An Effort at Functional Interpretation of Implementation by
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In my brief submission to the functional research seminar I located 20 references to the term implementation[1]. The last paragraph of that submission raised various questions in an effort to connect with the specialty of interpretation but all those questions could be merged into one question: Is it an anomaly that the term implementation did not appear in the indices of the original editions of Insight?[2] As much as the later specialties will have to work out the larger answer I believe that interpreting what Lonergan may have meant by the term implementation would be a contribution to that larger answer.

We begin with Lonergan’s definition of metaphysics as it is the context in which the term implementation most often occurred. I quote it here: Now let us say that explicit metaphysics is the conception, affirmation, and implementation of the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being. (Insight, page 416[391])

The relevant terms in the definition that pertain to this analysis are conception, affirmation, and implementation. But the entire definition, if it is not to be read nominally, need be related to the individual terms, so its meaning is also a context. There are also further contexts such as the chapters on metaphysics, the entire text of Insight, the entire corpus of Lonergan’s work and thought, the history of philosophy, the sciences, global culture and the stages of history. I will focus on the relationships of the terms in the definition, the definition itself, the text Insight. I offer now a diagram of the individual terms and the expanding contexts in an effort to assist in understanding the meaning and role of implementation in Lonergan’s thought.

Symbols in the Diagram

IHS-integral heuristic structure  CON-conception  AFF-affirmation  IMP-implementation
MET-metaphysics  INS-Text Insight  FS-Functional Specialization  UOS-Unification of the Sciences
HOP-history of philosophy  GC-Global Culture  SOH-Stages of History  UV-Universal Viewpoint

The arrows would not transfer in the posting but perhaps the reader can work out the possible relationships between the terms with a focus on the term implementation. The second semi-circle of terms constitutes three contexts for understanding the first group of terms and the third semi-circle of terms constitutes further contexts for the preceding contexts, terms and relationships. This brief analysis will not explore the third circle of contexts but they are implicit in the analysis.
If we begin with Chapter 7 of *Method in Theology* (page 155) we have a listing of the procedure outlined for interpreting a text. Lonergan describes the basic exegetical operations as: 1) understanding the text, 2) judging how correct one’s understanding of the text is, and 3) stating what one judges to be the correct understanding of the text. Following down page 155 of chapter 7 we have Lonergan detailing the procedure for each of the above operations. The remainder of the chapter describes further the procedure of interpreting a text. I will attempt to follow his outline below regarding the term implementation.

To what object does the term implementation refer? It would appear from the diagram that the term implementation refers to numerous objects but if we refer to the definition: Now let us say that explicit metaphysics is the conception, affirmation, and implementation of the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being. *(Insight, page 416(391))* then implementation refers to the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being. Let us take as an initial meaning of implementation in this context to be a method that will make the integral heuristic structure operative in the sciences.[3]

The relationship between implementation and conception and affirmation resides in the grasp one has of one’s own heuristic structure. To conceive is to have experienced one’s own acts of cognition, determined the relationships between the acts and formulated insights into those relationships. To affirm such a conception is to have verified those formulations. The degree or grasp of one’s conception and affirmation will affect one’s notion and understanding of both the integral heuristic structure and implementation.

In attempting to understand the relationship between implementation and the other terms in Lonergan’s definition of metaphysics I am also suggesting an understanding of what Lonergan may have meant. If the object of implementation is a higher control of meaning which the sciences have the potential for, then Lonergan was searching for a method that would implement the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being into the sciences. But this method that is required would not be some simple procedure of taking an idea and implementing it into some other process as one would change the way one makes coffee because she or he discovered a new and better way. New questions began to emerge for me that I felt would assist me in working out the meaning of the term implementation but those questions continued to yield only further questions and fewer insights into what Lonergan may have meant by the term itself.

It might help my reader for me to state some of the questions in the order that they occurred to me.
1) What does implementation mean?
2) How do I go about determining that meaning?
3) What terms are related to implementation?
4) What kind of diagram would show the terms and possible relationships?
5) Should I restrict the terms I work with?
6) How do I choose those terms?
7) What is the function of each term?
8) How do I relate functions?
9) What is the object of implementation?
10) Are there more than one object?
11) Does the object affect the type of implementation required?
12) How does the universal viewpoint fit into interpretation?
13) How does my understanding of myself fit into interpretation?
14) Why does Lonergan include implementation in his definition of metaphysics?
15) Into what does Lonergan want to implement metaphysics?

There were other questions but you can see how they continued to arise and complicated the exercise for me beyond what I had originally thought it would be.

It was after so many questions that I attempted to relate Chapter 17, Section 3 of Insight to Chapter 7 of Method. I found section 3 of Chapter 17 in Insight to be an explanatory expression which does not lend itself easily to some simple correspondence to what Lonergan outlined in Chapter 7 of Method. This exercise put more emphasis on the method of interpretation than on understanding the term. The more I moved back and forth in my reading of both chapters the more I found myself struggling with what I had achieved. It has been said that Lonergan lacked energy at this time in his life in writing Method and that he himself stated that he could not put all of Insight into Method. So the responsibility would seem to be for me to put all of Insight into Method. And that is where I found the difficulty. Could I bring my understanding of Insight into my reading of Method? I found that a huge task that led me to realize I had little idea just what Lonergan was at in section 3 of chapter 17 and without that I felt that chapter 7 of Method was being misread as more of a set of rules and that one could too easily lose sight of the explanatory expression required to back up those rules.

It was section 3 of Chapter 17 of Insight that I eventually focused on for assistance in my interpretation of the term implementation and its relation to Chapter 7 of Method. I found in that section a much more difficult expression of what it means to interpret. Lonergan begins that section with 3.1 The Problem, and follows on with 3.2 The Notion of a Universal Viewpoint which on page 153 of Method in footnote 1 he tells us he now names dialectic, 3.3 Levels of Sequences, 3.4 Limitations of the Treatise, 3.5 Interpretation and Method, 3.6 The Sketch, 3.7 Counter-positions, and finally 3.8 Some Canons for a Methodical Hermeneutics.

In section 3.8 Some Canons for a Methodical Hermeneutics, Lonergan outlines what he calls five techniques of the lower blade of a methodical hermeneutics. I wish to comment on the second paragraph of his second technique; the canon of explanation. I quote in part here:
First, there is the genetic sequence in which insights gradually are accumulated by man. Secondly, there are the dialectical alternatives in which accumulated insights are formulated with positions inviting further development and counter-positions shifting their ground to avoid the reversal they demand. Thirdly, with the advance of culture and of effective education, there arises the possibility of the differentiation and specialization of modes of expression; and since this development conditions not only the exact communication of insights but also the discoverer’s own grasp of his discovery, since such grasp and its exact communication intimately are connected with the advance of positions and the reversal of counter-positions, the three elements in the explanatory differentiation of the protean notion of being fuse into a single explanation.

My reading of the above paragraph brought to mind a sentence on pages 164-165 of Method; But my present point is not merely the significance of questions as well as answers – though, that is in full accord with my cognitional theory – but also regards the interlocking of questions and answers and the eventual enclosure of the interrelated multiplicity within a higher limited unity. I was raising new questions but getting few answers and that puzzled me. I realized that in Lonergan’s own way, the meaning of Section 3 in Chapter 17 of Insight is “in” chapter 7 of Method but I can read chapter 7 all to easily without the backup of understanding section 3 of chapter 17 subsequently missing the point. The two statements, “fuse into a single explanation” and “within a higher limited unity” both express a meaning that is expressed in the paragraph quoted from section 3 of chapter 17 of Insight. And the fact is, that meaning is quite beyond me at this time. This lack of explanatory understanding of that paragraph from section 3, I suspect is what is inhibiting further insights. A further stumbling block maybe as follows. I have for some time now concluded that a relationship between implementation and functional specialization existed. That conclusion is not verified, but it being an assumption of mine leads me to adapt, perhaps not always knowingly, my process of interpretation to verify my conclusion. In fact my conclusion is really a hypothesis at this point. But I am not treating it as a hypothesis, so my process of interpretation is sidetracked by another motivation affecting the authentic desire to understand. The strong psychological drive of perhaps many of us to not show ignorance can manifest some form of what we think is reasonable intelligence. It too can be an inhibition. Now this gets in the way of what Phil McShane speaks of in regards to "not hiding our tracks". As I try to express my struggle it becomes apparent to me that I do not know how to express my struggle. It is not something I am accustomed to in an authentic fashion.

It might help to state the questions that now came to mind in the reading of that paragraph in Section 3.8 of Insight.

1) Am I being descriptive in my relating of functions rather than explanatory?
2) Are my emerging questions linked in some genetic sequence?
3) Am I aware of other viewpoints and how they would affect the analysis?
4) How at-home am I in the theoretic differentiation of consciousness that would help in arriving at a position on my questions?
5) How are all these unanswered questions affecting my communication?
6) What are the three elements in the explanatory differentiation of the protean notion of being?
7) How do these three elements fuse into a single explanation?

In the two groups of questions I did find limited answers to some of these questions leading to new questions but the more important point here is that in comparing and contrasting the two sets of questions one can see how I shifted from attempting to understand the term implementation with the context of Chapter 7 of Method in mind to one of trying to understand interpretative method. It was the difficulty of understanding the paragraph quoted above from Section 3.8 of Chapter 17 of Insight that called me to a halt. It was at this point that I decided that perhaps my difficulty best be shared with others and collaboration might be achieved on a new basis.

Finally, I would hope that this brief analysis highlights the difficulty of doing functional interpretation. Personally, I found it quite beyond the work of functional research. Such a proper interpretation of the term implementation within the context of Lonergan’s work, I now think would require a very large book and months, if not years, of focal work. That work I would hope would determine the fuller relationship between what Lonergan meant by implementation and functional specialization, for if my hypothesis that functional specialization is what Lonergan meant by implementation is proven to be correct, until functional interpretation, history and dialectic work out a position on this relationship, functional specialization will not be understood or able to be judged. That is my second hypothesis. I offer another, that if I am correct, it is the absence of such an analysis that is delaying implementation of an adequate metaphysics.[5]

[2] Implementation does appear as a distinct term in the CWL edition of Insight on page 838 of the index. It also appears in the original edition of Insight on page 770 of the index and on page 850 of the index of the CWL edition under the term Metaphysics. The term Affirmation appears in both editions on pages 749 original index and 814 of the CWL index as well as under the term Metaphysics. The term Conception does not appear as a distinct term in either edition but does appear under the distinct term Metaphysics.
[3] Throughout all of Lonergan’s work the emphasis is on theoretical expression. Only in doing science is one in the explanatory mode. This fact leads me to judge that his reference of implementation is to the sciences that he understands into what the integral heuristic structure is to be implemented.
[5] In a recent conversation with Phil McShane he directed me towards Chapter 14, Section 3 of *Insight: Method in Metaphysics* as an aid in furthering this work. A close slow reading of this section can manifest to oneself that explicit metaphysics may be a rare event. Such a reality would, I suggest, have a great influence in the manner in which the implementation of Lonergan’s achievements are handled. Is it possible that Lonergan named metaphysics in *Insight* and only actually discovered how to implement it in his formulation of functional specialization? See http://www.philipmcshane.ca/cantower14.pdf page 1 of Philip McShane’s Cantower XIV.

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