

Metaphysics: Problem set 9
April 4, 2001
due date: Wednesday, April 11

NB: use your own words. No quotation, no paraphrase.

1. Which of the following claims are consequences of van Inwagen's definitions of mereological terms (these were given on the handout from April 2nd, except for the definition of 'sum' which is on p. 29. Note that van Inwagen's use of plural referring expressions is such that 'there is exactly one of the xs' is perfectly consistent.)

- (i) Everything overlaps itself.
- (ii) No two simple things overlap one another.
- (iii) If the xs compose a and the ys compose b and a and b compose c, then the xs and the ys compose c.
- (iv) If there are some xs such that the xs compose y, then y is composite.
- (v) If x is a proper part of y, then there is some z such that x and z compose y.
- (vi) If the xs compose y, then y is a sum of the xs.
- (vii) If y is a sum of the xs, then the xs compose y.
- (viii) If there is exactly one of the xs, then the xs compose something.
- (ix) It never happens that some things compose more than one thing.
- (x) For every x and y, there is something that is a sum of x and y.

2. Choose any of the Moderate answers to the Special Composition Question discussed by van Inwagen in section 6 of *Material Beings*. Explain the answer in your own words. Then choose one of van Inwagen's arguments against this answer. Explain and evaluate the argument.

3. Describe **three** different ways in which a defender of Universalism might resist the argument against Universalism given by van Inwagen in section 8 of *Material Beings*. Comment briefly on the plausibility of each of these strategies.

Extra credit: prove that the claim marked (*) on the handout from April 4th follows from the claim marked (ME) on that handout.