To dialogue successfully with intellectual atheists and with theists in other religions, I must first appropriate my own rational self-consciousness. This can properly be done only by one’s self. This statement, although logically correct, is impossible of fulfillment in the concrete situation where the subject is isolated from others. The only alternative is to attempt self-appropriation in a community where communication is fully operative.

There is a growing community of scholars who experience success in self-appropriation by retracing it in Lonergan’s personal experience and verifying this in each one’s personal situation. This is a very difficult task, and it is to the credit of Richard Liddy to have undertaken the task and to have communicated its details to readers interested in promoting interreligious dialogue.

There is also a growing community of scholars aiming at self-appropriation by living out insights experientially derived from two distinct religious traditions: Christianity and Buddhism. This is even more difficult, and it is to the credit of Ruben Habito to have presented us with a personal report of such experiments.

Both of these books:


have benefitted this reviewer in an intimately personal way. Of much greater importance as we shall see later, the books will also facilitate dialogue with atheists and with non-Christians.

How does Liddy go about this task? As he indicates in footnote 21 on page xix, his book spells out in detail what Lonergan says in "Insight Revisited."¹ Twelve chapters, very rich in detail, are grouped into three parts of uneven linearity, unpacking and paraphrasing random excerpts from Lonergan’s writings, capped with a panoramic Conclusion twelve pages long.

This Conclusion explains how self-appropriation requires conversion in the subject, and how Lonergan affirms three dimensions of conversion: intellectual, moral and religious, related to one another in terms of sublation. Throughout the book, Liddy has been focussing on intellectual conversion because he is convinced — and I concur — that this is central to understanding *Insight*² and Lonergan himself.

In this Conclusion, Liddy also describes a personal “Archimedean experience” of intellectual conversion. He had been asking himself where his insecurity about Lonergan’s view of human knowing came from. He was not sure what insight was like. He was not sure he could situate it clearly in his own consciousness. Then it occurred to him while taking a shower that he had been asking the wrong question — as though it could be visualized in imaginative and visual terms.

While trying to find a personal parallel with this Archimedean experience, I thought of my own puzzlement while splashing around in the stream of meanings on page 118. Because of my background in Suarezian metaphysics, my immersion made me shudder with repugnance against the old scholastic polemics about the distinction between essence and existence. I could not appreciate the importance or relevance of this controversy. Now

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Liddy is saying that Lonergan experienced intellectual conversion with an affirmation of this distinction. Begrudgingly granted. But it may be argued that another, perhaps more radical, intellectual conversion immediately followed when Lonergan added: "But that is a long way around." (I emphasize the conjunction as very significant.)

Canonically, a "short way around" can be more parsimonious, more systematic, more in accord with the "intentionality analysis" that had not yet been formulated in *Insight* but later recommended in *Method in Theology* as an advance beyond the uncritical methods or the faculty psychology in medieval metaphysics. The attempt to explain the mystery of Word-made-flesh in terms of medieval metaphysics might have led to the "vast arid wastes of theological controversy."³

**INTELLECTUAL CONVERSION AND INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE**

Interreligious dialogue is treated in *A Third Collection* as a "set of suggestions that might facilitate reflections" on this topic.⁴ But Liddy does not include it in his discussions of intellectual conversion. Perhaps he feels that such intellectual conversion will not happen soon, and he would not consider it "radical" enough when it does. I feel that it will and I would.

A decision among representatives of world religions and of atheism to enter into dialogue would normally be preceded and activated by religious and moral conversions. For intellectual conversion to result from such a dialogue, there is need of a method for constructing a new set of basic terms and relations, from which other terms and relations that correspond to intentional elements in the consciousness of the dialogists are to be derived. Terms and relations that cannot be so derived are to be eliminated, lest the dialogue should die "gasp for breath."⁵ This is particularly true of dialogue with intellectual atheists.

described by Pope Paul VI as “men taking pains to work out a scientific explanation of the universe . . . men of great breadth of mind, impatient with the mediocrity and self-seeking which infects so much of modern society.”

SYMBOLIC IMAGES: ANALOGY WITH NON-EUCLIDEAN STRUCTURES

Is there a method for constructing this new set of basic terms and relations? If we follow Lonergan’s preference for the field of intellectual endeavor where “in fact the greatest exactitude is attained,” one anticipated answer may be suggested by a mathematical analogy: this new set stands to the old set as Non-Euclidean geometries stand to Euclidean geometry. The basic terms and relations in Euclidean geometry form a set of “symbolic images” isomorphic to a non-Euclidean set, but there are dissimilarities. The dissimilarities require in the latter a new axiomatic structure, or “suprastructure” as named by Lonergan. In interreligious dialogue, some expressions in non-Christian traditions do not (yet) signify anything clearly identifiable in the Christian tradition, and vice-versa; hence this heuristic recourse to a suprastructure of symbolic images in the hope that it will evoke revelatory insights into the reality symbolized. Such insights will probably be “too manifold to be marshalled, too fleeting to be formulated” in the short term. More probably, they will be marshalled and formulated only in the long term.

One heuristic benefit of symbolic images is that they are initially free of meaning except their intentional relation to the infrastructure. The carriers of this relational meaning are intersubjectivity and “incarnate meaning” where heart speaks to heart.

IF DIALOGUE PROGRESSES

A suprastructure then begins to emerge and more meanings are carried by language, first ordinary language and eventually technical language.\(^{11}\) Hope in progress in such use of the emerging suprastructure will be fulfilled if the infrastructure it presupposes is found to be consistent with the seven points of unanimous approval drawn up by Panikkar of the research group of the World Congress of Philosophy held at Varna, Bulgaria in September 1973. Its participants represented not only the major religions of the world but also an institute for Atheism and Religion.\(^{12}\)

What then is the infrastructure? Lonergan proposes a state of being in love in an unrestricted fashion, unrestricted even by any concrete understanding of "who it is we love."\(^{13}\) There are grounds for hoping that this will facilitate the new intellectual conversion desired unanimously by the dialogists, Christian or non-Christian, theist or atheist.

IF DIALOGUE DECLINES

Predictably, dialogue will decline "gasping for breath" in the presence of group bias. One example of such bias is for the Christian dialogist to cling to basic terms and relations derived from the metaphysics of medieval Europe. As yet, these are not completely related to the conscious intentionality of the Asian cultures of today. There is need of intellectual conversion.

Fortunately, the Filipino culture that had inherited much of the meanings and values both of Asia and Europe infused these somehow into the conscious intentionality of Ruben Habito. His two decades of Jesuit education were complemented by two

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11. Lonergan lists seven "carriers of meaning": intersubjectivity, art, symbols, ordinary language, technical language, literary language, and incarnate meaning. See *Method in Theology*, 57-73.


decades of immersion among Zen practitioners in Japan and Zen researchers in India, Indonesia, Thailand and Hongkong. His book is a testimonial of his personal experience of Zen.

ZEN

In time he developed a skill in Shikan taza, just sitting, doing nothing but breathing out and breathing in. I believe that this and other Zen practices enabled him to experience many things that this reviewer could not experience in previous attempts to meditate on various themes learned from Christian tradition. Scholarly knowledge of this tradition took decades of bloody entrance. But meditative breathing soon evoked peak experiences that reminded me:

* that the Tagalog pahinga, meaning “to rest,” implies that breathing is like resting in the Holy Spirit “who has been given to us” and through whom “God’s love has been poured into our hearts” (Rom 5:5) . . .

* that without effort on my part while just sitting, my woundedness — identified with the woundedness of the human race and the woundedness of our planet earth — is being healed by the healing Breath, and my awareness of this healing process becomes deeper and deeper until suddenly “I” am lost . . .

* that Ignatius Loyola (d. 1556), John of the Cross (d. 1591), Rinzai Gigen (d. 866) and Sozan Honjaku (d. 901), although separated by centuries and hemispheres, were all dedicated practitioners of meditative breathing. Habito on page 43 quotes John of the Cross as saying that this breathing is “so profound and sublime a delight, that it cannot be described by mortal tongue, nor can human understanding, as such, attain to any conception of it.” Would such a conception be approximated by Lonergan’s infrastructure of “being in love in an unrestricted fashion”?

INTERRELIGIOUS AND INTRARELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

These are examples of certain peak experiences induced by repeatedly reading Habito’s reflections in the context of Liddy’s analysis. The peaks lasted for only a few microseconds, “too

INTERRELIGIOUS AND INTRARELIGIOUS DIALOGUE
fleeting to be formulated." But even when they had subsided into an emotional plateau, they still retained a sense of the marvelous during the "ordinariness of one's daily life" (35), leading to a vague feeling that a certain spiritual threshold had been crossed. These micro-events serve to intensify the initial yearning for interreligious and intrareligious dialogue. Alas, the response of this reviewer is limited to laughing and crying and gasping in an effort to verbalize in a review article micro-events that are, after all, ineffable.

But the hope remains for a massive increase of such fleeting events experienced by more and more Christian scholars skilled in intentionality analysis. This can promote the probable emergence of symbolic images of the suprastructure envisioned by Lonergan. It can construct the technical language needed if the dialogue of religions is to progress and not decline.