

future to study the work of the Maestro, as he was called, will most certainly bring to light the work of a talented filmmaker from the continent caught in the struggle between legitimate personal ambition and the space of representation that is allowed to creators from Africa in a global world still marked by enduring relations of coloniality.

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Homage to Idrissa Ouedraogo

Olympe Bhêly-Quenum

1991 or 1992. Sembene Ousmane telephones me, asking if I know Idrissa Ouedraogo. Without waiting for my answer, he declares: “You who are so Greek, you should see *Tilai!*”

In his habitual enigmatic manner when he was teasing, without explaining his reasons, he added: “one of your novels qualifies as a Greek tragedy in Africa, and you should know Idrissa...”

Some years later, at a film and record store in the 15th arrondissement in Paris, I found *Tilai* in DVD, along with five DVDs of Sembene’s films.

Tilai? Beauty, splendor, poignant force with the profound depths of things in Africa. Here, Idrissa plays his cards and wins the game as in a Greek tragedy! Still, I had the impression that he wouldn’t have done otherwise anywhere else in the world. Africa brings something of grandeur to this film, but at the end of the DVD I remembered two stories from the Old Testament: Reuben, incestuous while making love with Bala, the concubine of his father Jacob; and more tragic still, the sexual relations between King David and Bathsheba! “It was common practice in the great kingdoms of Africa,” Hampté Bâ told me. The sublime thing about the case of the king of the Hebrews is the creation of Psalm 51 (*Miserere*). Mozart leads us in *Davidde Penitente* (K469).

I would have liked to have known the magnificent artist that was Idrissa Ouedraogo as Sembene wished, but he left us...too young. My sincere condolences to his family. His DVDs will remain everpresent in my film library.

Garrigues-Ste-Eulalie, February 22, 2018

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Olympe Bhêly-Quenum is the author of *Piege Sans Fin* and *Un enfant d’Afrique* and many other African novels.

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