

## No Words Can't Describe: Image and Text Relationship between The Title Slate and Content of Netflix's *Ice Cold*

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### Article History:

First Received:  
20/07/2024

Final Revision:  
30/12/2024

Available online:  
31/12/2024

**Abstract.** The case of Jessica Wongso and the cyanide coffee has become the subject of public debate again since the success of the documentary *Ice Cold: Coffee, Murder, and Jessica Wongso* by Rob Sixsmith went viral. One of the iconic scenes in the film is the title slate depicting a cup of coffee with blood, which plays a strategic role in framing the narrative and enhancing the film's appeal as a medium for shaping public opinion. This research explored the relationship between the images and text in the title of a documentary film about a criminal case and trial chronology. The research method was qualitative, aiming to understand and describe the complexity of the phenomenon in-depth. This research used Dormehl's theory (2012) to analyze documentary film types, namely realism and reconstruction, as well as theory of the relationship between image and text to analyze elements in the title slate and text, namely little, close, and beyond in the film by Marsh & White (2003). Six elements were found in the title slate: 'blood', 'glass', 'ice', 'coffee', 'coffee seeds', and 'sugar'. The research results indicate that the realism-close relationship was dominant in the data findings. This proved that documentary films can represent reality, and the elements in the title slate represent the overall content of the film. This study can serve as a reference for researching title slates, especially in the context of documentary films.

**Keywords:** *documentary film, image and text, multimodality, coffee, murder*

<http://jos.unsoed.ac.id/index.php/jes>

### INTRODUCTION

In 2017, Jessica Wongso was found guilty as the murderer of Mirna Salihin by The Central Jakarta District Court. She was sentenced to 20 years in prison, a year after

the initial verdict on July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017 (Mahkamah Agung Republik Indonesia, 2017). The heightened public interest in this case sparked both support and opposition. Rob Sixsmith, a documentary film director, created a documentary that revisited this high-profile case. On September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the documentary film *Ice Cold: Murder, Coffee, and Jessica Wongso* was released, reigniting people's curiosity (Bintang et al., 2023). Title slates used in movie releases have received much appreciation and intrigue from viewers. In filmmaking, the use of title slate continues to be a promotional attraction to the audience. As a result, many moviegoers who have seen the title slate speculate and draw associations with the film. This includes guessing which characters will appear in the film, what events the characters will experience, and the overall vibe the title slate conveys about the film itself. In this case, it is highly plausible to argue that the relationship based on images (title slate) and the storyline is real (Marsh & White, 2003).

Images and text play a central role in conveying messages in visual communication. It is essential to acknowledge that the relationship between visual elements and text, both in title slate and content, is complex. Amid rapid technological advancements and graphic design, these elements can convey messages to the message recipients effectively and powerfully. The relationship between text and images is often used in the context of movie promotion through the title slate to express the continuity between the content of the film and its title slate, as well as to present the film's title. This approach is known as multimodality, referring to the use of various modes of communication media, such as written text, images, sound, video, and other elements (Kress, 2010). Through multimodality, the relationship between images and text is investigable in documentary films aiming to represent reality and factual accuracy (Dormehl, 2012). Meanwhile, researchers' utilization of research media, such as film, is an aspect of anthropological multimodality (Collins et al., 2017). In connection with the topic, the example is evident in Figure 1.



Figure 1. The Title Slate of *Ice Cold: Murder, Coffee and Jessica Wongso*.

The image of blood in the glass (Figure 1) represents the concepts of “injury”, “murder”, “victim”, “corpse”, “death”, and the like. Blood imagery, often associated with the essence of life, carries an intense and ominous meaning in this context. Its presence in the representation indicates its connection to violence, danger, and death. This symbol may create a dramatic or intense atmosphere, emphasizing its

weight on the depicted subject. These concepts indeed indicate that blood becomes a symbol of life when referring to vitality and a source of energy in the body, and death when associated with excessive blood loss, such as in situations of murder or serious accidents. No text in Figure 1 indicates that "something red" in the glass is blood. However, the color red serves as the symbol of blood. The dominant color in blood (red) is often used as a visual symbol to indicate a bloody condition, such as wounds.

The presence of blood, especially in a more dramatic or exaggerated context, can strongly depict scenes of violence, such as murder or other dangerous situations. This creates a profound effect and represents concepts related to violence or threats. Some concepts associated with blood may also stem from history, mythology, or specific cultural traditions where blood is linked to violent acts, sacrifices, or other dramatic events.

Thus, understanding the relationship between text and images in visual communication can be linked to the essence of the message, especially in the documentary context. The concepts associated with the word 'blood' can also be connected through a meaning called connotation in semantics, where meaning concepts arise in a non-literal sense (denotation) (Riemer, 2010). However, it is essential to underline that the relationship between image and text does not only lead to connotative meanings; this applies when an utterance intends to express or convey additional meanings, nuances, or emotional associations attached to a word, phrase, or expression.

The Jessica-Mirna trial has become widely discussed, attracting significant public attention. Various aspects of the case have been analyzed in prior research. For instance, Maulana (2018) examined linguistic cues of deception during the Jessica-Mirna trial, highlighting how language can reveal lies within courtroom interactions. Criminal cases and their trials often captivate audiences, leading to their portrayal in documentary formats. Documentary films are divided into various topics, including science, true crimes, historical and social issues, nature, and personal stories (Collier, 2023). In this context, true crimes are explored in the researched documentary films. Furthermore, Nichols (2001) categorized these actual crime/criminal documentary films into six types: 1) Poetic mode, which provides a subjective interpretation of its subject and disregards traditional storytelling that typically uses a single character. In contrast, 2) Expository mode utilizes voice-over to convey information or offer a specific perspective to the audience; 3) Observational mode emphasizes filmmaking based on spontaneous recordings of everyday life; 4) Participatory mode highlights the interaction between filmmakers and subjects, including interviews or direct involvement; 5) Reflexive mode underscores the filmmaking process as a representation of reality, making the audience aware of film elements, and 6) Performative mode focuses on the subjective and expressive aspects of the filmmaker's involvement with the subject. In the analyzed documentary film, a combination of expository and observational modes was used, emphasizing the use of voice-over to explain the film's content and the incorporation of recorded real-life events.

The documentary integrates narrative storytelling techniques closely associated with journalism and audio-based storytelling. In this context, Dowling & Miller

(2019) investigated the significance of narrative media, mainly focusing on audio delivery as a critical component of journalism and investigative reporting. While narrative storytelling plays a central role, the documentary combines text and visual elements, such as interviews, trial footage, and promotional media like the title slate. Studies like Fajriah et al. (2021) explored the interaction between textual and visual elements, which analyzed the relationship between text and images within educational contexts. This integration of multiple media forms reflects what Collins et al., (2017) described as Multimodal Anthropologies, where human experiences are mediated and communicated through diverse forms of media.

However, while these previous studies provide valuable insights into aspects of documentaries, journalism, and multimodal media, none have specifically examined the interplay between text and images in documentary films, particularly as exemplified by the title slate as a multimodal representation in criminal case narratives. This gap underscores the importance of exploring the relationship between textual and visual elements in documentary storytelling. The identified gap forms the questions that become the objectives of this research: 1) What is the type of documentary film, and 2) How is the image and text relationship found between the title slate and the content of *Ice Cold* documentary film? This research focused on analyzing the overall narrative in the documentary film and connecting with its implementation reflected in the documentary film publication title slate.

To examine these, Dormehl (2012) explained that documentary films are categorized into two types: realistic and reconstruction. Realistic types maintain the purity and identity inherent in documentary films as non-fiction works. At the same time, reconstruction adds specific elements to increase interest and bridge the gap between fictional and non-fictional elements without altering the facts of an event or documentary subject. Dormehl (2012) also presented dozens of documentaries reviewed from different perspectives and creation methods. Based on these perspectives and techniques, there are four types of documentary films: Firstly, essayistic films emphasize expository narration and precise information delivery, with the filmmaker serving as a narrator. Secondly, the participatory approach involves filmmakers actively engaging in events, creating direct involvement to gain a more intimate perspective. Thirdly, poetic-expression films focus more on artistic and expressive elements, creatively using visual and audio components to convey messages emotionally or poetically. Lastly, fly-on-the-wall attempts to observe events without significant interference, creating an objective and neutral observer's atmosphere in capturing natural moments.

Furthermore, to address the relationship between the title slate and the overall content in the film, this research used Marsh & White's (2003) framework on the representational relationship between visual and textual elements. This framework provides an essential categorization, involving a little relation, a close relation, and a relation beyond the text. Together, these theories provide a comprehensive basis for analyzing the interplay between the title slate and the broader narrative of the *Ice Cold* documentary. We argued that these three categories were sufficient to express various types of text in documentary films because they adequately represented the elements within our data. These categories explained the connection between images and text in their contextualization. They described a minimal connection (little), significant connection (close), and a connection that

surpassed the meaning within the text (beyond). The connection surpassing the meaning can be observed when the image provides additional information, context, and interpretation to the text.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This qualitative research focused on a meticulous analysis of the visual elements within the title slate of the film *Ice Cold: Murder, Coffee, and Jessica Wongso*. The research design centered on identifying and scrutinizing the relationship between these visual elements and the text or utterances within the film. The primary goal was to evaluate the accuracy of how the overall content of the film was represented through the elements presented in the title slate. The data collected specifically comprised visual and textual components extracted from the title slate. The researchers employed classification in this study by identifying image elements in the title slate. Then, the image elements were analyzed using an archetypal meaning approach, focusing on the perspectives associated with the elements 'blood,' 'glass,' 'coffee,' 'coffee seeds,' 'sugar,' and 'ice.' This interpretation was subsequently classified into the elements of documentary types, *realism* and *reconstruction*, as the first classification. Following this, the words or meanings were further categorized based on the relationship between text and image into three types: *little*, *close*, and *beyond*. The classification mapping was clearly illustrated in a table in the results and discussion section. This research method focused on determining whether the visual elements on the title slate consistently and accurately reflected the content expressed in the film.

To gather the data for classification, the interpretation of image elements produced several keywords that served as connectors between images and text. These keywords were then classified according to the theory of documentary film types and the relationship between the image and text. Subsequently, these keywords were searched throughout the entire content of the film to determine their frequency of occurrence and usage, whether through spoken words or text appearing in the film. The frequency of occurrence or usage of these keywords became the basis for determining the tendencies of the classifications and served as answers to the research questions and objectives.

This research undertook a targeted exploration of the relationship between visual and textual elements in the title slate of *Ice Cold: Murder, Coffee, and Jessica Wongso*, aiming to verify the accuracy of the film's representation through these elements. The meticulous process of concept matching revealed the nuanced connections between the visuals and text, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of how the title slate encapsulates the essence of the film's content. The text obtained from the film *Ice Cold: Murder, Coffee, and Jessica Wongso* was then linked to the images on the title slate using multimodality analysis techniques to search the domain. In multimodality, one of the means of conveying a message is through visual media, which could be in the form of a documentary film. All the data within the film was summarized and communicated to the audience in a title, subsequently illustrated in the title slate (Kress, 2010). Illustrated (in the title slate) was a glass of iced coffee containing a red liquid (assumed to be blood), placed within the glass, with numerous scattered coffee beans around it and two sugar

cubes. The elements drawn from the title slate illustration, which were part of this analysis, included ice, glass, blood, coffee, coffee seeds, and sugar.

Furthermore, the text within the film found in various scenes was sought and connected to the image elements presented in the title slate using the image and text theory to make the taxonomy. The collection of texts in the documentary film *Ice Cold: Murder, Coffee, and Jessica Wongso* was utilized to capture the meaning and rhetorical elements conveyed in the title slate. The text and components found were then analyzed with a conceptual approach because each image or illustration in the title slate carries the concepts or meanings related to the documentary film (Marsh & White, 2003). Examples of capturing meanings used include the placement meaning of elements inside or outside the glass, the meaning of substances mixed inside or outside the glass, and the philosophy of elements listed in the title slate.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section is divided into two parts: findings and discussion. In the finding part, we conducted an analysis of the visual elements present in the title slate of the documentary film *Ice Cold: Murder, Coffee, and Jessica Wongso* produced by Netflix. Some key elements found in the title slate included a depiction of a glass containing coffee and ice, with the presence of blood in it, scattered coffee seeds around it, and two sugar cubes. After identifying these elements, we then associated them with the content of the film and analyzed whether these elements adequately represented the content of the film or if the overall emphasis of the film was on a specific aspect. The textual association with these elements was related to the concepts that arose through a semantic approach, slang dictionaries, idioms, and the like.

In concluding whether the six-word elements carried meaning. The researchers first considered the archetypal meanings inherent in these elements. Once the archetypal meanings to which these elements refer had been identified, the findings in the film were aligned with the archetypes of the six elements through multimodality theory and documentary film theory. However, not all findings had to be interpreted via archetypes. A good example is when the element directly corresponds to a word, such as in the case of the coffee seeds element corresponding to the word coffee seeds in the film. It was clear that in this case, the word means the same thing, which is also the case in types of coffee drinks and places for drinking coffee—the concepts are closely related to the element of coffee. Most of these have been classified under realism with close relations.

In the semantic approach, scholars have not yet found the meaning of the meaning itself and thereby, they have to introduce a new approach, namely breaking the circle. Meaning can be a concept as well as a reference in a specific context; therefore, in analyzing this visual and textual relationship, a context is needed. In this case, the context referred to was the murder case of Mirna, which was linked to cyanide poison as a tool for murder, and Jessica Wongso as the suspect.

The analysis focused on the visual elements in the title slate, and it was necessary to examine them in more detail to identify explicit signs in those elements. The following are the visual elements found in the title slate of the film *Ice Cold: Murder, Coffee, and Jessica Wongso*.

1. Blood

Table 2. Elements Table of Blood.

Documentary Types	Relation	Word	Amount
Realism	Little	Toxicology	5
		Die	24
		Murder	23
		Poison	36
		Cyanide	36
	Close	Kill	19
		Killer	14
		Mirna	98
		Victim	3
		Jessica	143
		Death	15
		Hurt	1
		Shoot	1
		Premeditated murder	5
		Death penalty	3
		Corrosive substances	1
Beyond	-	-	
Reconstruction	Little	Defendant	12
		Suspect	3
	Close	-	-
		Beyond	Deadly

In the title slate image, a small amount of "red liquid" was being poured and mixed into a glass. While it was not explicitly stated that the red liquid in the glass was blood, using semantics as an approach to interpreting "something red" would lead to the concept of blood, allowing the element to be identified as such. Blood, in this context, symbolized several words associated with murder, including 'die', 'murder', 'poison', 'cyanide', 'kill', 'killer', 'death', 'shoot', 'premeditated murder', 'toxicology', and 'corrosion wounds'. The element of blood in archetypes is linked to themes of injury, pain, death, violence, and murder. In Greek mythology, Perseus killed Medusa by decapitating her, causing blood to spill, which gave rise to the winged horse Pegasus. On one hand, blood is closely associated as a bridge between death and life (birth). On the other hand, crimes involving blood in archetypes are often considered taboo and typically concealed by the perpetrators. When the crime is uncovered by others, the perpetrator faces severe punishment, which can even lead to death (Garry, 2017). This strongly suggests that the blood here is interpreted as the cause of Mirna's death (as alleged in court), namely poison.

## 2. Glass

*Table 3. Elements Table of Glass.*

Documentary Types	Relation	Word	Amount
	Little	-	-
Realism	Close	Drinks	12
		Glass	9
	Beyond	Trial	32
Reconstruction	Little	Guilty	16
		Not fair	4
		Arrested	4
	Close	-	-
	Beyond	-	-

Observing the shape of the glass, the glass visualized in the title slate was different from Mirna's actual glass. Mirna used rock glass, also known as lowball glass, an old-fashioned glass. This type of glass is typically used to serve alcoholic beverages without ice or mixers. On the other hand, the glass in the title slate was a highball glass, usually used as a replacement for Collins glass or for serving tall cocktails or cold drinks with ice. This demonstrated a balance in the use of glass elements, but it allows for the same interpretation in the context of multimodality. According to Jewitt (2009), multimodality involves the integration of various semiotic modes, such as visuals and text, to produce layered and complex meanings. In this context, the glass in the documentary's title slate functioned as a multimodal symbol representing the primary narrative themes. Bordwell & Thompson (2008) also emphasized that props and symbols in visual media often strengthen the storyline and encourage the audience to engage in deeper interpretation. The use of a highball glass in the title slate, which differed from the rock glass used by Mirna, can be interpreted as an artistic strategy to dramatize or generalize the documentary's themes—this visual representation aimed to support the documentary's narrative rather than adhere strictly to factual accuracy. The words 'drinks', 'not fair', and 'arrested' were the concepts that emerged in the visual representation of the glass. The glass, serving as a container for ice, coffee, and blood, can be interpreted as a decision to kill or take action because everything depended on Jessica, as the perpetrator, whether she would offer the glass or not to Mirna.



3. Coffee

*Table 4. Elements Table of Coffee.*

Documentary Types	Relation	Word	Amount
	Little	-	-
Realism	Close	Coffee	31
		Vietnamese Iced Coffee	2
		Cafe Olivier	7
		Proof	24
	Beyond	-	-
	Little	-	-
Reconstruction	Close	-	-
	Beyond	Ironic	1

The term coffee mentioned here brought forth the concepts of Vietnamese iced coffee and Cafe Olivier. This adequately represented the realistic or actual meaning of coffee. Vietnamese Ice Coffee was the specific type of coffee that Jessica ordered for Mirna. In the context of a documentary film, this fell under realism and established a close relationship between image and text interpretation. The connection with Cafe Olivier indicated the origin of the coffee. As a form of reconstruction, "irony" also became a word that subjectively linked coffee to Mirna as the victim. The irony, as a reconstruction, added a dramatic touch, turning Mirna's favorite drink into the cause of her death.

4. Coffee Seeds

*Table 5. Elements Table of Coffee Seeds.*

Documentary Types	Relation	Word	Amount
	Little	Witness	11
Realism	Close	Coffee Seeds	1
	Beyond	-	-
	Little	Problem	1
Reconstruction	Close	-	-
	Beyond	Case	44
		Crap	1

Criminal	1
Rumor	2
Motives	10
Irregularities	3

The scattered and irregular depiction of coffee beans was a symbol of witness, problems, crap, criminality, motives, and irregularities. These coffee beans seemed to serve as the backdrop or a general representation of the case in this documentary film. However, it is important to note that this interpretation derived from our identified context.

## 5. Sugar

*Table 6. Elements Table of Sugar.*

Documentary Types	Relation	Word	Amount
Realism	Little	-	-
	Close	-	-
	Beyond	-	-
Reconstruction	Little	-	-
	Close	Assumption	30
		Alleged	1
		The love triangle	1
		Speculation	1
		Conspiracy	2
		Story	3
Beyond	Sensational	2	

Sugar often correlates to a sweet meaning might not be as sweet as it seems. Sugar in this title slate signified assumption, conspiracy, and sensationalism instead. We connected it to the philosophy that sugar is an agent in the background, not visibly present, yet always a supporter and reason behind something significant. It is akin to the saying that the sweetness of coffee is due to the presence of sugar, but people still refer to it as sweet coffee rather than sweet sugar.

## 6. Ice

*Table 7. Elements Table of Ice*

Documentary Types	Relation	Word	Amount
Realism	Little	-	-

	Close	-	-
	Beyond	-	-
Reconstruction		Pressed	4
		Calm	5
		Relaxed	1
	Little	Perpetrators	2
		Silence	1
		Ashamed	1
		Cruel	2
		Cold hard floor	4
		Close	-
		Evil	5
Beyond		Revenge	3
		Cold blood killer	1

In the case presented in this documentary film, the element of ice brought forth various concepts, including evil, pressed, calm, smile, relaxed, perpetrators (criminals), revenge, silence, shame, cold-blooded killer, cold hard floor. The cold nature of ice is inseparable. When associated with the context of this case, the cold ice would refer to something inherently cold, and the cold nature represents the cold and calculated demeanor of a killer, enabling them to commit murder. From the six elements detailed above, we proceeded to count how many times each of these conceptual words appeared in the film. This way, we were able to determine the dominant or emphasized aspects that represent the film's content.

### ***Little Relation between Image and Text***

Little relation is the initial relation between image and text. It shows that there is a relationship between image and text, but only a slight or a far relationship when it comes to semantics in connecting image and text. The data obtained showed that only a few were classified as little relationships, both in the realism and reconstruction classifications. In the realism classification, the little relationship was indicated by the word 'toxicology' in the 'blood' element and witness in the 'coffee seeds' element. The word 'toxicology' was found five times as a little relationship in the element 'blood' associated with murder. The toxicologist who appeared in the film was an expert on dangerous substances brought in to provide information or opinions on dangerous substances ('cyanide') as the murder weapon. Meanwhile, the word 'witness' dominated in the realism classification, with 11 occurrences. The word 'witness' was included in the 'coffee seeds' element as a representation of important things spread as reinforcement in the case or main discussion in the film. These two words were realistic forms that we analyzed and connected between the title slate and the content of the film.

As for the reconstruction classification, little relationship was also found as a distant relationship in giving a more impression or dramatization between the title slate and the overall content of the film. For the reconstruction classification, the element with the least relationships found was the 'ice' element with 20 data divided into 9 types of words that represented it. The most frequently found word was 'calm' with 5 occurrences. The word 'calm' represented the element 'ice' as a 'cold' or 'calm' attitude and personality. Other words representing 'ice' in the form of attitude or personality were 'relaxed', 'silence', 'ashamed', and 'cruel'. Meanwhile, others were realized through the connotation of the room (cold hard floor as prison), situation (pressed), and character (perpetrators). Overall, the little relationship found was less than the level of relationship between the image and other text, indicating that the relationship between the title slate and the film content was made as close as possible allowing the title slate to carry out its duties as the initial image in the film representing the entire subsequent content.

### ***Close Relation between Image and Text***

A close relation between images and text indicates that they are highly interconnected. There is a high level of harmony between them, where images and text work together to convey messages or information more effectively. The overall analysis revealed that the most prominent element in this documentary film was 'blood'. With a total of 422 appearances, this word dominated both the visual representation and narrative of the film. This element reflected a primary focus on violence, bloodshed, or the context of death in the story. Although words like 'poison' and 'cyanide' have significant appearances, they served more as complementary or supportive elements in the development of the narrative involving blood. The presence of words like 'killer', 'Mirna', and 'Jessica' provided character context and helped detail the story related to violent actions or crimes involving blood. Killer and murderer indirectly referred to the person believed to murder in the film, namely Jessica, while Mirna was the victim. The text of 'Jessica' appeared most frequently with a total of 143 occurrences. Therefore, it can be said that 'Jessica' here was the focal point in the film, attempted to be depicted through the title slate. Overall, the element of 'blood' became the central point in this film, and further analysis of how this element was visually represented can provide deeper insights into the narrative and messages intended by the filmmaker. This was for realism.

On the other hand, there was a reconstruction that focused on the realm of 'sugar,' where intertwined dynamics were arranged within a tapestry of assumptions, allegations, and nuances of intrigue. The narrative began with various assumptions that formed a framework of uncertainty, creating a complex and speculative backdrop. Within a landscape dominated by the impression of sweetness, a single allegation emerged as a critical element, challenging the perception of harmony. A romantic dimension was introduced through the motif of a love triangle, weaving emotions and interpersonal interactions into the storyline. Speculation added a layer of mystery, raising profound questions about what might lie beneath the narrative. The emergence of conspiratorial elements further deepened the complexity, suggesting that the realm of sugar was not merely a symbol of sweetness but held deeper secrets and meanings. Ultimately, the

narrative unfolded by revealing various layers of complexity within the world of 'sugar', where assumptions, allegations, love triangles, speculations, conspiracies, and stories harmoniously intertwined to create a rich narrative that represented the diversity and complexity of this metaphorical sweetness.

### ***Beyond Relation between Image and Text***

The text found within the category of relationships beyond in the film showed a significantly lower count compared to the relationships categorized as little and close. Moreover, the tendency in the classification of documentary types exhibited a highly skewed number distribution, where the reconstruction type emerged as the most dominant. The total comparison between realism and reconstruction having relationships beyond amounts to 32 and 75 words, respectively. The data found and categorized under realism only constituted 32 words, and all of these instances were within the word trial. This indicated the similarity between the glass and the trial, both portraying a container where the legal process continued. The 'glass' element in the title slate contained ice, coffee, and blood that were mixed. In the trial process, numerous pieces of evidence were presented, including Jessica's stance on the case, as well as accusations of murder.

Meanwhile, in the reconstruction section, there was a tendency to use exaggerated adjectives. Among the 75 pieces of data found were words like 'evil', 'deadly', 'ironic', 'crap', and 'sensational'; each incorporated into different elements within the title slate. These adjectives described information derived from the analysis of the characters, particularly about Jessica, as all the negative and pitiful traits were attributed to the person perceived as the murderer. In other elements, such as 'coffee seeds', there was a tendency to find text related to the case and suspicions regarding the motives for the murder. Coffee seeds were analogized as evidence and scattered accusations. The relationships beyond categories under reconstruction still carried additional information value and metaphors or public figures' opinions about the case.

Documentary films are one form of multimodality that presents multiple media in conveying information. Documentary films communicate events by incorporating text, video, and images. In their early stages and development, Dormehl (2012) categorized documentaries into two streams: realism and reconstruction. Realism is the inherent quality of documentaries that upholds authenticity, whether through the use of settings, characters, or a collection of original documentation. The evolution of documentaries aligns with the development of fictional films, leading to the inclusion of fictional elements that enhance the impact of documentaries. This development has brought about reconstruction in documentaries, which rely on creative media to process facts. In documentaries, reconstruction serves solely as a method to process and convey information without altering any facts from an event.

In the relationship between image and text, as outlined by Marsh & White (2003), there are three types of relationships that can be seen as the frequency of how closely the meaning of the image relates to the concept or word that appears. These relationships include little, close, and beyond. Marsh & White have established a taxonomy of the relationship between text and image that reflects how images and text interact. This can be applied to all fields and types of documents,

including documentary films. The taxonomy identifies forty-nine relationships and groups them into three categories based on the closeness of the conceptual relationship between image and text. However, the research overlooks the abundance of taxonomies or classifications by focusing on how far and close the relationship between image and text is by considering the emerging concepts.

The tendency of image and text in realism and reconstruction was close, with a data quantity of 546. When divided by documentary types, it was found that realism-close is dominant. Specific characteristics in close realism here entailed elements closely related in existence and form within the film: 'coffee', 'glass', 'die', and 'death'. Although some words might not allude to tangible forms, the close elements were interpreted as things that indeed occurred. Documentary films indeed must possess the essence of authenticity and validity. If both aspects are absent, then the question arises whether the film is real or fiction. Realism-oriented documentaries do not necessitate questioning their authenticity. In contrast, reconstruction does raise questions about its authenticity because certain aspects are indeed altered, whether through actors, editing, or story, whether there are additions or not. This is reinforced by the close relationship between image and text, which had reached the essence of the documentary film *Ice Cold*.

Documentary films are often regarded as representations of realism, necessitating elements that succinctly encapsulate the film's content, such as the title slate. In this context, Kress's (2010) theory of multimodality becomes essential for understanding how various modes—text, images, and sounds—work together to convey meaning. Building on Kress's framework, which emphasized the integration of semiotic resources to communicate meaning, this study examined the distinct functions of title slates in different types of documentaries. Specifically, while documentaries focus on realism rely on direct and authentic representations, reconstruction documentaries employ more creative and symbolic elements.

These findings resonated with Jewitt's (2009) assertion that multimodal texts combine modes dynamically to construct meaning, highlighting the role of title slates as a concentrated representation of a documentary's broader multimodal framework. Additionally, this research aligned with Bateman's (2014) argument that multimodal texts must achieve coherence across various modes to create unified meaning. The study suggested that title slates function as a nexus of meaning, integrating text and visuals to convey the documentary's overarching narrative. Following Martinec & Salway's (2005) emphasis on the interaction between semiotic resources, the research further revealed that the role of title slates differed between realism and reconstruction. In realism, title slates maintain a close relationship between image and text to uphold authenticity, whereas in reconstruction, they leverage symbolic elements to introduce layers of meaning and creative expression. These findings substantiated Kress's (2010) view that multimodality is crucial for meaning-making in visual media, particularly documentary films. Consequently, the title slate in documentary films functions as a concentrated representation of the documentary's broader multimodal structure, reinforcing the connection between the film's content and its portrayal of reality.

The title slate is used as the opening scene of a film to depict the entire film. The title slate is also created to give an initial overview to the audience or target about what will be displayed in a visual form in a few seconds in the opening part. This

shows how a visual form can provide an overview of the entire content in a short time. From this function, this research attempted to find a pattern of how the relationship occurred between the title slate and the analyzed documentary film. The relationship found was also a 'close' relationship that represented something. However, the development of the film industry encouraged creativity and uniqueness in film production. Hence, the possibility of a title slate showing another relationship was likely to occur.

One notable limitation was the focus on a title slate that incorporated distinct visual elements, such as the depiction of blood, which were closely tied to the documentary's narrative. This specificity raises questions about how title slates function in cases where such elements are absent. For instance, how do the audiences interpret a title slate that features only textual information without accompanying symbolic imagery? The reliance solely on text may shift the dynamics of interpretation, potentially relying more on typography, language, and connotations of the title itself to convey meaning. These limitations point to opportunities for further research to examine the diversity of title slate designs, their semiotic functions, and their varying impacts on audience perception. Future studies could investigate how minimalist title slates or those with contrasting themes influence viewer engagement and understanding, thereby enriching the discourse on the interplay between visual design and narrative communication in media.

## **CONCLUSION**

The findings of this study underscore the pivotal role of the title slate in documentary filmmaking as a medium for narrative and thematic communication. In the documentary *Ice Cold: Coffee, Murder, and Jessica Wongso*, the title slate successfully encapsulated the essence of the film by establishing a close relationship between visual and textual elements to convey meanings. Among the elements analyzed, blood emerged as the most dominant symbol, representing the central theme of the murder case. This dominant relationship between the elements reinforced the film's intent to guide the audience toward a specific interpretation, particularly affirming the culpability of the accused. Through its semiotic representation, the title slate served as a bridge between the audience's initial impressions and the deeper layers of the narrative, facilitating an understanding of the documentary's key themes and central conflict. The interplay between the symbolic use of blood and other visual components, combined with textual cues, highlighted the gravity and dramatic undertones of the case while emphasizing the justice process central to the documentary. In conclusion, this study demonstrated how the intentional design of a title slate can shape audience perceptions by leveraging multimodal elements that closely align with the narrative.

The discussion and outcomes of this research could serve as a reference for exploring the relationship between visual and textual elements, particularly in the context of title slates within documentary films. Moreover, this study provided a comprehensive framework for designing title slates that effectively balanced artistic expression and narrative coherence, making them an essential element in documentary filmmaking. Title slates, as observed in this research, are not merely

aesthetic components but serve as a critical interface that connects the audience with the film's core narrative. By establishing a close relationship between visual and textual elements, creators could utilize title slates as a powerful tool to encapsulate the essence of their films, ensuring that their central themes and messages were conveyed with clarity and impact. From a practical standpoint, these findings encouraged filmmakers and designers to consider the semiotic weight of each element included in the title slate. Overall, the findings of this research served not only as a reference for filmmakers but also as a foundational resource for academic inquiry and educational practices in the field of media studies.

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