email.unc.edu))

Professor of Philosophy

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

William G. Lycan ([ujanel@email.unc.edu](mailto:ujanel@email.unc.edu))

William Rand Kenan Professor of Philosophy

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Theodore Sider ([ted.sider@nyu.edu](mailto:ted.sider@nyu.edu))

Professor of Philosophy

New York University

David Reeve ([cdcreeve@email.unc.edu](mailto:cdcreeve@email.unc.edu))

Delta Kappa Epsilon Distinguished Professor of Philosophy

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