

Q. 39 What are the flaws in comparing Lonergan and B?

A. 39 We pause here over the convention of having Lonergan as A in the “A and B”. We can ask, What does this mean? If the writer is really “taking sides with”, positioned with, Lonergan, then mention of Lonergan can be dropped: it is a matter of locating B regarding the standard model. If the writer is positioned against Lonergan then the writer has deviated from the LSM, and we had best skip that here and just deal with the “Lonergan ally”. In the case of someone allied with Lonergan there is the problem of non-explicit positioning, all the more so a problem if the relevant positioning is not explicit to the writer. There can be a positioning that is within Lonergan’s Standard Model, but simply as in *Insight* 413, or the positioning can involve picking up on axioms missing on that page, in particular the axiom of intentionality, or there can be a reaching forward towards a special categorical positioning, say, in the Christian tradition, a positioning indeed that places the writer subject-as-subject in the Dark Symphony of the complex Subject Christ. And if it is the latter type of positioning then it cannot, indeed, be merely implicit, even if it is, in this piece of writing, unspoken. Of its nature it is personally self-luminous in the Person of Grace, a passive spirating ever-seeding the tension, with active-spirating, of the pilgrim search for further tuning into the Cosmic Christ.

I swept forward there, in my rambling about the need for communicating positioning, to pointing to the ongoing fantastic climb that is the positioner’s call if she or he is authentically on the Tower trail of Lonergan, but the ramble points to the fuller musings of Q/A 41. It is best for the moment to stay, in its simplest manner of *Insight* 413, with the precise question raised above: “What are the flaws in comparing Lonergan and B?”

First, obviously, there are the flaws that parallel those mentioned in the previous Q/A, when it is not Lonergan but any A. But now such flaws, associated with clouded self-positioning, become meshed with a cloud over the positioning of A who is now Lonergan. It would be nice if the meshing were avoided: then three positionings are seen to be required, and are separated. So, as previously, Lonergan and Jones are to be identified in some type of sequence, and that

sequencing and its type are to be part of the third positioning, the writer's, whom I shall name here U, for convenience. Do I have to spell out how tricky this triple positioning is? Leaving Jones aside, Lonergan's positioning already includes a positioning on explanatory positioning. Has U got such a positioning, more sophisticated than Lonergan's, positioning Lonergan's explanatory genetic positioning?

I am tempted here to end this answer, hoping that, in its brevity, it will encourage a fermenting towards a shift in perspective in you, in U. But I would add a noting of the pointers Lonergan gives about positioning in *The Sketch of Insight* 17 so as to encourage the beginnings of a struggle with that dense alternate expression of the canons of hermeneutics.<sup>1</sup> They are pointers to a long and difficult climb needed if we are to rise, in these next generations, to sufficient maturity in the scientific pragmatics of interpretation to have both a sound content in a standard model and to guarantee "cumulative and progressive results" both in gown and town. What, then, we may muse, could be meant by a pure formulation of, say, not only Girard's [or Gadamer's] particular pointers but of his "context"? Does such a climb lead one to break off comparison through the luminosity of the chasm between Girard/Gadamer and the standard Position, be it regarding the simply pointing of *Insight* 413 or more complexly, regarding the avoidance of "pseudometaphysical myth-making"?<sup>2</sup> These fuller issues of Lonergan's heuristics of interpretation were shamelessly dodged in the conference on the topic in Concordia in the last century, where, yes, we did our share of comparing.<sup>3</sup> Do we wish to wander on shamelessly through this century?

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<sup>1</sup> I spell out the relation of *The Sketch* to the Hermeneutic Canons in chapter 9, "Interpretation" of *Christ in History* (a book on the Website).

<sup>2</sup> *Insight*, 528.

<sup>3</sup> The conference proceedings appear in Sean McEventy and Ben Meyer, *Lonergan's Hermeneutics. Its Development and Application*, The Catholic University of America, Washington D.C., 1989.