

Objection to flux doctrine

McDowell

- P1. "Everything is always changing in every way"
- P2. Thus, we cannot identify a moving sample of whiteness, or of seeing, *any longer* once it has changed into some other color, or perception.
- C. "No description of anything is excluded." For example, the thing is both white and not white, the perception is both a seeing and not a seeing.

Sayre

- P1. Any statement remains true no longer than the time taken in its utterance
- C. No statement can be treated as either true or false.

Problems

So long as we do have a language with stable meanings, and the ability to make temporal distinctions, there is no difficulty at all about describing an ever-changing world." (Bostock 1988: 105-6)

Consider the following claims:

1. The chair is now blue
2. I now see the blue chair.
3. I see now.
4. The blueness is present now

McDowell and Sayre's formulations of the argument might explain why a world of constant flux is incompatible with these claims being true; things don't stay stable long enough for them to be true. But it's unclear why the a flux theorist is unable to allow the following sentences to be true:

1. The chair was blue at 2am
2. I saw the blue chair at 2am.
3. I saw earlier.
4. The blueness was present earlier.
5. I saw a pink chair after seeing a blue chair.
6. I heard a loud noise after seeing the blue chair.

Cornford

Unless we recognise some class of knowable entities exempt from the Heraclitean flux and so capable of standing as the fixed meanings of words, no definition of knowledge can be any more true than its contradictory. (Cornford 1935, 99).

Our missing premise: the meanings of words is also in flux.

The Final Objection

- P1. We know that things are similar and different. We also know that things exist.
- P2. We did not acquire the concepts of similarity, difference, and existence through the senses.
- P3. Therefore, there are some instance of knowledge that are not instances of perception..
- C. Therefore, knowledge is not identical to perception.