

A Gestalt Analysis of the Coraline 15th Anniversary Re-Release Movie Poster

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ABSTRACT

The stop-motion film *Coraline* (2009) by Henry Selick is one of the best stop-motion works with a unique aesthetic theme, combining the colorful imagination of a child with a dark world. In 2024, on the 15th anniversary of *Coraline* movie, Laika Studio re-released the film with a new poster design as part of its digital promotion strategy, as movie posters can convey information, film identity, and visual impressions that shape perceptions. This study aims to analyze how the visual elements of a new poster can attract audiences from across generations. This research is qualitative-descriptive, collecting data through literature study and visual observation using Gestalt theory. Research results show that the new *Coraline* movie poster, which features a more minimalist and tactile visual design without losing the film's characteristic style, is quite effective at attracting a new modern generation of audiences who are consuming large amounts of visual information.

Keywords: *Coraline, Digital Promotion, Minimalist, Modern, Poster*

INTRODUCTION

Movie posters are one of the most effective and important digital promotional strategies for announcing the release of a film. Posters are created from various visual elements to convey information in an engaging way. Movie posters typically include important information such as the film's title, the names of the actors and actresses, the director, the producer, and may also include a tagline (Pooranalingam, 2024). During the 15th anniversary celebration of the film *Coraline*, Laika Studio released a poster created by Empire Design containing information about the return of *Coraline* to the big screen. With advancements in technology, Henry Selick and Laika Animation Studio re-released *Coraline* in 2024 with an enhanced 3D version featuring improved visual quality. This was welcome news for longtime fans and attracted new audiences from new generations. As the years progressed, the audience for *Coraline* kept growing, which led Laika Studios to consider re-releasing the film (Henry Selick 2024). The film not only retains its longtime audience but also successfully attracts a new generation. This proves that the artistic and narrative value of the film endures over time, and strengthens the relevance of the work in the modern film industry.

Previous studies have thoroughly examined visual communication in movie posters, the trend of minimalist design, and how digital media influences audience perception. For example, *Film Poster Design: Understanding Film Poster Designs and the Compositional Similarities within specific genres* (Pooranalingam, 2024) highlights that visual elements on posters are crucial for conveying a film's genre and narrative. This aligns with *Embracing Minimalism: A Guide to Modern Graphic Design Practices* (Osaigbovo, 2024), which emphasizes that contemporary design is moving increasingly toward the "less is more" principle. Additionally, Zhang (2017) and Eriska (2025) explain that our digital environment demands visual communication that is adaptive, efficient, and quick to process. Their constant

exposure to high-volume digital media has cultivated a preference for clean, straightforward, and immediately impactful designs. (Wibowo., et al 2024)

However, despite these findings, there is still very little research on the application of these minimalist principles specifically to film promotional materials, particularly for re-released films. In line with the film being remastered to keep up with technological developments, the poster for the 15th anniversary version of *Coraline* is certainly designed differently from the poster for the 2009 version of *Coraline*. This then led me to research how a poster design can convey information about the return of the polished *Coraline* film in order to attract the attention of both old and new audiences, because after 15 years there are a new generations, new styles, and new perspectives that influence audience interest. Unlike previous generations, Generation Z prioritizes speed, simplicity, and emotional engagement in visual content.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The poster for the 2024 re-release of *Coraline* shows a shift toward a more minimalist visual style compared to the original 2009 poster. This can be seen as a visual strategy to align with the preferences of new generations of audiences, particularly in the context of digital media, where viewers tend to prefer visual content that is simple, clear, and capable of evoking emotion. Minimalism has dominated various visual media, from digital ads to mobile apps, directly shaping new aesthetic standards for contemporary audiences. Generation Z, as a generation of digital natives who are constantly exposed to visual content, exhibits a unique preference for minimalist design.

The shift toward a minimalist visual style reflects a broader trend in contemporary visual communication, as discussed in *Embracing Minimalism: A Guide to Modern Graphic Design Practices* (Osaigbovo, 2024), which highlights the growing emphasis on simplicity in design. In addition, the study *Design and Research on Visual Communication under the Influence of Digital Media* (Zhang, 2018) illustrates how digital media environments demand more immediate and adaptive visual communication strategies. Similarly, *The Application of Visual Communication Design Strategies in User Interface (UI) Experiences on Digital Platforms* (Eriska, 2025) Emphasizes the importance of organizing visual elements to enhance user experience and communication efficiency.

Although these studies provide important insights into minimalist design and digital visual communication, they primarily focus on general design contexts and digital interfaces. The application of these principles in film promotional media, particularly in the context of re-released films, remains limited. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by comparing the *Coraline* film posters from 2009 and 2024, with a focus on how the shift toward a minimalist approach is achieved without compromising the film's distinctive visual identity.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses qualitative descriptive analysis, collecting data through a literature review by searching for as much information as possible from journal articles and books with the aim of obtaining in depth information. Qualitative descriptive methods provide an overview of a phenomenon as understood within the context of the daily lives of those involved. This method focuses on maintaining factual accuracy in the report and precision in capturing meaning. It emphasizes that researchers must stick to field data in order to produce an accurate, useful, and unbiased summary (Maxwell,1992, as cited in Sandelowski, 2000).

The primary data in this study consists of two visual objects, the original poster for the film *Coraline*, released in 2009, and the 15th Anniversary Re-release poster, releases in 2024, both designed by Empire Design. These posters were selected to analyze the transformation of visual style over time within the context of the same film's identity. The analysis stage was carried out by identifying the main visual elements on the poster and dissecting them using Gestalt theory to support visual observation of the poster for the film *Coraline* (2024), which creates a new impression and conveys a message of perception to the audience.

The term Gestalt in German means form, structure, or organized unity. According to this perspective, the human mind tends to organize sensory stimuli to achieve coherence and optimal simplicity of perception (Koffka, 2013, as cited in Fakheri,2025). This study is limited in scope to the 15th anniversary edition of the *Coraline* movie poster, released in 2024 , designed by Empire Design, and compares it with the original *Coraline* movie poster released in

2009, also designed by Empire Design. The objective is to achieve a deeper understanding of the evolution of visual aesthetics and contemporary communication strategies through the use of minimalist styles based on Gestalt principles.

DISCUSSION

The film *Coraline*, directed by Henry Selick, was first released in 2009 and became an award winning stop-motion film with many fans around the world. *Coraline* the movie is about a child named Coraline Jones who is moving to Pink Palace with her family. Coraline was a cheerful girl until she moved to Pink Palace, she feels lonely at Pink Palace and her parent are busy with their works, which caused Coraline to seeks their attention harder and led her to experience a magical moment. At Pink Palace she found a strange tunnel, which led her into a magical world, which made her happy for a while. The world in the film *Coraline* was created using real elements such as clay, fabric, cotton, and wire, resulting in natural textures that give a realistic impression, as if the audience could touch them. In addition, these natural textures support the strange and mysterious atmosphere that is characteristic of the film *Coraline*. All the elements used in the film *Coraline* were created with great skill, precision, and patience by the production team in building the characters, backgrounds, and small props in the world of Coraline. Using stop-motion techniques, all movements and changes in expression in the film need to be manually adjusted repeatedly and meticulously. Stop motion is an animation technique that involves photographing objects or characters frame by frame, moving the elements slightly between each shot to create the illusion of movement (Hammi, 2025). All the efforts and results of the production process add positive value to the film *Coraline*.

The distinctive characteristics of the film *Coraline* are certainly reflected in the design of the *Coraline* movie poster. Since the film's first released in 2009, the *Coraline* movie poster has never strayed from its distinctive characteristics and has always succeeded in conveying a child-friendly sense of mystery. The film *Coraline* has more than one version of the poster in its promotional strategy. However, there is a main poster by Empire Design that has become the face of the film *Coraline* in the public eye.



Figure 1. *Coraline* by Empire Design 2009

Figure 1 shows the poster for the 2009 film *Coraline*, which appears more colorful. The poster incorporates the two worlds in the film *Coraline* by showing the left side in purple and dark tones, representing the beautiful but false and dangerous magical world, and the right side in brighter but lonely tones, representing the reality of Coraline's life in the Pink Palace. These characteristics are typical of the film *Coraline* and are highlighted in the movie poster.

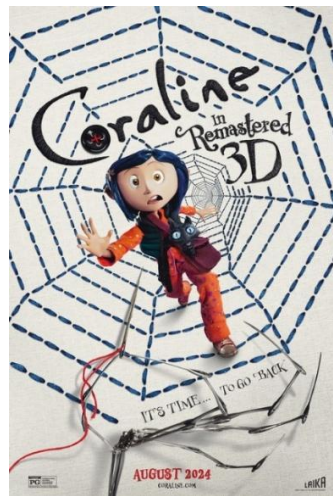


Figure 2. Coraline 15th Anniversary Re-release by Empire Design 2024

Figure 2 shows the latest poster design for the movie *Coraline*, which takes the texture and shape of fabric, needles, thread, and buttons that are characteristic of the *Coraline* movie in the poster design. The shape of the stitched thread forms a pattern of a tunnel leading to the magical world that Coraline passes through, while also forming a net that traps Coraline. This is sufficient to represent the content of the *Coraline* movie.

As shown in Figure 2, *Coraline* 15th Anniversary Re-release poster features a more minimalist visual design aesthetic with ample whitespace. Whitespace is an important element in Gestalt theory. Without whitespace, designs will appear cluttered or disorganized due to the improper placement of elements. Therefore, designs that appear minimalist, creating a sense of calm and visual focus, are the result of designer's understanding of how to use white space appropriately (Li & Huang, 2022). The aesthetic change in the 2024 *Coraline* poster to a more minimalist style is a strategic move in line with contemporary visual culture trends. The poster was released in 2024, targeting primarily Generation Z, who have grown up viewing a wealth of visual information anywhere, anytime, and in a variety of visual styles. The minimalist style will stand out to Generation Z because it allows the eyes to focus on the main information, and the design will give a neat impression with more organized and clean elements. (Wibowo., et al 2024)

The principle of similarity in Gestalt theory is reflected in *Coraline* 15th Anniversary Re-release poster design. People tend to classify the objects they see based on the similarity of their visual characteristics. It includes grouping elements that share similarities in terms of function, color palette, size, and shape orientation (Wu, 2023). Visual elements in *Coraline* 15th Anniversary Re-release poster are reduced to their essential forms. The title and main text on the poster are presented in different size but the same color, helping the audience focus on the key information. This results in a clearer and more immediate perception, aligning with contemporary minimalist design trends.

To create a focal point in a design, it is also crucial for designers to determine which elements will serve as the background. This can be identified through the use of color contrast, shadows, and whitespace, allowing the main elements to stand out more effectively. Accurately defining the figure-ground principle in a design helps the audience focus on the information and understand its meaning (Wong, 1993, as cited in Fakheri & Salmalian, 2025). For the 15th-anniversary edition of the *Coraline* movie poster, the designer used a white background with a fabric texture, featuring the title in black with a stitched thread texture on top of the fabric. The title and the character Coraline, the main character, are placed at the center of the poster to serve as the focal point for the audience.

All the principles of Gestalt theory found in the poster's design help shape the design to convey its message and achieve the goal of attracting both new audiences and long-time fans of the film *Coraline*. The latest poster features a minimalist style that effectively gives the film poster a more modern appearance. The modernist approach to graphic design focused on the use of white space and sans serif typography that utilized asymmetry (Noble & Bestley, 2016).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The aesthetic change in the 2024 *Coraline* poster to a more minimalist style is a strategic move in line with contemporary visual culture trends. Unlike the original 2009 poster, which had to explain the film's narrative in detail, the *Coraline* 15th anniversary re-release movie poster simply incorporates iconic elements as identifiers, representing the distinctive characteristics of the *Coraline* film so that it can adopt a minimalist aesthetic that prioritizes empty space and visual focus. Amidst the overwhelming flow of digital information, this clean design serves as an effective visual pause in line with Gestalt theory.

This visual strategy is particularly effective for capturing the attention of Generation Z, who tend to prefer a clean, straightforward aesthetic amid the overwhelming flood of digital information. Overall, this poster demonstrates that simplifying visual elements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of many people. First All praise is due to Allah SWT for His infinite blessings, strength, and guidance, which allowed me to complete this work with a clear mind and a persistent heart. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my beloved parents. Thank you for your unconditional love, your endless prayers, and your motivation, which always lifted my spirits. My deepest gratitude goes to Kankan Kasmana, for his guidance, patience, and for sharing the knowledge. Your insights have been very important role in the development of this paper. Thank to all of my good friends, who always support me.

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