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The (Un)translatability of Metaphors

Motivical Function and Ambivalence of Meaning in E. T. A. Hoffmann's *The Golden Pot*

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Abstract

The Golden Pot, as Hoffmann's first and most artistical tale, has also been canonized as his literary ars poetica. Henceforth, the intertextual relationship which connects the work to the popular genres of education- and artist novels of the Goethe Era, especially to Novalis' experimental novel, *Henry von Ofterdingen,* is given as the authentic milieu of the interpretation. So far, according to literary reception viewing from this angle, *The Golden Pot* is regarded to be an education novel, as well as the "caricature of it", which consequently shows a complex reflection of Hoffmann's ironic-critical attitude towards the programme of the early German Romanticism. Therefore, the greatest challenge the translator must face, is to imply this ironic relation, which is expressed in multiple layers of linguistic metaphors and in various elements of the German text. The perception of metaphorical meanings and of poetical functions of these elements, i. e. their explications or implications as motifs have a defining value of the work's literary meaning. In my paper, using five different Hungarian editions of *The Golden Pot*, I would like to draw attention to some of the actual examples of these, yet unsolved translation and interpretation problems, which deprive the Hungarian readers of comprehending all the layers of the meaning in some parts of the text.

Keywords

German Romanticism, E. T. A. Hoffmann, *The Golden Pot*, Hungarian translations, linguistic metaphors, Hungarian learners, intertextuality

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The Golden Pot, as Hoffmann's first and most artistic tale, has also been canonized as his literary ars poetica (Lubkoll, and Harald 2015, 27–32). Hence, the intertextual relationship which connects the work to the popular genres of education and artist novels of the Goethe Era, especially to Novalis's experimental novel *Henry von Ofterdingen,* is given as the authentic milieu of interpretation. From this point of view, *The Golden Pot* was long regarded by literary criticism as a typical Romantic educational novel (Schmidt 2004), and only recently have analyses been published that interpret the work more as a caricature of the Romantic *Bildungsroman*, which consequently also reflects Hoffmann's ironical-critical attitude to the programme of early German Romanticism (Orosz 2007a, 178-182). The popularity of the work in Hungary is shown by the five different translations published in the last hundred years.[2] Nowadays, with the re-translation of classical works a popular literary enterprise, one might reasonably hope that the scholarly aspects will become more prominent and translators will place increasing emphasis on capturing as many layers of meaning in a work as possible. Regarding the literary context of the work mentioned above, one of the most arresting challenges the current and future translator must face is probably the question of how to imply this ironic relation. Since most of these references are expressed in multiple layers of linguistic metaphors, the perception of metaphorical meanings, and motivical functions related to these elements, has a determining influence on the work's literary meaning. The more of these motifs remain invisible the less the existence of the irony as a differentiating figure can be recognized by the reader.

1. Kümmeltürke vs. Childlike Poetic Character

The peculiar story of the student Anselmus begins on Ascension Day, when he unfortunately loses the money he had saved for the festive spree. In a glum mood, he lights his pipe in the spring sunset and, sitting by the bank of the Elbe, recollects all the misfortunes of his life, posing a rhetorical question to himself: "[…] ist es nicht ein schreckliches Verhängnis, daß ich, als ich denn doch nun dem Satan zum Trotz

[2] The editions of the five Hungarian translations used for this essay are as follows: E. T. A. Hoffmann, *Az arany cserép*, trans. Mózes Gaál (Athaeneum, 1919).; E. T. A. Hoffmann, *Az arany virágcserép*, trans. Zoltán Horváth, in *E. T. A. Hoffmann: Válogatott novellák* (Európa Könyvkiadó, 1982, first published in 1959).; E. T. A. Hoffmann, *Aranycserép*, trans. György Szegő (Creangă Kiadó, 1972).; E. T. A. Hoffmann, *Az arany virágcserép*, trans. Ambrus Bor, in *E. T. A. Hoffmann: Az arany virágcserép / A homokember / Scuderi kisasszony* (Európa Diákkönyvtár, 1993).; E. T. A. Hoffmann, *Az arany virágcserép: Újkori mese,* trans. Géza Horváth, in *E. T. A. Hoffmann: Az arany virágcserép / A homokember / Scuderi kisasszony* (Európa Diákkönyvtár, 2007). In the following these editions will be referred to by the surname of their translator, the year of the publication, and page numbers.

Student geworden war, ein Kümmeltürke sein und bleiben mußte?" (Hoffmann 1981, 12) ["isn't it a terrible fate that after defying Satan by becoming a student, I must always be a complete duffer?" (Hoffmann 1992, 3)] Given the significance of the term Kümmeltürke, as the hero's linguistic self-identification immediately gives a complete conceptual background of understanding the work as a romantic *bildungsroman* – or perhaps as a caricature of one – its proper understanding seems to be a major issue. However, the word Kümmeltürke – as realia usually do – appears in various forms in Hungarian translations, which either understate the real meaning of the word ("Sanyarú Vendel" [Gaál 1919, 13]) or fail to define it completely ("nyárspolgár" [Horváth 1982, 25]; "egyetemi polgár, faszent állapotába jutva" [Szegő 1972, 10]; "hallei tuskó" [Bor 1993, 9]; "örökösen gúnyolódnak rajtam, mert az egyetem közelében lakom" [Horváth 2007, 10]).

The expression of Kümmeltürke originates from the city of Halle in the 17th century. At that time a large amount of cumin was growing in one part of the city, which is why this area was named Cuminturkey. Thus, the term Kümmeltürke (which could be rendered in English Cuminturk) originally refers to the citizens dwelling in that area. Its pejorative tinge was certainly taken for granted from the very beginning, as a label attached to the most everyday local patriots of Halle (Drosdowski 1983, 749). Later on, Kümmeltürke appeared in student slang as well, as a derisive epithet for those dull enough to have accommodation directly next to the university (Kluge 1899, 231). In this way, the meaning of Kümmeltürke spread until it became synonymous with the expression of "Philister" [Philistine], which counted as a proper swearword during Romanticism (Grimm and Grimm 1854, 2592). The original sense of Philister can be phrased as 'not a student anymore', meaning those who were already making their living in a civilian profession and no longer possessed the freedom of real student life. The second meaning of Philister, emerging during Romanticism, was the real lowbrow who showed indifference towards art or superior beauty and was only interested in utilitarian matters (Walzel 2003).

Apparently, the word Kümmeltürke gains a vital poetical function as long as it can be perceived that its inner form is being unfolded by the linguistic construction of Anselmus's story.[3] According to this interpretation, the Kümmeltürke, by its own historical semantics means the consecutive stages of his progress in civilian life. As such, at the beginning of the story, the expression Kümmeltürke must be meant in its first two senses combined. They correspond to the stages of the student's life, which

[3] According to Potebnya's theory, the *inner form* of a word (that vivid image to which the word owes its poetic qualities) is directly linked to the word's earliest known etymological root, which has an indisputable conceptual purity. (Seifrid 2005)

have already been completed, causing him to regard himself as inevitably miserable. Serpentina, however, identifies this misfortune as "high simplicity of manners" and "a total want of what is called knowledge of the world" as a "childlike-poetic spirit" in the 8th Vigil.[4] It means that the second level of being a Kümmeltürke – as a metaphor of childlike poetic soul – gains a new sense connoting that "inward make of mind" (Hoffmann 1992, 56) which enabled Anselmus in the first place to understand the song of the little snakes, and to become worthy of Serpentina's love. Although this metaphor, which is also an explicit allusion to Novalis's *kindliches Gemüt* (a common metaphor for poetic genius in the Goethe Era as well) will, unless the historical semantics of Kümmeltürke are thoroughly expanded, definitely remain unnoticed by any foreign reader. For this reason, in translations it would be absolutely necessary to explain this expression in a footnote or endnote – as is usually done in many other cases (e.g. the names of characters).

According to the metaphor of childlike character/spirit, which originally comes from Schiller, Romanticism defines the child as a naturally complete creature (Schiller 1975, 45–48). That is why a poet with a childlike soul is capable of perceiving the entirety of the nature that surrounds him, and exploring its inner essential secrets. On this basis, the protagonist of Novalis's novel, set in the Medieval Ages, appears as a real chosen hero with all the blessings and ambitions of his mission. His childlike poetic character is no secret either, as his talent is naturally revealed in all his speeches and actions. However, Anselmus, placed by his author in the early 19th century, considers himself an ordinary Kümmeltürke constantly beset by misfortune. That is why his poetic character can only obstruct his owner's advance in civilian life – in a very similar way, moreover, as Schiller describes the features of the naive-poetical characters born into an artificial age.[5]

Novalis romanticised the Middle Ages as an era of collective religiosity and the most harmonious time of human history – largely contributing to the characteristic idealisation of the Middle Ages in early German Romanticism. Since the medieval plot of *Ofterdingen* is affected by the same mythopoetic perception of history (Orosz 2007b, 54–64), the poetic genius is naturally given an honoured position in the novel. The same idea, however, when transferred into the present, and no longer protected

[4] "It is called a child-like poetic spirit. Such a spirit is often found in youths who are mocked by the rabble because of the lofty simplicity of their behaviour and because they lack what people call worldly manners." (Hoffmann 1992, 56)

[5] "Poets of this naïve category are no longer at home in an articifal age. They are indeed scarcely even possible, at least in no other wise possible except they run wild in their own age and are preserved by some favorable destiny from its crippling influence. From society itself they can never arise; but from outside it they still sometimes appear, but rather as strangers at whom one stares, and as uncouth sons of nature by whom one is irritated." (Schiller, 1967, 109–110.)

by the ennobling feature of the past, becomes relative and degraded. By transferring him into this new artificial age, when the childlike poetic character is often misapplied and is laughed at, Hoffmann deprives his hero of his safe background. Accordingly, the main difference between the childlike poetic characters of Henry and Anselmus is created by this very time shift, since the student – to his great misfortune – was born as a contemporary of his author. That is why his real talent may stay hidden not only from the world but also from himself, until he becomes capable of accepting a new self-identification as a result of loving Serpentina and believing in another level of truth.

According to the historical semantics and metaphorical connotation of Kümmeltürke outlined above, at the beginning of the story Anselmus faces the most significant turning point of his life. The question is whether the third stage of the original semantics of Kümmeltürke will be fulfilled, and Anselmus will be able to integrate into the philistine society, or – as a verification of Serpentina's metaphor – Anselmus' hidden talent is indeed that childlike poetic character which would drive him to achieve a higher state of his own existence and become a poet.

2. Dämmerung – A Passage to Atlantis

Atlantis, the magical realm of poetry, reveals itself to Anselmus in the first twilight of the story, just after he describes himself as a Kümmeltürke. Then, having a childlike poetic soul and falling in love with Serpentina, he starts to understand the sounds of nature; he hears the voices of the evening breeze, the sunrays and the flowers. The motif of twilight (Dämmerung) appears to have a significant metaphorical function in the work, signalling the opening of the passage between the transcendent and the immanent spheres of the story. In other words, the term of Dämmerung, as a linguistic unit, is a permanent feature of the passage to Atlantis, and as such the poetical leitmotif of the work. As a transitional state between day and night, waking and dreaming, twilight (Dämmerung) is precisely the fleeting, and in fact very colourful, interval of time in which the two worlds can meet. The boundaries between the immanent and transcendent spheres are blurred, and the miracle of a higher existence (which only true love can evoke) suddenly emerges from behind reality.

Giving the base of the expression, the verb dämmern can refer to the changing light at dusk or dawn, as well as 'wondering' or 'being half asleep'. Therefore, the word Dämmerung refers not only to the external world but also to a subject

perceiving the world with his or her own senses: this complex meaning is where the metaphorical status of the expression comes from. In the text of *The Golden Pot*, there are three special twilights described with this same expression; in other cases, completely different linguistic forms can be found meaning the same light conditions (e.g. Abendsonne, ziemlich finster, im tiefen Dunkel, etc.). The first twilight (Dämmerung) of the work is the above-mentioned sunset, when Anselmus falls in love with Serpentina and glimpses an insight into the realm of Atlantis. The second twilight (Dämmerung) comes in the 4th Vigil when the student can finally pour out his soul to Lindhorst, who once again conjures Serpentina with the help of his magic ring. The third and last twilight (Dämmerung) comes in the 9th Vigil, where Anselmus falls for Veronica's temptation. The ominous twilight has deepened into full darkness by the time Anselmus, Heerbrand and Conrector Paulmann finish their coffees and transform into a real "punch company". However, in order to unfold the metaphorical meaning of these fragments, we must first understand the function of these twilights in the *Ofterdingen*.

Novalis uses the term Dämmerung a total of six times in his own novel, to denote dawn as well evening twilight. What is particularly noteworthy is that the term itself always appears twice in the text describing the events of the very same sunrise or sunset, and these events have a fundamental poetic significance. The first Dämmerung pair comes at the point when the dreamy appearance of the blue flower is described;[6] when the *longing* after the flower and for a higher level of knowledge is born in Henry's soul (*Sehnsucht*). The second pair stand as a symbolic term for the Middle Ages, and as such, mean that in-between state of existence in which Henry starts searching for the blue flower (*Suchen*). The last pair come in the Atlantis tale, presenting the finding and fulfilment of true love (*Vereinigung*) (Novalis 1982). The fruit of the princess and the young man's love is the child, obviously the symbol of poesy, with whom they can appear before the king of Atlantis. The young man wins the contest of the minstrels and the king welcomes him as his own son – thus the spiritual and physical parts of the tale reunite in perfect harmony. In other words, these three pairs of Dämmerungs condense the plot of the first part of the novel, which is the symbolic journey of becoming a poet. Provided that Anselmus's story is in fact an intertextual retelling of Henry's, the Novalis-based explanation of the Dämmerungs by Hoffmann leads to a different result.

[6] The Blue Flower is known as a major motif in Novalis's transcendental poetry, mainly as the symbol of love and poesy. Furthermore, as a plant, it also symbolizes the passage between the two worlds *(Sein – Dasein)*, and linking these with the former two, the Blue Flower means the transcendent realm of perfect harmony, or even Atlantis itself. (Pikulik, 2000, 219–226.)

Similarly to Novalis, Hoffmann starts using the term Dämmerung in pairs (i.e. the word shows up always twice in the text, while describing the events of the very same twilight) however, in *The Golden Pot* it refers strictly to sunsets.

While the first Dämmerung denotes the possibility of contacting Atlantis, the second one indicates the successful outcome of the connection. The border between the immanent and the transcendent spheres becomes blurred, and suddenly a higher level of reality emerges – which can only be developed by true love. These first Dämmerung-pair describe the twilight on the riverbank, during which Anselmus falls in love with Serpentina and gains an insight into the realm of Atlantis. The vision dissolves with the last vanishing rays of sun; however, the longing after its magic lingers on painfully in the student's soul (*Sehnsucht*) (Hoffmann 1981, 11–17). The second Dämmerung pair come in the 4th Vigil, when Anselmus can finally open his heart to Lindhorst, who visualizes Serpentina again using his magic ring, and reveals the meaning of the boy's vision. As a result, Anselmus decides to start copying the manuscripts of the Archivarius the very next day, which is also a parallel activity to the *Suchen* by Novalis (Hoffmann 1981, 51–52). The subversion, as expected, comes in the third, single standing Dämmerung, when on the one hand, Anselmus is not where he should be, and on the other, he lets himself be seduced by Veronica. The enjoyable consumption of the coffee, with its dark colour and its metal pot (through which the crone has appeared elsewhere) clearly shows that the dark forces have taken control over Anselmus even before the twilight (Dämmerung) falls (Hoffmann 1981, 108–109). Obviously, that is why this Dämmerung stands without a pair, and accordingly, as a motif, it cannot fulfil its original function either. Anselmus becomes conflicted in terms of his faith towards Serpentina, and his dreams become limited by the most everyday values.

That is why he cannot find the other world, although it should happen here and now, as was the function of the third Dämmerung pair in Novalis's novel. In other words, the Dämmerung motif is turned upside down in *The Golden Pot*, as the third twilight ends in the fulfilment of the hero's worldly fate, and as a result, Anselmus reaches the final meaning-stage of Kümmeltürke. As a result, the very next day he arrives to do his copy work as a proper philistine, who cannot see the wonders of Lindhorst's house, and drops an ink blot on the outspread original. At this point Anselmus seems to exhaust his own potential and his failure as an artist becomes complete. That is why the primal dilemma generated by the ambivalence in the meaning of Kümmeltürke can only be solved by locking him into the crystal bottle, which means that the metaphorical status of the term would be restored in

an ironic-magical way. The childlike poetic character can attain to a higher state of existence (i.e. become a poet) only unknowingly, through the external, artificial help of Lindhorst.

Consequently, from this time on, Kümmeltürke is not only a metaphor for the childlike poetic character, borrowed from Novalis, but its ironic resemantization as well, which moreover develops through the distortion of another well-known motif of Novalis's poetical discourse.[7] Regrettably none of our translators applies a standardized expression with reference to the *Dämmerung*s: "mélyedő alkony", "alkony könnyű habja", "késő homály", "sűrű alkony homálya", "leszállt az alkony" (Gaál 1919, 13; 16; 38; 79); "mély homály", "alkony", "leszálló esthomály", "alkonyat", "be is alkonyodott" (Horváth 1982, 24; 27; 46; 79); "a messzeség sűrűsödő köde", "alkonyat", "erősen bealkonyodott", "homály", "beállt az alkonyat" (Szegő 1972, 9; 14; 43; 44; 96); "homály", "alkony", "sűrű esthomály", "alkonyhomály", "alkonyra hajlott az idő" (Bor 1993, 9; 12; 36; 78); "mély alkony", "alkonyat", "sötét szürkület", "szürkület", "bealkonyodott" (Horváth 2007, 10; 14; 41; 42; 83.), although in my opinion it would not be impossible to find an equally apt Hungarian term (e.g. "alkonyi derengés" or "derengő félhomály") and use it consistently. As a result, the unique cases in which the linguistical description of a sunset is at the narrative level also a story-forming motif (i.e. marking a stage of the journey to Atlantis) are not at all distinguished from simple sunsets of the Hungarian translations published so far.

3. Atlantis as Böhmerlande?

The magic realm of Atlantis manifests itself for Anselmus during that twilight (Dämmerung) when, in his suddenly born love towards Serpentina, he experiences perfect natural harmony. In this momentary idyll he can hear the voices of the elder bush and the evening breeze and understand the song of the flowers' scent (*natura loquitur*). This description perfectly matches Novalis's *Golden Age Theory*, which means an "ancient state of harmony", when the magical power of words was still known for both the living and the dead elements of the world (Sata 2002). This recollection of the old earthly *Golden Age* appears in the first, Herodotus-based tale of the *Ofterdingen*, in the story of Airon. The second tale about Atlantis, as mentioned

[7] In Novalis's poem *Der Himmel war umzogen*, not only does a golden-green snake appear in the same symbolic function as Serpentina, but the poem creates the impression that the first *Dämmerung* scene of *The Golden Pot* was "the love-seasoned prosaic rewrite" of it. Gardiner's interpretation draws attention to those fundamental symbols (*Dämmerung, Erfüllung der Sehnsucht, Erkenntniss durch Vereinigung*) which are the constant elements of Novalis's poetry, as well as his religious and natural philosophy, and the figure of the snake is connected to the Loved One. (Uerlings, 1991, 328)

before, represents the symbolic means of becoming a poet. The tale of Klingsohr in the 9th Vigil (combining the biblical world of John's Revelations, Nordic Mythology and Jacob Böhme's mystical theology) indicates the forthcoming revival of the *Golden Age* of Atlantis, which would have been recreated by concluding the ever-increasing levels of the plot and from the magic of Henry's poetry. Through this, Novalis' turns the original mythologem into a tale, making up a new plot with utopian contents and following the triadic structure (harmony – disruption of harmony – restoration of harmony) typical of him (Orosz 2007a, 174–178).

In *The Golden Pot* there is no such allegorical correspondence between the particular layers of the narrative. The intradiegetic tales[8] are the subsequent parts of the very same *fabula*, according to which the original mythologem of Atlantis is resemanticised by the same triadic structure, but with a very colourful and unusual *sujet*. No wonder that the interpretation of this new Myth of Atlantis created by Hoffmann is still an open discussion in the critical literature (Kraus 2014, 70–73).

My hypothesis is that the Myth of Atlantis in *The Golden Pot* has a same intertextual relationship with Novalis as does the main story, but that as far as his theory of transcendence is concerned, Novalis himself was heavily inspired by another well-known author.[9] Besides leaving a perceptible mark on Novalis's writings, the mystic depth of Jacob Böhme's theosophy influenced various other representatives of early German Romanticism.[10] As an element in contemporary literary fashion, the mysticism of Jacob Böhme was also well known to Hoffmann (Holzhausen 1988). As such, it seems legitimate to presume that Hoffmann is also likely to have used some thesis of Böhme's mysticism by creating his own fantasy world (of Atlantis).

This theory may be supported by the first implicit appearance of Atlantis in the text, together with the twilight (Dämmerung) on the banks of the Elbe: "aus tiefer Dämmerung gaben die zackichten Gebirge Kunde vom fernen Böhmerlande" (Hoffmann 1981, 13) ["and the jagged peaks half-hidden by twilight announced the far land of Bohemia" (Hoffmann 1992, 3)]. In this context ("aus tiefer Dämmerung", "half-hidden by twilight"), the term Böhmerlande is primarily identified as a

[8] A second level of narration inside the main narrative; when the narration itself becomes part of the narrative. (Genette 1983, 212–262)

[9] "Novalis praised Böhme as a poet or, more specifically, as a writer who presented an inspired, poetic view of nature. In this connection it is significant that Böhme was the one speculative mystic whose work Novalis knew at first hand. […] From this premise, Paschek derived two others: as a poet, Böhme provided Novalis with a favourable alternative to Goethe's Wilhelm Meister, and also with a model for his Heinrich von Ofterdingen." (Mayer 1999, 76–95)

[10] "Among the lunacies of the romantic school in Germany, their incessant praise and glorification of Jacob Böhme merits special notice. This name was the shibboleth, as it were, of the school. When they pronounced the name of Jacob Böhme they put on their most solemn and reverential look. Were they in earnest or in jest?" (Heine, 1882, 117)

metaphor for the fantastic realm of Atlantis, but as a linguistic metaphor, it also refers the land of Böhme's mysticism. Another piece of circumstantial evidence of Böhme's influence on the text can be found in the 3rd Vigil, when Lindhorst (archivist in this world, and a fiery salamander in the other) tells the cosmogonic story of Atlantis and at the end of it states to his audience nothing less than: "aber es ist dessen unerachtet nichts weniger als ungereimt oder auch nur allegorisch gemeint, sondern buchstäblich wahr" (Hoffmann 1981, 36) ["nevertheless, it is very far from absurd or even allegorical, but literally true" (Hoffmann 1992, 17)]. The expression of buchstäblich Wahrheit ("literal truth") is also a prominent reference to Böhme's well-known concept about the unquestionability of the mystical truth (Gauger 2000, 33–34). The critical literature has not yet reached a consensus on either Böhme's formal education or his literacy apart from the Bible, with special regard to the fact that he did not understand Latin (Helferich 1992, 150). The only author known to have been read by Böhme is Theophrastus Bombast von Hohenheim, or Paracelsus, who had identified the salamander as the element of fire.[11]

Since, however, Böhmerlande is usually translated as a simple, geographical name, these clues leading to Böhme regrettably remain invisible in the Hungarian editions. That is why the mysticism of Böhme does not even come up during the interpretation, although the mystical-biblical symbols (e.g. the Lily, the Dragon or the Morning Star) known from his theory of the Revival in the Holy Spirit (Böhme 1846, 116–237), along with his Creation Concept written in his *Mysterium Pansophicum* (Böhme 1920) do provide an excellent theoretical basis for the ironic, fairy-tale-like resemantisation of the Myth of Atlantis (Lovizer 2019).

4. Conclusion

"All literature is imitation" (Szerb 2002, 133), or at least reflection. This is why, in the case of works with an obvious ars poetical meaning, foreign translations must also be able to show at least the most relevant literary tradition in relation to which these works (and their authors) define themselves, especially if the works themselves also explicitly aim to do so. As the above examples taken from the Hungarian translations show, many of those references by which *The Golden Pot* could be interpreted in its intertextual relation to contemporary Romanticism remain

[11] The theme of the conflict between humanity and nature, which became a popular topic during the Romanticism, appears first in the tale *Udine* written by Fouqué, whose source was also the pneumatology of Paracelsus. (Gallagher, 2009, 352) About the common linkage between Böhme and the figure of the salamander see the epigram written by Angelius Silesius (Kemper, 2010, 209).

invisible. This means that one of the most original intentions of the work has also remained hidden from Hungarian readers, and the possibility of the ironic reading mentioned in the introduction, and granted in the German original, is considerably limited. A careful analysis of these motifs borrowed from the *Ofterdingen* clearly proves that Hoffmann, in the fictional character and verbality of Anselmus, is in fact parodying the protagonist of Novalis's novel. The target, however, is not only his hero, but the whole mystical-syncretic enthusiasm of early German Romanticism, along with its rhetoric, and the solemn remedial epistemology of Novalis's tales. Consequently, *The Golden Pot*, as a parody of Novalis's concept of novel and tale, also takes a certain distance from this kind of utopic universalized genre of artistical tales (*Kunstmärchen*). The best example for this attitude is the admitted connection between the two works, the mythologem of Atlantis, which can be identified in both as a unique form of the Arcadian topos. Even though, while the Novalis tale restores the long-lost harmonic state of the world in his utopic fiction of Atlantis, *The Golden Pot*'s Atlantis will be resemantisized by the sceptical-ironic transcription of the romantic idea of the *Golden Age* as a fully separated fantasy world (Böhmerlände) (Mayer, 2000).

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