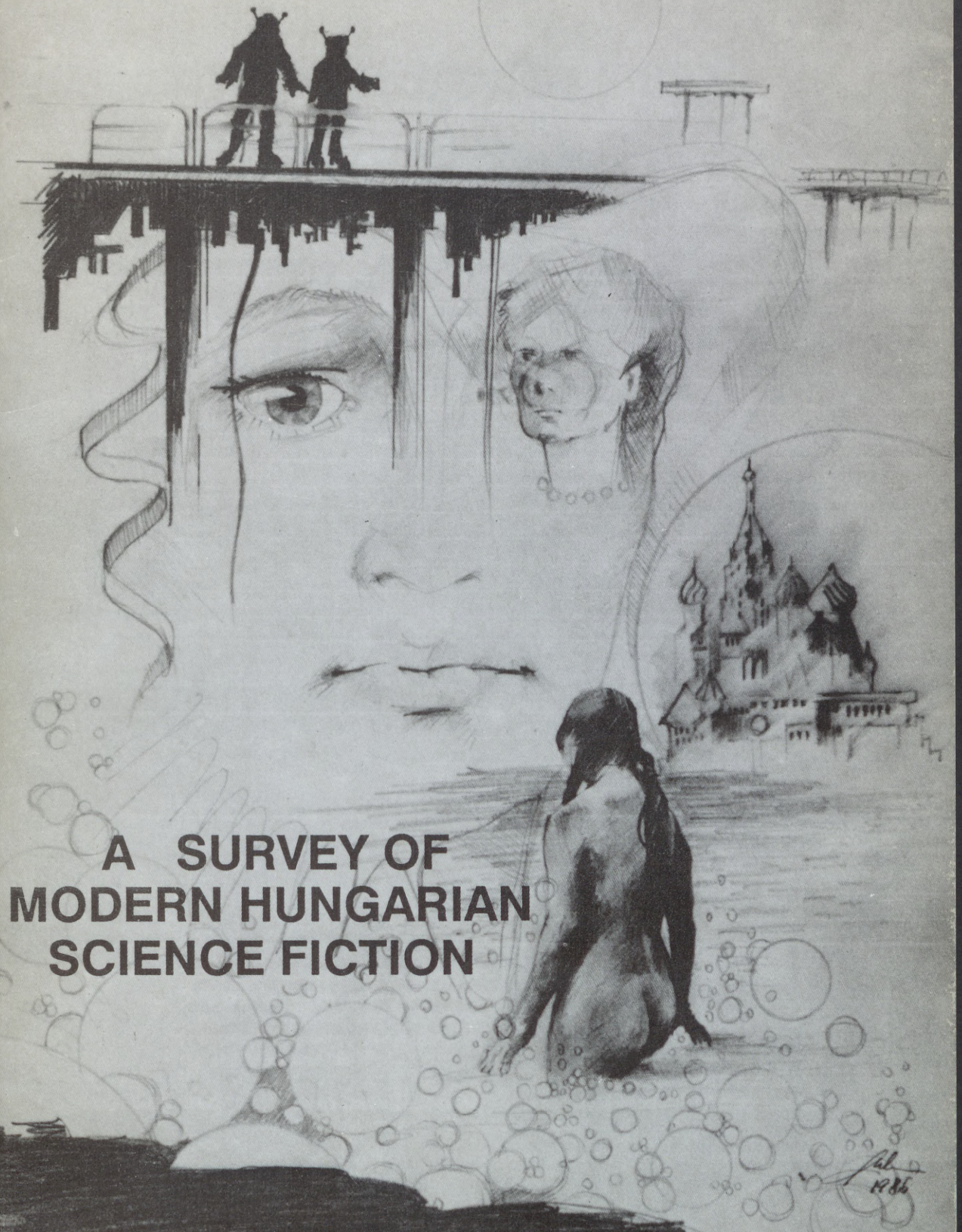


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## **A SURVEY OF MODERN HUNGARIAN SCIENCE FICTION**

**This collection of reviews gives a general survey of modern Hungarian science fiction to inform foreign friends about the scope, traditions and vistas of the genre.**

**Reviews with an asterix\* have been compiled by the editors of New Books.**

**A World SF Magyar Tagozata megbízásából,  
a Magy Írók Tanácsadó Irodájának közreműködésével kiadja  
az IRIS Kiadó Iroda •**

**Szerkte: Technoservice Kiszövetkezet**

**Miklós Apáti (1946 –)**  
**The Black Gene (A Fekete Gén)**  
**Kozmosz Publishers 1982**

The novel's action takes place in 2000. The hero is a not-yet existent being called the Black Gene, which a geneticist named Foxman brings into existence. The Black Gene is dangerous, it is capable of destroying everything around it. He himself has eternal life, he is the model of the human dream of never ending life. Why was the Black Gene created? According to Foxman because the world was ready for destruction. Water and air are disappearing or being polluted at a terrible rate. Cancer is rife and many people are starving. The cause, among others, advanced synthetic technology. The piled up waste can only be burnt but that releases poison gases. Green areas are quickly disappearing off the face of the earth and humanity is doomed to choke to death. The scientist sees only one solution for humans; to leave the Earth and move to another planet. But to force this there needs to be a concentrated power, an extraordinary individual, an Anti-Christ, who can force humanity on to another planet. This would be the Black Gene.

The other main characters are Maria and Joseph. Maria is Foxman's colleague. Joseph is a young research scientist in cancer. He is Maria's fiancée. Foxman tells them the secret of the Black Gene but swears them to secrecy, saying that they are in danger of having the idea stolen. And that this would endanger humanity. At the same time he has an unrevealed aim: Maria and Joseph should steal the Black Gene and Maria should give birth to the future great ruler. They do indeed steal the Black Gene capsule and escape to the Red Desert where Maria gives birth to a child nine months later. Joseph continues to experiment, and he discovers a way of getting synthetic materials back into the Earth without burning them he hopes that with this discovery doctors will be able to stop cell changes and stop cancer. In the meantime secret agencies are battling with each other to obtain the Black Gene. They have very innovative tools to get information, for instance they have something with which they can read each other's minds.

The writer's original plan was to use a parallel to the Bible to show that myths can be used creatively by writers of fantasy.

★

**Péter Bogáti (1924 – )**  
**Az utolsó ember,**  
**avagy C. Robinson különös története**  
**(The Last Man, or Robinson C's**  
**Unusual Story)**  
**Kossuth Publishers 1982**

The basic idea for the novel was the ever present fear of atomic war. The hero is a character from a novel much favoured by young people; Defoe's Robinson Crusoe, in modern form. A mysterious radiation spreads over the planet. Of all people on Earth but one remains to tell the news. The survivor, Robinson is an atomic engineer and he survives the apocalypse by remaining in his specially protected laboratory. Like Defoe's hero, he too becomes the only inhabitant of an "island". He must look into a hopeless future without any help from anyone, too. He tries to accommodate himself to his new surroundings and situation. He continues his research and tries to keep up a civilized way of life. He is served by the things left behind and he lives in the buildings remained in the comparatively intact in the terrifying dead city where these tragic things occurred. He tries to cope with his solitude. The hope that someone else may have survived gives him great energy, and he makes a formidable decision. He begins a journey in a well-equipped vehicle. The way menaces Robinson with danger. His meeting with 'the unknown' whose footsteps he discovers on the seashore may perhaps give hope for a new life, a new possibility.

\*

**György Botond-Bolics (1935 – 1975)**  
**Redivivus tüzet kér**  
**(Redivivus Asks for Fire)**  
**Táncsics Publishers 1969**

Members to the Hungarian Biological Research Institute return from Mars with a sensational discovery and a valuable find. The expedition came upon a ruined city under thirty meters of sand. In the city they found the brain of an ancient inhabitant of Mars from eight hundred thousand years ago. How are they to get at the advanced technological information contained in this brain? This is the institutes central problem. Two camps end up opposing one another. One wants to use Dr. Bertalan's epoch-making discovery, the 'memotransfer'. The other group are with Kelemen. According to them they must take no risk, the only way to get to the information is with the use of machines. The humanists win and they give the scientist the responsibility to create the rerobot. Bertalan's vanity is not soothed by this decision. In secret, with the help of two colleagues, including Litta, who was his lover, they carry out the memotransfer. Many tragic incidents, occur after the memotransfer at the institute. There are two murders and everyone is very worried about Parrag's altered behaviour. Bertalan and Litta guard the secret closely but they, too, soon become the victim of the revived Martian. A police detective discovers what has happened and helps Parrag regain his 'innocence' and with the help of the rerobot he becomes a human being again. The drama's records become a communal treasure in which the fate and destruction of the Martians is described as though by an eye-witness.

\*

## Zoltán Csernai (1925 –) He won the Galaktika Award for his life's work in 1988.

His first novel, *Titok a Világ Tetején* (Secret at The Top of the World) (Móra Publishers 1961) begins by introducing the reason for a scientific expedition into the mountains of Tibet. The scientists are going to explore a "strangely behaving" glacier. The measurements show a remarkable result. The stream flowing from the glacier is radioactive. They meet the mysterious yeti too and injure one and take it prisoner. It becomes quickly evident that the creature is not an earth dweller. They find their spaceship, too, by which, in the company of Anna and Radzs, two scientists, the star-man returns to his native world.

*Az Özönvíz balladája* (The Ballad of the Flood) (Móra Publishers 1964) takes the theme of the last book further. It presents a stark contrast. The meeting between the star-dwellers and the earth dwellers occurs around B. C. 3200 in Mesopotamia. Anna and Radzs, on their way to the star-dwellers' planet relive the events of the past with the help of a dreamfilm. The leader of the expedition Prof. Theodore Hügler and his friend Pierre Dumas follow an excavation closely. In evidence they find a gold Moon God statue and a round container to hold artificial materials. But these are lost in a sudden fire. The next two volumes are only loosely connected to the first two. *Atleóntisz* (Kozmosz Publishers 1971) begins with the destruction of the star-dwellers' home planet; the fourth planet of Orgon. The Great Catastrophe kills all life, only a gigantic space fortress which circles the planet stays intact. The troops need to find a new home. One day the spaceships arrive on the island. Theira and the peace is broken. Thus the destruction of Atlantis was due to outside attack.

*A Tollaskígyó utolsó visszatérése* (The Last Return of the Feathered Snake) (Kozmosz Publishers 1987). The main character is Dr. Pierre Dumas' son Peter. The young archeologist wants to bring up the remains of ships from the Yucatan Isthmus. An unexpected tidal wave washes him up on to an island. Here he is looked after by Prof. Angel who is a passionate amateur archeologist and the friend of Peter's father. Angel insists that The Mayas' god, Quetzalcoatl, the Feathered Snake came from another planet and is still here hidden somewhere. Peter assists the professor at the excavation site eventually succeeds in meeting Kecal, the explorer of world history from another planet.

**Tibor Déry (1893 – 1977)**  
**G. A. úr X-ben (Sir A.G. in X)**  
**Szépirodalmi Publishers 1972**

The great metropolises are surrounded by rings of light just as this Kafkaesque city is surrounded by rings of destruction. The remains of cars, airplanes and trains in endless mountaineous heaps await A.G. who has been traversing this terrain on foot, thirsty and hungry. He is greeted by a certain tension, that of hopeless insecurity. He arrives in X as a foreigner. In this incomprehensible and relentless order which is like hell turned in on itself. So that he can get to know the district better he moves from a hotel to a room in someone's place, to the family home of the young woman with whom he has fallen in love. He spends two years in this horror, in the intimacy of this city where if occasionally humourously, occasionally tragically, the everyday 'cold tension' never lets up.

"I did not write what is," admits the writer, "I wrote what could be, if humanity turned in on itself in its insanity." This is an anti-utopian picture, its five hundred pages aim at trying to give hope for the future by showing some of our inhumane characteristics. In this novel, the writer has proved a great deal about his capability in his profession.

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**Kálmán Donászy (1897 – 1976)**  
**A Borkman-villa titka**  
**(The Secret of the Borkman Villa)**  
**Móra Publishers 1974**

Livia Borkman, the young geologist hasn't had much success in her profession and her personal life is not too well either. She leaves for Bjorkdal with her students after a gigantic storm, and they find some unusual pieces, at some diggings. Livia has a minor accident, she slips at a pit. She goes home on sick leave and immediately afterwards surprises her boss with some valuable information. After this she appears with something new every month, in the areas of biology, computer technology and atomic physics. Her villa is closely guarded, but one of her suspicious students, and one time lover, Jorge Borg, starts to investigate. It turns out that Livia found a metal cylinder at the excavation site containing an extraterrestrial. It explained to Livia that it was from the far away planet Ghella, and added that they wished to let people on Earth acquire some of their advanced technology because they pitied Earth's primitiveness. They particularly don't understand why we kill each other in wars. So Livia's discoveries were from Tonda. The extraterrestrial creature left, but not before destroying all recordings how to use its discoveries, thereby making them useless. Livia and Jorge disappear and settle on a South Seas Island. And the use of the discoveries is left to the far future . . . This exciting, well written novel, mixes fantasy and adventure, (successfully) and thus has a wide readership.

**László Fábián (1941 –)**  
**Itt a bobókat is megölik?**  
**(Do They Even Kill Bobos Here?)**  
**Kozmosz Publishers 1987**

As far as objects go this world is little different from ours. Today: there are still fire stations in the villages and people still go about their everyday business in an ordinary way, women still nurse the sick and in the pubs people still gather to talk over their troubles. City life isn't too different from our own either. People live in insecurity, forever destroying their environment and manipulating the living world around them. (Sounds familiar). The villages are cut off from one another by dense vegetation, roads between them have been destroyed by wars. The only way of travel between the isolated regions is by helicopter. This is the way our hero arrives, escaping from the city, from the site of his life's tragedy to an isolated village, entirely alone he has condemned himself to this, having witnessed his wife's and child's destruction as a result of biological experimentation in the city. He tries to find an 'escape' from his life there. He keeps himself apart from village life he hunts, gathers mushrooms. The legend of the bog life of Zsámbék arouses his curiosity and he tries to traverse the intraversable. After an unsuccessful attempt he tries to turn back. But it's too late, the creatures of this world, the Bobos pursue him. He has no idea why they are pursuing him, but in his anger he kills three of them, and turns the village against himself. They capture him and he learns that his victims were well intentioned creatures, neither human nor animal. In reality they are the pub owner's children, who she gave birth to in her youth as a result of experimenting with crossing humans with gorillas. The village people do not condemn our hero to death, rather they send him back to the city, he has no escape from the real world, but must live with its horrors and accept them.

\*

## Gyula Fekete (1922 –)

A *Kék Sziget* (The Blue Island) Móra Publishers 1961 His first SF novel is built up from thoroughly explored elements of a classic utopia. A scientist, a student and a dock worker, work like obsessed a collective discovery. It is a radiophone that works without transforming voice. All this takes place during the fascist siege of Budapest. This little machine works in small areas, and they first try it out at a fascist meeting. So they are under threat of arrest. Unexpectedly an unusual rocket comes to their rescue which is sent by the dwellers of an island called Szimmaren which is not on the map. Szimmaren is sanity and democracy, the island where scientific knowledge is held in highest esteem. Where all new discoveries might be used and shared by everyone. The heroes of the novel are amazed by what they discover on the island. And the islanders are intrigued by them. After much adventure and some 'testing', the involuntary guests of the island become convinced honorary citizens. And their discovery can be finally made real.

*A szerelmesek bolygója* (The Planet of Lovers) (Móra Publishers 1964) is a story of the thirtieth century. A young girl, Marita has a fight with her fiance because he, Ali, would rather spend time with his algae than her. Marita goes to the Moon and then to Venus, (the planet of lovers) to recover. This Evening Star system guarantees happiness to everyone, yet many are not satisfied. Scientists are searching for the reason for this, but can't find it. Perhaps the answer is in the future.

*Triszex* (Trisex) (Kozmosz Publishers 1974) is about the populations' relationships. It paints an unrealistic picture. It shows unusual relationships between the sexes and their children. The author is trying to discover if the roles that men and women play are good or damaging. Whether interference in family life by outside authorities is useful or not.

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**György Gera (1922 – 1977)**  
**Az endogén expedíció**  
**(The Endogen Expedition)**  
**Kozmosz Publishers 1980**

Endogens, the inhabitants of the red-hot centre of the Earth – Edogenia live a spontaneous life, that is, at first instance very distant to human existence. They carry with them eternal truth and have no family, no occupations and no permanent place of abode. Nobody stops them from moving around freely. Their world is boiling hot but not boring. Wide fields and far horizons soothe them and they have strong inner lives. We discover through the eyes of Batang, an outstanding endogen that in his strange world with the characteristics of a class structured society.

Edogenia is held under the mad rule of the Kum, who is to be feared he declares terrible sentences so that room can be made for young endogens. The endogens (like humans) don't live happily with this despotism. They rise in rebellion against Kum. Batang returning from his tour to earth, though he despises the 'responsible father' tries to put out the fire at the palace, to no avail. The fire burns on relentlessly through everything.

\*

**Ervin Gyertyán (1925 –)**  
**A kibernerosz tündöklése és bukása**  
**(The Splendour and the Fall of**  
**Kiberneros)**  
**Kossuth Publishers 1963**

St. Lem (from Poland) has achieved his greatest literary successes with his books written about conflicts between humans and machines. Film-esthete Ervin Gyertyán is there beside him with this satire. Professor Palewski is preparing to give a talk at Ujburgundia in Neuropia, an imaginary country. The conference where all the best minds have gathered, drowns in conflict. Instead of the professor lecture, wild strip tease takes place. The professors announcement saves the day: the amazing women shown are mechanical. They are the answer to sexual frustration. He has created them to guarantee happiness in sex. The great happiness is disturbed by a young journalist from a small paper. But his voice can't be heard. All the more so because an American company is already discussing terms with the professor. In the meantime the streetwalkers are meeting too and they vex the professor with all kinds of tricks, but to no avail. They get some unexpected attention from Lillian the professor's intelligent and courteous daughter. But all this is to no avail till the wives turn against the discovery. But then the professor introduces his mechanical man and all protest stop. After much ado the state and the church condone the discovery. And it is to be seen and bought everywhere. Including the blackmarket, Lillian and Dorman (the young journalist) get married and continue the hopeless struggle on their own. The robot even enters the English Royal castle. As well the film industry, literature and mass culture. They are more and more aggressive towards humans. After a while normal human feelings are forbidden. Robot love becomes compulsory and the small group who are against become hunted. The professor realizes his mistake and saves the day by reprogramming the robots.

Gyertyán's irony and humour is about the reality of anything taken to extremes. This book is only for adults. And is very entertaining. It's very filmic qualities seem to point it strongly in the direction of the screen.

Isten, óvd az elnököt! (God Save the President!) Kozmosz Publishers 1971. Admiral Phillip de Dorsay, President of Marcomania is frightened of being assassinated. To protect his life the Bender-Lacombe company puts together a Bobinsky type 120 horsepower alterego appliance. The appliance is an exact copy of the Admiral, and

is just like a man in all respects except sexually. It receives ambassadors, declares laws, eats and drinks. And all the while the admiral is enjoying himself with his lover. All would be well if the robot did not have things go wrong. After all it is made by humans. Two companies, one being Bender-Lacombeare vying for a deal to ship arms The 'president' makes a declaration which infuriates them so much that they decide to get rid of Dorsay. Thus the armament face is carried on by the robot president.

\*

**Zoltán Géza Horváth**  
**Professzor úr, hol a lánya?**  
**(Where is Your Daughter Professor?)**  
**Kossuth Publishers 1971**

Zeno Grekol the famous young officer has disappeared. Six months later he turns up as the victim of a serious car accident. On another foreign tour he disappears again. His friend, Markas gets the job to find him, but finds nothing, more than some unusual handwriting. However, Livia Rotta's writing is the key. The novel within a novel begins in Marcello Germani's laboratory, he is doing experiments on complete memory transfer. The Italian army is very interested in the memory transfer of important travellers. In the end the proof is found and Markas avoids the trap the professor has set for him.

This is an interesting and intricate spy thriller. And reminds us of the terrible responsibility of science.

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## Gyula Hernádi (1926—)

His science fiction novels are characterized by montage, he regroups real elements, he rewrites already existing works and mixes in fiction. Of his books of short stories, the more important are *Logikai kapuk* (Logic's Gates) (Szépirodalmi Publishers 1974) in which some of the stories were born of science fiction roots, but not from fictional ideas.

He is not so much interested in scientific knowledge as in almost inexpressible human paradoxes. Such works are, for, instance, *Az utolsó ítélet* (The Last Judgement), *A Mozgógé* (The Moving Machine), and *Homo protoiensis*. In *Jézus Krisztus horoszkópja* (Jesus Christ's Horoscope) (Magvető Publishers 1977) he deals with physics after Einstein, in which time and matter are being experimented with. In another short story he tells a sad allegory of human propensity for creation and destruction. (*A tudat kvantummechanikája* – The Quantum mechanics of consciousness). Even in human mistakes he notices an attempt towards understanding, and a relationship between silly mistakes and fantastic discoveries. Or he tries to prove that somewhere between unrealistic soaring and dull positivism there might be some benefit in the swinging back and forth between the explanations and contradictions. (*Jelentés a Bermuda-háromszögről* – Report on the Bermuda Triangle).

\*

**Ferenc Karinthy (1921 –)**  
**Epepe**  
**Magvető Publishers 1970**

The hero of our story, Budai makes a fatal mistake and gets on the wrong aeroplane. He ends up going to an large unknown city instead of Helsinki. The linguist hero, who speaks many languages notices that they speak no languages here except their peculiar Epepe tongue. He goes to a hotel where they change his dollar cheques for local money and give him room 921. From the first moment on he tries to find ways to escape, but cannot. The city is enormous, has no inner city, or outer city or any demarcations. It also has no railway station or airport. There are enormous amounts of people in the filthy streets, there are cues for everything all the time and hardly anything is available. Budai's greatest sorrow is that he cannot make himself understood by anyone. All this despite the fact that he's a linguist and is trying a hundred ways out to do it. He tries over and over again and never gets anywhere.

His loneliness is only dispelled a little by a lift-girl, Bebe. But this episode does not last long. From then on he sleeps in the market place among rats and starts drinking.

He thinks often of suicide till there is a revolution in the city. After they quell the civil war, they get rid of the ruins and life continues as before. But Budai regains hope when he sees that a brook in the city has moving water in it. Now he needs only to follow the water sooner or later it will join a river and eventually the sea. And then he will find a ship and be able to travel anywhere. The novel is about modern life, a degraded environment and people's loneliness in it.

\*

**István Kaszás (1949 – )**  
**A Galaktika Urai**  
**(The Masters of the Galaxy)**  
**Kozmosz Publishers 1976**

Will our first meeting with another civilization be a peaceful one, when we exchange trust or will there be a cosmic war? István Kaszás answers the question by proving that the answer is not as black and white as we have come to think. The difficulties between two intelligent life forms may become apparent at the first meeting. If the interests of the two groups are so unrelated that they have hardly anything in common then there will be little likelihood of a common 'meeting' place. And there will be little reason to agree about anything. This book is only loosely connected in its contents. First there is a chronicle of a vicious battle between the inhabitants of the Earth and aliens from outside the solar system. It is a fight to save humanity; the humans' robot is made 'harmless', but it can deflect every attack against itself, and it is indestructable. It discloses those unwilling traitors who have been brainwashed to turn against their own kind. And then the fatal mistake is revealed: the aliens who have been searching for a new home are heading for Venus, not Earth.

In the second section, we step out into the world of the stars; the inhabitants of the solar system are slowly becoming the lords of the galaxy. They overcome the forces of nature, but have they missed the only chance for a relationship with an altogether alien intelligence that covers the whole of the cosmos?

The novel is a real science fiction writer's work. It is thought provoking, interesting and exciting.

★

**Dezső Kemény (1927 –)**  
**A titokzatos kecskebak**  
**(The Mysterious Buck Goat)**  
**Móra Publishers 1970**

The seven stories' main character is Imre Szakács, a detective first-lieutenant. Each story is about a crime and in each Szakács is set to solve it, with no small success. In the story with the anthology title, he tries to save the inheritance of a spinster what a scientist is trying to transfer out of the country by a system called 'hyloforezis'. In another he proves that a suicide is really a murder with the use of a tape recorder and a metallic wool (*Pergő Orsók Spinning Bobbins*). He proves that the key to an identity change, is a Swedish brain transfer. (*Balla Professzor balesete Professor Balla's accident*) And finally there is the story of a dentist who is a passionate art collector and wants to obtain a László Paal picture with the use of a radio built into a tooth. (*Mennyei sugallat Under Heavenly Suggestion*). In his stories the battle places for greater ideals and the sites of political murders are always abroad. (*Egy csomag kártya A Pack of Cards*). These exciting and entertaining stories are eminently readable.

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**Péter Lengyel (1939 —)  
Ogg második bolygója  
(Ogg's Second Planet)  
Magvető Publishers 1969**

The story takes place at a time and on a planet far from ours, in another solar system. The planet is called Eela. From this planet, the inhabitants of which are so similar to those of earth that they can almost be 'mistaken' for them, a star-ship was launched seven hundred 'eelan' years before this story starts. A thousand Eelans took part in this expedition to discover if there were any other places in the universe on which life was possible. The Eelans who have had their life lengthened are now on their way home. When they arrive they notice some very strange changes. One is that their civilization has sunk into lethargy, deteriorated mentally and physically alike. The other is that the leaders of the planet are frightened and tense. The reason for the latter is that extremely destructive robots have settled on one of Eelan's moons. They have managed to destroy the robots but in the case of a mass attack they are unable to survive. In order to avoid panic, they have not informed the population of this danger. The returned travellers decide that the whole population must be moved at once to the planet they discovered that is capable of maintaining life. The action works and the people are shaken out of their lethargy. Hundreds of years pass, and the robots appear again. Though the Eelans have prepared for the battle this time they do not have to go through with it. The robots are easily defeated. It turns out that this is so because they have received no further instructions for the rest of their journey. The barbarian civilization on Ogg's second planet has namely destroyed itself. The writer has great ideas and a freshness all the way through the work which never becomes 'kitch', or too scientific. It is not technology, but people are important; thus it becomes a humanistic, noble work, without losing its exciting, interesting qualities.

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## László L. Lőrincz (1939 –)

*A Nagy Kupola szégyene* (The Shame of the Great Dome) Kozmosz Publisher 1982). There are four long short stories in the volume. The title story takes us to a strange society, where everything is militarized and any attempt to change anything is strictly punished. It is only at the end that we find out that it's an ant society. In *A használhatatlanok* (The Useless) some creatures from another planet who have come to grief want to steal the best earth dwellers. They believe that those who get the greatest salary are the best of society on our planet Earth. They kidnap them but find them useless.

*A furcsa pár* (The Odd Pair) is about a cosmic punishment for a terrestrial murder. The murder goes unpunished till strangers come to earth. It is their task to deliver justice. *Az aranykapu* (The Golden Gate) is about Heracles. It must have had some help in accomplishing his unbelievable tasks someone from outer space.

The stories are about the most difficult human problems told in an entertaining style. *A hosszú szafari* (The Long Safari) Kozmosz Publishers 1984. There are two short novels in the volume. The first *Őrök visszatérés* (Constantly Returning) is about the story of someone who returns again and again in time. Glen Scott, an astronaut, ending in a black hole in the course of his travels. He gets out of it but arrives back much earlier than he left. When it is realized that he can see into the future he finds himself against a troubled world. Everyone wants to know the future. The novel asks if it is good to know the future at all? Could that help us in any way?

The *Hosszú szafari* (The Long Safari) is the story of a small boy, whose father leaves on a long space trip and never returns. They replace him with an android-robot, and the story is about the boy's conflict with his replacement father. The novel's question is, can a father be replaced? Whether the androids strict bringing-up of the boy can replace a father's love?

The stories are written in a good science fiction adventure style.\*

*A földalatti piramis* (The Underground Pyramid) Kozmosz Publishers 1986. The book is a science fiction thriller. The private detective, Sam Nelson gets the job of finding a peak headed boy with crossed ribs who disappeared thirty years ago.

The detective starts investigation and soon realizes he is not looking for an earth man. He gets involved with archeologists and egyptologists who are exploring pyramids, they get more and more information about a pyramid under the earth that has been the motivating force for many treasure hunters and explorers. Nelson realizes there is a connection between the boy and the pyramid.

Some treasure seekers get involved in the search who are not frightened by anything.

They soon discover a spaceship from another planet in the pyramid and the missing boys, the descendents of extraterrestrials.

The book is enjoyable for sci-fi and detective novel fans.\*

*Az elátkozott hajó* (The Cursed Ship) Galaktika Publishers 1988. A world famous actor is heading off to the country for a few days with his loved one. Since he has only a few lines to say in his present acting role, he asks his twin brother, the detective to stand in for him. When he returns he is stunned to find that his brother, the detective inspector has been kidnapped.

Investigating police discover that several similar occurrences have taken place all over the world. Who has need of a detective inspector, a card sharp, a cheat and a woman psychologist?

The clues lead to an ocean going tanker. The captain, called Nemo is a robot. The boat is manned with androids, and as yet they have not found out who is directing all this. At night mysterious robots walk on board of the ship, and humanoid come out of coffins with much moaning and cries.

The kidnapped people start fighting for their lives. It turns out that their captors have been involved in some environmental tragedy that has been hushed up. This book is for those who like a lot of colourful adventure.

*Üvöltő Bika* (Screaming Bull) Galaktika Publishers 1988. Somewhere far out in the galaxy a spaceship belonging to some super civilized beings has a dire accident. The air runs out and the spaceship becomes undirectable. Its passengers have choices: one is mass suicide, the other, something they loath to do, a gene-manipulating operation that will preserve their genetic codes and when reaching a suitable environment, enable them to be brought back to life. Halley's comet is just passing, so the navigator puts the genecodes into its nucleus. They end up on Earth and become people all, except the navigator who becomes a gigantic bull. The Babilonians love him best and want him for their chief god rather than Marduk. The god exchange is done with some offworld anti-gravity tricks, and after much ado they 'magically' save the women who were meant for sacrifice. And they stay on Earth as magicians, they cannot return to their own planet Hur because it has been destroyed.

*A halott város árnyai* (The Shadows of the Dead City) MUOSZ Antikva Publishers

1988. A young couple arrive in Longdale, a city deserted by people and only occasionally visited. They have no money, they are looking for work, so they settle in an abandoned house. They soon realize that such terrible things are occurring around them that they must escape. But to where? The streets are haunted the houses tremble, blood — rain falls from the sky and blood oozes from the ground at night.

Also huge one-eyed monsters appear who hunt down those unfortunates who happen to be in the city and kill them.

Clayton, who lives in the city but joins the police force in the nearby city, is given the assignment to find out what's going on. Are the creatures from 'beyond' or are they from another planet?

The policeman soon finds out that under this city there is another which has perished. The strange beings might be from that city. It turns out that the creatures are the victims of a mass poisoning.

We suggest this book only to people with strong nerves.

**Lajos Mesterházi (1910 – 1979)**  
**Sempiternin (Short Stories)**  
**Kozmosz Publishers 1975**

The four stories in the book examine some 'delicate' social problems using basic science fiction ideas. *Rakéták, csillagok, receptek* (Rockets Stars Recipes), is a sceptical, ridiculing opinion of our over-militarized world (the corpses of some Venus dwellers who have come to save the Earth and were killed there, are eaten by some local hungry villagers living in the vicinity of a nearby ultra-modern military base.) *Sportélmény* (Sport experience) is about a more usual theme, (cynical scientists experiment with people to create a most lethal weapon for killing huge numbers of people.) but the writing more than makes up for it. In the best story a dissident Hungarian scientist discovers the secret of immortality. *Sempiternin*, the distribution of which causes enormous problems (in central institutions the directors and their wives) are able to get it, as are the 15 – 20 most important people in each county. This brings up many moral and political problems (foreigners and owners of private enterprises can obtain it on the black market).

Last of all in *Hepisip* (On the Happy Ship), the writer takes up the issue of institutionalized euthanasia. Using this theme he shows us life's absurdities. There is a terrible logic in his moving and at the same time satirical writing full of personal truth.

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## István Nemere (1944 –)

*A sötétség határán* (On the Border of Darkness) Magvető Publishers 1982. Some terrorists force their way into an innocent looking research institute and steal five jars containing microbes to be used in warfare. If they come into contact with air they can kill millions of people in a matter of days. The hunt for the terrorists starts but they escape in five different directions on earth and in the water. The chase is very exciting, and several clashes occur between private and state political interests.

The book has appeared in German in 1985 under the title 'An der Grenze der Finsternis' (40000 printed) Neues Leben publishers and in Russian as 'Na grani tymi' (200 000 printed) Raduga publishers.

*A Neutron-akció* (The Neutron Action) (Kossuth Publishers 1982)

Terrorists steal two neutron bombs from military bases and hide them in a city of 5 million. They will explode them with remote devices unless the government grants their wishes. What can the state do? Can the commandos stop the terrorists on land and in the air? The novel tells the story of 12 hours and one minute at a filmic pace. Published in Slovak by Smena publishers 1988 under the title 'Akcia Neutron' (35 000 printed) Will soon be published in Italy.

*Időtörés* (Time slip) Népszava Publisher 1984. In the distant future they have found the way to time-travel, but only historians and detectives are allowed to do go back into the past. A historian escapes into the past so that he can be a South American Dictator in the 1990's and live out his horrific fantasies. They send a detective Roy Medina and his half human, half android assistant Barax, after the historian (the book appeared before films of the same ilk), they fight a great battle to get the historian back in front of a court of the future. There is politics, love and a lot of humour about our own time.

Published in Polish in Warsaw as 'SPRAWA KYLIOSA' in the periodical *Fantastyka* in 1986 (150000 issues)

*Veszélyes rakomány* (Dangerous Cargo) (Népszava Publishers 1985)

An unnamed but recognizable Israeli secret service hires some Arab terrorists steal

a nuclear shipment from Switzerland. The robbery takes place in a tunnel and among the unpractised Swiss anti-terrorist troupes only a young lieutenant excels. Long bargaining, a cunningly planned T.V. conference and the use of the tunnel and many adventures make this an exciting book.

Published in Russian in 1988 by Raduga as 'Opasnuj gruz' (200 000 copies Printed) *Holtak Harca* (The Fight of the Dead) (Móra Publishers 1986)

The story could be a thriller. It starts in 2003. A great battle is going on between some terrorists and five anti-terrorists who are chasing them. A terrorist kills the wife and children of the leader and hibernates himself into the future. The leader follows him, but a hundred years later, the terrorist knows he is coming and is waiting to 'welcome' him. They continue their battle, they who are not really alive. But they play the same roles in this world. One a terrorist who wants to blow up an energy plant, the other his assailant.

*Játszma tízmilliárdért* (Play for Ten Billion) Móra Publishers 1986. A small unknown planet is heading straight for Earth. This is only realized eight days before the impending lethal collision. The government sends out an unusual group in a spaceship to 'play billiards' with the planet and push another planet towards it. In the meantime earth prepares for the calamity and we see the struggle against it by the spaceship group.

*Klausztropolisz* (Claustropolis) (Ifjúsági Lap- és Könyvkiadó, 1986)

The action takes place a few hundred years from now. Or in the middle ages? A modern scientist discovers a small city in a hill with its own artificial 'day' and air circulation. He meets 1500 people who are still living in the middle ages and murdering one another. What is this? A gigantic sociological experiment, a people 'left behind', or a modern goal? Or all of them at once? Who are those modern scientists involved in this heartless experiment? We find out how a young man lands here and liberates the slaves.

*Terra* (Gondolat Publishers 1987)

This is for thinkers rather than action lovers. It takes place ten thousand years from now in a populated galaxy. There are many of these, but no-one remembers Earth. One day Yarkos, the great story-teller says he has been to Earth. This has a terrible effect. People realize that they are in a hopeless situation. The government stops Yarkos' TV broadcast. But he has not come back from Earth alone and his companions now do what they have come to do.

The book has also appeared in Esperanto. It was named best science fiction novel of Hungary in 1987.

A series of science fiction books for young people

1. *Műkincsrablók a kisbolygón* (Móra Publishers 1979)

(*Treasure Thieves on the Small Planet*)

2. *A kupolaváros titka (The Secret of the Domed City) (Móra Publishers 1982)*
3. *A kozmosz lovagjai (The Knights of the Cosmos) (Móra Publishers 1985)*
4. *Az idő vándorai (The Travellers in Time) (Móra Publishers 1987)*

The series all take place in the 25th century. Its heroes are three seventeen year old boys who were born in space. Many things happen to them. They often escape death or rescue other people. Sometimes they must save Earth itself. In the fourth novel they are joined by three girls. (There will be more of the series to come). The series is very popular in Hungary and there is an annual drawing competition too. It is already mentioned in periodicals about books for young people.

*A series for adults.*

1. *Zuhanás a Napba (Fall to the Sun) Népszava Publishers 1986*
2. *Az utolsó bolygó (The Last Planet) Népszava Publishers 1986*
3. *Vadak között (Among the Wild) Népszava Publishers 1987*
4. *Lenni vagy élni (To be or to Live) Népszava Publishers 1987*
5. *Skorpio (Scorpion) Népszava Publishers 1987*
6. *Aranybolygó (The Golden Planet) Népszava Publishers 1988*

It is an unusual thing to find a saga in this series, (which is by no means finished). The writer introduces life on Earth and on planets near and far in the twenty fifth century. But he brings the everyday life of the main characters close to us. The tragedies and events of family life. Each volume has a central exciting theme around which the writer builds the world.

**Kálmán Pápay (1948 –)  
A leghosszabb éjszaka  
(The Longest Night)  
Kozmosz Publishers 1975**

A sudden dark falls on the Earth. The sun does not rise. While they try to discover the reason for the change, life on Earth takes a different path. Darkness changes peoples' lives. The order of things is upset, many people who have left the city arrive at the castle of a prince dictator whose predecessors built an underground bunker system. Here the brainpower of hibernated people is the energy source. Some try to leave with spaceships, but it turns out that their rocket is only for exploring earth thus the 'space men' remain on earth. Some like an older couple remain on their own estate frightened by everyone and everything. Some form gangs members of there gangs blames a visitor, someone who is human-like but is from outer space for the darkness and kills him, but kills his own companions too. These individual, but linked stories are the first book-length work of the writer.

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**Miklós Rónaszegi (1930 – )**  
**A rovarok lázadása**  
**(The Revolt of the Insects)**  
**Móra Publishers 1969**

This book is set at the time it was published in Budapest. Its central character is the ingenious, but devilishly cruel Dr. Karafanda. The inspired professor's creation, as far as everyone, including his colleague, the brain surgeon knows, is a robot directed by a miniature brain. The miniature brain must be 'charged' by impulses from a living human brain. This is not painful or dangerous. The mad-eyed, megalomaniac professor becomes suspicious to the humanist hero of the story, an ethnographer who is very worried about the disappearance of his friend the brain surgeon. Just as the robot started working.

The robot is enormous, has four arms and cannot be damaged. And there are 3000 of them. They are in fact not directed by a miniature brain but by the brain surgeon who has been imprisoned by the dreadful doctor. The robots, using the surgeon's brain run amok in the city, swim across the Danube, entertain the people, kill some police, give talks in a church, mutilate a girl, help an old lady who has fallen. In other words they behave like people.

The work has the same excitement as a detective novel, the reader experiences it all through the eyes and feelings of the ethnographer and his girlfriend. As the story proceeds, the reader runs away with fear from the robots and finds her or his way into the castle district where the surgeon is imprisoned so that the needles can be pulled out of his head and the robots be made lifeless. Just as the army starts to kill the robots, the ethnographer has to work with all speed, because as they are 'killed', so the surgeon's thoughts are killed and eventually he could die too. Dr. Karafanda can't control things any more, his invention turns against him and the last robot kills him. The brain surgeon survives, the fires in the city are put out, the ruined buildings rebuilt, the bodies taken away and peace returns at last.

*Az ördögi liquor* (The Bedevilled Liquor) Móra Publishers 1970. The hero of the story is a clerk called Máté Rosda. He would have liked to be a biologist but his classmate prevented him from learning further. He does not give up his passion, he goes on experimenting in his laboratory. He discovers the way to 'undo' people to cell level and rebuild them again. He tells his discovery to his seemingly stupid girlfriend. The

girl tells everything to Rosda's childhood enemy, who has become the director of a research institute. And he presents the discovery as though it were his own. To pay him back Rosda gets him to drink the magic liquid and takes the liquid body back home with him. The 'body' in the bucket disappears. These are the starting motives of the novel, then the mystery continues and there is much about enzymes and cells. Finally it is all solved. The 'enemy' returns to normal and Rosda in his shame drinks the magic liquid and flows into a canal.

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**Sándor Szathmári (1897 – 1974)**  
**Kazohinia**  
**Magvető Publishers 1972**

This novel was written in the thirties, but the Horthy regime prevented it from being published. When it did appear in 1941, its sharpest anti-war and anti-imperialist sections were removed.

The story takes place in 1935. In a Europe infected by disgusting morality. The legendary twentieth century Gulliver, a ship's doctor, finds himself in a highly technological world that is super directed. The society has communist elements, work according to ability, payment according to need, the state, laws and politics are atrophied. But the lack of art, feelings, and personal connections between people make it a closed society. People no longer suffer from body-mind alienation and there is no tension or difference in knowledge or desires about life styles. They watch coldly Gulliver's struggles against all of this and finally at his own request send him to a special reservation. The craziest people live here, they carry all the human foibles to a greater or lesser degree. They have prejudices, obsessions and delusions. Gulliver tries desperately to find the way out of this self-destructive society. What he does not realize is that this world's ways, are just about the same as modern Europe's. Kazohinia is a bitter satire about an Europe running towards madness.

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**Szentmihályi Szabó Péter (1944 –)**  
**A tökéletes változat**  
**(The Perfect Variety)**  
**Kozmosz Publishers 1983**

The novel is an antiutopia that takes its reader not to outer space, but to Earth. The main character, Gwandal, is a pioneer in computer sociology. His views were condemned by the World Council and he was put in exile on Satanas, a small moon of Pluto where several other scientists have also been forced to live. The colony proves capable of surviving and the World Council reacts by sending three spaceships to exterminate the exiles. In the meantime a nuclear war breaks out on Earth and civilization is just about destroyed. The few who survive are members of the Bunker tribe and House of the mutant two-heads. They fight hopelessly for life and to remember, to remember the civilization of which there are only traces now. The exiled group returns to Earth under the direction of Gwandal to found the perfect city, Perfectopolis. They transplant Gwandal's brain to another one when he dies and this continues for 2000 years. The inhabitants of Perfectopolis watch the 'wild ones' with the help of advanced technology, and because they can't multiply they occasionally steal a girl or boy from among them. Omer, the young savage finds himself in Perfectopolis after many adventures he acquires Gwandal's half brain and kills the other brains. Perfectopolis disappears. Its inhabitants join the savages. Omer, answering Gwandal's 'order' arranges an expedition across the ocean, to humanity's original cradle, where there is no radioactivity. This is where the new civilization will be born. Omer stays in his homeland.

## Mária Szepes (1908 –)

*Surayana élő szobrai* (The Living Statues of Surayana) Kozmosz Publishers 1971. This novel is the description of a developed future society. Work becomes unnecessary. It's a world directed by robots, scientists and psychologists. The places of the action are Psychodom management center and Oscillarium. It is here that the pestilence.

Breaks out between the world of feelings and knowledge. There is total anarchy, for which there is no medicine. Shintal the great dimension-engineer discovers that there are energy bridges leading into an unseen world. The psychologists Riss and Konkrit fall into the abyss of their own knowledge. Konkrit blows up the psychodom. They dig up and revive Hermod Gjall. He saves the people who have been turned to living statues, with the assistance of time-machine director, Sisostri and a woman who has been counted as degenerate, who can read minds. They use equipment from the underground mining museum. Life begins again on a volcanic island on the Atlantic Ocean called Surayana.

The silence chamber and symbol therapy and the psychodrama that is presented in this mirror world are all elements of our present world. The perfectly directed world and the thoughtlessness of scientists, the dangers that flow from their curiosity are our problems here and now.

*Tükörajtó a tengerben* (Mirror Door in the Ocean) Móra Publishers 1975. The action takes place in 2195 in Aquapolis, a deep ocean city. An unexpected occurrence disturbs the fast progress of the place. An unknown person appears from the ocean depths. The person's energy is dematerializing and causes terrible destruction. The person has come from the world of anti-matter and represents an altogether other kind of development. Tymon and Oanna's love becomes the sacrifice of this alien's presence. Professor Galanus, Chriseis and Tenniosz all believe that the being can understand them. When they talk to it, it becomes apparent that its logic is directly opposite theirs. They try to prevent a catastrophe, finally they do. The being disappears into the point of Aquapolis where it first appeared. The novel is not about technology, rather about human values, feelings. It is a poetic societal work.

*A vörös oroszlán* (The Red Lion) Kozmosz Publishers 1984. The title of the novel is

the name of the wonder chemical that turns lead into gold, cures the mortally ill, gives life, or at least extends the life of the chosen. And it makes people remember their past deeds and lives. The red lion is the philosophers' stone, the alchemists' creation. The alchemists did not just want to turn lead into gold, but to have power over the elixir of life. Indeed they hoped to reach the level of transmutation, to turn the soul into gold. The main character is born in the sixteenth century's first half and he lives till the end of the eighteenth century, the nineteenth century's beginning in another body, with another name. But he could still be alive today. The child was born in Swandorf in 1535 to a fat comfortable father and an impossible, unpredictable mother. His name was Hans Burger. After the death of his father his uncle Sebastian spends more time with them. He can read and write and is taken with alchemy. He teaches the boy to read and write and to become fascinated with the philosophers stone. After Sebastian's death Hans runs away from home, he travels and works till he meets Eduard Anselmus Rochard, who says he's a doctor. He goes into service to Eduard and desires to get his red dust. He kills the elderly man and steals the pouch on his neck with the powder in it. He takes a large dose in some red wine at the first opportunity. He has terrible visions and experiences terrible pain and suffering. He finishes his destroyed life in the cellar of Count Brandenburg Ausbach. His soul is born again in Magdeburg in 1560. This time his short lived child's life is directed at love and knowledge. The third he lives as an even more suffering alchemist who is a failure. His fourth life is swept away entirely by love and passion. At last the fifth brings him greater balance and calm and knowledge and wisdom. And then a rough and aggressive young man, Ernst Muller, demands the same of him as he once demanded of Rochard, the elixir. And for the same reason he kills the old scientist.

**Rezső Török (1895 – 1966)**  
**Az elúszott sziget**  
**(The Island That Swam Away)**  
**Móra Publishers 1963**

These days animal stories seem to find great favour, particularly ones that are about animals with human features. In this very clever book for young people, Török presents a world of 'human' animals who use their intelligence and bravery to protect their island. First the bloodthirsty crocodiles cause havoc on Oapi island, but the hippopotomi trample them to death. And though the bravest of them is able to defeat even his rival, he must still run from his mother in law. Then there is a new danger from a nearby island where a dormant volcano becomes active and the hitherto peaceful dinosanus that live there start to head towards the island. A strange wreck is moving towards the island too, across shark infested waters, an american circus owner with his amazing animals. Their ship has been damaged, but after many adventures the animals and their kind hearted master land on the island. They step straight into the battle between the dinosaurs and the island animals. And it is the tamers pistol that decides the battle. The island accepts the tamer and his animals and peace descends under starry skies. Even the hippo finds his way back to his sweetheart and the good and brave win and the bad are defeated.

Török's novel is not so much science fiction as a book with much to say about humanitarianism.

And this is what makes it stand out from the others.

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**László Urbán (1950 –)  
Halhatatlan holdlakók  
(Immortal Selenites)  
Múzsák Publishers 1988**

It is true that all people who love reading, like to explore old newspapers and magazines, to try to find answers to one hundred year old riddles in the yellowed pages. The editor quotes from 34 writings, from 1811 to 1949, about civilizations from outside Earth, and the possibility of contacting them. Among the writers are Mór Jókai, the outstanding story-teller and József Szabó the excellent geographer, and Róbert Tábori, the popular novelist. From their humorous and fantastic essays we learn what Gauss has to do with the cosmic language, what the great Herschel saw on the Moon, what the Moon's channels are for, what happens if the Earth falls on the Sun, what the meteor that fell on Jamaica looked like, whether Martians wear tails, why the inhabitants of a moon of Mars are happy and whether creatures from Jupiter have been among us.

The foreword is about how these works belong to fine literature, about their art and their cultural place. There is a table of contents according to author and a bibliography. And there are 52 excellent illustrations mostly from the turn of the century.

## Péter Zsoldos (1930 –)

His first sci-fi novel appeared in 1963, it's called *A Viking visszatér* (The Viking Returns) (Móra Publishers) The hero of the story, Gregor Man and his companions on the Viking spaceship do not return to Earth due to a technical error, but land instead on a far planet which is very similar to Earth. Gregor Man is separated from the others and wanders alone on the planet in a wilderness that reminds him of Earth's past. He meets Nogo, the 'caveman' who becomes his companion and they join the horde together. Four years later they are forced to escape and try to find the Viking. After many battles with beasts and men they reach the city on the shore where the spaceship is marooned. The city's occupants worship the astronauts like gods and the head priest, who feels they increase his power, tries every method to keep them there. Finally thanks to Man's cunning the ship can return to Earth, but he remains on the planet.

*Távoli tűz* (The Distant Fire) (Móra Publishers 1969) continues Man's saga. He teaches the planet's inhabitants to make steel, and blow glass, he teaches them to write and develops their medical skills and their learning. He establishes a state council, thereby involving everyone in government. But the place is beset with danger when some people from across the ocean appear who try to force the city into their power.

*A feladat* (The Task) (Kozmosz Publishers 1971)

Has been published in German and English. Its hero Gill and his companions land on an unknown planet in their spaceship, Galateia. They meet with the local primitives but are unable to really communicate with them. The error of one of the reactors takes them into a final catastrophe. Gill, the doctor biologist feeds himself and his colleagues 'knowledge' into the consociator. The people of Galateia die of radiation infection, but their knowledge is able to be passed to the so called primitives as are their personalities in a few cases. The return to Earth is successful, but a terrible catastrophe befalls the planet, H bombs, and neurotrop viruses destroy the people. Perhaps the man and women returning to Earth on Galateia can begin a new life question is left open.

*Ellenpont* (Counterpoint) (Kozmosz Publishers 1973). In this novel intelligent robots are searching for the remains of human civilization. They begin from Pluto, where humans once put robots who could multiply by themselves. Some reach Earth where they meet people but cannot communicate with them and they die in the strange environment. The novel shows us the counterpoint, the world of people. But a world where atomic war has destroyed civilization. There are only a few people left who live a barbaric existence with primitive technology and they only have dim memories of the past. They almost guess about the intelligent robots but cannot break away from their passive existence.

*A holtak nem vetnek árnyékot* (The Dead Don't Cast Shadows) (Gondolat Publishers 1983) is set around 2200. Two young men take on the task of exploring a strange cloud. Then a third joins them, a woman and naturally everything changes. The novel is not just science fiction, but about human relationships.





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