

Hans Christian Andersen Prize 2022

IBBY Belgium - French Branch

Author candidate



THOMAS LAVACHERY

1. Biographical information on the candidate

Thomas Lavachery was born in Brussels in 1966, to a pedagogue father and a press cartoonist mother who choose later to be an antiquarian. He first did some comics. At the age of 18, his first drawings were published in *Tintin* magazine, before adapting Roland Topor's animated series *Téléchat* (Telecat).

He then studied Art History, following the footsteps of his grandfather Henri Lavachery, museum curator, archaeologist and initiator in the study of the primitive arts in Belgium.

After his studies, he joined Y.C. Aligator film, production company, as literary advisor. His main interest was on documentaries, first as a script doctor, then as a director. He is the author of two documentary films: *Un monde sans père ni mari* (A world without father nor husband), on the Mosos, a Chinese ethnic group ignorant of marriage, with very free sexual manners, and *L'homme de Pâques* (The Easter Man), retracing the scientific expedition led by his grand- father on Easter Island in 1934.

It was in 2002 that he wrote *Bjorn the Morphir*, an adventure novel based on a story he told his eldest son, Jean, published in 2005 at L'Ecole des loisirs (Paris). The adventures of Bjorn the Viking are told in eight volumes. A comic book adaptation was produced with the help of designer Thomas Gilbert.

After having abandoned his pencils for several years, Thomas Lavachery took them back to create albums for children - *Jojo de la jungle* (Jojo of the jungle), *Ma famille verte* (My green family) -, and to illustrate some of his novels, such as *Tor et les gnomes* (Tor and the Gnomes).

Since the start of the 2011 school year, he has been leading a seminar at Charles de Gaulle University (Lille 3): "Practice of writing for young people" as part of a master's degree devoted to the professions of children's literature.

2. A portrait photograph of the candidate

(See annexes)

3. A statement on the candidate's contribution to literature for young people

Thomas Lavachery : a fantasy writer and so much more...

In the early 2000s, Thomas Lavachery, like other authors before him (L. Carroll, J. Barrie...), begins to invent an epic story for his children. He thus plunges into literature through storytelling, and creates an heroic fantasy adventure led by Bjorn, a kind of anti-hero who reveals himself by drawing the best out of himself. Bjorn, like many other heros created by Thomas Lavachery (among others : Ramulf, Tor, Fulmir, Jojo...), rises up and make the most of his surroundings to become a dignified human being.

Thomas Lavachery lived a happy childhood, surrounded by his family, animals, and nourished culturally and intellectually. Later on, as a famous anthropologist's grandson, Thomas Lavachery becomes a great traveler, a documentary filmmaker, an author with an overflowing imagination, and a key author-illustrator of the French-speaking Belgian landscape of children's and young people's literature.

Let's be honest : the literature of the imagination would be particularly orphaned if Thomas Lavachery did not exist. No wonder he now teaches children's literature in France (Lille university).

What can we say about this great man ? It is true that he is tall. But above all, he has an immense heart. The exercice is difficult, but if we were to describe him in a few words and thus testify to his important contribution to children's literature, there would undoubtedly be the word « **adventure** ». Thomas lavachery loves to read and write adventure novels. Whether we follow Bjorn, Ramulf or Tor or go to the Sioux... it's a guaranteed adventure around the corner with Thomas Lavachery.

Another word would definitely be « **travel** ». We travel a lot with Thomas Lavachery. Among the American Indians, in the deep jungle, in the Viking traditions, and in unknown lands like through

Fizzland, the imaginary region in northern Europe where Bjorn, the Morphir, lives. Thomas Lavachery represented the different regions and countries crossed by his various heroes even before he wrote his stories. And that, like Tolkien, Thomas not only represented these regions, he also imagined the languages spoken there, the writings used... and if they are maybe not whole grammars or precise language rules, who can boast of being able to command the dragons in a language they understand !

As we contemplate Thomas Lavachery's work, we cannot miss the words « **fantastic creatures** ». They are legion in Thomas Lavachery's work. We find dragons in the saga of Björn the Morphir and other creatures like trolls, gnomes, two and a half inch homunculus and more invented species, created by « mixing » different animals like bear-whales, ptero-tactiles, monk(ey)illers, yetigres, snails... and he drew many of them !

We could add the word « **zoo** », because Thomas Lavachery loves animals, and not just imaginary animals ! And he had tons of them as a child : cats, dogs of course, but also reptiles, insects, monkeys and anything else that could be kept in the parental home.

« **Illustration** » is of course an unavoidable word. Thomas Lavachery's relationship to the drawing is not recent. His illustrations are extremely precise. They are a succession, an overlay of small cumulative strokes that form the substance of his representations of landscapes, action scenes, men, animals, creatures... Although he began his career in the ninth art, he is not the one who illustrates the comic book dedicated to his most famous character, Bjorn. Nevertheless, how strange it is that his first hero, Soumak, evolved in a fantastic world, close to the Middle Ages.

If there is one exercise that Thomas likes to do, it is to answer reader's questions. The last chosen word would then be « **readers** ». Never stingy with answers, always sharing and exchanging, Thomas Lavachery enjoys to meet his readers, from the youngest to the oldest, in class or in the library, in Belgium and abroad. If he doesn't meet them, Thomas Lavachery responds to his readers by email, or by videoconferences... Some of his readers have even had the opportunity to write with him (as it was the case for La colère des MacGregors). Thomas Lavachery is also the MUZ' godfather. Muz is a museum of children's works, created by Claude Ponti in 2009. This online museum is a space of expression for children.

Finally, let's give the last words to Thomas Lavachery himself :

« In my adventure novels, my fantastic stories, I have always been keen to work on style, aesthetics in general... in short to set the bar as high as possible at artistic level. I had an obsession to work on the psychology of the characters, to let them evolve, and to let their relationships grow. My heroes are contrasted, they have asperities, vulnerabilities, shadows. There's also the thematic question. My concern has always been to deal, in the novel of adventures, with themes both timeless and very up-to-date : power and its dangers, religious and racial intolerance, the loss of traditions, rumour... It has always seemed to me, right or wrong, that the time and spatial lag allows access to a form of universality that is more difficult to achieve - at least for the author I am - in a contemporary context. »

Thomas Lavachery's whole work is an ode to childhood and youth and how it can be accomplished, by getting the best out of ourselves, and of each one. A must for all lovers of literature. (Natacha Wallez)

4. One or two appreciative essays, interviews or articles

Interview by Daniel Delbrassine, lecturer at the University of Liège (Belgium), published in « LECTURES•CULTURES » nr 14 Septembre-Octobre 2019

Rumors tells the story of Tarir, capinchos eater, Amazonian Indian banished from his town. It gives the native's point of view on the world of the White men. Robinsonnade, Amazonia, clash of cultures, ecology are the themes of this short, but very dense, novel illustrated by T. Lavachery himself. After having read this novel, we wanted to question the author about it. (...)

The Robinson's myth is very present in *Rumors*, especially when the Indians seem isolated in the middle of the jungle. This seems a very conscious reference as this myth goes through all your work, for example in *Bjorn the Morphir*, when isolation seems to be a key factor. Where did you get this connection with Robinson ?

I'm just preparing a robinsonnade, a project I work on for years. As a child and as a teenager, I spent summers exploring nature in search of small animals. These solitary hunts at the bottom of the woods remain among the greatest memories of my life. When I discovered the adventures of Crusoe at 15, I felt that this novel was written for me, that I had more rights over him than the ordinary readers. Robinson, for me, is paradoxically an exhilarating form of happiness.

You are keen to give your sources in an afterword called Tributes. To what extent did they really played a rôle ? Because your novel is a real fiction...

It seemed important to me to say to the reader that the Amazon of the book is widely invented. I took some liberties regarding zoology, anthropology... Those who know nothing about this world could be wrong about it - and I does not wish to abuse anyone. To build an imaginary universe, rich and credible, you need to make research, and even a lot. Bjorn the Morphir owes a great deal to Icelandic sagas. Without respecting the letter, one can approach the spirit of a time, a culture. I will add that research provides me with picturesque elements, opportunities, poetry. Jurijri, the polyglot conquistador, is a demon feared by the Achuar Indians. I didn't create it. When I met him while reading Philippe Descola (*The spears of Twilight*, 1993), I knew right away that he would be part of my story.

***Rumors* presents a particular treatment of time and space. In this forest, they seem to be marked by a certain amount of liquidity, a lack of benchmarks. The reader thus experiences an unusual measurement of time, unmapped space. The effect is reinforced by the central notebook of illustrations, in which one gets lost... Then acculturation gradually inscribes your hero in a linear time and a recognized space. The reader discovers another way of measuring these two dimensions. Do you consciously produces this effect ?**

No, but I'm glad that is a difference between the way time and space are treatment in the two parts of the novel. The opposition is not only about the forest and the city (wildness/civilization), it also the way how memory works. When you look at the past, major events of childhood and teenager age floats in a mythical time, not very clear, a little blurry. The chronology, duration, space and, of course, the meaning - everything is reinvented, in this distant memory

What links can be made with your other works like *Jojo of the jungle* ? Or with authors like X.-L. Petit in *Itawapa* ?

I would rather see a link with *Bjorn in the Army, Tome II : The Thousand Banners*. There is a relation in *Rumors* with the episode in the forest of the Banned. The hero and his brother do not respect the traditions of the forest, which harasses them in retaliation. In *Rumors*, the protagonist is a Indian who

civilizes himself and then comes back in the forest, dressed in city clothes. Again, the forest - a real character - gets offended and it creates annoyances...

In a odd way, my oldest Amazonian dream dates back to *La Jangada*, the first Jules Verne that I opened. Then my books at the University... they were like honey for me : *Tristes Tropiques*, *Chronicle of the Guayaki Indians*. It is worth mentioning the books on South America signed Alfred Métraux, companion of my grandfather on the Easter Island expedition in 1934. If the Amazon occupies such a place in my imagination I can thanks to all these books. To stay on the ground of my sources of inspiration, I can't forget *Dersou Ouzala* from Akira Kurosawa. I must have seen him ten times, It's my favorite movie. My fascination for forest life owes much to this masterpiece.

The deep connection with most my other novels lies mostly in the characters. I wrote several stories of which the hero is first a shy, unaccounted boy, socially abused... In this respect, *Rumors* is very close to *Bjorn the Morphir* and *Ramulf*.

But in Fulmir, the hero seems a little different. Fulmir is an old dwarf only concerned about his imminent death, but is quickly involved in the life that surrounds him and catches up with him. This character knows its powers and limitations. Did you changed your hero ?

I run a seminar at the university of Lille 3 (France) : "Practice of writing for young readers." When I talk about the characters, I stress that the protagonist of a novel for young readers does not have to be a child or a teenager. For example, J. Verne, or current authors like M.-A. Murail, prove it. So far, however, I had never tried a novel with an adult hero ! It's done now, and I was delighted with the adventure. But this doesn't mean that I've changed my model. The main character of my next novel, the robinsonnade, will be a teenager who tells his story years later, in the twilight of his life. The narrator will therefore have the maturity of old age, and it won't always be tender with the protagonist, this other himself in whom he will sometimes have trouble to recognize himself. The first sentence of the book could be this : "I was a little bully."

Many of your stories take place in a kind of the Middle Ages. Do you see it as a historical epoch or rather as « landscape » ? Like a fantasy Middle Ages ? What do you think of the article by Cecile Boulaire (1) ?

« This « childish » Middle Ages is therefore a platitude. Because it is stereotyped. [...] But, beyond that, it seems to me that this Middle Ages is first and foremost the place for shared pleasure. » The fantasy described by C. Boulaire is that of the brave knights, the beautiful ladies and the enchanters. This is the wonderful Middle Ages. There is another, just as present in the collective imagination, also historically questionable : the dark, degenerate, sinister, prickly Middle Ages, where violence is king. Both images have fascinated me since I was a teenager, but I try to overcome them.

To get out of stereotypes, a adventures novel writer, even fantasy writer, must be seriously informed. I come back to my idea from the beginning ! By feeding off information about the "real" Middle Ages, we stock up on elements that, when well used, skilfully measured, will give the narrative an essential part of its credibility. More than a seasoning of realism, it is a kind of anchor... Then everyone has their own personal sources of inspiration, which contribute to the enrichment of the "landscape" you are talking about. The imagination of the author feeds on several levels. My studies in art history (non-European civilizations) led me to read a lot on anthropology. The ethnographic color of Bjorn's universe comes from there, and I think that it's an originality of my series - even if I'm not the only one to exploit this vein. In other settings, Phillip Pullman and François Place have done it too, and with such talent !

(1) Cécile BOULAIRE, *Le Moyen Âge dans la littérature pour enfants* (The Middle Ages in the young readers' literature), Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2002, p. 294

Interview by Marc Wilmotte, part of this interview was published in « Le Carnet et les Instants » nr 206 – janvier- mars 2021.

In *Fulmir's journey* you approach death in a very frontal way : a particularly dark context ("death took turns, without thinking about it, in these times of chaos"), failure and cowardice of the community, bitterness and desire for death of the hero... It's not new, there's a lot of darkness in the last *Bjorn*, in *Ramulf* or *Rumors*. Do you always feel very free to bring a certain gravity to your texts or do you have some constraints ?

Death has always inhabited my novels for teenagers, those of the Medium collection of L'Ecole des loisirs. From the first volume of the adventures of Bjorn, my Viking hero, it is present. I am thinking, for example, of the murder of Maga by the White Demon. The scene marked my young readers - they tell me about it - and it inspired a striking image to Thomas Gilbert, adaptor of the series in comics. That being said, you are right that my stories are evolving towards greater darkness. The general climate is harsher, the vision of the world and of men darkens. It is a path taken before me by the greatest authors of fantasy stories, in those books that came to push the boundaries of children's literature. I am thinking of J.R.R. Tolkien and J.K. Rowling. This evolution is above all unconscious - it is a natural way. Working at the *Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien surprised himself. He gave birth to a monster and was afraid of it. I never felt this feeling, but I knew in writing *Ramulf*, *Bjorn in the Underworld IV*, *Rumors* and, to a lesser extent, *Fulmir's journey*, that I was changing, that I was giving a more room to violence and death, to wickedness, to perversion... This did not frighten me, I did not try to counter this trend, even if I try not to cross the line. I mean, I say that... it is obviously a subjective question. Some readers, especially adults, find that I sometimes go a little too far.

You follow your natural way, you say... Is it your perception as adult that has evolved or your conception of writing ? When you take darker paths, is it to give another dimension to the narrative, in the way of initiation's or transformation's stories ?

With age, experiences, and extended historical knowledge, it is difficult to maintain optimism. Let us add that my view of humanity is becoming more severe every day because of the current events. Egocentrism, rise of extremes, epidemic populism, martyred planet... all this can only affect consciences. Around me, a lot of young people don't want to have children... But back to literature. When I take darker paths, as you say, it is not the result of an objective decision, of an artistic choice. It is my vision of the world that guides some of my writings. That's why I was talking about "natural way"
...

Some adult readers find that, sometimes, you go a little too far. This darkness seems to be better tolerated by young people ?

I don't think the -not so many - adults who think like think for themselves. They worry about the young readers. Wrongly, because I really don't feel like I'm overstepping the boundaries !

What are your limits ? And how do you pay attention to keeping it bearable for young readers ?

Today, all kind of themes can be addressed in the children's novel. No more taboos ! What changes, what continues to be different, is the way of telling. We proceed with more dexterity, we stay more often in the evocation. In my stories, sex and violence are present, but never described with the rawness of a George R. R. Martin, for example.

There is something else that I would like to raise, that is the general tone of the works. Personally, if I do not hesitate to portray the harshness of the world, I forbid myself on the other hand to finish my

novels on a gloomy, desperate note. I feel close to Jean-Claude Grimberg in this. I read for my students in Lille the vehement speech he gave at the Grand Bookstore in February of last year: "I wrote a lot for the children. You have to tell them everything, and at the same time you have to make them want to live. We must not crush them by the weight of our misfortunes or our stories. We must be aware that exposing evil is not telling children, since we continue to have children, « You will face life. ... And your life will be : no job, no water » ... No, our job as writers is to tell the truth, since we can't do otherwise, but at the same time to give them the desire to live ! »

You explain your way of working in *Dans la cuisine d'un auteur (In the writer's kitchen)* - the importance of the summary when your initial idea passed the two-week test, your work with maps, forms... Has *Fulmir* been an opportunity to change your method ?

For longer novels - *Ramulf, Bjorn in the Underworld...* - I always wrote a synopsis before I started. For shorter texts, on the other hand, I do not necessarily feel this need. The plot is sufficiently inscribed in my head. This was the case for *Rumors* and for *Fulmir's journey*. But this is the only methodological difference, because all my romantic projects lead me to draw maps, house plans, castles, to fill out forms with characters, others concerning food, clothing, warrior habits and customs...

What was your starting point for *Fulmir* ?

Fulmir is one of those stories born of two ideas that fertilize each other (Stephen King experienced this with *Carrie*, as he recounts in *On Writing : A Memoir of the Craft*. First there was the elephant cemetery, myth discovered in the first Tarzan with Johnny Weissmuller. This gave me the idea of a character who voluntarily walks towards his death. Then I saw *Josey Wales outlaw*, one of the best Eastwood film, and I wanted to take up the idea of a hero on the run who, in troubled times, is cluttered with weak people. Under gruff exteriors, the man is hopelessly good, if I dare say. The two ideas lived apart in me, until the day they found themselves, much like two drops of oil thrown into the water : they staid at distance, then suddenly clumped to the surface. The concept of *Fulmir's Journey* was born.

Did the end seems obvious to you ?

The end of a novel is always tricky to write, and I attach extreme importance to it. I like open endings, which offer the reader the opportunity to dream, to continue the journey at their convenience. One example immediately comes to my mind : the last pages of *The Alexandria Quartet* by Larence Durrell. What will be the relationship between Darley and Clea later on ? Friends from afar, friends in the same city, lovers again ? Durrell doesn't tell us, and I love his silence, which allows me to respond with my imagination... Besides, I want to finish on a stage, not on a speech by the narrator. My cinematic instinct always pushes me to favour the image. I dig myself in order to find the vision that I hope will remain in the reader's memory as a painting or a film sequence. I often think of *Gatsby's* body in the pool, on his air mattress. The mattress rotates slowly on itself while the blood draws a circular line in the water. Unforgettable !... For *Fulmir*, I wanted a biblical image, a bright light that emerges, a landscape as far as the eye can see... I felt before I started the book that I should conclude on a sacred note. After all, *Fulmir* is a holy man (a holy dwarf). As grunt as he is, he deserves this qualifier, and his story was supposed to end on a small apotheosis.

The story takes place in the Middle Ages. You have already spoken about your relationship with this period, in other interviews. You seem to fully assume his ambivalence in *Fulmir* : Peter and Brown are "children of war and scarcity", the despair of Esclarmonde seems total ("My prayers go nowhere, they come back to me") and yet you cannot bring yourself to abandon all recourse to the wonderful. Speaking of which, can you comment on the scene of the sacred pond, which I find beautiful and disturbing ? "War and scarcity did not exist for them, they could have lived in the time of King Blaise !" you write about the young people who bathe there. Then Brune and Pierre will never cease to learn to swim like them...

In the midst of the worst times, in war or oppression, the youngest are able to seize every opportunity to have fun. It is not strictly speaking unconsciousness, it is rather that the vital momentum is so powerful in them that it allows them to laugh and play as soon as a possibility arises. I am not sure that these teenagers in the sacred pond are not hungry, that they have not been abused or lost loved ones in the raging war. Only their collective frolics erase everything for a moment. The pleasure of swimming annihilates dark thoughts. This scene is therefore a way of ode to youth. But it has other functions : to strengthen Fumir's paternal role vis-à-vis Peter and Brown, to symbolize the dwarf's return to life. Its members are at first stiff, you remember, then they relax and its swimming becomes supple as it was at the time of its distant youth. Fulmir's story is also one of physical rejuvenation, suffered rather than desired - an element from which I tried to draw some comic effects. I do not know if the humour of the novel is sufficiently noticeable. I had some intentions, anyway...

The humour is also evident when you evoke the Welfriche, where "we hang sparingly" ! Does this kingdom where the protagonists are walking to and where men "bathed in old philosophy" build a new society, also respond to your desire to open the reader's horizon ?

It is the light at the end of the tunnel, the literal application of what I was saying to you in relation to the ends and my concern to spare the future. This is, I repeat, a moral duty to which I am bound, even though I am fundamentally inclined to anxiety.

Illustrations take a prominent place in this novel : coats of arms, delicate frieze, small motifs or full-page images adorn the whole book... You're enjoying yourself, it's obvious, and it's a delight for your readers. It also has a considerable impact on the way we perceive this story : your illustrations give lightness to the text and nourish the imagination since you always remain in evocation, suggestion... Would you say that you are discovering a new way of working, where texts and images are nourishing themselves from each other ?

If I remain in the evocation, as you rightly say, if I forbid myself too descriptive images, it is not to "lock the imagination" of the reader. The expression is by Albert Migelgrun. He used it in an article about Tardi's questionable work as an illustrator *of The Journey at the End of the Night* from Céline. Reading a novel provokes mental images that have a fascinating character, evanescent dreamlike visions. They are different for each reader and each reader is, ipso facto, co-creator of the work he discovers. Knowing this, the illustrator must proceed with dexterity, humility - what he proposes is there to stimulate the imagination, not to reduce it. 19th-century cartoonists had found a graphic language that fulfilled this function wonderfully. This is a subject close to my heart and one that I have often mentioned.

Did I changed the way I work ? No doubt, because all novelists evolve, but drawing has nothing to do with it. I always write without thinking about future illustrations. What is different, however, is my way of designing the illustrations for my books for the young readers. When I illustrated *Bjorn le Morphir* in 2010, I classically drew scenes and portraits. Today, with *Rumors* and *Fulmir's journey*, I'm looking to set a scene, to create a climate. The central notebook of *Rumors* superbly colored by Denis Roussel, is the most daring thing I've done in this regard. These are images of forest, without characters, that confine to abstraction.... As for friezes, coats of arms and other frontispieces, they have another mission, which is to make the object-book valuable. When the electronic reading machines arrived, I was (wrongly) afraid about the future of the paper book. I thought, "How can we make books irreplaceable without increasing their cost too much ?" Decorative richness seemed to me an interesting way.

To make books like precious object you say... *Rumors* and *Fulmir's journey* are probably your most philosophical texts, they are also your most original and aesthetically rich works : are you aware of this concomitance ?

This concomitance you are talking about, I was not really aware of it until others pointed it out to me. I don't think my research in drawing and writing is intimately linked. It was chance that a break-up would take place at the same time in my two areas of interest.

Finally, do you think that the novels you're writing for the young readers can be categorized as educational novels ?

I think the novel is pedagogical in essence, insofar as it multiplies our experience. Without Dumas, Stendhal, Conrad, Stevenson, Sigrid Undset, Yourcenar, Durrell, Lowry, Patrick O'Brian, Vargas Llosa, Jim Harrison..., I just wouldn't be the man I am. The other lives that I have known through them, and in which I have immersed myself, body and soul, have shaped me in the same way as my own existence. Besides, I don't make a real distinction between real life and life in novels. I could repeat this sentence of Robert Louis Stevenson referring to *The Viscount of Bragelonne* from Alexandre Dumas : "I carried the thread of this epic in my sleep and I woke up without being broken, rejoicing to plunge back into the book at breakfast. And it was not without a heart shake that I had to put it down to return to my own work—for no part of the world has ever seemed as captivating as these pages and even my friends are not quite as real to me, or perhaps as dear, as D'Artagnan. »

From my point of view, "education novel" and "training novel" are therefore pleonastic expressions. Every good story teaches us to live, enriches our gaze, develops our capacity for empathy, our aesthetic sense, our lucidity, our distrust too... But of course, the lesson deserves to be taken only if the author is subtle, deep, inhabited - never completely decipherable, both by others and by himself. A novel worthy of the name is subject to multiple interpretations, it cannot be akin, even from afar, to a mathematical demonstration. If it contains a message (the word doesn't bother me so much), if it illustrates a problem, if it fights injustice, terror— I think of dear Orwell - the ideas that inspire it must never be articulated. The novelist puts his magnifying glass on a situation, he places his characters under our gaze before making them live in semi-freedom. The result may surprise him. The very meaning of the book will escape him in part, when he has finished his adventurous work. One might think that these views apply to the adult novel and not to the children's texts. That is not my view. Our young readers are entitled to the best literature. Polysemy and mystery should not be confiscated from them. My friend Kitty Crowther's albums are multi-faceted masterpieces. How many hours, how many days could we discuss about *Annie of the lake*, *Mother Medusa*, *The Root Child*, *The Visit of Little Death*... without unraveling all the secrets ?

5. List of awards and other distinctions

He received the Prix Littérature Jeunesse de la Scam (Scam Prize for youth literature) in 2017 (Scam is Société Civile des Auteurs Multimédias (Civil Society of Multimedia Authors))

Thomas Lavachery received the Grand prix triennal de littérature de jeunesse (Triannual prize for youth literature) de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles (Belgium) in 2018

Some of his novels received also distinctions :

- **Bjorn aux enfers : le prince oublié (Bjorn in the Underworld : The forgotten prince)**

2005 : Prix Libbylit – Roman belge (Libbylit prize – Belgian novel)

- **Bjorn le Morphir (Bjorn The Morphir)**

2006 : Prix Sorcières

- **Ramulf (Ramulf)**

2015 : Prix Libbylit – Roman belge (Libbylit prize – Belgian novel)

6. **Complete bibliography**

- ***Bjorn le Morphir*** (*Bjorn the Morphir*), L'École des Loisirs, Paris 2004
- ***Bjorn aux enfers : Le prince oublié*** (*Bjorn in the Underworld : The forgotten prince*) L'École des Loisirs, Paris 2005
- ***Bjorn aux enfers II : La mort du loup*** (*Bjorn in the Underworld II : The death of the wolf*), L'École des Loisirs, Paris 2005
- ***Ile de Pâques 1935 : deux hommes pour un mystère*** (*Easter Island 1934 : Two men for one mystery*), Labor, Bruxelles 2005
- ***Bjorn aux enfers III : Au cœur du Tanarbrok***, (*Bjorn in the Underworld III : The Tanarbrok*), L'École des Loisirs, Paris 2006
- ***Bjorn aux enfers IV : La reine bleue*** (*Bjorn in the Underworld IV : The blue queen*), L'École des Loisirs, Paris 2008
- ***2 pouces & demi*** (*Two inches and a half*), Bayard, Paris 2009
- ***La colère des MacGregor*** (*The MacGregor's anger*), Bayard, Paris 2010
- ***C'est l'aventure !*** (*That's adventure !*), L'École des Loisirs, Paris 2010 (short stories by different authors)
- ***Bjorn aux armées I : Le jarlal*** (*Bjorn at the Armies I : The jarlal*), L'École des Loisirs, Paris 2010
- ***Jojo de la jungle*** (*Jojo of the jungle*), L'Ecole des loisirs, Paris 2010
- ***J'irai voir les Sioux*** (*I'll go see the Sioux*), Archimède - L'Ecole des loisirs, Paris 2011
- ***Padouk s'en va*** (*Padouk goes away*), L'Ecole des loisirs, Paris 2011
- ***Bjorn aux armées II : Les mille bannières***, (*Bjorn in the Armies II : Thousand banners*), L'École des Loisirs, Paris 2012
- ***Trois histoires de Jojo de la jungle*** (*Three stories of Jojo of the jungle*), L'Ecole des loisirs, Paris 2013
- ***Itatinémaux***, Aden, Bruxelles 2014
- ***Ramulf*** (*Ramulf*), L'Ecole des loisirs, Paris 2015
- ***Tor et les gnomes*** (*Tor and the Gnomes*), L'Ecole des loisirs, Paris 2015
- ***Tor et le troll*** (*Tor and the Troll*), L'Ecole des loisirs, Paris 2015
- ***Roussette et les Zaffreux*** (*Roussette and Ze Hideous*), Pastel - L'Ecole des loisirs, Paris 2016
- ***Tor et les garnements*** (*Tor and the little rascals*), L'Ecole des loisirs, Paris 2017
- ***Bjorn aux armées III : La reconquête*** (*Bjorn in the Armies III : Ther reconquest*), L'Ecole des loisirs, Paris 2017
- ***Ma famille verte*** (*My green family*), Pastel – L'Ecole des loisirs, Paris 2017
- ***Tor et le prisonnier*** (*Tor and the prisoner*), L'Ecole des loisirs, Paris 2018
- ***Rumeur*** (*Rumors*), L'Ecole des loisirs, Paris 2019
- ***Le voyage de Fulmir*** (*Fulmir's journey*), L'Ecole des loisirs, Paris 2019
- ***Un zoo à soi*** (*A zoo of one's own*), L'Ecole des loisirs, Paris 2020
- ***Tor et le cow-boy*** (*Tor and the cow-boy*), L'Ecole des loisirs, Paris 2021

Thomas Lavachery also collaborates to the comic books published around the character of Bjorn, illustrated by Thomas Gilbert

Bjorn le Morphir 1 : Naissance d'un morphir (Bjorn the Morphir : The birth of a Morphir), Rue de Sèvres, Paris 2015

Bjorn le Morphir 2 : Dans l'enfer des enfers (Bjorn the Morphir 2 : In the heart of the Underworld), Rue de Sèvres, Paris 2015

Bjorn le Morphir 3 : La reine des enfers (Bjorn the Morphir 3 : The Queen of the Underworld), Rue de Sèvres, Paris 2015

Bjorn le Morphir 4 : Les armées du roi (Bjorn the Morphir 4 : The King's armies), Rue de Sèvres, Paris 2015

Bjorn le Morphir 5 : Le choc des armées (Bjorn the Morphir 5 : The Clash of the armies), Rue de Sèvres, Paris 2016

Bjorn le Morphir 6 : L'armée des steppes (Bjorn the Morphir 6 : The army of the steppes), Rue de Sèvres, Paris 2017

Bjorn le Morphir 7 : La Revanche du Morphir (Bjorn the Morphir 7 : The revenge of the Morphir), Rue de Sèvres, Paris 2018

7. List of translated editions, and their languages

Chinese – Chang Jiang :

Bjorn le Morphir (Bjorn the Morphir), 2015

Bjorn aux Armées : Le jarlal (Bjorn in the Armies : The jarlal), 2015

Bjorn aux Armées II : Les milles bannières (Bjorn in the Armies : Thousand banners), 2015

Bjorn aux enfers : Le prince oublié (Bjorn in the Underworld : The forgotten prince), 2015

Bjorn aux enfers II : La mort du loup (Bjorn in the Underworld : The death of the wolf) 2015

Bjorn aux enfers III : Au cœur du Tanarbrok (Bjorn in the Underworld : Tanarbrok), 2017

Bjorn aux enfers IV : La reine bleue (Bjorn in the Underworld : The blue queen), 2017

Chinese – Orient Publishing Center

Roussette et les Zaffreux (Roussette and Ze Hideous), 2018

Korean – Seedbook (South Korea)

Ma famille verte (My green family), 2019

Italian – Gallucci Editore

Bjorn le Morphir (Bjorn the Morphir), 2020

Tor et les gnomes (Tor and the Gnomes), 2020

Tor et le troll (Tor and the Troll), 2020

Polish - Gdanskie Wydawnictwo Oswiatowe

Bjorn le Morphir (Bjorn the Morphir), 2018

8. Ten of the most important titles

1. ***Bjorn le Morphir*** (*Bjorn the Morphir*), L'école des loisirs, Paris, 2004
2. ***2 pouces & demi*** (*2 inches and a half*), Bayard, Paris, 2009
3. ***Bjorn aux armées I : Le jarlal*** (*Bjorn in the Armies : The jarlal*), L'école des loisirs, Paris, 2010
4. ***Bjorn aux armées II : Les mille bannières*** (*Bjorn in the Armies : Thousand banners*), L'école des loisirs, Paris, 2012
5. ***Ramulf*** (*Ramulf*), L'école des loisirs, Paris, 2015
6. ***Tor et les gnomes*** (*Tor and the Gnomes*), L'école des loisirs, Paris 2015
7. ***Bjorn aux armées III : La reconquête*** (*Bjorn in the Armies : the reconquest*), L'école des loisirs, Paris, 2017
8. ***Rumeur*** (*Rumors*), L'école des loisirs, Paris, 2019
9. ***Le voyage de Fulmir*** (*Fulmir's journey*) L'école des loisirs, Paris, 2019
10. ***Un zoo à soi*** (*A zoo of one's own*), L'école des loisirs, Paris, 2020

9. List of the five books sent to the jurors

Bjorn le Morphir (*Bjorn the Morphir*), L'École des Loisirs, Paris 2004

Ramulf (*Ramulf*), L'Ecole des loisirs, Paris 2015

Tor et les gnomes (*Tor and the Gnomes*), L'Ecole des loisirs, Paris 2015

Rumeur (*Rumors*), L'Ecole des loisirs, Paris 2019

Le voyage de Fulmir (*Fulmir's journey*), L'Ecole des loisirs, Paris 2019

10. (Published) reviews of the books

Bjorn le Morphir (*Bjorn the Mophir*), L'école des loirsir, Paris, 2004

Published in Libbylit nr 61 – Jan – Feb 2005 and in Libbylit Hors-serie « Thomas Lavachery » - oct 2019 by Robert Schmidt

In the winter of 1065, it snows like it has never snowed in Fizzland. Bjorn and his family take refuge in their log house while they wait for the bad weather to pass. But the snow is nasty, it wants men dead. During this long stay in the house and then in the cave under the house, as it will collapse, everyone reveals their heart and courage. Bjorn is also changing. The shy and reserved boy will turn into a reckless man and an exceptional fighter. Could he be a Morphir, the legendary man? No one knows for sure and especially not Bjorn. A novel of adventures and especially of inner adventures in a hostile world, as much by the men who inhabit it as by nature which imposes its rights. From 11 years old.

Ramulf (Ramulf), L'école des loisirs, Paris 2015

Published in Libbylit nr 120 – May – July 2015 and in Libbylit Hors-Serie « Thomas Lavachery » - oct 2019 by Robert Schmidt

Ramulf is a young simpleton who lives with his brother, a great scholar. One day, Ramulf buys a monkey at the market. This monkey escapes and climbs onto the platform where Jehanne the Pious is reciting a poem. Feeling mortally offended by the monkey's expressions, Jehanne dies of depression. The knight of Montluc, secret lover of Jehanne, swears to avenge her and launches his band of Choleriques, warriors without fear or law, survivor of cholera-morbus, in pursuit of Ramulf. This one must flee. No one gives him a chance at survival and yet Ramulf is less of a fool than the world thinks he is. In the face of adversity, he will develop courage and a sense of combat that no one would have granted him. An epic story, full of action, combat, fantasy. There is an air of Bjorn the Morphir about this epic and Ramulf could be a distant cousin of Bjorn. And besides, I have a scoop! It is likely that in one of Bjorn's next adventures, Ramulf will make an appearance. But shh ... it's still a secret! From 11 years old.

Tor et les gnomes (Tor and the Gnomes), Pastel/L'école des loisirs, 2015

Published in Libbylit nr 120 – May – July 2015 and in Libbylit Hors-Serie « Thomas Lavachery » - oct 2019 by Isabelle Decuyper

Gone fishing with his father and uncle Einar, the young Tor did not catch a single fish. For his father and uncle, it must have been because of the farfajoll, a gnome who lives in lakes and rivers and has fun keeping fish from biting the hook. The adults want to get rid of it, but Tor is fascinated by this creature. He will save the gnome by organizing a real funeral, making it look like the farfajoll is dead and replaces it with a fish skeleton! As a thank you, the farfajoll will also come to Tor's aid when it needs it. A new writing format for Thomas Lavachery who manages to immerse the young reader in the universe of gnomes, making sympathetic these little creatures unknown to humans. He will also offer a beautiful gallery of gnomes at the end of the book with all his talent as an illustrator. Illustrations also to be discovered throughout this story dealing with difference, fear of the other, and mutual aid. A little gem of reading. From the age of 8.

Rumeur (Rumors), L'école des loisirs, 2019

Published on the web site ricochet-jeunesse.org by Sophie Pilaire

Tarir is a young Indian Zapiro. Because he is different, he is accused of being a caponcho eater, a fearful and whining little animal. This supreme insult falls on Tarir's family, who still manage to get married. But the rumor goes on, and he doesn't do anything to deny it. Tarir eventually leaves his village and lives alone in the middle of the forest. Sick, he is then forced to go to the city, to "los Blancos". A doctor treats him, educates him. He falls in love with his daughter, finally finds his place. But Tarir wants to come back and take revenge on his clan.

Written and illustrated by Thomas Lavachery, the novel made me think a lot about the style of Jean-François Chabas. We find the importance of nature, the almost imperceptible fine humor, the quest of the hero (and here narrator) to make his personal journey and the profound lesson of life by example. The theme of the rumor is extremely topical, but we see here that it transcends times and spaces. A rumor can wreak real havoc, but it is also sometimes self-generated (see abrupt end). To be read without delay.

Le voyage de Fulmir (Fulmir's journey), L'école des loisirs, 2019

Published in Libbylit nr 139 – Dec 2019 – Jan – Feb 2020 by Marc Wilmotte

Fulmir, soon to be 160, feels that the end is near. He therefore undertakes to join the cemetery of the dwarves. But, since the death of King Blaise in 1302, the dukes have waged a merciless war. Fulmir has no choice but to come to the aid of the unfortunate people he encounters, even if it means turning out of the way. Once again, Thomas Lavachery offers us a story that will delight young readers, but adults too. It's fresh, simple and always exciting. The author's illustrations, which have the beauty of illuminations, add to the joy of reading. From 10 years old.

11. Reproductions of book covers and illustrations

See annexes.

12. Annexes

1. Photography of Thomas Lavachery
2. Book covers and illustrations
 - Bjorn series
 - Tor Series
3. Booklet published by L'école des loisirs - FR
4. Libbylit Hors-Serie Thomas Lavachery – FR
 - Cover
 - Booklet
5. Translations of one book and chapters in English
 - Tor and the Gnomes
 - Chapters of Bjorn The Morphir
 - Chapter of Rumors
 - Chapter of Ramulf
 - Chapter of Fulmir's journey
6. Electronical versions of the selected books in original language