Differences between the Epic
Der Nibelunge Not
And Hebbel's Drama
Die Nibelungen

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DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE EPIC DER NIBELUNGE NOT AND HEBBEL’S DRAMA DIE NIBELUNGEN

THESIS

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PREFACE

After a careful study of the two texts, it has been my purpose in writing this paper to point out the differences between the old German Epic Der Nibelunge Not and Friedrich Hebbel's Die Nibelungen. Passing over for the most part those differences obviously necessary for any dramatization of an Epic, I have put especial emphasis upon differences in spirit and character conception. In so far as it is possible, I have tried to get Hebbel's own view of his characters, and his purpose in changing their natures from those presented in Der Not. I have also paid especial attention to Hebbel's emphasis of the struggle between Christianity and paganism, and to the question, whether or not this emphasis has harmed the drama.

M. M.
INTRODUCTION

PART I. DER GEHÖRNTESIEGFRIED

PART II. SIEGFRIED'S TOD

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DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE EPIC "DER NIBELUNGE NOT" AND HEBBEL'S DRAMA "DIE NIBELUNGEN".

Introduction

Friedrich Hebbel when yet a boy read Der Nibelunge Not and was fascinated by it. He tells, himself, that altho he did not read it again for some years he was so impressed by the story that the characters were never forgotten. As he grew older the desire to write a Nibelungen tragedy came to him. He often thought of his plan but did not take up his work in earnest until 1855. He realized the difficulty in the dramatization of this great Epic but nevertheless he persevered until he had accomplished his purpose. Altho the basis of Hebbel's drama is Der Nibelunge Not there are differences in the spirit, beside those necessary for the construction of a drama. Hebbel has made a triology of his drama the first part of which Der Gehörnte Siegfried is a kind of introduction to the two tragedies which follow, Siegfried's Tod and Kriemhild's Rache.
Part I.
Der gehörnte Siegfried.

This first part contains but one Act and covers the ground of nearly six "Adventures" of the Middle High German story. The characters which enter here are but the most important of the original text. King Gunther and his court are shown us and then the mighty Siegfried comes upon the scene. For dramatic purposes the drama necessarily starts immediately with the action while the characters in the Epic are introduced by pure description. With dramatic fore-shadowing, Hebbel puts the first words in the mouth of Gunther's liegman Hagen who is to prove such a powerful force in all future circumstances. His very first question shows the abruptness of his disposition. It is by their speeches that we know people and by this means Hebbel shows his characters' personalities. The action of Der gehörnte Siegfried occupies but a part of a day, while the six "adventures" of the Epic cover a year. Both, however, end in Siegfried's promise to assist Gunther in winning Brunhild for his wife, providing Kriemhild shall be given as a bride to Siegfried.

The first scene of the drama corresponds in a rough way to stanzas 1 - 12 of Adventure 1, and stanzas 80 - 105 of Adventure 3. That is, Gunther and his court are described altho in entirely different ways, and also some little account of Siegfried is told by Hagen. Adventure 2, the account of Siegfried's home and his youthful life there, is entirely omitted. In Der Not, Hagen tells at
length how Siegfried won the hoard of the Nibelungen, but Hebbel leaves the account to the great Siegfried himself. This little device gives force and strength to the story and brings out a quality in Siegfried which has much to do with his fall. This fault is his supreme conceit and faith in himself, which altho innocent, are yet enough to cause Hagen to dislike him. The accounts are not alike, however, as Hebbel has taken his section from Norse sources. In this first scene another element is brought in which also shows Hebbel's reference to the Norse story. The mysterious Brunhild is told of by the musician Volker, and is described in such a way as is found nowhere in the old German Epic. She is distinctly a character from the Norse story, for there is no where else mention of the mountain protected by fire.

Naturally, in order to make the drama suitable for a stage production, the particular characteristics of the epic such as the detailed accounts of festivals and clothes, are not even hinted at. One of the great differences in the two texts is brought out here from the first. This is the extra stress Hebbel puts upon the Christian faith of the Burgundians. He brings it out very strongly in the first scene, and altho it afterwards proves to be but a faith of forms, it seems a little incongruous at first glance. The account of the manner of observing this Christian holiday is a complete surprise, for nowhere in Der Nibelungen do we feel that the people would so quietly observe a holy day as is here portrayed. It seems as if Hebbel's interpretation had been a little too much
in favor of Christianity and its influences. This influence shows in some of the later characters in a much more subtle manner, and here it does not seem so wholly at variance with the mythical element, the cruel acts and barbarous customs as this first conversation between Hagen and Gunther regarding the question of hunting on a holy day. The scorn for Christianity fits Hagen however, for in the entire drama he is exactly opposed to all those who show the faintest inclination towards Christianity.

Scene 2 (Adventures 3, 106 - 131). Siegfried enters upon this scene directly, of course, since for stage purposes the meeting best takes place in the court room of the first scene. There are no great differences in the content of these two versions, except that the detailed descriptions must be left out. In the drama, Siegfried states his purpose in coming, at shorter length perhaps, but nevertheless, in strong speeches which Hebbel has made for him by combining the words of others. At the end Siegfried suggests the throwing of a rock as a means of deciding which is the stronger of the two kings. In Der Not the reconciliation is made first, and then a sort of contest is entered upon as a means of entertainment. In the scene of this contest an element in Hagen's character is emphasized which makes him more disagreeable if possible than the Hagen of Der Not. This is his jealousy of Siegfried's greater strength. There seems to be no doubt that in Hebbel's conception of Hagen this element enters largely as one of the motives urging him to kill Siegfried. This is the first scene which shows the contrast between
the lovable Siegfried and the jealous Hagen which appears so strong later.

Scene three introduces Kreimhild and this part of the drama is taken from Adventure 1, stanzas 13 - 17, and Adventure 3, stanzas 132 - 134. Hebbel has here taken the wisdom of one sentence and cleverly expanded it into modern philosophy. Kreimhild upon the unhappy interpretation of her dream about the falcon, has vowed never to love. The old mother in Der Not satisfies herself by remarking that the happiness of the world depends upon love, but in the drama she argues at length that it is better to have "loved and lost than never to have loved at all". Kreimhild, however, remains firm in her conviction until she looks out of the window and catches sight of Siegfried. She hesitates in her vow and is lost. Here again Hebbel makes a difference. In Der Not Siegfried comes for the purpose of winning Kreimhild and it is very evident why he comes. Kreimhild's preference is simply hinted at, when she receives a messenger telling of Siegfried's success with the Saxons. In the drama, however, it is to her that the first indication of love between the two is attributed. Siegfried does not express his purpose until later. There may be in this the faintest suggestion of the Norse version of the story, where Kreimhild loves Siegfried and her mother gives him a potion which brings to him forgetfulness of his former life. This is pointed to also in the evident enthusiasm with which Ute in Hebbel's drama encourages Kreimhild to think that Siegfried is her falcon.
In Scene four (Adventure 6, 326 - 339 and Adventure 3, 91 - 99), Hebbel has made good use of both the German and the Norse versions. He sticks close to the German epic where it is sufficient, but fills out and completes the story from the Norse. Thus the complexity of the plot is thickened and gives added dramatic interest as well as a means to the solution of the problem of Siegfried's guilt. Here too is evidence of Hebbel's ability to fill out with his own imagination the parts incomplete for the best dramatic results. Siegfried's dark hazy objections to Gunther's attempt to win Brunhild for a bride do not answer in the drama. There must be firm definite reasons given, so Siegfried tells his own story.

That portion of his story regarding the quarrel of the sons of Niblung is taken from Der Not. There is nothing of the Norse story here at all. Then Hebbel has woven the story of the "tarnkappe" with that of the slaying of the dragon, taking parts from each source. The manner of slaying the dragon is his own invention, for the Norse story has Siegfried undertake the task, aware of all it involves. Here, however, he comes upon the dragon unexpectedly and after killing it he enters the cave, where the struggle with Alberich for the tarnkappe" takes place. Again Hebbel has had to turn to himself for a completion of the story, for in Der Not the account is not clear. The dragon does not appear here, to be guarding the treasure, he is only a hindrance to be mastered before entering the cave. Hebbel's Siegfried learns from Alberich the magic of the dragon's blood wherein, in the Norse version he learns it by experience and accident. In the drama Siegfried finds out both powers of the dragon's blood.
that of making him invulnerable and that of giving him the power of understanding the language of birds. As in the Norse story, led by these birds he goes to the castle of Brunhild. Hebbel, however, makes his hero ignorant of the results of his movements.

Hebbel, too, has had to create a castle for Brunhild. This is necessary since she must have her home and followers when wooed by Gunther, as in the Epic. In the drama Siegfried waves his sword Balmung three times over his head, an act which brings about the withdrawal of the flames from around the Castle, and this allows him to see Brunhild. probably Hebbel makes this change because he does not intend to have Siegfried go to Brunhild to awaken her. In fact his Brunhild is not asleep, but very much awake, ruling her own court. Siegfried sees her but does not feel any love for her and goes away unseen because of his "tarnkappe". When afterwards the character of this strong woman is known it does not seem at all surprising that she should not have attracted such a kind, gentle nature as Siegfried's, even though there were the two strongest people in the world.

In this Hebbel robs the supernatural of its power and makes a more human character of Siegfried. All this also tends to lessen his guilt. Hebbel follows the German and differs from the Norse in that the question of Siegfried's guilt does not depend upon his former relations to Brunhild but upon later actions. As in Der Not, he consents to assist in the wooing of Brunhild out of his love for Kriemhild and it is in this decision that Hebbel makes Siegfried's guilt lie. In buying his wife by a deceitful act, he is perfectly
aware that he is acting contrary to his best self, and so the laws of nature demand that he must suffer for it. As opposed to Siegfried's hesitation, Gunther's entire lack of the feeling of disgrace appears much more noticeable. It does not seem to occur to Gunther that treachery such as he is about to use to win his wife, is any dishonor to him. He is not lacking in pride or bravery, but he is lacking in that finer feeling of honor, shown in open dealings with others, which is an essential of a truly knightly character. Herein lies the difference between Gunther and Siegfried, the one entirely without this fine sense of honor, the other having it, but working contrary to it on account of his love. This makes Siegfried's punishment more tragic than Gunther's even though it is inevitable. Thus the decision to take the fatal step, ends the introduction which gives the setting for the tragedies to follow.
Part II

Siegfried's Tod

Siegfried's Tod is the story of the wooing of Brunhild, the quarrel of the two queens and Siegfried's death at the hands of Hagen. Scene one of the first act in its foundation is an invention on Hebbel's part. Nowhere do we find such a portrayal of Brunhild. Frigga, the nurse, is an imaginary person, doubtless created to represent the true pagan religion which Brunhild bears in her heart altho she has been baptized and is called Christian. It is Frigga who is wise in runes and has figured out that Siegfried is destined by the gods for Brunhild. This scene seems to be an exposition scene to prepare for the arrival of the Burgundians and their reception, as well as to picture the power and influence of the old pagan religion as opposed to the new forces of Christianity. There is a strange mingling of the two beliefs, for the very facts of Brunhild's life depend upon the pagan faith, while she herself has adopted the Christian creed. There is a slight resemblance in substance between the birth and divine guidance of the child Brunhild and that of the boy Siegfried as given in the Norse story, in that both were favorites of Wodan and born for an especially great purpose. There is, however, no hint of the sleeping Valkyrie who was placed on a mountain surrounded by fire as a punishment for disobedience.

Scene two takes up the story of Der Not at Adventure 7, stanza 419. There is nothing of the great stir of preparation for the
Burgundians trip to the north, but their first meeting with Brunhild is given at once and it is much the same as that of Der Not. Brunhild will not be moved by persuasion, and is confident of her own superiority when it comes to a question of strength. Hebbel now introduces an element which is new with him,—the vision of Brunhild just before she goes to the contest with Gunther. The purpose of the vision seems to be to make her more sure of herself and consequently the victory for Gunther the more tragic for her. It also in a way gives precedence to the Christian religion because Fate does not bring things about as Brunhild saw them and her faith thus receives a fall.

The latter portions of Adventures 7 and 8 of Der Not which tell of Brumhilds defeat and Siegfried's conquest of the Nibelungen are omitted entirely. Both of these would detract from the dramatic unity of the drama. The main story is taken again from Adventure 9, stanza 543, where Siegfried arrives at Worms to report the good news. After this scene there is a short transposition scene, to transfer the action back to the Burgundian court. This short scene also serves to show what confidence the Burgundians had placed in Siegfried. The two scenes barely make mention of the victory which Siegfried had over Lüdecast and Lüdeger while Der Not gives a detailed account.

In the third scene (Adventure 9, 550 - 565) the only noticeable difference is that Siegfried demands as a reward for his good news, not jewels but Kriemhild's handkerchief. This change though slight, tends to soften the characters of both Kriemhild and Siegfried. In scene five the chaplain's comment on the religion of the Burgun-
diarins shows very well the state of affairs among them at the time. They call themselves Christians but they cannot give up right away the belief in their ancient gods.

The sixth scene is based upon parts of Adventure 10, leaving out the descriptions of the magnificent garments prepared for Brunhild's reception, as well as the games which took place. These of course would detract from the unity of the drama. Frigga here appears as an evil force. For it is she who questions and finds out that Siegfried is the owner of Balmung and should have been the one to claim Brunhild. The reader feels that she is to make the trouble to come, for Brunhild seems to be moved by an inherent impulse. She regrets extremely that she is not like other women but must be conquered by force. In this portrayal of Brunhild Hebbel makes of her a much more individual and human character than did the writer of Der Not. Yet even here she does not become individual enough wholly to take away all trace of her symbolic purpose in the old nature myth. The violet episode in this scene has a softening influence upon the characters of both Kriemhild and Brunhild. It is almost inconceivable to think of the great change which takes place in Kriemhild making of her a far different woman from the one who gently selects the little violet to show her new sister as a sample of the beautiful flowers to be found in this land so new and strange to her.

Scene seven is a scene put in by Hebbel as a foreboding of events to come. The division among the courtiers to form sides for the
queens although it is made here in a pleasant manner void of all malice is but the foreshadowing of the quarrel in which each person later will be forced to choose between Kriemhild and Brunhild. Just so the discussions by Wulf and Truchs of the curse on the hoard warns of approaching trouble from this treasure. Siegfried's encounter with the crow which refuses to leave the gold when it is loaded on the ship increases the warning, because its message must have been an unpleasant one or Siegfried would not have killed it so rashly. The appearance and influence of the hoard thus comes into the drama much quicker and takes a more prominent part than in Der Not. In the latter it does not enter until after Siegfried's death when Kriemhild has it brought to her (Adventure 19). In giving this more prominent place to the treasure, the first part of the story as well as the last is made to depend more upon it. It does not figure, however, as the direct cause of Siegfried's death in the drama more than in Der Not, but its appearance on the stage suggests its dark mysterious power to bring about the overthrow of its owner.

Scene eight is founded upon Adventure 10, 651 - 659, but there are some important changes made in it. Hebbel gives Hagen a much more important part in this scene than he occupies in Der Not. Instead of Gunther it is he who comes to beg Siegfried to help subdue Brunhild and to make her Gut' er's willing wife, in spite of her vow that she will not until she knows the reason for permitting Kriemhild to marry Siegfried. Thus Hagen is directly involved in
Siegfried's act and so his guilt in afterwards killing the hero is the greater. Siegfried contrary to the account in Der Not, hesitates and takes a great deal of urging before he finally consents to render this service to Gunther. In Der Not he offers to undertake the task after Gunther has merely told his troubles.

In this way Hebbel has made a nobler, truer man of Siegfried and has lessened his guilt and increased Hagen's. Yet Siegfried seems to be led by an unchangeable fate and even if he can not act differently in either case he has to answer for his acts. This scene too adds to the description of Hagen's character. He is entirely devoted to the cause of his king and nothing is to stand in the way of his plans, let the risk be what it may and the punishment fall upon whomever it may. Hebbel individualizes him from the beginning and gives him an important role in Siegfried's Tod as well as in Kriemhild's Rache. It is not until after the death of Siegfried that Hagen advances and becomes a prominent hero of the epic. Near the close of Hagen's last speech there is dramatic foreshadowing in the words "Der Vierte in unserm Bunde sei der Tod". No such device is used in the Epic. All of its warnings are given in the simple remark that evil is to come in the future.

The first two scenes of Act three are short transposition scenes to prepare the way for the entrance of the more important characters on this the second morning. The third scene between Kriemhild and Siegfried seems to have been written in vindication of the latter. It serves to take the guilt from Siegfried and to
put more blame on Kriemhild, for a strong enough hint is given her to show that she should keep the girdle hidden and not talk about it. In the drama Siegfried does not thoughtfully and intentionally take the girdle from Brunhild. It is the contrary in Der Not where he purposely takes from her a ring and the girdle to lessen her strength, and gives them to his wife, thus making known to her the whole story.

The pretty picture drawn in this domestic love-scene serves to humanize the characters much more. Kriemhild is anxious that Siegfried should notice even the artificial charms of her dress, whereby Hebbel gives an artistic modern touch to her which is not brought out in Der Not. In the slight quarrel over the girdle at the end of the scene, the Kriemhild of Der Not is again brought into prominence. Altho she does not say that she is going to find out Brunhild's relation to the girdle, the feeling that she has determined to do so is underneath. Here again, Siegfried's fate leads him on, in the form of his great love for his wife which is so great that he trusts her perfectly. There is no exact passage in Der Not upon which this scene is founded neither is there one for the following.

This the fourth scene brings out the womanly characteristics of Brunhild which show themselves as soon as she has acknowledged man as her superior. Her love, honor and respect for her husband in this scene is a strong contrast to her anger and hate, when she finds out that it is not he who has conquered her but Siegfried. She seems to have an instinctive dislike for Siegfried altho she cannot
bear to see him, the vassal, win Kriemhild for his wife. In her anxiety to be rid of him the fierceness of the Norse Brunhild gleams through the character, as she pleads with Gunther to kill him. She has not entirely changed in her heart from her former self. So her cruel act of demanding Siegfried's death at Hagen's hands afterwards, is not so surprising as it would have been, but for this trait revealed in this scene. Scene five between Ute and Frigga strengthens the change in Brunhild and shows Frigga's mystification over the events that have taken place. Here Frigga, the pure pagan is contrasted to Ute the only one of the Burgundians who comes near to having Christian feelings.

The sixth scene is taken from Adventure 14, stanzas 816–851. Hebbel has condensed this part of the Adventure making both the two incidents which come before and after the church service in Der Not into one incident before the entrance into the Cathedral. Hebbel has kept very close to the substance of the texts, making the picture of the two stubborn jealous women, each fully persuaded that her husband is superior to the other's, very similar to the original.

Scene seven is not taken from any certain part of Der Not, but Hebbel puts the first expression for revenge in Frigga's mouth instead of in Hagen's. Also when Brunhild readily takes up with this idea of revenge it is not for taking revenge on Siegfried that she thinks so much, but of some way to avenge herself on Kriemhild whom she thinks is laughing at her discomfiture. In Der Not Siegfried is called to account at once, as he is the chief sinner,
but in the drama as soon as Brunhild hears the truth from Frigga it is against Kriemhild that she turns. In this Hebbel has given a more individual turn to Brunhild. She is no longer a goddess, the quarrel is one between woman and a woman must suffer the penalty. The eighth scene is based on Adventure 14, stanzas 852 - 855. Altho very short it is full of meaning. There is much warning and a foreboding of coming catastrophe in Hagen's last words, "Er hat geschwätzt". Here again is the fierce Hagen ready for the deed without waiting for a happier solution to the problem. His exclamation brings instantly to mind the warning which he gave Siegfried when he cautioned him against sharing the secret with a fourth person. This one little sentence expresses much in regard to Hagen's character. Determination for revenge is felt at once and this revenge is to be taken in the name of his kingdom and queen, and there is to be no faltering. Scene nine founded upon Adventure 14, stanza 857 - is changed decidedly from the original. Kriemhild begs her husband to forgive her altho underneath she seems to think that she is justified in her action. In Der Not she has no voice in the explanation; thus the individuality of Hebbel's women is again contrasted with that of Der Not.

The most decided change, however, is in the prominence given to Hagen. It is he who takes the lead and decides that the women should be separated. He it is in the following scene who first champions Brunhild and pronounces death for Siegfried. This prominence and influence on Hagen's part is doubtless given sooner by
Hobel than in the epic in order to make way for the influence he is to have in the later drama. Gunther from this time becomes Hagen's tool as before he had been wholly guided by Siegfried. In this scene also we find a different picture of Brunhild from that given in Der Not, for here she makes a vow to eat no more until Siegfried is dead. Hebbel's aim seems to be at every point to make a more individual and definite character of her.

So in the eleventh scene her sorrow and anger break forth anew, but this time they are turned from Kriemhild and are directed against the man who should have been her husband according to all tradition, but who has scorned her because of another woman. But it is when she thinks that he has used her as a means for winning his wife, that is, as a piece of money, that her grief knows no bounds and she cries for revenge for her humiliation. Far different is she from the woman who simply tells her sorrow to Hagen and is heard of no more while he does the work. There is a certainty now that she will not be idle but will do all in her power to assist him in getting vengeanc. In order to secure unity of time Hebbel has again shortened years into days and placed the quarrel between the two queens on the day following the wedding. In Der Not Siegfried takes Kriemhild home and they spend many happy years together, before Brunhild finds out the secret and takes her revenge. This change heightens the tragedy, for the contrast of the two days brought so closely together is all the more clearly defined. In the Not, Brunhild wonders for years about the true relationship between Gunther and Siegfried, but in the drama the quick succession
of joy and sorrow intensifies the tragedy.

The first two scenes of Act IV. serve as a sort of contrast between Hagen and Siegfried. The second scene is based upon Adventure 15, stanzas 884 - 888, and tells Hagen's scheme for getting Siegfried into trouble. The main purpose, however, of the scene is that of contrast. In so far as they are both heroes Hagen and Siegfried are very much alike. They are fond of adventure, happy in battle and confident in their own power. Yet there is one particular difference. Siegfried is sunny-natured and trustful, while Hagen is gloomy and suspicious. Hagen realizing that Siegfried can be killed only by strategy does not hesitate for a moment to make use of this strategy. Siegfried, on the other hand all unsuspecting walks easily into the trap in his great desire to show and thereby prove again his own prowess. These characteristics are very clearly and emphatically brought out by Hebbel in this scene. Especially well marked is Siegfried's delight in his own superiority.

At Siegfried's departure, Hagen's cunning comes to light at once. Hebbel shows much plainer than it appears in Der Not that this battle against Lüdeger and Lüdegast is only a means to an end. Hagen does not wish Siegfried to undertake the battle, but wishes to frighten his wife so that she will reveal the great secret of the linden leaf. In her great anxiety to have this one vulnerable spot on her husband protected she makes him utterly defenseless. So here, standing as opponents, are Siegfried strong, brave altho proud and somewhat arrogant and the bold fearless Hagen with his ways of dark deceit.
The rest of scene three and scene four bring out Gunther in strong contrast to the other characters. He stands in a middle position between Hagen and Giselher, that is he is very weak in that he is not able definitely to make up his mind in which way to act. He argues feebly for Siegfried, but gives no command against his death. So far he resembles the Gunther of Der Not who takes a rather subordinate position. In Der Not however Gunther merely protests for a moment and then becomes conveniently blind to what goes on around him, and lets matters take their own course. Naturally Gunther is influenced by the queen's oath neither to eat nor drink until Siegfried is dead. Even yet Gunther wavers until it is too late, and the capable Hagen lays his plans. In strong contrast on the other side is Giselher who is just as firmly for Siegfried as Hagen is against him, with one exception. He has not the ingenuity of getting out of trouble that Hagen has of carrying out his own purpose. He simply washes his hands from the affair and thinks he is free from all guilt.

So Hebbel in making all of his characters more definite than they are in Der Not has made Gunther weaker and more under Hagen's influence. Even with his cruelty Hagen's ideas of fidelity and his firmness of carrying them out to the letter make him much the stronger man of the two. Hebbel does not seem to detract from Hagen's harsh nature, but strengthens and makes clearer his conceptions of real fidelity and thus, in a way, makes his actions against Siegfried partly justifiable.

The sixth scene is taken from Adventure fifteen, stanzas 893 -
906. Hebbel has made but little change. He has brought out more clearly the sly cunning of Hagen's treachery and Kriemhild's innocent confidence. There is one little touch which shows that the old religion had not been entirely forgotten. Kriemhild says that it is the Valkyrie she fears not the hand of man raised against Siegfried in battle. This power which belongs to the Valkyrie seems almost impossible to contend with and so Kriemhild in her anxiety turns so much the more trustingly to Hagen when he offers to undertake the protection of Siegfried himself. Hebbel in making her fear greater makes her more blind to treachery and thus she rashly entrusts her secret to her worst enemy. By this little touch Hagen is made sterner and more hard-hearted, and Kriemhild more ignorant of the danger she runs. She seems to act in child-like innocence rather than in a rash moment of uncontrollable fear. Hagen's speech of exultation, after he has gained the information he so desired, gives another view of his character. The same thought is conveyed very well in the Not stanza 906, "do gie er vrolliche dan". He is now perfectly confident of his own success and no power can turn him from his intentions. Here, too, appears a trace of jealousy which Hagen seems to have felt because Siegfried could not be overcome by him. Hagen now has the advantage and his revenge seems to be in a part at least on his own account.

The eighth scene is entirely the invention of Hebbel. It portrays the beginnings of Christian religion. The miracles seem to be the things that attract the people. The chaplain believes that faith can accomplish these same miracles again. This faith in the
power of God is not a very great step from their belief in the pagan gods. They were accustomed to be thought of as doing just such wonderful things. The Christian religion has not yet reached the place where it obtained influence over much more than the natural side of life. Thus Kriemhild does not pray for the protection of Siegfried but promises to build an altar to a saint for each year of Siegfried's life, just as she would have done for her pagan gods. The priest himself seems to have felt the subtle influence of Christ's character at the time of his conversion. At this time also he found out what true forgiveness was and took up the work of the man he had killed. He alone seems to have grasped the spirit of the new religion. He stands out in strong contrast to Hagen who does not know how to forgive, but knows only the law of vengeance.

In the ninth scene, entirely due to Hebbel's imagination, Hagen shows his insight into character. He has discovered that it is hate born of love that prompts Brunhild to demand Siegfried's death. Hagen quickly sees her jealousy and in satisfying it satisfies his own, and so he is very glad to do it. In Der Not it is not at all clear that Brunhild loves Siegfried and is jealous of the women to whom he gave his love. It appears as if she wished retribution only for Kriemhild's taunts. Hagen again shows his cleverness in his answer to Gunther who naturally is somewhat aroused by the fact that Brunhild loves Siegfried. Hagen assures him that it is not the love that unites man and woman but the love which draws the last giantess to the last giant, without desire or will, and that death alone can break the bond. Gunther is now one step nearer to
giving his consent to the crime. This scene also gives another definite quality to Brunhild's character. It shows her persistence. She is determined to have her will carried out even at the risk of her own life. The fundamental thought of scene ten is taken from the Not, Adventure fifteen, stanzas 907 - 916. The main difference is that in the drama the message which stops the battle is given at the castle. In the Not, however, Siegfried and his army start out and are turned back in a short time by messengers. In both cases the matter is turned aside by the proposal to hunt. Also in both Giselher and Gerenot refuse to go, thus showing that they know what is to take place. Nowhere is Siegfried's cheery, bold, unsuspicious nature more clearly portrayed. But again Hebbel has the advantage over the writer of the Not with his dramatic fore- shadowing. Again too, it is Hagen to gives vent to the foreboding thought and brings for a moment the cloud of pending fate over the scene at its very close, when he agrees with Siegfried that he, too, must see blood. The next three scenes in which Kriemhild says farewell to Siegfried as to goes to the hunt are taken from Adventure sixteen, stanzas 920 - 926. Hebbel makes one change. In the drama Siegfried wishes to take Kriemhild with him and for a moment it seems as if Hagen's plan would come to nought. However, Hagen again rises to the occasion and describes the taunt against Brunhild which such an action would imply. So the plan is given up and Kriemhild is left with her fears, since she does not dare to tell her husband what she has done.
Scenes fourteen, fifteen and sixteen are of Hebbel's creation. The meeting with Gerenot and Giselher only serves to increase Kriemhild's anxiety. She begins now to suspect treachery. As for the two brothers they show decidedly weak characters. They know of the results of the hunt, but they do not dare make a move. Scene fifteen brings to Kriemhild the thought of Brunhild, and seems to serve as an unconscious stimulus to her worst suspicions. Altho she does not realize that this reminder of Brunhild's sorrow has anything to do with her anxiety, it doubtless does.

Scene one is brought in the drama to take the place of the long descriptions of the hunt in Der Not. It is at the place where the camp is to be pitched for the night, and here Hagen makes known his final plans to Gunther. Gunther, however, wavers as much as ever, and neither gives Hagen consent to act, nor commands him not to do so. Hagen here shows his perfect fearlessness. He is ready and willing to take the consequences of his crime, for he knows that no one will be left after Siegfried's death so brave that he will dare attack Hagen.

Scene two gives the contents of Adventure 16, stanzas 958 - 998. Hebbel begins the scene with Siegfried's return to camp. He however omits the incident with the living bear, for it would add nothing to the action of the drama, but would rather detract from the unity of the scene. Hebbel makes Siegfried childishly conceited, for when Hagen says with meaning that he hunts only lions yet he has found none, Siegfried answers that the reason is because he himself has
killed it. In Der Not the conceit is very evident, but it does not seem so innocent and childlike. Siegfried’s good nature is shown by his ready acceptance of the place for camp and of water in the place of wine. Hebbel changes the reason which makes Siegfried the last one to drink at the spring. In Der Not he waits out of deference for Gunther as king but in the drama he waits because he is the most thirsty and punishes himself because he has been too hard on Kriemhild. In the first instance it seems a mere matter of form, a little act of respect to the man who already has the title of king altho he does not deserve it more. In the second case, however, it shows that Siegfried is sorry for his harsh treatment of Kriemhild and doubtless does not realize how serious her offense has been. So he appears if possible even more unsuspecting and unprepared in the drama than in Der Not. And thus in both he unknowingly walks into the trap laid for him and meets his death.

The next two scenes turn abruptly back to Kriemhild. Hebbel varies the scene somewhat from Adventure 17, by having Kriemhild and her mother up trying to explain away undefined fears of trouble. In Der Not Kriemhild is up getting ready to go to mass when the news of Siegfried’s death comes to her. This scene also throws some light on the religion of these people. Altho they observe the outward forms of the Christian faith they still cling to their old pagan belief. Especially in the time of trouble and anxiety they turn back to Wodan and look for the signs of his will.

The picture portrayed in Der Not Adventure 17, stanzas 1006 -
1014, coincides very well with that of the fifth scene of this act. Hebbel has sounded the same key note for this scene as that in Der Not. Line 2518 is exact with the last line of stanza 1011. Kriemgild's woman's intuition and her guilty conscience at once tell her who has advised, and who has done this deed. Her own guilt in the case deepens her sorrow, but instead of excusing her enemies in the least because she herself is partially to blame, she is more bitter against them. This is the turning point in Kriemhild's character. From this time she becomes hard and cruel, a true member of her family, seeking only revenge. All the gentle qualities which Siegfried's love for her has brought out have entirely disappeared. She has become what often even today people become under great sorrow. That is, her whole nature becomes morose and bitter. The change is greater in the Drama than in Der Not because Hebbel makes her nature in the beginning more gentle. The transition however, is almost too great for so short a time. Hebbel has entirely omitted the story as told in Adventure 17 stanzas 1015 - 1039. This has to do with Siegfried's father and would be a digression from the main subject in hand, as well as involve more time.

The sixth scene gives a view of the characters of Gunther and Hagen. Gunther comes in his weakness to express his sorrow. He has expected that the priest would break the news to Kriemhild and would have made the way smooth for him. Just there Hebbel has again brought out Gunther's weakness. Hagen's character comes forth in
Dankwarts speech which gives the reason for putting Siegfried's body before Kriemhild's door. Hagen thus gets his revenge for Siegfried's curse upon him.

In the following scene Hebbel has made several changes. In fact it is so changed that it has only a mere foundation in the corresponding scene in Der Not. He has drawn his picture more clearly: Kriemhild's great sorrow and her desire to die are most intense. Hebbel gives Gunther one softening touch when he calls for an oath that no more such deeds shall be done.

Hebbel has made of the ninth, a kind of contrast scene. The first part which deals with the chaplain and his share in the funeral service is set off against the last part in which Kriemhild insists upon trying the test for the murderer. Hebbel has made a real, living man of the chaplain. He is a man who has grasped rather well the essentials of the Christian life and is trying to teach them to a pagan people. The scene in Der Not is conducted entirely upon the pagan plan with the exception of the masses which were sung. The question and the answer in the drama seems peculiar to us with our present ideas, but may be well used as a dramatic device by which the chaplain explains his Christian doctrine: that in death all is the same to both the small and the great in the world. After he has conducted his point in the service, Kriemhild insists upon the test to find out with certainty who the murderer is. When she has found that her suspicions are well-grounded, she resists all pleadings to remember how Christ forgave on the
cross. She wishes for nothing but justice, and even curses her own brother when he does not grant it to her.

At this point Hebbel has brought an inconsistency into his drama. He has taken a pagan people entirely used to thinking of individual revenge, and has attempted through his chaplain to show them the justice in leaving all matters of revenge in the hands of God. The results, if God is not the judge and punisher, are, of course, good points to be brought out, but the inconsistency lies in expecting a pagan people at heart to listen even for a moment to such a scheme of divine justice. In this case even the reader does not feel that Kriemhild could have been true to her nature as the type which she represents and still have headed the chaplain's pleadings. True to the woman of her time however, she has become the black consuming fire which Hebbel himself called her, when he was writing the drama.

In Der Not all of this takes three days and is conducted entirely after the fashion of pagan funeral celebrations. Money and clothes are given to the poor according to custom, apparently not yet as a means of gaining friends for Kriemhild. Adventure 17 of Der Not ends in a description of the burial itself, while Hebbel ends this part of the drama much more tragically with Kriemhild's words which are very near a curse.

The next Adventure, 18, is omitted entirely because it deals with Siegfried's father who has no part whatever in the drama. The events of Adventure 19, as events in themselves are omitted. Yet the happenings during the years which are passed over in this Adventure are told in condensed form by Hagen in a later scene.
Part III.
Kriemhild's Rache.

In turning from Siegfried's Tod to Kriemhild's Rache, Hebbel passes over a number of years and enters upon the time when Rüdeger comes as Etzel's messenger. Hebbel omits the first part of the Adventure which deals with Rüdeger's preparations for the journey and opens the first scene of the first Act where Rüdeger has been brought into Gunther's presence. (Adventure 20, stanza 1190) This scene follows very closely the text, verses 1190 - 1201 in substance. Hebbel has followed his usual manner and made more of the characters than of the incident. In the Not it is just the opposite. Rüdeger in the drama goes straight to the point of his message and explains his reasons afterward. This gives a correct insight into his character at the first meeting. He is frank and honest. His speeches, lines 2739 - 2748, give to him a tenderness and gentlemess which has not as yet been shown in the Not. Even this early Hebbel begins to bring out those traits of Rüdeger's character which point to the influence of Christianity. In his own imagination and in his knowledge of how he would feel under the circumstances Rüdeger gives Kriemhild and Etzel the credit of thoughtful sympathy and respect for each other's grief which they undoubtedly will never feel. In this there is a strong christian trait, for such a speech could not be consistently made by a character which is the type of the German hero.
The second scene is taken from stanzas 1204 - 1214, yet Hebbel has made several changes. In both cases Hagen advises against Kriemhild's marriage with Etzel. Hagen is clever enough to see the outcome of such a marriage but he does not go at it in the right way to prevent it. With his usual abruptness he speaks against Kriemhild and makes her brothers angry. When angry the king is blind to all persuasion. In Der Not he attributed all Hagen's opposition to his hatred for Kriemhild. So Gunther determines that Hagen shall not stand in the way of something which he thinks will be for her happiness. In the drama, however, a somewhat different elements enters. The king at once declares openly against Hagen. Now he sees that he was weak in letting Hagen kill Siegfried, for his death brought nothing but sorrow even to Brunhild for whom it was meant to be vengeance. She is not mentioned here at all in Der Not, but in the drama it is told that she might as well be dead as far as she is counted in life. She can be made neither to smile nor to cry. This element in the story may be a modification of the Norse version in which Brunhild throws herself upon Siegfried's funeral pyre to die. So here she is practically dead to the world after Siegfried's death. Hebbel's way of dropping Brunhild out of the action of the drama is much more satisfactory than that of Der Not where it tells nothing of her. Thus the reader does not have to divide his attention to wonder what has become of Brunhild. It also adds to the mystery of her whole character to have such a result from a vow the consequences of which she must have seen. Instead of being proud of her revenge she is totally destroyed by it.
Naturally all of this makes the king repent of his submission to Hagen, and now when the latter attempts to use reason Gunther will have nothing to do with it although it is very logical. When Hagen breaks forth passionately at the idea of reconciliation between the brother and sister, he reveals the foundation for every one of his actions. (lines 63 and following). He embodies the type of the old German hero with his wonderful idea of Treue". No matter how unreasonable the king may be he will follow him, even though he is positive that it will result in their destruction. He is harsh and cruel, yet always on the side of his king. There is no limit to his loyalty and fidelity.

Ute also has a part in this scene and enters into argument with Hagen as to Kriemhild's motives in her use of the Nibelungen hoard. No amount of persuasion can change Hagen's opinion that Kriemhild was giving the treasure away to make friends for herself that she might avenge her wrongs. Hagen is deeply suspicious of her as he is of everyone. In this he shows what he himself would do. "Blood for blood" would be his motto. The law of vengeance held good in every case with him and it is incomprehensible to him how anyone could disregard it when a convenient time for making use of it should come. Thus Kriemhild's outward forms of reconciliation are only blinds to him, and he simply refuses to have any faith in her. The reader's sympathies are with her, however, for it seems as if she had received nothing but harm at his hands while her brothers looked on.
In the next scenes in which Kriemhild's relatives attempt to persuade her to accept Etzel's suit, Hebbel has very little foundation in Der Not. The scenes seem to have been written entirely to show the great change in Kriemhild and the persistence of her desire for revenge. Apparently her heart is perfectly hard and she thinks of everything in the light of vengeance. She wishes her son to grow up only that he may avenge his father's death. Before she accepts Etzel's offer she begs once more for justice at her brother's hands, and being refused, she determines to seek it by other means. She betrays her aim in every speech and shows plainly that she has become a cold, embittered woman striving toward one goal, and to get there she is willing to make every sacrifice. Hagen has judged her aright, and she shows now some of the very characteristics which he himself has.

The eighth and ninth scenes which are composed of Rüdeger's consultation with Kriemhild are taken from Der Not; stanzas 1223 - 1267. The scenes in the drama make more for the progress of the story than for character revelation. Kriemhild remains the same simply emphasizing her own aim. These scenes also emphasize Rüdeger's simple, faithful unsuspecting nature. Where Kriemhild asks for a promise that any service she may wish, shall be done for her, Rüdeger answers this promise without either hesitation or suspicion. Hebbel has inserted that part of the scene in which Kriemhild asks Gunther to go with her, as is due a princess. In Gunther's refusal can be seen the effect of Hagen's suspicions even though the former has
scornfully refused to give them credit when presented to him. In this promise to go at another time to the land of the Huns which Kriemhild so skillfully makes Gunther give on his word of honor lies the fate which is to bring him to destruction. At this period in the drama it is very clear what Kriemhild's designs are, whereas it is not entirely so in Der Not, for Gunther does not promise so definitely to visit her in her new home.

Between Act I and Act II in Der Not are Adventures 21, 22, 23 and 24 which tell of Kriemhild's journey to Etzel, her life at his court and finally of Etzel's messengers bringing the Burgundian's invitations to visit his court. All this is omitted in the drama except for slight hints which occur in Act II.

The first scene of this Act disregards stanzas 1507 - 1575 of Adventure 25, and takes up the action with Gunther's army after it has been carried across the Danube in the ship which Hagen had managed to obtain. Here there is a slight change as to the characters present. To economize time and space Hebbel has brought the messengers Werbel and Swemmel with Gunther to this point instead of following the story of the Not where they leave the Burgundian Court at once to report to their king and Queen. The rest of the scene follows very closely the account of the Not, Hagen makes his test at the expense of the chaplain, and is convinced that the prophecy of the swan maidens is true and the Burgundians will lose their lives.

Hebbel has passed over the rest of the account of the Burgundians
journey to Bechlarn which is given in Adventure 26, and in scene two he has suddenly transferred the action to Rüdiger's home. Again he has united the important events of two adventures into a few scenes at the same place. He brings the meeting of Dietrich von Bern with the Burgundians here instead of having it an incident in itself as in the Not. The two kings Iring and Thüring also appear at this meeting. Thus all the characters of any importance with the one exception of Etzel himself have been introduced before the action reaches Etzel's court. Dietrich's character in the drama is much the same as in the Not. He is a strong, noble-minded man, determined to do the right according to his conception of it. So in both stories his purpose for meeting Gunther is to give him warning.

In scene Three Hebbel has given slight but clear sketches of Götelinde and Gudrun. Gudrun is a young maid full of sympathy and insight. She feels the sorrow of her Queen and at once recognizes Hagen as the cause of it when she sees him. Götelinde, however, is a practical mother of a temperament different from that of her daughter. She is concerned only with the duties of hospitality, not with speculations as to the queen's happiness.

Hagen comes forward and shows his nature in scene 7 where he skillfully manoeuvres to get possession of Nudung's sword. He has however, nothing to do in the drama with the engagement between Giselher and Gudrun. This affair is due to the strategy of Volker.
It is he who discovers that Giselher is much attracted by Gudrun and urges on the young man to ask for her in marriage. In Der Not, Haggen suggests and arranges the whole affair. In the drama, however, each of the young people in question is allowed apparently to do as he chooses. And so in both the two are betrothed and the Burgundians go on to their death. In this act Volker becomes much more important than hitherto. He becomes a close second to Hagen, a fact which is consistent with Der Not. He is, nevertheless of much milder character than Hagen. He has bravery and endurance, but the harsh qualities in Hagen are subdued in him.

In the last scene of this act after Dietrich has given warning and when Gunther must surely know the risk he is running, it seems strange that he should suddenly grow so bold. Apparently he does not at all care and he does not resemble the weak man whom Hagen has previously so easily influence. An explanation to this strange bravery may be found later when it is revealed that Brunhild is as one dead to him. After Siegfried's death she notices Gunther no more than before and after Kriemhild's departure she definitely takes up her abode beside Siegfried's tomb. Herein lies the explanation to Gunther's rashness. He loves life no longer since that for which he was living has been taken away. He feels that if he loses his life in a battle he may get rid of the curse which rests upon him and so he journeys on to Etzel's court.

The first scene of the third Act is the account of Kriemhild's messengers' report. Hebbel makes it much more realistic, gives
the characters more definite qualities than is done in the corresponding scene in Der Not. Werbel and Swemmel are plainly to be the queen's tools with which she is to get rid of Hagen. She shows very plainly that it is Hagen only against whom she is planning. If she can accomplish his death she is willing to let her brother go unpunished. In the third scene Etzel appears for the first time. As a whole he makes a very pleasing appearance as a pagan king. Hebbel has given him a rather noble character. He brings Etzel's traits of character out more clearly and develops them more fully than is done in the Not. In both cases, however, he is wholly unaware of Kriemhild's purpose in inviting her relatives to visit her. His aim is to show them all the honor that is due them and thus to please her. So unknowingly he puts himself entirely in her power by promising to do everything she wishes. This whole scene in the drama which so well reveals Hebbel's conception of Etzel has been the result of his imagination. There is nothing like it in the Not. In this scene also Kriemhild learns that Etzel considers Dietrich von Bern as the most powerful man alive and immediately there is a suggestion to her that he may be of use to her since he is Etzel's vassal.

The sixth and seventh scenes are taken from Adventure 28, lines 1738 - 1752 and correspond very closely to it. The thought is the same but Hebbel has expanded the speeches. Also Hagen makes known to Kriemhild that Gudrun and Giselher are betrothed, evidently hoping to soften her through her love of the young people. In this.
part of the drama as in Der Not the name Nibelungen is interchangeable with Burgundians, thus adding to the confusion as to who the real Nibelungen were. In the following scenes of the Act and in Act four Hebbel has interchanged some incidents with regard to time and yet kept the incidents relating to the most important characters. Thus he leaves out the account of the meeting with Etzel and Hagen reports it to Dankwart. The meeting between the Huns and the body of the Burgundians is much the same.

The first four scenes of Act four taken from Adventure 30 have two noticeable changes. Hebbel has taken the scene where Hagen and Volker are keeping guard at night as a good time for Volker to tell of the curse on the Nibelungen hoard. This is not at all inconsistent for Volker is to one who told of Siegfried and Brunhild in the beginning. The little account of the origin of the treasure is taken from the Norse story of Odin and Loki. This is an account of the reason for the curse which does not enter into the German version at all. The other change is Kriemhild's meeting with her brothers as well as with Hagen and Volker on the night they are keeping watch. She begs once more for revenge appealing to her brother's love of her and Siegfried. When again refused she plainly asserts her intention of taking Hagen's life even if she must take her brother's too. She is not so outspoken in Der Not. Even though her cruelty and seemingly utter lack of womanliness are somewhat repulsive to the reader, Hebbel still keeps one's sympathies with her. Doubtless some of this sympathy is due to the fact that our
laws of justice are far different from those of Gunther and his family. Here again we could not sympathize with her if we felt that she ought to be judged by Christian standards or if she even understood Christian laws. So Hagen accuses Kriemhild of being the most guilty one in the crime anyway. He freely acknowledges that he disliked Siegfried because he was jealous yet he holds her most to blame, because of her quarrel with Brunhild. In Der Not, however, he simply acknowledges his own guilt and stands ready to protect himself. It seems as if Hebbel had done more harm to Hagen's character by this one speech than he intended. Altho it is consistent with his character to taunt and anger Kriemhild by cruel blunt words it does not seem like him to shift the responsibility from his own shoulders.

Scenes five and six are to show the idea of fidelity as portrayed in Giselher. Altho Hagen has been the cause of all the trouble of the Burgundians, Giselher remains true to him as a man to his master should do. Resisting all temptations to return safely to his betrothed, he stays to accept his punishment for the crime of another. In this act the character of the young Giselher is clearly drawn.

These scenes are not given in Der Not, neither is the next which takes place between Dietrich and Etzel. It is in just such scenes as these that Hebbel gives his definite touches to character. In this latter scene Dietrich has opened Etzel's eyes to what is going on around him. Etzel cannot understand this action on Kriemhild's part because he has heard that Christians give thanks for a blow
with a kiss. Dietrich with his broader world experience realizes that even though people have adopted the Christian religion they are not all strong enough to follow exactly all its teachings. Yet a man with such a conception of Christian doctrine as Dietrich has, does not fit into this age. He seems overdrawn. Through Dietrich Hebbel gives a concise summing up of the Burgundians as a whole. He compares their rash fool-hardy bravery and fearlessness with the reasonable bravery of Etzel. As we would wish to have him, however, Etzel remains true to his wife and says that if she looks upon her brothers as murders he shall look upon them in the same light. As far as the rest of this Act is concerned the greatest individuality shown by Hebbel is in the delineation of Etzel's character. Naturally he shortens and combines his incidents for economy of space. However he has a different conception of Etzel's character at this point from that given in Der Not. In the drama Etzel is more manly, indeed he is almost noble when he continues to treat the Burgundians as guests, in spite of the fact that they have taken the initiative and killed the first man. His desire to give the Burgundians a fair chance in war is far above what might be expected of a barbarian of his reputation. Not until his child is brutally murdered by Hagen does he now return cold murder for murder. Hebbel also strengthens Etzel's character by the account of the change which took place in him at Rome. This little account makes use of the supernatural and shows how it has been mingled with history. In portraying Hagen as an elf-child in this act Hebbel makes use of
one interpretation of the Norse version which makes Hagen the son of Alberich the dwarf who first possessed the hoard. This accounts for Hagen's desire to obtain possession of the treasure. This idea is not carried out completely in the drama, but is simply hinted at. Scene Twenty, that of the pilgrim, is put in for the purpose of showing the value of Christian doctrines and of bringing out more strongly Hagen's paganism.

The Fifth Act moves rapidly to the tragic close of the drama and differs only slightly from the last adventures in the Not. The battles between the minor characters on Etzel's side and the Burgundians are entirely omitted but those with Rüdger and Dietrich are touched upon. The great conflict in Rüdger's soul is especially emphasized. He has unconsciously given his pledge for assistance in this terrible revenge, and he is driven to despair at the thought of carrying it out. Hebbel has not portrayed a character more noble and more to be pitied than Rüdger while he is so tortured between two fires. This is well shown in Der Not as is the fidelity of Dietrich to his king Etzel. Dietrich does not believe in this treatment of the Burgundians but he feels that he must be true to the man whom he has accepted as king. Even though one of the most Christianlike characters he renews his oath of fidelity, takes his turn and comes out victor.

The acts ends as Der Not does with Kriemhild's death at Hildebrand's hands and Etzel's terrible sorrow after it. In the drama, however, Etzel gives over his kingdom to Dietrich. This act gives
another gentle touch to Etzel's character. His sorrow is so great at the death of the woman whom he truly loves that he does not even care to keep his kingdom. He feels that the burden is too great, and he wishes the now stronger Dietrich to bear it for him. In Dietrich's answer, "Im namen dessen der am Kreuz-crblich!" is a last touch to the growing spirit of Christianity which Hebbel wished to emphasize. The old times are passing away and new ones are beginning in which love shall rule and the will of man submit to the will of God. Thus the spirit of Christianity triumphed and paganism died a tragic death. In this way Hebbel has dramatized Der Nibelunge Not and yet has maintained at the same time a large share of the original spirit in this passionate Epic.

There have, however, been brought against Hebbel two great criticisms. The first was made because he ever attempted to form a drama from the old epic of the Nibelungen. The ground on which the criticism is made is that so much time as the epic covers cannot be covered with justice in a drama which practically has its action in only three days. An epic is in its foundation a series of episodes and character presentations and a drama in its necessarily quick action cannot show the development of character, as portrayed in the Epic. For example the critic thinks that it is impossible to get a conception of Kriemhild as she was when Etzel's wife as opposed to her maiden character, through the sudden transition in the drama. This criticism in a way is true but it was Hebbel's aim to do just that which the critic thinks wholly impossible. Hebbel believed the epic to be made up of folk songs as he himself
has said: "An apple is not the fruit of one tree but of a whole forest."

So it seems that Hebbel believed a human tragedy in all its natural motives could be constructed on this mythological epic; and also he states with good faith in his Tagebücher that he has done it. If the critic is right Hebbel must have failed in the very start. Wherein, however, that the subjects in an epic are not naturally fitted for dramatization as a whole it seems as if Hebbel had succeeded rather well in the portrayal of a life tragedy in the critical events of three days.

The second criticism is that Hebbel has brought upon the stage the use of magic and supernatural powers and at the same time has attempted to Christianize his people to the extent that the lesson drawn from the tragic results of their lives should be such as the people of today may profit by. These things are certainly incompatible. Gottschall has said that a fundamental thought of human truth could not be represented in abnormal relationship and through abnormal characters. Just such abnormal characters are those in the epic and it seems unjust and almost impossible to judge their actions by Christian standards. To be sure the old German idea of fidelity is there, yet it is not fidelity to the right but of man to master. Kriemhild breaks "Treue" only for "Treue" and Hagen for the sake of his queen. These statements sound well, for even today we believe in weighing one faith against another in order to keep the one founded on the most right.
The secret of the whole epic, however, lies not in this "Treue" as it appears on the surface but in the spirit of revenge which permeates the whole. Everything is revenged, from Brunhild for the death of her lovers straight through the entire tale to Kriemhild for the death of her relatives. Hebbel has kept this idea of revenge, yet at the same time he has brought in the standard of Jesus Christ by which to judge the characters. The guilt for each character is the same, each lives for himself, and it is for this reason that he suffers. The Christian doctrine that he who lives for himself will never be happy is widely recognized as a truth of life aside from its connection from Christianity. So the lesson from the tragic end of such selfish lives as here portrayed would be just as evident without forcing in the higher standard.

In the epic, the Burgundians attend mass and observe other Christian rites, yet there is not the least suggestion that they have reached that stage in Christian thinking which Hebbel's chaplain represents. He begs Kriemhild to forgive but she has not reached the heights of forgiveness. It is just so with others. Dietrich seems to understand better than the rest, yet the difference between them is too great.

The thoughts which Hebbel makes his Christian characters express are beautiful in themselves and well worth observing by every reader. They are truths not to be forgotten. Nevertheless he has put too much Christianity into his drama to make it consistent with the characters he has to portray. These doctrines do not have their proper value with such people as Kriemhild and Hagen, even though today we
realize that passion does not easily listen to reason and conscience.

Goethe believed that there was no trace of Christianity in the foundation of the Nibelungen Lied and it would seem as if this conception were more true than Hebbel's. Considered as a reading drama, however, and in a symbolical sense Hebbel's drama does not lend itself so easily to criticism for his use of Christianity. Hebbel's purpose seems to have been to show the death of paganism and the rise of Christianity. Studied from this point of view, the struggle is well portrayed. The scenes which best show this struggle are the very ones which seem inconsistent from the acting point of view. The fight of paganism to hold its own, however, is true to history and so from this literary standpoint the drama is exceedingly well done.

Wagner in his Der Ring des Nibelungen has totally left out every Christian idea. Although he has founded his opera on the Norse version of the story which is even more mythological than Der Not it is more consistent throughout and has a stronger claim as an acting drama than Hebbel's.

Geibel's Brunhild is another modern version of the story which takes no account of Christianity. Geibel also with Wagner follows the Norse outline of the story although not in so much detail. He particularly emphasizes that portion of it which takes place at the Burgundian Court. Geibel's Brunhild, however, is not easily compared with Hebbel's drama because the former took only an episode from the story while Hebbel treats the whole. Geible is more interested
in the development of a single character, that of Brunhild, than he is in any abstract relationship between paganism and Christianity. He puts all his efforts on Brunhild’s character and she becomes the center of the whole drama. In her death on Siegfried’s funeral pyre there is a consistency with her dark jealous nature which seems more fitting than the weak humiliation of Brunhild as portrayed in the old epic and also by Hebbel. Geible has made his Brunhild human while Hebbel has not been able to think of his Brunhild as purely human. Thus his end for her is not so satisfactory. Geibel’s Brunhild is entirely pagan and could be given such a death as fitting her nature, but Hebbel’s who was to be judged by Christian standards could not be allowed to kill herself. Aside from its interests in this more natural portrayal of Brunhild’s death, Geibel’s drama is not so attractive. Its range is much narrower in that it does not deal with as many truths of life as Hebbel’s drama. From the psychological view Geibel gives a very good study of Brunhild but Hebbel gives equally well one of Kriemhild too.

From this study of Die Nibelungen there is no doubt that even with its faults Hebbel has made a drama both intensely interesting and powerful in its portrayal of the tragic results of uncontrolled human passions.