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What is the Hallé? *Thomas H. Smith*

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’, ‘Unison’, ‘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’,¹ ‘collective agent’,² and ‘collective subject’³, 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 *Quicunqve Vult*⁴—no entities are both one and many, then the use

1 Gilbert uses this expression in many places in her (2000), and in earlier works.

2 Graham (2002) pp. 82-3.

3 Pettit (2001 ch. 5) p. 123.

4 *The Book of Common Prayer*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1988) pp. 27-28: ‘... there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son: and another of the Holy Ghost ...

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

And yet they are not Three Gods: but one God.’

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.

about groups, and the Hallé in particular, in his *Parts*,⁶ 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 mereologically 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,⁷ namely that

6 Simons (1987).

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.⁸ 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

(1990), Lewis (1991), Cameron (1999) Hossack (2000), Oliver and Smiley (2001), (2004), Yi (2002), Dorr (2002), Rayo (2002) and Ben-Yami (2004).

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.’

outer edge of the Nile,¹⁰ and while (if Lewis¹¹ is right), ‘Everest’ may refer to several things on any occasion of use, namely many determinately bounded mountains, and while (if Field¹² 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 subjects¹⁴

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

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.¹⁶ 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—

16 See Velleman (1989 p. 4 fn. 1) for a spirited defence of this use of ‘he’.

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’,¹⁷ and in particular classes or pluralities as well as individuals.¹⁸ 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

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),¹⁹ so one may think of the expression as being elliptical for ‘object of possible discourse or thought’;²⁰ 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

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-fictionalising, 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-fictionalising, non-hypothetical* discourse. I ignore these complications.

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.²¹ 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.²² 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.

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 *occurrent*,²³ such as an *event*—a particular performance, say, *by* the Hallé, of the *Eroica*—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**, then *y* is present at *t*

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** 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.²⁴

Simons takes the contrast between continuants and events to consist in the alleged fact that events but not continuants may have temporal parts.²⁵ 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

23 Broad (1933) 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 *enmattered*.

25 Simons *op. cit.* p. 129, p. 175.

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)²⁶ 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, \dots, o_n which are (sizeable)²⁷ parts of o at t_1 , and then at t_2 , has *no* encounter with any objects o^*_1, \dots, o^*_n which are parts of o at t_2 , and then at t_3 , encounters one or more of any objects $o^{**}_1, \dots, o^{**}_n$ 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*.²⁸

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

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. 266 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

29 What may be urged—and is urged by Simons *op. cit.* 4.1—is that while events undergo mereological (and non-mereological) variation, they do not, unlike continuants, change; rather, they *unfold*. See Aristotle *Cat V* 4a30-32: ‘... in the case of substances it is by themselves changing that they are able to receive contraries.’ (trans. Ackrill J.L.).

30 Simons *op. cit.* p. 176.

and Pettit, Simons coins terms of art of ‘hybrid’ grammatical number—‘plural continuant’ and elsewhere ‘collective continuant’³¹—to characterise the *type* of thing instantiated by a group such as the Hallé. It may, then, I suppose, be suggested that, even though Simons clearly states that ‘A group is several objects fulfilling certain constitution conditions’,³² this should be read as saying not that a group is ‘several objects, *which* fulfil certain constitution conditions’, but rather that a group is ‘an individual, which is, at a time, *constituted* by several objects that fulfil certain constitution conditions’.

For it may be thought that ‘[a] group is several objects’ uses the ‘is’ of constitution, as featured in ‘The portico is wood and stucco’, not the ‘is’ of identity.³³ After all, why call the conditions ‘constitution conditions’ unless, when they are met by a plurality, it *constitutes* a further object?

In fact, there is a perfectly good answer to that rhetorical question. There are distinct senses of ‘constitute’, namely *compose* and *make it the case that*, such that it does not follow from the fact that the meeting of certain ‘constitution conditions’ by several objects *makes it the case* that some group exists, that those objects thereby *compose* a further (individual) object, in addition to their simply *being* a plurality of objects.

Simons does *seem* to put ‘the Hallé’ into the same category as terms such as ‘that exaltation of larks’, which ‘serve the function of referring collectively to a number of objects’.³⁴ What is more, if the Hallé *were*, in Simons’s view, an *individual* constituted, at a time, by several objects, and if I were right to attribute thesis (3) to him, then the Hallé would, by his lights, be an individual continuant constituted, at a time, by several objects, and thus on a metaphysical par with any other individual continuant constituted, at a time, by a plurality of objects, such as, say, a *stoat*. But then there would be no obvious point to his distinction, quoted above, between *individual* and *plural* continuants. So if I am right to

31 *Ibid.* p. 168.

32 *Ibid.* p. 146.

33 See Wiggins (2001) pp. 36-7.

34 Simons *op. cit.* pp. 145-6.

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 ‘*whichever* 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’,³⁵ 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

35 A citation under ‘constitute’ in the OED.

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*³⁶

However, the passage continues with an endorsement of thesis (2):

... it persists over time and its membership may fluctuate.³⁷

And I do not think it can be doubted that Simons endorses *this* thesis, for he makes similar remarks in many places:

... groups may continue to exist though over time they undergo a complete change of membership. They can thus 'outlive' their members: the Hallé orchestra is well over a century old, and all its original players are long since dead³⁸

A committee, orchestra, or species ... are all ... mereologically variable: they change in membership.³⁹

And it is very difficult to see how one could reconcile thesis (2) with the thesis that 'the Hallé' refers, at a time, to *whichever* objects 'regularly come together to play together' under the banner of the Hallé. For, just as 'the US President' does not pick out anything which persists through the centuries despite changes over time concerning which objects it has as parts, so 'the Hallé', on the view under consideration, can hardly be said to pick out anything which has persisted for over a century, despite changes over time concerning which objects it has as parts.

It may be conceded that the Presidency—the President's *office*—persists through the centuries, and perhaps even through changes of part, in some sense of 'part', but *it* is not the referent of 'the President', for we can truly predicate *made a speech* of the President, but not of his office. Likewise, the *property* of being the Hallé, which is, perhaps, at a time, jointly borne by musicians, may persist through time and survive changes among its bearers, but *it* is not the referent of 'the Hallé', for we can truly predicate *plays the Eroica* of the Hallé but not of this property.

36 Simons *op. cit.* pp. 168

37 *Ibid.* pp. 168-9.

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:⁴⁰ given that Cicero is identical with Tully, and Hesperus is identical with Phosphorus, Cicero and Hesperus are plurally identical 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

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 *i*₁, ... , in about each of the individuals picked out by *p*'s terms; consider 'The Conservatives are the Tories.'

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',⁴¹ and that such objects are 'referred to'⁴² 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 temporally scattered to render it impossible for *them* to ever have played the *Eroica*, whereas the Hallé has played it on many occasions.⁴³ It may be conceded that each of these individuals may have contributed to some performance of that symphony, but that shows

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 *_contributed 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 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' metaphysics 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 *just 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—and 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 tensed 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

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 mediately 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 held⁴⁵ 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

45 See Wiggins (1968), Pollock (1974 pp. 157-74), Doepke (1982), Salmon (1982 pp. 224-29), Fine (1982), Lowe (1983), Thomson (1983), Johnston (1992) and Baker (1997).

46 This is the conclusion of the exemplary sixth chapter of Simons *op. cit.*.

47 *Ibid.* p. 234.

as the matter of the groups.⁴⁸

On this new diagnosis of why it may have *appeared* that there was an inescapable difficulty entailed by (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.

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’ metaphysic 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 mediately 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).⁴⁹ Suppose *per impossibile* 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, \dots, 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, \dots, 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, \dots, 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.⁵⁰ But this breaches the ‘folk’ embargo on ‘one-one’ material constitution, so we

49 Baker (1997) is an example of a philosopher who makes frequent use of this notion. I hazard that our ‘folk’ metaphysic 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.

50 Wiggins (1968 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.

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 but 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 is have 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

51 Simons (1982 pp. 208-9). In this quotation, I substitute ‘class’ for Simons’s ‘manifold’, in keeping with the terminological change announced in his (1987) at p. 145.

52 Salmon (1997).

53 Simons *op. cit.* p. 156 thinks this: ‘A mass is ... neither one individual nor many’.

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 *many* 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 *relative* 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 *x*s are the Mortons and the Hanrahans; The *x*s are the *y*s. 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?⁵⁴

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.⁵⁵ Simons perhaps holds such a view too, as he writes, ‘a plurality is in one sense one, and in another sense many’.⁵⁶

A full and fair engagement with Frege’s view of number judgements cannot be attempted here.⁵⁷ 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 *organization* 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 up⁵⁸

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’.

55 Frege (1996 §22, §23, §46).

56 Simons *op. cit.* pp. 152-3.

57 But see my (2005).

58 Dummett (1981) p. 566.

fish.⁵⁹

If, however, Frege, or a Fregean, says that a *plural* object—a plurality of individuals—may be differentially conceptually articulated into, say, one pair and two boots, then I understand him perfectly. As Davidson suggests, while one cannot sort a closet, one can sort the shoes (or boots) that it contains; one might for example sort them into pairs.

Davidson goes on to say:

The notion of organization applies only to pluralities.⁶⁰

It makes no sense to say of an *individual* that it instantiates one concept *_F* exactly once, at some time *t*, and some other concept *_G* *several times* at *t*, such that *_F* and *_G* ‘sort’ it into objects of different number. For as it is an individual, *anything* that it instantiates, it instantiates exactly once; it cannot, as it were, ‘fill’ the ‘gap’ in a concept *more than once* at any time *t*. The nearest an individual can get to instantiating some concept *several times* at a time *t* is for it to have *parts* at *t* that (jointly) instantiate it several times at *t*. By contrast, it makes perfect sense to say of *several individuals*, such as some boots or cards, that they (jointly) instantiate some concept, like *_pair* or *_pack*, exactly once, at some time *t*, and that they (jointly) instantiate some other concept, like *_boot* or *_card*, several times at *t*. Several individuals are needed to ‘fill’ the ‘gap’ in a concept of the former variety; only one individual is needed to ‘fill’ the ‘gap’ in a concept of the latter variety.⁶¹ As a consequence, a concept of the former variety can ‘sort’ a plurality *p* into the one or more *pluralities* that instantiate it that are among *p*, while a concept of the latter variety can ‘sort’ a plurality into the one or more *individuals* that instantiate it that are one of *p*. Hence a plurality can (jointly) instantiate a concept *_F* exactly *n* times, at some time *t*, and some other concept *_G* exactly *m*

59 Davidson (1990) Essay 13 p. 192.

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

62 Simons *op. cit.*, pp. 168-9.

63 Kripke (1990) p. 259.

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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