

HOW TO BUILD A UTOPIAN LIBRARY. LUDWIG HEVESI (1843–1910) AS COLLECTOR AND COMMENTATOR OF FANTASTIC LITERATURE

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“[M]any things have been [...] considered impossible which increasing knowledge has proved true, and others which still to common sense appear fictitious were believed in former times, when faith was more enlightened and the sphere of vision open to surpassing effects.” (Mary Anne Atwood 1850)¹
“It is intriguing to examine the parallel rise of two such contrary world pictures between which we can still observe intricate cross-fertilization.” (György E. Szőnyi 2004)²

Until around 1900, the idea that reason would determine every sphere of life and that exact scientific thinking would result in a comprehensive world view with gradual progress underwent some corrections and refutations. Contrary traditions of thought and parallel discourses of knowledge that aimed at different aspects of reason and at other ‘realities’ were revived and received attention. Sub-discourses such as occultism and spiritualism demonstratively undermined the coordinate system of scientific verifiability and falsifiability. The literary expression of a world that was becoming more complex instead of simpler was fantastic literature, which “was born in the vacuum after the collapse of the premodern, organic world picture in the segment of the space which could not be filled by the scientific-rationalistic world model.”³ This paper wants to present an author and his approach to fantasy that demonstrates both the complexity and the range of this historical situation. He distinguishes himself through two mutually reinforcing activities:

¹ Walter Leslie Wilmhurst, “Introduction,” in Mary Anne Atwood, *A Suggestive Inquiry into the Hermetic Mystery with a Dissertation on the More Celebrated of the Alchemical Philosophers Being an Attempt towards the Recovery of the Ancient Experiment of Nature*, new ed., ed. Walter Leslie Wilmhurst (Belfast: William Tai, 1918), v, quoted by György E. Szőnyi, *John Dee’s Occultism. Magical Exaltation through Powerful Signs* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 6.

² Szőnyi, *John Dee’s Occultism*, 17.

³ Attila Kiss and György E. Szőnyi, “The Iconography of the Fantastic: An Introduction,” in Attila Kiss, Márta Baróti-Gaál, and György E. Szőnyi, eds., *The Iconography of the Fantastic: Eastern & Western Traditions of European Iconography 2* (Szeged: JATE Press, 2002), 13. Szőnyi refers to Rosemary Jackson in the quoted passage.

by collecting books and by writing texts that question the basic postulates of knowledge of the time around 1900. The study of both activities can help to understand the epoch and the inner workings of its fantastic thinking and writing.

The Viennese feuilletonist, theatre and art critic Ludwig Hevesi (1843–1910) is not one of the much-mentioned intellectuals of Austria-Hungary. It was only with the emergence of new research into the era of the Dual Monarchy in the 1980s that his work came back into view. He is best known as a critic and apologist of the Vienna Secession (since 1897); his motto “To Every Age its Art, to Art its Freedom [Der Zeit ihre Kunst. Der Kunst ihre Freiheit]” can also still be seen today on the facade of the Secession Building.⁴ Born as Lajos Lőwy in the small Hungarian town of Heves, he was, after briefly studying medicine, working as a journalist in Pest after the 1860s. This work led to his first book publications, a whole volume of Pest City Feuilletons (1876) and the first city guide of the united Budapest (1873). In 1875 he was employed as a columnist at the *Fremden-Blatt* and moved to Vienna, restarting his journalistic career. But he also remained a correspondent for *Pester Lloyd* and published in numerous other newspapers and periodicals. In the thirty-five years of his Viennese activities, he became a well-known, generally esteemed and socially well-connected figure in the cultural life of both the Cisleithanian and Transleithanian parts of the empire. Hevesi made a living just from his profession, which enabled him to travel regularly as an art critic. As a city-famous workaholic, he wrote about 3000 newspaper articles in his lifetime. Among his books are six publications of art or literary criticism, four biographies, eight travel books,⁵ and thirteen feuilletonistic-humorous text collections. Of these works, the art-historical writings on the one hand and the literary feuilletonistic writings on the other have been studied as the most effective and representative documents of his time.⁶

As an art critic with a journalist’s income, Hevesi did not become an art collector, but nevertheless, as he reports in one of his feuilletons, he had a sense of what he calls “soul

⁴ On the art critic Hevesi cf. Ilona Sármany-Parsons, “The Art Criticism of Ludwig Hevesi in the Age of Historicism,” *Austrian Studies* 16 (2008), 87–104, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27944878>.

⁵ Only two titles should be mentioned here, the British and the American travel book, the latter a retelling of the ‘Adventures’ by Friedrich Eckstein (1861–1939): Ludwig Hevesi, *Ein Englischer September: Heitere Fahrten jenseits des Kanals* (Stuttgart: Bonz, 1891); Ludwig Hevesi, *Mac Eck’s Sonderbare Reisen zwischen Konstantinopel und San Francisco* (Stuttgart: Bonz, 1901).

⁶ Cf. Ilona Sármany-Parsons, *Bécs művészeti élete Ferenc József korában, ahogy Hevesi Lajos látta* [Vienna’s Art Life in the Era of Franz Joseph as Seen by Ludwig Hevesi] (Budapest: Balassi, 2019); Endre Hárs, *Der mediale Fußabdruck: Zum Werk des Wiener Feuilletonisten Ludwig Hevesi (1843–1910)* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2020).

of a thing [Sachenseele]."⁷ He also found a compromise between his interest in objects and his professional skills by passionately and systematically collecting books. Reference books and art albums also served his art criticism as they were the contemporary media and a necessary tool. He also accrued further thematic collections out of hobby and interest. His collections of books reached such a volume, and were acquired with such accuracy, that they could be considered an archive of the state of knowledge of the period. And since they were auctioned after Hevesi's death, information about their extent and composition can be obtained today from the available auction catalogues. The art-historical collection was auctioned off in 1921 with 3237 titles, with individual titles comprising entire series of museum catalogues.⁸ There was also a Viennensia collection and a collection of fiction about which no information has been preserved. All the more important in the present context is that Hevesi also had a so-called "Curiosa" collection, which was auctioned off by the Vienna Book and Art Antiquarian Gilhofer & Ranschburg under the title *Bibliotheca Utopistica. Katalog einer merkwürdigen Sammlung von Werken utopischen Inhalts* [Bibliotheca Utopistica. Catalogue of a Curious Collection of Works of Utopian Content] in 1911. This catalogue is available and contains more than just the titles: it offers a certain systematics, and also a concept, which is explained in an introduction.

The *Bibliotheca Utopistica* played a special role in Hevesi's work and self-image. It concerned a field that was not his profession, such as art and theatre at the *Fremden-Blatt*. Rather, it was a hobby, which he also addressed as such. Sometimes he called himself "a future-sleuth by profession [Zukunftsschnüffler von Beruf]"⁹ who performed a "utopian sport [Utopiensport]."¹⁰ Sometimes he ironized that the modern "lord prophets [Herren Propheten]"¹¹ of the future can hardly tell him anything new. At the same time, he was well aware of the role collecting had in his literary formation and of the bibliophilic value of the *Bibliotheca Utopistica*:

Sometimes I browse the curiosity corner of my library. There are many hundreds of them together, the printed implausibilities that I have collected for a quarter of a century from countries all over the world. Venerable follies, great fantasies, great and small literary miracles from immature and super-smart centuries. [...] After my death, my library will undoubtedly be one of the most interesting catalogues; other book lovers (Grise-

⁷ L. H-i., "Die Sachenseele," *Pester Lloyd*, January 1, 1907, [1–2].

⁸ Cf. Sármany-Parsons, "The Art Criticism of Ludwig Hevesi," 92; Sármany-Parson, *Bécs művészeti élete*, 30–1.

⁹ L. H-i., "Neues aus der Zukunft (G. Tarde, 1843–1904)," *Pester Lloyd*, May 26, 1906, [2].

¹⁰ L. H-i., "Anatole France als Utopist," *Pester Lloyd*, April 2, 1905, [5].

¹¹ L. H-i., "Neues aus der Zukunft," [2].

bach) already publish their catalogues in their lifetime without owning such strange material.¹²

I collect such things more out of principle and for the sake of completeness; and so that one day the auction catalogue of my library will be even richer in such oddities.¹³

Such self-comments are not to be read without self-irony. Hevesi recognised and reflected on his love for books as a passion, and even more so for this collection as a special passion. Nevertheless, he regularly reviewed books that belonged into this collection, although more so in the *Pester Lloyd*, where he had more freedom in the choice of topics. The fact is that the collection represents a special knowledge that is reflected in its order and at the same time poses riddles. The Bibliotheca Utopistica contains 1850 titles, which are arranged in eleven thematic sections in the auction catalogue. It is rather unlikely that the rubrication of the catalogue was managed by its publisher. It is more likely that Hevesi's own structure was followed. He once speaks about "entire 'directions' [...], entire literatures on offbeat subjects"¹⁴ being represented in the collection, and he also refers to the departments of his library elsewhere.¹⁵ In any case, they appear in the catalogue in the following order:

1. General – Novels of utopian content – Fantastic adventures – Political and social satires and caricatures
2. Socialist Utopias – Thomas More. His predecessors and successors – Future and fantasy state – Eternal peace – World wars and future wars

¹² "Manchmal stöbere ich in dem Kuriositätenwinkel meiner Bibliothek. Da stehen sie zu vielen Hunderten beisammen, die gedruckten Unglaubwürdigkeiten, die ich seit einem Vierteljahrhundert aus den Ländern aller Herren gesammelt. Ehrwürdige Verbohrungen, tolle Hirngespinnste, große und kleine literarische Mirakel aus unmündigen und superklugen Jahrhunderten. [...] Meine Bibliothek wird nach meinem Tode ohne Zweifel einen der interessantesten Kataloge ergeben; andere Bücherliebhaber (Grisebach) geben ihre Kataloge schon zu Lebzeiten heraus, ohne so merkwürdiges Material zu haben." L. H-i., "Zwei Bücher Verfolgungswahn," *Pester Lloyd*, June 14, 1899, [2]. For the collection Hans Grisebach (1848–1904) cf. accessed February 21, 2022, <https://www.smb.museum/museen-einrichtungen/kunstbibliothek/sammeln-forschen/ueber-die-sammlungen/sammlung-buch-und-medienkunst/>.

¹³ "Ich sammle derlei Dinge schon mehr aus Grundsatz und der Vollständigkeit halber; und damit einst der Versteigerungskatalog meiner Bibliothek noch reichhaltiger an solchen Sonderbarkeiten ausfalle." L. H-i., "Neues aus der Zukunft," [2].

¹⁴ „ganze 'Richtungen' [...], ganze Literaturen über ausgefallene Themata". L. H-i., "Zwei Bücher Verfolgungswahn," [3].

¹⁵ Cf. Ludwig Hevesi, "Esperanto," *Pester Lloyd*, September 6, 1908, 1–3.

3. Arcadia – Paradise – Happy Island – Golden Age – Atlantis – Amazons
4. Mars – Moon – North Pole – L'autre monde
5. Prophecies – Dreams – End of the world – Divinations
6. Airship travel – Utopian technical inventions
7. Pasigraphy and Pasilogy – Universal Language and Universal Writing
8. Robinsonades
9. Small-towner satires [Krähwinkeliaden] – Philistines [Schildbürger]
10. Occultism – Magic – Spiritism – Secret Societies – Ancient Astronomy
11. Heaven & Hell – Death – Resurrection – Life after death – Angels – Devil – Purgatory – Elysium literature¹⁶

This list surprises with a historical and thematic breadth that threatens to go beyond the disciplinary-categorical framework. Historically, there are works from the 16th to the 20th century (14 titles from the 16th century, 98 titles from the 17th century, the oldest work in the collection being the second edition of Thomas More's *Utopia* from 1518). The first two sections are the most extensive (with 635 and 333 titles respectively), followed by Section 11 (with 226 titles), Section 3 (with 161 titles) and Section 10 (with 152 titles). The numerical ratios indicate two focal points, the utopian-social on the one hand, and the occult or supernatural on the other. The two focal points are in turn grazed by subcategories that transfer their theme into the literary (Small towners-epics), into the adventurous (Robinsonades), and last but not least into the scientific-fantastic (Mars – Moon etc., Airship travel, Pasigraphy and Pasilogy). Some titles are annotated in the catalogue, especially if they are rarities. In some cases, they even contain brief information on the content.

The question arises as to what holds this collection together. Is there a concept behind it, does curiosity mean more here than just the hobby of a bibliophile intellectual? The Austrian political economist Friedrich von Kleinwächter (1838–1927) wrote an introduction to the catalogue in which he outlines a concept for the collection. Kleinwächter,

¹⁶ *Bibliotheca Utopistica: Sammlung des + Schriftstellers Ludwig Hevesi. Katalog einer merkwürdigen Sammlung von Werken utopistischen Inhalts 16–20. Jahr. Aus dem Nachlasse des + Schriftstellers Ludwig Hevesi.* introd. Hofrat Prof. Dr. Friedrich von Kleinwächter (Wien: Buch- und Kunstantiquariat Gilhofer & Ranschburg, 1911; repr. München: Omnia-Minireprint, 1977).

who already presented a study on “state novels [Staatsromane]”¹⁷ in 1891, expands the field here by adding the category of “future images [Zukunftsbilder].”¹⁸ While the state novels (subdivided into “political” and “economic”¹⁹ works) deal with human social relations, the future images deal with the relationship to nature. Future images “start from the advances of science and technology and try to paint a picture of what human life will be like when we have those achievements.”²⁰ Kleinwächter also names the “adventurous journeys [abenteuerliche Reisen]” as a subcategory of the state novels, and the “planetary [siderische]”²¹ novels as their counterpart in future images. His classification is particularly suitable for subdividing the “utopian writings”²², i. e. sections 1 and 2 (as well as sections 3 and 4). It documents a stage of development where there is not yet a clear differentiation between utopian thinking and literary utopia. Kleinwächter’s interpretation of the catalogue refers to the ideas of the era about utopian literature in the broadest sense. In today’s research, utopian fictions are seen as having a “hybrid character”: they are seen as a theoretical challenge because their “aspirations are both political (to convince the reader of the desirability of its particular social vision) and aesthetic (to do so in an artistically convincing manner).”²³ Around 1900, utopias were all the more understood as world concepts, and thus as expository texts for a future society.²⁴ “In the 19th century, the idea of utopia was linked [...] to that of scientific research, prediction and influence on the social movement”²⁵, writes Hans Freyer, an early exponent of this view. As a consequence of this development, utopia “becomes a social-scientific system, and vice versa: social-

¹⁷ Friedrich Kleinwächter, *Die Staatsromane: Ein Beitrag zur Lehre vom Communismus und Socialismus* (Wien: M. Breitensteiner’s Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1891).

¹⁸ Friedrich von Kleinwächter, “Die utopistische Literatur,” in *Bibliotheca Utopistica*, IV.

¹⁹ Kleinwächter, *Die Staatsromane*, 7; Kleinwächter, “Die utopistische Literatur,” IV.

²⁰ “Die neueren Schriften dieser Art gehen von den Fortschritten der Naturwissenschaften und der Technik aus und versuchen es, ein Bild davon zu entwerfen wie sich das menschliche Leben gestalten wird, wenn wir jene Errungenschaften besitzen werden.” *Ibid.*, V.

²¹ *Ibid.*, VI.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Chris Ferns, *Narrating Utopia: Ideology, Gender, Form in Utopian Literature* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), 5.

²⁴ Cf. Matthew Beaumont, *Utopia Ltd.: Ideologies of Social Dreaming in England 1870–1900* (Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2005), 1–6 and 194–95.

²⁵ Hans Freyer, *Die politische Insel: Eine Geschichte der Utopien von Plato bis zur Gegenwart* (Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut, 1936), 150, quoted from Birgit Affeldt-Schmidt, *Fortschrittsutopien: Vom Wandel der utopischen Literatur im 19. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Metzler 1991), 13.

scientific systems become utopias or end up as such."²⁶ The first interpreters of the concept of utopian literature also held the opinion: "The principle is in the foreground, fiction serves as a means of transport."²⁷ It will be shown below that Hevesi does not agree with contemporary opinion on all points, i. e. that he already has an awareness of the difference between "Utopian form" and "Utopian wish."²⁸

However, with the distinction between state novels and future pictures Kleinwächter also captures another important characteristic of both the development of utopian literature and Hevesi's orientation.

[I]n late nineteenth century utopias, subversive visions were relocated in a future time when the process of revolutionary, historical change brought about the utopian society. At this point in the development of the genre, history more directly entered the texts, and utopian novels more regularly provided accounts of the required transition from the present to utopia.²⁹

As a result, temporal utopias (uchronias) have also become established alongside traditional (spatial) utopias. Reinhart Koselleck sees this development as the outcome of a comprehensive temporalisation of historical thinking and locates its beginning earlier, namely in a utopia, in Louis-Sébastien Mercier's *L'An 2440, rêve s'il en fut jamais* [The Year 2440: A Dream If Ever There Was One] (1771) as a paradigmatic text.³⁰ For Hevesi's time, Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward 2000–1887* (1888) is regarded as a special literary event that gave new impetus to utopian literature, especially its temporal direction. The anticipation of the future did not completely erase the utopian preference for order and

²⁶ "[Utopien werden] zum sozialwissenschaftlichen System, und umgekehrt: die sozialwissenschaftlichen Systeme werden zu Utopien oder enden in einer solchen". Ibid.

²⁷ "Das Prinzip steht im Vordergrund, die Fiktion dient als Transportmittel." Affeldt-Schmidt, *Fortschrittsutopien*, 3.

²⁸ Fredric Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* (London / New York: Verso, 2007), 1. Cf. "Introduction: Utopia Now." xiv: "[O]ur discussion will be complicated by the existence, alongside the Utopian genre of text as such, of a Utopian impulse which infuses much else, in daily life as well as in its texts". Cf. Löwe's differentiation between utopian consciousness and literary utopia: Matthias Löwe, *Idealstaat und Anthropologie: Problemgeschichte der literarischen Utopie im späten 18. Jahrhundert* (Berlin / Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), 7–14.

²⁹ Tom Moylan, *Demand the Impossible: Science Fiction and the Utopian Imagination*, ed. Raffaella Baccolini (Oxford, etc.: Peter Lang, 2014), 6.

³⁰ Reinhart Koselleck, "Die Verzeitlichung der Utopie," in Koselleck, *Zeitschichten: Studien zur Historik Mit einem Beitrag von Hans-Georg Gadamer* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2000), 131–49.

statics,³¹ but nevertheless it enriched the literary toolbox with dynamic elements. In his introduction, Kleinwächter gives in to this tendency towards temporalization by discussing the future – in contrast to his previous work – as a legitimate part of utopian literature. Although the state novels were “the scientific basis on which the theories of the serious national economists are built,”³² yet the new “kind of fantastic treatment of the great questions of the future intended for the large public is just as important.”³³ It is all the more important for Hevesi, who proves to be “an idealist in the most ideal sense of the word”³⁴. In fact, the feuilletonist ascribes particular importance to utopias of the future and the experience of temporality. The tendency emerges in his collection of books and becomes the driving force behind his own utopian writings.

Kleinwächter ends his introduction to the catalogue with the words: Hevesi’s collection “would deserve to become, in its entirety, a central consultation point for all questions that concern future theory in the broadest sense.”³⁵ It is noticeable, however, that the collection offers more “in its entirety” than is captured by the keywords ‘utopia’ and ‘theory of the future’. Some sections, such as the Robinsonades, even the Small-towner satires, require an explanation if they are to be understood in a utopian framework. The last two sections of the catalogue seem borderline and committed to an older tradition. We can assume that Kleinwächter could not fit them in and did not feel obliged to be stringent in an auction catalogue. But what is the significance of the occult sciences (Section 10) and the theological ideas of the afterlife (Section 11) in Hevesi’s supposedly utopian library? In her study of the fantastic literature of early modernity, Marianne Wunsch determines occult events and occult explanations in the broadest sense as phenomena that are “considered impossible and inexplicable within the cultural concept of reality.”³⁶ But she describes the period between 1890 and 1930 as one in which, alongside the dominant cultural knowledge and its theological-ontological or scientific “basic pos-

³¹ Cf. Ferns, *Narrating Utopia*, 102–4.

³² “die streng wissenschaftliche Grundlage, auf der sich die Theorien der ernsten Nationalökonomien aufbauen”. Kleinwächter, “Die utopistische Literatur,” VII.

³³ “die für das große Publikum bestimmte Art der fantastischen Behandlung der großen Zukunftsfragen ebenso wichtig”. Ibid.

³⁴ “ein Idealist im idealsten Sinne des Wortes”. Ibid.

³⁵ “[E]ine Sammlung, die es verdienen würde, in ihrer Gesamtheit eine konsultative Zentralstelle für alle, die Zukunftstheorie im weitesten Sinne des Wortes behandelnden Fragen zu werden”. Kleinwächter, “Die utopistische Literatur,” VII.

³⁶ “im Rahmen des kulturellen Realitätsbegriffs als unmöglich und als nicht-erklärungs-fähig”. Marianne Wunsch, *Die fantastische Literatur der frühen Moderne (1890–1930): Definition, denkgeschichtlicher Kontext, Strukturen* (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1998), 49.

tulates [Basispostulate]”, occult ideas also found a certain recognition.³⁷ In some social groups, among the educated, even among scientists, the occult gained relevance, which Wünsch explains to be the consequence of a “weak point in the scientific system of the 19th and early 20th century.”³⁸ According to Wünsch, modern science had not yet grasped all areas of the social, and the interest in the occult resulted from these desiderata: from shortcomings of contemporary psychology and a “reduced religious need”³⁹ that occupied the void of the old theology. This resulted in ideas becoming acceptable that otherwise did not conform with knowledge, so that spiritualist phenomena were even taken seriously (and examined) by scientists, and the representatives of the secret teachings acted on behalf of science. The *Bibliotheca Utopistica* illustrates the (pseudo-)scientific thinking of its time in the way it implements the project of collection. The “basic postulates” of the epoch both forbid and allow ideas about the order of the world and the future of human society to be drawn from fields as startlingly different as the rubrics of the collection illustrate. The historical background not only explains the inclusion of theological and occult literature, it also guarantees the connections between the most diverse disciplines, which are astounding from today’s perspective. It corresponds, for example, to the state of knowledge of the epoch when, in Section 10, pieces of occultist, astrophysical and Darwinian (!) literature are brought together. Also, the envisioned framework of thought allows works of the 18th century and contemporary literature to be invested with the same competence in thinking about possibility and the future. The question of seriousness and non-seriousness, truth claims and distortions – “reality compatibility [Realitätskompatibilität]” or “reality incompatibility [Realitätsinkompatibilität]”⁴⁰ – is decided through categories that are quite open by today’s standards. Thus, the difference between (literary) utopias and science fiction literature is also suspended, which Kleinwächter had already suggested but only later clarified.

Finally, a strong reference to the epoch is also evident in the openness of the *Bibliotheca Utopistica* to popular science on the one hand, and to trivial literature on the other. Hevesi pursued his thematic priorities without aesthetic-philosophical restrictions. As Section 1, the most extensive section of the collection, demonstrates, he not only drew on all kinds of curiosities from the 18th century, but also surveyed the literary market of his time. The emergence of science fiction literature is linked to the boom and mass

³⁷ Ibid., 19 and 55.

³⁸ “Schwachstelle im Wissenschaftssystem des 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhunderts”. Ibid., 121.

³⁹ “reduziertes religiöses Bedürfnis,” Ibid., 119.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 25.

production of entertainment literature.⁴¹ The interest of this literature in new technical inventions and scientific discoveries has always precluded its classification as high literature. Hevesi's principle of collecting was also based in this respect on special thematic circumspection instead of bibliophilic indiscriminateness.

How Hevesi's collecting activities influenced his reading habits and vice versa can only be speculated on, due to the lack of concrete life documents of the feuilletonist (for letters and notes have hardly survived). However, a number of writings of different genres testify to the yield of his readings in the context of the Bibliotheca Utopistica. On the one hand, these are literary texts, short stories and humoresques, and on the other, commentaries on the times and reviews. Of his large-scale humoristic-novellistic oeuvre – ca. 240 titles – about 30 are explicitly fantastic. Hevesi showed great interest in the theme of "time", as also evidenced by the – parodistic and deliberately exaggerated – title of his collection *Die fünfte Dimension. Humore der Zeit, des Lebens, der Kunst* [The Fifth Dimension. Humoresques about Time, Life and Art] (1906).⁴² The fantastic humoresques move the plot into the future and exaggerate modernization in a way that becomes a satire of the present.⁴³ In his short stories, which are fantastic in the strict sense of the word, Hevesi makes use – in addition to the all-embracing humour – of a literary artifice that accompanies him throughout his entire oeuvre. Hermann Bahr characterized this in 1898 as follows:

His [Hevesi's] humour consists in making plausible for us, even proving, something that is actually unthinkable. This is done by first showing us a little trait that we can indulge, then a second of evident truth, a third of which we cannot escape, and so we do not even notice that we are suddenly already in the fantastic.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Cf. Patrick Parrinder, *Science Fiction: Its Criticism and Teaching* (London / New York: Routledge, 2003), 29–47.

⁴² According to Volkert, "higher" (as "higher being", "higher dimensionality") is a favourite word of Charles Howard Hinton. Cf. Klaus Volkert, *In höheren Räumen: Der Weg der Geometrie in die vierte Dimension* (Berlin: Springer, 2018), 224; Charles Howard Hinton, *The Fourth Dimension* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1904), e.g., 2 and 37 (106 occurrences throughout the book).

⁴³ Cf. Ludwig Hevesi, "Flagranti: Ein Reiseerlebnis," in Hevesi, *Flagranti und andere Heiterkeiten* (Stuttgart: Adolf Bonz & Comp., 1909) 39–53; "Grand Hotel Styx: Ein Reisebild aus dem modernisierten Griechenland," in *Ibid.*, 54–66.

⁴⁴ "Sein Humor besteht darin, uns etwas plausibel zu machen, ja zu beweisen, das eigentlich undenkbar ist. Dies geschieht, indem er uns zuerst einen kleinen Zug zeigt, den wir uns gefallen lassen können, dann einen zweiten von evidenter Wahrheit, einen dritten, dem wir uns nicht entziehen dürfen und so merken wir es gar nicht, daß wir auf einmal schon im Phantastischen sind." Hermann Bahr, "Ludwig Hevesi," *Die Zeit*, July 9, 1898, 27.

This technique, which is even effective in Hevesi's writings critical of art and theatre, reaches a level in the fantastic novellas that corresponds to Tzvetan Todorov's well-known definition of the fantastic as "uncertainty" ("hesitation" between the natural and the supernatural).⁴⁵

Even more clearly than the fantastic humoresques and short stories, Hevesi's commentaries on the times and reviews can be related to the sections of the *Bibliotheca Utopistica*. Like his reports on daily events – a broad field in the work of the feuilletonist – several commentaries deal with technical innovations, voyages of discovery and special events in public life. This group of texts includes, for example, feuilletons on travelling by automobile,⁴⁶ on aviation technology – specifically on the International Airship Exhibition in Frankfurt am Main with the approach of Count Zeppelin's 'Z II' in 1909⁴⁷ – and on technically equipped voyages of discovery.⁴⁸ They are in line with section 6 of the collection. Section 7 is also a topic that occupied Hevesi throughout his life: his two detailed reviews on the occasion of the World Esperanto Congress in Dresden in 1908 are explicit documents of this.⁴⁹ Activities of an occult nature were also not overlooked by Hevesi. He wrote articles on hypnotism, on the famous medium Héléne Smith (1861–1929), and in his American travel book, which goes back to Friedrich Eckstein (1861–1939), several episodes are dedicated to Madame Blavatsky (1831–1891), Henry Steel Olcott (1832–1907) and the Theosophical Society.⁵⁰

The connection with the *Bibliotheca Utopistica* is most evident in Hevesi's reviews. At least 20 reviews focus on the core of the collection and document the feuilletonist's

⁴⁵ Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, trans. Richard Howard (Cleveland / London: The Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1973), 25. Cf. my analysis of the following novellas: "Ein Stück Zukunft.", in Ludwig Hevesi, *Das bunte Buch: Humoresken aus Zeit und Leben, Litteratur und Kunst* (Stuttgart: Adolf Bonz & Comp., 1898), 138–150; "Die Rumpelkammer: Ein Spuk," in Hevesi, *Die fünfte Dimension: Humore der Zeit, des Lebens, der Kunst* (Wien: Carl Konegen/Ernst Stülpnagel, 1906), 151–63; "Ein moderner Nachmittag," in Hevesi, *Flagranti*, 166–177. Hárs, *Der mediale Fußabdruck*, 287–97.

⁴⁶ Ludwig Hevesi, "Auto," in Hevesi, *Flagranti*, 142–52.

⁴⁷ Ludwig Hevesi, "Zeppelintage," *Pester Lloyd*, August 4, 1909, 1–2.

⁴⁸ Ludwig Hevesi, "Wellman am Nordpol," *Pester Lloyd*, September 22, 1907, 1.

⁴⁹ Ludwig Hevesi, "Esperanto," *Pester Lloyd*, September 6, 1908, 1–3; "Nochmals Esperanto," *Pester Lloyd*, September 29, 1908, 1–3.

⁵⁰ L.H-i, "Die drei Zauberer von Nancy: Nach Mittheilungen des Dr. Wilhelm v. Bragassy," *Pester Lloyd*, May 27, 1891, [5], about Hippolyte Bernheim and hypnotism; L.H-i, "Mlle Helene Smith: Die subliminalen Romane einer supranormalen Dame," *Pester Lloyd*, February 24, 1901, [2–3], and February 26, 1901, [5–7], about Héléne Smith; Ludwig Hevesi, *Mac Eck's Sonderbare Reisen zwischen Konstantinopel und San Francisco* (Stuttgart: Bonz, 1901), about Theosophy.

attitude to the utopian. As these writings prove, he can be very critical of utopias, yet his reviews show that he reads them precisely against the aforementioned historical horizon of reality compatibility and incompatibility and consequently examines them for their plausibility. He operates in a time when “the eutopian ideal [das eutopische Ideal]”⁵¹ has not yet been abandoned, albeit subject to increasing change and literarisation. The feuilletonist reviewed, among others, works that did not really deserve attention – that he regarded rather as curiosities –, and whose authors he consequently did not spare in his aesthetic judgement. He dealt, for example, with the sub-genre of the “French future wars”,⁵² represented by Capitaine Danrit (pseudonym of Colonel Emile-Cyprien Driant, 1855–1916) and Pierre Maël (pseudonym of Charles Causse, 1862–1904, and Charles Vincent, 1851–1920), and reviewed the latter’s novel *Le Sous-marin ‘Le Vengeur’* [The submarine ‘Le Vengeur’] (1902). He introduced the readers of *Pester Lloyd* to the “Zionist-socialist-Jules Verneist-criminalist novel [zionistisch-sozialistisch-Jules Verneistisch-kriminalistischer Roman]”⁵³ *The Lord of the Sea* (1901) by Matthew Phipps Shiell (1865–1947) and the “fantastic-satirical novel [phantastisch-satirischer Roman]”⁵⁴ *Pantalonie. Histoires romanesques* (1900) by Camille de Sainte-Croix (1859–1915). These are harsh critiques that value the satirical far more highly than the “into the blue and ever bluer [Blaue und immer Blauere]”⁵⁵ fantasies of the authors. Similarly, he did not spare the reform pedagogue Hermann Lietz (1868–1919), in whose utopian novel *Emlohstobba. Roman oder Wirklichkeit? Bilder aus dem deutschen Schulleben der Vergangenheit, Gegenwart oder Zukunft?* [Emlohstobba. Novel or Reality? Images from German School Life of the Past, Present or Future?] (1897), Hevesi found the utopian element illusionary and unlitrary.⁵⁶ He also reported almost sarcastically on Konstantin Sergeevich Mereshkovsky’s (1855–1921) *Das irdische Paradies. Ein Märchen aus dem 27. Jahrhundert. Eine Utopie* [The Earthly Paradise. A Fairy Tale from the 27th Century. A Utopia] (1903) in which he mocked

⁵¹ Affeldt-Schmidt, *Fortschrittsutopien*, 312.

⁵² L. H-i., “Das neuerdings vernichtete England: Ein Kapitel aus der nächsten Zukunft,” *Pester Lloyd*, August 24, 1902, [2]. The reviewed work under Nr. 308, Section 1 of the *Bibliotheca Utopistica*.

⁵³ L. H-i., “Der neueste Messias: Ein zionistisch-sozialistisch-Jules-Verneisch-kriminalistischer Roman,” *Pester Lloyd*, December 19, 1901, [2]. The reviewed work under Nr. 494, Section 1 of the *Bibliotheca Utopistica*.

⁵⁴ L. H-i., “Pantalonien: Ein phantastisch-satirischer Roman,” *Pester Lloyd*, July 29, 1900, [2]. The reviewed work under Nr. 461, Section 1 of the *Bibliotheca Utopistica*.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ L. H-i., “Der Schulstaat Emlohstobba,” *Pester Lloyd*, August 29, 1897, [2–3]. The title is the inversion of Abbotsholme, the reform school founded by Cecil Reddie (1858–1932), where Lietz worked for a time. The reviewed work is not available in the *Bibliotheca Utopistica*.

the counter-civilisational aspect, the reversed utopia of the “glorious, all-salvation imperfection.”⁵⁷

Hevesi was no less critical of the more demanding utopian-fantastic literature. In his review of Anatol France’s (1844–1924) novel *Sur la Pierre Blanche* [The White Stone] (1905), he contrasted the French writer with the narrative instance of the utopian internal story of the novel (“Par la porte de corne ou par la porte d’ivoire [Through the Horn or the Ivory Gate]”), attesting to France’s literary talent but attesting to his utopian subtext’s lack of imagination.⁵⁸ Hevesi also took a distanced approach to Upton Sinclair’s (1878–1968) *The Industrial Republic* (1907), excerpting its “American jungle of numbers and values”⁵⁹ with ironic precision, while seeing the criticism of capitalism thereby grounded seep into the author’s political message. Gabriel Tarde’s (1843–1904) *Fragment d’histoire future* [Underground Man] (1896) was discussed by Hevesi not only in memory of the sociologist who had died two years earlier, but also in awareness of the current conjuncture of utopian works. At the end of his two-part feuilleton, he writes about Tarde: “He is a fine critic of the present and a penetrating ironist. A smiling leader ad absurdum, with whose inspirations our Wells and even Vernes cannot remotely compete. His picture of deductive culture is among the wittiest that the satire of omniscience has ever invented.”⁶⁰ It is difficult to decide on the basis of the passage quoted whether the plural form “our Wells and even Vernes” refers to the mentioned conjuncture and its (arguably bad) successors or is a tribute to the leading utopians of the era. In any case, the writings that Hevesi dedicated to Verne and Wells convey a rather positive impression.

Although the French novelist Jules Verne was considered a reference figure in (later so-called) science fiction literature around this time, there were also already critical voices regarding his scientific and literary competence.⁶¹ Hevesi published two ‘mirror-image’

⁵⁷ “herrliche, alleinseligmachende Verunvollkommnung”. L. H-i., “Die Utopie der Utopien,” *Pester Lloyd*, December 21, 1902, [2]. The reviewed work under Nr. 1073, Section 3 of the *Bibliotheca Utopistica*.

⁵⁸ L. H-i., “Anatole France als Utopist,” *Pester Lloyd*, April 2, 1905, [5–6]. Cf. Anatole France, *The White Stone*, trans. Charles E. Roche (London / New York: John Lane, 1910).

⁵⁹ “amerikanischer Urwald von Zahlen und Werten”. L. H-i., Upton Sinclair’s industrielle Utopie: Angeblich keine Utopie,” *Pester Lloyd*, September 8, 1907, 1–2.

⁶⁰ “Er ist ein feiner Kritiker der Gegenwart und ein durchdringender Ironiker. Ein lächelnder Führer ad absurdum, mit dessen Eingebungen unsere Wells und gar Vernes sich nicht entfernt messen können. Sein Gemälde der deduktiven Kultur gehört zum Geistreichsten, was die Satire der Allwissenheit je ausgeheckt hat [...]”. L. H-i., “Neues aus der Zukunft,” *Pester Lloyd*, May 27, 1906, [9]. Cf. Gabriel Tarde, *Underground Man*, trans. Cloudesley Brereton (London: Duckworth & Co., 1905).

⁶¹ Cf. Roland Innerhofer, *Deutsche Science Fiction 1870–1914: Rekonstruktion und Analyse der Anfänge einer Gattung* (Wien / Köln / Weimar: Böhlau, 1996), 58–78.

feuilletons on the same day, a month after Verne's death, one in the *Fremden-Blatt* entitled *Jules Verne in der Hölle. Ein Brief des verstorbenen Schriftstellers an Ludwig Hevesi* [Jules Verne in Hell. A letter from the deceased writer to Ludwig Hevesi],⁶² and another in the *Pester Lloyd* entitled *Jules Verne im Himmel. Ein Brief des verstorbenen Schriftstellers an Ludwig Hevesi* [Jules Verne in Heaven. A letter from the deceased writer to Ludwig Hevesi].⁶³ In each of the two humorous 'Letters', 'Jules Verne' reports on disappointments in the afterlife, albeit of different kinds. Hell seems backward to him, and he is frustrated because his proposals for improving the technology of the infernal machinery are not accepted. In heaven, his "sacred physics [heilige Physik]"⁶⁴ is overtaken by higher metaphysics. In view of the "higher dimensionality" that opens up in the afterlife, he proves himself to be a representative of an outdated belief in technical progress. By publishing the two feuilletons in parallel, Hevesi left the decision about the value and expected reception history of the French writer to the readership but hinted that Verne's fantasy has its limits and might soon be considered obsolete.

Hevesi's opinion of Herbert George Wells (1866–1946) was much more positive, attributing to the British predecessor of science fiction precisely the role that later research would describe.⁶⁵ In his review of *A Modern Utopia* (1905) he expressed his thoughts on utopian literature most explicitly; it can be read as the feuilletonist's clearest statement on the subject, confirming Kleinwächter's overall assessment of the *Bibliotheca Utopistica*. Wells' *Utopia* is, according to Hevesi, not only a "utopian journey", it is also a "critical analysis of a series of significant pre-utopias."⁶⁶ The reason for this is that Wells does not want to give a "recipe", does not work "deductively" like earlier utopias, but builds the alternative world "inductively, ranked upwards from practical experience."⁶⁷ According to Hevesi, two main characteristics make *A Modern Utopia* a progressive representative of the genre: its socio-psychological interest and its temporality:

He [Wells] does not travel into the impossible, but into the possible. Into a twentieth century that does not present us with a frozen (alleged) perfection, but with states in

⁶² Ludwig Hevesi, "Jules Verne in der Hölle: Ein Brief des verstorbenen Schriftstellers an Ludwig Hevesi," *Fremden-Blatt*, April 23, 1905, 17–8. Also in Hevesi, *Die fünfte Dimension*, 1–16.

⁶³ Ludwig Hevesi, "Jules Verne im Himmel: Ein Brief des verstorbenen Schriftstellers an Ludwig Hevesi," *Pester Lloyd*, April 23, 1905, [3], [5]. Also in Hevesi, *Die fünfte Dimension*, 17–29.

⁶⁴ Ludwig Hevesi, "Jules Verne im Himmel," in Hevesi, *Die fünfte Dimension*, 10.

⁶⁵ Cf. Beaumont, *Utopia Ltd.*, 11–39.

⁶⁶ "kritische Analyse einer Reihe bedeutender Vor-Utopien". L. H-i., "Die Wells'sche Utopie," *Pester Lloyd*, July 23, 1905, [2].

⁶⁷ "induktiv, aus den praktischen Erfahrungen aufwärts gerankt". *Ibid.*, [3].

flux and humanities related to us that are merely already purified of the most miserable dross. Related to us? No, identical to us.⁶⁸

The reference to identity is related to Wells' narrative, which is based on a duplication: Modern Utopia is not a 'non-place', it is a double of the planet Earth and as such offers an alternative history of the world. In Wells' idea, according to which in this parallel world "there is a man like I might have been, better informed, better disciplined, better employed, slimmer and more active [...] and you, Sir or Madam, are also in the double, and all the men and women you know and I",⁶⁹ Hevesi sees not only a revision of utopian thinking but also literary possibilities. *A Modern Utopia* is therefore "a critique and annihilation of several others [utopias] and at the same time an entertaining reading book."⁷⁰ Looking at Hevesi's reviews of utopian works, this positive signal also aligns Hevesi's readership with regard to the meaning and purpose of his collection. Despite all the critical reviews – and self-critical comments on his "utopian sport" – he was also able to offer positive aspects that proved the Bibliotheca Utopistica to be a relevant archive of knowledge rather than a mere questionable 'smorgasbord'.

The field marked out by the Bibliotheca Utopistica occupied Hevesi throughout his life, although it was not his main area of interest. It merely represents a passion which explains the unequal relationship between his writings and the library: The fantastic novels, the commentaries on the times and the reviews are only the 'tip of the iceberg', as the collection itself can be seen as a "central consultation point for all questions that concern future theory in the broadest sense" (as Kleinwächter wrote). As such, its catalogue is a valuable document, which the feuilletonist created only partly as a writer, and largely as a collector. The catalogue of the Bibliotheca Utopistica is a monument to a time when it became a task to persevere in thinking in alternative, mutually contradictory models of thought. The collection is an impressive archive of the situation in which competing patterns of knowledge were permissible. In this capacity, it is the medium of a double consciousness, which Hevesi tried to bridge by alternating between seriousness and non-seriousness, with the effect of "disappointment of expectations [Erwartungsenttäu-

⁶⁸ "Er [Wells] reist nicht ins Unmögliche, sondern ins Mögliche. In ein zwanzigstes Jahrhundert, das uns keine festgefrorene (angebliche) Vollkommenheit vor Augen stellt, sondern im Fluß befindliche Zustände und uns verwandte Menschlichkeiten, die bloß schon von den elligsten Schlacken gereinigt sind. Uns verwandte, Nein, uns identische." Ibid., [2].

⁶⁹ H. G. Wells, *A Modern Utopia* (London: Chapman & Hall. Ld., 1905), 25.

⁷⁰ "[e]ine Kritik und Vernichtung etlicher anderer und zugleich ein unterhaltsames Lesebuch". L. H-i., "Die Wells'sche Utopie," *Pester Lloyd*, July 23, 1905, [2].

schung]⁷¹ anchored in humour. His humour and the strategy of literary-rhetorical “uncertainty” recognised by Hermann Bahr offer as such a method of dealing with doubts and dilemmas. The collection and the disposition of knowledge documented in it may be historical, but the gesture of dealing with contingencies can be transported across time. It is also for this reason, with a view to the present, that the feuilletonist and his collection have been presented here. A possibility that he himself – the “future sleuth” – anticipated. According to Lajos Hatvany (1880–1961), a colleague and renowned intellectual of the era, Hevesi said the following about his collection: “One works as the people worked whose curious works I collect. Maybe in the next century such an oddball as I was will come and dig me out. And that’s how you roll on through the ages.”⁷² This hope has been given space here, and hopefully not in futility.

⁷¹ Stefan Balzter, *Wo ist der Witz? Techniken zur Komikerzeugung in Literatur und Musik* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2013), 6.

⁷² “[M]an arbeitet wie die Menschen gearbeitet haben, deren kuriose Werke ich sammle. Vielleicht kommt im nächsten Jahrhundert solch ein Kauz wie ich einer war und wird mich ausgraben. Und so rollt man eben durch alle Zeiten weiter.” Ludwig Hatvany, “Ludwig Hevesi,” *Pester Lloyd*, March 27, 1910, 5.