

Contents

1. The Nature of Vagueness: Humpty Dumpty Gets His Due	1
2. Interlude: The Place and Role of Model Theory	45
3. A Start on Model Theory	60
4. Connectives, Quantifiers, Logic	88
5. Refinements and Extensions I: So-Called “Higher-Order Vagueness”	125
6. Refinements and Extensions II: Objects, Identity, and Abstracts	165
7. Metaphysical Matters: Language, the WORLD, and Objectivity	190
APPENDIX: Waismann on Open-Texture and Analyticity	210
<i>References</i>	216
<i>Index</i>	221

1. A NEUTRAL CHARACTERIZATION? WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

It is not easy to say what the phenomenon of vagueness is without begging the question against some philosophical account or other. One typically begins with examples of vague terms, such as “heap”, “bald”, or color words such as “red”. A word or property is vague if it is like one of those. Although this seems to beg no questions, it highlights the question: in what way are the examples alike?

Discussions often begin with an implicit or explicit statement that vague terms have, or might have, *borderline cases*.¹ An author might give a purported borderline case of a vague predicate, wondering what to say or think about it. The reader might be invited to consider an object whose color is midway between red and pink, a supposed borderline case of “red” (and “pink”). Or one might begin with a person for whom it is not quite correct to say that she is tall, and not quite correct to say that she is short, or even not quite correct to say that she fails to be tall. Controversy arises when we try to say what it is to be a borderline case, or what it is to be “not quite correct”.

¹ This is not to say that only vague terms have borderline cases. To adapt an example of Kit Fine [1975], define a named number x to be “nice” if $x > 15$, “non-nice” if $x < 15$, and “borderline-nice” otherwise. Intuitively, “nice” is not vague, since the three categories are sharply bounded.