

**KLEIST AND HEBBEL:
A COMPARATIVE
STUDY. THE NOVELS**

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Kleist and Hebbel: A Comparative Study. The Novels by Henrietta K. Becker

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HENRIETTA K. BECKER

**KLEIST AND HEBBEL:
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STUDY. THE NOVELS**

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KLEIST AND HEBBEL

A COMPARATIVE STUDY

The Novels

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTIES OF
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS, LITERATURE,
AND SCIENCE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO IN CANDIDACY FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
PHILOSOPHY

(DEPARTMENT OF GERMANIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE)

BY

HENRIETTA K. BECKER

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INTRODUCTION

The close affinity between Kleist and Hebbel as shown by their lives and their works has been stated in general terms by every literary historian who has studied either of the poets. Heine with his intuitive insight was the first to recognize the similarity. He expressed it in the introduction to the French edition of his work, "Ueber Deutschland."¹ Adolf Wilbrandt, Kleist's first biographer, remarked on Kleist's influence on the generation of poets that succeeded him.² More specific are the words of Friedmann,³ who speaks of the new dramatic tendencies called into life by Kleist and developed by Hebbel, Grabbe, and Ludwig. Minde-Pouet⁴ remarks briefly at the close of his study on Kleist's epic style: "Als Nachfolger Kleists in der Art der epischen Erzählung könnten nur zwei gelten: F. Hebbel, dieser feurige Verehrer unseres Dichters, und F. Halm."⁵ Kuh⁶ quotes Köpke, the Tieck scholar, as writing to him concerning Hebbel: "Vielleicht derjenige, der sich am nächsten an H. Kleist anschliesst, weil er, wie dieser, jenes nationale Drama anstrebte, das in der Mitte stehen muss, zwischen Goethe und Schiller, indem sich der Gegensatz zwischen Idealismus und Realismus in vollen Gestalten aufhebt." Hebbel ranked himself with Kleist in the estimation of his genius: "In der Halle der Litteratur werde ich nicht zu finden sein, doch eine Nische neben der Kleists und Grillparzers wird mir nicht versagt werden."⁷

An investigation of the extent to which this similarity is apparent in the works of the two artists seems not without importance, since Kleist and Hebbel not only stand out distinctly from their contem-

¹ Cf. Kuh, Hebbel, II, 118. ² H. von Kleist, 421.

³ Das deutsche Drama des 19. Jhrh., 102.

⁴ Sprache u. Stil, 95.

⁵ Kuh, Hebbel, II, 442.

⁶ Kuh, Hebbel, II, 669. Cf. also letter to Schloenbach of May, 1855 (publ. first in Euph. V, 722, by Loeffler), in which he speaks of Kleist and Grillparzer as the two "denen ich nicht zu nahe zu treten wüschte." Cf. also Bartels, "Der Sieg Hebbels" (Dtach. Monatsschrift, II, 1); Harden (Zukunft, XV, 87); Lemmermeyer, "Holtei und Hebbel" (D. R. IV, 319); Lublinski (Litt. d. Gegenwart, III, 744); Jahn ("Zum 90. Geburtstag," p. 17); Bamberg, Allg. dtach. Biogr.: Biographies of Kleist and Hebbel.