Yi-Chu Chen

I have to admit that I prefer designs that show the influence of time and magic of music. Since time and music are more abstract topics and far more difficult than others to be expressed. Some pieces in these books are so beautiful that not only show the floating rhythms in them and depicted in an elegant way. However, I don’t choose them as my favorite since their beauty lies in their simple or complex form. But there are pieces that telling stories in a way I never thought of, those become my favorite pieces.

*The Visual Display of Quantitative Information* by Edward R. Tufte

Graphical Practice

Charles Joseph Minard

Napoleon’s army in Russia

This map marks with a band that the width is in decreasing order through the journey. Also, there’s link between the band and the temperature scale which shows the influence of weather in the death toll. The most awesome thing in this map is that you don’t really need to read through the explanation of the graph and you could get the idea of what this is for. In the mean time, you won’t feel overloaded with data when you related the relation of multi-type of data (Actually there are six types of data in it). Also, there is a magic in this graph that it actually let you see the most important thing first then reader won’t confused the concept with other data. I think this may be related to vision cognitive that we receive the color part first.

This is a successful design because the creator perfectly combine the space and time. It has an advantage to achieve this since the journey has an end and the path is not
too complicated. These make the graphic not so complex and would let people understand this piece immediately without further explanation. It intuitive mapping the width of the stripe to the number of solders and the long stripe crossing from Europe to Asia really resemble the army lined and marching. And if you look at it more carefully, you would see the sawtooth pattern along the side of some band. You will notice that death toll increased rapidly when marching through this area. And this make sense when linked to the temperature during that time.

Although I confused for a while thinking the purpose of the darker line and later guessed that this may represent the retreat of army. And the guess is correct. To me, I would be more convincing that how the death toll related to the cold temperature because of this graph rather then some statistics number like correlation. And I would like to try to depict this graph on height-contouring map. Maybe this would reveal another thing.

_The Visual Display of Quantitative Information_ by Edward R. Tufte

Theory of data graphics
Consumer Reports

This is a cute piece. I like this form is simply because it’s clear and more flexible than other statics graphs which usually related to only one or two variables. This group of graphs could be seen in many different aspects. What’s the different between two kind of cars? Is the trouble spots related to different series in a brand? Would the manufacturer working on reducing the weak parts? And most of consumer would curious of what the total repair fee might be.
It only uses five degree to represent how serious the trouble spots may be. There are much better than average, better than average, average, worse than average and much worse than average. And those dots are placed horizontal in years and vertically in different parts. I like the reduction of not represent the data in line or area but in 5 degrees. The data is not about stock market or something, consumers probably not interested in the trend. The reduction in amount really sorts the data in an clear way for readers to understand and to compare.

Envisioning information
Micro/Macro Readings
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The Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. Directory of names

I think this is really a meaningful one. Sometimes I would be confused of the reason why we need to express statistical number in a more visual way. Is that only because visual expression let people easier to understand than a group of numbers? Or because it’s easier to express the situation or trends in a whole? I think this design is an extremely good example to tell people that the reason we use visual expression is more than the above reasons. What matters is how we tell the story hiding in the numbers. And, the measure criteria lie in how people feel about it.

The designer, Maya Ying Lin, insists to list the name in chronological way rather than the usual alphabetically listing. This makes a huge difference when people viewing it. If the memorial is listing in alphabetically way, families would find their lost ones in a minute but that’s it. They may feel lost since their loved family just like a small part of the war. This result would hurt them so much. However, if they find out the connection of their families with their team members and other fellows, they would realize their lost ones belong to a group of people and represents the war. And to visitors, who may not have deep thoughts of the war, the experience viewing this memorial may affect their thought toward this war. As they walk from the first people died in the field to the end of the war, they would know that there are so many broken families behind the names and they suffered from the day their families died or missing. That’s what the designer insisted in: the sense of unique loss that each name carried.