**Georg Maas’ comments on THE GLORY OF LIFE**

The film "The Glory of Life", based on the novel by Michael Kumpfmüller, tells of the young love of two extraordinary people in a hopeless situation. It is a story about longing and about being happily unhappily in love.

The young love between Dora Diamant and Franz Kafka is marked by an approaching shadow that cannot be avoided. Franz suffers from a fatal lung disease, and it is clear that their story, as heartbreakingly beautiful as its beginings are, cannot have a happy ending.

An aim of the cinematic realisation is to maintain this fine balance between happiness and encroaching threat. The film is stays close to the characters and tells the quiet and sensitive love story in such a way that the viewer becomes emotionally involved and deeply touched.

I find it remarkable and centrally important for the film that this love story also functions independently of the fact that Kafka is world famous and one of the most important authors of the 20th century. This was not the case at the time in which the film is set, and it is a nice little irony that Dora did not know Kafka's writings at first and was not particularly interested in them in the early days of their relationship. She was interested in the man, fascinated by his sincerity, exactitude - and zest for life.

In later years, Dora was puzzled by the image of Kafka that emerged after his death. Kafka is usually seen as a person driven by fears, shy and latently depressed. But he had another side: open, humorous, interested in other people. He was handsome and athletic. That's how Dora got to know him. This "correction" or completion of Kafka's image is another objective of the film.

Franz and Dora enjoyed a harmonious everyday life and enjoyed laughing together. There was a great lightness between them - quite in contrast to Kafka's previous relationships, which were characterised by the impossibility of really getting involved with each other. The film "The Glory of Life" is intended to be infused with this lightness.

In the novel, there is a love scene that is wonderfully tender and yet sketched with restraint, using just a few sentences. In the film, it would not necessarily have to be limited this to one scene, but the restraint seems appropriate, not least because little is known about this aspect of Kafka's life. What is the right direction for the film to take here remains to be explored. The physical, however, is an important aspect. Kafka was afraid of physical closeness; with Dora he could really allow and enjoy it for the first time in his life.

Contrast this with his tuberculosis, an almost overpowering opponent that challenges the couple anew every day. Over time, the impositions of the disease become more and more complex and test them both more and more. Franz must allow Dora to nurse him, Dora must accept that her lover becomes her patient.

For part of the only 10 months, they spent together, they were separated because Franz had to go far away from Dora for inpatient treatment. During this time, they wrote each other touching letters, full of longing. Since the original correspondence between the two is lost, we will use passages from other surviving letters by Kafka in consultation with current Kafka research.

In addition to the letters, Kafka's literary work is also a central part of the film. During his time with Dora, it wrote some of his better-known texts, all of which subtly refer to the life Kafka and Dora led at the end of his life:

"THE HUNGER ARTIST", "JOSEFINE - THE SINGER", "THE BUILDING" and "A LITTLE WOMAN".

The film is to be told in clear images, concentrated on the characters and the love story, in terms of image design more "Three Days in Quiberon" than "Doctor Zhivago". In the film, Dora is on an equal footing with Kafka throughout, much is told from her perspective.

The time in which the film is set (1923/24) is marked by economic crisis, poverty, inflation, hatred of Jews and hunger. All of this is told seen implicitly, rather than told explicitly. Here too, Quiberon rather than Zhivago. The focus is on the characters, the historical circumstances are glimpsed in the background without distracting from the timelessness of the theme. With the thinnest possible but precisely placed brushstrokes, the environment in which this story takes place should become visible.

The end of the film must not be heavy or bleak. The visual language becomes more permeable and warmer towards the end of the film, quasi counter-intuitively. Dora and Franz know that death will soon tear them apart. But shortly before his end, hope for a cure germinates in Franz once more. Dora is urged from various quarters to marry him now so that she will be provided for after his death. But Dora refuses. If she were to ask him to marry now, he would immediately realise that all hope is lost.

Dora pays a high price for this sacrifice. After his death, she receives only a very small share of the royalties, which flow ever more lavishly over time. And she receives little attention as Kafka's wife, which she was, with or without a marriage certificate. Dora dies virtually impoverished, while others become rich from Kafka's writings. Dora, however, never regretted her decision.

"Anyone who knows Dora knows what love is" a good friend of Kafka's said about her. This is the feeling you are supposed to leave the cinema with. Impressed, moved, with a smile on your lips and a tear in your eye.

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