

Abstract for “Being as Determinateness and Its Ground,” Metaphysical Society 2014

This paper puts forward the hypothesis that Being (or being-itself, *ipsum esse*) is to be understood best through an analysis of determinateness. Heidegger distinguished being from the being of beings (determinateness) but did not know what to do next because he kept waiting for something other than the being of beings to show itself. The way forward is to analyze determinateness. The analysis given here is that determinateness of any sort requires a plurality of determinate things with respect to which a determinate thing might be determinate. The plurality requires that mutually determinate things condition one another but also maintain some externality to one another. What can be the ontological context within which things might be mutually relevant but still not totally internally related to some Big One? The ontological context cannot be determinate, because it then would need an even deeper ontological context to relate to the determinate things it contextualizes. The answer, it will be argued, is that the ontological context of mutual relevance is a creative act that is determinate only as the creator of whatever is determinate.

The creative act is nothing at all without creating. Therefore it is defined in terms of determinate things and its creating of them. The determinate things would not be unless they were created. Therefore “Being” is determinateness *and* the ground of determinateness.

The paper analyzes two kinds of components of determinate things, conditional ones whereby they can be determinate with respect to one another, and essential ones whereby they can be external and have own-being. The paper defends both kinds of components as necessary against contrary metaphysical views.

Then the paper analyzes four traits of determinate things, that they have form, components to be formed, location in existential fields constituted by the mutually conditioning conditional components of things, and the value of having these components together with this form in this place relative to the other determinate things. Therefore, “Being” needs for its explication as “determinateness and its ground” analyses of form, complexity, relation, and value, which is quite enough to exhaust an audience in a 20 minute presentation.