

CHAPTER DIVISION AND CHAPTER HEADING IN THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY *NOVELLE*

In *Joseph Andrews* Fielding playfully suggests that "those little Spaces between our Chapters may be looked upon as an Inn or Resting-Place . . ."¹ and he compares the chapter heading to "so many Inscriptions over the Gates of Inns . . ."² Today's reading public would automatically associate these devices with the novel, a genre which, because of its expansiveness, seems to require such "Resting-Places". About one hundred and fifty years ago, however, readers of German literature would have linked the chapter not only with the novel but also with the *Novelle*, a literary form which thrived in the almanacs of the time. In this paper I shall first try to explain the emergence and gradual decline of the chapter division and chapter heading in the *Novelle* and then describe some of the interesting functions of these fictional elements during the period in which they were most commonly used in the *Novelle*, the first half of the nineteenth century.

The appearance of the chapter in the *Novelle* seems to be connected with the emancipation of the individually published tale from the cyclical frame. If we go back to Boccaccio and his Renaissance successors, we find that their stories are not subdivided. This is probably due to some of the conventions governing the framed collections of those times; for example, the tales contained in them tended to be not much longer than anecdotes and they were recited orally. Gradually, however, the publication of a single *Novelle* became established, and around the beginning of the nineteenth century, in spite of the revival of the cyclical frame by Goethe, Wieland, and several romantic authors such as Ludwig Tieck, Achim von Arnim, and E. T. A. Hoffmann, a majority of tales were already published individually. The growing reader appeal of almanacs and magazines, forms of publication which could accommodate a single story more easily than an entire framed collection, reinforced this development.

One of the most important results of the separation of the individual *Novelle* from the cyclical frame was that it could now move closer to another emerging genre, the novel, which was likewise unrestricted by traditional literary theory. Symptomatic of this trend, which culminated in the first few decades of the nineteenth century,³ were, among other features, a widening of thematic scope, a corresponding increase in length, sometimes to hundreds of pages as in Tieck's *Der griechische Kaiser* or *Der Tod des Dichters*, and the frequent use of the chapter division and the chapter heading in the *Novelle*. However, length and the occurrence of the chapter were not always strictly related. On the one hand, even moderately long tales were frequently subdivided, as for example Hauff's *Othello* or Stifter's *Der Kondor*. On the other, Tieck, who had used the chapter in his early stories, discarded it after 1820, even though his tales became considerably longer.

Unlike Tieck, however, the majority of writers during the first half of the nineteenth century, among them E. T. A. Hoffmann, Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué, Achim von Arnim, Joseph von Eichendorff, Wilhelm Hauff, Otto Ludwig, and Adalbert Stifter, employed the chapter quite frequently, and we even find this device in some cyclical frames, for example in Tieck's *Phantasmus* and Hoffmann's *Die Serapionsbrüder*. This is due to the fact that both authors included many stories in these collections which had already appeared separately; they merely added the frame later on as a means of holding the tales together. Appropriately, Tieck's and Hoffmann's storytellers read their chaptered narratives from prepared manuscripts, which marks a further move away from the Boccaccio tradition.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, however, the use of the chapter in short prose narratives declined significantly, while it continued to be employed in the novel. In particular, the combination of chapter number plus heading, the most incisive method of division, became quite infrequent. For instance, it never occurs in the stories of C. F. Meyer who merely numbers his chapters.⁴ Even the numbering of chapters decreased markedly, if less rapidly. In fact, many authors who wrote *Novellen* in this period, among them Gottfried Keller, Paul Heyse, and Theodor Storm, tended to avoid any of these devices. Storm discarded them in the early sixties, and Heyse almost never used them in his innumerable tales. This trend continues in the twentieth century, as exemplified by Thomas Mann and Hermann Hesse who do not employ the chapter in their short fiction while retaining it in their novels.

While the scattered remarks made by nineteenth-century authors on their use of the chapter in the *Novelle* do not help us in explaining the process just described,⁵ their frequent comments on the relationship between the *Novelle* and the novel are more helpful. Their discussions suggest that it was not until the second part of the last century that the two genres were clearly differentiated from each other. I think that the gradual disappearance of the chapter from the *Novelle* can be linked with this development.

Already the Romantics, who took a keen interest in both of these relatively new genres, at times obscured the differences. Friedrich Schlegel, in particular, repeatedly viewed them as interdependent literary forms, as can be seen from such synthesizing statements as „Die wahre Novelle ist zugleich Romanze und Roman“⁶ or „Die systematische Form des Romans eine Kette von Novellen“.⁷ Tieck's ironic remark in his story *Das Zauberschloss* (1829) that „Novelle“ is „ein Titel, der jetzt für alles mögliche beliebt wird“,⁸ aptly characterizes the widespread lack of differentiation between the *Novelle* and the novel during the entire first half of the nineteenth century. Thus, the subscriber to the *Novellen-Bibliothek* could acquaint himself with such novels as Dickens' *David Copperfield* or Thackeray's *Pendennis*,⁹ while Scott's *Waverley Novels*

were often called "Waverley-Novellen".¹⁰ Typically, the *Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung*, a respected journal of that time, frequently discussed newly published novels as well as short fiction in a column entitled „Romanliteratur”.¹¹

To be sure, some writers during the first half of the nineteenth century tried to separate the two genres. Hebbel, for example, disapproved of the fact that Tieck had expanded the *Novelle* form¹² and, correspondingly, he condemned „das entsetzliche Jelängerjelierer” of almanac stories.¹³ In his *Ästhetik*, Theodor Mundt contrasted the *Novelle* and the novel by comparing the latter to an extended „Linie” and the former to a „Cirkellinie, die in sich selbst zusammengeht, und die bestimmteste Beziehung auf ein gewisses Centrum hat, um dessentwillen sie da ist . . .”¹⁴ However, such attempts to define the *Novelle* as a genre distinct from the novel had little impact on contemporary critical terminology as well as on the actual writing of short fiction. As late as 1850, Oskar L. B. Wolff in his *Allgemeine Geschichte des Romans* was still puzzled by the question „wo der Roman aufhöre, und wo die Erzählung, wo die Novelle anfange . . . Hier herrscht noch viel Willkürlichkeit und Verwirrung . . .”¹⁵.

What are the reasons underlying this frequent lack of differentiation between the *Novelle* and the novel? Probably these genres could easily merge into one another since a body of generally acknowledged principles governing these literary forms had never existed. Furthermore, many critics in the first half of the last century did not feel attracted to the laborious task of rigorously defining the various kinds of prose fiction because they held them in low esteem. In part, this attitude was due to a lingering bias against prose, which they considered incapable of producing poetic effects.¹⁶ Also they were suspicious of the increasingly evident fact that of all types of literature, prose fiction was the one most liable to be exploited commercially because of its tremendous reader appeal. In fact, the mass output of fiction and the resulting inferior quality of many works made it easier for these critics to relegate these genres to the sphere of mere entertainment. Thus Adolf Müllner, in a review of *Ivanhoe*, which he wrote for Cotta's *Literaturblatt*, called the novel „mehr ein Kind der Muße denn der Muse”¹⁷ and, similarly, Hermann Marggraff in his critical survey *Deutschlands jüngste Literatur- und Culturepoche* characterized the *Novelle* as a „Genre des bloss Romanhaften und Unterhaltenden”,¹⁸ whose domination of the literary scene was, in his opinion, indicative of the „Schwächlichkeit der Literaturperiode”.¹⁹

It was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that a general awareness of differences between the two prominent kinds of prose fiction arose. Increasingly attempts were made to set up high artistic standards for the *Novelle*. Many writers of that period differentiated this genre more definitely from the novel by associating it with more tightly structured forms in literature and music. Thus, Heyse's reflections on the

Novelle were, in part, inspired by Boccaccio's sharply outlined tales. In his essay *Novelle und Sonate*, W. H. Riehl likened the concentrated construction of the *Novelle* to the concisely integrated sonata form.²⁰ Finally, E. T. Vischer,²¹ Storm,²² and F. Spielhagen emphasized the close relationship between the *Novelle* and the rigid organisation of one of the established genres, the drama. For example, in his essay *Novelle oder Roman* (1876) Spielhagen sees many similarities between the drama and the *Novelle* while differentiating both from the novel:²³

So gleicht die *Novelle* einem Multiplikationsexempel, in welchem mit wenigen Faktoren rasch ein sicheres Produkt herausgerechnet wird; der *Roman* einer Addition, deren Summe zu gewinnen, wegen der langen Reihe und der verschiedenen Grösse der Summanden, umständlich und im ganzen unsicher ist. Deshalb hat auch die *Novelle* sowohl in ihrem Endzweck als in ihrer künstlerischen Ökonomie eine entschiedene Ähnlichkeit mit dem Drama, während der *Roman* (und nichts ist vielleicht bezeichnender für den tiefen Unterschied zwischen *Novelle* und *Roman*) in jeder Beziehung des Stoffes, der Ökonomie, der Mittel, ja selbst, subjektiv, in Hinsicht der Qualität der poetische Phantasie und dichterischen Begabung, der volle Gegensatz des Dramas ist.

In all likelihood it was not incidental that at the very time when the *Novelle* was finally being established as a genre in its own right, the use of the chapter began to decline significantly. Heyse and many of his contemporaries excluded it from their stories because they probably felt that it was too closely connected with the novel as well as such features of many earlier *Novellen* as their excessive length and their loose structure. They must have considered the chapter division and chapter heading incompatible with their view of the *Novelle* as a unified, tightly structured whole.

I will now return to the earlier half of the nineteenth century in order to discuss some of the interesting ways in which fictional elements as inconspicuous and seemingly external as chapter division and chapter headings were used in the *Novelle*.²⁴

Even variations in the quantity of text contained within the chapters of a work of fiction can contribute to its overall meaning. When looking at almanacs from the beginning of the last century, one is struck by a type of tale, written mostly by minor authors, which, unlike other almanac stories, is divided throughout into innumerable tiny chapters. Such frequent demarcation prevents the building-up of narrative intensity and emotional involvement and lends these tales the character of a series of amusing little vignettes. If used continuously, as in F. A. Laun's *Der Mann auf Freiersfüssen* (1800),²⁶ the exceedingly brief chapter seems to parody ordinary narrative procedure and in this way it adds to the good-humored and flippant tone of these stories.

Chapter headings form an even more important aspect of the principle of chapter division. Around 1800 and during the subsequent decades, German writers of short fiction frequently used them for comical purposes. Some of Tieck's early stories, for example, display his humorous awareness of the chapter heading as a fictional element. Thus, towards

the end of the first part of *Peter Leberecht* the reader encounters the following heading:²⁷

Achtzehntes Kapitel.

Ist das vorletzte Kapitel. – Der Verfasser nimmt von seinen Lesern Abschied.

Since Leberecht is taking leave of his readers before the book has actually come to a conclusion, they may well be puzzled by what the last chapter may contain. The deliberately pompous heading of the final chapter – „Die moralische Tendenz dieses Buches“²⁸ – introduces a brief satiric discourse on the oppressive influence of didacticism. Here Tieck parodies the concern of many Enlightenment critics with moral lessons not only by conveying an intentionally trivial message but also by relegating it to the brief final chapter, which functions as a mere afterthought or appendix.

Peter Leberecht contains other examples of chapter headings which indicate comic deviations from ordinary methods of narration. For instance, the first chapter of the second part is preceded by the deliberately trivial heading „Das versprochene Kapitel über die Kopfneigungen und Rückenbeugungen“²⁹ which anticipates an amusing digression in the manner of Sterne. Similarly humorous chapter headings can be found in some of E. T. A. Hoffmann's tales, for example, in his hilarious narrative *Die Königsbraut*, whose final chapter opens on a note of mock-seriousness:³⁰

6. Kapitel.

Welches das letzte und zugleich das erbaulichste ist.

Like Tieck, Hoffmann jokingly refers to the reader in some of his comic chapter headings, for instance in *Prinzessin Brambilla*: „Wie der geneigte Leser in diesem Kapitel nicht erfährt, was sich bei Giglio's Tanz mit der unbekanntenen Schönen weiter begeben“.³¹ Both Tieck and Hoffmann were probably inspired either by Fielding's pioneering efforts in the humorous chapter heading or by German authors of the comic novel such as Wieland, v. Hippel, and J. G. Müller, who tried to emulate Fielding's comic techniques.³²

The chapter heading in *Prinzessin Brambilla* and other fairytales by Hoffmann, which is one of the elements differentiating them from simple folk tales, entertains the reader in yet another way. Often these headings are unusually long, consisting of several sentences or sentence fragments, and they abound in capricious detail as the following example from the very beginning of *Prinzessin Brambilla* illustrates:³³

Erstes Kapitel.

Zauberische Wirkungen eines reichen Kleides auf eine junge Putzmacherin. – Defini-

tion des Schauspielers, der Liebhaber darstellt. – Von der Smorfia italischer Mädchen. – Wie ein kleiner ehrwürdiger Mann, in einer Tulpe sitzend, den Wissenschaften obliegt und anständige Damen zwischen Maultierohren Filet machen. – Der Marktschreiber Celionati und der Zahn des assyrischen Prinzen. – Himmelblau und Rosa. – Pantalon und die Weinflasche mit wunderbarem Inhalt.

At first sight, such headings appear to be nothing more than an elaborate version of that traditional type of heading which briefly summarizes the plot. In *Prinzessin Brambilla*, however, their function is not to guide the reader but to throw him into a state of amused bewilderment, since the amount of information they convey is minimal in proportion to their length. In their own way, Hoffmann's fanciful and seemingly chaotic chapter headings mirror his extravagant plots and the often playful nature of his storytelling. They may well have been influenced by the lengthy and whimsically confused headings in the writings of Jean Paul who mixes together words and sentences whose strangeness and disparity is designed to baffle and amuse readers accustomed to more straightforward ways of communication.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, chapter headings were also used ingeniously in non-comic short fiction, especially by Stifter. As opposed to Hoffmann's headings, which are often lengthy and sprightly, those of Stifter are sober and compressed. Already in several of his earliest *Novellen* he achieves unity even on the level of chapter headings by creating strong links between them. Thus, in *Das Haidedorf* (1840), the word „Haide“ recurs prominently, like a leitmotif, in each of the brief headings, sometimes in the form of a compound like „Haidebewohner“, just as the word „Wald“ constantly reappears in *Der Hochwald* (1841). Furthermore, in both of these stories the headings echo the typically concise and unassuming title. By establishing such a series of variations upon a central motif, Stifter insistently evokes the setting, which forms an integral part of both *Das Haidedorf* and *Der Hochwald*. In both his early and his later tales, explicit anticipations of the plot as well as comments by the narrator are carefully excluded from the chapter headings. Their strangely static character is in large part due to the fact that here, as in the more conceptual chapter headings of *Der Nachsommer*, Stifter carries his growing predilection for nouns and adjectives to an extreme and avoids verbs altogether.

While stylistically revising his previously published tales for the *Studien*, Stifter introduced similarly structured headings in almost all stories that did not have them originally, among them *Brigitta*, *Der Hagestolz*, and *Der beschriebene Tännling*. Similarly, when selecting tales for *Bunte Steine*, Stifter again displayed his basic inclination towards artistic coherence by replacing their original titles by mineralogical ones which are appropriate to the title of the entire collection. By consistently applying such harmonizing techniques, Stifter contributed elements of order to story collections no longer held together by a frame and its rules.

As the unpublished preface to the second edition of the *Studien* shows,

Stifter unified his collection quite consciously „. . . man muss im Verschönern und Zusammenstimmen immer weiter gehen . . .”³⁴ His perceptive remark, „Es dünkt mich, der *Hochwald* . . . gehe im milden Redeflusse fort, ein einfach schön Ergiessen . . .”³⁵ holds true for his mature style in general. Chapter division at fairly regular intervals and the calculated simplicity of his headings are stylistic features which are well integrated into the steady measured pace of his narration. Stifter's deliberate structuring of the chapter heading and his constant endeavor to employ this device meaningfully, mark a high point in the use of this fictional element in the *Novelle*.

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Notes

1. Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, ed. Martin C. Battestin (Middletown, Conn. 1967), p. 89.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
3. For a discussion of the development of the novel, see F. Sengle's paper „Der Romanbegriff in der ersten Hälfte des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts”, *Festschrift für Franz-Rolf Schröder* (Heidelberg, 1959), pp. 214–228.
4. Even in *Der Heilige*, where the division into chapters seems to be superimposed upon the spontaneous oral narration within the frame. Throughout the nineteenth century, single framed stories of this type are generally not subdivided.
5. In Hoffmann's *Serapionsbrüder* Ottmar suggests that the chapter headings in *Formica* seem to imitate the tone of the “argument” preceding Renaissance *Novellen* (E. T. A. Hoffmann, *Werke in 15 Teilen*, ed. G. Ellinger (Berlin, & Leipzig 1927), VIII, 17).
6. F. Schlegel, *Literary Notebooks*, ed. Hans Eichner (London, 1957), No. 1102.
7. *Ibid.*, No. 1025. For further discussion, see Karl K. Polheim, *Die Arabeske. Ansichten und Ideen aus F. Schlegels Poetik* (München, 1966), pp. 266ff.
8. *Schriften XXI* (Berlin, 1846), p. 225.
9. Cf. Kayser, *Bücherlexikon XII* (1847–52), 153.
10. For instance, in Achim von Arnims *Metamorphosen der Gesellschaft (Sämtliche Romane und Erzählungen)*, ed. W. Migge, III (München, 1965), p. 322.
11. Cf. the following nos. of the 1846 volume: 42, 68, 103, 213, 241, 248 etc.
12. *Werke VII*, 228 (epigram “Tieck”).
13. *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. R. M. Werner, VIII, 418 (unpublished preface to a planned ed. of his stories; written in 1840).
14. *Ästhetik* (Berlin, 1845), p. 342. Similar views already in his *Kritische Wälder* (Leipzig, 1833).
15. I quote from the second ed. (Jena, 1850), p. 17.
16. See Reinhard Wagner, „Die theoretische Vorarbeit für den Aufstieg des deutschen Romans im neunzehnten Jahrhundert”, *ZPD* 74 (1955), 353–63.
17. 1820, No. 95.
18. (Leipzig, 1839), p. 183.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 182.
20. *Freie Vorträge* (Stuttgart, 1885), pp. 441ff.
21. *Ästhetik* pt. III, vol. II, (Stuttgart, 1857), p. 1318.
22. Cf. *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. A. Köster, VIII (Leipzig, 1920), p. 122 (unpublished preface, 1881).
23. *Beiträge zur Theorie und Technik des Romans* (Leipzig, 1883), p. 246f.
24. Since I am limiting my discussion to the early nineteenth *Novelle*, I exclude some interesting uses of the chapter, such as comical tension between the progression of chapter and book numbers and digression techniques (*Tristram Shandy*); comical reversal of chapters (Immermann's *Münchhausen*). Furthermore, I have excluded

examples of number composition. As Siegfried Streller has shown in his book *Grimmelshausens Simplicianische Schriften* (Berlin, 1957), the number of groups of chapters or all chapters as well as the positioning of particularly important chapters can be intimately related to the meaning of Grimmelshausen's fiction. Similarly, the seven chapters of *Der Zauberberg* correspond to the seven years Castorp spends in the sanatorium, and it is not coincidental that the last chapter of G. Grass' *Katz und Maus*, in which Mahlke perishes, is numbered 13.

25. A modern version of this technique occurs in *Der Zauberberg* where the conspicuous growth in chapter length corresponds to Castorp's changing time sense. See Herman Meyer, „Zum Problem der epischen Integration“, *Zarte Empirie* (Stuttgart, 1963).

26. Friedrich Laun, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. L. Tieck (Stuttgart, 1843), vol. I.

27. *Schriften XIV* (Berlin, 1829), p. 248.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 251.

29. *Schriften XV* (Berlin, 1829), p. 3.

30. *Werke*, ed. G. Ellinger, VIII, 219.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

32. Cf. Norbert Miller, *Der empfindsame Erzähler. Untersuchungen an Romananfängen des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts* (München, 1968), pp. 230ff, 411.

33. *Werke*, VIII, 23.

34. *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. August Sauer, vol. IV, pt. II, section II, p. 3.

35. *Werke XVII*, 74 (letter to Count Mailáth dated March 6, 1841).