

Title: France/Atlantis vs. USSR/Dystopia in Andrei Makine's *Le Testament français*
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Andrei Makine's novel, *Le Testament français*, won the Prix Goncourt and Prix Médicis in 1995 for its fictional autobiography of a young boy growing up in the USSR of the 1960's. Part of the text is taken up by the boy's French grandmother's narrative, which recounts her culture shock upon following her husband back to post-WWI Russia and living there from the 1920's on. Other parts provide glimpses of life into late 19th and early 20th century France.

Beneath what seem to be the nostalgic reminiscences of the narrator's grandmother, including accounts of her previous life, and of her time with the boy together in Russia, there are numerous references to France as "Atlantis," as idealized in the boy's mind. Other sections show his and her daily lives in Soviet Russia as manifestations of a Dystopia rather than the officially constructed Utopia disseminated by every form of Soviet media.

This paper focuses on the reasons Makine earned the honor of the two prestigious literary awards via an examination of his highly nuanced contrasts of the two "Utopias." Research on this novel has turned up a number of articles on bilingual authors, multiculturalism, the genre of children's biographies, and Proust's influence on Makine, but none on my proposed theme. However, vitriolic articles by Tatiana Tolstaya (*Znamia* 6, 1998), Maya Zlobina (*Novyi Mir* 10, 1996), and by the actor Sergei Iurskii (*Ogoniok* 28, 1998), upon the release of the Russian edition, show that they better understood Makine's symbolic evocations.