

Vagueness: Some Questions

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Some questions

- (1) Why is vagueness a problem? Why is it a philosophical problem?
- (2) What role does logic play in setting up the problem of vagueness?
- (3) How should one approach the problem of vagueness? What counts as an acceptable solution?
- (4) What role should one's intuitions about what is vague or not play in assessing answers to the problem of vagueness?
- (5) Does the sorites argument require one to change classical logic?
- (6) What does it mean to change a law of logic? How is that possible?
- (7) Can a law of logic be changed on empirical grounds? Does this happen in the case of the sorites?

Some questions

- (8) Let us suppose that Barney is a cat, and that it has loose hairs, $h_1 \dots h_{100}$. Let us also suppose that it is indeterminate whether these loose hairs are parts of the cat.
- Let us now consider the cats c_i , which have among their parts all the loose hairs except h_i . So:
 - Cat c_1 has all the loose hairs except hair h_1 .
 - Cat c_2 has all the loose hairs except hair h_2 .
 - Cat c_3 has all the loose hairs except hair h_3 , and so on.
- Clearly, each of the cats c_i is cat-like and, since they have different parts, they are not identical to each other.
- Question: which of them is Barney? (See Lewis [1993], Unger [1980], and Keefe [2000], pp. 160-161.)

Some questions

- (9) Which (if any) of the various approaches to the sorites we discussed seems right to you?
- (10) How would you construct your own account of the sorites paradox?