

## Conclusion

To sum up, both the novel of *Wives and Daughters* and its television adaptation appropriate the mechanism of observation when presenting the heroine—several visual techniques in the novel, such as the use of observer and framing devices, are parallel to the techniques of *mise-en-scène* in the adaptation to visualize characters. Nevertheless, the same visual technique functions differently in the novel and the adaptation, and thus creating different images of the heroine in the two versions of representation. When exposed to the gaze of the observer, the heroine in the novel looks fragile and almost on the verge of emotional breakdown: she is easily agitated, and her eyes are often filled with tears. But under the same mechanism of observation, shots on Molly face's in the adaptation manifest her vivacity and cheerful looks. Since Molly in the adaptation does not cry easily and never faints as the novel portrays, her general impression to viewers is wholesome and lively. And whereas the omniscient narrator in the novel captures Molly's vulnerable state of mind when she is alone, the camera in the adaptation finds Molly alone but captures her strong will.

This thesis also demonstrates versatile potential of the visual technology: it might either empower or disempower an individual's subjectivity. As the discussion above reveals, the visual techniques in the novel and the adaptation interact with the narrative techniques in different ways. In the novel, the visual techniques form an antagonistic relationship with the narrative framework—whereas the novel's structural design attempts to compel Molly to develop toward matured womanhood, the photographic impulse emerges as hindrance. Thus, due to the tension between narrative and visual techniques, Molly's image wavers between courage and dependency: although she was determined to be strong, sometimes she looks fragile and needs protection. Even though the narrative structure tries to present Molly's

helpfulness, the visual techniques keep hindering the development. At the end, the heroine's development is incoherent, and her potential is never fulfilled. On the contrary, visual techniques in the adaptation complement the structural design to accomplish Molly's development. Even in the moment of crisis, Molly's compassion outweighs her fear: she is agile and quick to respond, her mind clear, and her manners composed. The effect is, whereas the clash between narrative and photographic techniques in the novel makes the heroine look like a "girl-woman" (Dickson 56), the cinematic technique of the adaptation transforms Molly into a young woman strong in mind, possessing the kind of power in heart that supports her through critical moments of life.

Therefore, comparing the image of the heroine in the novel with that in the television adaptation, interestingly, one may find that the visual techniques in the adaptation are not as disempowering as that employed in the novel. In the novel, the operation of the gaze establishes an uneven power relationship between the viewer and the viewed. It dwarfs the heroine's image, confiscates her potential, and thus subordinates her into an inferior status. However, the camera in the adaptation does not exercise the belittling power of the gaze: many photographic images of the heroine in the novel, such as "her pretty lips," "pretty feet," or "her lips trembling," are simply omitted by the adaptation. Instead, the gaze in the adaptation highlights the character's self-sufficiency and independent characters. Therefore, Molly in the adaptation is an equal to her social companions in terms of power-relationship: she is not a vulnerable creature who needs protection, but an independent individual with the power of action and thinking. In short, it is the heroine's capability rather than her lack of power that becomes outstanding.

After illustrating different images of female characters in Gaskell's novel and its modern rendition, this thesis concludes that the modern practice of vision not only

sways the uses of visual techniques, but also determines the visibility of female characters in the realm of literature. Thus the formation of an ideal vision of female characters specific to each era: while the nineteenth-century visuality prescribes a semi-independent subjectivity of the heroine, the contemporary visuality sanctions an autonomous and wholesome individuality to her. Although the modern version of the heroine seems to have more autonomy than the Victorian one, both images of the heroine could be regarded as products of the same practice of vision—a mechanism that categorizes and enhances the circulation of stereotypical images. What might be excluded or obscured during this process of visualization might warrant further investigation.