



It was to have been a film : it has turned out to be an epic instead, comparable to the *Chansons de Geste*, the mediaeval verse-chronicles of the heroic deeds of gallant knights ; a book of the hours illuminated in the olympic colours ; a sumptuous illustration — aided by all the latest technical refinements available to the cinema — of the heights to which men are capable of rising when they are not engaged in war, politics, or petty rivalries, but inspired rather by an authentic ideal.

It was to have been a report, an account of Tokyo's most glorious hours : it has turned out to be a paean of praise extolling man in the act of surpassing himself.

And a music with its pauses — the silence of the athlete before his third attempt, the concentration of the runner just before the start of the 100 metre finals —, with its sighs — the panting of the winner as he breasts the tape —, with its harmonics — the supreme emotion of the medal winners on the victors' podium —, with its silences — the extenuated solitude of the marathon runners —, with its discords — the extraordinary mannerisms of the weight putters who handle their weights the way a virtuoso caresses his violin —, a living music of chords mingled with sweat and ardour which plunge the spectator into that state of grace in which he suddenly becomes aware of the true dimension of Man.

Beauty leaps out from these moving statues, these muscles that might have been sculpted by Michelangelo, these motley skins which obliterate all notion of race, especially in this voluntary effort to attain honour.

And we think of the paradox facing the producer Kon Ichikawa. In fact, his task was a most difficult one, cutting and pruning ruthlessly the miles of film available to him. He had to sacrifice superabundance for the sake of the sequence, the artistic work as a whole, while at the same time — accounting for all different sports.

The mass, the crowd, the long procession of athletes had to be shown, if only to illustrate the wonderful power of the universal movement which for a fortnight captured the imagination and the attention of the world.

But Man comes out of this film victorious. Not only the champion, but even the little boy who explodes with joy in the crowd of spectators ; not only the winner, but the marathon runner staggering painfully into the arena determined to finish a race which he no longer has any hope of winning ; not only the medal winner but the radiant bearer of the olympic flame whose extraordinary smile, both proud and infinitely confident, opens the Games which were to close in the torchlight of friendship.

Yes, Man, from the exultant athlete to the anonymous spectator, from the nameless competitor to the imperturbable official, emerges victorious from Tokyo-Olympiad.

It was to have been a film : it turned out to be a living fresco of contemporary humanity, depersonalizing the star in order to personalize the individual.

The report, the film, the documentary remain only in so far as news contains an eternal truth.

In the final analyses, man alone appears to be an end in himself.

That is why the Olympic Games affect us much more than any other sports meeting : in the Olympics, sport is only the means given man to achieve his full potential.

That is why this film will remain deeply engraved in our memory for a long time to come : through the beauty of its forms and colours, beyond appearances and motives, it gives us a marvellous lesson in humanity.

Out of this film Man emerges the winner... that is to say, a better individual.

*Claude Morgat.*

