BIG ISSUE - BORIS JOHNSON BY RALPH STEADMAN COVER

The front cover is what grabs the reader and is the selling point of the magazine. The Big Issue uses its front cover effectively to do this by various techniques. It is worth remembering that the Big Issue is a charity, non profit organisation, and is therefore unlike mainstream magazines as it doesn’t really need to use the front cover to generate sales. However, the front cover is always a showcase and is therefore important.

The Big Issue **subverts** usual expectations about magazine covers and this **exemplifies** what the Big Issue is about – being **subversive and rebellious**. Therefore a Big Issue magazine front cover rarely has a skyline, as we see in this issue of the magazine. The masthead in usual magazines may be large and dominate the front cover as this is supposed to attract the readers’ attention in a shop. But this magazine does not have a large masthead and is actually on the top left of the cover (as it is not sold in a shop) which contrasts to many other normal covers. This is smaller, and surrounded by a large black colour and covered by a devils horn making us feel the magazine may be hostile. Because the mast head is small, there is more space on the front cover for the magazine’s central message to be included.

The Big Issue is also different from conventional magazines since its main focus is to help the homeless, and change society. The magazine is sold by people who may be homeless and therefore the central theme of the publication is to help prevent social inequality and poverty. As it is **not profit making**, there are **no advertisements** on the front cover, or references to large organisations that may have sponsored the magazine. This particular cover demonstrates this because it is making fun of the conservative leader Boris Johnson because he doesn’t promote social equality enough in society. This is shown through the devils’ horns he has been given and his face also appears to be drawn in a very unglamorous way. (The Big Issue used a famous cartoonist, Ralph Steadman, for this image. He probably drew the cover without charging.)

There are **few sell lines or slogans** on this front cover, providing more space for the magazine to put forward its main message, which is that Boris Johnson is like the devil and he could create fear in society. In the same way, the **traditional conventions about having a main image in the centre and dividing the front cover into thirds, is not done in the front cover of Big Issue.** The whole of the front cover is used, to promote this message.

On this cover we see the **sell line** which says “Fear and proroguing”. Proroguing means suspending parliament. This is further suggesting that Boris Johnson is trying to **manipulate the peopl**e on the campaign trail just as he did by trying to prorogue parliament. **Intertextuality** is also used here as there is a clear reference to “Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas” by Hunter S. Thompson which was about bringing down the establishment in America just like the certain people in society want to do to Boris Johnson and the Conservatives. It is humorous as well, and the use of intertextuality promotes the fact that the current political situation may be dangerous and it is critical of it. Boris Johnson is slyly looking out of the side of the magazine as if he has something to hide – and in this way the front cover is criticizing him and what he stands for and makes us feel we cannot trust him.

**The front cover seems to be hand drawn and not professional which again gives the feeling of a simple publication without professionalism. This fits with the values of the magazine and it rejects the glossy, glamorized usual magazines. The Big Issue is against demonstrations of wealth and therefore avoids publicising this on their front covers.**

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15/15. An excellent analysis

This is a perfect revision document – exactly the sort of writing to get you a grade A/A\*