

EÖTVÖS LORÁND UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

Theses of the Doctoral Dissertation

Márton Hoványi

**The Poetics of Péter Hajnóczy**

Doctoral School of Literary Studies

Professor Mr. István Lukács DSc, Head of the Doctoral School

Comparative Literary Studies Doctoral Programme

Professor Mr. Zoltán Kulcsár-Szabó DSc, Head of the Doctoral Programme

Members of the Committee and their professional rank:

Head of the Committee: Professor Mr. Márton Szilágyi DSc, (full) professor

Officially invited referees: Professor Mr. László Bengi PhD, hab. senior lecturer  
Professor Mr. Gergely Angyalosi CSs, senior research  
fellow (external referee)

Further members of the Committee: Professor Mr. Gábor Tamás Molnár PhD, senior lecturer,  
secretary of the Committee

Professor Mr. László Földényi F. DSc, (full) professor

Professor Mr. György Eisemann DSc, (full) professor  
(assistant member)

Professor Ms. Edit Zsadányi CSc, hab. associate  
professor (assistant member)

Supervisor: Professor Mr. Zoltán Kulcsár-Szabó DSc, (full) professor

†Professor Mr. Mihály Szegedy-Maszák MHAS,  
professor emeritus

Budapest, 2017

This paper undertakes to review and critically evaluate the oeuvre of Péter Hajnóczy (1942-1981) published in his life and after his death. The history of reception of the oeuvre outlines from the start two clear reactions from the critics: we can find examples in the last forty years both for the enthusiastic recognition of the long-lasting aesthetical value of the works, partially doubting that they achieve the standard of classics, and at the same time for the thematic-stylistic criticism of the works. The thematic checking of the biographical motifs with the author's writings particularly expanded after the early death of the author. Although this cult-forming procedure gradually lost its strength after the end of the communist regime and gave its place to literary evaluation, the latter task can never vindicate itself the quality of completeness given its unfinishable nature. When the present thesis attempts the same task, it also tries to find the place of the oeuvre of Hajnóczy in the Hungarian literary canon, assuming that it can say something new compared to the results of reception until now.

The aesthetical evaluation of the oeuvre is based on specific text interpretations, which, approaching along the lines of different presumptions of literary theory, try to find a way to the writings of Hajnóczy from various aspects. The reception aesthetical, motivic and intertextual interpretations, with discursive poetry, narratology or the reading of deconstruction, which is radically different from the previous approaches, theoretically inspired the elaboration of each chapter. It is necessary that the paper use various types of reading so that reading as an event can search the aesthetical nature of the text in a more complex manner. It is essential for the paper that it view *alcohol* as figurativity organising the oeuvre as a linguistic event instead of biographical alcoholism, and that it could accommodate the various reading possibilities of alcohol to the ambivalent figurativity of, for example, *madness* or *blasphemy*. One of the characteristic features of the oeuvre of Hajnóczy is particularly the tension resulting from ambivalence. The paper gains its comparative feature on the one hand by the intertextual readings of the interpreting chapters, and on the other by the fact that it also directly examines the poetic and rhetorical function of the texts of Hajnóczy in the light of other texts born in different linguistic and historical circumstances. All this is complemented by the presentation of the results of the philological work concerning the oeuvre of Hajnóczy with quoting, for example, the text entitled *Alcohol*, and by the so far most complete bibliography of the author.

I discuss the evaluation of the reception of Hajnóczy in two main parts. First, I intend to outline the most important features of the reception of Hajnóczy in chronological order; later, I approach the phenomena experienced in historical circumstances by the separate evaluation of these features. This twofold approach leads us to the literary / aesthetical evaluation of the oeuvre, in connection with defining where and how the work of Péter Hajnóczy can be placed in the Hungarian literary canon today. Dividing the historical overview into three parts, first I examine the period from the beginnings to the first published collection, that is, until 1982; secondly, I analyse the critical response formulated in view of the complete oeuvre and the birth of the first comprehensive or specific studies until the beginning of the 2000s; last, I discuss the period of reception from the 2000s until today, mainly characterized by the start of the Hajnóczy-workshop in Szeged.

The chapter concerning the reception at the same time leads the reader to the review of literary features and the search of their possible place within the Hungarian literature. The thesis gradually advancing from contextual readings to specific interpretations of text first reinterprets alcohol as mentioned before, which is prepared by a linguistic and cultural historical draft. Then primarily through the drug-interpretation of Jacques Derrida and conceptions of other theories of addiction it reaches the literary line of the oeuvre of Hajnóczy until 1979. The joint examination of rhetorical and motivic aspects is complemented by the working draft entitled *Alkohol* [Alcohol] pointing to the novel *A halál kilovagolt Perzsiából* [Death Rode out of Persia] (1979) and the exploration of the philological background of the proto short story entitled *Jézus* [Jesus] and its interpretation. As the figures of opposites or the mingling of passive voice and surreal imagery rhetorically create a tension in the texts of Péter Hajnóczy, the figurativity of alcohol, madness and blasphemy thematically and tropologically creates the timeless literary value in the works of the author. In this demonstration what eventually is at stake is whether we can make another definite step from the biographical and cult-oriented approaches to the examination of the literary nature of the oeuvre focusing on the text. One of the theses of the paper can thus be formulated as follows: to turn the attention of the receiver from the *alcoholism* of Péter Hajnóczy to *alcohol* (madness, blasphemy) as an ambivalent literary organizing principle. This at the same time means that the oeuvre of Hajnóczy can be compared to Hungarian and international works organized around literary principles like ambivalence. As a result of such interpretation, Malcolm Lowry, Sadegh

Hedayat, Ambrose Bierce, Jack London, Knut Hamsun, Mikhail Bulgakov, Vörösmarty, the Cholnoky-brothers and so on could all become reference points, or, if you like, literary measures of value. A task of this thesis is also to make this comparative work possible.

The aim of the paper is among others to show that there is a stronger connection between the writings in the volume entitled *Jézus menyasszonya* [The Bride of Jesus] than between the writings published in the collections. According to my thesis, the fictional works in the last volume of Péter Hajnóczy are organized into a loose composition complementing each other's readings. This composition primarily points to the novella that provided the title for the volume; at the same time, it has paratextual features, such as a connection between the numbers of the volume's pages and the meaning constructions of each short story (e.g. *A latin betűk* [The Latin Letters]). The examination of the structural and motivic unity of the volume is also organized by the recurring question how the title *Jézus menyasszonya* [The Bride of Jesus] is related to the writings in the volume and through these how the text of the novel of the same title becomes accessible.

The whole of the thesis, but particularly the chapters interpreting the texts published in 1981 aim furthermore to examine within the oeuvre the attempts at the blaspheme rewriting of the biblical and religious inheritance of the Jewish-Christian tradition. The issue recurs reasonably in the reception from time to time due to the choice of titles, certain motifs and not the least the use of religious linguistic clichés in the oeuvre. The thesis intends to show how the treatment of this tradition ranges from ironic and neutral descriptive gestures to the use of a blaspheme tone first by playing a game from time to time with the biblical and religious elements of the Jewish-Christian tradition which the texts of Hajnóczy seem to reflect on. Secondly, beyond mere presentation, it attempts to point out the same literary functions of this intertextual web similarly important as the literature of narcotics as it already have done in the case of alcohol. The literature of Péter Hajnóczy creates the tension resulting from reaching limits and contrasting opposites in an extreme way in many cases precisely by his methods that keep and at the same time eliminate sacrality.

The thesis finally approaches the problems of the poetics of Péter Hajnóczy by dealing in a separate interpretive chapter with the world of the short stories *A latin betűk* [Latin Letters], *Ösztönző elem* [Driving Element], *A kecske* [The Goat] or *A pad* [The Bench] for instance. These wirings had little response previously in the criticism of Hajnóczy despite

the fact that one of the contemporary critics judged the text entitled *A pad* [The Bench] to be one of the best writings of the volume entitled *Jézus menyasszonya* [The Bride of Jesus]. The individual interpretive chapters are in a sense subordinate to the investigations of the thesis formulated before; this is why their initial problems are often similar. The individual methods of the interpretations overcome this in such a way as the individuality of the given text requires.

Since during the time of my research concerning the thesis I also had the opportunity to work with the literary legacy of Péter Hajnóczy, my thesis also wishes to philologically contribute to the criticism regarding Hajnóczy published until now – on the one hand in every occasion when a manuscript or typescript in the legacy, including the variants of the texts and their dating, published the known philological data. Furthermore, my thesis attempts to bring to the surface additional information in the survived sources (books, newspapers, cut out pictures etc.) relevant for the interpretations. The Appendix of the paper contains the edition of the transcript of *Alkohol* (Alcohol), a working draft in the legacy unpublished until now. Beside the publication of *Alkohol*, the Appendix of the thesis also contains the second edition of a proto short story entitled *Jézus* (Jesus), since these two works can jointly enlighten their role within the oeuvre, which eventually also contributes to one of the central questions of the paper, the trope of alcohol and the interpretation of the novella *A halál kilovagolt Perzsiából* [Death Rode out of Persia]. By reviewing the previous criticism, I am the first after the Hajnóczy-bibliography that appeared in 1999 to publish also in the Appendix of the paper a detailed, up to date bibliography exceeding three hundred items.

### **The Publications of Márton Hoványi in the Field of the Thesis**

#### **Edited books**

*Hajnóczy a könyvtárban. ...A kékből kell kiindulni...*, szerk. Cserjés Katalin, Hoványi Márton, Nagy Tamás, Yes-Press, Tótkomlós, 2016 (Hajnóczy tanulmányok 5), 174 p., ISBN 978-963-12-7383.

## Redaction and publication

HAJNÓCZY Péter, *Jézus*, kiad. Hoványi Márton, Jelenkor, 2011/11, 1183-1188.

## Papers

1. HOVÁNYI Márton, *Kilovagolhat-e a halál az Apokalipszisből?*, Tiszatáj, 2009/9, 94–97.
2. HOVÁNYI Márton, *Az alkoholtól a deliriumon át a Jelenések Könyvéig, Tudom. De: tudom-e? A párbeszéd kiterjesztése – az újraolvasás lehetőségei*, szerk. Cserjés Katalin, Szeged, 2009 (Hajnóczy tanulmányok 3), 141–150.
3. HOVÁNYI Márton, *A tett halála a szó születése*, Spanyolnátha, 2010/3.
4. HOVÁNYI Márton, *A vallási hagyomány Hajnóczy Péter Jézus menyasszonya című művében*, kéziratban, 2010. (Szakdolgozat az ELTE BTK-n)
5. HOVÁNYI Márton, *Művészi árulás. Hajnóczy Péter Árulás című novellájának vezérmotívumáról*, Palócföld, 2011/1, 52–54.
6. HOVÁNYI Márton, *A nexustól a textusig. Hajnóczy Péter Temetés című novellájának értelmezés*, Iskolakultúra, 2011/4–5, 90–98. Utánközlése itt: *Regényművészet és íráskultúra. Tanulmányok. A negyedik veszprémi regénykollokvium*, szerk. Kovács Árpád-Szitár Katalin, Budapest, 2012, 301–310.
7. HOVÁNYI Márton, „Sötét volt, mint a Szivárvány moziban”. *Adalékok Hajnóczy Péter A Parancs című regényének értelmezéséhez*, Tiszatáj, 2011/9, 79–89.
8. HOVÁNYI Márton, *Hajnóczy Péter Jézusáról*, Jelenkor, 2011/11, 1178–1182.
9. HOVÁNYI Márton, *Hajnóczy Péter A kecske című elbeszélésének értelmezése*, Irodalomismeret, 2011/4, 80–93.
10. HOVÁNYI Márton, *Fictio legenda. Hajnóczy Péter A latin betűk című novellájának értelmezéséhez = Énekelt, és táncolt, mint egy szatír. Nem szűnő párbeszédben*, szerk. Cserjés Katalin-Nagy Tamás, Szeged, 2012 (Hajnóczy-tanulmányok 4), 43–57.
11. HOVÁNYI Márton, *Folyamatban. Az életmű datálásáról = Énekelt, és táncolt, mint egy szatír. Nem szűnő párbeszédben*, szerk. Cserjés Katalin-Nagy Tamás, Szeged, 2012 (Hajnóczy-tanulmányok 4), 195–207. – HERCZEG Sárával közösen készített tanulmány.
12. HOVÁNYI Márton, *Elemi értelmezés. Hajnóczy Péter Ösztönző elem című novellájáról*, E-nyelv magazin, 2012. URL: [enyelvmagazin.hu/2012/10/04/elemi-ertelmezes/](http://enyelvmagazin.hu/2012/10/04/elemi-ertelmezes/)  
Letöltés dátuma 2017. 03. 02.

13. Hoványi Márton, *Világok közt padnak lenni. Hajnóczy Péter A pad című novellájának értelmezése*, Alföld, 2014/7, 89–95.
14. HOVÁNYI Márton, *Blaszfémiák áthallása. Az átok-ima hagyománya Jób könyvétől a Jézus menyasszonyáig = Esemény és költészet. Tanulmányok Kovács Árpád hetvenedik születésnapjára*, szerk. Szitár Katalin et al., Veszprém, 2014, 488–493.
15. HOVÁNYI Márton, *Hajnóczy Péter Szent/újraírása. A Hajnóczy-életmű kapcsolata a Bibliával*, Vigilia, 2014/11, 821–826.
16. HOVÁNYI Márton, *Mámoros kizökken(t)ések*, Alföld, 2015/7, 75-81.

### Shorter writings

1. HOVÁNYI Márton, *A Műhely mint előszó/szoba = Hajnóczy a könyvtárban. Vége/láthatatlan párbeszédben*, szerk. Cserjés Katalin-Hoványi Márton-Nagy Tamás, Tótkomlós, 2016 (Hajnóczy-tanulmányok 5), 14–15.
2. HOVÁNYI Márton, *Hajnóczy Péter hagyatékának antológiája = Hajnóczy a könyvtárban. Vége/láthatatlan párbeszédben*, szerk. Cserjés Katalin-Hoványi Márton-Nagy Tamás, Tótkomlós, 2016 (Hajnóczy-tanulmányok 5), 101–102.
3. HOVÁNYI Márton, *A szakács, Daphnisz és Khloé = Hajnóczy a könyvtárban. Vége/láthatatlan párbeszédben*, szerk. Cserjés Katalin-Hoványi Márton-Nagy Tamás, Tótkomlós, 2016 (Hajnóczy-tanulmányok 5), 145–146.
4. HOVÁNYI Márton, *Imádságos részegség = Hajnóczy a könyvtárban. Vége/láthatatlan párbeszédben*, szerk. Cserjés Katalin-Hoványi Márton-Nagy Tamás, Tótkomlós, 2016 (Hajnóczy-tanulmányok 5), 147–148.