



Centenary Tribute

Country : Senegal

Emitai

The God of Thunder

1971 / Colour / 103 minutes / French



Director : Ousmane Sembene

Producer : Filmi Doomireew

Cinematographer : Georges Caristan , Michel Renaudeau

Editor : Gilbert Kikoine

Cast : Robert Fontaine, Michel Renaudeau, Pierre Blanchard

Synopsis : Seething with outrage, Ousmane Sembene's *Emitai* envisions both the cruelties of oppression and the revolutionary potential of the oppressed. During World War II, Marshal Petain's French forces and their African lackeys comb the Senegalese countryside, conscripting young Diola men into service and attempting to seize rice stores for soldiers back in Europe. Torn between allegiance to their silent gods and fear of fomenting a resistance of their own that might upset them, the tribe's patriarchal leadership frays; meanwhile, the French humiliate the women of the tribe when they refuse to yield their harvests. With unflinching realism, Sembene explores the strains that colonialism places upon cultural traditions and, in the process, discovers a people's hidden reserves of rebellion and dignity.



“Influenced by Black postcolonial literature, the French New Wave, and Italian neorealism, Sembène captures the psychic violence of anti-Blackness, contrasting the on-screen silence of Diouana as imposition but also refusal, with a stream-of-consciousness voiceover.”

— Chrystel Oloukoi