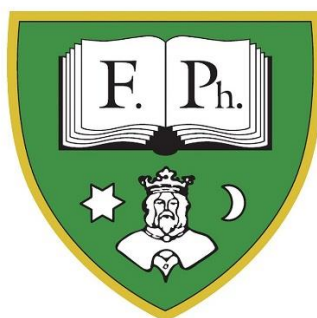


THESES OF THE Ph. D. DISSERTATION



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Papers and poetics of Péter Hajnóczy

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1. The object of the research

My dissertation focuses on the poetics tools of Péter Hajnóczy's writings (1942–1981) and the textual analysis of his unpublished works. The primary question of the study is how the archive papers reshape the position of Hajnóczy's œuvre in the Hungarian history of literature. By describing the genesis of motifs and other narratological elements through different versions of the texts, it becomes clear that the unpublished texts allow for the reconstruction of a complete structure of the œuvre. The ideas and conceptual connections that link the published works merge in the manuscripts. The research explores how the analysis of these textual intersections, revealed through philological work, contributes to a deeper understanding of Hajnóczy's works.

The philological found of the research lies in the digital processing of the Hajnóczy papers, which until recently lacked the necessary institutional environment and technological infrastructure. In 2018, when I began my doctoral studies, the Philological Portal of the Institute of Literary Studies (*DigiPhil*) and its database (*ITIdata*) were not yet available. Since then, this platform has partially provided the foundation for this research. Nevertheless, it seemed the most modern and logical approach to carry out this philological research in the digital space, given the unclear and fragile status of the manuscripts. The manuscripts of Hajnóczy (as the part of the nation's cultural heritage) was lost or hidden until recently. For the first time since Hajnóczy's death in 1981, the manuscripts were officially moved to the Petöfi Literary Museum in 2024. This situation has profound consequences for the textual condition, reception, and the history of the œuvre. Over the decades, manuscripts have been moved, rearranged, and prepared for publication multiple times, leaving marks on the corpus's current state. Furthermore, no professional manuscript catalog was ever created, which has been an essential obstacle to any meaningful future research.

The second and third chapters of the dissertation address the applicability of digital tools in literary studies and the methodology of creating the digital collection of the Hajnóczy papers. These chapters also provide an introduction to the unique, yet somewhat typical history of the papers, and the understanding of its content and condition. One of the central claims of the dissertation is that only the strategic institutions responsible for knowledge production are capable of ensuring and monitoring the proper professional protocols.

2. Methods of the dissertation, sources

The first chapter of the dissertation can be understood as an unconventional, yet targeted history the reception of the texts of Péter Hajnóczy highlighted the comments about the published collections of his works. I assume that the history of Hajnóczy papers fundamentally shaped the history of the interpretations and evaluations of his work. I conceptualize the periodization in relation to this; where and when the manuscripts were in the past decades. Based on this, it is important to distinguish between the primary (or canonical) corpus and the secondary corpus (the archive collection). The canonical corpus essentially consisting of the author's collected volumes. The distinction between the primary and secondary part became especially significant in the Hajnóczy-philology since 2010, following the partial publication of the manuscripts. (Between 1982 and 2010, the complete material was held by József Tamás Reményi.) In 2013, a publication ("Jelentések a süllyesztőből") was prepared by Tamás Nagy, a legal sociologist, which included Hajnóczy's only one but scandalous sociography ("Az elkülönítő"), along with manuscript materials and official documents from the papers. This work demonstrates that the work with the unpublished manuscripts are very important for the interpretation. After the publication of the variants of "Az elkülönítő" (1975) several unfinished texts or fragments remained in the archive material (calendars, correspondence, newspaper clippings, notebooks etc.). It would be impossible to discuss every single element in this dissertation in the same level of detail, but I will refer to the most important connections in relevant sections, even if not every type of the documents will receive a separate chapter.

The interpretative sections of the dissertation's core start with a more introductory goal, titled "The greatest small oeuvre" ("A legnagyobb kis életmű"). Firstly, they aim to capture the defining characteristics of the entire oeuvre in both quantitative-material and textological-semantic terms. Secondly, they examine the range of possible categorization. After reviewing the groups of the oeuvre's texts, the analysis proceeds along textological and semantic connections. The relationship between two or more texts or groups of texts is not considered only in terms of literal similarities, but in semantic relations as well.

Each of the analytical chapters has a vertical and a filological-textological perspective, in the sense that it always highlights one or more texts from the 'canonical' corpus (which are considered 'peaks' of the oeuvre) and links them to the unpublished materials and/or lesser-known elements published posthumously. The order of the chapters is also determined by the relative timeline of the creation of the texts in each group. This is why I first discuss the

group of texts written in the 1970s, and considered them as the group of ‘repetitive texts.’ This group of texts represents the most obvious form (in terms of syntax and sentence structure) of the fundamental poetic code of the *œuvre*, which is repetition and its various modes. These repetitive constructions, built on repetitive sentence structures, first appeared in the 1982 posthumous collection. Two other unpublished manuscripts (“Fúga” and “[A Cimborában felhajtott...]”) represents quite same poetic results, so these are also discussed in this chapter. The chapter also addresses Hajnóczy’s citation techniques, which involve various narratological solutions such as collage-like text structures, paratexts, metalepsis and special typography.

The sections focusing on the well-known short story, “A fűtő” (1975), which is often seen as a paraphrase of Heinrich von Kleist’s Michael Kohlhaas, and implements a comparative analysis between “A fűtő” and other unpublished texts, which also perform the boiler-heating motif and the characteristic plot points of the story of Mihály Kolhász. The heater motif also appears in the canonical corpus, such as in “A halál kilovagolt Perzsiából” (1979).

Chapter 6 discusses the relationship between “A fűtő” and another canonical text, “A véradó” (1977). These texts are presented as pairs. Both texts can be seen as psychological case studies and raise the issue of the mental off-balance state. This theme is not just a central aspect of Hajnóczy’s sociography (“Az elkülönítő”), but also present in many works within Hajnóczy’s *œuvre*.

The next chapter views the texts linked by the character named Márai as part of a narrative cycle, but also clarifies that the cycle remains unfinished. The analysis connects the role of the figure of Márai, examining how the name Márai functions within these texts.

Finally, the dissertation concludes with a micro-historical reflection that adds to the biography of Hajnóczy. It discusses Hajnóczy as a ‘dilettante’ figure within the context of the identity and roles available to him as an author. The textological layer of this chapter comes from non-fictional materials found in the unpublished papers.

3. Summary of the results

This study is the first to deal with Hajnóczy’s philology in such an extensive way in literary studies. The study has a strong and necessary philological-textological focus, while drawing on both literary-historical and aesthetic-poetic methods.

The self-referential character of the corpus is not only revealed at the macro level, through the textual and semantic connections between the pieces, but also through close reading of the individual texts. The basic narrative method of Hajnóczy's prose is repetition, and its most characteristic (almost the only) poetic code is quotation, very, very multiple (self-)quotation, and its 'pure form' is represented in the group of 'repetitive texts.'

From the point of view of historical-poetic, literary-sociological and philological-textological analysis, Hajnóczy's life-work is in an intermediate position. Since Péter Hajnóczy's literary career came to an end with his death in 1981, the *œuvre* is one of the last of the period to be preserved in only manuscript form, without digital elements.

The global digital shift of the eighties and nineties, however, is only one of the obvious signs of the socio-political and economic transformations associated with this period, whose Hungary-specific historical reference is 1989, and whose theoretical construct is the 'postmodern turn.' It would be tempting to argue that Hajnóczy's *œuvre* is capable of capturing something essential to this turn (or rather transition), but it is not so simple. I would argue that, on the basis of philological arguments, taking the aspect of textual genesis as a guide, the repetitive cycle seems to be of particular interest because it represents the fundamental poetic code of the *œuvre* (repetition, cycle-structure, seriality, citation).

This *œuvre* seems much more interesting if we do not see it as an illustration of the postmodern, but rather as an attempt to revise this notion of literary history (and theory). If we ask the question: is Hajnóczy's prose postmodern, I would argue that the answer is no. (Not because it is not characterised by all or any of the text-organising procedures that have been called postmodern, but because they were also characteristic of, for example, 19th century – or even earlier – literature.) If we were to ask how modern Hajnóczy's prose is, or rather, what our contemporary understanding of Hajnóczy's prose is closer to (and why) than, say, the texts of László Cholnoky or the prose of Attila Hazai, we would get much more exciting answers. The aim of the essay is not to reconstruct or deconstruct the ideas of the theorists about Hungarian postmodern, but merely to bring the methodology of genetic criticism into the field of interpretation.

The sociological position of the biographical author is also ambivalent. He is often proclaimed (or acknowledged) as an outsider, unable to professionalise and neglected; and his education, which can be reconstructed on the basis of the estate documents, represents the standards of socialist cultural policy. But he also selected his samples with exceptional taste and an intuitive sense of form.

The dissertation does not attempt to provide a monographic summary, only to examine certain groups of texts, but also compensating for the decades-long deficiencies in Hajnóczy-philology.

4. List of own publications on the topic

- “Textológiai kérdések Hajnóczy Péter *A szakács* című hagyatéki szövegének változatai körül.” *Dűlő*, no. 39 (2024): 34–45. 2025.01.26.
https://drive.google.com/file/d/15_OmjIx1SiE41U0gcDAN3AqcJ65c4HxW/view.
- “Hajnóczy Péter repetitív prózáinak datálásáról és kiadástörténetéről.” In *Doktoranduszok Fóruma 2022. és 2023.: A Bölcsészettudományi Kar Szekciókiadványa*, edited by Katalin LUDMÁN and Szilvia SZARKA, 27–40. Miskolc: Miskolci Egyetem Rektori Hivatal, [prior to publication].
- “The Freudian Tradition and Sociographical Context in Selected Works by Péter Hajnóczy.” *Primerjalna književnost* 47, no. 1 (2024): 69–81.
- “A Hajnóczy-hagyaték digitális feldolgozása.” *Új Forrás* 55, no. 4 (2023): 56–69.
- „A fürdőhely mint toposz Hajnóczy Péter prózájában.” *Irodalmi Magazin* 10, no. 3 (2022): 79–84.
- “Hajnóczy »esettanulmányai«: *A fűtő* és *A véradó* lehetséges olvasatai.” In *Kulturális transzferek, irodalmi diskurzusok*, edited by Ferenc KÖRÖSI and Katalin LUDMÁN, 75–101. Miskolc: Irodalomtudományi Doktori Iskola, 2022.
- “Hajnóczy »esettanulmányai«: *A fűtő* és *A véradó* lehetséges olvasatai”. *Irodalomtörténet* 103, no. 2 (2022): 201–218.
- “Szövegcsomópontok és materialitás: Hálózatok a Hajnóczy-életműben: műhelytanulmány.” In *Doktoranduszok Fóruma 2021.: A Bölcsészettudományi Kar Szekciókiadványa*, edited by Katalin LUDMÁN, 41–57. Miskolc: Miskolci Egyetem Rektori Hivatal, 2022.
- “Ködlovagok tegnap és ma: Krúdy–Márai–Hajnóczy.” In “*A rejtelem volt az íróága...*”: *A ködlovag-jelenség történeti, poétikai és biografikus vetületei a századfordulótól napjainkig*, edited by Katalin LUDMÁN, Dániel Szabolcs RADNAI and Ferenc KÖRÖSI, 143–166. Miskolc: Miskolci Egyetem Irodalomtudományi Doktori Iskola, 2022.

- “A hagyaték szerepe Hajnóczy Péter életművének befogadástörténetében.” In *Pályakezdés, karrierút, irodalomtörténet: Tanulmányok*, edited by Dániel Szabolcs RADNAI, Zsófia RÉTFALVI P. and Anna SZOLNOKI, 205–225. Pécs: Pécsi Tudományegyetem Bölcsész- és Társadalomtudományi Kar Magyar Nyelv- és Irodalomtudományi Intézet Klasszikus Irodalomtörténeti és Összehasonlító Irodalomtudományi Tanszék, 2021.
- “Hajnóczy Péter *Play-boy* című szövegéről.” *Forrás* 53, no. 9 (2021): 58–92.
- “»Egyetlen méter filmet nem tudtam csinálni arról, hogy boldog vagy«: Filmes vonatkozások Hajnóczy Péter, Esterházy Péter és Gothár Péter műveiben.” *Literatura* 46, no. 4 (2020): 475–485.
- “Hajnóczy Péter poétikája és a hagyaték: A kritikai kiadás elkészítésének lehetőségei.” *Tiszatáj* 73, no. 10 (2019): 97–101.