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**What is the Hallé?**

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**Abstract.** I address what I call the ‘Number Issue’, which is raised by our ordinary talk and beliefs about certain social groups and institutions, and I take the Hallé orchestra as my example. The Number Issue is that of whether the Hallé is one individual or several individuals. I observe that if one holds that it is one individual, one faces an accusation of metaphysical extravagance. The bulk of the paper examines the difficulty of reconciling the view that the Hallé is several individuals with two *prima facie* plausible theses about the manner of its persistence through time. The paper is structured around some remarks made by Peter Simons about groups, and the Hallé in particular, in his *Parts*.

**Introduction**

What, if anything, is the Hallé orchestra? In the formal mode: to what, if anything, does the expression ‘the Hallé orchestra’ refer? This is but one of many related questions of social ontology. We might equally ask: what, if anything, is a committee, trades union, government, university or corporation? In the formal mode: to what, if anything, do expressions like ‘the Foreign Affairs Select Committee’, ‘Union’, ‘The British Government’, ‘London University’, and ‘Microsoft’ refer? Quite generally, what, if anything, is a social group or institution?

Certain contemporary philosophers, such as Gilbert, Graham, and Pettit have reached for common noun phrases like ‘plural subject’, ‘collective agent’, and ‘collective subject’, which are all formed from *pluralizing* adjectives and *singular* common nouns, to try to characterise the type of thing instantiated by such social phenomena. But if—contrary to the *Quiaquique Vult*—no entities are both one and many, then the use

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1 Gilbert uses this expression in many places in her (2000), and in earlier works.
3 Pettit (2001 ch. 5) p. 123.
of such expressions of 'hybrid' grammatical number, in the absence of further elucidation, threatens to gloss over a key metaphysical issue, which we might term the 'Number Issue', namely that of whether a social phenomenon such as the Hallé is one individual or several individuals. For readers of Gilbert, Graham and Pettit must presumably choose between a reading of such common noun phrases as identifying a type standardly instantiated, on an 'occasion' of instantiation, by an individual (with the pluralizing adjective conveying that such individuals are in some sense composed of, or constituted by, several individuals), and a reading of them as picking out a type standardly instantiated, on an 'occasion' of instantiation, by several individuals (with the adjective correcting the impression given by the noun's grammatical number). These philosophers offer us scant guidance regarding this choice.

By appearing to gloss over the Number Issue, they may help to conceal something that deserves more philosophical discussion than it has received, namely that both the thesis that, say, the Hallé is an individual and the thesis that it is several individuals are problematic.

Consider the former thesis. If one holds that the Hallé is an individual, one faces an accusation of metaphysical extravagance. For, on the face of it, we can truly predicate action-types of the Hallé, such as plays the Eroica, and one might take it to be analytically true that actions can only truly be predicated of agents, who must have minds. But is it not extravagant to say that orchestras have 'minds of their own'? 5

Perhaps this accusation can be rebutted. That is not my present concern. In this paper, I will focus on what I consider to be a major difficulty faced by anyone who embraces the latter thesis. It is this: if the Hallé is several individuals, then as its membership varies over time, it is unclear what account can be given as to its persistence through time.

What follows is structured around some remarks made by Simons about groups, and the Hallé in particular, in his Parts, which I think throw the Number Issue into sharp focus. For unlike Gilbert, Graham and Pettit, Simons is avowedly primarily interested in the metaphysics of groups—in their number, and in the manner of their persistence—rather than in issues that groups may raise in ethics and political philosophy. Yet, as we shall see, his response to the question of my title raises as many issues as it settles. Acquaintance with Parts is not assumed; I intend what I say here to be useful to anyone seeking to explain what commitments are incurred by our use of expressions like 'the Hallé'.

The remainder of this paper divides into seven sections. In the first, I outline the presupposition that there are plural terms, by which I mean terms that refer to several individuals. In the second, third and fourth sections, I outline three theses that I have extracted from Parts, which I take to be prima facie plausible, namely (1) 'the Hallé' is a plural term, (2) it picks out something mереologically variable; i.e. whatever it picks out may gain or lose members over time, and (3) it picks out a continuant; i.e. whatever it picks out is wholly present at all times at which it exists. In the fifth section, I make the case for attributing (1), (2) and (3) to Simons. In the sixth section, I outline what I take to be the two best ways of making sense of this combination of theses, and three difficulties that they face. I do not say that these cannot be overcome, only that they merit further discussion. In the final section, I consider two claims that one might endorse to try to avoid the Number Issue, namely (α) the Hallé is neither one nor several individuals, and (β) the Hallé is both one and several individuals; I reject these claims.

**Plural terms**

Let me begin by making explicit an increasingly widespread philosophical presupposition, made by Simons and others, namely that

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5 Notice that this problem arises only for one who embraces the thesis with regard to social groups. It does not show that a group of, say, statues is not an individual.


7 The presupposition is explicitly made in the following works, some of which also defend it: Black (1971), Stenius (1974), Simons (1982, 1987), Boolos (1984, 1985), van Inwagen
not all terms are, or purport to be, singular terms. On the contrary, it is held, some terms are, or purport to be, plural terms; that is, terms that pick out, on any occasion of use, more than one thing. No such terms feature in the predicate calculus, as standardly interpreted. But, it would appear, they feature in natural languages. As Max Black writes:

... strangely overlooked by logicians and philosophers, are devices for referring to several things together ... 'Johnson and Kennedy' identifies two men at once, in a context in which something is considered that involves both of them at once ... the phrase 'the American presidents since Lincoln' succeeds in identifying several [men], in a way that allows something to be said that involves all of them at once ... The notion of 'plural' or simultaneous reference to several things at once is really not at all mysterious. Just as I can point to a single thing. I can point to two things at once—using two hands if necessary.\(^9\)

Black's way of putting things requires disambiguation, as there are distinct senses of 'together' and 'at once', namely simultaneously and jointly; there might be, say, an orchestral recital during which two fine musicians play jointly but never simultaneously, while two deranged musicians play simultaneously but not jointly. I disambiguate his claim thus: plural terms refer, on any occasion of use, to several things jointly in a way that allows something informative to be said that involves all of them jointly. So, by using 'Johnson and Kennedy' we can say of two men that they presided over the USA for eight years; we can say something—apply a predicate—that is jointly but not severally true of those two men.

It is worth noting that this way of explicating the notion of a plural term neatly excludes terms that indeterminately refer to several things on any occasion of use. For while 'the world's biggest bank' may be said to refer to several things on any occasion of use, namely Mizuho and the outer edge of the Nile,\(^10\) and while (if Lewis\(^11\) is right), 'Everest' may refer to several things on any occasion of use, namely many determinately bounded mountains, and while (if Field\(^12\) is right), 'Everest's mass' may refer to several things on any occasion of use, namely Everest's 'rest mass' and Everest's 'relativistic mass', it is not the case that any of these terms refer to several things in a way that allows something to be said that involves all of them jointly. At best, they refer to several things in a way that allows something to be said that involves all of them severally.

To see this, consider cardinality predicates of the form \(\_n\) in number, for some \(n > 1\). Such predicates are used to say something that is jointly and not severally true of several things,\(^13\) as Russell saw:

In such a proposition as 'A and B are two'... the assertion is not about \(A\), nor about \(B\), nor about the whole composed of both, but strictly and only about \(A\) and \(B\). Thus it would seem that assertions are not necessarily about single subjects, but may be about many subjects ...\(^14\)

Now, by using the expressions mentioned by Black we can informatively say of Johnson and Kennedy that they are two in number, and of the American Presidents since Lincoln that they are twenty-eight in number, but we cannot, in general,\(^15\) informatively apply a predicate of the form \(\_n\) in number, for some \(n > 1\), to an indeterminately referring term such as 'the world's biggest bank'. We need rather to ascend to the formal mode and say of the term that it refers to some number of things.

To conclude this section, we will speak of plural terms as referring to several things; but the claim that they thus refer is elliptical for the claim that they refer, on any occasion of use, to several things in a way that

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8 Although Russell may be interpreted as having at least flirted with the idea of such terms in his (1992). See, as an example of this, the quotation on page 79 of the text.
9 Black (op. cit. pp. 629-30). See also Simons (1982 p. 165): 'plural terms [are] the sort of expression that can be used to refer to more than one thing at once.'
10 Which is not to deny that the context of use may indicate which referent is intended.
11 Lewis (1999).
12 Field (2001) chs. 6, 7.
13 This truth is not undermined by the claim that things only have a cardinality relative to their instantiation of some concept. See pp. 101-3 of the text for more on this claim.
14 Russell op. cit., ch. VI §74.
15 This qualification is required as some terms may be indeterminate and plural; for if 'Everest' is indeterminate and singular, 'The Himalayas' is indeterminate and plural.
allows something to be said that involves all of them jointly.

**Thesis (1)—The Hallé is a plural term**

To return to the question of our title, I take it that a prima facie plausible response—given the aforementioned worry about the claim that the Hallé is one individual—is that the Hallé is several individuals; in the formal mode, 'the Hallé' is a plural term that refers to several individuals.

If one ventures to make this response in non-technical English by saying that the Hallé is a plurality or a class of individuals, or that 'the Hallé' refers to a plurality or class of individuals, one would be well advised to urge any philosophically educated interlocutors not to interpret 'plurality' and 'class' as applying to an individual of some kind, which the individuals in some sense compose, such as a ZF set or a mereological sum; rather, these expressions should be interpreted as applying to some individuals, presumably some musicians. In other words, a plurality or class of musicians, in this non-technical sense, and the musicians that this plurality or class is of are the very same things.

Of course, 'plurality' and 'class' are grammatically singular expressions, as—it may be said—is 'the Hallé', and even the 'is' of my title. But quite generally, we may distinguish semantic and grammatical number, just as we may distinguish semantic and grammatical gender when we use 'she' to refer to a ship or 'he' to refer to an arbitrary subject. The fact that a proper noun phrase like 'the Hallé' properly interacts with grammatically singular verb forms like 'performs tonight', and that the grammatically singular pronoun 'it' may be anaphoric on an occurrence of it, does not show that it is a singular term, any more than the fact that 'my knickers' properly interacts with grammatically plural verb forms like 'are in the drawer' and that the plural pronoun 'they' may be anaphoric on an occurrence of it, shows that it is a plural term. Likewise, the fact that common noun phrases like 'orchestra', 'committee' and 'club', and—

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at a somewhat higher level of abstraction—the aforementioned terms of art 'plural subject', 'collective agent' and so on, and—at an even higher level of abstraction—'collection', 'plurality' and 'class' properly combine with grammatically singular determiners like 'a', 'an' and 'that', to yield proper noun phrases, does not show that they pick out types or properties instantiated, on any occasion, by an individual, any more than the fact that common noun phrases like 'knickers' properly combine with grammatically plural determiners like 'some' and 'those', to yield proper noun phrases, show that they pick out types or properties instantiated, on any occasion, by several individuals.

The lack of a widely accepted gender-neutral singular personal pronoun in English may require that we use 'he' or 'she' when we speak about subjects without prejudice as to their gender, such as when we speak generally about them, or of an arbitrary subject, or of one of unknown gender. Likewise, the lack of number-neutral forms in English may require that we use a grammatically singular or plural expression when we speak about some or all of whatever exists or could exist, without prejudice as to its number, such as when we speak generally about some or all of whatever exists or could exist, or of arbitrary instances thereof, or of instances that are of unknown number.

I follow Simons in reserving 'object' for this purpose. He calls the expression a 'formal term covering anything at all', and in particular classes or pluralities as well as individuals. There are unitary objects, like my hand, and there are also plural objects, like my fingers. There is nothing at all queer about this way of putting things. For one thing, the OED gives as its primary definition of object, 'thing thrown before or

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16 See Velleman (1989 p. 4 fin. 1) for a spirited defence of this use of 'he'.

17 Simons (1987) pp. 175-6
18 Ibid. p. 10 fn. 2 It should be noted that for Simons 'individual' and 'plurality' or 'class' are not, strictly, the antonyms they appear, as classes are 'the ontological counterparts of referential terms, singular and plural' (ibid. p. 144). I do not object to this usage, but will not cleave to it, as it obscures the number issue, which is my topic.
presented to (the mind or thought), so one may think of the expression as being elliptical for 'object of possible discourse or thought', that is, as applying to whatever an accurate representation could be directed towards, without prejudice as to its number. For my fingers may (jointly) be an object of possible discourse or thought as well as my hand.

To conclude this section, a prima facie plausible claim is that 'the Hallé' refers to several individuals, and we might make essentially the same claim by saying that it refers to a plurality, class, or plural object.

**Thesis (2)—'The Hallé' picks out a mereologically variable object**

I take it that another prima facie plausible response to the question of our title is that 'the Hallé' picks out an object which has different people as parts at different times. If an argument is wanted, it is this: John Moate is, in 2005, the Hallé's timpanist, and so is a part of the Hallé at that time; but it is not the case that Moate was a part of the Hallé when it was founded in 1858; so the Hallé has a part in 2005 that it does not have at all times at which it exists.

It must be conceded that my use of 'part' to describe what one might more naturally call a member of the Hallé is less than idiomatic. I reach for this word because I seek to motivate thesis (2) independently of thesis (1). Let me explain. In non-technical English, it is natural to say of an individual that another individual is a part of it, and that a plurality of individuals are parts of it, and in certain circumstances it may also be natural to say of a plurality that a plurality of individuals are parts of it, as when we say of two shoes—a pair—that some heels are parts of them, but there are other circumstances in which it would be more natural to say of a plurality that a plurality of individuals are, not parts of it, but rather part of it, and likewise that an individual is, not a part of it, but rather part of it; so for example, we might naturally say that Dopey and Bashful are part of the Seven Dwarves, and that Doc is part of them too.

Now, I take it that it is more natural to say of John Moate that he is part of the Hallé, than that he is a part of it. That might suggest that our ordinary talk indicates that we think the Hallé is a plurality. But as I do not want thesis (2) to presuppose thesis (1), I will stipulate into existence a general notion of parthood, which relates objects, and comprises the different ways in which individuals and pluralities may be said to be part or parts of individuals and pluralities.

But I do not deny that, in certain contexts, including those in which musical groupings are one’s topic, is part of and are part of may be replaced, respectively, by the rather more idiomatic is a member of and are members of, and also by, respectively, is one of and are among or are some of. Hence Mick Jagger may equally be said to be a member of, one of, and part of the Rolling Stones, while Mick Jagger and Keith Richards may equally be said to be members of, some of, among, and part of the Rolling Stones.

To conclude this section, a prima facie plausible claim is that 'the Hallé' picks out an object which may gain and lose parts, where this is taken to entail that it may gain and lose people, such as John Moate.

**Thesis (3)—'The Hallé' picks out a continuant**

I take it that a third prima facie plausible response to the question of our title is that the object picked out by 'The Hallé' is a continuant: it exists in time, and is wholly present at all times at which it exists. That is not to say that it is active at all times at which it exists; that may not be true: the orchestra may be 'dormant' at certain times. Nor is it to say that it is wholly active at all times at which it is active; that may not be true: the orchestra is not wholly involved with every performance it gives.

19 There is thus a link between the noun and the verb 'object', for to object is to throw something before another's mind. There is also a link with 'objective', as something before the mind is a possible end for a subject, and in that sense a possible 'objective'.

20 Perhaps I should say 'non-fictionalizing, non-hypothetical discourse' or thought'. But some have thought that the objects of fictional or hypothetical discourse are bona fide objects. Even if they are right, this might be only because such objects are also the objects of non-fictionalizing, non-hypothetical discourse. I ignore these complications.

21 Simons sometimes talks this way too (op. cit., p. 149) but he prefers really to say (4.5. 4.9) that the two senses of 'part' are closely analogous, sharing many formal properties.

22 Simons (ibid. p. 175) gives the same definition of 'continuant'.
One might then ask: what is it to say that the Hallé, by virtue of being a *continuant*, exists in time and is wholly present at all times at which it exists? The contrast standardly drawn is with an *occurrence*—such as an *event*—a particular performance, say, by the Hallé, of the Erard—which also exists in time, but which is only *partly* present at each time at which it exists. But there is room for debate as to what is meant by the claim that some *x* is ‘wholly present’ at all times at which it exists. If it is taken to be equivalent:

For all times *t*, if *x* exists at *t*, then for all *y*, if *y* is a part of *x* at some time *t*\(^6\), then *y* is present at *t* \(\text{then organisms, which are generally taken to be paradigm cases of continuants, are not in fact continuants. For a man may have hair at some time *t*\(^8\) which is not present at some time *t* at which he exists. If, however, the claim is taken to be equivalent to:}

For all times *t*, if *x* exists at *t*, then for all *y*, if *y* is a part of *x* at *t* then *y* is present at *t*,

then even football matches or theatrical or musical performances, which are generally taken to be paradigm cases of *events*, are in fact continuants. For any object that exists in time and has parts at certain times is such that those parts are present at *those* times. \(\text{34 Simons takes the contrast between continuants and events to consist in the alleged fact that events but not continuants may have temporal parts. 23 But despite the ubiquity of the expression ‘temporal part’ in the philosophical literature, there is room for debate about what we should take it to mean. For it may be argued that, for example, you were constituted by some zygote *z* during some interval *t*, and so are related to *z* as a whole to a part, even though *z* is present only at *t*, and wholly occupied the region occupied by you at *t*; so, at least one paradigm case of a *continuant*, viz. you, is an object *o* that has a part at a certain time, which is present *only* at that time, and which wholly occupies the region occupied by *o* at that time. It may then be asked: what are temporal parts if not parts of some *o* meeting such conditions?}

However we formulate the distinction between continuants and events, I will take it that it entails the following: if an object *o* exists at time *t*\(_1\), some (significantly)\(^6\) later time *t*\(_2\), and some (significantly) later time *t*\(_3\), and some agent *a* encounters, at *t*\(_1\), one or more of any objects *o*\(_1\), ..., *o*\(_n\), which are (sizeable)\(^7\) parts of *o* at *t*\(_1\), and then at *t*\(_2\), has no encounter with any objects *o*\(_{21}\), ..., *o*\(_{2n}\), which are parts of *o* at *t*\(_2\), and then at *t*\(_3\), encounters one or more of any objects *o*\(_{31}\), ..., *o*\(_{3n}\), which are (sizeable) parts of *o* at *t*\(_3\), then if *o* is a continuant *a* is standardly entitled to say that he has encountered *o* several times, and not standardly entitled to say that he has encountered *o* just once, whereas if *o* is an event *a* is not standardly entitled to say that he has encountered *o* several times, but may be entitled to say that he has encountered *o* (albeit intermittently), just once. Hence, on the basis of a (significantly) temporally discontinuous sighting of, say, Dan Rather’s upper body, one is entitled to say that one has seen Dan Rather twice, and not entitled to say that one has seen Dan Rather just once. By contrast, on the basis of a temporally discontinuous sighting of a live television news broadcast we are not standardly entitled to say that we have seen it twice: we may, however, be entitled to say that we saw it (intermittently) just once.\(^25\)

It is for this reason that I take it that it is *prima facie* plausible to say ‘the Hallé’ picks out a continuant. For the Hallé surely does exist in time, and a fan, upon going to a concert given by it, is likely to be entitled to say, ‘I’ve heard this orchestra perform before’; by contrast, upon waking up after napping during the evening’s concert, he would have.

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23 Broad (1923) ch. VII.
24 See Sider (2001 pp. 63-64) for essentially the same dilemma about ‘wholly present’. I leave open, however, whether ‘present” is interchangeable with ‘existent’ (as Sider appears to assume), for one might use it to mean *spatially located*, or *ensubstantial*.
26 This vague qualification, wherever it appears in the paragraph, is intended to rule out gaps between times that are brief enough to be wholly occupied by the blink of an eye.
27 The reader will, I hope, implicitly understand what this vague qualification excludes.
28 I owe these observations to Martin (2001 p. 256 fn. 13). See also his (forthcoming).
not be entitled to say, 'I've heard this performance before' (no matter how minimal a thematic and harmonic palette the evening's composer had used). Now, I have not argued that the continuant/event distinction is exhaustive of objects that exist in time, so it may be felt that while this shows that the Hallé is not an event, it does not thereby show that it is a continuant. Still, I take it that it is prima facie implausible that the Hallé is neither a continuant nor an event, given that it does exist in time.

Thesis (3) neither obviously entails nor is obviously entailed by thesis (2). For a particular quantity or batch of something, such as a pint of milk, is prima facie a continuant that has all and only the same parts at every time at which it exists, while an event has, prima facie, different parts at different times: a football match has the first half as a part at, or during, one temporal interval, but not at, or during, another.29

To conclude this section, a prima facie plausible claim is that 'the Hallé' picks out a continuant, where this is taken to entail that one might be entitled to say, of the object it picks out, that one has heard it twice.

Simons and the three theses

Simons appears to commit himself to the three theses by saying:

Although we shall concentrate mainly on continuants which are individuals, there are plural and mass continuants as well. A committee, orchestra, or species is a group which comes into existence, continues to exist, then ceases to exist. These are all groups which are, in the sense of 'part' developed ... for pluralities, mereologically variable: they change in membership.30

This seems to say that groups like orchestras are (3) continuant (2) mereologically variable (1) pluralities. But, no doubt, there is scope for controversy regarding the attribution to Simons of this composite view.

Regarding (1), a controversialist may note that, like Gilbert, Graham

31 Ibid. p. 158.
32 Ibid. p. 146.
attribute (3) to Simons, I am right to attribute (1) to him.

Can it then be doubted that Simons endorses thesis (3)? It may be suggested that his claim that a group is 'several objects fulfilling certain constitution conditions' should be read as saying not that a group is 'several objects, which fulfil certain constitution conditions', but rather that a group is 'whatever several objects fulfil certain constitution conditions'.

On this view, 'the Hallé' refers, at a time, to whichever objects 'regularly come together to play together', under the banner of the Hallé, at that time, rather as 'the US President' may be said to refer, at a time, to whichever object is elected to that office, at that time. Again, the attribution of this view may make sense of Simons's talk of 'constitution conditions', for in addition to compose and make it the case that, 'constitute' may mean fashion or set up as in 'He hath been constituted by the higher powers in the station of receiver-general', and one might say that 'the US President' refers, at a time, to whomsoever has been set up (by the higher powers) as President, and that likewise, 'the Hallé' refers to whichever musicians have been set up as the Hallé orchestra.

Such is a view. According to it, I should say, 'the Hallé' does not pick out a continuant, in my sense of the word, despite Simons's use of it. For on this view, while one might be entitled to say, in the de dicto mode, that one had heard the Hallé in 1955, and that one had heard the Hallé in 2005, one would not be entitled to say, of the Hallé, in 2005, that one had heard them in 1955, any more than one is entitled to say of the US President, in 2005, that one had heard him give a speech in 1955.

There is a case for attributing this 'whichever' view to Simons. For as we have seen, there are different ways of explicating 'continuant', and in the following passage he appears to flirt with a way of explicating 'collective continuant' in accordance with the 'whichever' view:

... the same sentence, 'John is one of the Directors' may be uttered falsely before John's election to the Board, and truly after. The expression 'the

36 Simons op. cit. pp. 168
38 Ibid. p. 146.
39 Ibid. p. 176.
To conclude this section: Simons’s commitment to (2) cannot be doubted. This makes probable a commitment to (3), which in turn, given his actual words, makes a commitment to (1) overwhelmingly probable.

**The difficulty posed by (1) (2) and (3)**

Earlier, we availed ourselves of a non-technical usage according which a plurality or class of, say, orchestral musicians, and the musicians that the plurality or class is ‘of’ are the very same things. But it should be noted that this relation of ‘sameness’ is not the relation predicated by the identity predicate in the predicate calculus, as standardly interpreted, for that predicate takes only singular terms or variables as arguments. Nevertheless, our understanding of the notion of being the same thing or singular identity, a relation that every thing bears to itself, is closely related to our understanding of being the same things or plural identity, a relation that any things whatever (jointly) bear to themselves. For we surely all know, implicitly, that the obtaining of plural identities supervenes upon the obtaining of singular identities: given that Cicero is identical with Tully, and Hesperus is identical with Phosphorus, Cicero and Hesperus are plural identically with Tully and Phosphorus. More generally, given that any thing is (singly) identical with itself, any things whatever are (plurally) identical with themselves.

As standardly understood, singular identity is not relativised to times: if Cicero and Tully are identical then they are identical at all times; more generally, any thing is identical to itself at all times, or at least at all times at which it exists. Plural identity is also absolute: if Cicero and Hesperus are plurally identical with Tully and Phosphorus then they are thus identical at all times, or at least at all times at which they exist; more generally, any things whatever are (plurally) identical with themselves at all times, or at least at all times at which they exist. I take it that this is simply a part of our implicit understanding of the manner in which plural identities supervene upon singular identities.

This brings us to the difficulty facing (1), (2) and (3): if a plurality is (plurally) identical with the individuals that it is ‘of’ at all times at which it exists, and if by (1), the Hallé is a plurality, then the Hallé is, at all times at which it exists, (plurally) identical to the individuals that it is ‘of’. But that just is, it would seem, the claim that it is, at all times at which it exists, (plurally) identical to the individuals that are each one ‘of’ it. And by (2), certain individuals bear the relation of being one ‘of’, or part of or a member of the Hallé at some times but not at others. I take it, then, that if we endorse (1) and (2) we face a choice: the Hallé is, at all times at which it exists, (plurally) identical to those individuals:

(a) ... that are each one of it at all times at which it exists.
(b) ... that are each one of it at some time or other at which it exists.
(c) ... that are each one of it at some particular time at which it exists.

By (a)’s lights, given the unhappy contrast between the life-span of the Hallé and that of a musician, it would appear that, as there is no individual that is one of it at all times at which it exists, there is no such thing as the Hallé. That is a revisionary view, to put it mildly. It is also not Simons’s view; he says ‘the existence of groups is not in doubt’; and that such objects are ‘referred to’ by terms like ‘the Hallé’.

By (b)’s lights, the Hallé is at all times identical to the musicians who at some time or other are one of it. But the individuals that meet this condition are sufficiently temporarily scattered to render it impossible for them to ever have played the Eroica, whereas the Hallé has played it on many occasions. It may be conceded that each of these individuals may have contributed to some performance of that symphony, but that shows

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40 It does not follow that, to grasp the truth of some plural identity statement p, one must be able to grasp the truth of some singular identity statements li, ... in about each of the individuals picked out by p’s terms; consider ‘The Conservatives are the Tories.’

41 Simons op. cit. p. 147. The quoted claim is embedded in a conditional, but is clearly intended to be the conclusion of pp. 145-47.

42 Ibid. p. 146

43 The same objection mutatis mutandis succeeds against the view that the Hallé is a trans-worldly plurality, and against a view this arguably implies, that it is abstract.
only that _contributes to a performance of the Eroica_ is (severally) true of them, not that _plays the Eroica_ is (either severally or jointly) true of them, as it is (jointly) true of the Hallé. It may be conceded, too, that for _plays the Eroica_ to be true, at a time, of the Hallé it need not be true, at that time, of the whole of the Hallé (just as, for _touches a violin_ to be true of a violinist it need not be true of the whole of him). But we would surely not endorse the proposition that the overwhelming majority of the Hallé do not play the Eroica—indeed, are not even spatially located or enmattered—at any time at which it plays it, and yet, of course, the overwhelming majority of those individuals who are each one of the Hallé at some time or other do not play the Eroica—and are neither spatially located nor enmattered—at any time at which the Hallé plays it.

By (c)'s lights, the Hallé is all times identical with the individuals that are each one of it at some particular time. But that entails the negation of (3). For one would not, on this view, be entitled to say, of the Hallé, in 2005, that one had heard them perform in 1955.

It may seem, then, that to evade the unhappy choice between (a), (b) and (c), we must reject one or more of (1), (2) and (3). But each seemed like a good idea at the time. Where, then, have we gone wrong?

A possible diagnosis of what has gone wrong is that, given that a plurality is (plurally) identical with the individuals that it is 'of', at all times at which it exists, it cannot be contrary to thesis (2) be mereologically variable in the sense that it can gain or lose individuals that are each one of it, and that for this reason, the single sense of 'part' that we stipulated into existence when we discussed thesis (2) yokes together senses which, when issues of persistence through change are taken into account, are revealed to be importantly different. For while it is part of our 'folk' metaphysic that we can say of an individual i, such as a stoat, that some other individual (or plurality)—a cell, (or some cells), perhaps—is, (or are), a part, (or some parts), of i at some times but not at others, and perhaps also that we can say of a plurality p, such as a trio of stoats, that a certain individual (or plurality)—a cell, (or some cells), perhaps—is, (or are) a part, (or some parts), of p at some times but not at others, it is no part of that metaphysic that we can say of a plurality p, such as a trio of stoats, that a certain individual (or plurality)—a stoat, (or a pair of stoats) perhaps—is, (or are) part of p at some times but not at others. Or, to change the example, as the Seven Dwarves are Dopey, Sleepy, Sneezy, Grumpy, Bashful, Happy and Doc, we can make no sense of the hypothesis that, say, Doc is one of them at some times but not at others.

That may be true of the Seven Dwarves, but its analogue is, of course, not true of the Rolling Stones or the Hallé. For Bill Wyman was one of—a member of and part of—the Rolling Stones in 1965, but is not thus related to them in 2005, while Bill Wyman and Brian Jones were among—and members of and part of—the Rolling Stones in 1965, but are not thus related to them in 2005. And John Moate is part of the Hallé in 2005, but was not part of it when it was founded in 1858. Quite generally, there is a temporally relative usage of 'is one of', 'are among', 'is/are a (member(s) of', and 'is/are part of'. As Simons says:

> ... when applied to groups this expression ['is one of'] can have a tense or temporally relative meaning. For instance, the same sentence, 'John is one of the Directors' may be uttered falsely before John's election to the Board, and truly after ... the group designated by 'the Directors' ... persists over time and its membership may fluctuate.\(^{44}\)

To deny (2) is, plainly, to deny a truth.

A more promising diagnosis is that we took a wrong turning when we identified those individuals that are each one 'of' a plurality with those individuals that the plurality is 'of'. For, it may be said, while by (2) an individual that is one 'of' the Hallé at some time need not be one 'of' it at all times at which it exists, the individuals that a plurality is 'of' surely are such that it is 'of' them at all times at which it exists.

But how could this be? Well, consider first the individuals that a plurality is 'of'. I say the individuals that the plurality is 'of' because we may speak of pluralities as being 'of' objects that are themselves pluralities; for example, we may speak of Imelda's pairs of shoes. We may

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\(^{44}\) Simons op. cit. pp. 168-9
speak, even, of pluralities that are *of* pluralities of pluralities; for example, we may speak of Imelda’s and Barbara’s collections of pairs of shoes. But I take it that every plurality is ‘well-founded’ in the sense that it is, at some level, ‘of’ nothing but individuals, such as shoes.

*Prima facie* the individuals that a plurality is ‘of’ are each one of, or part of, or a member of it; this need not be denied. But it is not obviously the case that each individual that is one of, or part of, or a member of a plurality is one of the individuals that it is ‘of’. For it might be that some individual i may indirectly or mediatly or derivatively be one of, or part of, or a member of some plurality p, either (i) by virtue of being a part of some individual i* which is itself one of, or part of, or a member of p, or, (ii) by virtue of i’s being one of, or part of, or a member some plurality of objects p*, which are parts of the plurality p, even though i is not directly or immediately or non-derivatively one of p.

Here are descriptions of circumstances that fit schema (i) and (ii):

(i) John Moate constitutes, at a time, an individual i*, which we might call ‘the Timpanist’, and is thereby a part of i*; i* is one of, or part of, or a member of the Hallé, which is a plurality p ‘of’ other such percussionists, and string, wind, brass and keyboard players as well. Moate is thereby one of the Hallé, though not an individual it is ‘of’.

(ii) John Moate is one of, or part of, or a member of a plurality p* of persons which constitutes, at a time, a plurality p of percussionists, string, wind, brass and keyboard players, such that p* are thereby parts of p. Moate is thereby one of the Hallé, though not an individual it is ‘of’.

The two descriptions appear to be alternative accounts of a single circumstance, in which the Hallé is at all times at which it exists a plurality of percussionists, string, wind, brass and keyboard players, which is, at any time at which it exists, constituted by a plurality of persons, which is both distinct from the Hallé and distinct from the other pluralities of persons that constitute that orchestra at other times.

Can we make sense of such a circumstance? For us to do so, it had better be the case that were it to obtain, it would be quite possible for *plays the Eroica* to be true of the aforementioned plurality of percussionists, string, wind, brass and keyboard players, despite the fact that they are distinct from any persons that, at a time, constitute them, (persons who might also be truly said to play that symphony). Any plurality that such persons constitute cannot, then, be one of causally inert, non-spatio-temporally located ‘roles’ or properties—like the office of the Presidency—but must rather be one of causally efficacious, spatio-temporally located and—one would presume—enmattered individuals.

If one adopts the view that this circumstance obtains, then, one appears driven towards saying that the Hallé and any plurality of persons that, at a time, constitute it share many properties, including the property of occupying a particular location at a time, the property of bringing about a certain effect at a time, and the property of being made of a particular quantity or batch of matter at a time. But these are not philosophically disreputable kinds of commitment. For it is quite widely held that objects of different kinds may share the same—or at least many of the same—locational, causal and material properties. Furthermore, views of this kind are motivated by the same kind of consideration as that which has been the focus of this paper, namely that intuitions concerning what changes may befall an object of a certain kind are best reconciled by revising the belief that they concern one object rather than—as it is sometimes put—materially coinciding objects.

It should be noted that there is evidence for attributing this view to Simons. After all, he must reconcile (1), (2) and (3) and is a friend of the possibility of material coincidence.46 Furthermore, he writes:

... 'the wolves' is a simple plural term referring to just these animals, whereas 'the pack' refers to a group, and the group and the plurality ... have different identity conditions. The wolves are the matter of the pack.47

The extensional classes making up groups at any time may be looked on

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46 This is the conclusion of the exemplary sixth chapter of Simons *op. cit.*
as the matter of the groups. 48

On this new diagnosis of why it may have appeared that there was an inescapable difficulty, why (1), (2) and (3), we are no longer forced to choose between (a), (b) and (c). For if the variably constituted plurality of percussionists, string, wind, brass and keyboard players that just are the Hallé exist at all times at which it exists, then, quite obviously, each of the individuals that it is ‘of’ exist at all times at which it exists, at some time or other at which it exists, and for any time at which it exists, at that particular time. Sad facts about personal mortality do not threaten the longevity of that continuant mereologically variable plurality of—we may as well use the word—musicians that is the Hallé.

Nevertheless, the view faces the following three objections, each of which claims that it has some unwelcome consequence. I outline one reply to the first and the third objections and two to the second. I do not think that the replies that I give are, as stated, adequate. Either the objections succeed, or more must be said to rebut them.

1. An unwelcome consequence regarding supervenience

In a possible world in which we singly play those instruments that we classify as ‘orchestral’, but in which there are no orchestras, and which is in every other respect very similar to the actual world, there would be no obvious motivation to say that John Moate constituted a distinct material individual, namely a timpanist, just as, in the actual world, there is no obvious motivation to say that George Bush constitutes a distinct material individual, namely a President. So facts about whether individuals constitute distinct material individuals supervene, on the view under consideration, on facts about certain pluralities that they are part of. That is counter-intuitive.

Reply: perhaps. Perhaps it is not, if we re-describe ‘the timpanist’ as ‘the orchestral timpanist’. But it should be recalled that we can articulate the view without saying that John Moate constitutes a distinct individual.

48 Ibid. p. 168.

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Only description (i) puts things that way. According to (ii), Moate is one of, or part of, or a member of a plurality $p^*$ of persons which in turn constitutes, at a time, a plurality $p$ of percussionists, string, wind, brass and keyboard players, and which are thereby parts of $p$. That is consistent with Moate in and of himself not constituting anything, either in the actual world or the possible world described. It could be, then, that just as persons can play the Eroica jointly but not severally, they can constitute objects jointly but not severally, even when the objects thereby constituted are no more than pluralities of individuals.

2. An unwelcome consequence regarding the two senses of ‘part’

On the view under consideration, there remains a disanalogy between the two senses of ‘part’ that we stipulatively yoked together when we outlined thesis (2). The disanalogy is not the one that was alleged earlier, which was founded on the alleged fact that we cannot say of a plurality $p$ that a certain individual (or plurality) is, (or are) part of $p$ at some times but not at others; we saw that there is a temporally relative sense of ‘part of’ or ‘one of’. What there is not, however, is a sense of ‘part of’ or ‘one of’ that is temporally relative and direct or immediate or non-derivative. By contrast, it is part of our ‘folk’ metaphysic that an individual can directly or immediately or non-derivatively be a part of another individual at some times but not at others. The disanalogy is, if not a counter-intuitive consequence, one requiring explanation.

First reply: perhaps it is. But again, it may be said that description (ii), if not (i), contains the resources for a rebuttal. For although (ii) puts things by saying that John Moate is one of, or part of, or a member of a plurality $p^*$ of persons which constitutes, at a time, a plurality $p$ of percussionists, string, wind, brass and keyboard players, such that $p^*$ are thereby parts of $p$, might it not be said that $p^*$ is thereby part of, or some of or among $p$? If it might, that would be to use a temporally relative and a direct or immediate or non-derivative use of ‘part of’.

Second reply: we might undermine the alleged disanalogy from the opposite direction and deny that, at least where material individuals are
concerned, it is any part of our ‘folk’ metaphysics that an individual can directly or immediately or non-derivatively be a part of another individual at some times but not at others; rather, it is because a plurality may directly or immediately or non-derivatively be parts of a material individual at some times and not others, and a material individual directly or immediately or non-derivatively be one of, or part of, or a member of some such plurality (at every time at which it exists), that a material individual may indirectly or mediate or derivatively be a part of another material individual at some times but not at others. Here is an independently motivated argument for the first part of that claim, from a premise which I take to be prima facie plausible, namely that our ‘folk’ notion of the material constitution of individuals is of constitution by pluralities (perhaps, if there is a notion of ‘one-one’ constitution as a relation obtaining between material individuals, it is a philosophers’ invention, or hallucination).\textsuperscript{49} Suppose per impossible that a material individual could directly or immediately or non-derivatively be a part of another material individual at some times but not at others. Then some material individuals $p_1, \ldots, p_n$, $q$ could presumably each be directly or immediately or non-derivatively a part of a material individual $i$ at some time $t$, such that they jointly constitute $i$ at $t$. But suppose further that $p_1, \ldots, p_n$ are removed from $i$ (and not replaced) during a period in which $q$ undergoes no intrinsic changes, such that none of $p_1, \ldots, p_n$ is a part of $i$ at some later time $t'$ at which $i$ still exists. If that were so, it would seem that $q$—as it did not change—constitutes $i$ at $t'$ by itself.\textsuperscript{50} But this breaches the ‘folk’ embargo on ‘one-one’ material constitution, so we

\textsuperscript{49} Baker (1997) is an example of a philosopher who makes frequent use of this notion. I hazard that our ‘folk’ metaphysics does not, however, exclude the possibility of the ‘one-one’ constitution of non-material individuals by (perhaps material) individuals; it need not be denied that Bush constitutes the office of the Presidency and/or a singleton set.

\textsuperscript{50} Wiggins (1988 pp. 94-5) and van Inwagen (2001a) tell stories along these lines about, respectively, a cat losing a tail and Descartes losing a leg: Wiggins attributes his story to William of Sherwood, via Geach—and a variant later appeared in Geach (1980 pp. 215-6)—and Burke (1994) attributes a similar story of leg-loss to Chrysippus; Chisholm’s (1976 pp. 157-8) ‘problem of increase’, which he attributes to Aristotle, is a temporal mirror image of these stories. None of these authors draw the conclusion drawn here.

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should reject the assumption that a material individual could directly or immediately or non-derivatively be a part of another material individual.

3. An unwelcome consequence regarding materialism

The Hallé may have more or fewer string players than it used to have. If that’s so, then some of what we earlier supposed to be the enmattered individuals that it is ‘of’, exist at times at which nothing material appears to constitute them. No doubt there are insufficient of these to ever make it the case that the overwhelming majority of the individuals that the Hallé is ‘of’ do not play the Eroica whenever it plays it. All the same, this tolerance of non-enmattered musicians is a counter-intuitive commitment in addition to the tolerance of material coincidence.

Reply: it may be said that an orchestra is at all times a plurality ‘of’ five sections—percussion, string, wind, brass and keyboard sections—and that these are mereologically variably enmattered individual continuants that are constituted at a time by pluralities of people of variable number. But this reply is at best incomplete, for an orchestra may have, say, a keyboard section at some times but not at others.

To conclude this somewhat inconclusive section, an endorsement of (1), (2) and (3) presents one with a difficulty. The best way to evade it that I can discern commits one to either (i) or (ii). Simons is, perhaps, thus committed. A commitment of this variety invites at least three objections, to which I may or may not have sketched adequate replies.

A third way?

We began with the Number Issue, namely that of whether a social phenomenon such as the Hallé is one individual or several individuals. I raised a concern about the former thesis; the rest of this paper has led us to some objections to the latter thesis. But it may be felt that the Number Issue is not an issue, for one of two reasons: one might hold that a phenomenon such as the Hallé is neither one nor several individuals; or, alternatively, one might hold that it is both one and several individuals. In this final section, I consider these two positions in turn.
1. Neither/Nor

In a paper that pre-dates Parts, Simons appears to hold a ‘Neither/Nor’ view about groups:

Do collective noun phrases [like ‘this flock of sheep’] refer to new, higher-order individuals, constituted by the distinct from their members, or do they simply refer to classes of individuals? I believe that, if we consider carefully, we shall see that they do neither, although they share in part the behaviour of singular terms and in part the behaviour of plural terms referring to a class.\(^{51}\)

Why might anyone say of some object \(o\) that it is neither one individual, nor more than one individual? I can think of only two reasons: either \(o\) is fewer than one individual, or notions of how many or few it has no application. I will briefly consider these in turn.

Suppose, to adapt a case discussed by Nathan Salmon,\(^{52}\) that there is exactly one orange on the table. I slice it in half, eat one half, and leave whatever remains on the table. How many oranges are now on the table? A natural answer is ‘one half’. We all know that one half is less than one; so, someone might say, the object on the table is less than an individual, and therefore neither one individual nor several individuals.

But there surely is an individual on the table: an orange-half. Whatever the number of oranges on the table—and one might debate whether this is one-half or zero—there is no object on the table that is neither an individual nor several individuals. I doubt that we can make sense of the idea that there are objects that are fewer than individuals.

It might, however, be suggested that there are objects regarding which it does not make sense to ask how many or few they are. This is often said of masses. For expressions like ‘gold’ cannot be pluralized, and do not properly interact with ‘one’ or the indefinite article, and we talk about much or less gold, not many or few gold(s). It may, then, be said that a mass of gold is neither an individual nor a plurality.\(^{53}\)

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52 Salmon (1997).
53 Simons op. cit. p. 156 thinks this: ‘A mass is ... neither one individual nor many’.

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I doubt whether this is the right conclusion to draw about masses. The fact that common mass nouns like ‘gold’ behave differently from common count nouns like, say, ‘chair’, does not show that nouns of either variety cannot combine with determiners to yield proper noun phrases like ‘that gold’ and ‘that chair’ that are bona fide singular terms. For ‘that gold’ may be used to pick out some quantity or batch of gold, and we can speak of one quantity or batch and of more than one quantity or batch of gold. And a quantity or batch of gold just is a mass of gold.

But whatever the truth about masses, ‘orchestra’, and ‘musician’ can be pluralized and do properly interact with ‘one’ and the indefinite article, and it is proper to talk about any or few orchestras or musicians and not much or less of them. Perhaps cardinal number is not the measure of all things, but it is the measure of the Hallé.

2. Both/And

Why might one say of some object \(o\) that it is both one individual, and more than one individual? I can think of only two reasons: either \(o\) is both one and more than one individual simpliciter, or it is one individual relatum to some property of it, and several individuals relative to another.

We should quickly dispense with the former suggestion. For an object to be both an individual and a plurality simpliciter, ‘it’ would have to be identical with ‘them’. But while we can make sense of singular and plural identity predicates, it is very difficult to see how one might make sense of a hybrid ‘is/are’ predicate. Hence van Inwagen writes:

There is the ‘is’ of (singular) identity. This word makes syntactical sense when it is flanked by singular terms and variables: Tully is Cicero; \(x\) is the successor of 0; \(x\) is \(y\). There is the ‘are’ of (plural) identity. This word makes sense when it is flanked by plural terms (or ‘plural referring expressions’) and plural variables: Locke, Berkeley, and Hume are the British Empiricists; The \(xs\) are the Mortons and the Hanraths; The \(xs\) are the \(ys\). But what kind of syntactical sense is there in taking either ‘is’ or ‘are’ and putting a singular term or variable on one side of it and a plural term or variable on the
other? 

What, then, of the view that something may be one individual relative to one property of it and several individuals relative to another? Something approximating to this view is widely attributed to Frege, and he certainly appears to give examples of objects that are, relative to instantiations of distinct Begriffe, one poem and several books, one pack and several cards, one copse and several trees, one pair and several boots, and so on. Simons perhaps holds such a view too, as he writes, 'a plurality is in one sense one, and in another sense many'.

A full and fair engagement with Frege's view of number judgements cannot be attempted here. But if Frege, or any Fregean, holds the view that an individual object may be differentially conceptually articulated into, say, one pair and two boots, then I do not understand him. For how exactly do the concepts set about that task? The metaphors that tend to be reached for fall, broadly, into two families. Either some notion of division is appealed to—the concepts 'slice' or 'cut' (as a 'cookie-cutter' cuts)—or the idea of organisation is—the concepts 'sort', 'gather' or 'collect'. But metaphors of either kind offer no elucidation. For one cannot cut cookie-dough in two ways except by cutting it in a third way:

... a lump of material cannot simultaneously be sliced up in two different ways, without the result constituting yet a third way of slicing it up.

And an individual cannot be organized, as Davidson saw:

We cannot attach a clear meaning to the notion of organizing a single object (the world, nature etc) ... Someone who sets out to organize a closet arranges the things in it. If you are told not to organize the shoes and shirts, but the closet itself, you would be bewildered. How would you organize the Pacific Ocean? Straighten its shores perhaps, or relocate its islands, or destroy its

54 van Inwagen (2001b) p. 100. But he is a Christian, who says elsewhere (1995 p. 219) that 'apparently impossible beliefs' in the Trinity of three persons in one being and the Incarnation of two beings in one person 'are true and therefore possible'.


57 But see my (2003).


60 Ibid.

61 I here assume that pairs of boots and packs of cards are, respectively, pluralities of boots and cards, rather than unitary composite objects that have boots and cards as parts. Of course they are not any old boots and cards, but ones with certain properties. The reader who does not share this intuition is invited to substitute his own example.
times at $t$, such that $n < m$, because $F$ is instantiated, on any 'occasion' of instantiation, by a plurality, while $G$ is instantiated, on any 'occasion' of instantiation, by an individual.

But this way of relativising cardinal number to concepts does not evade the Number Issue. On the contrary, it is presupposed by the way in which we set that issue up, by asking whether 'plural subject', 'collective agent', and 'collective subject', and more particularly 'orchestra', pick out types or properties or concepts standardly instantiated, on an 'occasion' of instantiation, by one individual or several individuals. We might just as well have asked: do these expressions 'sort' pluralities into pluralities, like 'pair' and 'pack', or into individuals, like 'boot' or 'card'? If 'orchestra' is a common noun of the former variety, then, I presume, whenever, in an appropriate communicative context, it attends upon a determiner like 'that' or 'the', it standardly yields a plural term. If it is a common noun of the latter variety, then, I presume, whenever, in an appropriate context, it attends upon a determiner like 'that' or 'the', it standardly yields a singular term. I see no third way between these two alternatives.

Perhaps something may be salvaged from the 'Both/And' position. One might ascend to the formal mode and say, not that the Hallé is both an individual and a plurality, but that the Hallé has, by virtue of a referential indeterminacy, both individual and plural referents, just as 'the world's biggest bank' has, by virtue of a referential indeterminacy, both natural and institutional referents. One might argue that this division of reference rarely leads to confusion as in most communicative contexts it is clear that the user of 'the Hallé'—like the user of 'the world's biggest bank'—wishes to convey something about one but not the other referent. So for example, one would say 'The Hallé are meeting in the pub afterwards' to convey a fact about several individuals, for no individual could meet in a pub, but it may be that one would say 'The Hallé orchestra is well over a century old', to convey a fact about an individual presently constituted by those individuals. It may be that the likely contexts in which anyone would commit himself to (1), (2) or (3) are ones in which it ought to be clear which referent was the intended one.

Perhaps Simons holds some such formal mode 'Both/And' view. For, by this passage, he might intend to convey the thought that a term like 'the Directors' may be used to pick out some plurality of people, and also an individual continuant that they presently constitute:

... the same sentence, 'John is one of the Directors' may be uttered falsely before John's election to the Board, and truly after. The expression 'the Directors' thus designates those who are now Directors in this case (it need not, but can and often does work like this.) So the group designated by 'the Directors' is a collective continuant: it persists over time and its membership may fluctuate. 62

Whatever Simons thinks, according to the formal mode 'Both/And' referential indeterminacy view, thesis (1) is true, but not the whole truth: there are orchestras among the individuals of the world. On this view, (1) does not, then, offer the ontological economy that it appeared to provide: the Hallé, in one sense, is an individual somehow composed of, or constituted by several individuals. Still, it may be urged by a defender of the referential indeterminacy view that economy is not the issue; after all, the accusation of metaphysical extravagance that we mentioned at the beginning of this paper was not that there are individual orchestras, but that if per impossible there were, they would be agents, which is absurd. It is, then, open to a defender of the referential indeterminacy view to say that, while there are individual orchestras, they are not agents: it is their human parts that (severally and jointly) author actions.

Still, as Kripke writes:

It is very much the lazy man's approach to posit ambiguities when in trouble... the ease of the move should counsel a policy of caution. Do not posit an ambiguity unless you are really forced to, unless there are compelling theoretical or intuitive grounds to suppose that an ambiguity really is present. 63

A referential indeterminacy need not, strictly speaking, suffice for an ambiguity, but Kripke’s point carries over. The claim that the Number Issue is not an issue as ‘the Hallé’ refers indeterminately is rather ad hoc.

To conclude, it is uncertain whether the prima facie plausible (1), (2) and (3) are all true. I deny (1), but I cannot defend that view here.64

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