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Jean-Claude Mourlevat: France â€¦ Author

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Bookbird: A Journal of International Children's Literature, Volume 50,
Number 2, April 2012, p. 24 (Article)

Published by The Johns Hopkins University Press
DOI: 10.1353/bkb.2012.0079



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JEAN-CLAUDE MOURLEVAT

France ★ Author

Jean-Claude Mourlevat was born in France in 1952. After his studies abroad in Strasbourg, Stuttgart, and Bonn, he worked as a German teacher for several years. When he finally devoted himself to a career in theater, he staged one-man shows that he performed over one thousand times in France and abroad. He also worked as a theater director and staged work by such well known playwrights as Brecht, Shakespeare, Ludwig Tieck, and Cocteau. He began writing his own books in the 1990s, and by the end of the decade his career as an author gained momentum with the publications of a collection of stories he wrote for a friend. In 1998, his first novel, *La Balafre* [The Gash], was published followed in 1999 by *L'Enfant-Océan* [The Pull of the Ocean]. The success of *L'Enfant-Océan* enabled Mourlevat to devote himself entirely to writing.

The work of Jean-Claude Mourlevat is both extremely diverse and very coherent. His stories—sometimes for young children, sometimes for teenagers—are also a pleasure for adults to read. He covers a variety of genres written in different registers: poetic prose, fables, science fiction, fantasy, and realism. Regardless of the genre, a characteristic that his works share is the quality of theatrical performance that is evident in the pervasiveness

of dialogue. The quality of his characters' voices enables him to keep his audience "listening" with bated breath. Listening is, indeed, a relevant aspect as he takes particular care with the sound of proper names and the musicality and rhythm of the text to ensure that the texts "sound" beautiful when read aloud.

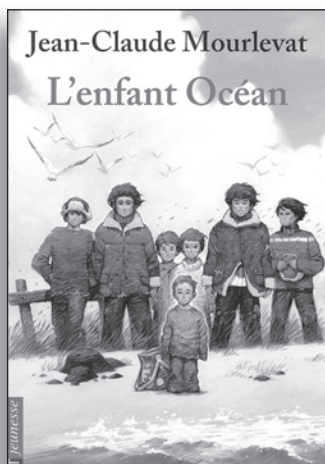
Mourlevat likes to acknowledge his debts to the literature of the past for inspiration. His influences

include very familiar works such as *A Thousand and One Nights*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and the Grimm Brothers' *Children and Household Tales*, as well as Greek myths and many other traditional literatures. When Mourlevat revisits these tales, they take on new significance as he reinterprets them in his own unique style, combining wonders and marvels with realistic subjects, and humor to counteract the characters' suffering.

Today, he is a successful writer and also a translator from German

to French. He is considered one of the major authors of children's fiction in France and is consistently appreciated by children, teachers, and critics alike. His stories have become classics. Most of his best known works are novels addressed to young adults, which provide route maps for personal development.

Melissa Garavini



SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- *L'Enfant océan* [The Pull of the Ocean]. Illus. Christian Heinrich. Paris: Pocket Junior, 1999. Print.
- *La Rivière à l'envers* [The Flowing Backwards River]. Illus. Marc Taraskoff. Paris: Pocket Junior, 2000. Print.
- *L'Homme à l'oreille coupée* [The Man with the Missing Ear]. Paris: Editions Thierry Magnier Petite Poche, 2003. Print.
- *Le Combat d'Hiver* [Winter Song (UK) / Winter's End (USA)]. Paris: Gallimard Jeunesse. Hors Série, 2006. Print.
- *Terrienne* [Terrestrial Girl]. Paris: Gallimard Jeunesse. Hors Série, 2011. Print.