

Thema:

Between the ‘midnight sun’ and ‘polar nights’: hopepunk, solarpunk and grimdark education futures

Erasmus Incoming Staff: Rikke Toft Nørgård, Associate Professor, Danish School of Education - Educational Theory and Curriculum Studies, Aarhus University (Denmark)

Datum: 10.11.2025

Uhrzeit: 12:15 Uhr

Via ZOOM

<https://fau.zoom-x.de/j/63227387130?pwd=VEsWTezDjZC5hhtgg8lY5IHdClPuIR.1>

Meeting-ID: 632 2738 7130

Kenncode: 414128

Sprache: Englisch

Kontaktperson: Karina Brehm (karina.brehm@fau.de)

Description:

This lecture explores educational futures that sit between the metaphorical “midnight sun” of resilient, radiant possibility and the “polar nights” of collapse, using three thematic frames - hopepunk, solarpunk and grimdark - to illuminate contrasting pedagogical orientations. It argues that hopepunk’s insistence on solidarity, small-scale utopias and radical hope can function as an active pedagogical future-oriented stance that cultivates collective hope-full agency, while solarpunk offers more-than-human, ecological imaginaries oriented toward regeneration. Conversely, grimdark pragmatism foregrounds critique of utopian ‘unreasonableness’ and advocates the ‘realism’ of probability and survival.

Bringing theory into practice, the lecture draws on Rikke Toft Nørgård’s programmatic work on utopian imagination and hopepunk strategies. The session highlights differences and affinities between utopian imagination, hope attitudes, and hopepunk/solarpunk approaches to offer an analytical framework for working towards more ‘hopepunk imagination’. The talk will combine and draw on Nørgård’s work on hopepunk, solarpunk and grimdark futures – in theory and in relation to education – including ‘(No) Hope for the Future?’ (2024), ‘What Comes After the Ruin?’ (2022), ‘Cultures for Collective Visioning and Future-Making’ (2022), ‘Futurescaping Alternative Universities’ (2022), and ‘Utopia, Hope and Desire in Education Futures’ (forthcoming). We end the session with writing a collective poem to ‘the midnight sun’ and hopepunk/solarpunk education futures.

Background resources:

Nørgård, R. T., & Holflod, K. (2024). (No) Hope for the future? A design agenda for rewidening and rewilding higher education with utopian imagination. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 21(1), 30.

Nørgård, R. T. (2022). What comes after the ruin?: Designing for the arrival of preferable futures for the university. In *Transformation of the University* (pp. 156-174). Routledge.

Rikke Toft Nørgård (2022). 'Chapter 7: Cultures for Collective Visioning and Future-Making' In: Barnett, R., Smedegaard Ernst Bengtsen, S., & Nørgård, R. T. (2022). *Culture and the University: Education, Ecology, Design*. Bloomsbury Academic.

Rikke Toft Nørgård (2022). 'Chapter 8: Futurescaping Alternative Universities' In: Barnett, R., Smedegaard Ernst Bengtsen, S., & Nørgård, R. T. (2022). *Culture and the University: Education, Ecology, Design*. Bloomsbury Academic.

Nørgård, R. T., Bosanquet, A., & Grant, B. M. (2024). The slow scholar in the accelerated university: Slowness as solidarity. In *The Contemporary Scholar in Higher Education: Forms, Ethos and World View* (pp. 133-153). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Kim Holflod, Sian Bayne & Rikke Toft Nørgård, 'Utopia, Hope and Desire in Education Futures' (forthcoming)

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