

Ndokale Maam Bubakar Bóris Jóbb

Maam [grandfather in Wolof, the language of wider communication in Senegal] is how I sometimes jokingly call Boubacar Boris Diop. This powerful mind from Senegal has consistently worked in the shadow for decades, just like the title of one of his novels, *The Knight and His Shadow* [from the French original *Le Cavalier et son Ombre*, translated into English by Alan Furness]. This timeless novel asks the basic but central question: whom do ‘African’ authors address in their works, in what languages? Boubacar Boris Diop shifted from French to Wolof after his participation in the Project *Rwanda: Écrire par Devoir de Mémoire* [Writing for it Never to Happen Again!] because he understood in Rwanda that French had danced in a ditch of blood. While he was a writer in residence and my guest at the University of Bayreuth in 2016, I organised a workshop focusing on his writing in Wolof and carried out an interview with him at the Holocaust Museum in Nuremberg. The outcome is ‘Qui a Peur de la Littérature Wolof’, *Études Littéraires Africaines* 46/2018, available at [Qui a peur de la littérature wolof ?. Études littéraires africaines – Érudit \(erudit.org\)](https://erudit.org/fr/revue/ELA/46/2018/1011111)

Boubacar Boris Diop wears several hats: as a journalist, writer, literary critic, translator, publisher, university professor etc., he has always raised his voice against all kinds of neocolonial enterprises such as the recent Montpellier Masquerade with thousand voices of a continent speaking to the French head of state, and human humiliation. *Murambi, The Book of Bones* [translated from the French original *Murambi, le livre des Ossements* by Fiona Mc Laughlin] is his ultimate cry against *The 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda*, a metaphor of any human humiliation. This novel of eternity is the representative novel for **The Neustadt International Prize for Literature 2022** for which the writer and translator Jennifer Croft recommended Boubacar Boris Diop. *Maam* is taking the prize home, after Assia Djebar (Algeria, 1996), Nurrudin Farah (Somalia, 1998) and Mia Couto (Mozambique, 2014):

[Boubacar Boris Diop Wins Prestigious 2022 Neustadt International Prize for Literature - Neustadt Prizes](https://www.neustadtprize.com/en/2022-winners)



Boubacar Boris Diop signing a copy of *Murambi, le Livre des Ossements* at the University of Bayreuth, 19 July 2016. (© Diop & Tchokothe)



Boubacar Boris Diop generously SHARING his journey around *Murambi, the book of Bones* with M.A Students in the course, 'Black Skin, white bones': Rwanda 1994 and Humanity's collective Memory(cide), April 29, 2021. (© group)

[Congratulations] *Ndokale Maam Bubakar Bóris Jóbb*

Rémi Armand Tchokothe