

Preface

Naoko Saito (Kyoto University)

A three-day intensive course entitled ‘Thinking about education through film’ took place on December 8, 9 and 10, 2018 at UCL Institute of Education in London. This was an international joint course with UCL Institute of Education as part of Kyoto’s ongoing International Collaborative Course. The principal instructor was Professor Paul Standish from the Institute of Education. The idea was to enable Kyoto students to experience the atmosphere of a British-style seminar in the UK. Nine students from the Institute of Education and five from Kyoto (including two undergraduate students) participated. With the multicultural and multilingual backgrounds of the participants (Japanese, British, Arab, Philipino, Korean, Chinese and Taiwanese), and with interdisciplinary interests of the participants in philosophy, education and media studies, lively discussion took place. After the course, the participants wrote essays on the topic, and the students from the Institute of Education tutored the Japanese students in their writing in English. The articles included in this volume are the product of these experiences of mutual learning.

Continuing the theme of last year, the course followed ground-breaking work in film as a medium of philosophical enquiry into education. It examined film texts to explore the ways in which film as a medium aids the understanding of experience and education in what has been called a post-literate, image-driven society. *How does film educate us, and how does the film philosophize? What would happen to us and to the world when the experience of film is shared?* This collaborative intensive course was itself the occasion to search, to experience and to experiment with answers to these questions. The main philosophical texts were Stanley Cavell's *Contesting Tears* (1996) and Plato's *Phaedrus*, and along with them, we watched two films – the Hollywood film, *Stella Dallas* (1937) (directed by King Vidor), and a contemporary Japanese film, *Still Walking [Arutemo, Arutemo]* (2008) (directed by Hirokazu Kore-eda).

On the first day (December 8, 2018), in the morning, the theme of finding one's voice was introduced by Professor Standish, in a reading of the closing pages of Plato's *Phaedrus*. The nature of speech and writing was discussed in the light of the 'ancient quarrel': this expression refers to the dispute or tension that has existed between the idea of philosophy as pure reason, independent of language, and that of literature, in which the play of language opens the way to new connections and new meaning, not entirely within the author's control; is there a clear boundary between these two or does the play of language always condition the possibilities of reason? The central issue here, or paramount importance for education, was how one can be engaged with language in being true to one's self: this is a question of what it is to speak in one's own voice. In the afternoon, we watched *Stella Dallas*. This is the story of a woman, Stella, who aspires to be cultivated and sophisticated, and who marries above her own social class. Yet in due course, when she becomes separated from her husband, her relationship with her daughter, Laurel, gradually comes to an end too, with her own cooperation: but Stella is then able to take new steps in finding her voice.

On the second day (December 9, 2018), we continued the discussion on *Stella Dallas*, both in small groups and in the whole group. This was followed by Professor Standish's lecture, 'Student voice, *parrhesia*, and speaking in one's own voice'. In the afternoon, we watched *Still Walking*. The film clearly made a sharp contrast to *Stella Dallas* as the progress of the story is less dramatic and (Japanese) people's engagement with language was less indirect. Still, throughout the discussion, we found the common theme of finding one's voice in testing one's words in conversation with others – and this, in the ordinary scenes of our lives. Also, the relationship between mother and daughter, and between father and son was paralleled in the two films. They are perfectionist films in that, in the face of complicated family relationships, the main characters continue to find their way. As one of the characteristics of the course, Professor Standish enabled students to learn to pay close attention of particular scenes of the films, and to test their analysis in conversation with others. The students learned that film as the medium of teaching and learning allows us to see things and people in the details of the ordinary life. This helps one to acquire capacity to think philosophically. On the third day, under my instruction, the Japanese students had a review session and were instructed on how to write a paper in English. We ended the course over a meal with Professor Standish.

Throughout the three-day intensive course, the Japanese students began to express themselves with growing confidence, even though they were relatively shy and silent in the beginning of the course. They encountered the limits of language, and yet struggled to express what, in a foreign

language, is difficult to put into words. They progressively learned how to present themselves in front of others. All this progress was made gradually in the course of the three days, in face-to-face dialogue, and in relation to the medium of the film. Film, unlike the theatre, enables us to enables a shared experience of what is on the same screen. We see the same image—in contrast to the ways that things in the world are normally perceived, from left and right, from different perspectives. In this course, students from the Institute of Education and Kyoto experienced such moments of sharing common images and, through this, underwent mutual transformation. This would never have happened in a distance learning or in online course.

The event is a cumulative outcome of international exchange between the Institute and Kyoto in the past several years. The joint course with UCL Institute of Education began in 2014, and this year it was an experiment of the new programme of the International Collaborative Course at the School of Education in Kyoto University, jointly offered with, and as a registered course of, the Institute's Doctoral School. The course has run alternately in London and Kyoto. We hope that the collaborative teaching with Institute of Education will continue to be an example of initiating Kyoto students into seminar style in foreign institutions and inspire students to study abroad.

We thank, first and foremost, Professor Standish, who is also currently Distinguished Visiting Professor at Kyoto University. His wholehearted commitment in teaching Kyoto students has helped them to cultivate a high standard in the command of English and to increase the number

of their presentations and publications in international conferences and academic journals. He has also been initiating Kyoto students into ways of philosophizing in ordinary life. This has a bearing on students' engagement and re-engagement in language, and on the way they do research in the humanities. We also thank other participants from the Institute of Education, who helped and inspired Kyoto students to express themselves and transform themselves through cross-cultural dialogue.

December 11, 2018
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***Appendix: Programme ***

**Kyoto-UCL Institute of Education colloquium: Film, Philosophy, Education,
8-9 December 2018**

This event will run on Saturday and Sunday (with an extra day on Monday for the Japanese participants only). On each day we shall start at 10.00 and go on until 5.00.

We want to run this with a degree of flexibility, but here is the provisional timetable. Please note that coffee, drinks, meals are at your own expense.

Saturday ROOM 731, UCL Institute of Education

10:00	Brief introduction followed by Plato's <i>Phaedrus</i> (just the section at the end on writing and speech)
11:00	Coffee break
11:15	Brief introduction and then viewing of <i>Stella Dallas</i>
1:00-2:15	Lunch (recommendation: food stalls in the Brunswick Centre, WC1N 1BS)
2:15-5:00	Discussion of the film, including close analysis of scenes For part of the afternoon, you will be asked to work in groups and to select a short scene (e.g. 3 minutes) that you would like to discuss in detail. That scene will then be shown, and your group will lead the discussion. Other discussion will look more directly at the Stanley Cavell reading. Coffee break at a convenient point.
5:00-6:30	Drinks at a local pub
6:45	Dinner at Antalya (Turkish restaurant in Southampton Row, WC1B 4HH) About £25-£30, including drinks.

Sunday ROOM 828, UCL Institute of Education

- 10:00 **Student voice, *parrhesia*, and speaking in one's own voice**
Brief presentation and discussion led by Paul Standish. Reference to the readings by Naoko Saito and Paul Standish.
- 10:45 Coffee break
- 11:00 **Brief introduction and then viewing of *Still Walking***
- 1:00-2:15 Lunch
- 2:15-3:45 **Discussion of the film, including close analysis of scenes**
For part of the afternoon, you will be asked to work in groups and to select a short scene (e.g. 3 minutes) that you would like to discuss in detail. That scene will then be shown, and your group will lead the discussion.
- 3:45 Coffee break
- 4:00 **Discussion on the films in relation to education**
The point is not just to consider education as it emerges in a theme from the films, but what educational practices might be supported and what avoided in educational institutions themselves.

Readings

A key essay on *Stella Dallas* by Stanley Cavell is attached, as well as papers by Naoko and by me, both related to Cavell's discussion of the film. Also attached is the relevant section of Plato's Phaedrus, in Benjamin Jowett's translation. The section covers about the last five pages of the dialogue, and in some respects (and for our purposes) it can be read independently of the main body of the dialogue. You can, however, find the whole thing here: <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/phaedrus.html>. (If your first language isn't English, you may choose to read a version in your own language.)

Participants: Jason Eyre, Ibrahim Lawson, Sojin Lee, Soyoung Lee, Beki Mace, Leila Osman, Rowena Palacios, Duncan Roberts, Adrian Skillbeck, Chien-Ya Sun, Chlöe Tomlinson. Five students will be coming from Kyoto.