

Utopia on the Tabletop: CfP

“Quite the contrary, Skepticus. I believe that Utopia is intelligible, and I believe that game playing is what makes Utopia intelligible.”

— Bernard Suits, *The Grasshopper: Games, Play, and Utopia*

We invite abstracts of 200-500 words on the theme of **tabletop roleplaying games** (TTRPGs) and **the utopian**. Please also include a 50-300 word bio (or alternatively a CV or a link to your website). Send abstracts to j.c.walton@sussex.ac.uk by 1 February 2021 with “Submission” in the subject line. Informal queries in advance are also welcome. Chapters will be due 1 September 2021. Word counts will be confirmed upon acceptance, but may range from 1,500 to 8,000 words.

All submissions should briefly and in some way touch on the theme of the utopian in relation to TTRPGs, but this may be interpreted flexibly. Themes and perspectives may include, for example, hopepunk, solarpunk, and other -punks, Afrofuturism and Indigenous Futurisms, transformative justice and anti-carceral feminism, queer publics and queer world-making, colonialism and decoloniality, climate change and ecological crisis, critical humanism and posthumanism, dystopia and heterotopia, imaginary voyages and philosophical novels, counter-mapping and radical cartography, performance and performativity, revolt and revolution, post-work and anti-work, post-scarcity, degrowth and post-growth, paranoid and reparative reading, architecture and infrastructure, left-accelerationism and techno-utopianism, critical design, actual play and live-streaming, critical play, serious and applied games, play therapy, game design and playtesting, political activism and organizing, participatory democracy, de-anthropoc play, de-anthropoc utopianism, intentional communities, governing the commons, speculative economics, aleatoric writing and procedural generation, gamification, AI, Quantified Self, ambient computing and SHINE, Mixed Reality, and other digital technologies.

We welcome all approaches, e.g. close analysis of a single TTRPG; comparative analysis of several TTRPGs; proposals engaging with design philosophies or other conversations that have played out over blogs, Discord, and other social media; proposals for introductory overviews of a relevant phenomenon; exploration of broader TTRPG cultures (e.g. streams and podcasts, zines); proposals focused on a particular designer, press, mechanic, norm, subculture, movement, hashtag, etc. We especially welcome submissions that will shine a light on work by BIPOC game designers, writers, and creators.

Submissions will be considered for an innovative open-access edited collection, *Utopia on the Tabletop*, which will include original mini-TTRPGs on utopian themes alongside scholarship. If you are a game designer and would like to be kept up-to-date about the game design aspect of the collection, contact j.c.walton@sussex.ac.uk.

Relevant theorists and secondary texts may include:

- Sebastian Deterding, Jose Zagal, [*Role-Playing Game Studies: Transmedia Foundations*](#)
- Alex Zamalin, [*Black Utopia: The History of an Idea from Black Nationalism to Afrofuturism*](#)
- Bonnie Ruberg and Adrienne Shaw (eds.), [*Queer Game Studies*](#)
- Bernard Suits, [*The Grasshopper: Games, Life, and Utopia*](#)
- Mary Flanagan, [*Critical Play*](#)
- Ruth Levitas, [*Utopia as Method*](#)
- adrienne maree brown, [*Pleasure Activism*](#)
- Felwine Sarr, [*Afrotopia*](#)
- Ashis Nandy, [*Traditions, Tyranny, and Utopias: Essays in the Politics of Awareness*](#)
- Kathi Weeks, [*The Problem with Work*](#)
- Jon Peterson, [*Playing at the World*](#)
- José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*
- Ralph Pordzik, *The Quest for Postcolonial Utopia*
- C. Thi Nguyen, *Games: Agency as Art*
- Dunne & Raby, *Critical Design*
- Rosi Braidotti, *Post-Humanism*
- Jane McGonigal, *Reality is Broken*
- David Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology* and *Utopia of Rules*
- Nicholas J. Mizer, *Tabletop Role-Playing Games and the Experience of Imagined Worlds*
- Ashley M. L. Brown, *Sexuality in Role-Playing Games*
- Edward K. Chan, *The Racial Horizon of Utopia: Unthinking the future of race in late twentieth-century American utopian novels*
- Jon Peterson, *The Elusive Shift*
- Caroline Edwards, *Utopia and the Contemporary British Novel*
- Paul Booth, *Board Games as Media*
- Jack Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*
- Matthew J. Wolf-Meyer, *Theory for the World to Come*
- Anton Nijholt (ed.), *Playable Cities*
- Caroline Bassett, Sarah Kember, Kate O'Riordan, *Furious: Technological Feminism and Digital Futures*
- Bonnie Ruberg, *Video Games Have Always Been Queer*
- Kari Schonpflug, *Feminism, Economics, and Utopia*

- Alexandra Brodsky, Rachel Kauder Nalebuff (ed.), *The Feminist Utopia Project: Fifty-Seven Visions of a Wildly Better Future*
- Paul Youngquist, *A Pure Solar World: Sun Ra and the Birth of Afrofuturism*
- Kai Masser, Linda Mory, *The Gamification of Citizens' Participation in Policymaking*
- Curtis D. Carbonell, *Tabletop Role-Playing Games and the Modern Fantastic*
- Jose Sanchez, *Architecture for the Commons: Participatory Systems in the Age of Platforms*
- Saklofske, Arbuckle, and Bath, *Feminist War Games?: Mechanisms of War, Feminist Values, and Interventional Games*
- Sarah Lynn Bowman, *The Functions of Role-Playing Games*
- Jennifer Grouling Cover, *The Creation of Narrative in Tabletop Roleplaying Games*
- Adriana de Souza e Silva, Ragan Glover-Rijkse, *Hybrid Play: Crossing Boundaries in Game Design, Players Identities and Play Spaces*
- S. D. Chrostowska and James D. Ingram (eds.), *Political Uses of Utopia: New Marxist, Anarchist, and Radical Democratic Approaches*
- James Gustave Speth, Kathleen Courrier (eds), *The New Systems Reader*
- Torill Elvira Mortensen, Kristine Jørgensen, *The Paradox of Transgression in Games*
- João M. Paraskeva, *Curriculum and the Generation of Utopia*
- Dale Leorke, Marcus Owens (eds), *Games and Play in the Creative, Smart, and Ecological City*
- Caitriona Dhuill, *Sex in Imagined Spaces: Gender and Utopia from More to Bloch*
- Michael Gardiner, Julian Jason Haladyn (eds), *Boredom Studies Reader*
- Philip Abbott, 'Utopians at Play'
- Jeffrey Sens, 'Queer Worldmaking Games: A Portland Indie Experiment'
- Special issue of *Sports, Ethics, and Philosophy: Bernard Suits' Legacy: New Inspirations and Interpretations*
- Elinor Ostrom, Erik Olin Wright, Ernst Bloch, Darko Suvin, Raymond Williams, Tom Moylan, Krishnan Kumar, Lucy Sargisson, Fredric Jameson, Lyman Tower Sargeant, Ruth Levitas, Carl Freedman, Seo-Young Chu, Ytasha L. Womack, Lisa Yaszek, Sherryl Vint, N. Katherine Hayles, Donna Haraway, Farah Mendlesohn, Marleen Barr, Caroline Edwards, Ursula K. Le Guin, Joanna Russ, Samuel R. Delany, Adam Roberts, China Miéville
- Decolonising Utopia Resource List: utopia.ac/resources/decolonisation/

Suggestions of games and genres to explore include:

- Serious games, applied games, Games for Change
- Lyric RPGs
- SWORD DREAM
- *The Quiet Year* and *The Deep Forest*
- *Dream Askew* and *Dream Apart*
- *Flotsam: Adrift Among the Stars*
- *Wanderhome*
- Other Belonging Outside Belonging games
- *Microscope*
- *Shock: Social Science Fiction* and *Human Contact*
- Other worldbuilding-focused games
- *MoonPunk*
- *Brinkwood: The Blood of Tyrants*
- *The Glass Dream Game*
- *Consensus / Together*
- *#Feminism: A Nanogame Anthology*
- *Bluebeard's Bride*
- *Dogs in the Vineyard*
- *Freemarket*
- *Mars Colony*
- *Urban Shadows*
- *Orun*
- *Archipelago*
- *Steelweaver's Rebellion*
- *The Treasure At The End Of This Dungeon Is An Escape From This Dungeon And We Will Never Escape From This Dungeon*
- *The Riot Starts*
- *Songs for the Dusk*
- *Balikbayun: Returning Home*
- *Return to the Stars*
- *Dialect*
- *Legacy: Life Among the Ruins*
- *Affection Game*
- *Told by Starlight*
- *Rosette Diceless*
- *Troika!*
- *Our Queen Crumbles*
- Anti-utopian RPGs such as *Paranoia* and *Herland*
- War gaming, game-like futures tools
- ARGs and LARPing
- Fictional TTRPGs

Feel free to propose discussions of fragments, works-in-progress, ashcan editions, early access editions, etc. E.g., [Applied Hope submissions](#), *Time of Tribes*, *PbtA Debt*, *Traverser*, [Solarpunk](#).