

Le Moyne
College

Religious Studies Department

18 November 1975

Dear Walter,

How pleasant you are and what a wonderful chance it was to have you with us. You make one feel as though he has known you for years!

I hope you enjoy this spoof. The drawings are by a student of mine, Diane George. I included the Harcourt objection because it seems to go along with the whole direction of the spoof.

Hopefully, we will meet again before you leave Syracuse. I only wish there were enough time to have you over for a talk - mais, hélas! Au revoir vous bémisse.

Yours fraternally in Christ,
Ed Fogarty

Prof. Walter Capps

Edward Zogby, S. J.
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Man as Conductor of Being:

A Re-examination of "Man as Shepherd of Being"

Man is the shepherd of Being . . . The thinker
pronounces being, the poet names the gods.

Heidegger, German Philosopher

Man is the con-duc-tor of Being . . . he
calls the tune.

Zogby

The shepherd's hut is no longer a home for technological man.
For him it is no longer the house of being. Bobbing like a boat over
70,000 fathoms of water, technological man is searching for a new
metaphor to mirror himself to himself. The shepherd metaphor he finds
acultural or pre-cultural; it has as its prime referent a man-less
world, a not-yet world, a world of necessity, no artifacts, no ornamen-
tation or adornment. It lacks that quest for embellishment which has
always been the true mark of culture of every civilization. Such a

Drawing
#1

Drawing # 2

metaphor has nothing to do with the advance of the possibility of being; just with tending to it. It does nothing with it except care for it and be concerned for it. It does not reach out its hand towards being which needs not only the warming sunlight of attention (which indeed it does need, as Wallace Stevens has said!) but it needs the bracing activity which results from being put in new relational configurations. Only then, when in relational juxtaposition with other beings, acting - reacting - interacting - interreacting - combining - recombining, can the true figura or heart of being itself emerge; only when we add "con" to "figura" and the attraction-germination power released by being-in-relation can have its effect are we in a position to grope to the very this-ness of being. One does not discover the "itself" character of being by mere tending to, or manipulation, or fretting concern--all of which operate at too respectful a distance from being. Rather one discovers the itself-ness of being by plunging into the combined poised energy of con-figura, by, in one sense only, violating the indifference in being to combining and recombining, and by crashing through the dull bovine glazed gaze of non-related being. But from the combining and recombining ^{these} must emerge not a new being but a new relation of being; being must be made to yield the possibilities of itselfness without losing itself or becoming other than itself. Therefore our metaphor for describing being cannot be drawn from pastoral, acultural determinations, nor from field theory, magnetic-electricity and so on. None of these suffice. The only metaphor capable of getting to the heart of man's relation to being as we are describing it is that of man

Drawing
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as conductor of being. When we look upon the multiplicity of being as an orchestra in which all the instruments are prepared to produce their parts of the score as well as occasional breaks into cadenzas, we see that unity is there in the very ensemble--in the wind instruments, brass, strings, percussion and so on. Each instrument can be said to solo truly only by pursuing the search for the melody together with the other soloing instruments (just as, to use an analogy, a pack of baying hounds run in hot pursuit of their quarry). Only the conductor, who knows the whole score, can govern the relational configuration and moderate the concerted effort of the ensemble. They depend on his intellect, will and imagination for their fullest expression; he depends on theirs not to become recalcitrant or obstreperous. In this sense, the conductor must have the gentleness and concern of the shepherd, but there the similarity ends.

Before going on, however, we would benefit from a meditation on the metaphysical etymology of the metaphor conductor. It seems rather obvious that the word breaks down into three parts-- con, duc, tor, each of which can reveal the richness of the total metaphor. This is one of those rare words which is also symbol in the Coleridgean sense of primary imagination: it participates in the reality which it also represents.

Con: Even though the immediate and positive aspect, and obvious meaning, of this prefix means "with," its immediate and negative aspect, and equally obvious meaning is "without." In fact, it is the negative which alone has the power to reveal the positive. It is only through the negative of "without itself" that one immediately sees revealed the truth of itself, for without "itself" it simply would not be. But we do not want simply

to deal with the law of non-contradiction which is clear enough in and of itself. Rather we wish to see "itself" in its relational character which stands revealed only by "con." When itself is bathed in the full light of con, the unitive attraction-germination power of itself present to another itself or to other "itself"s" manifests the essential paradox of the co-existence of "with itself and without itself," of "with itself and without itself" present to "with itself and without itself," and present simultaneously to an ensemble of "with itself and without itself"s. Con, then, when used as a prefix for a metaphor which is also a symbol, has to be seen not only as a prefix but especially in its essential true nature of preposition; this connection remembered, the ineluctable reciprocity, at one and the same time nascent-emergent and diminished-finished, between conductor and responding ensemble (which reveals itself precisely in its crescens-decrescens nature, emptying out of fullness but never emptying out, sound growing out of empty silence but returning to full silence) is protected and preserved. It is this element of preposition which enables con to bend down and reach its fruit to duc and then to tor. Thus con becomes not only the nourishing mother, but the empowering mother, since nourishment gives energy and energy becomes the power to effect relation. Eventually, even this very essay will become a symbol of the metaphor-symbol we are developing here; thus the going around in circles pattern itself becomes the objective correlative of the metaphor-symbol, man as conductor.

duc: Again, the obvious meaning of this word is, as noun--leader, as verb--to lead; here it is also an imperative, a command. This sense of the verb form will not be lost to us for we shall return to it later and empty the

skin of its wine. Again, it is obvious, too, the power of interplay which exists between the naked verb form duc, and what a symphony of hidden meanings, realities and total worlds emerge when we add the other simple prefixes ab, de, ex, in, pro, re. (A reflection on the metaphysical etymology of each of these will appear in subsequent studies, because they all illustrate the necessary but secondary characteristics that flow from the primary metaphor con-ducere). But we need not here in this brief endeavor dwell on the obvious. Rather let us experience the full impact of duc-as-leaned-on-by-con. And yet, even though we will be considering the element duc in total relation to con, we will be considering it in total relation to non-con, or the obvious negative aspect of without which alone reveals the necessary relational essence of duc. Because of its nature duc has to lead something or someone, but again this stands more powerfully revealed by trying the impossible task of seeing it as not leading something or someone. The not instantly reveals the poverty of the negative. And so we turn to the positive.

To suck the full meaning out of the egg of the positive aspect of duc let us ask how duc is accomplished. Let us then begin by saying that positively speaking duc means to take the lead. How does one take the lead? He can seize the opportunity, he can command a response, he can choose his own gambit, he can draw a tight bow, he can snatch the day. In keeping with the tight central meaning of our metaphor-symbol, however, let us dwell on the primary how of duc: with the hands. We make this selection because it is primal; it is the ur-aktion. All men can recognize its centrality, and therefore its symbolic status. When

we consider how most men communicate we discover that body language and gesture makes an iceberg out of spoken speech. Nine-tenths of what we communicate is submerged below the waterline of our verbal communication (and even our verbal communication is so riddled with pauses, silences, tonal shifts, guttural eructations, and so forth, that even much of our verbal communication is non-verbal. We will not now consider what this means to our nine-tenths ratio.) Surely, when one confronts the metaphor-symbol "man as conductor," it is just a short journey to "with the hands." It is every concertgoer's experience, and certainly that of every orchestra member, that the conductor of the orchestra-ensemble conducts, leads, with the hands! It is obvious too, what conducting hands do to the orchestra-ensemble. The hands not only pull the multiplicity into a unity which emerges as pleasing sound, but they become central to what we are here considering: how can hands pull sound out of silence? How can anything material draw what is transcendent out of the immaterial? This kind of gesture of hand becomes a new signal of transcendence; the hands (extended for greater effectiveness and power by the baton, and raised above the ensemble not only by their being lifted but by the whole conductor being elevated by the podium!) become the necessary and absolute way for man to unite "with itself" with "with itself," without blending them into a new mass. Here motif and motive are one and the same. Under conducting hands the immaterial silence becomes material sound without (and here is the paradox in each of our three elements of the word "conductor") losing its silent immateriality. This, I grant, is paradox at the heart of mystery, but what other way do we have of comprehending mystery save through paradox, difficult though that may seem?

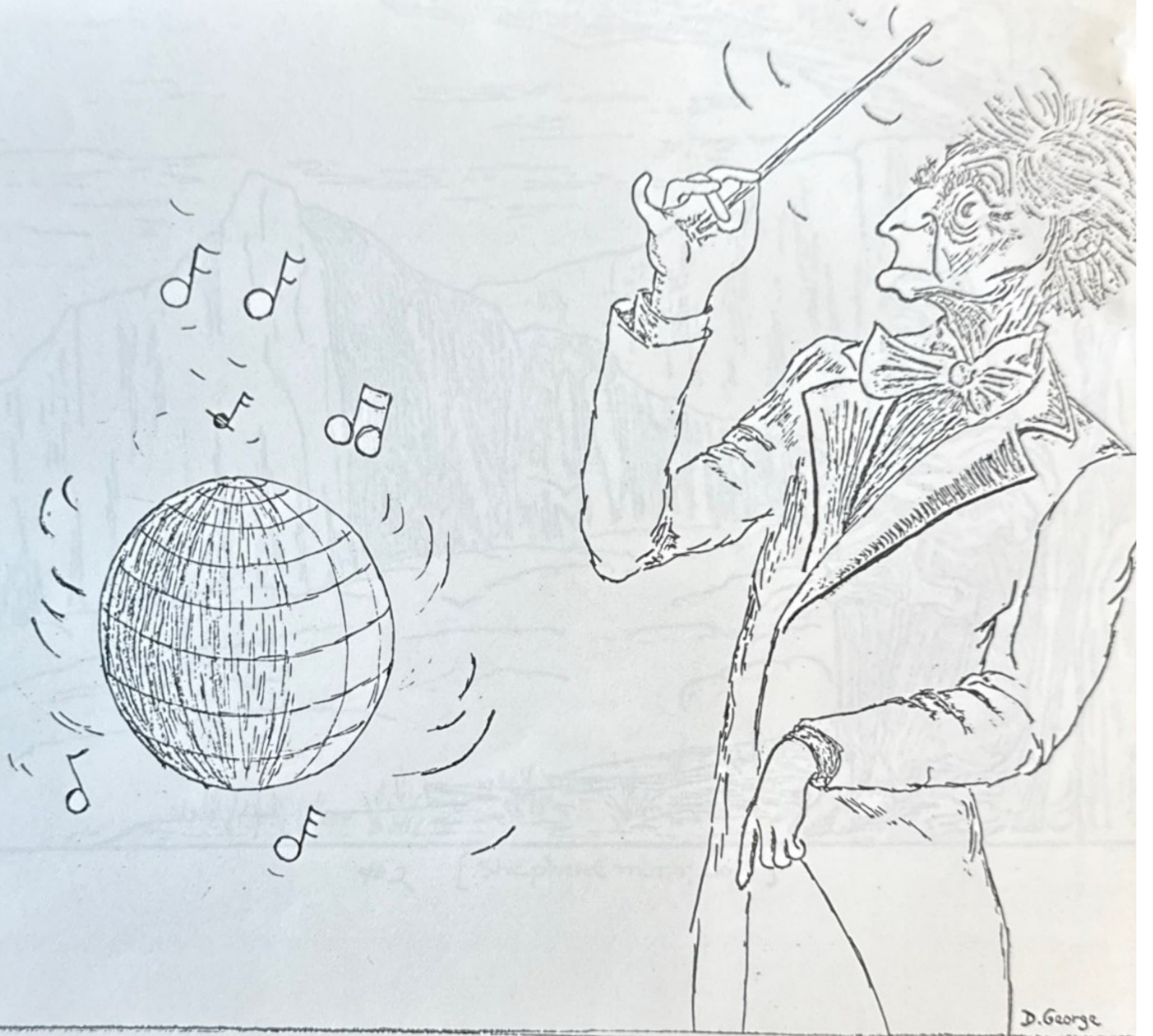
#5

tor: Tor takes us beyond anything we have come up with before in our discussion. For tor is our direct link with hand-gestures as signals of transcendence. If we but remember the primitive Nordic mythology which has exerted such profound influence on the formation of our nouns and verb forms, it would not take the most astute from among our ranks long to realize the connection of the suffix tor with Thór the Nordic great god. It is not that we intend to equate tor with Thor and thus claim divinity for man. No. What we do intend instead is to show that the tor-Thor co-incidence really tells us that for man to act naturally as tor is to discover in one and the same act and commitment to the real his essential vocation as conductor of being. Because the gods have become absorbed not only into our vocabulary but also into man and into all that exists, we can say now with confidence what we only postulated at the beginning, namely--that to conduct being is to discover our necessary connection with the gods. By conducting being, man is able to bring the "with itself" into concert with the "with itself," able to unify a multiplicity without destroying a single "with itself" (can a shepherd of being operate with such delicacy?). Man as conductor uses his hands to join, extrude, build, diminish, without ever laying a hand on one "with itself." As builder, joiner, extruder and diminisher, man as conductor carries on, through obedience to his primary vocation, the function and power of the gods. Only man as conductor is master of the movement and the rest, the reader of the notes, the knower of the score, the waver of the baton. But he remains only man, only tor and not Thor. There always remains one element of the ensemble of solos not subject to his baton,

and thus, the proof of his limited dominion and control of the
total melody. There remains always beyond his control as conductor,
a power which the members of the ensemble always retain, the power
at any given rest to break into an uncontrollable cadenza.

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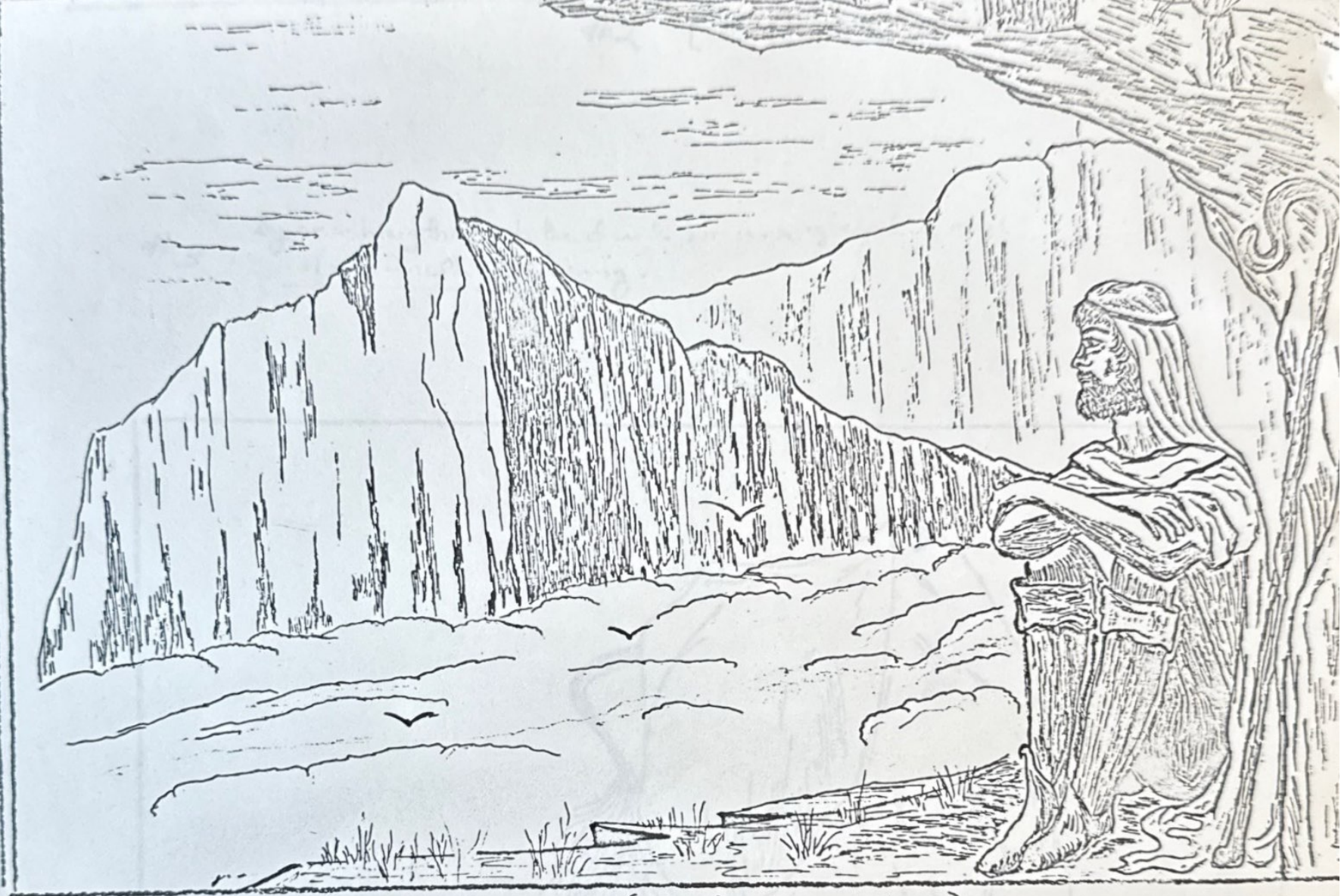
#1



#1 MAN - The Conductor of Being

D. George

V. D. ...



#2 [Shepherd metaphor]

#3 : By crashing through the death domain of legalism
of non-subsistent being.

#2 [Shepherd metaphor]

#3 : By crashing through the dense barren glacier of age
of non-related being.



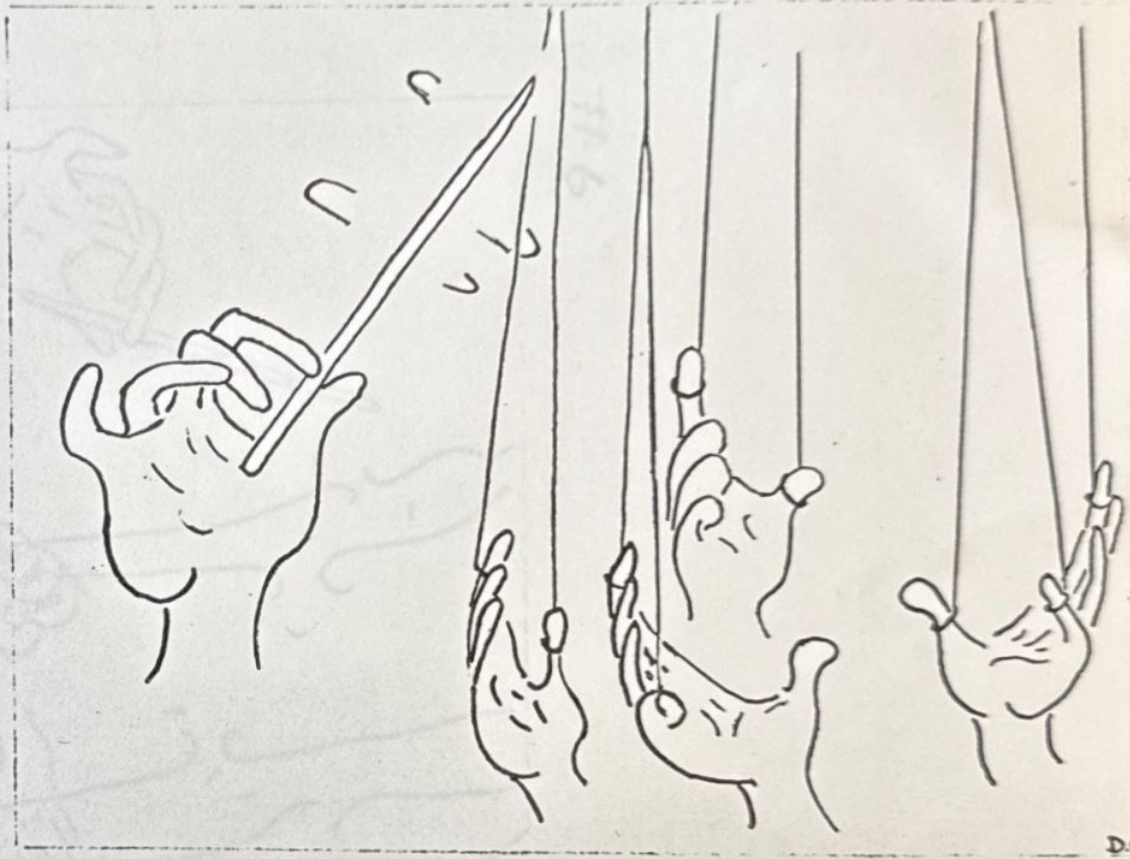
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- The multiplicity of being - as an orchestra
- that unity is there.

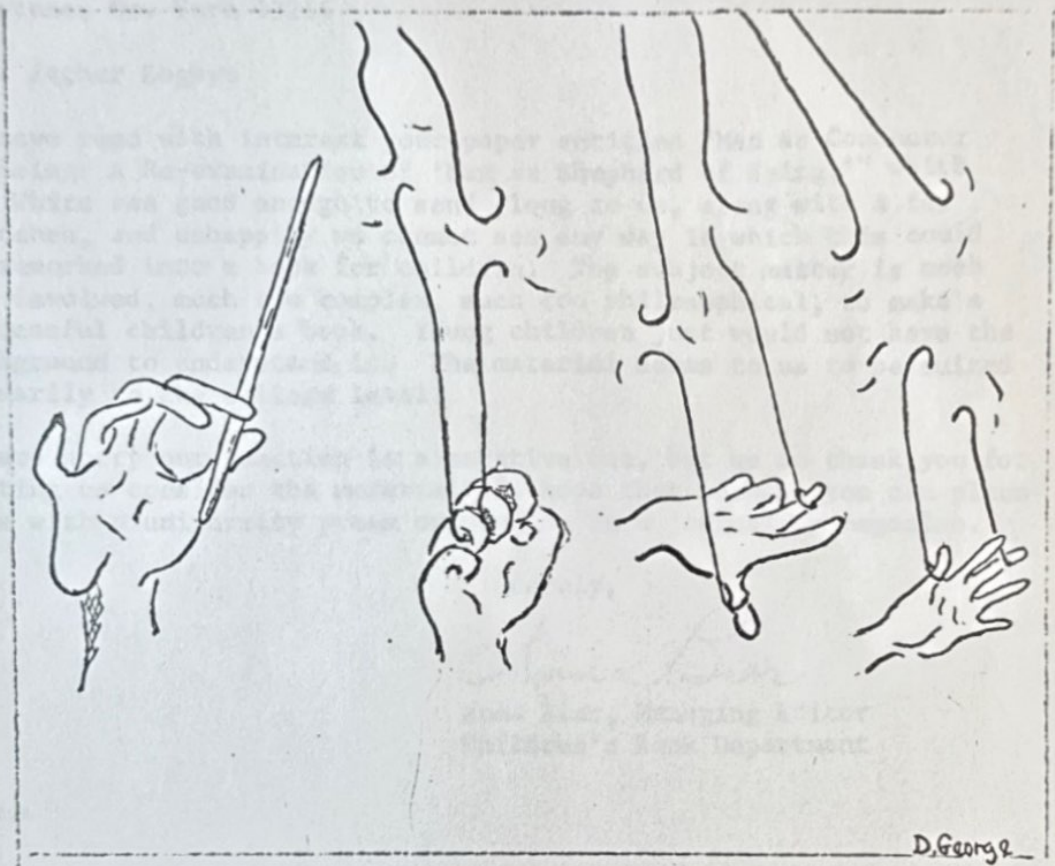


D. George

#5... →
CONDUCTING HANDS-
Pull the multiplicity
Into unity



#6



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June 24, 1975

Rev. Edward Zogby, S.J.
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Syracuse, New York 13214

Dear Father Zogby:

We have read with interest your paper entitled "Man as Conductor of Being: A Re-examination of 'Man as Shepherd of Being,'" which Mr. White was good enough to send along to us, along with a few sketches, and unhappily we cannot see any way in which this could be reworked into a book for children. The subject matter is much too involved, much too complex, much too philosophical, to make a successful children's book. Young children just would not have the background to understand it. The material seems to us to be suited primarily to the college level.

We are sorry our reaction is a negative one, but we do thank you for letting us consider the material and hope that perhaps you can place this with a university press or perhaps in a journal or magazine.

Sincerely,

Anna Bier, Managing Editor
Children's Book Department

AB:sm