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1 Introduction

Since the beginning of film filmmakers have attempted to bring stories from novels onto the screen. That also goes for Elizabeth Gaskell's works whose novel *Cranford* has already been adapted twice for television. The most recent series of 2007 with a two part sequel in 2009 has become a very popular BBC production, scoring constant viewer ratings of around 29% (which amount to 7.3 to 7.9 million viewers in Britain alone¹). This also raised interest in the original novel which was very popular in its day (Unsworth 199), but since then has lost some of its recognition.

The transference of one medium to another has often been the topic of investigation in the field of adaptation theory. This thesis, however, will attempt to research the transference from another angle: from that of narratology. Narratology provides guidelines to analyse complexities that occur in narratives, especially when it comes to the narrator. Many theorists, with narratologist Gerard Genette, amongst others, leading the way, have attempted to define the complex literary issues and phenomena in literature. With the constantly growing importance of film in popular culture, there has been a need to expand the research of narratological issues into the realms of film theory. Thus, film narratology was born. Film narratology tries to research some of the same issues that narratologists have determined, but because of the different nature of the medium film many problems have occurred. Literary theory provides a lot of categories for the analysis of written fiction, however, the same categories cannot be transferred into film analysis without undergoing at least a small change. As Seymour Chatman states on this subject, "verbal activity furnishes no easy analogy with visual activity" (Chatman 1990: 124). Therefore, there are many different attempts to analyse narratological concerns, such as the narrator, in film. Whereas Chatman tries to find bridging equivalences to literary concepts in the

¹ These figures stem from an article of the online edition of the newspaper *The Guardian* and only represent the British viewer ratings of the first BBC broadcast. DVD sales and further viewer numbers collected by other international broadcasts, especially overseas, through BBC America, and other broadcasting stations around the world (including dubbed versions into other languages) are not included in these numbers.

audio-visual medium, other theorists such as David Bordwell, dismiss this notion and attempt to create new standards for film narratology. Said issues will be subject of discussion later in this work.

One of the most significant features in Gaskell's *Cranford* is the narrator. Because the narrator of this novel offers very interesting and complex matters for an analysis in terms of definition and development – a fact often disregarded by critics of this piece of literature – it is of vital importance to implement a narratological theory that focuses on the narrator in particular. Said focus is provided by Austrian narratologist Franz Stanzel's comprehensive *Theory of Narrative*.

In general, it seems to prove easier to translate a story from an authorial narrating stance because the narrative's perspective does not need to be changed for a movie. Whereas the novel *Cranford* is written from the point of view of a first-person narrator, the recent televised version has been adapted into a series without a narratorial instance. Therefore, the vital questions this thesis seeks to answer are: Did the filmmakers of *Cranford* take into consideration that there is a first-person narrator in Gaskell's original? If so, how did they attempt to include this fact in the filmed version? What changes had to be made? The purpose of this thesis will be to answer these questions within the theoretical frameworks of narratology and film narratology and provide insights into the yet unresolved problems of a narrator in film.

1.1 Methodology and Structure

The text will be divided into two analytic parts. The first segment contains an analysis of *Cranford*'s narrator under the main guidelines of Stanzel's narrative theory. Definitions and explanations of his theoretical concepts and terminology will be included within the analysis of text examples from the novel. Therefore development of the story's narrator will also be clearly visible. The purpose of this analysis is to illustrate and confirm the assumption that *Cranford*'s narrator is indeed very complex and unique, a matter which has mostly been overlooked by literary critics – apart from a few notable exceptions such as Wendy Carse, who

recognized the interpretive value of the narrator. Her analytical work will therefore also be included in this analysis.

The second part of this thesis concentrates on the analysis of the narrator from a film narratological standpoint. Theories that are concerned with the concept of the “narrator” in the visual medium film will be provided by theorists such as Seymour Chatman, David Bordwell, and others which differ widely in their approaches. Scenes taken from the filmed version of *Cranford* will be analysed to showcase the difficulties in defining the narrator in film. This analysis will provide a comparison of the original material with its adapted version in order to illustrate whether the findings from the original text’s analysis can be applied in the films as to show whether the films indicate the existence of the first-person narrator in the original novel.

2 *Cranford* – The Novel

2.1 A Synopsis of *Cranford*

Elizabeth Gaskell's novel is a collection of short stories revolving around the citizens of Cranford, a fictional rural town resembling Gaskell's hometown in Cheshire. The citizens of Cranford are mainly women, most of them widows or old maids, and they are introduced as "Amazons" who possess the town. (Gaskell 1) It seems as if all the men of the town either died or are on business away from home. The novel is divided into sixteen chapters each concentrating on one specific event in the women's lives. It is an almost sentimental yet comic portrayal of a society holding fast to its own customs, rules and traditions dictated by the town's community in an era where industrialisation has not fully touched upon the rural areas yet. Although there are strict distinctions in class, the women in Cranford make it a point to treat each other with warmth and respect and always lend a hand to those in need. The stories are told through Mary Smith's point of view, who is a frequent visitor of Cranford and stays with the Jenkyns sisters, Deborah and Mathilda (Matty), who are either the protagonists of most of the tales or involved with the other characters such as Miss Pole, Mrs Forrester and others. Most of the characters portrayed in Cranford are of low financial standing but deem it as vulgar to talk about such issues. Foreign characters such as Mr Brown and his two daughters or Signor Brunoni are generally greeted with scepticism but are ultimately befriended and included in the community. The women in Cranford love to gossip but are never ill intentioned. While there are also stories of loss, overall the tales provide a sense of amusement in the portrayal of everyday situations.

2.2 The Composition of *Cranford*

From 1851 until 1853, *Cranford* was first published as a series of papers in Charles Dickens' journal *Household Words*. In order to print *Cranford* as a novel all the stories were gathered together in a volume and small changes were made in order for them to be unified and chronologically more consistent. The publication of the whole volume in 1864 with additional illustrations was a huge financial success and led to further numerous illustrated editions and later on

even dramatized versions for both stage and television. Therefore, one can conclude that the stories of *Cranford* have not lost their appeal, even for modern audiences (Unsworth 199).

The 1864 edition attracted a lot of visitors to Knutsford, which Elizabeth Gaskell may have called her hometown for a great part of her life and served as the inspiring example for *Cranford*. Rev Henry Green, who wrote a chronicle about Knutsford, called *Knutsford, Its Traditions and History*, even stated that *Cranford* was indeed Knutsford (Unsworth 199).

Cranford was generally well received and often lauded by various critical voices. Lady Ritchie, daughter of William H. Thackeray, who prefaced a new edition of the novel 50 years after its first publication, wrote that she did not consider *Cranford* as a story but as a “visionary country home” (Unsworth 199). Furthermore, she made a reference to Jane Austen’s books, which she thought are not able to convey as much “real feeling” as *Cranford* (Unsworth 200). Even Gaskell herself seemed to be very pleased with the book as she mentioned in a letter to John Ruskin about *Cranford* that “it is the only of my books that I can read again” (Unsworth 200).

A great number of the characters in Gaskell’s novel is modelled on real life acquaintances and family members of the author. The character of Mr Holbrook, for instance, is a fictionalised version of how Gaskell memorised her grandfather Samuel Holland (Unsworth 205). Unsworth also mentions that the narrator of *Cranford* is supposed to stand in for Gaskell herself (Unsworth 202).

3 Narratology

The following chapter will primarily refer to the work of Austrian narratologist Franz Stanzel - *A Theory of Narrative*. The reasons for using his theoretical approach are to use a consistent terminology and the fact that his approach concentrates mostly on issues of the narrator in understandable and useful terms. Stanzel's narrative theory unifies the various concepts of literary and critical traditions of narratologists in order to present thorough means of examination of fictional texts (Hernadi ix). Since this thesis concentrates especially on narratives with a first-person narrator and how the issues of such a narrator are transformed into film, the focus of the theoretical problems will primarily be on the first-person narrative.

3.1 Mediacy and the Typological Circle

The primary assumption of Stanzel's theory of narrative for an analytic approach is based on the process of narrative transmission. The underlying base for narrative transmission is the concept of *mediacy*. Stanzel explains the term mediacy as follows: "Whenever a piece of news is conveyed, whenever something is reported, there is a mediator – the voice of a narrator is audible" (Stanzel 1986: 4). This audible voice generically distinguishes a narration from other forms of literary art. In order to determine the form and state of mediacy, Stanzel provides a model of three analytic parameters: mode, person and perspective. These three parameters are required to be understood as first and foremost "rough descriptions of basic possibilities of rendering the mediacy of narration" (Stanzel 4).

Since narratives exhibit numerous phenomena that are not easy to categorize, Stanzel constructed a diagram of an abstract model in order to facilitate the understanding of these phenomena.

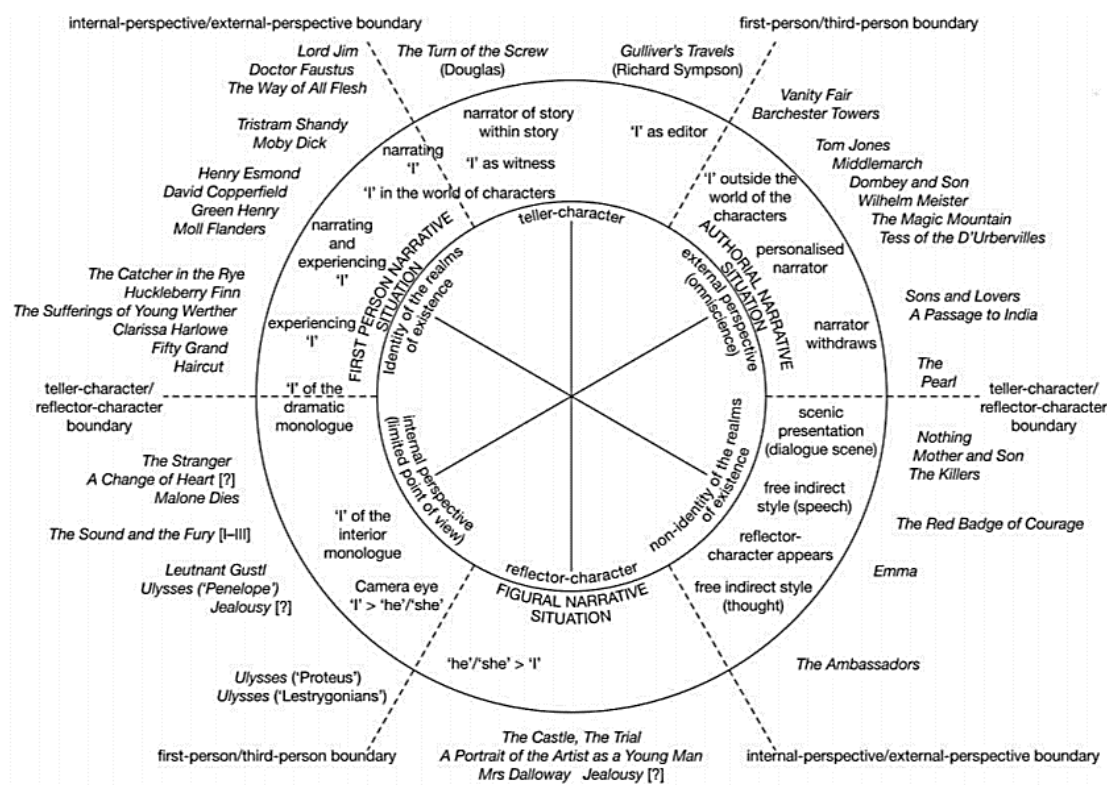


Figure 1 – Typological Circle, see Stanzel xiv

This model specifically illustrates three of the following aspects:

The first aspect shows the three aforementioned parameters mode, person and perspective typologically placed in the circle in oppositional positions. This represents their “relations to one another in the system of narrative forms” (Stanzel 185) and can also determine which of the three representations is dominant in the determination of the narrative situation.

The second aspect of the model is the fact that it can display the dynamic and transitional forms that these elements of the narrative situation can result in. Stanzel's further explication of the aspect is as follows:

The mobility or dynamics of this continuum are two-fold: the system itself has no category borders, only transitions; also, the narrative situation of the individual work is not a static condition but a dynamic process of constant modulation or oscillation within a certain sector of the typological circle. (Stanzel 185).

The third aspect displays the “connection between the system of narrative forms and the history of narrative genres” (Stanzel 185). According to Stanzel the areas

in the typological circle display the various frequencies of occurrence of each narrative situation in a historical context.

The mediacy of narration [...] forms the basis for the distinction among the three narrative situations in such a way that in each narrative situation a different element (person, perspective, mode) of the mediacy complex is dominant. (Stanzel 5).

To exemplify this notion, one may say that, for instance, *person* is the dominant factor in the first-person narrative situation. One of the most vital matters for an author to decide how to shape a subject matter into his narrative is to start with rendering the mediacy, as Stanzel claims. The importance that he places upon mediacy is the fact that it enhances the aesthetics and literacy of the narrative.

3.2 The Constitutive Elements of the Narrative Situation

The following segments will explore the three constitutive elements of the narrative situation, which are vital for a narratological interpretation, in greater detail.

3.2.1 Mode

Who is narrating? According to Stanzel, that is the first and foremost question when dealing with narration. It is also the question that determines the first constitutive element of Stanzel's theory.

"The answer may be: a narrator who appears before the reader as an independent personality or one who withdraws so far behind the narrated events that he becomes practically invisible to the reader" (Stanzel 47). In literary theory the distinction between these two forms of narration are generally termed as "telling" versus "showing" (Friedman 1160-1184) or as Stanzel classifies them as "reportorial narration" versus "scenic representation" (Stanzel 1971:22). The reportorial narration, Stanzel adds, is relatively straight forward and unambiguous but the scenic representations rely on different techniques which theoretically must be distinguished (Stanzel 1986:47).

On the one hand, there is the dramatized scene which consists of "pure dialogue, dialogue with brief stage directions, or dialogue with very condensed narratorial

report” (Stanzel 47). On the other hand, there is the technique which shows the reflection of fictional events through the mind of a character “without narratorial comment” (Stanzel 48). Stanzel calls this character the reflector to distinguish him from the narrator as a narrative agent. Both of these techniques, which help the analyst to interpret scenic presentations in narratives, require the exploration of what he calls the *mode* of a narrative situation – constituting the first element of narrative situations. Stanzel’s definition of mode encompasses all possible variations of narrative forms between the two polar oppositions – narrator and reflector. Therefore, he states that narration in the true sense of mediacy leaves the reader with the impression of coming into contact with a personalised narrator, as opposed to being confronted with the reflection of the fictional reality in the consciousness of a character, which provides the illusion of immediacy. The various relations between narrator/reflector and the reader comprise the product mode (Stanzel 48).

3.2.2 Person

The second constitutive element is based on another level of relations: that is the relations between the narrator and the fictional characters. Needless to say, there are a variety of possibilities within these relations but Stanzel again delimits them to two polar positions: On the one hand, there is a narrator who belongs as a character within the fictional reality he narrates about, on the other hand, there is a narrator who exists outside the fictional reality (Stanzel 48). Stanzel specifies this under the terms identity and non-identity of the realms of existence of the narrator and the fictional characters. According to traditional terminology, the narrator that exists as a character of the fictional world would be called the first-person narrator. However, the terms first-person and third-person narration, which have been used through time proved to be too confusing as the only criterion that distinguished them was the personal pronoun. In that case the first-person narration would refer to the narrator as opposed to the third-person to a character in the narrative who is not a narrator. For example, there are narratives such as “Tom Jones”, which is a third-person narrative but also displays instances of a narratorial “I”. Therefore, it is important not to count the occurrence of the personal pronoun “I”, but rather “the location of the designated person within or

outside the fictional world of characters” (Stanzel 48). In order to keep the terms identity and non-identity under one category and because of its succinctness Stanzel prefers to keep the overall term “person” (Stanzel 48).

3.2.3 Perspective

“While *mode* focuses the reader’s attention primarily on his relation to the process of narration or presentation of the third constitutive element, ‘perspective’, directs the reader’s attention to the way in which he perceives the fictional reality” (Stanzel 49). In further detail, Stanzel says:

The manner of this perception depends on whether the point of view according to which the narration is oriented is located in the story, in the protagonist or in the centre of action, or else outside the story or its centre of action, in a narrator who does not belong to the world of the characters or who is merely a subordinate figure, perhaps a first-person narrator in the role of the observer or a contemporary of the hero. In this way an internal and an external perspective can be differentiated. (Stanzel 49).

Perspective, an additional aspect that is different from *mode* and *person*, helps the reader to form a clearer mental image of the time and space within the narrative. In other words, the reader gets an understanding of the “spatio-temporal arrangement with respect to the centre or the focus of the narrated events” (Stanzel 49). The story is perceived differently if its events are seen or reported from outside the centre of the story action or from within (Stanzel 49). Stanzel furthermore adds:

Accordingly, there are differences in the ways in which the spatial relations of the characters and things in the represented reality are treated [...], as well as in the restrictions placed on the knowledge and experience of the narrator / reflector [...]. (Stanzel 49).

3.3 Analysis of the Narrator in the Novel *Cranford*

The analysis of *Cranford's* narrator will be exemplified by the following text excerpts of the novel. Stanzel proposes in his theory that it is very helpful to start with the very beginning of the novel in order to establish the way that the narrator is introduced to the reader.

Example 1

In the first place, Cranford is in possession of the Amazons, all the holders of the houses, above certain rent, are women. If a married couple come to settle in the town, somehow the gentleman disappears; he is either fairly frightened to death by being the only man in the Cranford evening parties, or he is accounted for by being with his regiment, his ship, or closely engaged in business all the week in the great neighbouring commercial town of Drumble, distant only twenty miles on a railroad. In short, whatever does become of the gentlemen, they are not at Cranford. What could they do if they were there? The surgeon has his round of thirty miles, and sleeps at Cranford; but every man cannot be a surgeon. For keeping the trim gardens full of choice flowers without weed to speck them; for frightening away little boys who look wistfully at the said flowers through the railings; for rushing out at the geese that occasionally venture into the gardens if the gates are left open; for deciding all questions of literature and politics without troubling themselves with unnecessary reasons or arguments; for obtaining clear and correct knowledge of everybody's affairs in the parish; for keeping their neat maid-servants in admirable order; for kindness (somewhat dictatorial) to the poor, and real tender good offices to each other whenever they are in distress, the ladies of Cranford are quite sufficient. "A man," as one of them observed to me once, "is so in the way of the house!" Although the ladies of Cranford know all each other's proceedings, they are exceedingly indifferent to each other's opinions. Indeed, as each has her own individuality, not to say eccentricity, pretty strongly developed, nothing is so easy as verbal retaliation; but somehow good-will reigns among them to a considerable degree. (Gaskell 1)

The introductory sentences direct the reader's attention straight towards the main object of what the narration will be about: the protagonists of the story, which are the women of Cranford. However, there is yet no clear answer to the question "who is narrating" if one follows Stanzel's approach to determine the *mode* in this narrative situation. The style of these sentences seemingly shows a reportorial narration with a practically invisible narrating entity behind the narrated events, which could indicate that the reader is confronted with an authorial narrator. The use of the present tense also adds to the effect of a reportorial narration without

a personalised narrator. However, the first phrase with which Gaskell opens the first chapter to her novel, is worded as “In the first place” which might be interpreted as a colloquial way in which the narrator opens a communication with the reader. One also might grasp this phrase as an answer to a request to tell the whole story of *Cranford*, and the narrator prepares to set up the beginning of the story as if he/she were to say, “Before I tell you more, you should know...” This in turn could be the first indication that the reader deals with a first-person narrator. The following sentence (“What could they do if they were there?”) is a question which could be answered with two possible options: a rhetorical question that requires no answer from another and will be answered by the inquirer themselves, or as a question where the reader is addressed. Yet, the fact alone that a question is posed could imply that there is indeed a personalised narrator. Since the next question is answered by the following sentences, it can firmly be argued that it is a rhetorical question that was possibly posed in order to give a more detailed description of the everyday lives of the ladies in Cranford, their habits and characteristics and the fact that there is no need for a man. These sentences do not only objectively present the women’s living conditions in Cranford but the vocabulary is chosen carefully to hint at a subjective tone. Subjectivity therefore also points to a personalised narrator.

The sentence “as one of them observed to *me* once”² finally gives an indication to the existence of a personalized narrator as well as to the second element of a narrative situation – *person*. As already earlier mentioned, in order to determine the narrative situation *person* one has to look for signs in the text that can provide the relationship between the narrator and the fictional story world’s characters. The narrator may exist as a character inside the fictional realm. The use of the personal pronoun “me” may signal a first-person narrative situation, however, as previously stated, Stanzel points out that looking at personal pronouns to differentiate between a first-person and third person narrator is not as simple as there is a possibility of a narratorial “I” in a third-person narrative. The major distinction between a third narrator and an authorial narrator is their existence inside and outside the fictional realm. Therefore, the first-person narrator

² Italics not in the original but altered for the purpose of highlighting

provides the narrative from an *internal perspective*, whereas the authorial narrator narrates from an *external* one. According to Stanzel, another distinction the reader has to make is whether the narrator has *identity* or one deals with a *non-identity* of the fictional story world (Stanzel 49). So far, the sentence only suggests that the narrator may have once been a part of the story world's characters, but leads to no tangible indication of being in any relationship with them at the point of time the story is told. Therefore, both assumptions might be correct: one could deal with an authorial narrator with a narratorial "I" or one can simply expect a first-person narrator. Which assumption may be correct may only be seen by how the narration continues.

Another possibility to determine *person*, is the fact that a narration is never simply one thing or the other, but can constantly change. As Stanzel's diagram of the typological circle illustrates, the authorial and the first-person narrative situation are not only situated next to each other but it is fairly easy to cross the demarcation line from the authorial narrative situation into the territory of the first-person narrative situation. The aforementioned narratorial "I" should then symbolically signify the demarcation line between the two narrative situations (Stanzel 200f). Furthermore, Stanzel notes that by crossing the demarcation line the ontological basis of the narratorial "I" changes (Stanzel 201).

"The difference is marked by the opposition identity and non-identity of the realms of existence of the narrator and the fictional characters. [...] Compared to the bodiless (but not impersonal) authorial "I," the person of the first-person narrator increases in embodiment, becomes an embodied narrator [...] to the extent that the position of such a first person narrative on the typological circle approaches the ideal type of the first-person narrative situation" (Stanzel 201).

According to Stanzel's statement, the narratorial "I" – or in this case "me" – may indicate a change from an authorial narrative situation into a first-person narrative situation.

In order to be sure of where to place the narratorial "I" of *Cranford* in Stanzel's circle, there is still too little evidence. As earlier noted, the first time the narrator uses "me" in this narration he/she refers to a time in the past and not the point of time the story is told. This puts a temporal and spatial distance between the narrator of the story at the time of narrating and the time when the characters

“observed to [her/him] once”. Stanzel comments on this distance by examining the spatio-temporal deixis on the deeper levels of the structure of a narrative. The spatio-temporal deixis of a narrative is supposed to “help the reader orient him/herself in the time and space of the fictional world in first and third person narratives” (Stanzel 91). The easiest way to approach this examination is by looking at pronouns and adverbs. Scanning the example, there are no indicators of space, which means there is no way to tell where the narrator can be placed in the fictional universe and in what spatial relation he/she stands to the characters of his/her story. Nevertheless, regarding the temporal aspect in this example there are a few more indicators: As previously mentioned the text is written in the present tense until the narrator issues the phrase “as one of them observed to me *once*”³) in which the past tense and the adverb ‘once’ are used, which indicates a temporal distance between her/him and the characters and at the same time leads the reader to believe that there is a first-person narrator with a distinct corporeality. The spatio-temporal aspect of a story also gives the reader an indication to put the narrator’s *perspective* into place. As described in the previous chapter, there are two options that Stanzel provides in his theory: external and internal perspective. From the example it can clearly be said that the reader deals with an external perspective. Especially at the beginning of this paragraph, the sentences point to an objective view, an overview of the situation. The earlier mentioned temporal distance of the narrator to the characters suggests that the reader deals with a narrator with an external perspective. It appears that the narrating agent is positioned outside the fictional realm and gives the reader a look into the lives of the characters in a seemingly omniscient way. In this case the comments, references, and adjectives that carry a more subjective tone in the text lead one to believe that the narrator might present only a limited point of view. It can only be revealed later how much the narrator knows and what he/she does not know.

What specific first-person narrator the reader comes across is still unclear. Due to the fact that the narrator accounts for the women in Cranford and not for him/herself, one might establish that a quasi-autobiographical narrator seems out

³ Italics not in the original but altered for the purpose of highlighting

of the question. The rhetoric style of the first paragraph signalizes that the narrator is observant and comments on the peculiarities of another subject matter rather than him/herself. One option that Stanzel offers to characterize the narrator's properties might be the peripheral first-person narrator. A narrator can appear in the form of simply an observer, or as a contemporary of the main character, as his biographer for instance (Stanzel 205). As the aforementioned roles signify, the narrator, thus telling the events from his perspective, is not at "the centre of the events but at the periphery", therefore making him distinguishable from the autobiographical first-person narrator, who stands at the centre of events as the main character and the narrator (Stanzel 205).

Opinion-forming adjectives, such as "eccentric", are used to describe the ladies and their habitat. The little side note in brackets "('somewhat dictatorial') and the last sentence of this example definitely refer to the narration's subjective and comic commentary or even critique of the story's characters which could further confirm the assumption that the reader of *Cranford* is concerned with a peripheral first-person narrator.

Example 2

I can testify to a magnificent family red silk umbrella, under which a gentle little spinster, left alone of many brothers and sisters, used to patter to church on rainy days. Have you any red silk umbrellas in London? We had a tradition of the first that had ever been seen in Cranford; and the little boys mobbed it, and called it 'a stick in petticoats'. It might have been the very red silk one I have described, held by a strong father over a troop of little ones; the poor lady – the survivor of all – could scarcely carry it. (Gaskell 2)

This example is taken from a passage very closely following the first text example from the first chapter. The narrator has started using the personal pronoun "I" more often now, to reveal something from his/her personal past. In the sentence "We had a tradition" clearly signalises now that the narrator has a personal connection to Cranford and has had personal experiences there. However, to call the narrator embodied would go a step too far at this point. Stanzel is careful to categorise the narrator. He, for instance, presents an example in which there is a "not impersonal narrator" but also a "non-identity", which means that these two are not dependent on each other. There are instances in which he states that a

narrator may be personalized, nonetheless one is not to jump to the conclusion that the narrator possesses an *identity*. It may be a personalized narrator that does not show any features of personality in the fictional universe of *Cranford*. Once more, it is still difficult to yet determine the narrator's definition of and position in the discourse of the novel without more textual evidence.

As in the former example, another rhetorical question can be found in this text which seems to be posed with a purpose to engage the reader – to familiarize them with objects from the town or experiences in a place such as Cranford. The tense that is used in this text passage signifies that the narrator changed from listing things he/she knows to narrating about a personal “tradition” to connect to the story world. However, the real relationship that the narrator has to the story's characters or in what relation the narrator stands to the story world is still too vague for a determination. It seems that the narrator's relationship with the story world of Cranford lies in the past and is now only reminiscing about her/his experiences there. This notion could, however, be contradicted by the aforementioned text example, which characterises the women of Cranford in the fictional present. Analysing the perspective of this excerpt, it seems that there has been no change. It still represents the narrator's external perspective which means that the narrator is on the outside of the narrative story world.

In the last sentence the narrator, again, submits another example of subjective commentary with the utterance “the poor lady”. It signifies the narrator's empathy towards the character she talks about and leads the reader to be sympathetic towards her and ultimately also towards the narrator.

Example 3

‘Our friends have sent to inquire how you are after your journey tonight, my dear, (fifteen miles, in a gentlemen's carriage); they will give you some rest tomorrow, but the next day, I have no doubt, they will call; so be at liberty after twelve; - from twelve to three are calling hours.’

Then, after they had called,

‘It is the third day; I dare say your mamma has told you, my dear, never to let more than three days elapse between receiving a call and returning it; and also, that you are never to stay longer than quarter of an hour.’

‘But am I to look at my watch? How am I to find out when a quarter of an hour has passed?’

‘You must keep thinking about the time, my dear, and not allow yourself to forget it in conversation.’

As everybody had this rule in their minds, whether they received or paid a call, of course no absorbing subject was ever spoken about. We kept ourselves to short sentences of small talk, and were punctual to our time. (Gaskell 2f)

Whereas the first two examples lead only to speculations as to what kind of narrator the reader deals with, this example finally gives a more concrete idea. It is the first time that the narrator uses direct speech, which provides numerous details of narratological interest. First of all, the reader can interpret the fact that the narrator is a woman because the character refers to the narrator as “my dear”, that. The reason for this speculation is that a woman in Cranford would never be as cordial to a male visitor. “My dear” also confirms the assumption that she is indeed an embodied character in *Cranford*. As part of the story world the woman, who is still yet to be named, gives the reader a direct approach to the other characters and the world of *Cranford*. The dialogue illustrates the narrator’s role as a subjective mouthpiece for the other characters. By using direct speech, not only does the narrator provide a dramatic effect, which relates to the mimetic part of the text and therefore renders immediacy for the reader, but she also integrates herself into the same timeline as the other characters. The sentence “Then after they had called...” represents two separate pieces of information for the reader: The past perfect tense (signalled by the temporal adverb “then”) in this sentence tells us that the narrator acts as a *teller* character reminiscing about her time with the other characters in the past. The last two sentences of this text excerpt are interesting in that the narrator can definitely be characterised as a teller by not only describing the women’s behaviour but by including her own as well.

However, there is another point to note, which Wendy K. Carse mentions in her article “A Penchant for Narrative: Mary Smith in Elizabeth Gaskell’s *Cranford*”. She refers to the switching from the “narrative agent as a narrator that comments, describes and observes” and is addressed by the other characters as “my dear”, to a character that constantly “confines herself primarily to commenting through the first-person plural of the community “we” (Carse 318). What does this point

add to this analysis? First, it raises the question again of who the character-narrator is and what kind of narrator one deals with when she is not visible as a character. The text thus far provides more indicators that the narrator is a peripheral first-person narrator. Stanzel defines the peripheral first-person narrator as mainly a character in the vicinity of the main characters' fictional space yet he/she uses the external perspective for the narration as if not being directly a part of the fictional story world. It is mostly subjective commentary that the reader can expect from such a narrator. One of the first things that Carse states in her article is the fact that the narrator of *Cranford* has been mostly overlooked by most critics because she often drops so much into the background (she diverges into invisibility) throughout the course of the book that she is called "a self-effacing character of no particular significance" (Griffith 62 qtd. in Carse 318). By trying to illustrate the complexity of this narrator, however, this analysis also attempts to prove her significance, which seems to have been Carse's goal as well.

The second point that can be contributed to the peripheral first-person narrator is the fact that although she observes externally, her subjectivity always plays its part in the narration. Since subjectivity means that the reader solely gets to know the narrator's side of a story, he/she can only guess the narrator's "truth". In other words, the reader may never be too sure of its reliability.

Generally, Stanzel determines that every narrator is unreliable because even an authorial omniscient narrator's knowledge is limited to that of the author's. Thus, the limitation of knowledge applies twofold for a first-person narrator. On the topic of unreliable narration Ansgar Nünning has developed an approach for an analysis. One of a number of questions around the theoretical concepts of unreliable narration is how recipients are able to recognise textual and contextual signals which raise doubts as to the reliability in a narrative instance (Nünning 5).⁴ In order to systemise the signals of unreliable narration, Nünning urges one to distinguish between the aforementioned textual signals and the contextual

⁴ The original text by Ansgar Nünning is written in German. This reference has been translated by myself. Any further future text passages in German, which refer to Nünning's work will therefore also be translated by myself.

signals which he terms *frames of reference*. Textual signals are only concerned with discernible signs in the source text that make the reader doubt the narration's reliability (Nünning 28). First and foremost, textual signals are described as the primary points an interpreter of a text should direct his attention to.

These signals are listed by Nünning as follows (Nünning 27):

- Explicit contradictions made by the narrator and other internal discrepancies inside the narrative discourse
- Discrepancies between statements and actions of the narrator
- Divergences between self-characterisations of the narrator and characterisation of the narrator by other characters
- Discrepancies between explicit comments of others by the narrator and his implicit self-characterisation or rather involuntary self-exposure
- Discrepancies between the reproduced events by the narrator and his descriptions and interpretations of said events as well as other inconsistencies between story and discourse
- Accumulation of narrator-centric comments as well as linguistic signals of expressivity and subjectivity
- Accumulation of direct comments addressed to the reader and therefore manipulating the recipient through the narrator
- Syntactic signs of a higher degree of emotional and personal involvement (for example: exclamations, ellipses, repetitions)
- Explicit self-referential metanarrative addressing by and of the narrator's credibility (for example: emphatic affirmations)

Contextual signals, on the other hand, can be recognised on the recipient's cognitive level and grouped in two categories: there are frames of reference in which the truth may be understood by experience and frames of reference that belong to a predominantly, socially accepted truth⁵. These frames of reference refer to a reality in the text which makes the reader assume that the fictional reality is compatible with the real world. To be clearer, utterings, comments and

⁵ Nünning calls this model of truth "Erfahrungswirklichkeit bzw. das in einer Gesellschaft vorherrschende Wirklichkeitsmodell" (Nünning 29)

interpretations made by the narrator may be deduced as unreliable if they deviate from the dominant perception of truth in the real world (Nünning 29).

The second group of contextual signals of unreliability entail deviations from specific literary frames of reference and conventions and are drawn from the reader's literary competence (Nünning 30). Nünning refers to Harker's work in order to clarify this notion: "[T]he experienced reader of literature brings to a text a set of schemata learned from previous literary reading experience" (Harker 1989: 437 qtd. in Nünning 30). Deviations from literary conventions, intertextuality (references to specific pretexts), stereotypical models of literary figures, and the reader's construct of value- and norm-systems of the respective text are the frames of reference that Nünning accredits to literary competence.

Since the analysis of *Cranford* is mainly conducted with the help of examples, it will predominantly concentrate on the text signals of Nünning's unreliability parameters. As already mentioned in the analysis of Examples 1 and 2, even at the beginning of the novel the narrator tries to influence the reader by addressing him/her in the form of asking questions. So far, the examples lack any self-characterisation by the narrator, which means unreliability cannot be determined by these factors. However, another indication of an unreliable narrator that can be determined so far, is the point of accumulation of linguistic signals that suggest expressivity and subjectivity. Referring back to Carse's article, she brings up a number of inconsistencies in the narrator's storytelling which will be addressed again later in this thesis.

The following excerpt, for instance, demonstrates some of Nünning's textual markers of unreliability.

Example 4

'Elegant economy'! How naturally one falls back into the phraseology of Cranford! There, economy was 'elegant', and money spending always 'vulgar and ostentatious': a sort of sour-grapeism, which made us very peaceful and satisfied. I never shall forget the dismay felt when a certain Captain Brown came to live in Cranford, and openly spoke about his being poor – not in a whisper to an intimate friend, the doors and windows previously closed; but, in the public street! in a loud military voice! alleging his poverty as a reason for not taking a particular house. [...], he was so brazen as to talk of being poor – why! then, indeed, he must be sent to

Coventry. Death was as true and common as poverty; yet people never spoke about that, loud out in the streets. It was a word not to be mentioned to ears polite. We had tacitly agreed to ignore that any with whom we associated on terms of visiting equality could ever be prevented by poverty from doing anything they wished. (Gaskell 4)

At first sight, one can detect the repeated use of exclamations. The content of the first few sentences signalise to the reader that the narrator has started to integrate her actions fully into 'Cranfordian' behaviour. She tells us that she has fallen back into the phraseology of Cranford, as she explains the phrase "elegant economy", which is used by the other women in the story. The second sentence in this example is full of noteworthy statements that provide more information about the disposition of the narrator. What appears to be a definition of "elegant economy", is merely another way for the narrator to pass subjective commentary. The words "elegant" and "vulgar and ostentatious" which are put in quotation marks represent personal statements by the women in Cranford when they think about financial matters. Nonetheless, a personal statement of how the narrator perceives these women's opinions about material things should influence the reader. The phrase "a sort of sour-grapeism" leaves the impression that the narrator wants to convey a slightly negative connotation. At the same time, however, she finishes the sentence with the contradicting statement "[...], which made us very peaceful and satisfied". This is the part in which the narrator's persona as a commentator with a mind of her own switches back to using the communal "we". This might reveal that she thinks like the women in Cranford. For the analyst who wants to try to pinpoint a clear vision of the narrator's character and their opinions, this passage demonstrates difficulties. An alternative interpretation to the narrator thinking like her characters might also be the narrator's constant wish to refer to herself as "we". According to Nünning, contradictory connotations show markers for the narrator's unreliability which is what one can say about this sentence. Furthermore, the exclamations in this text example also refer to an unreliable narrator, since they signify attempts to influence the reader's opinion. The description of the scene when Captain Brown arrives in Cranford is sprinkled with judgmental exclamations ("[...] in the public street!"; "in a loud military voice!"). Once more, it is indiscernible if these exclamations represent the narrator's true disposition towards Captain Brown or

whether she functions as the mouthpiece for Cranford's women. The following text passage allows the reader to see more clearly in that regard.

Example 5

"He had been blind to all the small slights and omissions of trivial ceremonies with which he had been received. He had been friendly, though the Cranford ladies had been cool; he had answered small sarcastic compliments in good faith; and with his manly frankness had overpowered all the shrinking which met him as a man who was not ashamed to be poor. And, at last, his excellent masculine common sense, and his facility in devising expedients to overcome domestic dilemmas, had gained him an extraordinary place as authority among the Cranford ladies" (Gaskell 5).

In this instalment one cannot only see a different tone towards the Captain but also a different resonance regarding the ladies of Cranford. Whereas the previous example displayed phrases such as "I never shall forget the dismay felt when a certain Captain Brown came" and adjectives such as "brazen" to illustrate the character, in this example (which followed closely after the previous text example in the novel) Captain Brown is described with semantically contradicting words. Suddenly, he is characterised as having "manly frankness" and "excellent masculine common sense". The women of Cranford, on the other hand, provide "sarcastic compliments" and are "cool" when he is friendly. In that moment, the judgement and personal stance of the narrator shines through the phrasing and there is no communal first-person plural or "anonymous we", as Carse puts it (Carse 319). The reader may also interpret this change of opinion about Captain Brown as a consequence of the Cranford women changing their minds about the Captain. However, as Carse's definition on this phenomenon shows:

[The narrator] watches and judges for herself Captain Brown's behavior at a party typical of the usually all-women affairs in Cranford: "He immediately and quietly assumed the man's place in the room; attended to every one's wants, . . . and did it all in so easy and dignified a manner, and so much as if it were a matter of course for the strong to attend to the weak, that he was a true man throughout" (Gaskell 7 [qtd. in Carse 319]). This appreciation [...] directly opposes Miss Jenkyns's belief that women are superior to men and demonstrates both [the narrator's] powers of observation and her capacity for independent evaluation of people and events" (Carse 319).

Carse's analysis of this scene provides even more material for that leads to suggest the narrator's unreliability as she presents the text example that implicates the narrator's real feelings towards Captain Brown. A very well phrased statement by is that she defines the narrator as a watching and judging entity with the capacity for independent evaluation (Carse 319). This enables the reader to ponder about the concept of the *embodiment* of a narrator, which Stanzel introduces in his theory as well. Stanzel defines the embodiment of a narrator to go hand in hand with an existential need or motivation to narrate. In a first-person narrative situation the narrator must be embodied and thus his motivation for narrating is existential. Everything the embodied narrator practically experiences – his emotions, moods, and needs – are directly motivational for his narration. Another reason for the motivation to narrate can also originate in the need for an organizing overview, he adds (Stanzel 93). A look back at the beginning of chapter one of the novel could be a demonstration of said organised overview: the narrator's reports on the town's customs and the women's characterisations could be an attempt to establish her initial motivation to write about Cranford. The third reason that induces the narrator's motivation as Stanzel professes is "[the] search for a meaning on the part of the matured, self-possessed 'I', who has outgrown the mistakes and confusions of his former life" (Stanzel 93). In that case the narration becomes more distanced and is intrinsically intertwined with the experiences the narrator goes through. Therefore, Stanzel concludes that "the narrative process and the narrator's experience form an entity" (Stanzel 93). In light of Stanzel's statements on the embodiment of the narrator it is vital to specify the motivation of *Cranford's* narrator. This narrator's persona takes on different roles in terms of visibility in the course of her telling of the story's events. The narrator's role of the primary narrator shifts into different levels of visibility – from complete obscurity, thus with an audible commentary and occasional addresses made to her by other characters – into a character which is not only visible but also influences the course of her narrated events.

Regarding the shift in her narration from the first-person singular "I" into the first-person plural "we", Koustinoudi addresses "the novel's idiosyncratic narrative form in terms of how it generates tensions between the individual and the

community". She describes the narrator in *Cranford* as liminal to a communal text which in the persona of a narrator acts as an individual (Koustinoudi 67).

Stanzel's point on the motivation of an embodied narrator also may have something to do with the shift in her character. It is apparent that Gaskell's novel provides an embodied narrator and the motivation according to the narratological theory is existential. Her moods and thoughts need to be expressed narratively. Since the novel indicates an autobiographical intention at times, one could also see the narrator's need to preserve her memories of the past in *Cranford*. It also seems to be of vital importance that *Cranford*, as she has experienced it, should not be forgotten.

The earlier mentioned empathy towards her characters leads to another compelling argument provided by Stanzel. He considers empathy towards the narrative's main characters as a typical form for the peripheral first-person narrator. He terms a narrative in which the narrator develops empathy for the characters an *unforeseen partnership* between both parties. A narration in which empathy dominates in the portrayal of the characters assumes a shift on the typological circle from the peripheral first-person narrator with a predominantly mediating function to a quasi-autobiographical first-person narrator. Therefore, one may be able to explain the numerous instances in which the narrative shows the narrating "I" changing into the communal form "we" as a result of this typological shift. In cases where the narrator shows empathy for the other characters and identifies as "one of them" the novel shows displays of said shifts into a temporary quasi-autobiographical territory.

3.3.1 Letters and 'Other Narrators' in *Cranford*

Two of the most striking parts of the novel's unique narrative style are the role that letters take in *Cranford* as well as the numerous instances in which the narrator is replaced as the source for receiving narrative information by other characters. The letters, for instance, are significant in the analysis of the narrator's narrative distance and perspective. The distance of the narrator changes spatially and temporally in between the times that the narrator tells her story from within the realm of *Cranford* or outside of it. There are chapters in which one reads the contents of stories from the letters the narrator received

while being away from Cranford. At the beginning of the novel (see examples 1 and 2) the reader recognises that the narrator reminisces about her experiences in her earlier years in Cranford, which makes the narrator not only spatially but also temporally distant from the story world. A short time later, (still in the first chapter) the reader witnesses her visit to Cranford from her hometown, which means that she leaves her own literary universe outside the microcosm Cranford and enters the world of her stories through her visits. Hence, one can assume that all the commentary of the ladies and the events are perceived from an outsider's perspective but inside the sphere of her writing space. Even then the external perspective remains apparent due to the fact that although the distance between her and the other women gets smaller, the gap does not close entirely.

Another reason why letters take a significant role in the narrative of *Cranford* is that the narrator utilizes the information found in them to further her own narrative. In Carse's words:

Writing letters, making the most of "fragments" and "talking of days that were past and gone" – these activities, already delineated in the first instalment, are those for which [the narrator] displays an unflagging fascination throughout *Cranford*. Their connection to the creation of narratives is of such interest [...] that they supply not only a significant set of motifs for her own narrative but also a key to the overall importance of narrative for her. (Carse 320)

There is an instance in which an entire chapter, called "Old Letters" (Chapter five), is dedicated to only letters. Most of the chapter contains conversations between the narrator and Miss Matty about written and conceived letters, commenting on their varying styles or subject matters. Thereby one can see that the narrator does not share the same enthusiasm for them as Miss Matty. The "blind" enthusiasm explains a lot about Miss Matty's character and represents a better view of the narrator's independent mind. In other chapters (for example, chapter 3) one finds out that the narrator has left Cranford for a while and recounts the messages of letters to her.

Example 6

I thought that probably my connection with Cranford would cease after Miss Jenkyns's death, at least, that it would have to be kept up by correspondence, which bears much the same relation to personal

intercourse that the books of dried plants I sometimes see [...], do with the living and fresh flowers in the lanes and meadows. I was pleasantly surprised, therefore, by receiving a letter from Miss Pole (who had always come in for a supplementary week after my annual visit to Miss Jenkyns (Gaskell 28).

There is one case in chapter 6 that differs in the presentation of the letters. In this example the narrator decides to “show” one of them to the reader. The following excerpt displays an instance in the novel where the reader may perceive the narrative not only provided by the narrator herself but also from other characters who take over the role of the teller in the story or as in the following case through a piece of epistolary narrative.

Example 7

This is it: -

My dearest Peter,

‘You did not think we should be so sorry as we are, I know, or you would never have gone away. You are too good. Your father sits and sighs till my heart aches to hear him, he cannot hold up his head for grief; and yet only did what he thought was right. Perhaps he has been too severe, and perhaps I have not been kind enough; but God knows how we love you, my dear only boy. Dor looks so sorry you are gone. Come back, and make us happy, who love you so much. I know you will come back.’

But Peter did not come back. That spring day was the last time he ever saw his mother’s face (Gaskell 69 f).

What one can see here is a letter that explains the feelings of the (already deceased) mother of Miss Matty to her son who, after a bout of misguided pranks, had left the house to join the military. The premise of the presentation of this letter is a scene in which Miss Matty, one of the main characters, tells the narrator-character – and therefore also the reader – about her family’s and especially her brother’s past. In order to demonstrate the deep sadness that her family felt, Miss Matty and the narrator seek out old letters and the narrator (who still remains nameless and is still called “my dear”) presents the letter. With the simple phrase “This is it”, the narrator does not act upon any request by Miss Matty to read it out loud, but presents it with the sole purpose of addressing the reader directly. The whole letter is framed in quotation marks, which suggests that the narrator

seems to recite the letter. In this moment the audience tends to become unaware of a visible narrator and is left to hear Miss Matty's mother speak for herself. This gives an illusion that the narrator turns invisible for a short while, and as soon as the letter is done, the narrator resurfaces to finish the story of what became of Miss Matty's brother, which can be seen in the last two sentences of the example. The excerpt is taken from the chapter called "Poor Peter", which illustrates another thought-provoking narratological phenomenon aside from representing the contents of a letter. This chapter is one example in which another character, aside from the narrator, acts as a story teller. Carse writes that "[n]early all the women are story tellers who can recollect and describe and report" (Carse 322). She means that in instances when, for example, Miss Matty tells the narrator the story of her brother, the narrator acts just as a conversational partner. The text is presented in dialogue form. The character-narrator mostly provides questions that are answered by the telling character in a longer monologue. Due to a lack of clear indications the reader can easily become confused when trying to distinguish the speaker. There are times in which the narrator makes her own presence known by stating "she said" or "she continued". Yet, there are also numerous confusing passages in the novel (especially in "Poor Peter") that are quoted as a direct speech by one of the other characters with no indication of a present narrator. When compared to the quotation marks framing the letter, the only way to recognize who the narrating agent really is (from passage to passage) is by looking either for indicators that the narrator cannot know yet or at textual references that indicate who is talking to whom. One possible reason the author may have chosen this style of narration for these passages in the novel could be to evoke the reader's empathy by making them feel the immediacy of the scene. It also helps the author shed a more personal light on the characters without the mediating function of a narrator. That case, in turn, seems to produce another discursive level in which the narrator is put in further distance to the narrative world. The letters and the story told by Miss Matty are about characters that the narrator does not know since they belong to Miss Matty's story world. In these moments personal commentary from the narrator is reduced to a minimum and only questions or short reportorial comments are thrown in every once in a while to either signal that the narrator is still present or to describe the scene in greater detail.

Indicators that it is still Miss Matty telling the story are cleverly inserted during her monologues. The following example shall illustrate one of the text passages in which the narrator is simply a listener.

Example 8

‘But you see, he saw what we did not – that it was killing my mother. Yes! killing her – (put out the candle, my dear; I can talk better in the dark) – for she was but a frail woman, and ill fitted to stand the fright and shock she had gone through; and she would smile at him, comfort him, not in words but in her looks and tones, which were always cheerful when he was there (Gaskell 71).

The aforementioned indicators that the narrator functions as a mere witness to the other character’s stories can be detected in the first three lines of the text. Although the narrator does not speak in the greater part of this chapter and Miss Matty is the primary storyteller, she is still referred to directly – in insertions, spoken as side commentaries. What is noticeable as well is that Miss Matty, not unlike the main narrator of *Cranford*, comments on her mother’s character during her narration. While reminiscing about her mother, Miss Matty interprets her mother’s feelings and thoughts, which she cannot know but only assume and interpret. This once again shows signs of unreliability.

The emphatic exclamations that Matty utters such as “Yes!” and “put out the candle, my dear” could be interpreted as a dialogue with the silent, witnessing narrator. The whole chapter “Poor Peter” is almost entirely told by Miss Matty in direct speech. The character of the narrator therefore becomes an invisible but embodied narrator again.

A by-product that results from other characters taking over the teller role is that by their subjective accounts the reader is exposed to only a limited amount of information. The narrator can mainly rely on fragments of the whole story and gossip that has evolved from mouth to mouth. Since there is insufficient material to fill in the stories’ gaps the story tellers attempt to come up with their own explanations. By weaving together singular narrative components they are able to create more eventful storylines. The narrator, whose main interest lies in providing entertaining narratives, also shows annoyance by commenting on the

lack of interesting narrative value in the letters and the stories she perceives through others (Carse 321).

According to Carse there is one character in particular that resorts to storytelling strategies like filling in narrative gaps. This character is Miss Pole (who seems to be the gossip maker of the town) and almost rivals the narrator in her joy to tell stories of Cranford. In the book, the reader can make her character out as having an inclination towards embellishing certain details in her stories which do not necessarily turn out to be the way she described them in the first place. Miss Pole also mirrors the narrator's storytelling techniques with the small difference that "she does not wait for fragments and small opportunities to come to her, but actively seeks them," as Carse observes (Carse 324).

The next few examples are an accumulation of illustrations of Miss Pole's role as a teller and the general narrator's comments on her character throughout the novel.

Example 9

Miss Pole was always the person, in the trio of Cranford ladies now assembled to have had adventures. She was in the habit of spending the morning in rambling from shop to shop; not to purchase anything (except an occasional reel of cotton, or a piece of tape), but to see the new articles and report upon them, and to collect all the stray pieces of intelligence in the town. (Gaskell 102)

This example demonstrates the narrator's characterisation of Miss Pole as the gossipmonger of Cranford. Her curiosity has no bounds, and no matter how minute an event or change is, it is brought forth in the town by Miss Pole who manages to sensationalise every bit of news. It also reveals what Carse has mentioned earlier: the narrator's way of gathering story information is actively sought. The following example represents one of the instances in which the narrator steps back as one of the other silent characters in the scene and gives Miss Pole the reigns of story-teller.

Example 10

Miss Pole began: "As I was stepping out of Gordon's shop, today, I chanced to go into the George (my Betty has a second cousin who is

chambermaid there, and I thought Betty would like to hear how she was), and, not seeing anyone about, I strolled up the staircase, and found myself in the passage leading to the Assembly room [...] when, all at once, I perceived that I was in the middle of the preparations for tomorrow night - the room being divided with great clothes-maids, over which Crosby's men were tacking red flannel [...], when a gentleman (quite the gentleman, I can assure you), stepped forwards and asked if I had any business he could arrange for me. He spoke such pretty broken English I could not help thinking of [...] Santo Sebastiani; and while I was picturing his past life to myself, he had bowed me out of the room. But wait a minute! You have not heard half my story yet! (Gaskell 102 f)

At the beginning of this example the narrator indicates that Miss Pole will be the primary story teller of the next narrative. The rest of this text is a long direct speech with personal addresses at her audience ("I can assure you"), which function as an indicator of the narrator's and the other character's silent presence in the scene. Also, because she speaks straight to her listening counterparts, the reader feels included as one of the listeners, which provides an effect of immediacy. During the story telling the narrator withdraws completely from her usual function as commentator and observer of the scene's surroundings and takes over the role as passive audience member, allowing Miss Pole's narrating style to present itself. Miss Pole's narrating style is identical with the fashion of what Stanzel defines as a first person narrator with an internal perspective. Not only does the reader see the entire situation as perceived by Miss Pole's character, but also hears her trains of thought during those situations ("He spoke such pretty broken English I could not help thinking of [...] Santo Sebastiani"). Her eagerness to narrate, ("But wait a minute! You have not heard half my story yet!"), as well as the urgency in her voice to sensationalise her story, do not only depict her character but say a lot about her persona as a narrator, as Carse observes. Carse also notes that "Miss Pole's narrative powers take centre stage" (Carse 324) throughout a three chapter instalment, which starts with the chapter called "Signor Brunoni" (which the previous example is taken from). Here the reader receives a clear vision of what is vital to Miss Pole. Miss Pole's proclivity to sensationalise her stories does not go unnoticed by the narrator. Indeed, the narrator is sceptical of the way Miss Pole uses bits of information and gossip and exaggerates them to place herself as a heroine in these situations. It is this scepticism that leads the narrator to wait for a way to expose the little faults in

Miss Pole's character and the inaccuracies of her stories, as can be seen in the following excerpt.

Example 11

Miss Pole who affected great bravery herself, was the principal person to collect and arrange these reports, so as to make them assume their most fearful aspect. But we discovered that she had begged one of Mr Hoggins's worn-out hats to hang up in her lobby, and we (at least I) had my doubts as to whether she really would enjoy the little adventure of having her house broken into, as she protested she should.

Here, it is clearly discernible that the narrator questions the way Miss Pole represents herself in her stories as a fearless heroine. She doubts her story of witnessing a robbery at night, due to the fact that the thieves become gradually more dangerous with every retelling (which is later mentioned in the text). That is why the narrator uses the term "affected great bravery" – slightly mocking the character. The text example also reveals the narrator's disapproval of the way Miss Pole presents the material for her stories as she is "the principal person to collect and arrange these reports, so as to make them assume their most fearful aspect". She utters her – and assumingly the other characters' – doubts about the truth of Miss Pole's stories, outing her as an unreliable narrator. However, the narrator never seems to talk about Miss Pole in an ill-intentioned manner. Rather, her slightly amused and empathic comments simply serve to illustrate Miss Pole's weaknesses as a character. The reader can assume that the reason why Miss Pole is telling her stories in an exaggerated manner is to cache her insecurities which makes the audience sympathise with her more.

Even though the narrator questions the truth in Miss Pole's tales and passes mild judgment, she consorts to the same information gathering methods. The difference between the two narrators is explained in a statement by Carse. "[The general narrator's] narratives may be constructed of the same kinds of gossip and fragments of lives as Miss Pole's are, but never do they exaggerate the facts in order to exalt the narrator or ridicule the other characters" (Carse 325), which aligns with the observation stated earlier in this analysis.

Another example of Miss Pole's tales is the tragic love story of Miss Matty and a character called Mr Holbrook. "Miss Pole does not know many details of this tale

[...], just enough to set [the narrator] to ‘castle-building’”, Carse explains (Carse 322). However, with the mention of Mr Holbrook’s age (he is seventy) it “blows up her castle, as if by gunpowder, into small fragments” (Gaskell 36). According to Carse, this is the narrator’s first attempt to set up Miss Matty as the heroine of her stories. In the course of this chapter the narrator witnesses the first encounter between Mr Holbrook and Miss Matty after a long time and speculates that her “castle” might not only have been an unfounded phantasy. Nevertheless, the story of these two characters is constructed by interpreting looks and gestures rather than known facts. The reader can thus only conclude what may have happened but never what really happened, which makes the whole love-story unreliable.

The last part of the investigation of other characters’ narratives that will be mentioned here is the one narrative that prompts the narrator into acting on her own accord to create a narrative. In the chapter called “Samuel Brown” it is revealed that the conjuror – Signor Brunoni – who has been the object of discussion in example 10 is really called Samuel Brown and that he and his wife ended up in Cranford in need. Their adventure before they came to Cranford is told from Mrs Brown’s point of view. She tells the tale of how her husband has become a conjuror in India and of the pain and strife it involved to return home to England with the help of a mysterious man called Aga Jenkyns. The last name Jenkyns as well as bits and pieces of information from Miss Matty and others about her long lost brother in the course of the story motivate the narrator to write a letter to said Aga Jenkyns. She tries to confirm her suspicion that Aga and Peter are the same person, which eventually proves to be true. The following sequence shows the moment in which the narrator actively decides to send her letter to Aga Jenkyns.

Example 12

[...] I stood looking at the wooden panel, with a gaping slit, which divided me from the letter, but a moment ago in my hand. It was gone from me like life-never to be recalled... [T]he little piece of paper, but an hour ago so familiar and commonplace, had set out on its race to the strange wild countries beyond the Ganges! (Gaskell 159f)

As Carse observes, “[the narrator’s] letter sends Peter to the side of his sister and ensures a happy ending of Cranford, and [she] seems to recognize this power of letters to provoke reaction when she drops hers in the post” (Carse 321). The narrator not only creates Matty’s happy ending through her action but also allows Peter to come home and establish his own repertoire of storytelling.

At this point it is also necessary to mention the final revelation of the narrator’s name. In the next to last chapter, called “A Happy Return”, the reunion of the Jenkyns siblings takes place. Encouraged by the letter Peter resolves to return to Cranford. Estranged from a long time apart, the siblings do not recognise each other and Peter keeps staring in the direction of Miss Matty, who is accompanied by the narrator. Very promptly he walks over to the ladies and asks whether the narrator’s name is Mary Smith, which she emphatically affirms. By his knowledge of her name, which she must have included in her letter, Mary is also sure that she wrote to the “right” Jenkyns. Thus her observations of Peter commence. After having been away for a long time, in an exotic land, he tends to tell his own stories to the Cranford ladies. Mary’s need to comment has therefore found another object in Peter. He is, however, also not spared of Mary’s need to criticise.

Example 13

It was not surprising that Mr. Peter became such a favourite at Cranford. The ladies vied each other who should admire him most; for their quiet lives were astonishingly stirred up by the arrival from India- especially as the person arrived told more wonderful stories than Sindbad the sailor[...] but when I found, that if we swallowed an anecdote of tolerable magnitude one week, we had a dose considerably increased the next, I began to have my doubts; especially as I noticed that when his sister was present, his accounts of Indian life were comparatively tame[...]. I noticed also that when the Rector came to call, Mr Peter talked in a different way about the countries he had been in. (Gaskell 191)

Mary’s observation lets the reader know that Peter as a story teller is not trustworthy, which she utters in the part where she openly professes her growing doubts. His unreliability as a narrator seems to be even more stressed in the segment where she reveals that his stories are much more exaggerated in presence of the town’s women. In front of people like his sister and the Rector, people he loves and presumably respects, his stories do not seem too outrageous and rather more believable. The fact that Mary describes Peter’s character in this

way can lead to the assumption that she criticises his changeable behaviour towards his peers. Whereas Mary also often comments on the women's silly quirks with a certain amusement, she never tries to be condescending but remain empathic.

Peter, on the other hand, seems to lack the sensitivity and empathy for the ladies that Mary possesses. His character, as already revealed, has a prolific need to joke. His stories – as Carse names them – are “tall tales”, and “[...] he still possesses the tendency to ridicule women and disregard their own narrative material” (Carse 325). This lack of sensitivity becomes apparent once more in a text passage where he disregards his sister's feelings by making unwarranted comments on her failing to marry Mr. Holbrook (“You must have played your cards badly, my little Matty, somehow or another...”) (Gaskell 193). Carse deems Peter's storytelling as irresponsible, which goes against not only Mary's but also Elizabeth Gaskell's “credo” of what a narrator should do, in order to gain the audience's respect and uphold the power of a narrative (Carse 327).

Nevertheless, due to the fact that Peter was brought back home in order to secure a happy ending for Miss Matty, Mary has to alleviate her criticism towards Peter, as Carse claims. “[...] Gaskell does not waste the opportunity provided by Mary's consistent interest in stories” (Carse 327). Mary finds a way to shed a positive light on Peter by not commenting critically on his behaviour in the novel's last chapter. One of the characters, Mrs Jamieson, who (even in Mary's eyes) is generally disliked due to her snobbish behaviour and dull character, seems to be taken down a notch by Peter's “old tricks” (Gaskell 197). In order to reconcile Mrs Jamieson (who has refused to join the company of the other ladies because of an earlier dispute) with the rest of the women in town Peter tricks her into attending an event in the Assembly Hall of the town to restore the peace. Therefore, she has to behave in a civil manner towards her self-pronounced enemies in order to save face.

3.3.2 The Development of Mary Smith

Reviewing the analyses of several text examples, a multitude of changes and interesting facts about *Cranford's* narrator and her character have been revealed.

As stated earlier the disclosure of the narrator's name "Mary Smith" only takes place in the next to last chapter of the novel, which may have happened for various reasons. This final segment will summarise and conclude the results from the novel's analysis and establish the developmental arc of Mary.

Mary Smith is undoubtedly an unusual narrator. Looking back at the examples there is enough evidence that her function as the narrator in this novel displays certain complexities. The first chapter of *Cranford* shows that her role as a narrator changes constantly between visibility and invisibility. There are shifts in her storytelling technique in which she wanders from the role of observer with a tongue-in-cheek repertoire and criticism to an involved character who takes an initiative in the story. Many critics have disregarded or paid little attention to Mary as a character, but Wendy K. Carse is one of the few critics to have found something other than her function as an "almost anonymous chorus" (Carse 318).

However, according to the theoretical framework provided by Stanzel, the narrator Mary could be categorized as a peripheral first-person-narrator – a mediating figure in the side lines of her character's spheres which operates between the reader and the characters. In the beginning of the novel she simply functions as an observer in the form of a teller-character. Even so, Gaskell's presentation of Mary as a narrating character provides several more complexities. Her aforementioned empathy for her characters shifts her narrator-status into a quasi-autobiographical first-person narrator at times. The more she recedes from her role as an observer and into an empathic character, the more the narrative enters autobiographical territory. On the other hand, Patricia Spacks, for instance, interprets the narrator's reasons for her evolution as follows: "The storyteller emphasizes the urgency of narrative by her own involvement in creating the story she tells" (Spacks 187 qtd. in Carse 330). Furthermore, she states, "It also underlines her need to make excitement for herself by functioning as more than an observer" (Spacks 188 qtd. In Carse 330). In other words, Spacks determines that the motivation as a narrator drives Mary to change into a more involved narrator. Nonetheless, the changes are never permanent as she often switches back to her commenting self. As the later examples from the previous chapter show, her presence next to the other characters alters according to each situation. Sometimes, she lets the other characters express themselves and

practically goes out of sight, at other times “she includes her actions and reactions [...] to enhance the story” (Carse 329). However, her eagerness for telling and creating stories seems to be Mary’s primary goal. This desire puts a special emphasis on alternative ways to tell a narrative, namely through letters and other characters, as previously discussed. As Miss Matty, Miss Pole or Mrs Brown (Signora Brunoni) share their personal stories, the reader often feels Mary receding into background and into her usual role as a mediating, observing and commenting narrator who encourages the characters to tell more. Letters are an important source of information for all the characters, including Mary. Not only do they entertain or keep them informed but they also function as a vehicle for Mary’s comments. The letters give Mary a means to comment on their writing style and they introduce characters that do not or cannot appear in *Cranford*. Such characters are for instance Matty Jenkyns’ parents, their son Peter Jenkyns, and even Mary’s father at one point.

It has been mentioned several times in the analysis that most of the novel is narrated by an unknown female before the reader finally learns her name. However, from the moment Gaskell decides to reveal her as an embodied narrative agent who is also a character in the fictional world other characters start to refer to her as “my dear” or address her with the personal pronoun “you”. One of the reasons for keeping the reader in the dark about Mary’s name may only be answered in an interpretive way. According to Gaskell’s biographer Jenny Uglow, Elizabeth Gaskell presumably only planned the first instalment to be published. It is probable she did not see a need for Mary to obtain any other role than that of an unobtrusive, convenient narrator (Uglow 282). Mary just needed to be someone who was familiar with both the outside and inside world of *Cranford*. On the other hand, as it also seems to be Mary’s wish to be part of the community, she feels the need to be perceived as one of the women in *Cranford* by the reader.

Looking back at the analysis yet again, the narrator’s perspective is definitely one of the most remarkable points of the narrative. Mary can be described as a first-person “I” narrating the story from an external perspective. The reader is faced with a person on the outskirts of her fictional universe, making her objects – the other female characters – her protagonists. At the beginning of the story her persona is very unclear and she could come across as an authorial narrator, up

to the point where it is made known that she in fact exists in the fictional universe (by mentioning that she was addressed by the other characters). This results in determining varying degrees of temporal and spatial distance between her and the other characters. Example 2 of the analysis shows her involvement with the universe of Cranford as part of the past – a memory of her childhood in Cranford. Shortly thereafter, she returns to Cranford to visit the ladies, which puts her back in their presence as a character. In the later chapters of the novel the reader sees that she returns home again and provides her narratives with the help of letters that are sent to her, which furthers her personal distance to the characters again. By the time her personal involvement in the story is more significant her position in Stanzel's typological circle moves from a peripheral first-person narrator to an almost autobiographical one.

Reflecting on peripheral first-person narrators in the previous chapter, stories from the first-person perspective would be determined as not only mediated for narrative information but also as sources of unreliable narration. This analysis presents numerous occasions when the narratives are deemed as unreliable, due to how the information for the stories is retrieved, who tells them and how the stories are told. Because of inconsistencies regarding the character of Mary over the course of this novel one may find reasons for doubt. Mary, as well as the other figures who take over as teller-characters are all subjective in their acts of narration, which limits them of telling the objective truth. Miss Matty is biased by her affection for her family members, especially her sister. Miss Pole wants to make her stories more interesting and frightening by exaggerating in order to stand out as a heroine. Peter Jenkyns also embellishes his stories to the ladies about his time in India for his own amusement because he knows they would never be able to contradict him. Mary, not unlike the other characters, often relies on gossip and half-known stories rather than facts to tell her narrative. At one point she describes herself as being "of moderate means" (Gaskell 5) just like the other ladies. Later, however, she is revealed to be "a well to do and happy young woman" (Gaskell 109), which contradicts her characterisation from before. She can therefore be deemed unreliable.

Investigating the mode of the narrative, Stanzel's proposition is to ask: who is narrating. Is she invisible? What is her motivation for writing? The narrator takes

on different functions in the course of her recounting the story's events. As already mentioned a few times, Mary's role of the primary narrator shifts into different levels of visibility – from complete obscurity (with an audible commentary and the occasional dialogue as other characters address her) into a character which is not only visible but also influences the course of her narrated events.

There are different reasons for why the character of Mary seems to change from an unobtrusive narrator who passively comments on the society of older women to a more active one who seems to want to steer the fate of those she comments on. So far, as most of the analysis from the earlier presented examples shows, Mary is a passive narrator with an independently thinking mind. After Gaskell decides for her character to be more active and name her in the next to last chapter, her part as a personality and character as well as a commentating narrator seems to change her motivation to narrate. According to Stanzel the general motivation for a narrator is existential. The intrinsic need to tell a story comes first. By changing into a covert and invisible narrator at times where she lets her characters take over the reins as tellers of the stories, the narrator prioritises the act of narration over the identity of the narrator.

Another aspect of Mary's motivation, which Carse points out, is the fact that Gaskell created Mary with qualities that circumstances and background deny the older women of Cranford (Carse 329). Mary's possibilities in life surpass those of the ladies in almost every way. For one, she is a highly independent woman by Victorian standards, which gives her the chance to be a narrating artist. Furthermore, one might interpret Mary's purpose as more than a mouthpiece for the other characters, which is vital for them. Even her father comments in the novel, "See, Mary, how good an innocent life makes friends all around. Confound it! I could make a good lesson of it if I were a parson; but as it is, I can't get a tail to my sentences – only I'm sure you feel what I want to say" (Gaskell 175); indicating that Mary is the only one who "gives meaning to the otherwise forgotten lives of those in Cranford" (Carse 329). Mary's pleasure in creating the stories not only gives her the responsibility to write, but the power to do so, as Carse additionally notes (Carse 329).

Another reason for Mary's variable status may also be induced by the author's writing process. As mentioned earlier Elizabeth Gaskell only planned the first chapter as an instalment to be published in Dickens' magazine. Because the story found a huge audience and the demand rose for Gaskell to publish more, she seems to have decided to change a few aspects of her narrator to fit into her story. Gaskell also stated that had she known that she would write more stories on the women of *Cranford*, she would have changed certain elements in the beginning. The deaths of certain characters wouldn't have occurred, such as Captain Brown for example. Gaskell may also have changed the distance of the narrator to the other characters from the start (Carse 319). Initially, Gaskell presumably perceived Mary Smith as one of the women in the community, someone who apart from age and residence has almost everything in common with the ladies of *Cranford*. Later on, she must have decided to set Mary apart from the others by making her independent thinking status into independent acting. Moreover, it might also explain why Mary need not necessarily be completely unreliable but that Gaskell did not take better care of continuity.

The changes that Gaskell undertook in her writing process are not only visible in the narrator but also in the narrative structure of the novel. The book's chapters are not chronologically linear. George Griffith analysed the chapters by content and according to the timeline in which Gaskell produced each of the instalments. He concluded that the first four instalments, which comprise the chapters 1 to 8 have characteristics of a series. A series contains several episodes in which single plots find closure at the end and a few links are laid in between the storylines to establish coherence in one fictional universe. During her writing process it is recorded that between April of 1852 and January 1853 Gaskell took a hiatus between her first instalments and the last ones. In the intervening time Gaskell must have decided to publish her chapters as a serial novel and therefore changes in her writing commenced. The following three chapters (chapters 9 – 12), in which Miss Pole takes over a central role, teller-wise and protagonist-wise, make out one overarching story-line. It starts with the arrival of Signor Brunoni, an indication that change is coming to the usually not varying daily routines of the women. Chapter 10 called "The Panic" the motif of "the other", "the unknown", and "the strange" is continued and explores the women's panic of burglaries

happening in Cranford. The story arc finishes with the revelation of Signor Brunoni's real name and the resolution of the mysteries that have built up in the first two parts. Concerning Mary's unreliability, the contradicting statement that Mary is a "well to do young woman" appears right after Gaskell's hiatus. Furthermore, the overarching plots are written in chronological order unlike the aforementioned irregular timeline in the first 8 chapters. One can therefore conclude that the three-chapter-story-arc was a visible change from the episodic writing in the earlier chapters.

The last part in Mary's evolution shall be introduced by her quote "For my part, I had vibrated all my life between Drumble and Cranford" (Gaskell 191). This is one of Mary's statements that John Sharps alludes to in his analysis of Cranford's narrator. This moment represents the author Gaskell herself, as Sharps assesses a parallel between her fictional characters' spaces and her own – Manchester and the little town Knutsford that inspired her to write Cranford. In other words, one can establish Gaskell's autobiographical traces in the narrative while firmly maintaining Mary's status as a fictional character (Sharps 132f qtd. in Carse 330). Especially in the second half of Gaskell's novel, Mary's development as a character and narrator reaches its full potential. Mary becomes a full-fledged character, who, apart from still being an observant commentator, actively participates in the story to create new material for her writing. As Carse states, Mary's commentary on her characters is coloured with Gaskell's values of what a narrator should be as the author instils her own principles in her (Carse 322).

Stanzel also comments on characters that function as mediators for their author's moral and intellectual mouthpieces, which is one of the main qualities he attributes to the peripheral first-person narrator (Stanzel 204). Albeit one can say that all narrators must have some qualities that are similar to their authors' values and thoughts, the peripheral first-person narrator, by Stanzel's definition, is the most likely narrator to go through a development like Mary's. Although Mary's world is outside of Cranford, her distance to Cranford is close enough to be a full character at times but far enough to mirror the author's influence. Her active state as an influential character narrator that temporarily becomes an autobiographical narrator can also mainly be explained by Gaskell's desire to find a happy ending for her characters. By making Mary the key factor in actively discovering whether

Aga Jenkyns is Miss Matty's long lost brother, Mary is not only able to express narrative but steer it in the right direction.

4 From Text to Film

As mentioned in the introduction, *Cranford* has been made into a highly successful television series. From a narratological standpoint the films offer a good opportunity to compare the novel to the films. A short introduction into the process of adaptation shall present the initial problems that occur with the transfer of narrative from one medium to another. Adaptation very often involves changes that filmmakers have to make in order to convey a narrative that works for film. These changes are particularly often required when a novel's first-person narrator is adapted. For the sake of finding an equivalent for the point of view of a first person narration different attempts have been made. The closest results to mimic a first-person narrator in film have, however, only been found in experimental cinema. More often than not, stories with first person accounts are changed into third-person retellings for conventional film productions. *Cranford* with its original peripheral first-person narrator is no exception either. Therefore one can assume that the filmmakers had to resort to a number of changes. As Linda Hutcheon writes in her work *A Theory of Adaptation* literary critics have historically often focused singularly on the fidelity of the adapted work to its original (Hutcheon 6). This particular analysis does not ponder on the issues of fidelity but rather tries to highlight the changes that were made in the process of the series' production.

4.1 Issues of Adaptation

Instead of concentrating on the fidelity to the original work Hutcheon suggests that it is significantly more important to focus on the task of adaptation as adaptation (Hutcheon 6). She proposes to rather ask questions such as "Exactly what gets adapted?" and "How?" (Hutcheon 9). Hutcheon defines the "transforming" or "recasting" of a narrative from a medium to another as the changing of form but the "persisting" of the content (Hutcheon 10). However, she also opens the discussion of what exactly constitutes the "content" (Hutcheon 10). "Many professional reviewers and audience members alike retort to the elusive notion of the "spirit" of a work or an artist that has to be captured and conveyed in the adaptation for it to be a success" (Hutcheon 10). How to define or how to analyse "spirit", however, seems to be a questionable task. A

proposition to explain “spirit” is mainly an attempt to “justify radical changes in the ‘letter’ or form,” says Hutcheon (Hutcheon 10). Nevertheless, she closes this argument with the notion that in many adaptation theories the assumption is made that it is the *story* which defines the spirit and which is “the common denominator, the core of what is transposed across different media and genres” (Hutcheon 10). Moreover, the question that arises in writing an adaptation is to find the “equivalences” for different elements of a story (Hutcheon 10). These elements consist of “themes, events, world, characters, motivations, points of view, consequences, contexts, symbols, imagery, and so on” (Hutcheon 10). Out of all these elements, however, the notion that counts for adapters is that themes carry the most value in novels and plays and must be reinforced or dimensionalised in film and television productions to serve the storyline, as Seger suggests (Seger 1992: 12 qtd. in Hutcheon 10). Murray Smith, on the other hand, emphasises the vital importance of another element that is more easily transported from one medium to another, i.e. characters. The rapport and relationship that the audience or recipient of a narration builds with characters is “crucial to the rhetoric and the aesthetic effects of both narrative and performance texts” (Hutcheon 11). Smith calls this the process of the receiver’s recognition, alignment and allegiance (Smith 1995: 4-6 qtd. in Hutcheon 11). Moreover, when characters are the central part of the storytelling arc their psychological development becomes a vital part of the narrative and therefore also receive the audience’s empathy (Hutcheon 11).

Another important point Hutcheon addresses in regard to adaptation is the frequency with which changes inevitably occur. When several units of the story (or *fabula*) are transformed in the process of adaptation they often change radically regarding the plot’s time structure. “Pacing can be transformed, time compressed or expanded”, i.e. the adaptation can exhibit liberties that have been taken of the plot’s order due to shifts in the story’s focalisation or point of view which lead to those changes (Hutcheon 11).

The primary distinction that Hutcheon makes is between the *telling* and the *showing* of a narrative content. Therefore, a lot of the changes depend on the adapter’s position on what he wants to be ‘told’ or if he only wants to ‘show’ things. As she says,

[T]o tell a story, as in novels, short stories, and even historical accounts, is to describe, explain, summarise, expand; the narrator has a point of view and great power to leap through time and space and sometimes to venture inside the minds of characters. To show a story, as in movies, ballets, radio and stage plays, musicals and operas, involves a direct aural and usually visual performance experienced in real time. (Hutcheon 13)

The distinction between telling and showing, in consequence, shows the dilemma with adaptations and proves to be rather problematic. Stories with a certain point of view, for instance, are stacked with difficulties and questions for the adapter. For this reason Hutcheon comments on a few questions which are often cliché-ridden: Concerning performance media, she inquires whether it can be merely limited to a third-person point of view. Moreover, can they achieve the same intimacy that a first-person narrative provides to a reader? She also questions whether literary devices such as soliloquy or a voice-over adequately perform the function of providing said intimacy. Do technical devices such as close up offer the ability to transport the internal information of a first-person narrator? (Hutcheon 53).

In order to answer these questions Hutcheon mentions Robert McKee's and Linda Seger's opinions on the subject. Both are adamant that using literary devices, such as "voice-overs", is undesirable. McKee's observation results in the statement that those particular methods would fall into the category of telling and not showing, which is what needs to be avoided. Similarly, Seger finds voice-overs "disruptive" as they make the audience rather listen to words and not concentrate on the action it sees (Seger 1992: 25 qtd. in Hutcheon 54). Nevertheless, a lot of filmmakers still resort to voice-overs in their works to capture what a first-person narrative provides in literary texts. On the other hand, attempts to capture first-person narrative information with only the camera are quite rare. An example of this method of filmmaking would be Robert Montgomery's 1964 adaptation of Raymond Chandler's *Lady of the Lake*. By strapping the camera equipment to the protagonist's chest the audience sees just what he sees – a first-person point of view. However, this way of adapting a first-person narrator for film was also met with harsh criticism. Giddings, Selby, and Wensley referred to those attempts as being "clumsy, ostentatiously and even

pretentiously artistic” (Giddings, Selby and Wensley 1990: 79 qtd. in Hutcheon 54). It is fairly apparent that transforming first-person narratives is not easy.

Another problematic issue Hutcheon addresses is the term *point of view*. Hutcheon uses it loosely, however admits that there is more to it. François Jost, for example, differentiates between what the character sees and what he knows (Jost 2004: 73 qtd. in Hutcheon 55). Robert Stam additionally clarifies that there are many filmic devices that can represent point of view, such as camera angles, focal length, music, *mise-en-scène*, performance, or costume (Stam 2005: 39). However, he deems having “authorial control of intimacy and distance” much more important (Stam 2005: 35 qtd. in Hutcheon 55). In other words, Stam thinks it is vital to have access to the inner workings of the character’s mind (Stam 2005: 35 qtd. in Hutcheon 55).

4.2 The Problem with the Cinematic Narrator

As the previous text states, the process of adaptation involves a lot of problems and changes, especially when it comes to adapting works that were originally written in the first-person narrative situation. One of the most discussed and unsolved problems in film narratology is the question of the narrator in film – which itself is a narrative medium. The first part of this thesis illustrated one approach to analyse a narrative according to its textual features. It was to be expected that narratologists would soon try to expand their theoretical approaches onto this genre. This undertaking, however, was not without its own set of problems. As shown earlier, a narratological analysis generally implies that a narrative has to have some form of narrator. The medium film though, albeit having an abundance of story-telling abilities, lacks a narrator in the strict sense. In contrast to written narratives which are language based, the film’s nature is plurimedial, which includes not only a narrative but also a performing component. The combination of these two acts therefore demands finding other ways for a narratological analysis which sets it apart from a textual one. As Johann N. Schmidt argues, “film combines ‘co-creative’ techniques” that “create an overall meaning [of a narrative] only in their totality” (Schmidt 2013: [2]). These co-creative techniques take over the mediating function between the narrative and the audience and contain elements relating to camera, sound and editing, *mise-*

en-scène etc. Therefore, compensations for the missing narrating subject have to be made. Theorists such as Deleyto (1996) and Kuhn (2009), for example, think of constructing “a visual narrative instance” that would complete this task (Schmidt [2]).

The main features of narrative strategies in literature can also be found in film, although the characteristics of these strategies differ significantly. In many cases, it seems to be appropriate to speak of “equivalences” between literary and filmic storytelling and to analyse the pertinent differences between the two media in narrative representation. (Schmidt [3])

The complexity of these “equivalences” that Schmidt refers to surpasses the mere process of translation/adaptation from one medium to another (Schmidt [3]). Thus, the task of film narratology is to find an approach that incorporates all aspects of film in order to determine what narration means in filmic terms. The field of film narratology has therefore developed into two different areas. Whereas one group of theorists, among them Seymour Chatman, has based their theoretical outlook on literary theory, the other group, which includes theorists such as David Bordwell, articulated their approach on the basis of film theory. Both directions provide widely accepted theories for an analytic approach, but both also find critics from their respective opposition. What both attempts have in common is the fact that the categories and concepts of literary narratology had to be “obscured” from their original purpose in textual analysis in order to “fit” the medium film (Schmidt [4]).

4.2.1 Different Perspectives in Film Narratology

The following segment discusses two major theories (provided by the earlier mentioned Chatman and Bordwell) that have been widely accepted as resources for including film into the field of narratology and to confirm the notion that films are indeed narrated media (Chatman 1990: 130). Although both theories attempt to achieve the same goals their approaches differ greatly, especially when it comes to the question of the cinematic narrator. In his work *Coming to Terms* Chatman explicates the differences between his and Bordwell’s theoretic approaches. Chatman acknowledges a lot of the points in Bordwell’s theory, however, he also questions a lot of his aspects.

One of the major critiques that Chatman utters is the fact that Bordwell “allows for narration” but does not acknowledge a narrator (Chatman 125). Therefore, the concept of mediacy previously mentioned by Stanzel and supported by Chatman is not found in Bordwell’s framework. Even though Chatman accepts the fact that “cinema resists the traditional language centred notions of a narrator”, and that “verbal activity furnishes no easy analogy with visual activity”, he generally believes that film as a form of narration has to have *some* kind of narrating agent that tells the story (Chatman 124). Bordwell’s theory, on the other hand, is based on the notion that the audience that watches a film “constructs” a narrative through the mental activity from perception to cognition. This can be explained as follows: humans learn to recognize certain behavioural and cognitive patterns and store them mentally as processes. These cognitive processes do not always have to appear in the same way or be fully executed to be understood by a person. The missing information will simply be reproduced by the brain to build a coherent story. In films the viewer is mentally trained to recognize certain patterns. For instance, when there is a scene in which somebody gets into a car and then there is a cut to another scene in which the car stops somewhere else, the viewer immediately associates that time must have passed and that the person in the car must have moved from one place to another. The cognitive process in the viewer links these two events together as one ride in a car without seeing the whole journey played out. Since Bordwell’s theory is based on the response of the readers it can be called *Readers Response Theory*. The origins of Bordwell’s theory lie in the theoretical groundwork of the Russian formalists, who made the distinction between the concepts *fabula*, *syuzhet* and *style*. According to Bordwell’s definition the term *fabula* “embodies the action of a narrative as chronological cause and effect chain of events”, which are occurring within a given field of space and time (Bordwell 49 qtd. in Chatman 125). Its structure is totally implicit, which means “from the viewer’s perspective”. *Syuzhet* accordingly represents the actual presentation of the *fabula* and its arrangement in the film (Bordwell 49 qtd. in Chatman 125). “The *syuzhet* (or “discourse”) approach to narrative structure is preferable to a passive “enunciatory” one because it “avoids surface phenomena distinctions (such as person, tense, metalanguage) and relies upon more supple principles basic to all narrative representation” (Bordwell 49 qtd. in Chatman 125). The third mentioned term

style encompasses “the systematic use of cinematic devices” (Bordwell 49 qtd. in Chatman). Chatman further explains, “unlike the *syuzhet* [...], [style] is medium specific” (Chatman 125). Style and *syuzhet* are treated as comparable systems, Chatman elaborates, and each treat different aspects of the phenomenon process. Whereas style stands for the technical aspect of the film, *syuzhet* represents the dramaturgical process.

Chatman questions Bordwell’s dismissal of any narrative agent and does not concur with the theory based solely on the viewer’s perception and cognition. “He seems only concerned with the agent of perception, not the agent of narration: that is, he equates the agent of perception with the act of narration (Chatman 127). He articulates his point of view on the subject as follows: “It is not that the viewer constructs, but that she *reconstructs* the film’s narrative (along with other features) from the set of cues encoded in the film” (Chatman 127). He furthermore argues that narration in the general sense of the word presupposes an act or a performance of an entity and therefore require an agent. “Objects and processes may have qualities, but only agents can do things” (Chatman 127).

Another critique that Chatman lodges with Bordwell’s theory is the argument that “narration” controls the amount of placement of fabula information in the *syuzhet* through three instruments which he calls *knowledge*, *self-consciousness* and *communicativeness*. Thereby he personifies these terms (words that only may be applied to human beings) thus regarding also the term *narration* as a personified process. Chatman has issues with Bordwell’s stance that narration is a personified process, but ignores the fact that “all instruments for narration *need* an agent” (Chatman 129).

Another point that Bordwell is criticised for by Chatman is the interpretation of the term *self-consciousness*. In its usual literary critical sense, self-consciousness refers to “those effects by which the narrator comments on – and thereby demystifies – the process of narration itself” (Chatman 129). Bordwell, however, rather uses this term as to the extent of “the narration displays a recognition that it is addressing the audience” (Chatman 129).

“How can ‘narration’ do this kind of acknowledging?” Chatman ponders (Chatman 129). The lack of precision in defining narration and attributing personified

processes mystify rather than clarify, he complains (Chatman 128). Unlike in a novel, in which the reader may be addressed, films seldom use the device of talking to the viewer. Nonetheless, there are examples in which the character may look at or gesture to the audience, which Bordwell calls an act of self-consciousness but Chatman questions as to why it cannot be called as a simple act made by the characters. Chatman furthermore challenges Bordwell by saying, “Bordwell goes on to have it both ways. ‘Self-consciousness’ is marked not only by characters addressing the audience but also by turning away from them” (Chatman 129).

The third point *communicativeness* is independent from the point *knowledge* according to Bordwell. He claims that an omniscient text as well as a restricted text may equally possess communicativeness. Whereas an omniscient text provides all knowledge, a narration from a limited perspective is generally communicating in that it tells the viewer all the available information of the experiencer at any given moment.

The reason Chatman claims to “need” to criticise Bordwell’s theory in so much detail is the fact that although their theoretic approaches seem so different they actually are very close to each other. As mentioned earlier, the only point they really cannot agree upon is the cinematic narrator. In Chatman’s theory “the narrator communicates all of and only what the implied author provides” (Chatman 130). The concept of the *implied author* (a term that Wayne Booth coined) is a theoretical construct made by the reader – the author’s second self, which eliminates the fact that the narration represents what is going on in the author’s mind, but as an instance that fictionalises the author of the narration as well. The implied author stands as the basis for the narrator and all of narratology, including film-narratology, says Chatman. David Bordwell, on the other hand, rejects the notion of an implied author altogether.

In Chatman’s eyes it is not important to ask how the narrator came to learn the provided information, because all the knowledge stems from the implied author. Chatman explains the implied author in literary theory in the following way:

He is not the narrator, but rather the principle that invented the narrator, along with everything else in the narrative, that stacked the cards a

particular way, had these things happen to characters, in these words or images. (Chatman 1980: 148)

Therefore, Chatman believes it justifiable to transfer the same principle – from the implied author to the cinematic implied author. The cinematic implied author decides what the cinematic narrator knows and presents as well as what the camera shows (Chatman 1990: 130). The concept of the cinematic narrator in Chatman's theory reads as follows:

Though film theory tends to limit the word 'narrator' to the recorded human voice 'over' the visual image track, there is a good case to be made for a more general conception of cinematic narrator. [...] Films in my view are always presented – mostly and often exclusively shown, but sometimes partially told – by a narrator or narrators. The overall agent that does the showing I would call the 'cinematic narrator'. (Chatman 133f)

In other words, Chatman does not perceive the cinematic narrator to be a human being but rather refers to an agent – “a composite, which consist of a large and complex variety of communicating devices” (Chatman 134). Furthermore, the cinematic narrator is not to be confused with the cinematic device of a voice-over narrator. A voice-over is part of the devices a cinematic narrator may use for his narration and its contribution is almost always transitory. It may never dominate the film in the same way a literary narrator can dominate a novel (Chatman 134).

As one can see, there are numerous discrepancies between these two theoretical standpoints when it comes to the term and concept of narrator in film. Since these concepts are highly theoretical in nature it is useful to consider further sources in the field of film narratology to provide a more pragmatic and applicable approach for the analysis of the TV production of *Cranford*. One such framework can be found in the work of Jason Mittell.

4.3 Narrative Issues in Film and Television

Jason Mittell's article *Film and Television Narrative* introduces “specific narrative facets that are common to moving-image storytelling as found within film and television” (Mittell 156). Mittell points out that although film and television share a common visual and aural form, they do have differences in their structures albeit their storytelling differences are quite similar (Mittell 156). In order to find

commonalities between the two media – literature and moving-image – a comparative analysis is useful. Especially areas like narration, perspective, temporality, and comprehension as well as plot structure and viewer engagement can be determined that way.

Mittell's attempt to compare the two narrative media does not aim to "judge the faithfulness of the adaptation or to explore creative choices, but to understand how the basic mechanisms of storytelling function within literary versus moving image narratives" (Mittell 157). This is also the general aim of this thesis. With the complications of shedding light on the film narratological problem of a cinematic narrator, it seems to be a more useful approach to examine the changes that were made in order to convey what the original narrator intended for her story.

Using an illustrative example of L. Frank Baum's novel *The Wizard of Oz* Mittell explains the different variants a novel can use to convey a certain situation to the reader. By utilising this example Mittell is able to point out the ways in which literature evokes visual and aural details by the use of vocabulary. This "imaginary vista", as Mittell puts it, is a way the reader visualises details about the imaginary landscape and the character's thoughts (Mittell 157). In other words, what is conveyed by the narrator may be visualised in the reader's mind with many more details. If an example is so illustrative, it almost "begs to be captured on film" (Mittell 157). The excerpt scene from the novel *The Wizard of Oz* that he shows, is written from an authorial narrative standpoint and does not offer many emotional beats to the description of Dorothy's character, as for instance a first-person narration would. Therefore, Mittell explains that the reader must depend on the character's exterior behaviour to interpret her emotional state. In this scene Dorothy cannot believe her eyes, is astonished and cries in amazement. The filmic version therefore has to rely on the actor's performance to convey this emotion. As there are "no adjectives in cinema" film has to use a different narrative grammar to communicate "even the most cinematic of literary texts" (Mittell 159). Therefore one may assume that film adaptations do not only have possibilities but also limitations in their storytelling. As previously mentioned, the emotional reaction of the actress portraying the character is vital for the audience's understanding of the character's emotional state – but what about the character's point of view? What does Dorothy see and how does she perceive

her environment? In this particular circumstance the advantage lies with a novel's author. In Dorothy's case, Mittell explains, the viewer has been taught through film conventions "that a sequence alternating between shots from over a person's shoulder and her facial reactions, which are termed 'shot/reverse shot' will be interpreted as conveying her perspective" (Mittell 159).

"Most films lack the narrative voice used in literature to convey attitudes towards the action" Mittell continues (Mittell 160). Filmmakers would have to apply techniques such as camera angles and movement, editing, music, and unusual "tricks" to convey the narrative content. As in for example the filmmakers of *The Wizard of Oz* did when they used the technique of shifting from black-and-white to Technicolor in order to convey the contrast between grey Texas and the amazing landscape of Oz. In that way the viewer can understand and emotionally respond to the story represented (Mittell 160).

This leads to Mittell's point about the crucial distinction between what he terms *diegetic* and *non-diegetic elements of a narrative*. The diegetic level he refers to is the story world which belongs to the characters' experiences and the contrasting non-diegetic level includes elements which tell a story, but are not actually within the film's story world (Mittell 160). The devices that film uses, such as camera angles and movements, editing, music, etc. are non-diegetic techniques which "represent aspects of the story world and guide our reactions to onscreen events" (Mittell 160). When reading a novel it is often not necessary to mention every detail because, as remarked earlier, the human mind adds certain details through imagination. Visual features in a setting might have been specifically left out or are mentioned later by the narrator for narrative purposes. A filmmaker, however, does not have the luxury to leave out details in his scenes. Ambiguities are not desirable in filmic presentations. Rather, the filmmaker has to include every little detail in order for the audience to comprehend a full picture. If specific parts are not included they simply do not exist in the diegesis (Mittell 160). Therefore, Mittell states that film has the disadvantage of being "limited as to how much of the diegetic world can be represented or withheld" (Mittell 160). In case of adapting a first-person narration film has the opportunity to use a "voice over". However, this "literary" device is rarely utilised in a film adaptation. *Cranford* is no exception in that matter either, as will be shown later.

On another note Mittell points out that in written narratives details might have been left out on purpose so as to highlight certain aspects. The film equivalent would be the use of film devices such as close-ups or an actor referring to the highlighted issue. Due to the abundant influx of information cinematic representations paint a much more complete but less highlighted picture than literary narratives (Mittell 161).

One of the most striking differences between literary narratives and their film pendants is the treatment of time. Mittell therefore uses the concepts and terminology borrowed from narratologist Gerard Genette.⁶ In narratological terms one has to differentiate between three levels of temporal streams. The time that passes in the story world is the so-called *story-time*. Story-time is usually constructed in a linear fashion, which conventionally is ordered chronologically with the exception of narratives that purposely rearrange the timeline of events for narrative purposes, such as time travelling storylines or other science fiction story devices like time freezing (Mittell 161). The duration time of a story told in the narrative is the so-called *discourse-time*. In other words, discourse-time represents the whole time-span from the earliest point in the story to the latest, which can be as short as a few moments or span over decades, depending on the narrative. Mittell also mentions the *narration-time* which is the actual time the reader needs to read a story, which is variable because every reader reads at different speeds. For films and television programs the time is mostly limited. The regular length of a movie amounts to about 90 minutes to two hours and television productions, especially in serial forms last between 20 minutes up to an hour (see Mittell 161). One major detectable difference between literary narratives and moving-image narratives is the fact that literary narrative has much more temporal freedom (Mittell 162). Mittell states that literary narratives have the ability to “freeze story-time to indulge in detailed descriptions or asides” (Mittell 162). Furthermore, they have the freedom to be ambiguous about their temporality leaving no markers that can identify the time passed within the narration. This poses the difficulty for a filmmaker to decide how long to dwell on

⁶ Genette discusses the narratological concept of time in several of his works. For further interest one may refer to: Genette, Gérard, *Narrative discourse: An essay in method*. Cornell University Press, 1983.

a described scene taken from a literary source. Since there is no mentioning of the time passed in a scene the filmmaker has to decide on their own as to how much story-time passes for that particular instance (Mittell 162). On the other hand, Mittell further explains that “moving image media can mark temporal shifts through devices like editing, dissolves, and flashbacks, but it is quite rare that a film pauses to describe a scene or delve in thematic diversion” (Mittell 162). He also adds that although temporal continuity might be a strength of film it lacks the playfulness and freedom that literary narratives enjoy in exploring time and ambiguity (Mittell 162).

One of the vital points that Mittell questions is the understanding of the audience/reader of these narratives. “It is crucial that we grasp the medium-specific particularities that make moving-image media distinct in their ability to tell stories” (Mittell 162). Although film or television can never fully ‘translate’ the particularities that make literary texts special one has to acknowledge and appreciate the specific potentials that film can add to storytelling by its own account. The addition of visual details, temporal construction and aesthetic achievements are definitely a unique quality that only moving-image media possesses (Mittell 162).

Mittell proposes to further distinguish between the two moving-image media, film and television.

In terms of narrative structure and comprehension, television offers a set of challenges and possibilities that compile how stories are told and understood, and numerous programs have strategically played with storytelling techniques to create unique innovative narratives. (Mittell 163)

Therefore, he says that “films and novels are self-contained” (Mittell 163). In other words, most films and novels create a story-world that is unique to their own particular medium (Mittell 163). The created fictional world stands alone providing its own hero and its own unique themes and characters, its own style of narrating, its own pace and setting. Even though there are cases of serialisation, such as a series of books or sequels to one movie, the first instalment – the original – is mostly self-standing. The *James Bond* franchise provides both books and movies and illustrates this self-standing quite well. Neither the books nor the films require the reader or audience member to follow a storyline from previous works of the

franchise (Mittell 163). Exceptions from this rule occur more often in genres like science fiction or fantasy in which the reader (or audience member) is required to follow the story sequence in order, such as *Lord of the Rings* or the *Harry Potter* series (Mittell 163).

Historically, the serialized narratives of nineteenth-century fiction have given way to stand alone novels, and even in their own time such texts were usually released as singular narratives upon completion. For television, this tendency is reversed: the exceptions are stand-alone television narratives, like made-for-TV movies or anthology series that offer a new storyworld with each new episode. (Mittell 163).

The crime and detective genre mostly carries out this format as it can present different crime cases carried out in the same universe by the same characters after the same formulaic structure. Examples for series that offer ongoing story worlds but provide different stories are the *CSI* franchise, *The Mentalist* or *Psych*. The preferred narrative structure for television series nowadays is one major story arc that is clipped into several small pieces that make out each episode. This has two major reasons: For one, the storytelling process can be stretched out to any desired extent, which means that it can explore far more details than one film of the same topic ever could. Secondly, the need for knowledge of the diegetic history requires viewers to tune in every time the show is aired, which is very valuable from a business perspective. Viewer ratings determine a show's financial success and have a strong impact on the decision of whether a show stays on the air or not. The definitions of the two different series structures are *serial narratives* and *episodic narratives*. The plot in a series that reaches over from one episode into others is what Mittell refers to as the *core narrative* that defines the essential theme of a series (Mittell 165).

Mittell makes the following mention regarding the genre of soap operas in terms of the difference between episodic and serial narratives. In soap operas serial narrative devices are used that feature continuing storylines traversing multiple episodes, with an ongoing diegesis that demands viewers to construct an overarching story-world using information gathered from their full history of viewing, which for some soap operas means it can go on for decades.

4.4 Analysis of the Narrator in BBC's *Cranford*

The following film analysis will show examples of scenes from the BBC series *Cranford*. Due to the lack of an original screenplay, the scenes will be presented from a viewer's perspective via descriptions and in parts directly transcribed dialogues. Other filmic devices will also be mentioned in order to provide a complete image of the scenes.

Before specific examples of the series can be analysed, some details ought to be paid attention to. Mittell suggests to take a look at the series format. The series is composed of five 60 minutes long episodes in its first production and added two additional 90 minute (the length of a regular feature film) episodes in the second season. Although the series' title is *Cranford*, the adaption includes storylines and characters from two of Elizabeth Gaskell's other works, namely *Mr. Harrisson's Confessions* and *My Lady Ludlow*. It stands to reason to assume that *Cranford's* filmmakers interweaved the different storylines to enrich the narrative. The television series of *Cranford* provides stand-alone episodes, each presenting a different month and year. While each episode has its own closed *episodic* narrative there are overarching *serial* storylines throughout the whole series.

The *core narrative* in *Cranford* focuses on the characters' everyday routines and slice-of-life stories, almost as if it were a soap opera set in Victorian times. Unlike the novel, the storylines are presented chronologically. One overarching storyline that goes through the whole series is the character development of Mary Smith – a young woman visiting Cranford who meets the citizens of the town and develops an attachment to them which inspires her to write about them.

Just as with the novel this analysis starts with the series' very first scene. By this point of the thesis it has firmly been established that Mary Smith is the narrator in the novel, however, her part was changed in the filmed version. As it is often the case with adaptations, novels in the first person are commonly changed into films with an authorial narrative perspective. Coincidentally, the original function of Mary Smith was obliterated in the adaptation process. The *narrating agent* that Chatman seeks to identify in his theory needs to be found through the interpretation of other devices. As Hutcheon says, adapting the narrative material requires changes. What kind of changes had to be implemented in the making of

the series will be one of the analysis' main goals. In order to achieve this task the character of Mary will be followed throughout the series *Cranford* in an attempt to establish a link between the narrator in the novel and its filmic equivalent. The first example will begin with the opening sequence which also features Mary's first appearance.

Example A⁷

The first scene opens with the protagonists of Cranford, the Jenkyns sisters, Matty and Deborah (their names, however, not yet mentioned), hurriedly clearing a room in their house. It turns out to be for "our guest" – a new arrival in town. The viewer is still unaware who this guest might be: Matty and Deborah indicate that it is a girl from Manchester, arriving by coach and has announced her arrival by a letter. A cut to the next scene follows, showing a coach hurrying through a rural landscape and then the camera shortly cuts again to the person inside the coach. The following camera close shot shows a young woman, presumably said guest, with a slightly distressed or worried expression on her face. The camera then immediately cuts back to the Jenkyns sisters as the viewer hears Miss Matty saying, "We told her, there is nothing we like more than to have visitors". Another cut is made with a wide shot back to the coach, which is overtaken by a young man on horse who is riding in the same direction as the coach. Yet another cut is made back to Miss Matty who, while still working around the house says, "It seems the girl wrote in distress. [...] There were exclamation marks!" The scene changes then to the scenery in front of the house of the women, with the maid of the house announcing to the sisters the arrival of the coach and "Her!" As the guest exits the coach the viewer is introduced to the names of the sisters and the name of the guest, Miss Mary Smith. The following dialogue indicates it is not Mary's first visit in Cranford. Apparently, she was there as a child and she resembles her mother. Her father remarried and the arrival of lots of children in the Smith house is also given as background information for Smith's character.

Unlike the novel, which in the beginning introduces the central characters and the ways that people live in Cranford, the opening sequence of the series' first

⁷ The examples shown in this chapter are descriptive accounts of the series' scenes and are therefore put in italics to differentiate them from direct quotations.

episode sets up a different narrative from the start. The novel gives a general overview of who the women in Cranford are and how they live, as described earlier in the analysis. The film narrative is constructed to provide some of the information by diving directly into the story's action. Instead of producing the general details of Cranford and its population as an introduction, the films are composed to provide the same information by concurrently revealing these details bit by bit throughout the series. As described in example A, the moviemakers decided to start the episode by introducing the Jenkyns sisters in their household. The camera moves around the interior of the house's guestroom that is covered in white cloths, supposedly to protect the furniture from dust. The camera movement then halts to focus on Matty and Deborah Jenkyns who hurry into the room to clear it by lifting the linen from the furniture. The windows are opened to let in a fresh wind which symbolically can be connected to the new arrival in town that the women are preparing for. At the same time the dialogue between the sisters tells the audience that a guest is arriving. A cut to show the landscape with a travelling coach follows immediately after. The audience sees a lush green countryside which seems to have stayed untouched by man. Then cuts back and forth between the scenes of the women cleaning the house and the coach driving towards Cranford follow. As Mittell says, there are some limitations for both narrative media in terms of conveying details and information of a story. Especially when it comes to visual details of the settings, films have the advantage of providing a tremendous amount of information. In that regard, one can say that there is a far more detailed description of Cranford in the movies than in the novel. The novel, on the other hand, is better at summarising the story and giving insights to the characters in a more concise manner. The reader definitely knows more about the narrator's mind than the movie viewer will ever know about Mary Smith's point of view. In other words, the subjectivity that is so present in the novel is not recognisable in the filmed version. What the novel's first page shows can be deemed as not only a description of "the ways of the town" but also a characterisation of Cranford and the people in it. Those ways can only be explored in the filmed version as elemental parts throughout the entire narrative, as for example when Deborah Jenkyns informs Mary Smith of the visitation rules shortly after her arrival.

Another proposition that Mittell makes is to analyse is the temporality, a point that is often investigated in general narratology as well. As earlier explained, the time in a narrative has to be considered from three different aspects. One needs to differentiate between story-time, discourse-time and narration time. Narration-time of the movies are about 60 minutes per episode. Story-time, on the other hand encompasses a much larger quantity of time. The time frame of one episode can expand from a few days up to a few weeks. Another one of the film's advantages is the amount of content that can be told in a movie through the filmic device of cutting. The scene illustrated above shows that movies can establish two separate story actions almost simultaneously. The discourse-time of the scene is about two to three minutes, but in this time the movie shows the women cleaning the house, providing the viewer with information on the new guest through the dialogue and at the same time show the coach travelling through the rural area coming towards Cranford. Additionally, the viewer is able to see the interior design and the actors' costumes, which indicate the period. All these details provide a rush of information for the viewer to take in without consciously noticing it. If a writer of a novel were to consider all these pieces of information the narration-time would be infinite. Analysing the temporality of a movie does not only consist of seeing how long it takes to view the content or how much can be shown in the viewing time, it also shows what filmic devices can do to a narrative's *tempo*. The used film devices produce a sense of urgency in the presented scene. The high frequency of cuts in the short amount of time between the different settings mediate a fast tempo. This sense of urgency is also played out by other factors: the background music is vivacious, the actors' performances and actions in the scenes display a commotion. The coach is coming towards the camera with speed.

A difference that should be noted between the temporal constructions of the novel and the films is the fact that in the novel's discourse there is an additional level between Mary's narration and the narrated events. Whereas the narrator in *Cranford* writes from a reminiscing stance, looking back at past events when she visited Cranford as a young adult lady, the series is composed to show the story action without the outer time frame. Means to represent that the stories in *Cranford* are the narrator's memory could have been established by, for instance,

showing Mary in a writing process in which the story from *Cranford* could “come to life” in the form of flashbacks. With the decision to leave out the fact that Mary is indeed *Cranford*’s narrator, these filmic devices never come into play.

Instead, the filmmakers decided to jump right into the events. The arrival of the new guest sets the story in motion. As soon as Mary appears, the audience finds out all the characters’ names and part of their background are revealed. The scene’s pacing also immediately seems to slow down. A relevant revelation for the audience is the introduction of the guest – Mary Smith. As mentioned earlier, Mary is not a narrator figure anymore but a fleshed out character. Since the series is not an experimental film project in which the filmmakers try to play with the first-person point of view and the camera in unusual ways, the films have been produced in a “conventional” way. A possible way to have translated the first-person narrative situation, as is the case with the novel *Cranford*, could have been to use a voice-over, but the filmmakers decided against it. *Cranford* therefore can be labelled a *narratorless* narrative. The *telling* function of the novel’s narrator in this case has been obliterated. The viewer is shown what to know and the rest is enunciated by the characters. Every observation made in this example could be an illustration of how Bordwell sets up his theory. Example A implicates analytic observations that mostly rely on informed common sense and interpretation. They also rely on Bordwell’s theory that the audience can recognize the narrative statement through cognition and reception. Bordwell’s notion that a film, compared to its literary counterpart, has no narrator could therefore be agreed upon. Rather than searching for a narrative agent the audience member knows what the film wants to convey and processes it subconsciously. The audience also knows that the coach is heading towards Cranford because it is announced by the characters seconds before.

In *Cranford* the filmmakers decided to introduce Mary’s character by giving her a reason to come visit to Cranford, which is to escape her new stepmother. She personifies the role of the outsider who seeks refuge there. The audience witnesses the town in the same way Mary does, it seems. The actress plays out her arrival scene with a facial expression that could be interpreted as that of an anxious intruder. In a way one may say that the audience is also an unnoticed intruder that moves into the microcosm that is Cranford. With the arrival of Mary

the viewer is also introduced to the main characters. The audience's knowledge of Cranford is still very limited, however, it can gain more information by following Mary on her journey.

Example B

Immediately after the arrival scene, Mary is depicted unpacking her luggage in the guest room. The camera shot's angle is wider in order to catch the room's surroundings around Mary. As Miss Matty enters the room to bring the guest some fresh flowers to liven it up, one can see a close-up shot of Mary's face in a melancholic state – on the verge of tears. Miss Matty notices her emotional state and supposes that it must be because she misses her family already. Then Mary answers that she must. It seems that she "regrets her hasty behaviour to leave her home so suddenly and come to Cranford". Mary then starts to list her "faults" and describes herself, "I'm indiscreet Miss Matty, and incautious and I do not appreciate my stepmother's attempt to marry me off." "You don't wish to marry?" Miss Matty asks astounded. "No, at least not yet." Miss Matty therefore assures Mary that she is "sure, no malice was intended." Then she changes the topic to refer to the room. "This is the room you slept in as a child." – "I've always remembered my visits with my mother", replies Mary fondly. Miss Matty then goes on to reveal the relationship they had entertained during Mary's absence, mentioning that they have always liked receiving Mary's letters. "You have such a sprightly turn of phrase," which is returned in kind by Mary, who "loved to hear from Cranford" in return. "I've relished everything Miss Deborah wrote." Matty further explains the style of Deborah's letters to be modelled after Dr Johnson, and asks if she might have heard the latest news of the Parish bull, which Mary confirms she has. She also adds that the letter "was more compelling than a novel".

The striking feature of this scene is Mary Smith's self-characterisation. The novel's reader knows a lot about Mary's insights into and comments on the other characters, her own ideas and point of view. However, her role as a character (apart from her function as a narrator) is definitely not as easily discernible from the original text. One definition for character is stated by Uri Margolin: "[c]haracter can be succinctly defined as [a] story world participant" (Margolin 66). One of the

functions for a character is to act as a narrative agent for the narrative. Due to the fact that Mary's primary role in the novel is that of a narrator her role as a character is inactive most of the time. In order to flesh out Mary's character for the film, she needs to have more substance – a background story and a purpose for coming to Cranford. This scene may be regarded as one of the key scenes for the filmmakers to do that.

Furthermore, a certain amount of elements from the novel are integrated as well. One such element is the background information of Mary's past with Cranford. In the novel's opening chapter, Mary tells the reader that she used to be in Cranford as a child before her mother's passing and that she visited it as a young adult. The series alludes to that fact in the conversation between Mary and Miss Matty.

Another matter that is instantly visible is the establishment of the relationship between Mary and Miss Matty. In the novel it comes across that the narrator seems to be particularly fond of Miss Matty, due to the sympathetic description of her character. She is mild and understanding, humble and good to the core. The actress's portrayal of Miss Matty radiates exactly that. Even when Mary hints at the possibility of not wanting to marry (a fact that was very unusual for a woman in a Victorian setting) Miss Matty seems not judgmental of the fact. Mary's indecision regarding marriage is an additional hint to the development of her character in the course of the series.

One of the important parts in the novel, as discussed in its analysis is the use of letters as a way of conveying entertaining narrative for the characters. As mentioned earlier, the novel's narrator used to comment on the letters' writing style in the letters she received while being away from Cranford. In light of staying faithful to the original narrative material, the adapters of the series included this fact by inserting it into the conversation between the two characters. This scene is one of many in which the characters openly speak of the observations usually stated in the comments of the novel's narrator. In other words, the general content of Mary Smith's narration in the novel (in particular her subjective observations) is often "repurposed" into dialogue material in order to generate the reader's mental image of *Cranford*.

The chapter “Old Letters” from the novel which discusses the importance of letters and the distribution of the narrator’s role onto other characters is made into a central storyline in the series as well. In the third episode the storyline of Matty’s brother Peter is brought up as they read out letters to each other, which can be seen in the following screenshot:



Figure 2 – Cranford, Season 1, Episode 3, Minute 45

The scene above represents all the elements of the character acting as the storyteller by means of commenting on letters.

As mentioned earlier in this example’s description, Mary seems to have the proclivity of “turning a sprightly phrase“, according to Miss Matty. This indicates the future “fate” of Mary as a writer. There is a number of indices that allude to the fact that Mary is the original narrator of the story. Her process of writing is constantly shown in scenes, as in the fifth episode, for instance, where she is placed in the background writing correspondences (see figure 3 below).



Figure 3 – Cranford, Season 1, Episode 5, Minute 20

In episode 4, one scene revolves around the fact that Mary uses letters to convey narratives to others. This scene is narratologically valuable for two possible reasons. First of all, Mary, as the “active” character from the novel, decides to use a letter to further her narrative by trying to find Peter Jenkyns. Apart from that, she also shows the viewer a possible way to narrate the status quo of the dramatic situation the characters are in. She does this by writing a letter to somebody that does not appear in the episode.



Figure 4 – Cranford, Season 1, Episode 4, Minute 20

One common way to dramatize the writing of letters in film is not only to show the character in the writing process, but also to utilise the filmic device of a voice-

over. It is interesting to note that in the entire first season of the series Mary Smith is the only character who is used for these voice-overs. The letter writing scenes also fulfil their purpose as a plot device. With the letters Mary informs other occurring characters of current events and invites them to take an initiative to help. Therefore the plot moves forward. In case of finding Peter Jenkyns, for example, she does so by contacting the character of Major Gordon overseas. In another storyline she writes to a character who is responsible for some mischief and reminds him to return to Cranford to resolve the situation.

Example C

The following scene describes the first visit of Captain Brown as it is referred to in the book as well (see page 23, example 5). The scene is constructed as a way to introduce the beginning of the relationship between Captain Brown and the ladies. In light of Bordwell's theory on cognitive schemata, it is the audience's responsibility to interpret the meaning of what is shown on screen. Even without reading the novel it is instantly clear that especially Deborah Jenkyns is very sceptical of the new man in town. The question of one's financial situation, in particular, is frowned upon. In the novel the ladies would never tell their dismay to Captain Brown's face and the reader is informed by the narrator Mary. The film however, as firmly established, is not provided with a constant voice-over narrator. Instead, this is another case in which the characters take over the role as enunciators for the narrator's voice. In order to analyse the scene in further detail, one has to look at the description of the full scene.

The scene starts with a shot from behind a fireplace showing the mise-en-scène with the protagonists, sitting opposite each other in a seemingly square position as illustrated in the following screen capture:



Figure 5 – Cranford, Season 1, Episode 1, Minute 35

The first shot focuses on Mary and Captain Brown, who are propped on the sofa to indicate the spatial distribution of the characters on the set. Captain Brown initiates the conversation by thanking Miss Deborah and Miss Matty for helping his daughters settle in Cranford. Then the camera position changes into a variety of over-the-shoulder shots between the talking characters Captain Brown and Miss Deborah, with cuts of reaction shots and close-ups in between. The conversation follows Miss Deborah, reminding him of the “visitation” rules of Cranford. He need not have returned his visit earlier than the customary three days since their last visit. Captain Brown therefore responds with a disregard, “I prefer to do things promptly”, which earns a disapproving look from Miss Deborah and an avoidance of eye contact. Then she asks for Captain Brown’s reasons why he and his daughters moved to Cranford for which he gives an elaborate answer, “My poor girl’s health required a move to a milder clime. Broadstairs was put to us as the ideal, but I’m retired and on half-pay and the expense was quite beyond us. And, Cheshire is so much cheaper”. During his explanations the camera exchanges quick shots between an awkward looking Miss Matty and an appalled Miss Deborah. Not being able to tolerate more of his talk, Miss Deborah gets up and tries to shovel a few coals into the fireplace. While she puts the coals into the fire, the camera angle goes back to the shot from behind the fire in which the audience sees Miss Deborah from the front and also enables the viewer to catch Mary’s reaction behind her in the room. The camera then cuts to a middle-

length shot focusing on an embarrassed looking Mary who worriedly glances in Miss Deborah's direction and then weakly smiles towards Captain Brown's placement. In order to keep the conversation going Captain Brown then opens the discussion on Charles Dickens' Pickwick Papers. Again, he is oblivious of the women's reactions in the room, which are again portrayed by focused middle-length shots on the female characters. He goes on about how the stories make him laugh and Miss Deborah shows her disapproval of his reading choice by emphatically saying, "I am an admirer of Doctor Johnson, Captain Brown". Captain Brown does not understand the unwelcome topic of Charles Dickens and dismisses Johnson's work as "tolerable enough" and highlights that in contrast to Johnson, Dickens is the better choice for a contemporary read. He then offers an edition of the 'Pickwick Papers' to the ladies as a "token of his gratitude", which Miss Deborah reluctantly accepts. The camera cuts to the next scene with a shot from the window panning outside the house with Captain Brown leaving and bowing respectfully to the ladies watching him.

The following conversation shows Miss Matty excusing Captain Brown's behaviour by stating that he did not overstay the "required" fifteen minutes, which is then dismissed anyway by a grumpy Miss Deborah, who states that she does not approve of Captain Brown's frankness and reading choices. After that she leaves the room, demonstratively leaving the book on the table. Mary, curious about the book, goes to take a look inside of it and is stopped by Miss Matty, who mouths to her to better leave it there untouched.

In contrast to the book, in which Mary recounts her personal observations of the scene, the filmmakers let the camera take over that function. The beginning of the scene alone, with the camera's eye behind the fireplace, shows a perspective in which the viewer can have the feeling of peeking anonymously inside the parlour in which the homeowners, the Jenkyns, are entertaining their guests. The viewer may interpret this view with a feeling of unobtrusive immediacy. This camera stance occurs twice, however, two different intentions are conveyed. The first time the camera is placed behind the fireplace presents an overview of the setting and the characters. The four characters are exactly positioned in a way to not fully obstruct the view over the room's interior. As the screenshot from earlier illustrates, the "guests" are shown from a fully frontal perspective whereas the

Jenkyns sisters are sat with their backs against the camera on either side of the screen with their faces partially displayed or not visible at all. The camera position seemingly represents the Jenkyns' perspective. As an audience member one may interpret the first shot as an exposition of the following scene. It establishes where the characters are, who they are, and in what positions they are seated – the *mise-en-scène*. The frame of the gleaming fireplace is also slightly unfocused, which brings the primary attention towards the characters in the background. The second time the shot behind the fireplace is used, it serves a different function, as the following screenshot will illustrate.



Figure 6 – Cranford, Season 1, Episode 1, Minute 36

This time it diverts the attention from the interior, as one can only see how the hands of Deborah are energetically shovelling coals into the fire. The reactions of the character seconds earlier in the scene show Deborah in a state of exasperation about what the Captain is saying. In order to portray how the character tries to vent her emotions the shot is placed directly from behind the fire. The view from Captain Brown is immediately taken away and the other characters are shown to look worried into Deborah's direction from behind her. It seems that the camera provides an interest point of view from Deborah's perspective. The just mentioned term *point of view* is often loosely applied and one should be aware of the various implications that come with it. Chatman therefore provides an attempt to narrow down the very broad concept of point of

view. According to the Oxford English dictionary, he says, the term point of view has more than one accurate definition and therefore one must be fully aware of how to use it. As said by Chatman one must distinguish between points of view that are “literal”, “figurative” and “transferred”. The literal point of view includes one’s perception, or as he states, “through someone’s eyes” (Chatman 1980: 151). Figurative point of view is described as a conceptual system – someone’s ideological view on the world. The third definition of point of view – the transferred one – is described as “from someone’s interest vantage” (Chatman 152). Nevertheless, these different concepts of point of view can still be confusing as Chatman notes. “[P]oint of view may [...] refer to an action of some kind – perceiving or conceiving – or to a passive state – as in the third sense. In narrative texts, Chatman adds, it is even more probable to find a complicated situation to differentiate between points of view. When there is only a single presence, as in expository essays, sermons or political speeches, for instance, it is easier to discern the point of view as an author’s interest or ideology. In narrative texts, however, where there are characters and a narrator, more than one kind of point of view may be manifested. “A character may literally perceive a certain object or event; and/or it may be presented in terms of his conceptualisation; and/or his interest in it may be invoked (even if he is unconscious of that interest)” (Chatman 153). Therefore, Chatman proposes to differentiate between point of view and *narrative voice*. He states that the crucial difference between these two is that point of view is the physical place or ideological situation or practical life orientation to which narrative events stand in relation. The narrative voice on the other hand, refers to overt means, such as speech, “through which events and existents are communicated to the audience” (Chatman 153). In other words, if one were to adapt this narrative concept from Chatman, one might say that what the camera does is showing points of view in a literal sense. The camera’s positions and angles show the points of view the filmmaker wants the audience to see, which, on the other hand, also means that the audience perceives the filmmaker’s interest point of view by means of the camera placement. In contrast to that, the characters convey the voice of their points of view. Regarding the so-called *camera-eye*, Chatman explains that its function is to represent the conventionalised notion of an *illusion mimesis*. The camera is supposed to be a neutral recording device where the events just “happened” in front of (Chatman

154). One might try to name the transmission from what is recorded and then show it to a viewer as a limited third person point of view, however Chatman warns of this simplified classification. One cannot specify what the narrative voice is. It is important to classify the limited third person point of view by adding the type of narrative voice. The narrative voice may be covert or overt. (Chatman 154).

Perception, conception, and interest points of view are quite independent of the manner in which they are expressed. When we speak of “expression”, we pass from point of view, which is only a perspective or stance, to the province of narrative voice, the medium through which perception, conception, and everything else are communicated. Thus point of view is *in* the story (when it is the character’s) but voice is always outside, in the discourse (Chatman 154).

Looking at *Cranford*, the points of view that are represented through the camera angles and placements always try to catch the actors’ expressions to communicate a sense of the character’s point of view. The voice of the movie is what the filmmakers want the audience to see. Regarding the first time the “fireplace shot” is used, the narrative voice could be interpreted as “telling” the viewer to see the setting and the characters. The second time the shot is used, the voice directs the viewer to perceive an outside view on the characters’ reaction – their point of view.

The quick cuts between the over-the-shoulder shots facilitate following the conversation and act as a visual aid of the characters’ seating arrangement. The reaction shots may represent the points of view of each character to what is being said.

What Chatman does by pointing out the functions of point of view and narrative voice in cinema may be seen as an attempt to find an equivalent for a narrator in film. On this account one may note one of the concepts that David Bordwell discusses in his work *Narration in the Fiction Film* – the concept of the *invisible observer*. It seems that Bordwell presents this theory (among numerous other accounts) to make a stronger argument for his case in negating that film could have a similar concept resembling a narrator. His argumentation against the invisible observer are indeed valid, however they do not strengthen his preferred theory of reception and cognition, as the previous chapter shows. In traditional

film theory the invisible observer is described as a creation of a perspectival eye in cinema. “[A] narrative film represents story events through the vision of an invisible or imaginary witness” (Bordwell 1985: 9). According to Bordwell, the most explicit formulation of this concept can be found in V. I. Pudovkin’s work *Film Technique* from 1926. Similar to an observant narrator in a written narrative, the camera should “represent the eyes of an implicit observer taking in the action. The certain actions and details captured by the camera should indicate to the film’s viewer what ‘the attentive observer saw’” (Pudovkin 70f qtd. in Bordwell 9). According to Pudovkin, the changing of shots may be interpreted as a “natural transference of attention of an imaginary observer” (Pudovkin 70f qtd. in Bordwell 9). In other words, the camera shows what the invisible observer sees. If the camera cuts from one character to another, the invisible observer casts his glance in these directions. According to this theory, editing and the quickening of the tempo reflect the invisible witness’ and therefore also the viewer’s excitement. As Bordwell explains, Pudovkin extended this theory even to sound, with the implication that the audience hears with the invisible witness’s ears. “The result of the theory”, as Bordwell says, “was a conception of film as presenting us with ‘an observer ideally mobile in space and time’” (Pudovkin 254 qtd. in Bordwell 9). Pudovkin’s theory became widely known and accepted, in particular by mainstream narrative filmmakers who “seized this model to explain practices of continuity editing” (Bordwell 9). Continuity editing was a vital point in Pudovkin’s theory due to the fact that his example in which the camera moves from one to another implies that the camera is rooted to the spot and only remains as a witness on an axis of 180 degrees. Furthermore, the invisible observer’s use of the camera’s long shot to a closer view is therefore explained by other theorists who support Pudovkin as “a ‘psychologically accurate’ depiction of the normal process of seeing a detail (Reisz and Millar qtd. in Bordwell 9). In summary, the invisible observer is regarded as a representation of the narrator, Bordwell assumes. Furthermore, Pudovkin specifies that the camera lens represents the director’s eye and the filmic device cutting reflects the filmmaker’s emotional attitude. These initial definitions were then taken one step further, as Bordwell explains,

Later writers came to see the camera itself as the film's story teller, the narrator's 'point of view' on the action. Thus the invisible witness model became classical film theory's all-purpose answer to problems involving space, authorship, point of view, and narration. (Bordwell 9)

However, after closer inspection of the theory Bordwell points out the general faults with this theoretical formulation. For example, he mentions high or low camera angles that would not fit natural viewer positions and cuts "from one locale to another could hardly be justified as faithful renditions of perception" (Bordwell 9f). If one takes a look back to the scene from example C, one might refer to the camera's placement behind the fire place – as one of those implausible shots for an ideal observer. Why would the observer stand behind a fireplace? Bordwell calls these kinds of shots "impossible" as can be seen in the following excerpt.

It is not hard to find empirical fault with the invisible observer account. It must ignore many stylized techniques which cannot correspond to optical processes (split screen, wipes, negative filming, 'impossible' camera positions and movements). It presupposes continuity cutting to be the closest representation of actual perception. It forgets that even in ordinary films, the camera's position changes in ways that cannot be attributed to a shift in a spectator's attention. (Bordwell 10)

Since this model can only work on a localised "atomic" level and is basically just able to explain a cut or an image, not whole sequences or films, Bordwell continues that this model is insufficient for an analysis. "Even if we put aside the contradictions in the notion of 'an ideally placed possible spectator' we must recognize that analogies to phenomenal perception tend to 'naturalize' the operations of film style" (Bordwell 11). Implementing this model in an analysis would implicate that camera and microphone would anthropomorphically be stationed like a person before a phenomenon. However, it disregards, the fact that the imaginary observer is not "looking at" an objective world of a story action but a staged one. "The imaginary witness account forgets that in cinema, fictional narrative begins not with the framing of a pre-existent action but with the construction of that action to start with" (Bordwell 11).

Looking at the screenshot in Figure 2 from the earlier example one can say that the shot looks fairly ordinary. The camera is placed to show – as Bordwell would describe it – "a maximally communicative view" of the women (Bordwell 11).

While the theoretical account of the invisible observer is mainly concerned with space, it cannot explain how the story action develops once the camera standpoint might have to shift only to prolong the point of maximum visibility. Because the invisible observer is constricted to constructing sense only from certain vantage points it ignores other narratorial functions of filmic devices, such as costumes, lighting, mise-en-scène, figures, etc., Bordwell remarks. He thus deems this theoretic model too inexact, as it blocks “grasping the range of styles at work in cinema” (Bordwell 12). Even though his theory has provided the classical film theory with “the rudimentary conception of narrative representation”, in particular the stylistic figure of filmmaking – the camera as an ideal witness – Bordwell sums up the model as “lacking coherence, breadth, and discrimination” (Bordwell 12).

What does this excursus to Pudovkin’s theoretical model mean for the analysis of the narrator in *Cranford*? According to Bordwell, the camera as a witness cannot qualify as a generalised representation of the narrator. One could try to analyse a scene like in Example C with the camera as an invisible witness to the conversation between the characters. The camera movements could be interpreted as the invisible observers tracking the characters’ reactions. However, the ideal camera stance, as explained earlier, is a static camera that only shoots in a parameter of 180 degrees. This fact alone could not be shown in this otherwise fairly simply filmed scene. The sequence shows all the facial reactions in the filmic style of the earlier mentioned shot/reverse shot. However, since there are four characters every over-the-shoulder shot is shown from a different camera standpoint. Hence, one cannot determine whether the camera is *one* anthropomorphic device looking from one to the other. If the ubiquitous invisible observer were to jump around in the midst of the characters one maybe could say otherwise. It is still worth mentioning that the transference from one character to the other seems somewhat unnatural. One detail can be analysed exactly as the theory suggests – a small camera movement points at the coal shovel that Miss Deborah picks up from the floor and follows her movement as she straightens up at the fireplace. This indicates the natural psychological process of following a certain detail. However, because this instance is a very small detail

it confirms Bordwell's notion that this model of analysis only works on an "atomic" level.

The final part of this comparative analysis seeks to discuss the previously announced character development of Mary Smith. As analysed earlier, it takes a long time for the name of *Cranford's* narrator, let alone the nature of her character to be unveiled. With this revelation her whole persona shifts from a mostly unobtrusive narrator to a participatory character. This is not the case in the movies. As the first example of the film analysis shows, the story develops Mary's character right from the beginning. Apart from the already mentioned fact that she looks uncomfortable to intrude, she very quickly establishes herself as a firm character among the women. With the welcoming arms of Miss Matty she seems to feel a little more at ease. Her storylines are mostly intertwined with those of Miss Matty, as she accompanies the Jenkyns sisters in almost every scene. Especially after the death of Deborah Jenkyns (whom Mary seemed to fearfully and silently respect most of the time), in the third episode Mary has developed into a constant companion for Miss Matty as she takes over the part of her confidante.

One central part of Mary's storyline which earns her the trust and friendship of all the other ladies, is not taken from the novel. On the subject of elements that are not in the original it is important to note that the television series *Cranford* is an amalgamation of storylines and characters of three different works by Elizabeth Gaskell, namely apart from *Cranford*, *Mr. Harrison's Confessions* and *My Lady Ludlow*. The major storylines are presented in a parallel way, as for instance the arrival of Mary which coincides with Mr Harrison's arrival in town. While Mary is taken under the wing of the Jenkyns sisters, Dr Harrison is introduced to the town by Dr Morgan. When Dr Harrison needs an assistant for an emergency surgical procedure it is Mary who proves to be the bravest to assist him. It is then that the other women in Cranford as well as Dr Harrison acknowledge and respect her.

After Deborah's death at the end of the second episode it also seems that apart from being Miss Matty's confidante Mary develops a voice of her own. She shows more initiative in the scenes with other characters, especially when it comes to helping them. The previously addressed letter scenes are all initiatives to help the

town's people and happen only after the second episode. Instead of quietly following the conversations as she does in the beginning, she later starts to inquire more about the characters and increasingly integrates herself in the ladies' discussions and conversations.

One of the most decisive moments for her character development happens in the second season of the TV series, called *Return to Cranford*. Unlike the first season the second season consists of two episodes in feature film length. In the first half of the first episode of *Return to Cranford* Mary is away from the town. She returns again to visit Miss Matty, who is alone again after the death of her housemaid. Her appearance when she returns seems to be more assertive and she bears the news of a new engagement with a Mr Turnbull, the son of a soap manufacturer. During her stay in Cranford for the second time around she also reveals her ambition to do "something else entirely" than only writing letters to her fiancé. As the main storyline revolves around a great new change for the citizens of Cranford, the construction of the railway, a change in Mary becomes also visible. The ladies, who are mostly portrayed as scared and concerned by so much progress, change their minds when Miss Matty decides to take a first ride on a train and invites them to go along. Inspired to try something new, Mary decides to send one of her written articles to a publisher. Along with this post she also sends a letter to her fiancé. The following dialogue is a transcript of what follows next.

Example D

The scene begins with the arrival of Mary's stepmother, who has come to confront Mary about a broken engagement.

Mrs. Clara Smith (aka Mary's stepmother) (exasperated): A broken engagement!

Miss Matty: Oh Mary! Mary.

Mrs. Clara Smith: Thank you, Miss Matty, for your evident distress. For Mary is clearly quite indifferent to the anguish she has caused.

Mary: My error was in agreeing to marry Mr. Turnbull. Now I have found the courage to admit it, I must confess I feel quite calm.

Mrs. Clara Smith: Calm! When she has spurned a man who has just patented his soap flakes!

Miss Matty: Mary, dear. Surely you care for Mr. Turnbull?

Mary: I do care for Mr. Turnbull. I do not care for him enough.

Mrs. Clara Smith: Oh, spare me the fancies of the schoolroom. You, who purport to be so mature and perspicacious... You even had your poor Papa convinced of it, posturing about in your spectacles and that checked dress, and wasting his money on ink and paper all the while.

Mary: Writing is the only skill I have. It is not a convenient gift for a woman. It requires solitude and application. Marriage would deprive me of the chance of both. Now I can retain my independence, and at least discover if my work is worth pursuing.

Mrs. Clara Smith: You are not independent! Your father pays you a most generous allowance.

Mary: It is my share of my own mother's fortune. If I marry, it will all become my husband's.

Miss Matty: It is a dreadful thing, Mary, to withdraw a promise.

Mary to Miss Matty: You inspired me to do this. I did as you suggested when you urged your friends to travel on the railway. I examined all things.

As the dialogue reveals, Mary has decided to break all social conventions, and decides to live her life independently as a writer. This fact may also be interpreted as the pathway for her to write the stories of *Cranford* and become the narrator of the novel. Her role did not only change into the future narrator, but also says something about the adaptation process of the novel. As Chris Louttit remarks, "[...] elements of the adaptation are far from conservative on issues of class and gender" (Louttit 2009: 40). Furthermore, he elaborates,

Feminist critics have analysed *Cranford* the novel appreciatively; those involved in the production of the adaptation seem to be aware of such readings since it also includes important roles for women and direct statements about their social position. More surprising, perhaps, is the adaptation's radicalism on class issues as well. It is commonly *Mary Barton*, Gaskell's first novel, which is regarded as her most socially involved work, an impassioned account of the lives of the poor urban, industrial Manchester. (Louttit 2009: 40)

Due to blending in socially involved topics, the screenwriter and adapter of *Cranford*, Heidi Thomas, seems to have found more purpose for the role of Mary. In contrast to the older ladies in *Cranford*, Mary has been turned into a protofeminist. In contrast to the novel, where very little is revealed about Mary's personal interests and life after her narration of *Cranford*. Nonetheless, it is important to note that there is no real indication or statement by Mary Smith, or any other character in the novel whatsoever that shows that she has feminist tendencies. One passage in the book comes to mind when Mary mentions that, after witnessing the story of how the Brunonis overcame obstacles in their marriage, and how Miss Pole dislikes the idea of marriage, she sees the advantages of being married as shown in the following example:

If I had been inclined to be daunted from matrimony, it would not have been Miss Pole to do it; it would have been the lot of Signor Brunoni and his wife. And yet again, it was an encouragement to see how, through all their cares and sorrows, they thought of each other and not of themselves, and how keen were their joys, if they only passed through each other and not themselves. (Gaskell 134)

While Mary in the film version might be hesitant to enter marriage initially, it is interesting to observe her character's development with regard to her opinion on marriage. Over the course of the TV series she increasingly warms to the idea of disavowing Victorian ideals and follows her passion of writing instead. This clear deviation from the original character may signify a deliberate decision from the filmmakers to make the character of Mary Smith more relatable to modern audiences.

One main function of a first-person narrator in a novel is to influence the reader through his subjectivity. The audience sympathises with the narrator's intentions and values. In the series Mary takes over this role of an identification figure for the viewer. It is therefore only understandable that these changes were made as to not alienate contemporary viewers because of outdated morals and ideals.

5 Conclusion

This thesis set out to narratologically determine a specific narrator and to see how such a narrator translates into film. Elizabeth Gaskell's *Cranford* was chosen as the subject of examination as it offers a narrator with multiple interpretable layers. With the help of Franz Stanzel's work *Cranford's* narrator Mary Smith was able to be defined as a peripheral first-person narrator. Furthermore, the narrator exhibited additional narrative functions which changed fluently depending on what was needed for the narrative – an authorial stance for description, a peripheral stance to be able to distance herself from the events to subjectively comment and observe, and a quasi-autobiographical stance, in which her character takes an active role to further the story action. Instances in which Mary Smith hands over the reins for other characters to be a narrative agent as well as letters to provide more narrative for the story could also be pointed out.

Regardless of the specific traits of such a narrator narratologists have come to no conclusion on how to find an “equivalent” for the narrator or otherwise termed – a cinematic narrator.

A film narratological analysis of the television production *Cranford* based on the theoretical frameworks of Bordwell and Chatman was conducted which confirmed the initially expected difficulties of finding a comparable concept to the literary narrator. Several generalized issues related to the cinematic narrator were presented, from which one may conclude that in film narratology there is indeed no uniform solution to determine a film's narrator.

Due to the difficulties of defining a cinematic narrator the thesis' main goal was to examine what filmic solutions and changes the filmmakers had to consort to instead in order to illustrate the essential narrative content the novel's narrator provides. The analysis followed the scenes in which the character of Mary Smith is shown because she served as the original material's narrator. With Mary's introduction as a visitor to Cranford, her character may be interpreted as an identification figure for the audience who initially seems to share the same knowledge. The society of Cranford with their particular tastes and manners are presented to her by the other characters and therefore also to the viewer. A very detailed set serves as a second source of information. The camera work and

editing seamlessly mediates the story action and visual details for the audience. The style of filmmaking can be described as mainstream cinematography.

Furthermore, the chosen scene examples present Mary's particular development as a writer, which points towards the fact that she is/will be narrator of *Cranford*. Mary functions in most of her initial scenes as a constant companion to Matty Jenkyns, one of *Cranford*'s main protagonists. She can be spotted in most of Miss Matty's scenes, at first often as a silent observer and companion and later as a more active friend, who helps the other characters. The prominent feature of writing letters in the novel is also included in the television production as Mary is shown twice writing letters to people outside of Cranford. She is the only character who is filmed while actively writing the letters with a voice-over.

As her role as a narrator in the novel suggests, Mary provides personal commentary on the writing style of the letters she reads. In the films Mary's character and commentary is not verbally articulated but often only signalled by the actress' performance or uttered by other characters. A multitude of scenes utilise close up shots to capture Mary's facial reactions to the events that happen around her. In the latter part of the novel Mary becomes a more active participant in her characters' storylines, by for instance helping Miss Matty to get her brother back and so on. The nature of film grants Mary a more fleshed out character development as well as her own storyline. Throughout the series Mary can be seen to immerse herself more and more into the society of Cranford by not only following suit to the other character's actions. She develops into an independent woman who forsakes marriage to ultimately become a professional writer.

The same principles for a narratological analysis of a novel cannot be applied in film narratology, as the concept of the narrator cannot be applied equally in both media. Whereas it is easy to firmly establish the existence of a narrator in a novel, in moving pictures one has to decide who or what is responsible for conveying the narrative in film, whether it is the adapter, the director or even the camera. One may conclude that the cinematic narrator can only be conceptualised by adding different components from different theories. Whether one takes a textually based approach like Chatman's into consideration or the "responsive reader" account by Bordwell, both sides in film narratology have valid points for an analysis. However, both approaches have not supplied satisfactory end

results to define the existence of the cinematic narrator. This analysis shows that both approaches together provide insight into the intentions of the filmmakers. One cannot be very certain whether *Cranford*, the television production, intentionally included some of the narrator's features or not. It seems that some of the most vital elements that could be found in the novel's analysis were indeed used to enhance the narrative value in the films as well. In many adaptations a first-person narrator is often disregarded or even discarded in a sense and very little is done to convey specific details other than major storylines, plots, or only characters. With *Cranford* it seems that the adaptation was done very carefully, i.e. the filmmakers tried to incorporate many details from the original text's narrative perspective, if it was at times only even imperceptibly done.

Even though one can draw from several theoretical and pragmatic approaches to analyse a novel's adaptation, one might eventually come to agree with Bordwell's conclusion that a narrator in film may only be constructed as an interpreting reader's response after all.

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Appendix II – Abstract

English

Elizabeth Gaskell's novel *Cranford* and the 2007 BBC production of its adaptation clearly demonstrate the narratological issues that arise when adapting a literary text with an extraordinary first-person narrator. An initial analysis of individual text passages from the novel sets out to highlight the narrator's specific features according to Stanzel's narratological theory. Next, the film narratological frameworks by Bordwell and Chatman, amongst others, seek to explicate the problematic definition of a cinematic narrator. With the help of Mittell's pragmatic approach example scenes are examined for their film narratological elements in order to determine whether it is possible to transport a literary first-person narrator into a filmic medium. Furthermore, this paper discusses what changes were made in the film adaptation to indicate the existence of the first-person narrator in the original novel.

German

Elizabeth Gaskells Roman *Cranford* und dessen gleichnamige BBC-Verfilmung aus dem Jahr 2007 zeigen deutlich die narratologischen Problemfelder an, die bei der Adaption eines literarischen Textes mit einer außergewöhnlichen Ich-Erzählerin auftreten. Eine Analyse einzelner Textstellen anhand der narratologischen Theorie nach Stanzel soll zuerst die Besonderheiten der Erzählerin hervorheben. Daraufhin wird durch die filmnarratologischen Theorien von u.a. Bordwell und Chatman auf das Problem der Definition einer filmischen Ich-Erzählerin hingewiesen. Eine darauf folgende Analyse der filmnarratologischen Elemente einzelner Szenen unter Zuhilfenahme von Mittells pragmatischen Zugang soll klären, ob es möglich ist, eine literarische Ich-Erzählerin in ein filmisches Medium zu transportieren. Zusätzlich wird eruiert, welche filmischen Veränderungen vorgenommen wurden, um auf die Existenz von Gaskells Ich-Erzählerin im Buch hinzuweisen.