

ABSTRACT

This dissertation presents an analysis of the phenomenon of time in the narrative dynamics of the documentary film *Something Better to Come* (2014), which was filmed over fourteen years.

The film tells the story of Yula, a girl growing up in the largest garbage dump in Europe, located on the outskirts of Moscow, portraying her gradual transformation from childhood to adulthood. *Something Better to Come* is a poignant story of coming of age and the struggle to take control of one's own destiny. It is a universal tale of hope, courage, and life, created in the cinéma-vérité aesthetic.

The long-term process of documenting reality not only allowed for capturing the changes in the protagonist's life but also revealed time as a fundamental element shaping the film's narrative structure.

In this study, I attempt to define the unique narrative form represented by long-term documentary films, referring to film theory and analyzing similar projects. I then discuss the genesis of *Something Better to Come*, focusing particularly on the challenges of securing funding and the risks associated with the prolonged production process.

Special attention is given to the role of time as a force structuring the film's dramaturgy and influencing audience perception. I analyze not only the potential of such projects in constructing deep, multi-layered narratives but also the challenges of maintaining narrative coherence in a film produced over many years. I examine editing strategies that provide a clear structure to the story, as well as artistic choices that allowed for the portrayal of the protagonist's profound transformation and that of her surroundings.

This dissertation also addresses ethical concerns related to long-term documentation of a film's protagonist, as well as the resulting challenges and the filmmaker's responsibility toward both the subject and the audience. Drawing from my own experience in making *Something Better to Come*, I reflect on the methodology of working on such projects—from material collection through selection and editing to the final form of the film.

The aim of this study is not only to analyze the role of time in the narrative structure of documentary cinema but also to explore the challenges and opportunities that arise from long-term documentation of reality. This dissertation may serve as a reference point for documentary filmmakers and scholars, encouraging deeper reflection on the essence of time in cinematic art.