

A Determinable-based Account of Metaphysical Indeterminacy

Jessica Wilson (University of Toronto)

Many phenomena appear to be indeterminate, including material macro-object boundaries, predicates or properties admitting of borderline cases, and certain open future claims. Here I provide an account of indeterminacy in metaphysical, rather than semantic or epistemic, terms. Previous such accounts have been "meta-level" accounts, taking metaphysical indeterminacy (MI) to involve its being indeterminate which of various determinate states of affairs obtain. On my alternative, "object-level" account, MI involves its being determinate (or just plain true) that a certain indeterminate state of affairs obtains. More specifically, I suggest that MI involves the obtaining of a determinable state of affairs that is either multiply determined, or not further determined. I motivate the needed extensions in our understanding of determinables and determinates as independently reflecting that, even in the paradigm case of determinable and determinate colors, determination of a given determinable may be relative to circumstances (multiple of which, or none of which, may be in place at a given time). I then argue that an object-level determinable-based account of MI accommodates, in intuitive and intelligible fashion, a wide range of seeming cases of MI, while satisfactorily treating the usual concerns to accounts of MI, stemming from Evans's argument, the problem of the many, and Sorites paradoxes.