

Escaping the Terrestrial: Science, Power, and Elite Escapism in Contemporary Eco-Science Fiction

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This paper investigates the complex interplay between scientific authority, political power, and ecological crisis in contemporary speculative narratives, employing Bruno Latour's concept of the "Terrestrial" (Down to Earth) as a theoretical framework. In the face of the Anthropocene, contemporary science fiction increasingly moves beyond classic catastrophe tropes to interrogate how political elites and transnational capital instrumentally respond to planetary breakdown. By conducting a comparative analysis of Ukrainian author Max Kidruk's sci-fi novels *The Colony* and *The Collapse* (from his *New Dark Ages* series) alongside Adam McKay's satirical film *Don't Look Up*, Andy Weir's *Project Hail Mary*, and Kim Stanley Robinson's *Mars Trilogy*, this study delineates three distinct models of sci-fi climate politics. First, Kidruk and McKay exemplify Latourian "elite escapism" – a trajectory where political and corporate hegemonies abandon the ruined Earth to establish off-world sanctuaries, prioritizing capital accumulation over planetary care. Second, Weir's narrative presents a technocratic counter-model, imagining a benevolent, centralized authoritarianism that empowers science to avert total extinction. Finally, Robinson's work offers an eco-democratic alternative, transforming outer space from an elite escape hatch into a contested battleground for alternative, eco-centric social orders. Ultimately, this paper demonstrates how contemporary eco-science fiction reflects and critiques current geopolitical anxiety regarding climate inertia. By positioning Kidruk's vision within a broader global canon, the study highlights how speculative literature serves as a crucial arena for renegotiating scientific responsibility, political ethics, and climate justice in times of polycrisis.

