

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL REPORT
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ASSOCIATION
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This report is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for international travel, funded by the Maricopa County Community College District. I traveled to and from Vancouver on 4/8 and 4/12, respectively. If you have any questions or would like to receive more information about the contents of this report, please email Dr. Yount at yount@mesacc.edu. Thank you.

Thursday, 4/9, 9:00 a.m. to noon:

Attended a session on Plato, and his perception requirement in his *Philebus* dialogue. I learned more about Plato's view of pure pleasures; that learning, and that learning is a process, whereas I had been thinking that pure pleasures are states or dispositions, as happiness (according to Plato).

Attended a session on Plato, based on his dialogue the *Theaetetus*, and the connection between knowledge, harmony, and beauty in what is known as the digression there. I essentially agreed with Holtzman's thesis.

Attended a session on Aristotle, where the thesis was that Plato could effectively respond to Aristotle's criticism of the Form of the Good in his *Nicomachean Ethics* I.6. I wrote my dissertation on this, so I met with George Harvey for lunch and shared with him my arguments against Aristotle's argument as well. But I learned from Harvey other arguments that Plato could make against Aristotle (i.e., that Plato's dialectic leads one to the Good, and that would aid the craftspersons, since Aristotle's criticism is that the craftspersons would not benefit from knowledge of the Good).

Thursday, 4/9, 1:00 p.m. to 4 p.m.:

Attended a session on Plato, on his Receptacle, as detailed in the *Timaeus*. Sattler's thesis is that Plato thought that topology and metric were related to the Receptacle, which is sometimes interpreted as matter or space. Sattler interprets the Receptacle more as space than matter. I disagree with her view, as she did not account for Plato's passages where it is apparent that the Receptacle might be matter and not space.

Attended a session on Aristotle, on his view of universals. Corkum denied that Aristotle had the view that universals are sortals (kinds which provide criteria of identity for individuals falling under that kind), very convincingly I thought. I had never thought of this, and will relate this to my students when applicable.

Thursday, 4/9 4 p.m.:

Attended a session on Aristotle, related to the dialectic of *Physics* II.8. I learned from Scharle that Aristotle can be defended against the charge that he begged the question against his opponent there in that passage, because he uses a "winter rain" example as the common ground between him and his opponent.

Friday, 4/10, 9 a.m. – noon:

Attended a Plato session on recollection and the method of hypothesis in the *Meno*. Weiner argued that the slave boy example in the *Meno* was a form of method of hypothesis. I learned that other scholars did not really accept this view, and I found myself agreeing with Weiner's opponents on this issue.

Attended a Plato session on whether good tragedy was possible for Plato, based on *Gorgias* 502b-503b. Trivigno argued that there is some room in the text there to interpret Plato as claiming that SOME tragedy may actually be good, and not a form of flattery, as is commonly interpreted. I thought it was well argued, and will keep this in mind as I teach Plato in the future.

Attended a Plato session on the rationality of the youths in Plato's ideal state (*Republic*). Jenkins argued that the youths have to have some kind of rationality, and in fact quite a lot, given that they have to learn math when they're 18. She rejects the interpretation that the youths have no rationality, which I found convincing.

Friday, 4/10, 1 – 4 p.m.:

Attended a Plato session on the source of law in Plato's *Laws*. Mayhew argued that God is the ultimate source of law, according to Plato, given the text. He also integrated the idea that Plato was rejecting Protagoras' view that man is the measure of all things, since Plato mentions in the *Laws* that God is the measure of all things. I agreed with Mayhew's thesis.

Attended a Plato session on "Doing without the Gods", by Paul Woodruff. Woodruff claimed that Plato did believe in the Gods of Olympus, but modified their accepted attributes by Athenians into other qualities. His issue was, "Why do I need to know the gods, if the Forms provide us with examples of what we need to recollect?" But one answer is that the Gods are the ideal knower of the Forms, and can lead the way for us. So I was sympathetic to Woodruff's thesis, but wasn't sure I agreed in the end. I also learned that Plato says that we should consult the Delphic Oracle in order to create the laws, of which I was not aware.

Attended a Plato session on what the gods do for Plato, by Tim Maloney. He first argues, based on the *Theaetetus*, that Plato says we should be godlike, so that is one role they play – being a role model. He also mentions that Plato has a theistic view of gods, which I agreed with. Moreover, he reminded me that being godlike is being just and pious with wisdom (again from the *Theaetetus*). He then brought up the tension that the philosopher doesn't care about the visible realm, but has to rule in it in the *Republic*, according to Plato. That was an interesting problem I had not considered before.

Saturday, 4/11, 9 a.m. – noon:

Attended an Author-Meets-Critics session, where the author was Christopher Rowe, the work was *Plato and the Art of Philosophical Writing*, and the critics were Ruby Blondell, Charles Kahn, and George Rudebusch. From what I gathered at this session (since I had not read this book), Rowe argues in his book that Plato has not changed his mind over the years of writing his dialogues, and just basically is the Socrates of the dialogues. He also assumes the mouthpiece theory (i.e., that Socrates usually represents Plato's view throughout the dialogues) as well. I agreed with both of these theses. However, Rowe also claims throughout that Socrates and Plato remain "non-knowers", that the Form of the Good is an idea that is not fully attainable in human life, and that the philosopher-king of the *Republic* is an ideal philosopher who is still seeker who doesn't have knowledge. Moreover, during the Q&A, I learned that Rowe denies Gerson's view that Plato believes in a suprasensible Good, upon which all else depends. I disagree with all of these views because in order for Plato to claim that once one knows the Good, one knows all of the other things as well, he (at least from the interpreter's standpoint), must know the Good (even though I grant that the character Socrates says that he doesn't know the Good but it's only opinion); that is, Plato is the writer and we must take him seriously about the Good, and not only because Aristotle argues that the Form of the Good is not relevant to ethics. In addition, Plato explicitly states that the Good is a Form in places, where Forms are eternal (beyond time), immaterial, and immutable. So the Good is, as any other Form, suprasensible. Plato

also claims that the Good is not being but beyond being in dignity and power, and the source of the Forms and everything else that the prisoner released from the cave (in the Cave Allegory) is.

Saturday, 4/11, 6 – 9 p.m.

Attended a group meeting for the Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy, which consisted of three papers:

(1) Mason Marshall argued that Plato neither deplores nor lauds democracy in his *Republic*, Book VIII. He gave reasons for why Plato does not necessarily deplore democracy, such as the idea that philosophers could flourish in a democracy, because they'd be free to practice philosophy. My objection to this view is that Plato pretty clearly states that the ideal state is the best form of government, and that there are successive degenerations from oligarchy, timarchy, democracy, and tyranny, and that he ranks them at the end of the descriptions and arguments; there must be a reason for the ranking, and it was nowhere based on whether philosophers flourished or not.

(2) Aimee Koeplin gave a paper on the persuasive force of the preambles in the *Laws*. It was very well argued, that Plato holds that the preambles to the laws in the *Laws* give rationales for why they will be beneficial for the citizens, so they are rational devices.

(3) Ian Flora, a graduate student at U of Michigan, gave a very impressive paper on Aristotle on part of the difference between belief and imagination (mainly in *On the Soul*). He described about 5 or 6 different interpretations of the important passages, and gave his own interpretation thereof, which seemed plausible at the time.