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Document Analysis: The New Yorker's Cover Page Week 8/31 – 9/6/2021

Defining design, and from an overall perspective, would be something thoughtfully planned to solve a problem, for example, a house, a book, a flyer, or a videogame. Design predominantly represents a brand's style by its colors, type, and illustration on a more focused concept.

A design has a message, and it is recognizable because it prompts you to action. When a design is good, you want to have the product or read the book. On the contrary, it does not intrigue the audience to action when its design is terrible.

The document I decided to analyze is The New Yorker's issue cover for the week 8/31-9/6 edition (see Picture 1), named Food for Thought and designed by Tom Gauld. The New Yorker weekly edition covered Food and Beverages. The use of a popular saying and relating it to actual food and beverages plays well with the illustrations on the page. Considering that it represents a scene from a city, in this case, one could assume it is New York City, but it is also relatable to any big city in the United States.

The magazine has a signature typeface as its logotype that is recognizable by readers as well as non-readers. As Ellen Lupton describes, "a logotype is part of an overall visual brand, which the designer conceives as a language that lives (and changes) in various circumstances" (Lupton 68). The type designed by Rea Irvin (Vermaas) has been a staple and provides character. According to the Bradfrost Github repository (Condé), the original logo design has the word The on top of the words New Yorker with a distinctive type size hierarchy. Also, the logo can be a single line with all the words of the same size. The logotype takes second place in this edition, letting the illustrations bring out the humor and a deeper understanding of the weekly theme.

The illustrations on this cover are simple. Anyone who thinks of food, whether human or not, is a black figure with no other identifiers but gender, not to be confused with sexual orientation. The thoughts are on thought bubbles with white space featuring the food or drink in soft neutral colors. The thought bubbles "use enclosure to show separation and to group complex objects" (Kimball 35). The background colors representing the building, grass, street, and even the food truck, are in a similar color spectrum. In 2017, Nicholas Rougeux analyzed the colors of The New Yorker covers since its first one in February 1925, found out that since the 2000s, the magazine started to use "more well-rounded palettes" (Rougeux).

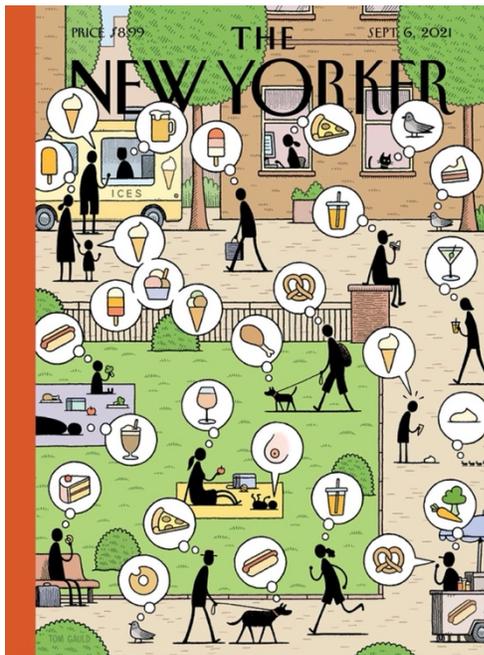
The humor used in the issue cover, where animals, pigeons, cats, dogs, and ants also think about their food preference, is inclusive. It is similar to the tone Edward Tufte showed in *Gentle Humor in Design*, using, for example, the picture of Elihu Yale for sample ID card, or changing the network names to make a joke about the "very slow AT&T Edge network in comparison to fast networks" (Tufte). The humor Tufte inserted, or sprinkle, was only caught by 5% of the people that watched the video with a changed network name. Having a design that is within our comfortable boundaries of thinking is not challenging and loses its impact.

The people illustrations are aligned subtly by horizontal groups. The group on top is within the confinement of walls or an ice cream truck. Then, the second group is the one that walks along the street. The third and fourth groups are the ones that walk through or are in the park. It includes the baby, who is thinking about breast milk. The last group is the one walking along the other end of the park. The harmony it creates goes beyond the relationships of the

illustration thoughts; moreover, the activities each performs or the certainty of the thoughts among the age group, for example, the kid thinking of all the kinds of ice creams that he would like to try. It is a boy because the girl figures have either a ponytail or some hair bun.

Kimball- Haskin explained that using the principles of design "help you control how your designs meet readers' needs and fulfill your clients' agenda" (Kimball 36). In this issue cover, the designer considered the magazine's cosmopolitan readership and stayed in brand style. The New Yorker is a brand with six million monthly print readers and sixteen million unique digital users (The), including a middle-high and upper-class readership. They expect high-quality articles to satisfy their intellect on "politics and foreign affairs, business and technology, popular culture and the arts, along with humor, fiction, poetry, and, of course, cartoons" (The). And also, illustrations and caricatures bring thought-provoking ideas.

John Heskett argued that "if considered seriously and used responsibly, design should be the crucial anvil on which the human environment, in all its detail, is shaped and constructed for the betterment and delight of all" (Heskett 1). In this regard, The New Yorker's issue cover is relevant by meaning and by delight. It not only is simple in a message, to not overthink the famous phrase *Food for Thought*, but also delivered an illustration that represents a broad reality, human, and perhaps animal too. It was because a design that assembled the principles and objects, from which, and to use Heskett's words, is one of the "basic characteristics that define what is to be human" (Heskett 2). It is through design that we transfer emotions and ideas. Design solves problems, whether they are complex or simple. From the cover of a magazine to a rocket, design is the vehicle that puts ideas, and maybe dreams, into reality. Next time we think of food or have an idea, the mere thought of something that makes us reflect on something deep or shallow might be by design thinking - solving a problem, designing a solution, or just understanding. The issue cover of The New Yorker magazines gives its readership some food for thought, not only in a symbolic way but literally.



Picture 1. The New Yorker issue cover week 8/31-9/6.

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