"Tokyo Olympiad": Olympism Interpreted from the Conflict Between Artistic Representation and Documentary Film

Naofumi Masumoto* and Gordon MacDonald**

*Department of Kinesiology, Graduate School of Science, Tokyo Metropolitan University
1-1, Minami-Ohsawa, Hachioji City, Tokyo 192-0397 Japan
masumoto-naofumi@c.metro-u.ac.jp

**Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
347 Tecumseh Ave. E. London, Ontario, Canada, N6C 1T1
[Received March 4, 2003 ; Accepted March 20, 2003]

The purpose of this study is to clarify the Olympism of the filmmakers by considering both artistic and documentary aspects of the film, with an interpretation of the contents of representation of "Tokyo Olympiad." In order to interpret these messages, it is important to notice the film's context and metatext. First, as a social context, it may be argued that the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games had a strong role to play in enhancing the national prestige of Japan. So, it was natural that the politicians, the officials of the Japanese Olympic Committee (JOC), and the sport world in Japan asserted that the IOC's official film of the Tokyo Olympic Games should record mainly the outcomes of the performances of Japanese athletes (nationalism). Second, the gap between the artistic representation and a conventional documentary record are clarified by considering the metatext of the film. The frame of reference of film viewers, which is comprehension of the film itself when they watch the film, is as follows: "This is an official film of the Olympic Games," and "this is a documentary film." So, people regard this film with the understanding that "all that is represented in this film must be true." In contrast, the filmmaker's premise was also that "this film is not just a conventional documentary film but an artistic one." In conclusion, it can be said that this excellent film tried to represent not only a peaceful world (inter-nationalism) but also universal equality as human beings. The images of the film have no connection with race and class because of the representations of the universal solemnity of athletes, and human possibilities of excellent performance by winners and losers (trans-nationalism). This is the authentic representation of the Olympism of the filmmakers, and the reason "Tokyo Olympiad" was appraised as a great film worldwide.

Keywords: 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games, Olympism, sport documentary film, IOC official film.

1. Introduction

Although "Tokyo Olympiad (1965)" was criticized both by the Japanese sport world and Ichiro Kono - a great Japanese politician, the special minister of the Tokyo Olympic Games of 1964, and the president of the Japanese Athletic Federation [Inomata, (1974); Sato, (1995)] - it was enormously and internationally welcomed and praised at the Cannes Film Festival in 1965, receiving a special Award of the International Film Critics [Bergan, (1982); Cinema-Jumpo Sya, (1965); Daily Variety Ltd., (1983); Espagnac, (1995); Toho Co. Ltd., (1965); Vaughan, (1977); Weiler, (1966)]. This study was derived from the motivation to discover the reason for this criticism in Japan, and whether the problem may be solved by using text theory to consider the differences in reviews of the film between Japan and other countries. The text theory as the method employed in this study is one of the hermeneutics of sport culture, formulated through the interpretation of the text of the film in consideration of the context of the film, and in accordance with the metatext of the film. With text theory, an interpretation of the images of the film can be attained more deeply than by a reading of the text of the film only. Thus, the purpose of this study is to clarify...
the Olympism promoted by the filmmakers by considering both the documentary and artistic aspects of the film, through an interpretation of the contents of "Tokyo Olympiad." The interpretation proceeds as follows: (1) Japanese newspapers and film journals were used to confirm the details of the disputes, (2) the film was interpreted using the VTR version, and (3) the interpretations were supplemented with the records of statements by the director Kon Ichikawa.

2. Details of the film production and the disputes about "the art or the documentary film."

As shown in the newspaper, the original director of this film was Akira Kurosawa. Kon Ichikawa replaced him in January of 1964, just prior to the Tokyo Olympic Games. According to the request of the Olympic Organizing Committee (OOC), the film script was started at the beginning of May. The filmmakers decided that four writers who were not athletes must prepare a script of the film. This shows that the producers favored an artistic representation of the film, rather than a strictly documentary recording, before shooting ever began. Their idea was to film and project on screen the inner feelings of not only the winners but also officials, referees, spectators, and all persons involved in the Games of Tokyo in 1964.

Although he had many apprehensions about the delay of the production organization, the director Ichikawa stated that he had an advantage in that the real intention of the film permeated to all levels of the staff [Ichikawa and Tamaki, (1992)]. The OOC accepted the script, and Ichikawa drew the pictorial continuities of the main shots. This fact also showed the director's intentions before shooting began. According to the script and the continuities, the filmmaking staff arranged elaborately the next day's shooting plans every night during the Games. Total footage amounted to 322,933 feet, and these films were edited to 18,000 feet in the first film rushes. After several modifications, the first special preview of the film was held March 8, 1965. The special Minister, Kono, attended the preview and reviewed the film which he then decried, saying that it was not a documentary film and was too artistic, because he thought it should have recorded more of the results. His comments were printed in the main newspapers in Japan, and this ignited the dispute of "the art or documentary film."

For example, the sequence of the solitary struggle of the nameless runner - Armed Isa from Chad - continued about eight minutes. The scene was a typical part of the criticisms that the film recorded mainly the underdogs, although at the script writing sessions this solitary scene was already planned. Furthermore, the script had been approved by the OOC, and the director Ichikawa said, in retrospect, that it brought merit to penetrate his intentions for the work to all the staff [Ichikawa & Tamaki, (1992)]. However, after the Games, in order to avoid criticism that the film was too artistic, another film was edited to record mainly the activities of Japanese athletes [Riefenstahl, Ichikawa, & Tamaki, (1992)].

But what were the main comments about "Tokyo Olympiad"? According to the newspapers and the film journals, the main criticisms and Ichikawa's refutations may be summarized as follows.

2.1. The main criticisms:

(1) The film was too much artistic. (2) The film did not record all outcomes of the Games as required by the Olympic Charter. (3) The film recorded too few activities of the Japanese athletes.

---

2 "The documentary aspects" means that the film includes a record of the facts as a documentary film. Tayama (1987) defined the documentary film as, "the film that records the actual affairs, the phenomenon, and the situations. ... in general, news reels are not included in this genre, and the documentary film is the work produced depending on the specific theme." (pp.92-93) It is an important point that the documentary film is not the representation of the fact like the news reels, but a film that was recorded under a main theme. Moreover, as Tayama noted, the filmmakers can not help putting their own subjective opinions into the films; in film-making, the filmmakers' philosophy must be reflected on the works as an ideology. In other words, documentary films are structured so that the camera articulates the scenes from the real phenomenon spatio-temporally, then are edited for sound, and are represented to the film viewers.

3 The concept of the artistic representation is, in this study, "the creation and the representation of beauty by certain materials, artifices, and forms."(Shinmura, 1991, p.789) Within this stand point, the artistic representation of the Olympic film can be defined in the following ways: that the existence of the athletes in the Games was articulated by the cameras, the theme of Olympism was projected on screen, and the beauty of sport and the human being were represented by the filmmakers. Sasaki (1984), an aesthetic scholar, asserted that the essence of the artistic work is the representation of the adventurous nature of human spirits and the disclosure of the world (pp. 131-132). This study takes a standpoint that in the film "Tokyo Olympiad" the adventure of the mind of the director Ichikawa and the Olympic world he captured should be disclosed.

4 A continuity of the filming according to the script takes the director's frame images into account. In the images of the frames of each shot, the subjects filmed, the lens, the location and movement of cameras, the size of frames, the camera angles, the sequence of the scene, sound and music, etc. are carefully written into the script.

5 According to the director Ichikawa, five edited versions of the film were printed: for previews in Japan and for the Cannes Film Festival (135 min.), for the English version (93 min.), for Japanese standard version (170 min.), and for the Emperor Hirohito and Imperial family (Ichikawa & Tamaki, 1992).
(4) The film mainly recorded the underdogs, such as the last runner of the 10,000-metre race and the solitary runner from Chad who competed in the men's 800-metre race. (5) The film distorted the real competition. The representations, especially in the shot put, the rifle shooting, and the race walk, caricatured the athletes too much. (6) The Ministry of Education's recommendation of the film to children was reconsidered, because the artistic representations of the film were, presumably, hard for young people to understand. (7) The scene of Emperor Hirohito smiling and swinging his hat lacked dignity. (8) Among the miscellaneous shots inside the stadium, the shots of the Japanese baseball superstars, Shigeo Nagashima and Sadaharu Oh, were unnecessary because they had no relation to a recording of the events.

2.2. Ichikawa's refutations:

(1) This was a documentary film that tried to record the human being and the significance of Olympism. (2) Children had good sensibilities for artistic representations. (3) He did not deny both the artistic and the documentary aspects of the film. (4) As the dispute progressed, he argued in newspapers that the point had turned to political problems, rather than being about the nature of the film itself. Ichikawa kept pushing his beliefs about the film, continuing to confront the criticisms from the sport world and the politicians in order to complete a good work.

2.3. The Context of the film

In order to interpret these messages, according to the text theory, it is important to notice the film's context and metatext. First, in a social context, the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games had a strong role to play in enhancing Japan's national prestige. The Games were exploited as a tool to arrange certain infrastructures in Japan, such as the Tokyo capital highway, Tokaido Shinkansen Express, and so on. So, it was natural that the politicians, the officials of the JOC (Japanese Olympic Committee), and the sport world in Japan asserted that the IOC's official film of the Tokyo Olympic Games should record mainly the outcomes of the performances of Japanese athletes. Moreover, praise for both the smooth management of the Games and the formative architecture of the Olympic Stadia caused many to insist that Japanese leadership and technology should mainly be recorded in the film. Nevertheless, Ichikawa insisted upon his belief that the spirit of the Olympic Games must be a peaceful festival, so he tried to create an artistic documentary film that would surpass Leni Riefenstahl's "Olympia (1938)." Here the conflict between the conventional documentary and the artistic representation of the film arose. That is to say, the nationalism trying to uplift Japanese power and the universalism trying to record Olympism collided artistically with each other.

2.4. The Metatext of the film

Second, the gap between the artistic representation and conventional documentary record are clarified by considering the metatext of the film. The frame of reference of film viewers, which is comprehension of the film itself, is as follows: "This is an official film of the Olympic Games," and "this is a documentary film." So, people regard this film with the understanding that "all that is represented in this film must be true." Thus, the frame of understanding of the film associated with it being a documentary record should be reinforced. This led some to ask that the film record the activities of the Japanese athletes and the associated enhancement of nationalism. On the other hand, there is also a premise of the filmmakers that "this film is not just a conventional documentary film but an artistic one." This latter frame of reference led to the message that "some important theme must be represented in the film." In this case, the attitude of the filmmakers' attempt to record Olympism and the universality of human beings should be reinforced.

Even with these metatext, it must be recognized that the possibility of unrestrictedness of representation still exist. In filmmaking, directors can articulate the real world by shooting under the contention of creation, and insert scenes with editing. Even in a documentary film, a director can devise the representation in the editing room. This invention could be said to be a creative recording of a documentary film. This type of construction of the frame of reference in film viewing could be confirmed carefully by film audiences. For example, like the sequence of the female gymnast's (Vera Caslavska) vault and balance beam performances, there were others in the film where viewers noticed something artificial. It is no exaggeration to say
that those who asked only to have the outcomes recorded in the documentary film, did so not only because they had no concerns with the artistic nature of the film, but also because they were incapable of understanding or creating an artistic frame of reference to the film.

3. A Creative documentary film: for the records of impressiveness

In order to interpret the film effectively, the next step is to examine the following issues: (1) what was included in the frame of the film (mise en scene), (2) what was inserted by the retakes, and (3) how were these items composed as images in editing? Obviously, the director could not ask the athletes for replays while filming the Olympic Games. This was different from ordinary filming where a director guides the acting and where retakes would be available and, indeed, inevitable. Hence, this study can approach one of the ideas of the filmmakers by making these types of examinations.

3.1. Mise en scene

As mise en scene, in this type of film, the camera work takes a central position exclusively. That is to say, the camera work is a method that selects the filming subject depending on the restricted frame of the camera, decides the composition (spatiality), and captures and directs the subject's movements (temporality). The close-ups and the high-speed shots change the size and time of the subjects. The camera position fixes the direction of the subject's movement. According to these types of camera work, the filmed subjects - the athletes and spectators, for example - are articulated from the real world selectively and are projected on screen. The selective articulation of the subjects enables the filmmaker to represent more than just body images or movements. This function depends upon which aspects and on what subjects the director focused. In "Tokyo Olympiad" Ichikawa focused on human emotions enormously, along with physical prowess, muscular beauty, motion forms, and the formal beauty of composition. For example, the sequences of the events were articulated before and after the athletes' performances. In every performance shot, the anxieties, tensions and concentrations, devotions and absorptions, endeavors, exaltations or disappointments of athletes were all composed as one sequence. Moreover, by shooting not just the individual athletes but also all the various people participating there, the film was able to capture the commonality and the feeling of togetherness of the filmed subjects. The film could represent the universal theme, ‘peace, friendship, and human wisdom,’ by shooting the athletes and cheering spectators, thereby transcending nationality. The editing of the film contributed inevitably to those representations.

3.2. The retakes in the film

According to Ichikawa, the retakes in the film were as follows.

(1) Caslavka's gymnastic performances:
The scenes of Caslavka's performance on the long horse vault and on the balance beam (Fig. 1) were filmed with a high-speed camera with black background, and overprinted by a multiple exposure of two frames. This technique of film editing enabled Ichikawa to represent vividly the inner condition of the athlete beside the superficial beauties. Arguably these sequences were not the real events. It was possible, though, to represent the excellence and the solemnity of the athlete who was earnestly attaining a level of superb skillfulness, in showing

![Fig. 1. Caslavka's gymnastic performance (Courtesy: Toho Film Company)](http://www.soc.nii.ac.jp/jspe3/index.htm)
these impressive representations of her mature performances.

(2) The Olympic Torchbearer running at the foot of Mt. Fuji:

The Torch Relay with the beautiful backdrop of Mt. Fuji was not the real shot of the Relay, but a "reverse side" print. Because it was cloudy when the real Torch Relay passed Mt. Fuji, Ichikawa decided to shoot the scene from the other side of Tokaido. Incidentally, this scene was cited in the Canadian film, "Running Brave (1983)," in which Billy Mills, the winner of the 10,000-metre race at the Tokyo Olympic Games, was a protagonist. The scene was acknowledged as a great symbol of Japan in any time.

(3) The close-up shot of the bronze medallist of the marathon race, Kokichi Tsuburaya:

The close-up shot of Tsuburaya was testimony to the persistence of Ichikawa who tried to capture the inner situation of the loser. The scene was filmed after the Games at a Japanese Self-Defense Force Base because his face on the podium during the medal ceremony could not be taken with cameras as he was standing behind the other athletes.

(4) The close-up shot of Robert Hays, winner of the men's 100-metre race, just before the start of the final:

The scene was borrowed from a shot of the 100m heats, again because Hays was behind the runners. The strained expression of the winner at the starting line was necessary to express the seriousness and the anxiety of the athlete before the race. The substitution happened because of a limitation by the International Amateur Athletic Federation that restricted the number of cameras in the field to three.

(5) A performance on the horizontal bar:

The sequence of the Japanese male gymnast, Takashi Ono, was a typical shot filmed under the bar in order to represent the skillfulness in a beautiful composition of the film.

With these retakes and 'after shots', the director Ichikawa tried to represent not only the peaceful situation in the Olympic Games but also the earnestness and the superb performance of the athletes. Although the film was a record of the Games, it was penetrated with the director's stance that mise en scene was important to express the impressions of the Olympics.

3.3. The editing

The editing can be roughly classified into two procedures of montage effects, 'cutting,' and sound effects, 'sound editing.' In this film, there were many examples of effective cutting for artistic representations such as: the shots of the sun irrelevant to the record of the Games, the shots of the construction sites, the silhouette of the roof of the Budo-kan gymnasium, the shots of the flags of all nations fluttering in the wind, and so on. These images have montage effects that approach the film's theme. On the other hand, the close-up shots of the athletes could depict the anxieties and the growing tensions. Above all, the close-up shots of the various spectators breathlessly gazing at the Games in the stadium could suspend the images and play the role of increasing the tensions. Then, the film showed the relieved atmosphere with the joyful shouts of the spectators and the close-up shots of the athletes after the races.

The edited sounds overlapped these shots. There were many examples of sound effects too, such as the sounds of the fluttering flags and the noises of the ropes slapping the flag poles, the sound of running steps of the marathon race winner Abebe Bikila, the whistling by the Japanese runner Ikuko Yoda to relax herself before the start of her race. The sound effects in the shot put and the comical music in the walking race were superior because this type of sound editing could change the hard work to light steps. The miscellaneous shots of the spectators and the athletes who were gazing at the race played the role of making the serious atmosphere conspicuous. Every shot was considered thoroughly. Above all, Ichiro Mikuni's narrations attained a special effect. His narration seemed to transmit more than merely a supplement to the games. The feeling and the viewpoint, the intuition of the representations, and the sense of the values of the filmmakers were present too.

With this type of editing and composition, what kinds of message were transmitted by the film? It seems that the obvious messages are the symbolic meanings that might be difficult for a person seeking only documentary information to understand.

4. The interpretation of the film: the main messages

To begin the interpretation of the film, we examine first its main messages. One of the main messages of this film is 'peace', as shown straightforwardly in the superimposition of text. In the opening title, Ichikawa
inserted the message that the "Olympic Games are a manifestation of human dreams," and in the end sequence, "In the night, the sacred flame returned to the sun. Every four years, human beings have a dream. Is it right to finish this realized peaceful situation as only a dream?" What kind of image of the film can transmit these messages?

4.1. Peace as a dream

The fundamental principles of the Olympic Games are specified in the Olympic Charter. Fundamental principle three of the 1962 Olympic Charter (in effect at the time of the Tokyo Olympic Games) states that, "The aims of the Olympic Movement are to promote the development of those fine physical and moral qualities that come from contests on the friendly fields of amateur sport and to bring together the youth of the world . . ., thereby creating international respect and goodwill, and helping to construct a better and more peaceful world." [International Olympic Committee, (1962)] Ichikawa's message that "the Olympic Games are a manifestation of the human dreams," showed the direction of our endeavor to actualize the dream, though it would be just a dream. The message appealed to all people who viewed the film to see the necessity of trying to attain a peaceful world even if a renouncement of war was a momentary situation, following the example of the ekecheiria (Olympic truce) in Ancient Greece. These messages were also presented both with the delegations of the developing countries dressed in folk costumes during the entrance parade of the opening ceremony, and the long takes of the nameless athletes, like Armed Isa and the Ceylonese runner who ran last with a finishing kick long after Mill's finish in the 10,000m race.

4.2. Equality under the sun

Another message that must be noticed is the close-up shot of the sun in the opening sequence. The scene of the sun seems to be a symbolic representation of the subject of Ichikawa's film. Although the shots of the sun were transformed to the flames, as in the Torch Relay and the ignition on the Olympic Cauldron, these shots as the background of the Olympic events played a role as symbolic representations. Not only could these shots symbolize Japan as the land of the rising sun, but also that everything is inevitably lighted up nakedly under the sun and, consequently, all the people in the world are equal. The representations of human equality may be seen in the attempt to film all people who attended the Tokyo Olympic Games. The film shows not only the athletes, but also officials, referees, spectators, tourists, and the Emperor. Despite the different ages and sexes, all the people participated as equal human beings. Although the athletes took the central position in the film, they were not just the winners. That is, even though the skilful performances were depicted from the technical standpoint, these sequences were presented as shots of the universal and earnest attempt of human beings.

4.3. Universal human nature

All the sequences of the film, as a whole, transmitted the performances of earnest human endeavors. Nevertheless, the events did not always progress as the original script planned. Dramatic scenes happened without the aid of theatrical drama. Capturing these dramatic happenings with cameras, the film was able to represent more than the excellent performances. The hero of the 10,000-metre race in the film was not the winner, Billy Mills, but the last runner from Ceylon running to the finish with a final spurt of energy. The gold medallist of the women's 800-metre race, Ann Packer of Great Britain, rushed directly into her fiancée's arms, and they hugged each other happily after she won the race. The camera captured her eyes and shy smile just after the finish line, and the film showed the scene in one unedited shot. Moreover, the highlights of the film and the Tokyo Games itself were the chaotic entrance parades of the athletes at the closing ceremony. It is said that Japanese sake was served to the athletes while they were waiting for the closing entrance parade. Because of the wait to be served, the athletes entered chaotically, creating a superb parade that was known as one representation of international friendship. All the athletes entered the track in a rush, carrying the Japanese Olympic team's standard-bearer, Makoto Fukui, on their shoulders (Fig. 2.). This happening was not expected in the film script. Finally, although the scene of the Emperor Hirohito was criticized, he was responding to the athletes by smiling and swinging his hat unconsciously. It could be said that these shots succeeded in representing universal human nature.
In sum, it can be said that this film tried to represent not only the peaceful world but also universal equality as human beings. The images of the film have no connection with race and class because of the representations of the universal solemnity of athletes, and human possibilities of excellent performance by winners and losers. This is the really authentic representation of the Olympism of the filmmakers, and this is the reason the film was praised as a great film worldwide.

On the other hand, most Japanese persons connected with the Tokyo Olympic Games could not understand this Olympism from the film representations. As evidence supporting this concluding remark, the next year another film, "Impressive Century (1966)" was reedited and released in Japan. This film was aimed mainly at recording the Japanese athletes' activities and was edited in the order of the Games. Although it was released with the promotion of the union of the sport member of the Japanese Diet, it did not receive a good evaluation from film critics in Japan.

5. Conclusion: Nationalism, Trans-nationalism, and Olympism

In this study, by reexamining the disputes using newspapers and film journals, and with film analysis, the conflict between artistic and documentary representation was confirmed. As shown, the persistence of those other than Ichikawa in pursuing the goal of simply recording the results of the Games shows the aims to uplift national power and to display Japan. This standpoint tried to record nationalism, even though the Olympic ideal promotes trans-nationalism in some sense [IOC, (1994)]. Of course, the Olympic Games seem to be a favorable opportunity to reconfirm and to reinforce national identity in any time. In contrast, the director Ichikawa tried to record not the nationalism of Japan but the trans-nationalism of the Olympics. In this sense, the film was a documentary record. The symbolic images captured in the film represented exactly the peace and the solitude of the world and recorded a universal human equality. Ichikawa said that the sport was a manifestation of the pureness [Riefenstahl, Ichikawa, and Tamaki, (1992, p.303)]. Is this sport ideal just a dream not to come true? It seems to be necessary for us to rethink critically the modern Olympic Games according to reinterpretations of the records of Olympism such as that portrayed in "Tokyo Olympiad."

Acknowledgement
This is the revised version of the paper presented at The 3rd International Symposium for Olympic Research held from October 3-5, 1996 at The Centre for Olympic Studies at The University of Western Ontario, Canada.

References

Name: Naofumi Masumoto
Affiliation: Associate Professor, Department of Kinesiology, Graduate School of Science, Tokyo Metropolitan University
Address: 1-1, Minami-Ohsawa, Hachioji City, Tokyo 192-0397 Japan
Brief Biographical History:
1974- Graduate School of Physical Education, Tokyo University of Education
1977- Assistant Scholar of Center of Sport and Health Science, University of Tsukuba
1981- Lecturer of Physical Education, Faculty of Science. Tokyo Metropolitan University
1988- Associate Professor of Physical Education, Faculty of Science. Tokyo Metropolitan University
1999- Ph. D. degree at University of Tsukuba
Main Works:
• Epistemology of Sport Films. ShinHyoron(2000)
Membership in learned Societies:
• Japan Society of Physical Education, Health and Sport Sciences
• Japan Society for the Philosophy of Sport and Physical Education
• Japanese Society of Sport Education
• Japan Society of Sport Sociology
• International Association for the Philosophy of Sport
• The North American Society for the Sociology of Sport