1996

Visual considerations when designing publications featuring and targeting minority students: a study of minority representation in college and university recruitment material

Lucretia Orlantha Carter

_Iowa State University_

Follow this and additional works at: [https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/rtd](https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/rtd)

Part of the [Business and Corporate Communications Commons](https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/rtd/), and the [English Language and Literature Commons](https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/rtd/)

Recommended Citation


[https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/rtd/7915](https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/rtd/7915)

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Iowa State University Capstones, Theses and Dissertations at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Retrospective Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.
Visual considerations when designing publications featuring and targeting minority students:

A study of minority representation in college and university recruitment material.

by

Lucretia Orlantha Carter

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department: English

Major: English (Business and Technical Communication)

Major Professor: Carol David

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

1996

Copyright © Lucretia Orlantha Carter, 1996. All rights reserved.
This is to certify that the Master’s thesis of

Lucretia Orlantha Carter

has met the thesis requirements of Iowa State University

____________________________
Major Professor

____________________________
For the Major Department

____________________________
For the Graduate College
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER ONE. INTRODUCTION</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER TWO. REVIEW OF LITERATURE</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visual Representation and Pictures</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Representation and Power</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Representation and Social and Political Ideologies</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Representation and Cultural Studies</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| CHAPTER THREE. RECRUITMENT MATERIAL: VIEWBOOKS | 19 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER FOUR. ANALYSIS OF VIEWBOOKS</th>
<th>24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Semiotic Analysis as Mode of Critique</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Viewbooks and Accompanying Documents</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER FIVE. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS</th>
<th>62</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APPENDIX A</th>
<th>71</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX B</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX C</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX D</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX E</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX F</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX G</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX H</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX I</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX J</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX K</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

As borders and zones of cultural identity become increasingly blurred, the politics of representation -- more specifically, visual representation -- are altered. Although some changes have occurred in American culture that reorganize the "other" as legitimate social and cultural identities, the danger of essentializing other cultures exists. That is, the dominant culture tends to view members of minority cultures as all alike. Cornel West, a philosophy professor and writer on cultural studies explains that representations of African-Americans have taken on an homogenizing effect, where black people are shown as being just alike. West suggests that although blacks have some things in common, homogeneous representations overlook class, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, and age. West implies that traditional strategies of identity-formation should be challenged, denouncing dominant modes of representation that incorporate class, patriarchal and homophobic biases. Instead, more multidimensional responses should be constructed to relay the complexity and diversity of African-Americans (18).

Purpose of the Study

In this study, I will analyze current research in professional communication and cultural studies on the cultural and political implications for visually representing ethnic minorities in college and university recruitment material. In doing so, I will examine the recruitment material of seven universities -- more specifically, the material targeted toward and sent to ethnic minorities. I will be noting how minorities -- in particular,
African-Americans are represented through the visual display of pictures and the pictures' integration with the text. To highlight the responsibilities of constructing representations, I will focus on the following: document design, especially pictures; cultural stereotypes constructed by the dominant culture; recruitment materials and the context of the institutions they represent. Finally, I will make inferences about writers' roles in constructing representation and meanings when presenting minority students. My thesis is that visual choices are informed by ideology, and that through the use of dominant strategies such as selection and placement of pictures, writers may narrate the identities and environment of marginal groups.

My research question centers on how the identities of minority college students are narrated visually in college recruitment material, principally, viewbooks. Looking at seven case studies, I will address the possible effects of such representations and the responsibility of writers/designers. I will look especially at the pictures and also consider some written text integrated with them.

Several researchers speak directly to the use of visual design and cultural studies. Chapter two of my thesis will present the current research in professional and visual communication and apply related research in cultural studies to the design of college viewbooks. In chapter three, I will present the materials under evaluation, which include the viewbooks and accompanying brochures from the following seven universities, which have contrasting populations of minority students.

- Drake University
- Francis-Marion University
Analysis

Viewbooks are the most frequently used recruitment literature. They depict the scope of student opportunities, the surroundings, and the social side of the institution (Reck). Viewbooks are heavily visual -- usually large, colorful, full of pictures, with little text. I will note any miscellaneous documents that come with the viewbook, such as brochures, because many recruitment packages sent to minority students contain such documents with “minority-specific” information. In addition, I believe that the arrangement of the general information and “minority-specific” information into separate documents is a major visual design choice.

In chapter four, I will present the model for the analysis and an analysis of the recruitment materials. I will use as a tool for analysis the semiotic analysis model used by Sam Dragga in “Evaluating Pictorial Illustrations.” Brasseur and Thompson, who applied this model to illustrations in Renaissance medical manuals, in “Gendered Ideologies: Cultural and Social Contexts for Illustrated Medical Manuals in Renaissance England,” state that a semiotic analysis “will treat all messages within a culture as a symbol of systems that can be read and interpreted” (205). They use three semiotic levels in the
model -- syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic, which help us understand how illustrations communicate to the reader. I will apply these three levels of semiotics to the pictures and other design choices in the recruitment material. I have made some modifications for the purpose of my own study.

Finally, in chapter five, I will draw inferences concerning my observations and research. I will conclude with a brief summary of my research and observations, and my thoughts on the significance of my study in the field of professional communication.
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As a part of document design, visual representation, especially pictures, elicits different responses from readers than does text. Pictures, because they seem to convey reality, may invoke from readers more emotion and have more impact than written text. Because of their emotional impact, document designers can make use of their potential to persuade and attract an audience. Thus, document designers may rely heavily on pictures to convey a message. For example, when organizations, such as resorts and hotels, wish to attract an audience, they focus on and show through pictures the positive aspects of the organization. They will picture clean beaches, luxurious hotel rooms, gourmet dishes, and sunny days. Also, included in an annual report might be a picture of the workers in the clean, organized factory and a posed picture of the company officers complete with gender and ethnic diversity. College viewbooks, whose purpose is to attract interested students and their parents to the institution, would naturally display happy students in an atmosphere conducive to academic and personal growth. A viewbook might include pictures of a well-manicured lawn, beautiful architecture, and students socializing in harmony.

While some literature from advertising and journalism apply to the theory of visual representation through pictures, technical writing research also contributes. In the following review of literature, I will first address the professional and technical communication literature applicable to the use of visual representation in document design. I will then present research which addresses the political and ideological basis for
the selection and use of visual representations. Finally, I will apply the findings of some researchers in cultural studies to show how this discipline addresses issues of representation.

**Visual Representation and Pictures**

Visual representations are especially suited to depict reality and reduce the ambiguity evoked by text (Williams). One such form of visual representation is a picture. Realistic pictures, such as photographs, present extended information and are closer to their referent. Intrinsically, photographs can depict detail and precision, such as the color, size, linear perspective and texture of its referent more directly than text and other kinds of visual representations, like charts, bar graphs, and cartoons. For example, from a color photograph of my mother and me, viewers can immediately and with little cognitive expenditure get a realistic perception of our differences in skin tone, size, and height. However, trying to convey the same information through linear text might require more time and cognitive processing from the reader. Furthermore, with text, the reader may fail to interpret the information as intended by the communicator. In essence, photographs, when used where most applicable, inform better than text because they provide more relevant information, highlight and clarify it, and present it in an accessible manner (Perkins 272). Thus document designers may employ pictures to grant the communicator the ability to directly convey the appearance and structure of what is represented. Furthermore, document designers might use pictures to present information in a form in which the perceptual system does not require multiple cognitive processing. And finally,
Document designers may use pictures to escape the syntactical constraints of text in revealing representations (Williams 676). While text can describe with certain precision and clarity, visual representations directly and specifically resemble what they represent.

Although both are processed similarly, the mere nature of pictures allows the viewer to employ less perceptual processing. Thus, what is presented in a picture often contributes significantly to the meaning being conveyed. For example, when illustrators want to communicate a harmonious campus environment, they might show students from various ethnic backgrounds collaboratively working on a project. The message of this picture can be processed in a “single fixation, a glance seldom exceeding one-third of a second” (Williams 673). Because pictures require little cognitive effort, document designers may rely heavily on pictures to instantly convey an image when text may call for lengthy, time-consuming descriptions. Also, pictures seem to give readers an immediate reaction. Pictures have an instant emotional impact on readers that does not require them to engage in complex thinking. Because pictures look like their referents, they are often interpreted as real. The reader takes the picture at face value. Therefore, readers react so quickly to the image, that they fail to think about it logically.

Finally, although text can describe with certain clearly, it is structured linearly, and requires readers to employ the use of their memory as they piece information together. Pictures, on the other hand, require less transformation because they are better able to convey spatial and conceptual relationships. For example, a map of the campus directly conveys the size and shape of the institution, whereas, a description of the location of each building on campus might result in various interpretations from readers.
Although suited to represent reality, give readers an immediate reaction, and reduce the ambiguity evoked by text, pictures, above all, are aesthetic. Barton and Barton note that pictures invite a reader’s interpretation through the use of such concrete elements as size, texture, and color, which increase accountability and decrease levels of abstraction. Polychromatic color is a valuable rhetorical tool which can be used to express precision and detail. For example, a clear blue sky can be more accurately portrayed through the use of a polychromatic picture than a lengthy text description. Size is another valuable rhetorical tool. Pictures can closely portray figures of various size, thus substantiating the concrete representation of values. For example, small buildings can be distinguished from tall buildings in a picture showing both. For these reasons, pictures are often remembered better than words.

Although these rhetorical elements, when applied appropriately, improve the function of communication, the basis of such aesthetics is to arouse interest and gain an emotive response in the reader while reinforcing the theme of the document. For example, a viewbook may include a section entitled The Learning Experience, where pictures of college students are shown interacting in class, reinforcing the theme – academic involvement. However, the impact that aesthetics have on readers is only the most obvious function of pictures. Actually, aesthetic elements can also serve to influence readers emotionally. Because they may function rhetorically to persuade readers to accept or reject the depicted scene, they can be strongly persuasive.

Extending beyond pure aesthetics, which contribute to the reality of pictures, are elements which help in conveying the intended message. These elements, as described by
Dragga, include the visual unity, visual location, visual emphasis, and text parallels of the picture. These elements are also valuable rhetorical tools. Visual unity in pictures includes the symmetry and balance of the figures represented; visual location suggests the position of the figures represented in the picture with respect to one another; and visual emphasis suggests the weight given to certain figures in the picture. Text parallels are the relationships of the pictures and the accompanying verbal explanation, such as headings and captions.

Visual Representation and Power

John Hartley describes pictures as having voices. No picture is a purely aesthetic image. Pictures, which are visual, social, spatial and communicative, “construct literal social space within and between the frames and fields of which they’re made” (28). As aesthetic, textual works, pictures are capable of personal appreciation and individual interpretation. At the same time, they are “institutionally produced, circulated within an economy, and used both socially and culturally” (28). Their own internal space is organized or framed, and relations are developed between them and readers outside of the frame. In other words, Hartley recognizes that pictures are largely political.

While traditionally pictures have been associated with reality and emotion, Hartley considers them within the public domain of social and political ideologies. He states that
Pictures are objective traces of socio-semiotic struggles (conflict), allegiances (consensus), and ideologies (sense-making practices), right across the spectrum from big-deal public politics to intimate personal culture. (29)

Hartley calls for a critical interrogation of such politics and explains that the politics of pictures begin with the act of selection: selecting the picture, not the textual content and social use of the image because they are understood and conducted according to the selection of the picture, which is not self-evident, but a product of the way pictures are viewed.

An example of how pictures are social and political constructs may be found in college and university recruitment materials -- specifically, viewbooks, which rely heavily on pictures to convey messages, and are highly political. Generally, recruitment materials, which consist of catalogues, viewbooks, and brochures are targeted toward prospective students, parents of prospective students, preparatory school administrators and instructors, and prospective donors. Recruitment materials usually inform their readers of the institution’s current curriculum, programs, progress, and present and future needs. However, viewbooks are mainly circulated to prospective students and their parents. Viewbooks depict the scope of student opportunities, academically, professionally and socially (Reck 65).

In other words, the pictures in a viewbook are not arbitrarily placed there. Instead, the pictures are deliberately selected to represent the image that the institution wants to illuminate. For example, in the spring of 1995, I conducted a study entitled, “Representation in ISU College Publicity Manuals.” Featured in this study was a picture
and text analysis of minority representation in the institution's publicity manuals --
catalogues, viewbooks, and brochures. I found that forty-one percent of the pictures in
the viewbook, entitled "Iowa State University, It Works," feature African-Americans,
who make up only three percent of the student population. I concluded that in an attempt
to adhere to traditional regimes of representation centered around the politics of race and
multiculturalism (perhaps to increase the number of minority students), the Iowa State
University publicity manuals, designed and distributed for recruitment purposes, create
false images of their minority population and community (Carter).

Furthermore, the visual representations in the viewbooks also reflect the attitudes in
the larger American culture. Institutions may attempt to present traditional images of
college life, through viewbooks, whether or not those scenes are typical and accurate.
Represented through these viewbooks are images of an atmosphere conducive to
academic and personal growth, career preparation, and safety for students. Viewbooks
may also depict the college as emphasizing an elitist, liberal, or vocational mission. In
doing so, viewbooks may be conformed to stereotypical ideas of college life.

In representing the larger American culture, colleges may mask actual discrimination
or neglect of other cultures. For example, some viewbooks present a harmonious campus,
with ethnic minorities existing in concert with students of the dominant culture. Other
institutions present American minorities, especially African-Americans and their
supposed interests, in a neat, little package. For example, an institution may publish a
brochure featuring what it has outlined as African-American interests, like "The Black
Ruth Sidel, a leading sociologist who explores campus issues in the context of a larger culture, illustrates a different picture of minority representation than the ones presented in the viewbooks. In *Battling Bias: The Struggle for Identity and Community on College Campuses*, Sidel gives voice to neglected students whom she describes as multidimensional people who play varied roles and illustrate multiple issues on college campuses. In numerous case studies, she reports how minority students struggle to balance identity and community. They try to come to terms with their “multifaceted identities,” while remaining part of the various communities to which they belong. She points out the complexities of living in the dominant culture, while trying to understand the oppression, history, culture and language of their ancestors (177). However, “students have often been portrayed simplistically and one-dimensional, marching in lock-step with others who share their status” (106). Sidel reports that when students are lumped together because of their skin-color, gender, or sexual orientation, they may be reviled. Overt prejudice on college campuses is not uncommon.

**Visual Representation and Social and Political Ideologies**

Researchers in the field of professional and technical communication have become increasingly aware of how a document designer’s sense of audience and purpose influence features of the document. However, not enough attention has been paid to the larger cultural contexts in which documents are produced. Highly influential in the rhetorical choices for a document, cultures encompass values, attitudes, and knowledge shared by their members. For example, Odell points out that document designers, when
considering their audience, may create their reader in their own image. How they assess their audience may have nothing to do with the members of the audience but instead reflect the document designer’s understanding of the larger institution’s characteristics or image. These images are in turn affected by the larger culture and the ideologies operating within them.

Barton and Barton recognize that pictures can encompass cultural conventions which may serve to sustain relations of domination. They recognize underlying ideologies at the basis of such conventions as privileging certain meaning systems. As an example, recruiting materials may attempt to convey the image of a campus as safe or pleasurable. Therefore, when or if pictures are shown of minority students, they are integrated with white student, perhaps because the dominant culture sees minority males -- especially African-American males -- as threatening. Such double-sided attributes of ideology provide cultural studies worker with the incentive to make inferences about the power of representation. Barton and Barton cite Stuart Hall, as describing the ideological model of power as

a way of representing the order of things which endows its limiting perspectives with that natural or divine inevitability which makes them appear universal, natural and coterminal with ‘reality’ itself. This movement -- towards the winning of universal validity and legitimacy for accounts of the world which are partial and particular, and towards the grounding of these particular constructions in the taken-for-grantedness of ‘the real’ -- is indeed the characteristic and defining mechanism of ‘the ideological.’ (50)
In essence, visual representations are seen as complicit with social-control mechanisms linked to power and authority. The dominant culture determines the standard by which subordinate cultures are judged.

Subsequently, Barton and Barton recognize the Italian Marxist Gramsci’s notion of hegemony -- a process by which certain definitions attain dominance in a society -- as a way of revealing such social-control mechanisms. The notion of hegemony operates in a dual mode: (1) certain meanings and practices are chosen for emphasis, (2) other meanings and practices are excluded, reinterpreted, diluted, or put into forms which support or at least do not contradict other elements within the effective dominant culture. In other words, what is emphasized and what is excluded are disclosed. These conventions make up what Barton and Barton recognize as the rules of inclusion and the rules of exclusion, which they feel underlie the double-sided attributes of ideology (53).

More specifically, the rules of inclusion determine what is selected to be presented, what aspects of the selected are presented, and what representational strategies and devices are used to represent those aspects. For example, an institution or organization may choose to focus only on what is positive and desirable. In an attempt to create an image so positive and intriguing that it will draw visitors, its viewbook might present an optimistic world and unrealistic view. To draw members from various ethnic backgrounds, an institution might attempt to show racial balance on the campus by picturing an equal number of students of various ethnicities.

Furthermore, such a representational strategy as inclusion legitimates dominant interests. This strategy is based on the hierarchization of space because space is not
perceived as everywhere having equal value. The placement of pictures then becomes a way of granting privilege. Positioning to privilege may be determined in various ways -- placing the dominant image in the center, top, and/or first. When presenting representations of a minority community, some institutions place pictures featuring minority students away from the general viewbook, in a separate, smaller document. In such cases, the minority-specific information featured in the separate, smaller document may be interpreted by readers as least important or not valuable.

On the opposite end of inclusion is exclusion and repression. The rules of exclusion entail obscuring the real conditions of existence by presenting partial truths. For instance, the practice of exclusion includes intentionally omitting information; leaving gaps rather than directly lying; smoothing over contradictions; cleverly appearing to provide answers to questions which in reality are actually evaded; and masquerading as coherent in the interests of the social relations generated by and necessary to the reproduction of the existing mode of production (59). For example, when some institutions present minority-specific information in a separate viewbook, away from the general viewbook, the interested minority students are only given the viewbook featuring minority-specific information. In such cases, they may get only a partial view of what the institution has to offer.

Finally, with exclusion practices, whatever is not presented is cast out of existence. Barton and Barton note that the prime targets for exclusion are nonhegemonic groups, or what social studies workers describe as the “other,” who are ethnocentrically conceived to have homogeneous qualities. For example, institutions will publish a general
viewbook, and a feature viewbook which entails information specific to only one group such as, minority-specific viewbooks. Within the general viewbooks, the institution may have chosen to feature students who fit the stereotype of the American college student, while leaving out those who do not appear to do so. In such cases, students outside the parameters of the categories are “nonexistent.”

**Visual Representation and Cultural Studies**

In essence, viewbooks may not give an accurate picture of college cultures, and such misrepresentation may be a reflection of the power system exercised by the dominant culture. Document designers may react to stereotypes of college scenes and to cultural identities consistent with how the dominant culture defines ethnicity. Cultural studies researchers have articulated such covert domination of traditional regimes of representation by speaking to the issue of representation and explaining that forms of cultural identity are learned in relation to the ordering and structuring of dominant practices of these representations.

Hall explains that identities are not obtained at birth, but are “formed and transformed within and in relation to representation” (292). For example, Americans may only know what it means to be “Black” by the way “Blackness” has come to be represented. Because identities are formed within relation to representation, social, political, and cultural influences, which underlie means of representation -- drawing, writing, photography, paintings -- influence how identities are located and represented. Giroux, a professor of secondary education and researcher of cultural studies, states:
Representations are not simply forms of cultural capital necessary for human beings to present themselves in relation to others and human nature, they also inhabit and sustain institutional structures that need to be understood and analyzed within circuits of power that constitute what might be called a political economy of representations. (48)

Because modes of representation in America are often constructed by the dominant culture, the danger of essentializing other, previously marginalized cultures exists. For example, false identities, stereotypes, and generalizations may appear in presentations of minority students when colleges attempt to attract more diverse populations, thus, as West suggests, forming an identity for minority students. Consequently, cultural studies researchers, like West, Hall and Giroux, state the need to challenge the hegemonic politics of race and representation of institutions defined by the dominant culture.

Therefore, cultural studies researchers are primarily concerned with deconstructing popular culture, and de-essentializing stereotypes perpetuated by representations. For instance, Giroux, in “Living Dangerously: Identity Politics and the New Cultural Racism” through an analysis of the movie, Grand Canyon, deconstructs how black neighborhoods are shown as dangerous, black men as powerless, and minority women as lacking morality. He suggests that such representations are not situated ethically and politically with respect to questions of social justice. Also, those being represented were not considered. And finally, moral, ethical, and ideological principles which may structure our reactions to such representations were not considered.
Expressing a concern about the traditional regimes of representation and identity-formation, cultural studies researchers might ask of viewbooks the following:

When considering those being represented...

- are the identities of minority students being defined and categorized in the viewbook by the university?
- are assumptions made in the viewbooks about the interests of minority students?
- are only pictures shown of minority students who appear to fit into an ethnic stereotype?
- are only pictures shown of minority students who appear to fit the larger American ideology of what a college student should look like, excluding individual expression?

When considering ethics and social justice...

- is the minority population indicated through the viewbook a true representation?
- when portraying integration, do viewbooks give an accurate account?
- how do these institutions construct themselves? Is it ethical?
- do these viewbooks provide models for their readers?

In chapter four I will apply the literature on pictures and cultural studies to the pictures in the viewbooks in an organized model of analysis.
CHAPTER THREE
RECRUITMENT MATERIAL: VIEWBOOKS

According to Reck, recruitment material or publications, in many cases, provide initial contact with people who may become important constituents -- students, instructors, alumni, and financial supporters. Their purpose is to inform, interpret, promote and record. As a result, the appearance, format, and content of such material constitute an image and an estimate of the institution presented. In other cases, such materials serve as the official representative -- the envoy -- of the institution for those who are already constituents. In either case, Reck states that the institution says in effect through each publication bearing its name:

This is my story in type and picture. It is told in keeping with my philosophy and traditions. In preparing it, I have done everything possible to follow the rules of good craftsmanship and to make my message clear, accurate, honest, and dignified. I am so confident that this publication will do the job for which it was prepared that it carries my stamp of approval. I am willing to be judged by the impression it makes upon you. (63)

Reck’s statement indicates that recruitment materials and publications are legitimate forms of representation.

The size and reputation of a college can influence the content of the recruitment package. Large institutions usually have a more extensive package. They may have a catalogue for each college, viewbooks, brochures concerning university offerings and activities, and various types of pamphlets. Small universities and colleges may attempt to
outdo the larger ones by publishing a plethora of material. Or perhaps some smaller institutions may not be able to afford such excess publishing, so they opt for only one or two documents, like the catalog and a brochure. Similarly, a well-known institution may not feel it necessary to publish so many documents when they can rely on their already outstanding reputation. On the opposite end, a less popular institution may have an extensive recruitment package in order to promote its image.

To depict the scope of student opportunities, the surroundings, and the social side of the institution, many colleges and universities use a viewbook. Viewbooks are heavily visual -- usually large, colorful, full of pictures, with little text. Because of their visual density, viewbooks are the focus of this study. In addition to viewbooks, colleges and universities rely on a number of other publications for recruitment purposes: catalogs, pamphlets, calendars, sports schedules, etc. The catalog, for many institutions, is a single repository for a mass of miscellaneous information. The pamphlet or brochure is usually adopted to departmental needs. Other miscellaneous pieces allow the institution to express itself informally (Reck). Although viewbooks are the focus of analysis, some institutions arrange general information and “minority-specific” information into separate documents. In such cases, the miscellaneous documents will be noted. Under analysis are the viewbooks and accompanying documents from the following seven institutions:

- Drake University
- Francis-Marion University
- Grinnell College
- Iowa State University
• South Carolina State University
• Williams College
• Winston-Salem State University

These institutions can be compared and contrasted by type -- liberal arts, state-supported, private, large (over 5,000 students), predominantly white, historically black. They also have contrasting populations of minority students.

Both Winston-Salem State University and South Carolina State University are historically black institutions and thus have a greater population of African-American students than do the other five schools. They both are small, state-supported schools. South Carolina State University has approximately 5,000 students with two percent white students. Winston-Salem State University has approximately 2,700 students with thirteen percent white students. It will be interesting to compare their representations of African-American students to those of the other five institutions, which are predominantly white institutions.

On the opposite end of the small, historically black institutions is Iowa State University, a large, state-supported, predominantly white institution. It has a student population of approximately 25,000. Three percent are African-American. Also, a state-supported, predominantly white institution, Francis-Marion, has a student population of approximately 4,000. Twenty-three percent are African-Americans. Francis-Marion is a small school but has a larger percent of African-American students than the other predominantly white schools in this study. Drake University, a private and independent institution, has approximately the same number of students as Francis-Marion. The
student population at Drake is approximately 3,474. Of that number, five percent are African-Americans. Because Drake’s African-American student population is similar to Iowa State’s, they may use similar strategies of representation.

Grinnell College and Williams College are private, liberal arts and sciences institutions. The student population for Grinnell is approximately 1,260. Thirteen percent are minority students. More specifically, five percent are African-American. Williams’ student population is 1,988. Minority students make up twenty-five percent of the institution’s student population. With approximately thirty-four African-Americans, I would like to see how these two colleges represent African-American students as opposed to the historically black institutions and the other predominantly, white institutions.

All of the institutions have characteristics that may determine how they represent themselves and their African-American population. These characteristics can be compared and contrasted interchangeably to show patterns in strategies of representation. For example, an institution which wants to increase the number of African-American students may show many pictures of African-American students thriving on the campus, in order to depict an integrated environment. Their purpose might be to appeal to prospective African-American students.

The selected schools are not a random or representative sample. I chose them because I am aware of their minority makeup. Finally, I am not claiming that I can make generalizations about other schools from these schools; I merely want to investigate dominant strategies of visual representation, their cause, and possible effects.
Because of their purpose, viewbooks are a good source for observing the representations presented by the seven schools. The viewbooks attempt to persuade students by assuring them they will find whatever these institutions promote. Relying heavily on visuals, viewbooks are emotionally appealing and pleasing to the eye. They visually represent what can not or is not put into words. By evaluating the contents of the recruitment package, we can see how these seven institutions construct themselves for a particular audience. For example, some institutions may send a different recruitment package to prospective minority students. If so, will the prospective minority student receive a distorted image of the university? Or will minority students receive a more holistic view while other prospective students receive a distorted image?

To obtain the recruitment packages, I called the schools (I visited the admissions office of Iowa State University) and expressed my interests. After giving them my name, they proceeded to asks questions about my identity -- gender, ethnicity, intended major, and current address.
CHAPTER FOUR
ANALYSIS OF VIEWBOOKS

This chapter contains an explanation of the model for analysis and my analysis of the recruitment materials.

A Semiotic Analysis as Mode of Critique

As explained by current literature on visual communication, an effective analysis of pictures would evaluate the visual elements that strongly attract the reader. One model is described by Sam Dragga in "Evaluating Pictorial Illustrations." Borrowing from Evelyn Goldsmith's theory of illustration, Dragga develops a 12-question heuristic that directs the composition and evaluation of pictorial images. Dragga states that the theory reinforces the importance of audience analysis in visual communication on three levels: syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic. The syntactic level assesses the user's ability to perceive the image. The semantic level observes the user's ability to identify the images. And the pragmatic level determines the user's ability to interpret the image (52-3). Dragga notes that the pragmatic level is particularly sensitive to social and cultural diversity.

Brasseur and Thompson, in "Gendered Ideologies: Cultural and Social Contexts for Illustrated Medical Manuals in Renaissance England," modify the model as a semiotic analysis to examine visual representations of the female body in Renaissance medical manuals. Brasseur and Thompson explain that a semiotic analysis "will treat all messages within a culture as a symbol of systems that can be read and interpreted" (205). They use the same three semiotic levels in the model -- syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic -- to
demonstrate how illustrations communicate to the reader. The syntactic level assesses how visual elements communicate on a perceptual level. The semantic level observes how visual elements communicate meaning. And the pragmatic level evaluates the relations of the visual elements to the circumstances of their production and use (205).

Similarly, I will use the three-level, semiotic analysis to evaluate the pictures and related design choices in the recruitment material of the seven institutions. I have made the following modifications within the three levels of the model so that the semiotic analysis is applicable to my own study.

On the syntactic level, my analysis will focus on how the pictures within the total composition relate to each other and how users perceive the visual cues, organization and structure. More specifically, my examination from this perspective will include the following:

• display or organization; pictures may be placed locally or globally in relation to the individual documents included in the entire package. More specifically, if certain pictures are placed away from the main document and inside a document of lesser status, then they are located globally. If all the pictures in the entire recruitment package are organized together in one main document, then they are located “locally.” For example, pictures are likely to be displayed locally in a viewbook and not displaced throughout a catalogue, brochure or letter.

• number of pictures; the number of pictures in a document indicate the level of reliance on the visual to communicate to the user.

• number of pictures featuring minorities; the number of pictures featuring minorities in a document might suggest an attempt to communicate the existence of a minority population.

On the semantic level, my analysis will examine how each of the pictures communicates meaning. Because the focus of my study centers on minority
representation, the semantic analysis is only applicable to the pictures featuring minority students. More specifically, I will note the following:

- visual-text integration; the initial interpretation of the visual can be assessed through its integration with text, e.g. section headings, captions, and quotes.

- theme (focus); a distinct meaning might be interpreted through the theme or focus of the photograph, e.g. an academic theme entails a focus on minority students in an academic setting, while a sports theme entails a focus on minority students in a sports setting.

- size; the status or importance of a picture can be interpreted by its size.

- color; the status or importance of a picture may also be interpreted based on whether it is featured in polychromatic color or black and white.

- type (action or posing); the reality of a picture can be interpreted by its type, e.g. a posing photograph might be interpreted as a staged condition, while an action photograph might be interpreted as an event that actually took place.

- subject; what or who has been emphasized to represent the idea behind the picture can be interpreted through the subject, e.g. a female dressed in business attire, or a male wearing clothing associated with the hip-hop culture.

An analysis on the **pragmatic** level will examine relations of visual representations to the context for which they were produced and used. In the analysis, the ideologies behind the context might be revealed. Such an analysis will be assessed through student data obtained from the institutions. I will note the following:

- institutional culture

- mission

- target audience
Analysis of Viewbooks and Accompanying Documents

Following is a semiotic analysis of the pictures featured in the recruitment materials (in particular the viewbooks) of the seven institutions. Under each heading labeled with the name of the institution is a description of the recruitment package contents, a semiotic analysis on three levels: syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic. The interpretations following the analyses are my own. Attending both a large, predominantly white university and a historically black university has allowed me to draw some insights on what meanings these visual representations may convey. However, I do not claim that my opinions are authoritative.

Drake University

Drake University’s minority recruitment package includes a 1996-98 general catalog, entitled *Drake*; a viewbook entitled, *Your Multicultural Opportunities at Drake University*; a booklet entitled, *An Investment in Your Life: Financial Aid, Scholarships*; and an application for undergraduate admission.

A Syntactic Analysis of the Drake University Viewbook

Drake University’s viewbook, entitled *Your Multicultural Opportunities at Drake University*, features minority-specific information. Therefore, the pictures are placed globally relative to the larger viewbook for the general student population. This general student viewbook was not included in the minority recruitment package, and thus can not be included in the analysis. The minority viewbook has twenty-five pictures, which are
displayed over twelve, nine-inch by eight-inch pages. With the exception of two photographs picturing buildings, all of the pictures feature minority students. Drake wants to convey a message of a multicultural experience on the college campus. To do so, they appear to rely heavily on minority faces in their minority viewbook. However, the recipient of this recruitment package, which includes only the minority viewbook, might feel as though the pictures inside are representative of the whole university environment.

A Semantic Analysis of the Drake University Viewbook

The viewbook features on the cover a large color photograph with eighteen students of various ethnicities posed in four rows. The picture is displayed under the title, and features five African-Americans and other ethnic minorities intermingled with white students. The theme appears to be a diverse campus environment where people from various backgrounds make a profound contribution to collegiate culture. Because the pictures show students of various ethnic backgrounds, and because this is the only viewbook included in the recruitment package, readers might feel that the contents inside are representative of the university as a whole.

Inside the viewbook are seven sections. The viewbook generally employs the same layout for each page, with the exception of the two inside, front and back, cover pages. Two pictures dominate the page, leaving room for one column of text on the left. The text is an elaboration on the topic expressed through the section heading. For example, the text in the section, called The Des Moines Community — Your Neighborhood, describes the diversity of the Des Moines community. The large picture, which measures five
inches by five and a half inches, is in the top, right corner. In the picture is a block of text, which is a quote from the person featured in the photograph. The small pictures, which measure two and a half inches square are sometimes centered at the bottom of the page or in the bottom left corner beneath the column of text.

The viewbook contains seven major sections, which cover topics such as minority student involvement with Drake University and the Des Moines community, minority resources and special services, and minority funding and financial obligations. The first section, entitled *A Place for You*, features two pictures. The theme of the pictures seems to be minority student involvement in the university as a whole. The large picture is a close-up featuring an African-American female posing with her sorority jacket against a colorful backdrop (see Appendix A). The sorority can be identified as Alpha Kappa Alpha, Sorority, Incorporated, the first national African-American Greek-lettered sorority. The quote inside the picture reads

Drake is special in that a lot of people develop bonds right away. Friends at Drake treat each other like family – but the family members have many different backgrounds. I’ve learned a lot from my friends in organizations, too. I’ve developed a sense of responsibility … and I’ve stopped procrastinating.

The picture integrated with the text denotes that African-Americans have a place at Drake university. The sorority paraphernalia worn by the young lady also suggests that black Greek-lettered organizations exist at Drake University, perhaps because some African-American students may think it necessary for these organizations to be available for them to pledge. (Some predominantly white schools do not have the African-American Greek-
lettered organizations.) Directly beneath the larger picture is a caption identifying the student, her hometown and participation in the organization. The small picture features three students walking on campus. The African-American female is at the center of the picture between the two white students. This picture indicates that Drake has an integrated and friendly environment.

The theme of the next section, entitled *The Des Moines Community – Your Neighborhood*, seems to encompass the minority students' connection with the Des Moines professional community. The large picture is a close-up of an African-American male posing in suit and tie against a colorful backdrop. The quote inside the picture reads:

> Drake has a big-school atmosphere without being all that large, so you see familiar faces on the way to class. Drake is receptive and encourages students to try new things. I had the freedom to look into new interests, and professors provided lots of support. Drake gave me room to be an individual.

The caption directly beneath the larger picture identifies the male figure as a graduate and names his current job. The well dressed professional pictured and the caption identifying him suggest that minority students can graduate from Drake University and get good jobs. The small picture features the Des Moines skyline at night, depicting a "big-city" atmosphere.

Following is the section entitled *Academic Opportunities for You at Drake*. The theme seems to be the multicultural, academic curriculum at Drake University. This section features only the large picture, which shows an Asian-American female posing in
a turtle neck and sweatshirt against the same colorful backdrop. The quote inside the picture reads

When considering colleges, I looked for a school where I could take Asian studies and have an opportunity to study abroad. Drake provided both. My Asian cultural studies courses are so interesting, mostly in part to my professors. Then I had an opportunity to spend an entire semester studying in Thailand. I learned so much about their culture by just being there.

The caption directly beneath the picture identifies the Asian-American female as an international business major from Des Moines. In the place where the small picture should be is a side bar encased in blue lines labeled *Take A Look at the Courses that May Interest You...* This block of text features a list of non-traditional curriculum courses, such as Native American Art and Introduction to Cultural Studies. The picture, of course, indicates that Asian-Americans have a place at Drake. The side bar suggests that the courses listed will appeal to the readers, minority students.

The next section, entitled *Opportunities for Personal Growth*, consists of four pages and seven subsections. Therefore, the general layout used throughout the entire document is occasionally modified after the first page. The theme of this whole section is personal growth through the organizations of minority students’ interests. The large picture, on this section’s first page, features a middle-aged African-American male posing in a suit and tie while holding a baseball cap displaying the John Deere company name and logo. His quote reads
Make no doubt about it: Drake is committed to being a premier multicultural university. The University actively recruits and graduates minority students, and Drake is committed to recruiting and retaining faculty to represent these groups. It is important to have representatives teaching the classes. We have that at Drake. The caption directly beneath the picture identifies the male figure as the vice chair of the Drake University Board of Governors and general manager of John Deere Des Moines Works. Integrated with the text, this picture suggests that Drake has supportive African-American faculty members with business connections. The smaller picture features three minority students socializing outside on the campus. Pictured are two African-American males wearing clothing associated with the hip-hop culture (oversized pants, large or loose shirts and baseball caps), and a Latino female wearing a skirt and blazer. This picture indicates social harmony among diversity. Also, clothing worn by the two males depicts a different image of the African-American male than usually pictured in college viewbooks. More typical is a male wearing a button-down shirt, tie and slacks or a suit, representing the collegiate African-American male in viewbooks.

The first subsection, called *The Coalition of Black Students*, shows only the large picture. Featured in the picture is an African-American male wearing a button-down shirt and slacks, and holding a book. His quote reads

> I’ve found Drake’s atmosphere to be very conducive to learning – in and out of the classroom. Drake broadens your perspective and allows you to pursue several different areas of interest. Because of the size of the student body, you can get involved and take advantage of leadership opportunities.
The text directly beneath the picture identifies the male’s major and his extracurricular involvement at Drake University. Integrated with the text, this picture portrays the ideal intellectual who is accomplished physically (well-dressed and well-groomed), academically (carrying a book), and socially (past president of the Student Activities Board, a student senator, and a member of the President’s Roundtable).

The subsections, entitled *Mentors from the Des Moines Community* and *The National Panhellenic Council*, share a picture featuring an African-American female casually dressed holding a stack of books, whose titles imply a content centered around social and political issues. The quote inside the picture reads

Drake is light-years ahead of other private institutions in the Midwest, in terms of commitment to simultaneously diversifying faculty, curriculum and students. It is a collaborative effort by the administration and students, and that makes it good.

The caption beneath the picture identifies her as an assistant professor of sociology at Drake University, indicating that there are African-American instructors who approve of the university’s academic and social environment.

The next subsections, labeled *The National Association of Black Journalists*, *International Students’ Association*, *Drake Gospel Choir*, and *La Fuerza Latina*, border two small pictures. One picture features a Latino male wearing a Drake T-shirt and carrying a book-bag while he socializes with a white female. Similar to previous pictures, this picture suggests a friendly and integrated campus. The second picture features an African-American male wearing a cap and gown shaking hands with a white, middle-
aged, male, who appears to be an administrator or faculty member. This picture, of course, implies that African-Americans—especially males—do graduate.

The following section, entitled *Opportunities to Feel at Home in a New Environment*, has three subsections entitled *The Black Cultural Center, La Casa Cultural,* and *International Center.* The theme for this section, which consists of two pages, appears to be special resources for minority students. The first page features two pictures. The large picture shows an Asian-American male dressed casually, holding a pencil. His quote reads

*Drake takes care of its students. No matter what your background, no matter where you are from, Drake provides services for a quality education AND special attention. Drake has the resources to make students feel comfortable.*

The caption below the picture identifies the male figure as student and peer mentor for New Student Days. The small picture, which is displayed below the text, subtitled *The Black Cultural Center,* features three African-American males casually dressed and socializing outside, in front of a house, which may be the Black Cultural Center.

The next page of the same section has three pictures. The large picture features a Latino woman casually dressed and holding Spanish books. Her quote reads

*La Casa Cultural is a reality! My students have discussed such a center for many years, and I’m so proud to see their dreams some true. It’s a perfect example of what students can accomplish here at Drake. The house is also a strong statement of Drake’s support for multicultural students.*
The caption identifies her as a Spanish professor at Drake. One of the smaller pictures is under the subheading, *La Casa Cultural*, and features three Hispanic students -- one male and two females -- socializing in a room of what appears to be the building that houses *La Casa Cultural*. The other small picture, which is displayed under the subheading, entitled *International Center*, features a far off shot of people standing in front of a house and behind a sign displaying “International Center, Drake University.” All of the pictures in this section correspond to the text suggesting that anyone of any ethnic background can feel at home at Drake.

The following section, called *Financial Aid Opportunities for You at Drake*, consists of two pages. The theme for this section seems to be financial assistance for minority students. The first page features two pictures. The large picture shows a Latino female dressed in a button-down blouse. Her quote reads

I remember visiting Drake for orientation and meeting Nikki (Alonzo), a senior at Drake. Our family backgrounds were so similar, and we were both first-generation college students. Learning about the opportunities she took advantage of at Drake was such a positive influence on me. I want to accomplish what she did, for my family and for me.

The caption directly below the picture identifies her as a minority scholarship and fellowship recipient. The small picture shows the scholarship building, which is the dominant figure, with two students walking in front of it. The second page features two small pictures. The first picture shows two minority students working together at a computer. The second small picture features four students of color socializing on campus.
The final section is entitled *Drake Welcomes You with...the Drake Advantage!* The theme is an overview of the entire viewbook—opportunities, success, and life. The large picture features a middle-aged African-American female in business attire holding a leather bound book. The quote inside the picture reads:

Drake professors play a key role in retaining students. It was my professors that kept me at Drake. They were always supportive, accessible and extra welcoming. They helped frame my career and provided additional insight into the career path I was going to lead. Now many of my professors are my peers. Many of our students transfer to Drake, and I know they are in good hands to grow and develop.

In the caption below she is identified as a 1973 graduate of Drake University and current executive dean for the Des Moines Area Community College. The small picture features a crowd of graduating students in caps and gowns, with students of color as the focal point. These pictures and text suggest that the university works hard at retaining minority students. Finally, the inside back cover page includes a small picture of two students of color walking together on the campus.

Overall, Drake's viewbook shows minority students, male and female, from various ethnic backgrounds. These representations show a variety of minorities who contribute to the college community -- undergraduates, graduate students, alumni, professionals, and instructors. The captions and text integrated with the pictures draw attention to the multidimensionality of minorities on Drake's campus. The viewbook also shows the minorities in both an academic and social setting.
A Pragmatic Analysis of the Drake University Viewbook

Drake University is a private and independent institution, located in urban Des Moines, the capital of Iowa. Enrollment is selective and size is limited. The student population at Drake is approximately 3,474. Of that number, nineteen percent are ethnic minorities. In particular, five percent are African-Americans. As part of their mission statement, Drake implies that it is committed to "attracting students of all ages, races and backgrounds," who are "academically able," and providing them with "comprehensive services that enhance learning and personal and professional growth." Drake is also committed to "attracting and maintaining faculty and staff of all races and backgrounds and providing resources for their professional development." Overall, Drake intends to increase the "individual's global concerns and the University's role in them" (Drake General Catalog 1996-98 7).

The contents of the recruitment package -- a viewbook dedicated to expressing minority concerns and issues -- suggest that Drake wants to appeal to students from various ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. In almost each section of the viewbook, they illustrate the attributes of the minority students and faculty at Drake University. Therefore, the audience for the viewbook appears to be minorities and international students from various ethnic, socioeconomic, and geographic backgrounds. Drake tries to appeal to its target audience by doing the following:

- showing people of different races -- African-American, Asian-American, and Latino
• showing people who have received minority scholarships

• showing people from various places like Chicago, Illinois, Omaha, Nebraska, Kansas City, Missouri, and Arden Hills, Minneapolis.

To directly reach their intended audience, Drake arranges this information globally in a separated document away from the general viewbook and sends it in a recruitment package assembled specifically for perspective minority students.

While chunking like information together might appear rhetorically wise, when representing the image of an institution, it has its disadvantages. Ironically, in Drake’s effort to show how the University’s environment is inclusive of minorities by dedicating a viewbook to minority issues and concerns, they exclude minorities from the university environment as a whole. The recipient of this minority recruitment package may not know it is such, and may not know that a general viewbook exists. He/she may believe that what he/she sees represents the whole university. Also, Drake has assumed or even more dangerously dictated that prospective minority students’ interests lie within the boundaries presented in the viewbook. For example, just because I fit the profile for Drake’s target audience does not mean that I am necessarily interested in the social organizations that the students pictured have participated in.

Francis-Marion University

The Francis-Marion University recruitment package includes a twelve-inch by nine-inch viewbook, entitled Francis Marion University; applications for admission and on-campus housing; and a brochure for financial assistance.
A Syntactic Analysis of the Francis-Marion University Viewbook

The Francis-Marion viewbook contains general information about academics, sports, and social involvement. The viewbook has twenty-nine pictures. Six pictures, which are randomly displayed throughout the viewbook, feature African-American students. Because the pictures featuring the African-American students are not arranged and condensed into a minority, information-specific document, they are located locally in regards to the general viewbook. Francis-Marion conveys a message of fun and adventure for the typical college student. As a result, they have a rather large viewbook, which allows some of the pictures inside to carry considerable impact. The large, colorful pictures showing students enjoying the Francis-Marion experience resemble small posters.

A Semantic Analysis of the Francis-Marion Viewbook

All of the pictures are in color. There are seven sections in the Francis-Marion viewbook. African-Americans appear to be the only identifiable ethnic minority visually represented in the Francis-Marion viewbook. Pictures of African-Americans appear to be randomly placed throughout the entire viewbook. There are no sections dedicated to minority-specific information, so the pictures showing African-Americans seem to merely show their existence on the campus.

On page six, in the section, entitled It’s a Great Place to Live!, is a small picture, two and a half inches by three inches, featuring three muscular African-American males and a
female of color socializing in the university in-door swimming pool. The theme is recreational facilities, and the four pictures in the layout show students enjoying them. Two of the four pictures show African-American males. Page seven, which shares the layout with page six, features a large, twelve-inch by nine-inch picture, which covers the entire page. The picture shows an African-American male, wearing a red and white casual shirt, blue jeans, and a cap, posing on a weight set (see Appendix B). These pictures show the existence of African-Americans, especially males, on Francis-Marion's campus.

On the next page and section, entitled *Everyone Here is a Patriot*, school support through athletics seems to be the theme. In this section, the large picture which covers the entire page eight shows six male basketball players from Francis-Marion playing against another team. All but one of the basketball players are African-American. Two of the African-American men wear (Francis-Marion) Patriots uniforms, while the other three wear Hornets uniforms. So far, the viewbook shows many African-American males who appear athletically inclined – the first are muscular (athletic-looking) and are in a pool, another is on a weight bench, and the next males are shown playing basketball.

The theme for the following section, entitled *If You Choose Francis-Marion We'll Help You All We Can*, is financial assistance. On this page are two pictures featuring minority students. The smaller picture, two and a half inches by one and a half inches, shows two African-American females – one in front of a computer, and the other off in the background. The picture is a head shot, so their clothing is barely visible. The larger picture, three inches by four and a half inches, shows an African-American male wearing a casual shirt and jeans, talking with a white female who, judging from the title of the
section, may be a financial aid counselor. The financial aid counselor appears to be the dominant figure in the picture. The latter of the pictures appears to be posed (due to the fact that financial aid counseling sessions are private and cameras normally would not be allowed in the room). Finally, an African-American male is not associated with athletics, but is in the financial aid office. Perhaps these pictures suggest just what the title implies – if you choose Francis-Marion, we’ll help you financially all we can.

The last section showing pictures of African-American students is entitled, *The Focus Is On Learning*, and hence the theme – learning, education, academic growth, etc. The larger picture on this page, three inches by four and a half inches, shows two African-Americans, one male and one female, talking while looking at a book. The female is wearing glasses and a white shirt. The male is wearing glasses and a shirt and tie. This picture shows a more intellectual looking African-Americans.

*A Pragmatic Analysis of the Francis-Marion Viewbook*

Francis-Marion is a small, state-supported university located in Florence, SC. The student population at Francis-Marion is approximately 4,000. Twenty-three percent are African-Americans. Francis-Marion is a newly established institution of twenty-five years. Because they are only twenty-five years old, they don’t have the long record of accomplishments like older institutions, so they emphasize their low costs, new facilities, individual attention, and great location (an hour away from the beach). The audience for the viewbook appears to be prospective students, in South Carolina, for whom financial
support is important, and/or prospective students whose priorities do not hinge on academics.

By showing African-Americans, Francis-Marion may have intended to show a diverse campus environment. However, all but one of the pictures featuring African-American students showed African-Americans interacting only with other African-Americans. The only picture where an African-American is shown interacting with someone besides another African-American is in the section, entitled If You Choose Francis-Marion, We'll Help You All We Can, where an African-American male is shown with the financial-aid counselor, who is a white female. Also, most of the African-American males shown appear to be athletic. Perhaps this is an accurate portrayal, although unintentional, of the Francis-Marion college community: African-American males, who are athletes, make up the largest number of minority students and do not interact on a regular basis with students of the dominant culture.

Grinnell College

The recruitment package for Grinnell College includes a viewbook, entitled Grinnell Viewbook, 1996: Celebrating 150 Years.

A Syntactic Analysis of the Grinnell Viewbook

The Grinnell College viewbook, which measures eight inches by eleven inches, contains general information about academics, extra-curricular activities, and the Grinnell, Iowa community. The viewbook has sixty-two pictures, with eight featuring
African-American students. Because the pictures featuring the minority students are not arranged and condensed into a minority, information-specific document, they are located locally in the general viewbook. Overall, the viewbook portrays a serious, academic environment where students can advance academically, professionally, and socially. The subtitle, *Celebrating 150 Years*, sets the tone for the contents inside, signifying Grinnell's prestigious reputation.

**A Semantic Analysis of the Grinnell College Viewbook**

With the exception of twelve black and white pictures showing people and occurrences of Grinnell College's past, all of the pictures are in color. The first picture showing African-American students covers an entire page in the section, entitled *A Tradition of Innovation*. The theme seems to be Grinnell and its students. The picture shows an African-American female wearing a Grinnell sweatshirt and jeans talking with two white females. The picture also shows an African-American male wearing a Grinnell T-shirt and jeans walking several feet behind the group of females. However, the buildings, not the students, seem to be the dominant figure, and thus the focus of the picture.

The next pictures featuring minority students are found seven pages later, in a section, entitled *The Curriculum*. The theme focuses on the advantages of a liberal education. Page nine of this section displays two pictures featuring African-American students. The first picture, which measures three and a half inches by seven and a half inches, shows an African-American female wearing a hat, T-shirt, and pants, talking to a
middle-aged white male (see Appendix C). The caption identifies him as the Chairman of the Faculty and Professor of Classics, offering academic advising assistance. The second picture, which measures three and a half inches by five inches, shows an African-American female, wearing a sweater and skirt, assisting a white female with media preparation (see Appendix D). The caption identifies the facility as the Audio Visual Center. Although these pictures show African-American students interacting with others, the captions for each of the pictures take the focus off of them and tell what should be interpreted. The caption for the first picture indicates that the professor is the dominant figure. The caption for the second picture takes the focus off of the figures and places it on the facilities. Therefore, Grinnell does not appear to rely solely on the faces of students to attract other students, but places these faces within the environment of the larger college community in hopes of appealing to their audience.

The next section which features a minority student is entitled Planning Your Education. The theme appears to be what the section heading implies – planning your education. On the second page of this section is a picture showing an African-American male wearing a button-down shirt seated in a classroom with white students, where a middle-aged white male stands holding a book. The caption identifies the white male as Professor Emeritus of Philosophy and Religious Studies. He is leading a tutorial session. The picture, which measures three and a half inches by five inches, is one among two smaller pictures on the page. Although an African-American male is pictured here, the caption and the focus of the camera seem to indicate that the professor is the dominant
figure. The picture and text indicate that students can receive individual attention in addition to their regular class sessions.

Two pages following is the section, entitled *Programs of Study*. The first page of this section, whose theme is major fields of study, displays horizontally, three, one and a half square-inch pictures. The last picture shows an African-American female wearing a shirt and blazer, sharing a microscope with a white female in a classroom setting. There is no caption for this picture. This picture suggests integration in the classrooms.

The next section, entitled *Beyond the Curriculum*, displays a three-inch square picture featuring an African-American student. On the third page of this section, whose theme is life beyond the classroom, is a picture and text encased in a black line border, sectioned off from the normal flow of text (see Appendix E). The picture shows an African-American male posing in a shirt and cardigan. Directly below the picture is his name and text which begins

...’97 transferred to Grinnell because he wanted to be surrounded by students like him. This is a compliment to the Grinnell student body when one considers [his] accomplishments. He has: ... (27)

The rest of the text describes his accomplishments before and during his study at Grinnell College, including “Student Leader of the Year in Chicago.” Also, he pioneered a mentoring program to help young African-American men. This sidebar further lists his involvement in student life as the vice-spokesperson for Concerned Black Students, and a member of the Young, Gifted, and Black Gospel Choir. Finally, there is a quote from the young man, which reads
it's amazing, particularly for an organization of its size. I've been in black student unions since high school, and this has been the best one. Not only does everybody have a vision, everybody is willing to make it happen. (27)

The picture shows an African-American intellectual-looking male who, as indicated by the text, appears to be very well accomplished. To state that he attended Grinnell because he wanted to be around students like himself, and then list a number of outstanding achievements, indicates that he may be the typical African-American student.

Under the same section, but on the following page is a picture showing an African-American female wearing an overcoat, gloves and earmuffs, carrying a book-bag, and looking through a folder. The caption reads “a stroll through North Campus on the way to class” (28). Again, the picture shows the existence of African-Americans on the campus, while the caption takes the focus off the female and places it on the atmosphere.

Four pages over, in the same section, is another sidebar featuring an African-American female. The picture, which measures three inches square, shows her posing in her cap and gown. Below her picture is her name and text describing her and her experiences at Grinnell College. One paragraph reads

"People at Grinnell are excited about learning," she says. In addition to academics, [she] felt welcomed by the friendliness of the student body. She was pleased to find a supportive, close-knit community of fellow African-American students who, though themselves containing quite a wide diversity of experience, were nonetheless able to relate and share the experience of being part of a minority population. (32)
The picture shows that African-Americans can graduate from Grinnell College.

Overall, the Grinnell viewbook seems to employ various representational strategies. First, by identifying Grinnell facilities and services through captioning, they seem to rely less on the representations of the students to attract other students. Then, by featuring certain students in sidebars, Grinnell relies directly on the students and their interests to attract students with similar interests. When the two African-American students were featured in sidebars, Grinnell recognized so-called African-American concerns and interests.

**A Pragmatic Analysis of the Grinnell College Viewbook**

Grinnell College is a private, coeducational, residential, liberal arts and sciences institution located on a campus near the center of Grinnell, Iowa. The student population for Grinnell is approximately 1,260. Thirteen percent are minority students. More specifically, four percent are Latino, four percent are Asian-American, one percent are Native-American, and five percent are African-American. Grinnell stresses "individualism, social commitment, and intellectual self-reliance." They aim to "produce individuals who continue the process of learning, caring, valuing, and questioning" *(Grinnell Viewbook: Celebrating 150 Years 5).*

The audience for the Grinnell viewbook appears to be prospective students who are intellectually and academically mature. In other words, their African-American students seem to be primarily interested in academics. Although Grinnell indicates that there is an
African-American population, they seem to share a common identity – serious-minded intellectual.

Iowa State University

The recruitment package for Iowa State University includes a viewbook, entitled *Iowa State University, It Works*; a newsletter, entitled *Hispanic Students at Iowa State University*; a booklet, entitled *Iowa State University Minority Student Affairs: Helping You Feel At Home*; and three brochures, entitled *ISU: We're All In This Together, Iowa State University: African American Studies Programs (College of Liberal Arts and Studies)*, and *Iowa State University: Graduate Study...It Works for You*. Although the viewbook contains general information about academics, extracurricular activities, and geography, the remaining documents contain minority-specific information.

**A Syntactic Analysis of the Iowa State University Viewbook**

As previously noted, Iowa State University’s viewbook, entitled *Iowa State University, It Works*, contains general information. Overall, Iowa State portrays a technology-oriented school in a bucolic environment. They do so by showing pictures of students using modern facilities in the classroom and outdoors. Measuring eight-inches by eleven-inches, it is divided into two sections. The first section contains colorful, glossy pages, with pictures and text illustrating general information about academics, leadership, and sports. The second section is made up of textured pages, with black and white pictures, smaller text, and dark green headings. This section goes into a little more detail
about financial assistance, major fields of study, and visits to the university. Out of twenty-two pictures in the viewbook, five pictures feature African-American students. Therefore, the pictures are located locally in the general viewbook. However, it is important to note that brochures containing minority-specific information accompany the viewbook.

A Semantic Analysis of the Iowa State University Viewbook

The cover of the viewbook shows a picture of three people socializing on the steps of a university building (see Appendix F). At the center of one picture of a white female and another female whose back is turned is an African-American male, wearing a suit and tie and glasses. The way he is standing, leaning on his left knee with his foot propped up on one step, adds to his intellectual look. He looks as though he may be a graduate student or a faculty member. This picture shows that Iowa State has a warm, friendly, integrated environment.

The next picture featuring an African-American is displayed on page six, in the section entitled It Teaches. The theme is academics. The picture, which measures one and a half inches by two inches, shows a head shot of an African-American male wearing glasses, which make him look very intellectual. Beside the picture is a subheading which reads “An Iowa State Day,” and text which describes a typical day at Iowa State University. The picture shows that an African-American population exists at Iowa State.

The theme of the following section, entitled It Plays, is sports. A large picture, measuring seven and a half inches by six inches, is displayed at the beginning of this
section. The picture shows the university football team engaged in a game. Two African-American males wearing football gear are shown with other team members. However, they are not dominant figures in the picture. The picture seems to focus on the team in general.

The last color picture featuring an African-American is in the section entitled *It Believes*. The theme is caring. A very large picture, measuring nine inches by seven inches, begins this section. This picture shows a middle-age white male, who appears to be an authoritative figure, socializing with three students. One of the students is an African-American male wearing a bright red jacket and black slacks, and carrying a duffel bag. Although the white male is at the center of the picture and appears to be the dominant figure, the bright red colored jacket draws attention to the African-American male. To the right of this picture is a block of text, which consists of a question and answer pertaining to the welfare of African-American students at Iowa State University. It reads

“I’m African-American – am I going to feel at home?”

In two big ways: As a member of the whole Iowa State community and as a member of the minority student community. And the Black Cultural Center provides a “home away from home” where you can celebrate your heritage.

The picture integrated with the text show that Iowa State cares about the welfare of its African-American students.

The second major section, entitled *Iowa State University: How It Works*, has nine subsections. They are listed as *Advising, Enjoying, Financing, Exploring, Challenging,*
Visiting, Applying, Majoring, and Scanning. The picture featuring an African-American is found in the section entitled Exploring, whose theme is the major areas of study. The one and a half-inch by two-inch black and white picture shows an African-American female wearing a blouse and slacks, looking at a bus schedule. This picture appears only to show the existence of African-American females on campus.

Iowa State University shows only a few African-Americans (with the exception of one, all are males) in their general viewbook. The African-American males are shown in the glossy, colorful section of the book, while the picture of the African-American female is in the last section. Also, with the exception of the football picture, the representations of the males seem to identify them as intellectuals, who fit nicely into the college community of Iowa State.

**A Pragmatic Analysis of the Iowa State University Viewbook**

Iowa State University is a large, state-supported institution located in Ames, Iowa, thirty-five miles north of Des Moines, the capital city and urban center of the state. It has a student population of approximately 25,000. Three percent are African-American. According to its mission statement, Iowa State University takes pride in being one of the first land-grant institutions in the United States. Their philosophy is defined by four qualities:

- access regardless of race, creed, gender, or economic background; the marriage of practical and liberal education; emphasis on both applied and basic research; and
service to the people of the state through the delivery of knowledge that improves the quality of life. (Iowa State University Bulletin: General Catalog 1995-97 4)

The target audience for the viewbook seems to be prospective students, perhaps from a farm or small town environment, who are more interested in a practical education than a liberal education. The viewbook basically shows the existence of an African-American population. However, it shows primarily one type of African-American – the intellectual – and does not show African-Americans interacting with one another. For example, the viewbook mentions the Black Cultural Center as being a home away from home but does not show it. The recruitment package, with its minority brochures, as a whole is targeted toward prospective minority students, African-Americans in particular. But because the viewbook is included in the minority package, prospective students may be able to gain a more holistic view of the University.

South Carolina State University

The recruitment package for South Carolina State University consists of a viewbook entitled For You. For Your Future. South Carolina State University, 1896.

A Syntactic Analysis of the South Carolina State University Viewbook

The South Carolina State University viewbook contains general information about what the university has to offer its students. They seem to portray an informal, family-like environment where students can grow academically, socially and professionally. They do so by displaying large colorful action pictures showing students and faculty interacting
and engaging in numerous activities. In addition to this, many of the pages dedicate a column or small section to feature alumni who have since succeeded in some way. South Carolina State University also suggests an ideal geographic location and climate by using palm tree watermarks on many of the pages. There are no separate documents with minority-specific information; thus all the pictures are displayed locally. The viewbook contains twenty-six colorful pictures. All of the pictures feature African-American students.

A Semantic Analysis of the South Carolina State University Viewbook

Because there are twenty-six pictures, all showing African-American students, I will analyze only four pictures. These four pictures are typical of the twenty-six in the viewbook. The cover displays a six and a half-inch by six-inch, color picture of eight students casually posing in a group (see Appendix G). Pictured is one white male, four African-American females, and three African-American males. It appears to be a very sunny day. Although most of the figures pictured are African-American, they appear by their clothing to be very different from one another. For example, one conservative-looking female is wearing a button-down shirt and slacks. Another female is wearing sweatpants and a sweatshirt with a T-shirt hanging underneath. She looks more casual. This picture shows that South Carolina State has a warm and friendly environment where everyone is welcome.

The theme for pictures in the section, entitled Navigating the Information Superhighway to the Global Village, seems to be advancement in technology. The large
six-inch by five-inch picture shows two African-American students, one male and one female, working in what appears to be an engineering laboratory. The male, who is the dominant figure in the picture, is wearing a shirt, tie, suspenders, and slacks, and appears to be well-groomed. He is working in front of a computer and observing an electronic arm. The female in the background is also well-dressed and working in front of a computer. This picture shows that students are involved in the advancement of technology.

The theme for pictures in the section, entitled Shaping the Total Student, seems to be student involvement. A small four-inch by three and a half-inch picture shows three African-American students, one male and two females bowling (see Appendix H). They are casually dressed wearing T-shirts and shorts. They appear to be enjoying themselves. This picture shows that students can, in addition to studying, pursue other interests.

The theme for pictures in the section, entitled A Tradition of Winning, is the school’s athletic programs and achievements. Like many others, this section includes a column featuring an alumnus who attributes his success to having attended South Carolina State University. The picture measures two and a half inches square. The picture shows an African-American male wearing a suit and tie. He looks professional. The text below identifies him as a 1992 graduate and professional golfer who has played with the Jordan Tour, The Nike Tour, and The Hurricane Tour. His quote reads:

As a native of Orangeburg, I have been influenced by the school’s academics, culture and sports events all my life. Receiving a full athletic scholarship was the deciding factor in choosing STATE. When I started leaning toward a professional
career in golf, my STATE family, especially my instructors, were extremely motivating. This network of support still inspires me today. (For You. For Your Future. South Carolina State University, 1896)

This picture integrated with the text highlights the achievements of South Carolina State students. Fewer African-Americans have excelled at golfing than other sports like football and basketball. This picture shows someone who has deviated from the stereotype of the African-American athlete.

The last picture in the viewbook is on the inside back cover. The picture consumes the whole page. It shows two African-American students, one male and one female, wearing caps and gowns. As they smile, the young man is throwing his cap into the air and the young lady is extending her hands in the air. They are outside in front of a statue of a bulldog, the mascot. They appear to be rejoicing because they are graduating. This picture shows that students graduate from South Carolina State University.

A Pragmatic Analysis of the South Carolina State University Viewbook

South Carolina State is a historically black, state-supported institution located in Orangeburg, SC, halfway between Columbia, the state’s capital and Charleston, the region’s most historic city. The student population is approximately 5,000. As a part of their mission, South Carolina State University is committed to providing students “valuable classroom experiences, career awareness, cooperative education opportunities, a realm of campus activities, and services which realize the importance of developing your collegiate life” (For You. For Your Future. South Carolina State University, 1896).
The audience for the viewbook appears to be prospective African-American students with various interests. South Carolina State University felt it necessary to profile successful alumni who attribute their accomplishments to having attended the University. Perhaps, because they must compete with large, predominantly white institutions and other prestigious, historically black institutions, they felt it necessary to feature alumni in order to boost the University’s image.

**Williams College**

The recruitment package for Williams College contains two eight-inch by eleven-inch viewbooks entitled *College Prospectus and Application 1995-96, Williams* and *Williams*.

**A Syntactic Analysis of the Williams College Viewbooks**

The general viewbook, which consists of over fifty pages, is entitled *College Prospectus and Application 1995-96, Williams*. It contains an application and general information on the school’s history, academics, and campus life. Also at the beginning of each section is a fourth of a page statistically profiling the school’s and its alumni’s achievements. For example, “Books published by Williams alumni in 1994 52,” and Moving beyond the traditional dimensions of international studies, Williams is developing a Global Studies Program that emphasizes the integration of scientific and technological literacy into discussions of world-scale problems. Since the initial research funding in 1993, a team-taught course has been developed,
followed by a program of multidisciplinary electives examining assumptions that inhabit global action. A Winter Study course, Global Climate Change, involves hands-on computer simulations and debate on international policies. (*Williams: College Perspective and Application* 21)

This viewbook has thirty-six pictures; two show African-American students. All of the pictures show students heavily engaged in activities at Williams, indicating that it offers its students the best courses and facilities.

The other viewbook, entitled *Williams*, is only five pages and contains minority-specific information. All six pictures in the viewbook show minority students, of which five show African-Americans. In this viewbook, Williams portrays a diverse campus with representatives of various ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. To do so, they picture minority students interacting on the campus.

*A Semantic Analysis of the Williams College Viewbooks*

The cover of the general viewbook displays a five and a half-inch by eight-inch black and white picture. The picture shows three students: one white female, one male of an ethnicity I can not determine (perhaps African-American), and a Latino female (see Appendix I). The male is wearing a button-down shirt and jeans and is leaning on a bicycle. The white female is wearing a blouse and slacks. The Latino female is wearing a denim jacket and a skirt. They are all smiling and socializing with one another. These students look preppy. This picture shows the typical student at Williams College and also suggests that the campus is integrated and friendly.
The next picture showing an African-American is on page twenty-two, in the section entitled *The Curriculum*. This five and a half-inch by two and a half-inch picture shows an African-American female studying with an Asian or Asian-American female. The African-American is wearing a turtle-neck, a blazer, slacks, glasses and pearls. Her hair styled back in a bun adds to her conservative look. The Asian-American is wearing a denim shirt and jeans. This picture shows an integrated, intense study environment. The caption beside the picture reads, “Upperclassmen may take some course as Oxford-style tutorials, presenting and defending ideas in weekly meetings with a faculty tutor and a fellow student” *(Williams: College Perspective and Application 22)*.

The second picture showing African-Americans is on page thirty in the section entitled *Outcomes*. The four-inch by five-inch picture shows two African-American males wearing suits and ties, and glasses, socializing in front of a building (perhaps located in a business district). The two men look accomplished and conservative. The caption beside the picture reads, “Public service is central to Mike Reed, Class of 1975. He’s Washington, DC, head of Inroads, a nonprofit internship program for minority students” *(Williams: College Perspective and Application 30)*.

The cover of the minority viewbook shows a black and white, eight-inch by eleven-inch picture of seven students from various ethnic backgrounds singing together. Off to the side, also singing, is a small group of children from different ethnic backgrounds. Also, there is a column attached to the cover that lists the number of students, minority students, students’ religious backgrounds, bilingual students, faculty members of color,
faculty who are women, etc. In the minority viewbook, Williams suggests that the campus is diverse.

The first page of the minority viewbook features two color pictures showing minority students interacting with one another. The first picture located at the top of the page is three inches by four inches and shows a distant shot of five minority student laughing with one another. It appears that at least two are Asian-American and two are African-American. They are all dressed casually. The second picture near the bottom of the page measures six and a half inches by two and a half inches. The picture shows an African-American female wearing glasses and talking to three other students who appear to be international students (perhaps Indian) (see Appendix J). These pictures show that Williams has a multicultural environment.

The second page has two pictures as well. The first picture at the top of the page measures six and a half inches by two and a half inches and shows two African-Americans, one female and one male, who appear to be faculty, leaning on a desk. The female is wearing a blouse and a skirt. The male is wearing a shirt, tie and slacks and glasses. They both look conservative and professional. This picture emphasizes that Williams has African-American faculty members. The second picture, which measures three inches by four inches, shows three minority students talking by a van. One is an Asian-American female wearing a T-shirt. Another is an African-American male wearing a cap, flannel shirt, and jeans. The other is a male who has his back turned. This picture shows minority students interacting outside of academics.
A Pragmatic Analysis of the Williams College Viewbooks

Williams College is a private, coeducational, residential, liberal arts and sciences institution located in Williamstown, Massachusetts, which is in a three-hour drive from Boston, New Haven, and New York. The student population is 1,988. Minority students make up 25 percent of the institution’s student population. More specifically, there are approximately 34 African-Americans, 51 Asian-Americans, and 32 Latinos. Williams states that it seeks “creative, motivated, independent individuals who value a personal learning environment” (Williams: College Perspective and Application 43). Williams also emphasizes the development of a multicultural community.

The audience for the minority recruitment package is obviously minority students. But it appears that the book is addressing a more conservative or intellectual type of student. Because Williams includes the general viewbook with the minority viewbook, students can get a holistic view of the College. However, the books seem to contradict each other. The general viewbook shows only two pictures of African-American students who look very professional. Meanwhile, the minority viewbook shows only African-Americans in five of its six pictures who represent different types of students: intellectual, ethnic, preppy, casual, and athletic.

Winston-Salem State University

The recruitment package for Winston-Salem State University includes a catalog, entitled WSSU 1995-1996 Catalog, and a brochure for summer school registration. They do not have a viewbook. They seem to rely only on a catalog to convey their image. The
catalog has fifteen black and white pictures, one at the beginning of each major section. They show students involved in various aspects of the university such as academics, and extracurricular activities. Eight of those pictures displayed at the beginning of each section are condensed and shown on the front cover (see Appendix K). These pictures show mostly African-American students and a few white students interacting in class and on campus.

Winston-Salem State University is a historically black institution located in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The student population is 2,700. Approximately thirteen percent are white students. As a part of their mission, Winston-Salem State University “seeks to promote racial integration by recruiting and enrolling a larger number of white students” (WSSU 1995-1997 Catalog 1).

Winston-Salem State University may not have a viewbook for various reasons. As a small, state-supported, historically black institution, it may not have the resources for publishing such documents. Also, the University may be content with their student population and profile, and may not feel the need to use viewbooks to recruit. Furthermore, if the audience for the recruitment package is prospective students from the area, they would already be familiar with the environment.
CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The viewbooks analyzed illustrate the principles cultural studies workers have addressed. These institutions have used various strategies of representation in their viewbooks in order to appeal to prospective students. These strategies of representation are a reflection of the power system exercised by the dominant culture. As a result, the document designers of the viewbooks may have reacted to stereotypes of college scenes and to cultural identities consistent with how the dominant culture defines ethnicity. While Drake University, Iowa State University, and Williams College published documents containing minority- or African-American-specific information, perhaps to illustrate their investment in the social well-being of these students, they must have relied on existing generalizations of what minority concerns and interests include. In doing so, these institutions have inadvertently narrated the identities of minority students by defining them within the boundaries of the over-generalized representations in the viewbook. In the following discussion, I will refer to the questions posed in chapter two, and make inferences about the traditional strategies of representations and identity-formation.

Discussion

The hypothetical questions posed in chapter two center around the principles of representation and identity-formation addressed by cultural studies workers. The first set of questions deals with the representation of minority students.
Are the identities of minority students being defined and categorized? Through various strategies of representation in the viewbooks of predominantly white institutions (except Francis-Marion), the identities of minority students have been defined and categorized. Representational strategies such as organizing minority-specific information globally, away from the general information, dedicating a section to address the so-called concerns and issues of minorities, and selecting and picturing an “idealistic” minority student to exemplify students of his/her ethnicity reveal the standards by which the dominant culture defines subordinate cultures. Although perhaps unintentional, the recruitment packages of the predominantly white institutions (except Francis-Marion) represent minority students within political and ideological boundaries -- simplistically and one-dimensional -- and not as individual students who may share the interests and concerns of students from the dominant culture. On the contrary, the two historically black institutions did not adhere to such strategies to represent African-Americans, or white students, who are identified as the minority.

Are assumptions made in the viewbooks about the interests of minority students? In order to define and categorize the interests and concerns of minority students, assumptions must be made. When picturing minority students parallel with text that describes agendas outside that of the dominant culture, the institution has inadvertently generalized students by suppressing individual differences. Some institutions directly imply a distinction between interests of minority students and those of students of the dominant culture by associating minority students with their ethnic background. The assumptions made by predominantly white institutions are evident through their arranging
of pictures showing minority students parallel with text that read, "Take a look at some of
the courses that might interest you...", or "Minority students discover us in a variety of
ways." The former statement implies that this institution assumes that because of their
ethnic backgrounds, minority students will be interested in the ethnic-oriented courses
listed below the sentence. Moreover, the use of "you," in the former statement and "us,"
in the latter, marginalizes minority students and shows a distinct division between "you,"
the prospective minority student and "us," the predominantly white institution.

Are only pictures shown of minority students who appear to fit into an ethnic
stereotype? Pictures featuring students who fit ethnic stereotypes might show only
African-American students playing sports, Asian-American students operating in a lab,
and Latino students socializing. With the exception of Francis-Marion, none of the
institutions relied on conventional ethnic stereotypes to represent minority students. The
two historically black institutions showed various subjects to reveal individuality. The
predominantly white schools also refrained from relying on conventional ethnic
stereotypes; however, they seemed to have created a stereotype that directly contradicts
already existing ones, especially for African-American males: that of the conservative
intellectual. With the exception of Francis-Marion, where most of the African-American
males pictured were athletic-looking, the predominantly white institutions showed many
pictures of African-American males wearing suits, ties, button-down shirts, slacks,
blazers, and glasses. Although being typically identified as a conservative intellectual
might be a step up from "dumb jock," as I have already indicated, representational
strategies can be complicit with social control mechanisms associated with power and
authority. Perhaps identifying African-American males so differently from larger American stereotypes, which often associates them with violence, complies with an attempt to present one of the many traditional images of college life: safety. These institutions may show African-American males in the viewbook for recruitment purposes -- perhaps to increase African-American male enrollment -- but they are mostly shown as wholesome and benign, and thus safe. Showing African-American males in this nonthreatening manner may perhaps soothe the fears of parents who have reservations about these men.

On the contrary, Francis-Marion mostly showed African-American males in an athletic environment -- the pool, the weight room, and the basketball court. Furthermore, one picture showed three muscular, well-fit, African-American males with bare chests and swimming trunks. I must admit, I was surprised to see such a display of masculinity when the other predominantly white institutions opted to represent a more intellectual image. However, Francis-Marion is the only institution that did not visually represent an integrated campus community. Thus, although they showed many African-American male "jocks," unless engaged in a game with white team members, they were shown only with other African-Americans.

Are only pictures shown of minority students who appear to fit the larger American ideology of what a college student should look like, excluding individual expression? As mentioned above, the historically black institutions showed various subjects to reveal an individually diverse campus. For the most part, the predominantly white institutions showed minority students who seemed to fit the larger American ideology of what a
college student should look like. Their viewbooks mostly showed minority students who fit into the following identities: academically-mature, serious, intellectual, and rigid.

Deviating from this pattern is Drake University, who in their minority-specific viewbook pictured two African-American males wearing the “hip-hop” look -- baseball caps (one’s cap is turned backwards), oversized shirts, oversized jeans and sweatpants that hang over their sneakers. In the larger American culture, these subjects might be identified as gang members or gangster rappers, which of course does not fit the larger American ideology of what a college student should look like. Therefore Drake has included individual identity. However, unlike some pictures that were featured in both the minority-specific viewbook and Drake’s general viewbook (which is sent to non-minority students), the picture showing the gangster-looking African-American males was located only in the minority-specific viewbook. Perhaps Drake felt that these two African-American males might be seen as threatening by students from the dominant culture.

The final set of questions address ethical and political issues with respect to social justice.

Is the minority population indicated through the viewbook a true representation? The general viewbooks indicate the minority population at these institutions. For example, South Carolina State’s viewbook showing only two white students corresponds with the two percent of white students that attend the university. Although the general viewbooks of the predominantly white institutions show somewhat close representations of their minority populations, minority-specific recruitment packages as a whole do not. For example, prospective African-American male students expressing interests in Drake
University will not receive the general viewbook showing only one picture of an African-American male (shown in black and white and placed in the back of the book), but they will receive the minority specific viewbook showing many pictures of African-American males. Perhaps this representational strategy was influenced by the “safety” image of the institution, previously described.

When portraying integration, do viewbooks give an accurate account? Although difficult to assess the degree of integration, these viewbooks show that institutions feel obligated to portray an integrated campus environment. Because I have not attended all of these universities, I cannot draw accurate conclusions about how students from various ethnic backgrounds socialize. However, I have noted some contradictions in the representations that indicate that some campuses are not as socially integrated as they illustrate. Organizing minority students into categories and defining their interests within the perimeters of social groups, such as “Black Student Alliance,” “The Gospel Choir,” and “La Fuerva Latina,” hint at a somewhat segregated environment. For example, Iowa State University firmly identifies the Black Cultural Center (BCC) as a retreat for African-American students, a home away from home. However, they don’t show African-American students assembled in the BCC. Instead, they show African-Americans only interacting with white students. I happen to know that African-American students, on the Iowa State University campus, do not interact solely with white students.

On the contrary, Francis-Marion showed African-Americans socially interacting only with African-Americans. My experiences living in the South lead me to believe that this display of segregation may be an accurate one. Francis-Marion, unlike the other
predominantly white institutions, did not feel obligated to portray social harmony among African-American and white students (by having them pose together for a picture). This failure to show an integrated campus may stem from the outgrowth of historical race relations in the South. Showing African-Americans segregated from white students may also soothe the fears of white parents who have reservations about African-Americans.

How do these institutions construct themselves? Is it ethical? Overall, these institutions construct themselves within the confines of the larger American culture. Represented through these viewbooks are images of an atmosphere conducive to academic and personal growth, career preparation, and safety for students. However, when representing members of subordinate cultures, the minority-specific recruitment packages attempt to portray a utopian college community. Of course, the mere purpose of the viewbook -- publicity and recruitment -- permits it only to convey positive images and interactions of students. However, Ruth Sidel, a speaker on social policy, might question the degree to which these representations are constructed, noting that they may mask actual discrimination and neglect. I am not suggesting that predominantly white institutions portray the struggles of their minority students, but a socially just and ethical representation would give a fair picture of the numbers and identities of minority students attending the institution.

Do these viewbooks provide models for their readers? Researchers in cultural studies have indicated that identities are constructed and reconstructed within and in relation to representation. Through the various representational strategies described, document designers of these viewbooks may have created the reader in the interests of the larger
institution’s desired characteristics or image. Predominantly white institutions -- whether small, large, private, state-supported, or liberal arts -- for whatever purposes -- recruit minority students or simply illustrate a desired image of the institution -- show somewhat distorted, constructed identities of minority students. Perhaps, such distortion occurs because the representational strategies used in the recruitment packages are defined by the dominant culture and are not appropriate for representing subordinate cultures.

Researchers in cultural studies note that one of the dangers of constructing representations is identity-formation. Because representational strategies are often set by the dominant culture, the danger of essentializing subordinate cultures exists. For example, through defining and categorizing minority students, false identities and stereotypes may erupt. Contrary to the predominantly white institutions, the historically black institutions show a more realistic representation, perhaps because they are more familiar and comfortable with African-American students.

Conclusions

The analysis of the recruitment packages, the viewbooks in particular, reveals the degree to which document designers rely on visual representation to convey a message. Although authorized as objective representations, these pictures are representative of the authority in today’s culture, and thus are reflective of the attitudes and beliefs about minorities. However, the ideology behind traditional strategies of representation is so implicit that it does not appear as a choice, but exists as a cultural context that exerts pressure on how choices are made. Therefore, writers, illustrators, and designers perhaps
should be more aware that the visual choices they make reveal conscious and unconscious attitudes about subordinate cultures.
Displayed in the Drake University minority viewbook, *Your Multicultural Opportunities at Drake University*, this picture, along with its caption, denotes minority student involvement at Drake.

"Drake is special in that a lot of people develop bonds right away. Friends at Drake treat each other like family — but the family members have many different backgrounds. I've learned a lot from my friends in organizations, too. I've developed a sense of responsibility ... and I've stopped procrastinating."
Displayed in the Francis-Marion University viewbook, *Francis-Marion University*, this picture shows students utilizing the facilities at the university. The dominant figure is the African-American male, who is sitting on a work-out bench.
Displayed in the Grinnell College viewbook, *Grinnell Viewbook, 1996: Celebrating 150 Years*, this picture, along with its caption, illustrates the services available at Grinnell while showing the existence of an African-American population.
Displayed in the Grinnell College viewbook, *Grinnell Viewbook, 1996: Celebrating 150 Years*, this picture, along with its caption, illustrate the services available at Grinnell while showing the existence of an African-American population.
Displayed in the Grinnell College viewbook, *Grinnell Viewbook, 1996: Celebrating 150 Years*, this picture, along with text and quotes from the subject, illustrate an intellectual African-American male at Grinnell University.
Displayed on the cover of the Iowa State University viewbook, *Iowa State University, It Works*, this picture denotes an integrated campus environment, with an intellectual African-American male socializing with two females – one is white and the other is of color.
Displayed on the cover of the South Carolina State University viewbook, *For You. For Your Future. South Carolina State University, 1896*, this picture illustrates individual expression of South Carolina State students.
Displayed in the South Carolina State University viewbook, *For You. For Your Future. South Carolina State University, 1896*, this picture shows South Carolina State Students in a leisure environment, illustrating that students can pursue interests beyond academics.
Displayed on the cover of the Williams College general viewbook, *College Prospectus and Application, Williams*, this picture shows a friendly and integrated campus environment.
Displayed in the Williams College minority viewbook, *Williams*, this picture shows that Williams has a multicultural environment.
Displayed on the cover of the Winston-Salem State University catalog, *WSSU 1995-1996 Catalog*, this picture shows students involved in different aspects of the university.
REFERENCES CITED


Drake University. *Your Multicultural Opportunities at Drake University*. Des Moines, Iowa.


Iowa State University. *Iowa State University: It Works.* Ames, Iowa, 1996.


South Carolina State University. *For You. For Your Future. South Carolina State University, 1896*. Orangeburg, South Carolina, 1996.


Williams, Thomas R. "What’s So Different About Visuals?” *Technical Communication* 40.4 (1993)
