Journal of Japanese and Korean Cinema

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rjkc20

Gazing at Kaoru: star image in film adaptations of The Dancing Girl of Izu

Lauri Kitsnik[a]

[a] Trinity College, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, CB2 1TQ, UK

Published online: 13 Oct 2014.

To cite this article: Lauri Kitsnik (2014): Gazing at Kaoru: star image in film adaptations of The Dancing Girl of Izu, Journal of Japanese and Korean Cinema, DOI: 10.1080/17564905.2014.961711

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17564905.2014.961711

Journal of Japanese and Korean Cinema, 2014
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17564905.2014.961711

Gazing at Kaoru: star image in film adaptations of *The Dancing Girl of Izu*

Lauri Kitsnik*

Trinity College, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, CB2 1TQ, UK

In star vehicles, such as the serial adaptations of Kawabata Yasunari's *The Dancing Girl of Izu*, it is often the image associated with the lead actors/actresses that takes the position of organizing the traits of main character(s). This article examines how and to what extent the star images of the actresses Tanaka Kinuyo and Wanibuchi Haruko have informed the 'drift' of alterations to the source in their respective turns of stepping into the role of the eponymous dancing girl, Kaoru. Observing how elements of the star's real-life persona sometimes crawl into the film will help us to reconsider how the negotiation arising from the problematic fit between a star's image and narrative character can expand rather than contain the creative possibilities of adapting literary works to the screen.

Keywords: *film adaptation; Kawabata Yasunari; problematic fit; star image; star vehicle; Tanaka Kinuyo; Wanibuchi Haruko*

Film adaptations of *Izu no odoriko*/*The Dancing Girl of Izu*[1] have served as the site for any number of discussions on bringing Japanese literature to the screen. Approaches have been manifold: from case studies with a comparative (McDonald 2000) or an auteurist (Nolletti 2005) angle to those addressing wider issues in film culture and industry, such as consumption patterns (Wada-Marciano 2008) or career management (Shamoon 2009). However, it is fair to say that efforts to make bold generalizations about adaptation practices based on *The Dancing Girl of Izu* have mostly fallen through, not least for the lack of solid factual grounding (Cazdyn 2002). On the other side of the spectrum, as an example of drowning in detail, is the book-length study *Izu no odoriko monogatari*/*The Story of the Dancing Girl of Izu* (1994) by Nishikawa Katsumi, the director of two of the six film adaptations.[2]

Based as they are on a canonical piece of short prose by the Nobel Prize-winning novelist Kawabata Yasunari, *The Dancing Girl of Izu* films certainly have what it takes to be at the crux of literary and film studies with the additional benefit of multiple versions to weigh against each other. However, both the approval of critics as well as scholarly interest has been largely limited to the first adaptation from 1933. The latter versions, in turn, have been relegated to being useful for little more than commenting on the increasing staleness of the film industry (Cazdyn 2002) or the predictability of its practices, such as serial attempts to facilitate careers of

*Email: lk329@cam.ac.uk

fledgling starlets based on a template first introduced for Misora Hibari in 1954 (Shamoon 2009). Nevertheless, as I will show in this article, examining subsequent films of what could be called the *Dancing Girl of Izu* franchise can be highly informative for the purpose of looking at the underpinnings of female stardom in Japan as well as its implications for adapting literature to the screen.

Robert Stam has summarized the underlying concern of any study of adaptations as follows: '[W]hat principle guides the processes of selection or "triage" when one is adapting a novel? What is the "drift" of these changes and alterations? What principles orient the choices?' (Stam 2005, 34). The task of the present article is to move beyond simple narrative analysis and by drawing from various sources to reconsider how and to what extent the star image of leading actresses has informed the drift of alterations to the source in the film adaptations of *The Dancing Girl of Izu*, focusing on the 1933 and the oft-neglected 1960 versions. I will look at how the star image can instigate and expand rather than contain and restrict the possibilities of reworking literary texts, while remaining close to the objectives imposed by the studio system.

Bittersweet partings and tiny departures: Tanaka Kinuyo's star image

The Dancing Girl of Izu was first published in two instalments in the coterie magazine *Bungei jidai*/*Literary Age* in February–April 1926, reappearing in the eponymous collection of short fiction in the following year.[3] Kawabata tells a story about a student from Tokyo who takes a trip to the Izu peninsula in Shizuoka prefecture. There he accidentally meets a group of travelling entertainers, among them a young dancing girl named Kaoru, the student's infatuation with her apparently becoming the reason he decides to accompany them on their way to the port town of Shimoda. The story is told from the narrator's point of view, with less emphasis on the surrounding nature and more on his ever-shifting inner feelings. When spending a lonely night in his room while the dancing girl is performing to a drunken party, he is attacked by a bout of jealousy and despair; the next day, while in a bathhouse and on seeing Kaoru waving to him from afar, naked, he realizes in rapture that she is still only an innocent child. Subsequently, he seems to lose the initial interest in the girl and instead develops a stronger bond with her older brother, Eikichi. Indeed, on the brief occasions when the two young people are together alone, the student seems largely indifferent to her child-like behaviour. In the final scenes of the story, the student says farewell to his new friends and boards a ship back to Tokyo, sheds a few tears, then on the boat makes the acquaintance of another young man and it is suggested that the two share a bed for the night.[4]

Of the six film versions, *Koi no hana saku: Izu no odoriko*/*The Flowers of Love in Bloom: The Dancing Girl of Izu* (Gosho Heinosuke, 1933), adapted by Fushimi Akira[5] and directed by Gosho Heinosuke, remains the most celebrated and frequently discussed. It is also the version that takes the clearest and bravest departure from its source material. By introducing a number of new characters and storylines, more emphasis is placed on the socio-economic factors in the Depression era of the early 1930s that guide the human relationships in the story. Remarkably, there is little doubt that the student (named Mizuhara) maintains his interest in the dancer throughout the film; in this regard, what reveals the drift of this adaptation is

the ending. The finale of Kawabata's original story finds the narrator at Shimoda harbour saying farewell to Eikichi; Kaoru is standing in the background, silent. In contrast, Fushimi and Gosho have the boy and the girl engage in a long and emotional conversation by the ocean, the main subject being his insistence that she should marry a wealthy local man and through this attain a secure future for herself and her brother.[6] They exchange farewell gifts (a comb and a pen) and ultimately confess their love for each other. When the ship is sailing into the distance, Kaoru starts to run along the shore, stopping at the end of the pier, waving her white handkerchief and pressing the pen received from the student to her lips.

Curiously, many later versions have followed Fushimi and Gosho's example, and it is easy to notice how persistent certain themes and elements first introduced in 1933 have remained. The farewell gifts alone point at a remarkable case of genealogy between the film adaptations: the comb, not present in Kawabata's ending, appears in four of the six films. Thus, it is not only by its thematic focus but also in small details that Gosho's film has become a point of reference (and site for anxiety of influence) for the later film adaptations of *The Dancing Girl of Izu*. Moreover, film versions have arguably established a new reading that in turn has come to dominate the later reception of Kawabata's story itself. As a result, the source text is now being interpreted with the help of its adaptations.

Both Keiko I. McDonald (2000) and Arthur Nolletti, Jr. (2005) make much of Gosho's skills as a director in explaining the critical and commercial success of this first adaptation of *The Dancing Girl of Izu*,[7] often putting his signature on elements in the film that should clearly be attributed to either the screenwriter or the cinematographer. Nolletti even concludes bluntly that the film represents a 'harmonious collaboration between Gosho and Kawabata' (2005, 62), downplaying both the alterations to the source mentioned above and the inherently collaborative nature of filmmaking. Moreover, treating Gosho as an auteur filmmaker and directors of the subsequent film adaptations as craftsmen at best coincides with the trend of regarding the postwar versions more or less as soulless replicas. While there are certainly benefits to analysing adaptations vis-à-vis the source, the theoretical frame of placing two authors/auteurs (the novelist and the director) against each other can be rather restrictive and fail to account for the actual drift of the alterations in the adaptation.

It is also important to notice how focusing on the artistic qualities of the 1933 version has downplayed what a slick commercial product it really was;[8] one of the most striking features of the film is its heavy reliance on product placement. For instance, confectionery (Meiji chocolate) and cosmetics products (Club skin whitening powder) make their appearance numerous times in the course of the film without having any discernible diegetic function. Furukawa Kaoru (2004, 179) suggests that adding these shots acted as a safety net, obtaining additional funding for the otherwise risky attempt of adapting contemporary literature to the screen. As a result, compared to the later versions that tend to cater for the audience's feelings of nostalgia (for example, cropping the landscape of modern elements such as buses and telephone poles), the 1933 film at times appears as an advertisement for tours to the Izu peninsula.[9] However, the crucial decision in order to attract audiences was the casting of Tanaka Kinuyo in the female lead. It is well worth looking at how her star image was instrumental in promoting the first film adaptation of *The Dancing Girl of Izu* as well as facilitating alterations to the story.

Tanaka Kinuyo and the rise of the star

Often hailed as the greatest actress in the history of Japanese cinema, Tanaka (1909–1977), who maintained critical and commercial success from the 1930s to 1970s, was also one of its first stars to be perceived as such, while also being associated with star-like behaviour.[10] In the 1930s, Tanaka already stood clearly apart from other contemporary actresses, most visibly for the way her films were being promoted. A series of films with titles such as *Kinuyo monogatari*/*The Story of Kinuyo* (Gosho Heinosuke, 1930) and *Joi Kinuyo sensei*/*Kinuyo the Lady Doctor* (Nomura Hiromasa, 1937) indicate how her star image was instrumental in marketing, creating an overlap between the individual and her screen persona. Shindō Kaneto (1983, 107) has noted that when screenplays with the name Kinuyo in their title first started to appear on producers' tables in the early 1930s, it was clear that a new kind of star was born. Even Kurishima Sumiko, commonly considered the biggest star before Tanaka, never had her star image extend as far as the titles of her films. This promotional strategy also suggests that Tanaka was not only a national actress (*kokuminteki joyū*) but something of an early *aidoru* (idol, a word that largely replaced the term 'star' by the 1970s) during her prewar career.

The Flowers of Love in Bloom: The Dancing Girl of Izu, released during an early high point in Tanaka's career, makes full use of this strategy as is visible from the opening titles where her name appears in the same frame as the film's title. This is quite an unconventional feat in the standard practice of Japanese cinema (commonly, the names of the actors would appear last), and that alone attests to her already existing star status, as well as creating certain expectations in the audience familiar with her image. In his seminal study on film stardom, Richard Dyer pointed out how star vehicles emerge from such preconceived sets.

> Films were often built around star images. Stories might be written expressly to feature a given star, or books might be bought for production with a star in mind. Sometimes alterations to the story might be effected in order to preserve the star's image. This is what is implied by the term star 'vehicle' … The vehicle might provide a) a character of the type associated with the star … b) a situation, setting or generic context associated with the star … or c) opportunities for the star to do her/his thing. (Dyer 1979, 70)

The notion of the star image being a source of alterations becomes particularly important when looking at film adaptations that are also functioning as star vehicles.[11] Considering how Kawabata's lyrical and egotistical musings have been turned into a full-fledged love story ending with a truly selfless (albeit patriarchal) gesture of handing the girl over to a rival, it is interesting to observe how such alterations might have been informed by a particular star image.

Crucially, star image contains not only character types and situations played out on the screen, but also the star's off-screen persona. It often happens, then, that the latter becomes a point of reference for audience reception. In the case of *The Flowers of Love in Bloom: The Dancing Girl of Izu* this mechanism is taken one step further. A tiny but remarkable detail that brings Tanaka's real-life persona straight into the film text is the christening of the student by the name of Mizuhara (in Kawabata's story, the narrator was simply referred to as *watakushi*, I). According to Nishikawa (1994, 202), this can be traced back to Mizuhara Shigeru (1909–1982), a baseball player from the Keiō University team, who later became the legendary coach of the

Yomiuri Giants, leading the team to three consecutive league titles in the 1950s. Both the dormitory and the practice field of Keiō were relatively close to Shōchiku's Kamata studios and the story has it that Tanaka and Mizuhara, who along with other players from his team often visited the set, were dating at the time. Whatever the exact nature of their relationship, in an interview with Shindō (1983, 117–118), Tanaka half-jokingly admits to eventually losing out to another Shōchiku actress, Matsui Junko, who married Mizuhara in 1935.

From early on, gossip has been an integral part of image-making, controlled and often deliberately leaked by the studios or the star's agent (Dyer 1979, 69). Tanaka, who never married, had many stories circulating about her love life since the beginning of her stardom, culminating in speculation about her affair with the director Mizoguchi Kenji. While it is a well-known fact that in the late 1920s she had been briefly engaged to Shimizu Hiroshi, another Shōchiku director, Shindō's biography, *Shōsetsu Tanaka Kinuyo/Tanaka Kinuyo: The Novel* (1983) makes her private life seem almost like a soap opera, her love interests comprising a list of most of the notable people she worked with, including Gosho and Ohara Jōji, the cinematographer of *The Flowers of Love in Bloom: The Dancing Girl of Izu*.[12] Nishikawa (1994, 207–208) suggests that given the background, Gosho and Fushimi could not resist the temptation to name the student Mizuhara, alluding ironically to the failed courtship between the actress and the baseball star within their adaptation of another story of unconsummated love. Nishikawa admits that this certainly would have had an even stronger effect had the film been made in sound, perhaps having Kaoru/Tanaka call out in her soft Kansai dialect, coquettishly or in desperation: 'Mizuhara-san!' At any rate, this inside joke resulted in the name Mizuhara, which has no precedent in Kawabata's story, remaining conspicuously present in the next two versions of the film, creating a genealogy that extends all the way to the 1960s.[13] The Mizuhara story hints at the playful nature of studio filmmaking of the day,[14] as well as how a star's off-screen persona can be made to overlap with her character in the film, adding layers to the story.

One might then ask whether this film was tailored to suit Tanaka's image, up to the point that her love interest in the film was named after her real-life boyfriend. However, it would be an exaggeration to say that she had one definite image at the time; even a quick look at some of her films of the same period makes the picture complicated. In the year 1933, Tanaka starred in a number of films, Ozu Yasujirō's *Hijōsen no onna/Dragnet Girl* being one of the few preserved to this day. In this crime story, quite untypical of its director, Tanaka has a leading role as a typist, an archetypal occupation for a *modan gāru* (modern girl), diametrically different from the image of naive and innocent Kaoru, not least for the fact that in one of the most emblematic scenes from the film she is threatening another woman by holding a revolver. If only looking at her output from the single year of 1933, it is very difficult to point out a certain type she might have been most likely cast in.

While attesting to the versatility of Tanaka's talent as an actress,[15] this also indicates how contradictions in the star image are in fact an inextricable part of it. Dyer has used the term 'structured polysemy' to describe this type of dynamic within star images.

> By *polysemy* is meant the multiple but finite meanings and effects that a star image signifies … In some cases, the various elements of signification may *reinforce* one

Figure 1. Tanaka Kinuyo, a superstar of the 1930s, starring as Kaoru in the 1933 version of *The Dancing Girl of Izu*.

> another … In other cases, the elements may be to some degree *in opposition or contradiction*, in which case the star's image is characterised by attempts to negotiate, reconcile or mask the difference between the elements, or else simply hold them in tension … Structured polysemy does not imply stasis; images develop or change over time. (Dyer 1979, 72–73, emphasis in original)

Tanaka's polysemic star image was arguably one of the reasons behind the success of her early career and films such as *The Flowers of Love in Bloom: The Dancing Girl of Izu* where the audiences were allowed to read elements of her other roles and off-screen life into the story of the film. Approaching Tanaka from her *modan gāru* roles, Isolde Standish notes that 'despite her modern status as an independent working woman, she also becomes a signifier of the traditional. It was this ability to bridge the contradiction between the modern and the traditional that came to define Tanaka Kinuyo's star persona in the 1930s' (Standish 2005, 57). Being structured in this manner, Tanaka's image exemplifies the Shōchiku studios' persistent attempts – evident in a number of contemporary films – at negotiating the tension in the composite image of Japanese womanhood that in the 1930s was fluctuating between embodying traditional values and emulating the trends of the day.

Problematic fit: gaze reversed and sexuality regained

Deborah Shamoon (2009, 144–145) has pointed out that Tanaka's lively and dynamic performance as Kaoru is clearly juxtaposed to that of Misora Hibari in the

second adaptation (Nomura Yoshitarō, 1954), who rarely speaks or makes a significant gesture. On the one hand, this immobility brings the character closer to the one in Kawabata's novella, but on the other hand it stresses Misora's own star image of a submissive female who, unlike Tanaka, does not contest the dominant gaze of the narrator/protagonist. Shamoon has also convincingly shown how the managing of Misora's career in the early 1950s was instrumental in moulding an industry practice of remaking (rather than adapting) *The Dancing Girl of Izu* with subsequent fledgling actresses that would continue until the 1970s. Indeed, after being cast in the role, both Yoshinaga Sayuri in the 1960s and Yamaguchi Momoe in the 1970s went on to become so-called national actresses. The former continues her career in film to this day whereas the latter withdrew from the public eye at the height of her popularity at the age of 21.[16] Yomota Inuhiko (2006, 26) has even pointed out that playing Kaoru in an early stage of one's acting career is a condition for being eventually being elevated to this status. While this is somewhat exaggerated, not least for the fact that not all of the six actresses came to have a lasting nationwide following, it is easy to see how some of them fit the image of a traditional Japanese girl better than others.

Dyer (1979, 142–149), when discussing how star images are used in the construction of a character in a film, uses the terms 'selective use', 'perfect fit' and 'problematic fit' to underline three dominant types of relationships. As we have seen, the case of Tanaka clearly belongs to that of a selective use, 'bring[ing] out certain features and ignor[ing] others' (143). Meanwhile, a line of actresses starting with Misora and ending with Yamaguchi could be regarded as a series of representatives of the second type where 'all the aspects of a star's image fit with all the traits of a character' (145). This is particularly true of Yoshinaga and Naitō Yōko who played Kaoru in the 1967 film; in the case of both Misora and Yamaguchi, as Shamoon (2009) has noted, this was realized only after some fine-tuning of their existing star images to fit the mould of a good and obedient girl. However, there is one major exception to this rule and a valid example of a problematic fit: the 1960 film starring Wanibuchi Haruko, incidentally the only mixed-race actress to have played Kaoru.

Curiously enough, this third adaptation (by Kawazu Yoshirō) is almost completely missing from discussions of *The Dancing Girl of Izu* films. Shamoon (2009, 148) only briefly alludes to it as one not compatible with the common practice of constructing a national identity through an unspoiled rural girl. She suggests that Wanibuchi, being a *haafu* (with a Japanese-Austrian parentage), made such identification impossible by definition, at least for the older and more conservative audiences. This seems to be supported by the poor critical reception at the time: in his review in *Kinema Junpō*, Ogura Shinbi (1960), while not bringing the race issue explicitly into discussion, admits to having sensed incongruity (*iwakan*) at various points during the film. Ogura does give kudos to Tanaka Sumie's script, which introduces new plot elements, turning the second part of the film into serious drama in the *hahamono* (mother film) vein. However, in sum, this is a very negative review, concluding with the usual *kōgyō kachi* (performance value) column which states that although the pairing of Wanibuchi and Tsugawa Masahiko as Mizuhara has freshness to it, the overall content of the film is way behind its time. Despite this and other negative reviews, we may say that while clearly not a masterpiece, this well-crafted film that attests to the solid overall quality of Japanese studio film production around the year 1960 is sadly overlooked, as is the work of its director

Kawazu Yoshirō.[17] Moreover, the failure of this film to find a following is significant if considered in terms of its refusal to sustain the anticipated image of the dancing girl, acting as an attempt to subvert the emerging *Dancing Girl of Izu* franchise of star-forging almost at its inception.

Given that Kawabata's story has often been interpreted as one about class difference, it is crucial to point out that Wanibuchi's Austrian family tree allegedly goes all the way back to the Habsburg dynasty, making for a clear contrast between images of a discriminated itinerant performer and a member of the aristocracy, albeit a foreign one. This facet in Wanibuchi's star image is further underlined by her early career as a violin prodigy, which took her on a tour of Japan at the age of eight. Her film debut was in *Non-chan kumo ni noru/Nobuko Rides on a Cloud* (Kurata Fumindo, 1955), a children's film that in a dream sequence gives Wanibuchi an opportunity to show off her talent in both ballet and violin, soloing in Chopin's *Étude Op. 10, No. 3*.[18] The implications of this background in Western highbrow art clearly clash with the image embodied by the troupe of entertainers travelling and making their living in Japan's rural areas. Keeping in mind this particular set of images associated with Wanibuchi, I will observe how they informed the drift of alterations in the 1960 film. While it is difficult to assess whether Wanibuchi was simply given the role of a different Kaoru than her predecessors, or if the need for a different kind of actress resulted in casting her in the role, there are two scenes in particular that are highly informative for examining how Wanibuchi's star image worked in bringing a new kind of Kaoru, more active and emancipated, to the screen.

In a striking contrast to all other versions, the 1960 film begins with Kaoru noticing the student and taking interest in him, not the other way round. In the opening scene, when Mizuhara emerges from underneath a bridge and strides past the troupe on a mountain trail, she looks up at him and while plucking the petals of a camellia and one by one tossing them into the river, whispers to herself: 'He will turn around, he will not, he will turn around…' When he then does, her eyes are set ablaze (Tanaka 1960, a-2). This reversal of the gaze, which in this film version is located in Kaoru rather than the student, can be best understood in terms of diegetic star-gazing.

> Essentially there are two audiences looking at the star: the diegetic and the extra-diegetic ones … [t]he effect [of diegetic star-gazing] on the male star is twofold … [I]f the star-gazers are female, even though the gaze is now heterosexually charged, the feminizing of the male body still takes place. Women's agencing their gaze on to the male body means they are taking up the privileged male position as holder of the gaze. (Hayward 2006, 356–357)

This is exactly what happens here as Kaoru comes to occupy the position of gazing at Mizuhara in the very first scene, and by feminizing the male body alters the underpinnings of the subsequent development of the story and its characters. Providing the extra-diegetic spectator identification with her diegetic gaze rather than his can in part be attributed to the screenplay written by Tanaka Sumie, one of the most notable female scriptwriters in the history of Japanese film.[19]

Considering this reversal of the gaze, one is tempted to speculate whether Tsugawa in the role of Mizuhara might actually have been the real star of this film. Incidentally, and in contrast to the star dynamics of lead actors in all other versions,

Figure 2. A chance for Wanibuchi to show off her talent on the violin, here pictured with Hara Setsuko who plays her mother in the 1955 film *Nobuko Rides on a Cloud*.

Tsugawa was and remains a much better-known actor than Wanibuchi. A prolific actor still active today, Tsugawa was only 20 years old at the time, but had already gained a significant reputation by starring in films such as *Kurutta Kajitsu*/*Crazed Fruit* (Nakahira Kō, 1956), a *taiyōzoku* film often credited for helping to launch Japanese (and French) New Wave, and highly praised by Ōshima Nagisa, who

Figure 3. Wanibuchi Haruko and emerging prolific star Tsugawa Masahiko in the 1960 version, the only instance in the franchise where the male star is a better-known actor than the eponymous dancing girl.

himself cast Tsugawa in *Nihon no yoru to kiri*/*Night and Fog in Japan*, released from the same Shōchiku studios in the same year as this version of *The Dancing Girl of Izu*. In a symptomatic manner, as if under the influence of the dominant male gaze, it has been common to consider *The Dancing Girl of Izu* films as vehicles for their female leads, resulting in the fact that almost no attention has been paid to their male counterparts.[20] Fully addressing the dynamics of star images in the case of such actor pairings might prove to be a fruitful way to gain further insight into the

adaptations of *The Dancing Girl of Izu*, but necessarily remains outside the confines of this article.

The implications of the gaze cast in the opening scene are more fully played out towards the end of the film, when Kaoru's mother trades places with her to make the sacrifice of giving in to the advances of a persistent customer. As a result, Kaoru decides to dismiss the prospect of a relationship with Mizuhara in favour of sticking with the troupe and taking care of her mother who has lapsed into something of an emotional abyss after the incident. This effect of character motivation that wraps up the plot comes in a striking contrast with both Kawabata's novella and the rest of its adaptations, where it is always the student who takes the initiative and leaves on a ship to Tokyo, whatever his exact reasons. Although this decision allows Wanibuchi's Kaoru to remain the good and obedient girl, very much like Misora before and Yoshinaga after her, she is no longer on the receiving end where, in a patriarchal mode, all arrangements are made for her, even if these are apparently to her benefit as in the 1933 version where Kaoru is at the end provided with a suitor more suitable than the student.

There is another scene highly informative for revealing both the drift of the alterations made by Tanaka Sumie to Kawabata's story, as well as how Wanibuchi's star image proved a problematic fit for the character of Kaoru. In this case, the scene is important for its absence from the film. Unlike all versions that followed it, the 1960 film does not include the bathhouse scene – the story's anticlimactic climax as Mark Morris (1997) has dubbed it – where Kaoru ceases to be an object of sexual pursuit for the student. In the three versions from 1963 to 1974, this scene was delivered in an almost replica-like fashion with a shot of the student in a bath followed by an extreme long shot of Kaoru dashing out of the women's bath on the opposite bank of the river, followed by a reaction shot and then her close-up.[21] In the 1933 film, this scene is apparently replaced with a much more erotically loaded one where Mizuhara is wiping Kaoru's feet when the two are sitting on rocks by the river.[22] In the 1954 version, the student makes a remark about Kaoru's immaturity upon seeing her retrieve a cloth from the river. While these partial omissions could be well attributed to contemporary censorship, it could also be argued that Misora's star image was so cleansed of sexual implications that a scene to reiterate this fact was deemed unnecessary. As Kawamoto Saburō (2007, 237) has noted, Misora retained the image of a younger sister (*imōto*) even in her roles that suggested romantic love.

While the scene of naked Kaoru dashing out of the bathhouse to innocently wave to the student is missing from the 1960 film, there is a scene with Wanibuchi's Kaoru sitting neatly in an indoors bath, never emerging from it. With the student's realization of Kaoru's innocence now omitted, her body becomes one that has to be hidden, its naked presentation unable to either erase or contain its threatening sexuality. Curiously enough, of the six actresses who have played Kaoru, Wanibuchi is the only one who in fact has appeared naked in images. In a book of photography by her then-husband Tad Wakamatsu, *Ipy Girl Ipy* (1970, re-released and updated in 1998 as *First & Last*), Wanibuchi is the model for a series of photographs, with nudes taken in a studio and at various New York locations juxtaposed with images of Wanibuchi dressed in a black veil in a Middle Eastern setting. This later development further attests to the capacity of Wanibuchi to drift far away from the images of traditional Japanese girlhood.

The 1960 version of *The Dancing Girl of Izu* clearly clashes with that of Kawabata by turning Kaoru from a mere child into a character with a mind and body of her own. While the sexuality of the student remains ambiguous in Kawabata's story, the question of whether Kaoru is desexualized or not remains an important one for facilitating the motivation of the characters. Clearly, the student is first excited about the prospect of being with her, only to be later liberated from these feelings by the bathhouse scene. From that point on, Kawabata's novella is not so much about unconsummated love between the two young people than a quest for the student's (sexual) identity. The empty and pure feeling after tears that the narrator is left with after saying goodbye at the end of the story has implications for what Mishima Yukio (1950, cited in Starrs 1998, 51) has famously noted as the dominant virgin theme in Kawabata's work. Downplaying these aspects of the story points to the refusal by the screenwriter Tanaka to repeat this thematic preoccupation by giving Kaoru a more mature character and reaching beyond Kawabata's solipsistic worldview. The drift of her adaptation is further underlined by the closing scene, which rather than depicting the student's departure from Shimoda harbour – a favourite of filmmakers and audiences alike – has the troupe once again making their way on a mountain trail. By employing Wanibuchi's star image to invest Kaoru with her own point of view, it is suggested that perhaps meeting the student was merely an episode in *her* life, not his.

In film adaptations, alterations to the source are implemented by various contributors to the production process, with director, screenwriter, producer and cinematographer being the most visible. In this article, I have tried to show how, in films that can be looked at as star vehicles, it is rather the star's image itself that can take on the position of informing the drift of these changes. This tendency has often been seen through a determinist prism where the allegedly restrictive star image seems to keep certain elements of the character from emerging, resulting in unimaginative reworkings of the source material. However, in the case of a problematic fit it is exactly the negotiation between a star's image and narrative character that can help in expanding the creative possibilities of adapting literature to the screen. Moreover, in the case of multiple film versions of the same text, such practice has the capacity for destabilizing – and setting adrift – the very underpinnings of the franchise. Finally, while I have almost exclusively focused on the images of female stars in this article, it has become apparent that issues arising from the dynamics of the star couple should be addressed in any future studies on *The Dancing Girl of Izu* films.

Notes

1. In total, there are six feature-length films from the years 1933 (Gosho Heinosuke), 1954 (Nomura Yoshitarō), 1960 (Kawazu Yoshirō), 1963 (Nishikawa Katsumi), 1967 (Onchi Hideo) and 1974 (Nishikawa Katsumi). In addition, there have been five series of TV dramas based on the story (aired in 1962, 1973, 1992, 1993 and 2002); a 20-minute animated version was included as the opening episode in *Sumitomo seimei seishun anime zenshu*/*Animated Classics of Japanese Literature* (Kurokawa Fumio, 1986).
2. While Nishikawa's book at times appears as an unnecessary self-justification for choices he made as the director, it is nevertheless an invaluable aid in studying *The Dancing Girl of Izu* films. Drawing on something that other scholars simply cannot – first-hand experience which allows for more facts about the actual production circumstances – pre-empts much of the unsubstantiated speculation that scholarship on *The Dancing Girl of Izu* is often

misled by. See Noël Burch (1979, 121) and Donald Kirihara (1992, 63) failing to assess the semi-silent nature of the film and thus reading too much into the clearly functional role of song-intertitles.

3. Two English translations exist: an abridged one by Edward G. Seidensticker that first appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1958 (Kawabata 1974); and J. Martin Holman's complete translation from 1997 (Kawabata 1997).
4. A summary based on a more traditional reading would probably stress different aspects of the story, particularly its anticipated correlation with the author's biography. Roy Starrs (1998, 48) notes that '[t]he pertinent question … is whether or not the term "orphan psychology", used by the narrator in a rare moment of self-analysis, is explicable only by an "outside" reference to the author's own life, or is its full meaning amply manifested "inside" the work itself'. Thematically the focus would be on either the unconsummated love affair or the unbridgeable social differences that make it so impossible. However, without considering the narrator's incessant inner doubts and the end scene that Cécile Sakai (2001, 66) has described as 'a voyage of initiation to the terrain of homosexuality', a number of pivotal scenes from the story would start to look redundant and lose their ambiguous lyricism. I agree with Starrs (1998, 54) that in the second half of the story the focus is clearly shifted away from Kaoru as the student becomes more and more disinterested in her. This is attested by a number of scenes including one where she brushes a puppy's hair with a comb that he had initially wished to receive as a memento, and another one where she fails to bring him fresh water from a mountain spring. A more common interpretation, shared by Keiko I. McDonald (2000) and Deborah Shamoon (2009), has the student keep his interest in Kaoru through the whole story, thus bringing it closer to film versions.
5. In the opening titles, Fushimi is credited for *zōho kyakushoku* (augmented adaptation), most likely an unprecedented term. According to Kobayashi Masaru (1966), Fushimi appears to have been infamous at the time for his extended adaptations of literary works that merged various stories by the same author into a new whole. He was also one of the most prolific screenwriters at the Shōchiku studios, working frequently with major directors such as Ozu Yasujirō and Saitō Torajirō. His collaboration with Gosho amounts to roughly a quarter of the director's entire output. For more on Fushimi, see Kishi 1970, 383–412.
6. The scene is superbly analysed in painstaking detail by Nolletti (2005, 56–60).
7. The film appeared in the top ten of the *Kinema Junpō*'s film critics' annual poll; no later version made it anywhere near.
8. Kitagawa Fuyuhiko (1933) indeed uses the term 'commercial film' (*shōhin eiga*) in his contemporary review of the film; Kawabata in his reflections on seeing the adaptation of his novella expresses amazement that '[i]t is possible to create safe commercial films (*anzen-na shōhin eiga*) not only from novels serialized in newspapers and magazines, but also from short fiction like *The Dancing Girl of Izu*' (Kawabata 1982, 78).
9. Japan's tourism industry has made much of *The Dancing Girl of Izu*. To give one example, the express train currently running from Tokyo to Shimoda is named Super View Odoriko.
10. Perceived in negative terms at the time of the infamous incident from 1950, when after visiting the United States, she returned home and blew kisses to the people that had come to meet her at the airport. At that time, this was widely considered as inappropriate behaviour and almost destroyed her film career. For more on Tanaka, see Smith 2012.
11. Incidentally, *The Flowers of Love in Bloom: The Dancing Girl of Izu* is often credited as *bungei eiga* (literary film), and it is sometimes even suggested that it helped to initiate the whole genre. Nolletti (2005) strongly makes this argument, although he somewhat mistakenly equates the terms *bungei eiga* and *junbungaku* (pure literature). However, the star vehicle-like aspects of this film (and many others from the same period starring Tanaka) make such a straightforward generic distinction slightly problematic. In addition, Shindo (1983, 94) notes that in the years immediately preceding *The Flowers of Love in Bloom: The Dancing Girl of Izu*, Tanaka was starring in both types of films promoted by the Shochiku studios in its attempt to do away with the melodramatic influences of the previously dominant *shinpa*, lyrical (*jojō*) and youth (*seishun*) films, exemplified by the work of the directors Gosho and Ushihara Kiyohiko, respectively. Tanaka also appeared

in *shinpa* standards such as the 1932 adaptation of *Konjiki yasha*/*The Golden Demon* (Nomura Hōtei), a stage play by Ozaki Kōyō that spawned more than 20 film adaptations in the 1910s and 1920s. See McDonald 2000, 5–16.

12. While these accounts take up a lot of space in the two major biographies by Shindo (1983) and Furukawa (2004), obsession with Tanaka's private life continues. A recent book by Ōba Kenji, *Ginmaku no koi: Tanaka Kinuyo to Ozu Yasujirō*/*Silver Screen Love: Tanaka Kinuyo and Ozu Yasujirō* (2014), adds fuel to the fire, making allegations about her love affair with Ozu who directed her on a number of occasions around the same time.
13. In contrast, the last three versions of *The Dancing Girl of Izu* stressed the autobiographical aspect of Kawabata's story by naming the student Kawasaki (1963 and 1967) and Kawashima (1974), both thinly disguised versions of the author's name. In Umeda Haruo's unproduced script (1955), the name is Shimamura.
14. Fushimi and Gosho were not the only ones playing name games at the time. Ozu was particularly famous for coming up with various monikers for himself; most notably he is credited for original stories for a number of his early 1930s films as James Maki, and on one occasion *Tōkyō no onna*/*Woman of Tokyo* (1933), as Ernst Schwarz, an amalgam of the names of his current favourite filmmakers Ernst Lubitsch and Hanns Schwarz.
15. Since the 1950s, Tanaka became mostly known for her many roles as a woman forced into prostitution, for example in *Saikaku ichidai onna*/*The Life of Oharu* (Mizoguchi Kenji, 1952) and *Sanshō dayū*/*Sansho the Bailiff* (Mizoguchi Kenji, 1954). This current continued all the way to her last major performance in *Sandankan hachiban shōkan: Bōkyō*/*Sandankan No. 8* (Kumai Kei, 1974) for which she won the Best Actress Award at the Berlin International Film Festival in 1975. With the aid of these later roles, Tanaka encapsulated the collective experience of female subordination represented by the long-suffering mother figure which is diametrically different from the image that her roles in the 1930s initially suggested.
16. For a summary of Yamaguchi's career, see Shamoon 2009, 149–151.
17. According to Kimata Kimihiko (2003), Kawazu Yoshirō (1926–1972) was the favourite student of the director Kinoshita Keisuke, expected to emulate his mentor's brand of lyrical but socially conscious filmmaking. From the mid-1950s to mid-1960s, Kawazu worked extensively with the so-called Kinoshita-*gumi*, staff that included Kinoshita's brother Kinoshita Chūji (composer), sister Kusuda Yoshiko (screenwriter) and her husband Kusuda Hiroshi (cinematographer). For his second film, *Kodomo no me*/*Eyes of Children* (1955), Kawazu won the Golden Globe Award for Best Foreign Film.
18. In Japan, this étude is widely known as *Wakare no kyoku*/*The Song of Farewell* due to its appearance in the Chopin biopic of the same name, *La chanson de l'adieu* (Albert Valentin, 1934), itself the French language version of the German film *Abschiedswalzer*/*Farewell Waltz* (Géza von Bolváry, 1934) that was screened in Japan to great acclaim in 1935.
19. Tanaka Sumie (1908–2000) is best known for penning a number of scripts for Naruse Mikio in the 1950s, often being credited for providing a female point of view in collaborations with another screenwriter, Ide Toshirō (himself the writer of the 1963 version and, under the pen name Miki Katsumi, the 1967 version). She also wrote scripts for two films directed by the first Kaoru actress, Tanaka Kinuyo, *Chibusa yo eien nare*/*The Eternal Breasts* (1955) and *Onna bakari no yoru*/*Girls of Dark* (1961). For more on Tanaka Sumie, see Kitsnik forthcoming.
20. A notable exception is the last couple, Yamaguchi Momoe and Miura Tomokazu, for both of whom *The Dancing Girl of Izu* (Nishikawa Katsumi, 1974) was their screen debut. They went on to star together in a number of films in the 1970s, dubbed the *goruden konbi* (golden combination) by the media. Quite opposite to the gloomy ending of that final film adaptation of Kawabata's novella, this turned out to be the only pairing on screen that resulted in the marriage of actors in real life.
21. While this alteration of field sizes has been clearly employed to avoid showing full frontal nudity, Nishikawa (1994, 173) adds that even for the extreme long shot, a body-coloured suit was used. By far the most explicit treatment of this scene can be seen in the animated version in *Animated Classics of Japanese Literature*.
22. Remarkably, this scene is completely missing from the film's screenplay (Fushimi 1966), suggesting a strategy of bypassing censorship.

Notes on contributor

Lauri Kitsnik is a PhD candidate at the University of Cambridge, currently completing his dissertation on the history of screenwriting in Japan. His interests include silent film, screenplays and literary adaptation. He is the author of entries on Japan in *Woman Screenwriters: An International Guide* (forthcoming). He has previously taught courses on Japanese literature and cinema at Tallinn University.

References

Burch, Noël. 1979. *To the Distant Observer: Form and Meaning in the Japanese Cinema*. London: Scolar Press.

Cazdyn, Eric. 2002. *The Flash of Capital: Film and Geopolitics in Japan*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Dyer, Richard. 1979. *Stars*. London: BFI.

Furukawa Kaoru. 2004. *Hana mo arashi mo: Joyū Tanaka Kinuyo no shōgai* [Flowers and Storm: The Life of Actress Tanaka Kinuyo]. Tokyo: Bungei Shunshū.

Fushimi Akira. 1966. "*Izu no odoriko: Kyakuhon*" [The Dancing Girl of Izu: Screenplay]. In *Nihon eiga shinario koten zenshū* [A Collection of Classical Japanese Screenplays], Vol. 2, 157–167. Tokyo: Kinema Junpōsha.

Hayward, Susan. 2006. *Cinema Studies: The Key Concepts*. London and New York: Routledge.

Hijōsen no onna [Dragnet Girl]. 1933. Ozu Yasujirō. Kamata: Shōchiku.

Izu no odoriko [The Dancing Girl of Izu]. 1954. Nomura Yoshitarō. Ōfuna: Shōchiku.

Izu no odoriko [The Dancing Girl of Izu]. 1960. Kawazu Yoshirō. Ōfuna: Shōchiku.

Izu no odoriko [The Dancing Girl of Izu]. 1963. Nishikawa Katsumi. Tokyo: Nikkatsu.

Izu no odoriko [The Dancing Girl of Izu]. 1967. Onchi Hideo. Tokyo: Tōhō.

Izu no odoriko [The Dancing Girl of Izu]. 1974. Nishikawa Katsumi. Tokyo: Tōhō/Horipro.

Izu no odoriko [The Dancing Girl of Izu]. 1986. In *Sumitomo seimei seishun anime zenshū* [Animated Classics of Japanese Literature]. Kurokawa Fumio. Tokyo: Nippon Animēshon.

Joi Kinuyo sensei [Kinuyo the Lady Doctor]. 1937. Nomura Hiromasa. Ōfuna: Shōchiku.

Kawabata, Yasunari. 1974. *The Izu Dancer and Other Stories*. Translated by Edward G. Seidensticker. Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company.

Kawabata, Yasunari. 1982. "*Izu no odoriko* no eiga-ka ni saishi" [On the Occasion of Film Adaptation of *The Dancing Girl of Izu*]. In *Zenshū* [Collected Works], Vol. 33, 77–82. Tokyo: Shinchōsha.

Kawabata, Yasunari. 1997. *The Dancing Girl of Izu and Other Stories*. Translated by J. Martin Holman. Washington, DC: Counterpoint.

Kawamoto Saburō. 2007. *Ima hitotabi no sengo Nihon eiga* [Postwar Japanese Film Once More]. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.

Kimata Kimihiko. 2003. "Kawazu Yoshirō." In *Kantoku besuto 101 Nihon-hen* [101 Best Directors Japanese Edition], edited by Kawamoto Saburō, 219. Tokyo: Shinshokan,

Kinuyo monogatari [The Story of Kinuyo]. 1930. Gosho Heinosuke. Kamata: Shōchiku.

Kirihara, Donald. 1992. *Patterns of Time: Mizoguchi and the 1930s*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Kishi Matsuo. 1970. *Jinbutsu Nihon eigashi* [History of Japanese Film: People]. Vol. 1. Tokyo: Daviddo-sha.

Kitagawa Fuyuhiko. 1933. "*Izu no odoriko*" [The Dancing Girl of Izu]. *Kinema Junpō*, February 21, p. 76.

Kitsnik, Lauri. Forthcoming. "Tanaka Sumie." In *Women Screenwriters: An International Guide*, edited by Jill Nelmes and Jule Selbo. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kobayashi Masaru. 1966. "*Ikitoshi ikerumono ni tsuite*" [On *Everything that Lives*]. *Nihon eiga shinario koten zenshū* [A Collection of Classical Japanese Screenplays], Vol. 3, 32. Tokyo: Kinema Junpōsha.

Koi no hana saku: Izu no odoriko [The Flowers of Love in Bloom: The Dancing Girl of Izu]. 1933. Gosho Heinosuke. Kamata: Shōchiku.

Kurutta Kajitsu [Crazed Fruit]. 1956. Nakahira Kō. Tokyo: Nikkatsu.

McDonald, Keiko I. 2000. *From Book to Screen: Modern Japanese Literature in Film*. Armonk, NY and London: M.E. Sharpe.
Morris, Mark. 1997. "Orphans [Review of *The Dancing Girl of Izu and Other Stories*]." *The New York Times*, October 12. http://www.nytimes.com/books/97/10/12/reviews/971012.12morrist.html.
Nihon no yoru to kiri [Night and Fog in Japan]. 1960. Ōshima Nagisa. Ōfuna: Shōchiku.
Nishikawa Katsumi. 1994. *Izu no odoriko monogatari* [The Story of the Dancing Girl of Izu]. Tokyo: Film Art-sha.
Nolletti, Arthur, Jr. 2005. *The Cinema of Gosho Heinosuke: Laughter through Tears*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Non-chan kumo ni noru [Nobuko Rides on a Cloud]. 1955. Kurata Fumindo. Tokyo: Shintōhō.
Ōba Kenji. 2014. *Ginmaku no koi: Tanaka Kinuyo to Ozu Yasujirō* [Silver Screen Love: Tanaka Kinuyo and Ozu Yasujirō]. Tokyo: Shōbunsha.
Ogura Shinbi. 1960. "*Izu no odoriko*" [The Dancing Girl of Izu]. *Kinema Junpō*, June, *ke*: 77–78.
Sakai, Cécile. 2001. *Kawabata, le clair-obscur: Essai sur une écriture de l'ambiguïté* [Kawabata, Chiaroscuro: Essay on a writing of Ambiguity]. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
Shamoon, Deborah. 2009. "Misora Hibari and the Girl Star in Postwar Japanese Cinema." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 35 (1): 131–155. doi:10.1086/599268.
Shindō Kaneto. 1983. *Shōsetsu Tanaka Kinuyo* [Tanaka Kinuyo: The Novel]. Tokyo: Yomiuri Shinbunsha.
Smith, Michael. 2012. "Kinuyo Tanaka." In *Directory of World Cinema: Japan*, edited by John Berra, Vol. 2, 41–44. Bristol: Intellect.
Stam, Robert. 2005. "Introduction: The Theory and Practice of Adaptation." In *Literature and Film: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Film Adaptation*, edited by Robert Stam and Alessandra Raengo, 1–52. New York: Blackwell.
Standish, Isolde. 2005. *A New History of Japanese Film: A Century of Narrative Film*. New York and London: Continuum.
Starrs, Roy. 1998. *Soundings in Time: The Fictive Art of Kawabata Yasunari*. Tokyo: Japan Library.
Tanaka, Sumie. 1960. *Izu no odoriko* [The Izu Dancer] (film script). Ōfuna: Shōchiku.
Umeda, Haruo. 1955. *Shinario no kufū* [Means of the Scenario]. Tokyo: Muromachi shobō.
Wada-Marciano, Mitsuyo. 2008. *Nippon Modern: Japanese Cinema of the 1920s and 1930s*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
Wakamatsu, Tad. 1970. *Ipy Girl Ipy*. Tokyo: Heibonsha.
Yomota Inuhiko. 2006. "*Eiga joyū Yamaguchi Momoe*" [Yamaguchi Momoe, the Film Actress]. In *Joyū Yamaguchi Momoe* [Actress Yamaguchi Momoe], edited by Yomota Inuhiko, 22–68. Tokyo: Wides Shuppan.