

Gerontechnology in Ukrainian Science Fiction: a Case Study of Max Kidruk's "Колонія" (2023)

Introduction

- Ukrainian Science-Fiction in Soviet times: Vladko, Berdnyk, Rosokhovatsky, Teslenko.
- The themes of longevity and immortality in Teslenko: planet Incana, humans/cyborgs live 200 years, Earth a museum; and Rosokhovatsky: "sihomasy" → synthetic humans, space exploration, immortality.
- Stylistic features: scientific + fictional terminology; utopia ↔ dystopia.
- Max Kidruk's **Колонія** (Нові Темні Віки): dystopian, character-driven.



Results

- **Колонія** as a global ecology novel: genetic, ecological, social interconnections.
- Telomide: biotechnological artifact. Prolongs life, protects from cosmic radiation. Mandatory for Mars colonists. Produced by "Biogen", tied to politics + smuggling.
- Sociogerontological view: aging reduced to "defect" to fix → ignores lived experience.

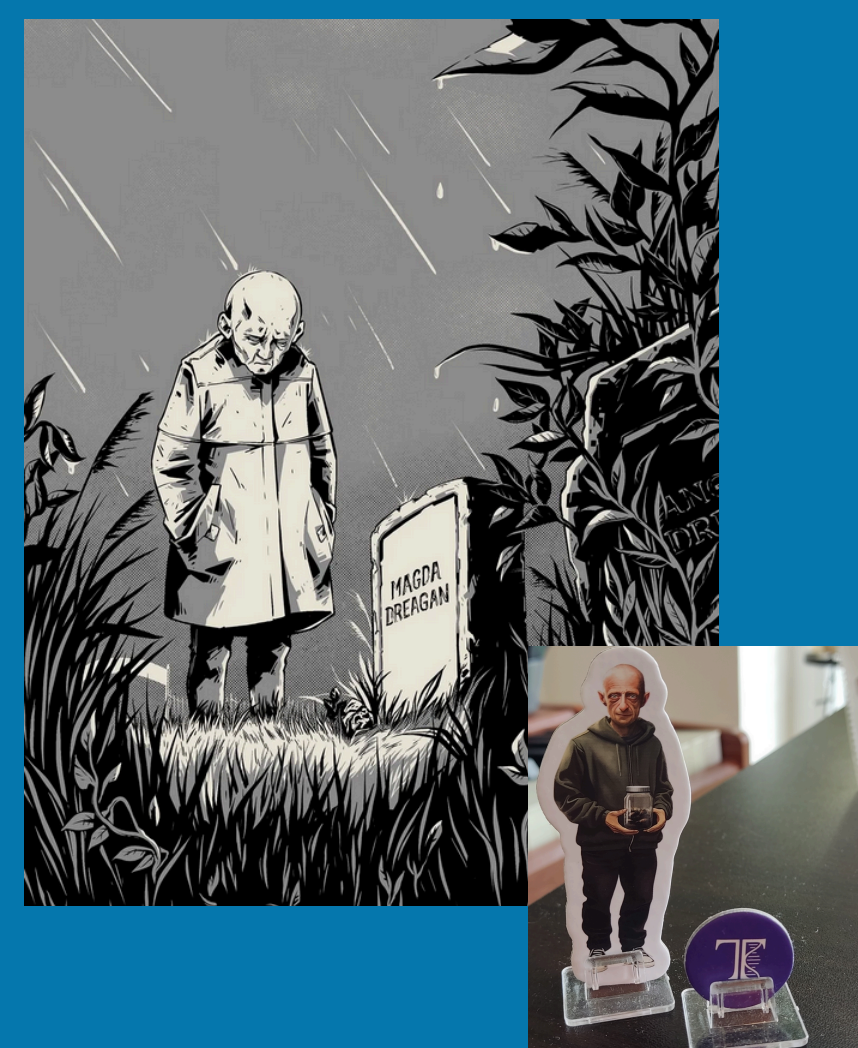
Goran Zahariya

- Access to Telomide → new elite, biological caste system.
- Council of elders on Mars → gerontocratic power.
- Represents a double image: measurable/optimized life ↔ signs of decline.
- Aging becomes a management object, not an existential experience.



Kenton Dragun

- Molecular programmer with progeria; survives to 42 only via Telomide.
- Ban on Telomide on Earth forces him to migrate to Mars.
- Embodies the figure of the "freak" in global mass culture, adapted into Ukrainian science fiction.
- Despite brilliance, stigmatized for his body; subway scene shows humiliation + violence.
- Illustrates ambivalence: Telomide as utopia (life extension) ↔ dystopia (exclusion, marginalization).



Conclusions

- Goran Zahariya & Kenton Dragun illustrate both utopia & dystopia.
- Telomide as the paradox of techno-optimism (*promise of eternal youth*) and as an allegory of the risk of inequality (*the medicine becomes a critical mirror of sociogerontology*).
- Takeaway: Max Kidruk's **Колонія** is a lens to explore not only the biology of aging, but also power & meaning.

