

# Introduction

## Dystopia, Ambiguous utopia, Ustopia

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### Abstract

The ideal city [the favourite site of utopian literature] turned out to be only one step in a not yet imagined story. [...] In the second half of the nineteenth there were many signs of crisis and people started to think that utopia was certainly feasible but that, in reality, the utopian paradise hid hell.

Thus Raymond Trousson (2000: 183) defines the shift from utopian to dystopia (or dystopian) Western imagination. The very different, but in both cases shining, futures of William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1890) and William Bellamy's *Looking Backwards* (1888) fade away and the gloomy outlines of a hell-on-earth landscape take shape among the thick fogs enveloping both individual lives and the whole social body: the triumph of capitalism, the rise of totalitarian regimes, the improvement of sentient machines and artificial intelligence lead humanity towards utter submission or physical annihilation. "*The Last Man in Europe*" is one of the titles considered by George Orwell for his great dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, centered on the sterile rebellion of its main character.....