MPC MAJOR RESEARCH PAPER

Intersections Between Visual Design and Representation:
An Evaluative Study of the Ethical Dilemmas in the Production of HIV/AIDS Advocacy
Advertisements

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Abstract

HIV/AIDS advocacy advertisements often use constructions of specific cultural groups to communicate the need for immediate action to prevent the spread of the virus. This study examines how graphic design strategies such as the use and juxtaposition of colour, photography, typography and vectors create representations of cultural identities. A selection of documents collected from The AIDS Committee of Toronto, International AIDS Day 2009 and The Stephen Lewis Foundation were the sites of the analysis. Drawing from theories of cultural studies and philosophy, this research project examined the semiotic strategies of the documents to develop a set of ethical best practices for visual design. Issues including the representation of cultural groups through victimage, as well as the pace at which an audience is presented information, were key in understanding ethical challenges the visual design of these documents present. The following set of best practices were developed to account for the emerging conventions and moral dilemmas identified in the study: i) Recognizing the harm of victimizing groups, ii) Developing visual representations that avoid negatively stereotyping groups, and iii) Accurately explaining HIV/AIDS issues and its prevention rather than relying on narratives.

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Dedication

To the EAA, having worked with you all shaped my interest in this research.
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Introduction

  Advocacy communication has the capacity to create meaning systems, which assist in giving a voice, or means of representation to disenfranchised cultural groups. However, techniques employed by visual communication producers sometimes depict specific, and at times misleading constructions of these groups. Graphic design elements such as the use of colour, photography, typography and vectors highlight cultural, gender and class roles, and as a result can create misleading or biased representations. Although the use of aesthetics in communication plays an important role in creating effective and widely received messages, the role of how graphic elements are used to create meaning within a message is in need of further analysis.

  This Major Research Project (MRP) will explore, in a broad sense, the relationship between the practice of ethical communication, and the role of graphic design as a rhetorical mechanism. The purpose of this project is to attempt to develop an understanding of how graphic elements such as photography, typography, colour and vector are used to design advertisements for Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) awareness campaigns. Mapping this field of research is both beneficial and pertinent to the study of professional communication because it seeks to examine the contemporary practice of visual design's effect and role in advocacy communication. In doing so, the goal of the research is to explore how the representation of specific cultural groups is created by the composition of an advertisement's visual rhetoric. Documents which include depictions of ethnic minority groups, as well as people who identify as part of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered and Queer community (GLBTQ) will constitute some of the source materials. A focus on the specific role of

visual design in advocacy communication will contribute a new set of best practices to a body of established ethical guidelines.

As international and local community organizations develop advertising campaigns that demonstrate messages of HIV/AIDS awareness and advocacy, they often do so by representing specific cultural groups. A secondary goal of this MRP is to highlight how these groups come to be represented, and to better understand what cultural values are being conveyed as a result. The timing of the research is important because it is situated in between two International AIDS Conferences, the previous which took place in July 2010, in Vienna, Austria and the next in July 2012, in Washington, D.C, U.S.A. A plethora of Canadian organizations have and will continue to attend the International AIDS Conference, releasing advocacy material throughout their attendance. Having this study complete with an analysis of professionally produced documents, could be beneficial to the production of future communication campaigns by Canadian HIV/ AIDS awareness advocacy organizations.

Context

Although a body of ethical codes exists within the field of professional communication, as well as in advertising, there is little scholarly inquiry conducted which relates HIV/AIDS advocacy communication and the representation of class, gender and culture within the context of professional communication practices. For this reason, I have examined advocacy material from three organizations with vastly different audiences. The first site selected is the AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT), who predominantly develops outreach campaigns for the GLBTQ community of Toronto. The second site of document collection includes selected pieces from the 2009 advocacy campaign 'AIDS is a Mass Murderer', which had international dissemination as

it was used as a precursor to World AIDS Day that year. The third site is the Stephen Lewis

Foundation, which is an international organization, dedicated to advocating on behalf of those

living with HIV/AIDS. All three organizations cater to different audience demographics, and

employ varying arrays of visual design techniques. In selecting advocacy material from these

organizations, I will be afforded the opportunity to examine a robust sample of documents to

compare and contrast as part of my proposed analysis.

Section 1.1 Literature Review – Ethics in Visual Communication Practices

From the perspective of applied ethics, it is important to understand the production of

messages, and the intent behind their conception. Schroeder and Borgerson (2005) address visual

representation from a framework of ethical analysis. Their article focuses particular attention on

the link between ethics and ontology, stating that they are both "concern[ed with] how visual

markers such as skin color, embodiment, and gendered attributes represent or determine the

status of human beings, particularly in the context of racism and sexism" (p.583) Schroeder and

Borgerson's ideas on the ethical foundation of marketing examine and question the use of visual

design strategies and how they create particular means of representation. By encompassing

issues of representation and ethics into their inquiry, Schroeder and Borgerson question the

power relationship between the message and the audience. They state that, "Marketing

representations have the power to make us believe that we know something we have no

experience of and to influence the experiences we have in the future" (p.584).

Shifting focus away from the ethical implications of the documents themselves, and onto

the role of the designer, Shaver (2003) defines how ethics can be applied to visual

communication production by categorizing ethical analysis into two distinct schools of thought.

He distinguishes these categories in order to evaluate how moral responsibility can be examined. The first category is Philosophical Ethical Codes, and the second is Professional Ethical Codes. Shaver's focus on the institution of advertising as a case study allows for practical examples of how these two codes can be separate, and distinct from one another, while also showcasing their reliance on each other. The distinction between these categories is outlined, when Shaver argues that, "Professional or occupational ethics [focus on] the best interests of the group maintaining the group's relationship with society and engendering social trust in the group's benevolent behavior so society does not resort to harsher remedies to protect itself" (p.292). Contrastingly, Personal, or Philosophical Ethics as they are often referred to are predominantly concerned with the idea of the individual as a moral actor, one who is consistent in acting out ideas or making decisions based on their own value system (Shaver 2003). The importance of this distinction is that it explains which ethical values are relevant depending what is being examined. For instance, Personal Ethics can be used to govern an individual within a particular group when they are faced with a moral dilemma (a designer's artistic choices or creative interpretation). Personal or Philosophical Ethics identifies the individual as an actor, capable of making decisions based on their situation. Professional/Occupational Ethics, however, have the task of exploring how an institution influences the role of the designer, and ultimately what they release into society. By categorizing how they are used, Shaver operationalizes professional ethics in a manner that demonstrates how ethical practices within an organization can be situational, and also reliant on the role of the actor (or producer). By revealing the potential for moral dilemmas a designer may face, one can argue the use of ethical practice and ethical guidelines should not only be applied

to the finished product, but also established as part of how a producer is instructed to conduct their work.

Providing a perspective from the area of information design, Ward (2009) examines the role of visual communication ethics in an analysis of technical communication used during the Second World War, to promote Nazism as a cultural norm. Ward's observation of the ethical implications of propaganda material portraying elements of social bias provides an interdisciplinary analysis of historical, cultural and ethical issues in visual design. The article is a detailed case study, which assess the use of visual communication strategies to develop propaganda for Nazi ideologies. Ward rationalizes the relationship between both meaning and intent by including audience perception of a particular topic into the spectrum of ethical observations. In giving the example of Nazi propaganda, he states that information design can be looked at, "…as a process in which designers and users, who possess shared social knowledge, engage in communal conversation to construct meaning – in this case, a seemingly rational agreement to exclude Jews from their community" (p.63). Ward's interpretation of the interaction between audience and message from a socio-cultural perspective provides a key insight into the relevance of ethical practice within the field of visual communication.

Ward's study into the negative, and dangerous effects of deploying visual communication strategies for propaganda material supports arguments set forth by Shaver as well as Schroeder and Borgerson. The set of guidelines set forth for the designer of such material was developed and institutionalized by organizations dedicated to unethical practices. Their hate, or anger towards the Jewish communities at the time of the second world war allowed for a negative precedence to be set which made the designer's choices limited to the context of creating

dangerous propaganda. The poster, which Ward describes as a monochromatic piece, used

illustrated figures to depict very specific cultural bias' to categorize a non-Aryan population. In

presenting such obviously biased and explicit visual depictions of targeted minority groups in

Nazi Germany, the poster demonstrates how information design can be put to such monstrous

use without consulting ethical inquiry.

The production of such material also compromised the idea of occupational, or

professional ethics, which Shaver addresses. In perpetuating messages of intolerance,

propaganda that asserted an anti-Semitic stance influenced "social trust" to create a meaning

system which evoked negative representations of people, ultimately acting as a tool to implement

acts of violence and hate crimes.

What is also interesting in Ward's case study is how it identifies the effectiveness of the

Nuremburg poster not only because of the role of the designer, but also because of the shared

cultural understanding by its audience. He states, "In a thousand ways, both large and small,

citizens needed to be conversant with the provisions of the Nuremberg Laws. The poster

conveyed the intricacies of this information with an elegantly simplified design solution" (p.65).

In essence, Ward's statement directly correlates to Schroeder and Borgerson description of how

the ontological experience of marketing creates a sense of representation in an advertisement.

The audience was able to identify their existence or identity within the cultural re-appropriation

of Nazi propaganda in the design of this poster.

Section 1.2 Literature Review – Analytical Theories of Representation & Visual Analysis
Making sense of complex design strategies and human creativity requires a theoretical lens

which links the social, cultural and communicative paradigms of visual language. Roland

Barthes' *The Rhetoric of the Image* is important to the framework of visual analysis because of its emphasis on the discursive function of visual language, within the context of contemporary cultural practices. The power of meaning embedded in imagery can be multifaceted, and as Ward points out, the meaning of a message is heavily reliant on cultural context. Barthes (1977) argues that, "the image is re-presentation, which is to say ultimately resurrection, and as we know, the intelligible is reputed antipathetic to lived experience" (p.33). This is to say that, meaning is derived from images based on one's cultural understanding of what is being depicted. We, the audience see our own sets of values reflected in what is constructed by an image, and in turn, process our interpretation of its meaning based on our social position. This is why advertisements relating to HIV/AIDS awareness are often so persuasive, as they at times show us our fears, call us to act accordingly, or even bind us to the subject by playing on our ability to be empathetic. Contrastingly, Barthes also emphasizes the role of text, which is both oppositional and supportive of the image with which it is juxtaposed. He explains that, "The text is indeed the creator's (and hence society's) right of inspection over the image; anchorage is a control, bearing a responsibility – for the use of the message. With the respect to the liberty of the signified of the image, the text has thus a repressive value" (p.41). This is to say that, the text, although a main component of the image's composition, is also what authorizes its meaning, ultimately narrating the visual design of the message.

Barthes's perspectives on visual rhetoric will provide relevant support for examining the cultural meanings encoded within the body of documents selected for this study. His cultural interpretation of representation also ties into theories of visual representation developed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), who focus predominantly on the structure of visual media. They

do so by separating representation into two distinct categories. The notion of **narrative representation** is a perspective that seeks to find the stories embedded within a cultural text. Narrative representation can be seen as a parallel to what Hall (1997) discusses as part of a system of meaning. The amalgamation of all of the elements used to create a unified image is what develops a story, and is what can give cultural relevance to it. The second category of representation is conceptual. **Conceptual representation** examines all of the elements used to create an image as separate entities, taking to account how the use of shape, colour and form work independently to create an image. Ultimately, conceptual representation seeks to explain which design elements were used and the choices made by the designer. Narrative and conceptual representation are applicable theoretical frames to my proposed research project because they seek to show the relationship between the construction of the document and its intended meaning. Working together with Barthes' critical approach to representation, Kress and Leeuwen's theories will structure an analytical framework, which will seek to define how selected strategies in graphic design are used to convey salient messages to an audience.

In *Multimodality: A Social Semiotic Approach to Contemporary Communication*, Kress (2010) asserts that an ethical approach to communication is needed because of the rapid shrinking, or disappearance of a public domain where a consensus regarding forms of social action may exist. Kress' exploration of the need for ethics is an applicable theoretical frame to analyze the set of images selected for this study, because it connects the role of the audience to the persuasive power of visual media. He draws upon a social perspective of communication in his ethical approach to the field, addressing the role of community, which includes those producing as well as those consuming a message. Kress discusses, "that as members of a

cohesive community they are able to contribute to common purposes by dealing productively

with constantly new cultural, semiotic and social problems and by designing, representing and

communicating their suggested problems to them" (p.18). He argues for the application of social

semiotics to ethical communication practices so that it may empower the collective community

to make meaning from complex messages.

To further expand upon the need for a holistic perspective on visual communication,

Kress builds a link between communication ethics and the environment in which documents, or

other multimodal forms of media are produced. An environment is shaped relative to the social,

cultural and economic values of the people who participate in it. The relationship between

communication and ethics is built upon rhetoric, that which is produced by a communicator, and

accepted by the audience. Thus, there is a sense of relatively in the environment the

communication takes place in, allowing the design of a message to be disseminated to an

audience able to dissect its cultural relevance. "Design meets the interest of the rhetor (most

usually the same person) in full awareness of the communication potentials of the resources

which are available in the environment and needed for the implementation of the rhetor's

interests" (p.27). In outlining a relationship between the message and the designer, his frame of

communication ethics coincides with Barthes' critical perspective of visual rhetoric and

representation. Both argue that cultural influence plays a significant role in determining the

intent of a message; these influences are also part of the process of creating the image itself. The

influences are, "mediated by the interests of members of social groups so that practices,

resources and technologies of communication respond, at different rates at different times to

social, economic and technological developments" (p.19). The validity of this argument is not

only apparent in contemporary practices of visual communication production, but also in the analysis of visual media. In the context of discussing the ethics of visual design, perspectives such as cultural influence, aesthetic choices and the environmental values of the message are to be considered when developing an ethical frame.

Kress further explores the audience's understanding of a document through a concept he describes as **pace**. He notes that the pace of how something is read or interpreted is dependent on the social and technological conditions a medium is influenced by. His concept of pace articulates issues in media literacy, which can be applicable to the analytical frame of this particular study. Much of the visual media that is produced has an interpretive element to it; as a result, there are obvious divisions amongst the audience in respect to the understanding of an intended message. For the purpose of this study, Kress' notion of pace will also be applied to the relationship between the visual design of a message, and how the audience is expected read it.

Kress' concept of pace will be used in this study to distinguish if each is of the messages is designed to achieve an inherent speed. .An image can have an explicit set of signifying factors that will aide or rush its audience to arriving at the heart of the message. On the other hand, tactics can be employed so that the image evokes a much more interpretive and less explicit tone when delivering a message, which can be defined as having a slower pace.

Concepts of culture and audience interpretation are of utmost importance to the study of ethical issues in visual communication. The texts selected in this section of the literature review work cohesively at building a theoretical frame, which can be applied to the analyzing and evaluating of the ethical merit of design strategies used in HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns.

In order to ground the previously discussed theoretical frames, it is important that a set of applied case studies in visual design be looked at. The first, a case study titled *Audience as Co-Designer: Participatory Design of HIV/AIDS Awareness and Prevention Posters in Kenya,* investigates how HIV/AIDS prevention posters can be designed collaboratively. This case study showcases the working process between professional graphic designers and Kenyan citizens. The goal for producing these posters using a method of collaborative design was to determine whether the visual language generated in the design process could translate the message(s) of the campaign by incorporating appropriate signs or symbols (Bennet et al., 2006). The process of designing the posters collaboratively demonstrates a holistic, and ultimately an ethical way of producing advocacy material, which could more accurately represent the visual language of the audience. In relation to the process of participatory design explored in Ward's article, there are a set of distinct values which separate the two case examples. The information design used during the holocaust was created to showcase a cultural hierarchy of human importance placing positive and negative values on the audience, with their own consent. The design practice which took place in Bennet et al.'s article embodies an almost altruistic approach to visual communication. The goal there was to take cultural meanings and social context to develop a set of signs to benefit a specific society.

The second study is focused much more on audience studies in relation to design. Authored by Ann C. Tyler, *Shaping Belief: The Role of Audience in Visual Communication*, uses a spectrum of examples from advertisements for the New York Aquarium, to corporate branding such as logos designed for Screen Gems Incorporated, in order to illustrate how theories of persuasion and representation are used to create meaning. Tyler (1992) highlights the designer's

role in the process of persuasion by creating a dialogue with the audience. She states, "In an attempt to persuade, the designer develops an argument within the two dimensional space that defines and represents an audience's future experience" (p.38). The future experience can be something which shows the audience a segment of their own reality, a representation of their identity within the context of the image. In a sense, the role of the audience is to create an experience based on their own cultural stories to make sense of the narratives constructed by visual design.

Both studies examine the relationship between audience and participation within the confines of two-dimensional graphic design such as advocacy material, and advertisements. What they also demonstrate is the power of persuasion, and the steps that are taken to ensure it is done successfully. Bennet et al. discuss how the design of the posters achieved success by developing a level of cross cultural communication with the co-creators' intended audience. The reasons for doing so were for the implementation of an ethical approach to producing HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness material. However, this set of audience engaging strategies can also be detrimental, and in a way unethical if applied to the types of advertisements shown in Tyler's study. This is to say that, if an audience is engaged to create material to implement better social and cultural practices, it should be deemed as ethical. If those same strategies are used to promote conspicuous consumption, or represent people or cultural groups negatively, it should be deemed as an unethical application of such communication strategies.

Section 2.1 Methods - Research Questions

Within the body of reviewed literature, concepts surrounding representation, culture and morality are addressed in a multitude of ways. The possible intersections of how these broad

themes meet in the context of this study will be addressed in this proposed research. The

questions being asked throughout the course of my visual analysis are:

- **What are the visual strategies used to represent specific social, and cultural groups in advocacy advertisements?**

- **How is the representation of specific people and community groups used to develop advocacy messages?**

- **What kinds of tensions exist in using representations of people in advocacy documents?**

Section 2.2 Methods – Data Collection

The AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT) sponsors the development of many different AIDS

awareness campaigns, and more often than not, uses humour to convey their message. ACT tends

to produce advocacy campaigns to develop awareness of HIV and AIDS by targeting the

GLBTQ Community. Their demographic also includes specific ethnic groups such as Hispanic,

Portuguese and African-Canadians. The other documents collected were part of a campaign used

as a precursor to World AIDS Day 2009 titled "AIDS is a Mass Murderer". The final set of

documents collected come from a public archive found on the website of the Stephen Lewis

Foundation. The goal of the campaign material seeks to support grassroots HIV awareness

organizations that aide African populations at risk of not having adequate support to combat or

prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. The organization also focuses on campaigns which advocate

for grandmothers who are left to care for their orphaned grandchildren due to a mother's death as

a result of AIDS.

The number of collected documents will be limited to two from each organization, amounting to six samples of advocacy material. Physical copies of the documents were obtained from ACT, as I have been given access to a back catalogue by the organization, and digital copies of the documents developed as part of the "AIDS is a Mass Murderer" Campaign, and the Stephen Lewis Foundation, as they are available to the public on both of their respective websites. Having the documents come from three different sources and organizations, may also allow for a more diverse comparative view when conducting a visual analysis. In turn, this will permit for a richer data set to examine design choices.

Section 2.3 Methods – Analysis

The methods employed for the analysis of these documents are drawn from Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen's *Reading Images: the Grammar of Visual Design (2006)*. This text will assist in developing a visual analysis centered around the constructs of narrative and conceptual representation. In accompaniment to this, a structure of multimodal analysis will be used to apply the aforementioned theories and methods of representation directly to an image. **Multimodal analysis**, in essence, is the analytical method of examining how two distinct sets of meanings work with one another, to determine how and if a new meaning or representation is constructed. The concept of **foregrounding** will also be working as part of the visual analysis as it is used to navigate towards the most salient and directed part of a document, pointing out what the viewer is being directed towards.

By reading the images through a multimodal lens, each element of the texts' composition can be isolated and examined independently, before understanding how tools such as colour, typeface, and photography can work together to develop meaning. In joining theories of

representation with multimodal analysis, this study hopes to bring together both critical and applied areas of visual communication to understand the impact and intent of such carefully produced messages.

Exploring the individual elements of an image requires a deep reading, and an understanding of visual literacy. Kress and van Leeuwen's models of analysis serve as an analytical framework for this study because of the sophistication their tools of visual analysis provide. More specifically, their conceptual understanding of foregrounding will be extracted and applied to the analytical examination of visual design within the context of this study. Foregrounding is an important design element to understand because it is used to create a necessary depth in an image; allowing for the audience to be fixated upon specific design elements in order to be drawn into a narrative presented through visual design. In doing so, the main focal point, or message embedded in an image is easily identifiable. When the foreground is understood, the other elements which create the separation between foreground and background can be pin pointed. The aforementioned strategies of typography, colour, vector and photography can be individually analyzed to understand what they contribute to the overall body of work to which they belong .

The second phase of examining these three bodies of images will be rooted in conducting an interpretive visual analysis. This analysis will seek to find the role of the images' persuasiveness within a cultural context. More importantly, an interpretive visual analysis can perhaps develop insight into the social and environmental values conveyed within the texts. Although the visual analysis will draw upon the applied principles of graphic design, the goal of conducting such an examination is to bring forth a much more critical understanding, or

perspective on the cultural function of the body of advocacy communication material selected. The work of Roland Barthes creates a bridge between the artistic production of the documents collected, and the cultural and social representations they create. Ultimately, what Barthes' theoretical construct will assist in analyzing is the difference between, or contrast of visual design techniques used to create the documents. Analyzing these techniques critically may give insight as to how they are used to construct specific cultural representations.

The method of research employed for this study will draw upon elements from critical, multimodal, and visual means of analysis. Combining elements from the aforementioned modes of analysis will permit for a rich study of how applied design strategies, are employed in advocacy communication. In identifying these strategies, it is possible to map how elements of design create cultural representations of the subject the designer seeks to define.

The analysis of both the elements of visual design and the cultural paradigms the texts' produce provides a frame for evaluating the ethical value the collected advocacy documents present.

Section 2.4 Methods – Operational Definitions

The terminology highlighted in this section combines areas of visual design and the fine arts, as well as cultural studies in an attempt to make them applicable to the study of professional communication documents, such as advocacy advertisement material. The definitions which are relevant to their native field, need elaboration in order to show how they are applicable as part of this study. The definitions themselves are rooted in highlighting how such design tools are used as strategies while giving a brief overview of their relation to a philosophical, or theoretical construct.

figure t1

Term	Definition
Colour	By using colour, a designer is able to highlight key signifiers and show variations within the tone of an image, while creating contrast between other elements of design. It is also used to distinguish subjects within an image, "such as different socioeconomic groups, or landforms" (Kress, & van Leeuwen, 2006, p.88). Colour connotes the representation associated with a particular subject giving it cultural meaning, while being used a tool to serve the aesthetic pleasure needed for an audience to engage with an image.
Typography	The design, stylization and placement of font is an important aspect of the written portion of the document's layout. Headlines and body copy need to convey very distinct calls to action, and they are categorized by the amount of space they occupy. Typography evokes a specific experiential quality, in that it reflects how the form of the message influences the reader's interpretation of the content (Baines, & Haslam, 2005). Ultimately, the typography guides and enforces the tone of the message presented in the makeup of a document.
Vector	The viewing of images often creates a central point the audience is drawn toward. Vectors are the lines, which are composed by the various elements of an image to guide a viewer to this point. By creating a map for the audience to comply with assist in driving the narrative structure of an image thus allowing for a direct confrontation with the image's intended message. (Kress, & van Leeuwen, 2006). It is the vectors, which are formed by the positioning of all of the other stylistic elements to illustrate the narrative flow and structure of an image, including advertisements and advocacy material.
Photography	The captured image, taken using a camera and manipulated to suit the aesthetic of a particular document. Photography is multifaceted and is used to contextualize complex ideas and values within a visual language. Those using or creating the photograph impose upon it empirical, rhetorical or aesthetic values (Barthes, 1980). In which case, a photograph's message or language can change depending on its context .

Section 3.1.1 Analysis – Welcome to Condom Country (AIDS Committee of Toronto)

Figure A1
Welcome to Condom Country
AIDS Committee of Toronto

In a scene composed of elements borrowed from Hollywood western films and romantic dramas as well as an homage to the irony of cigarette advertisements, the AIDS Committee of Toronto has captured a wide range of popular references in the visual design of its *Welcome to Condom Country* (Figure A1) poster. These elements are unified by the distinct weight of the cause, reminding the viewer about the importance of condom use to prevent the transmission of HIV. However, the tone established by the design of this poster does not demonize or demonstrate a judgment call upon any groups, instead it established a humorous rapport with the audience to deliver such a serious message.

The layout of Figure A1 is composed of three tiers, articulated by vectors, dividing the message into three distinct parts. The first tier begins and ends with the headline "Welcome to Condom Country". The third tier is the black banner with the organization's logo and call to action, and the second tier is housed between the first and third, comprised predominantly by the photograph. The importance of these tiers is that they guide the viewer to each distinct function of the advertisement's individual sections. A captivating and humorous headline establishes the logic in the photograph, allowing the photograph of the two men riding a horse in the country side to be a relevant message in regards to the organization's call to action, located on the bottom right hand corner.

It is important to note that these three tiers create contrast by juxtaposing each individual section with one another. By doing so, the design of this document allows for the reading of three independent messages:

1. *Establishing Condom Country as a concept, creating a narrative composed by the design of the document.*
2. *Explaining the relevance of the advertisement by narrating the rise of HIV in Toronto.*
3. *The call to action, with the AIDS Committee of Toronto being a resource.*

The interpretation of a unified message when all of these parts come together then creates the function of the narrative representation of the advertisement. In developing this structure, the use of vectors allows for the audience to also be directed to the more salient parts of the photographic element of the advertisement's design. The "V" shape of the tree line allows for depth of focus to be placed on the two men in traditional cowboy attire riding the horse. In presenting such focus, the photograph succeeds in highlighting paradoxical meanings to what the aesthetic of the design suggests. The photograph, and its use of vector, achieves placing figures who represent part of a spectrum of gay men in a scene which is normally associated with heteronormative ideas found in popular culture. The photograph, however, causes the reinforcing of racial profiles by associating the construct of the gay cowboys as Caucasian figures. This representation can be seen as problematic because of how it aligns issues surrounding HIV transmission to an exclusive ethnic demographic.

Returning to the notion of the guided separation in the design of this document, the viewer is afforded a slow pace when reading the connection of the visual elements used to articulate the message behind it. This is to say that, not all parts of the design are imposed upon the viewer at once, each element has its place and the viewer can travel between them to interoperate their own definitive connection between the visual signifiers. The copywriting on diagonal ends of the full image produce an anchoring effect, which gives the text their own stage to be presented upon. The headline asserts an inviting tone to draw in the reader, confronting them into the larger, more traumatic realization of their mortality in relationship to the physical threat of HIV. The caption on the bottom right hand corner of the document, which reads, "HIV is on the Rise in Toronto. Ride Safely" should be seen as the call to action, which links ACT to

the message. The call to action, takes on a very different tone than the rest of the copy, in that it is used to articulate a threatening means of engaging the audience.

figure t2

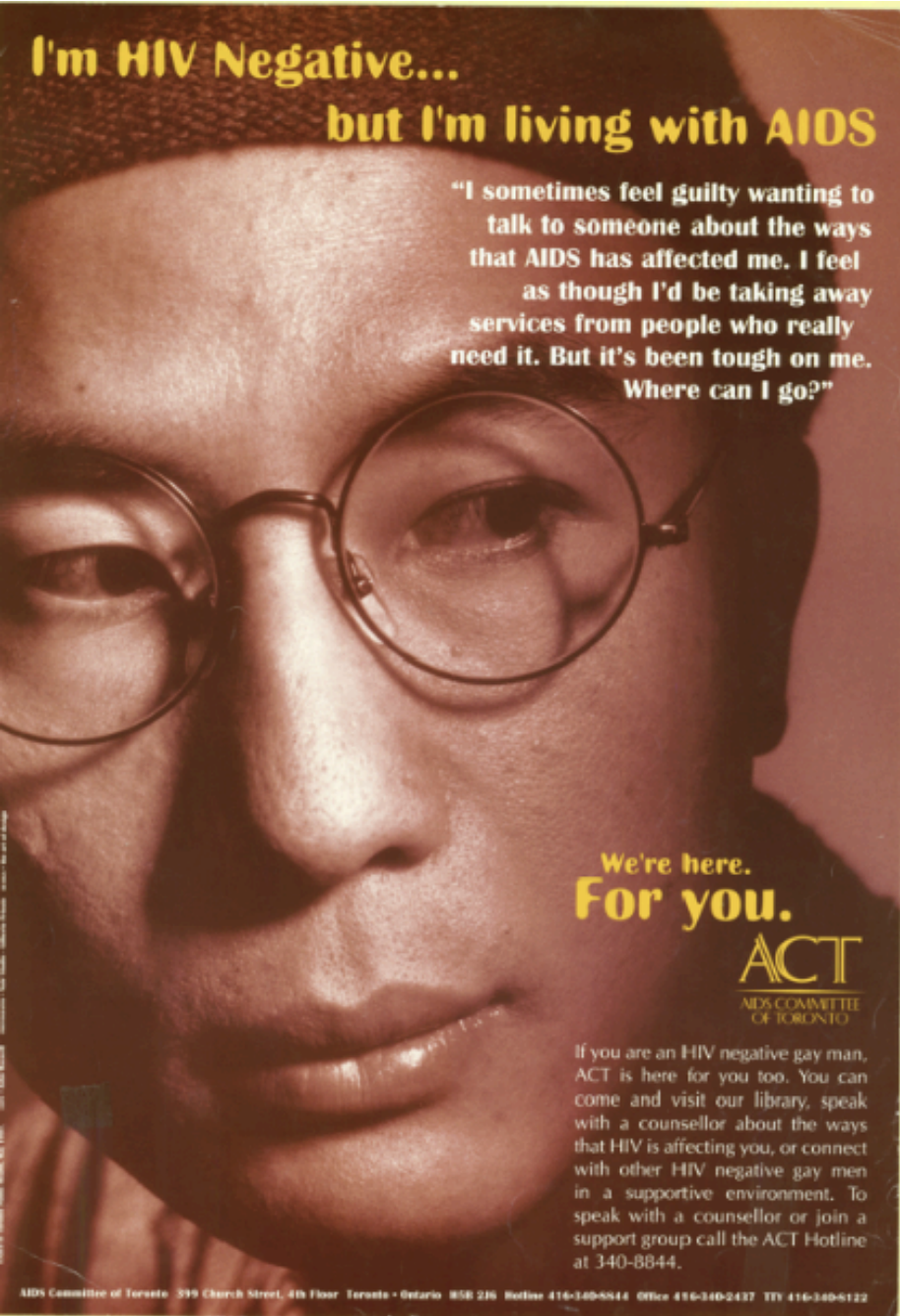| HIV is on the rise in Toronto	Presented as fact, and as a threat to the audience.
Ride Safely	Presented as a solution, thus associating the organization (AIDS Committee of Toronto) as a champion for the solution.

The rhetorical mechanisms used to convey the message of Figure A1 can be noted as duality between both humour and warning (or "caution"). By merging them into a singular image the audience is positioned against two ways in which their pathos is being appealed to.

The photograph, as its own unique element of the visual composition of the advertisement creates the vectors within the image, allowing the text to be situated in an anchored manner. More importantly however, the photograph can also provide an ontological experience for the audience to take part in; it captures the attention of those who see themselves represented as part of the demographic which the message seeks to reach. One can position the meaning ACT is putting forward by seeing this depiction of the two men as an extension of their own reference point of popular culture in relation to their own role as part of a community of gay men.

The overall visual design of Figure A1 incorporates a range of design techniques to communicate the danger of sex without a condom in a frame, drawing upon the rhetorical use of

humour by incorporating aesthetics and images from film and advertisements, found in popular

culture. What is problematic in the design of the document, however, is the clear lack of cultural

diversity used to represent members of the gay community, which can limit how viewers identify

themselves as part of the outreach of this campaign. Also, the call to action presents a

threatening tone, which may have to potential to cause worry or victimage in the audience who

create an ontological experience with the subjects situated in the photograph.

Figure A2
HIV Negative
AIDS Committee of Toronto

Embedded within the visual design of Figure A2 is narrative structure, which lends itself to be looked at in two ways. The document appears at first as a personal case story, told through a first hand account. It is then realized that the story emerges as promise of confidentiality by the AIDS Committee of Toronto to the gay community of the city. One of the key visual strategies used to create space and separation in the rhetorical structure of the document's copywriting is the differentiation between typeface or typography selections. The writing, which is predominantly part of the case story section of the document's body copy is written in a large, bold typeface, ensuring that the viewer is immediately engaged in that particular narrative first. "I'm HIV Negative...but I'm living with AIDS" introduces the narrative by introducing a strong yellow hue at the very top of the page and foreground of the photograph. Such precise visual cues enable a direct conceptual accompaniment to the representation of the idea of people who are affected by HIV/AIDS.

The use of photography accompanying the narrative representation of the written appeal provides the document with a human subject as the focal point of the story. In essence, the photograph of the young man behind the typography provides focus on the victimage of individuals caused by HIV/AIDS. The significance of the placement of victimage creates a contrast between the narrative representation housed in the story, and the conceptual representation illustrated by the photograph. In developing such a contrast, the typography can seen as set in the foreground of the document, explaining to the audience that the copy is what contextualizes the photograph.

The use of dark shadowing around the subject's eyes and chin permit for a contrast in the use of red and provides depth to the hyper lethargic facial language he is performing.

Interestingly, Figure A2 utilizes the colour red in a subtle way. Red drapes over the

photograph to create a uniform tone, and places it even further in the background of the visual

design. The typography is then able to appear in the foreground with maximum visibility. The

photograph of the man gazing back to the viewer is able to sit adjacent to the body copy used to

narrate the story without disrupting the aesthetic of the document, and successfully anchors the

typography on the right hand side. The use of the colour red is important because of how bold

uses of the colour are often associated with HIV/AIDS advocacy. The red is still used to signify a

correlation to the pandemic and its cause, but is done so in a manner which brings together all of

the elements of the document's design, including the juxtaposition of typography and

photography and also the contrasts between foreground and background.

It is in the juxtaposition of the design elements of photography and typography against

the red frame where the pace of the document is set. Each of these elements in isolation would

not signify a distinct argument for the cause they advocate for. However, because they are used

together cohesively, the audience is able to understand what the document seeks to communicate

at a fast pace. The bold typeface framing key narrative words, the photograph depicting a

lethargic and pensive man, and the confrontational use of the colour red, comprehensively create

a visual composition in Figure A2 which all contribute to the fast pace of the document's design,

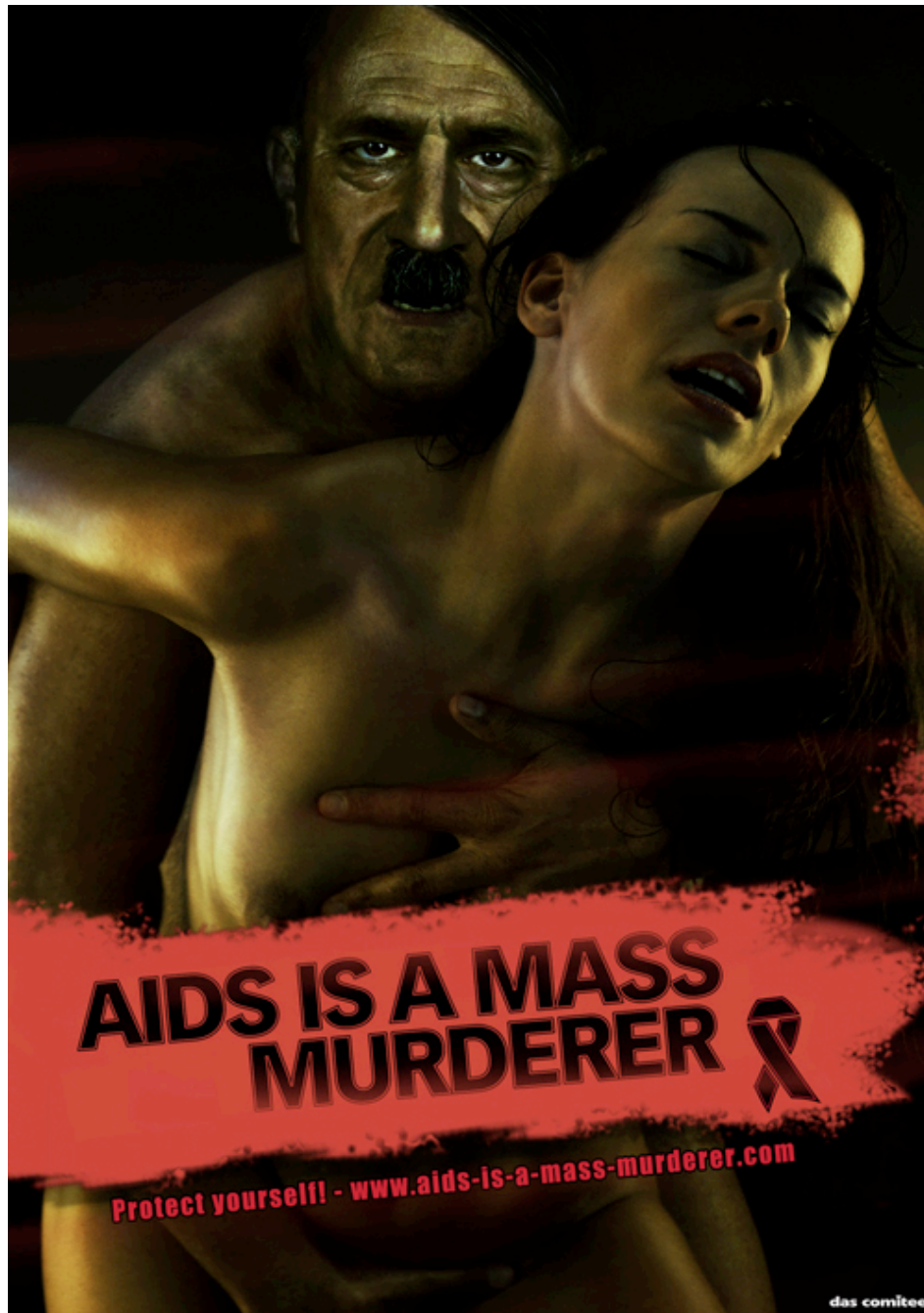thus the audience is able to quickly decode the message.

Figure A3
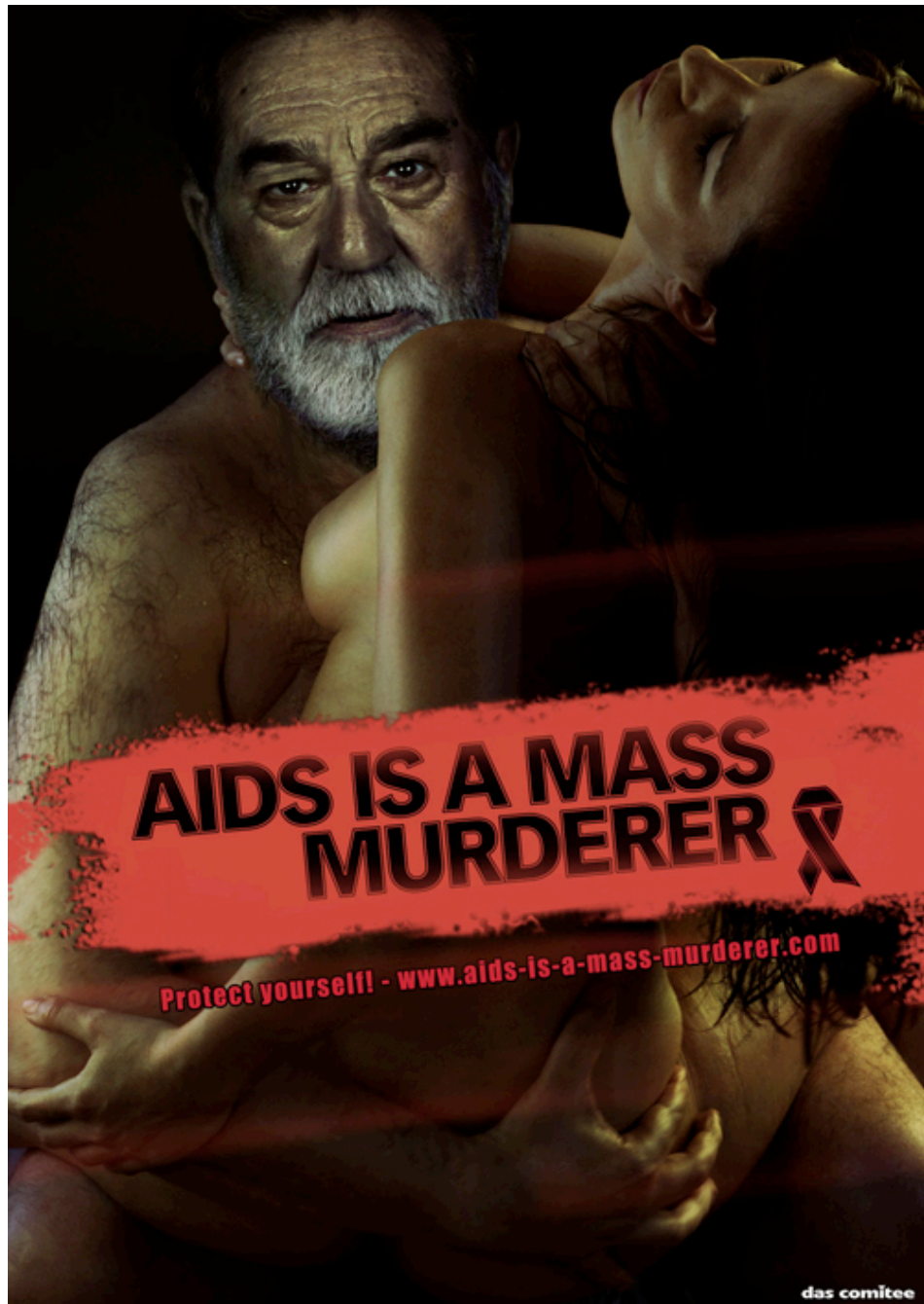*AIDS is a Mass Murderer - Hitler*
International AIDS Day 2009

Figure A4
AIDS is a Mass Murderer - Sadam
International AIDS Day 2009

The most obvious point of focus in Figure A3 is its use of Nazi leader, Adolf Hitler, as a representation for the death toll associated with the AIDS virus. In using such illicit imagery, one is able to equate the negative implications of AIDS with the villainous actions of Hitler. What can be seen as problematic with such a comparison is that it visually depicts the cultural stigma associated with HIV/AIDS. The same approach to the narrative representation of AIDS is found in Figure A4. The advertisement uses Saddam Hussein as the main figure to draw similarities between the idea of mass murder and AIDS. Both visual narratives are conceptual representations of the negative cultural ideologies which are associated with AIDS, including a sense of villainy towards the population infected with the disease, and being segregated socially for being a potential threat to life. Such representations are attributed to the use of graphic design strategies such as colour and photography, which create a meaning system based on stigmatization and fear.

The colour red has become synonymous with the fight to end the spread of the virus and disease, but also used as a symbolic reminder of the deaths caused by AIDS. The use of the colour red in these particular documents is no different. It is smeared over top the digitally manipulated bodies to draw the attention away from the sexually explicit acts captured in the photograph, allowing the viewer to negotiate the use of such imagery within the context of the cause. In a sense, the red is used to justify the narrative. Without it, the photograph appears gratuitous. Ultimately, the choice of framing the copy in red is what gives the narrative its placement in the context of the cause; the viewer is able to associate the sexually explicit imagery to the severity of the message.

Photography used in each document shows dramatic images of the female body such as breasts, and derrière being objectified by historical villains. These targeted body areas each represent moments of sexual vulnerability. Having them exposed to these villains in such an explicit way alludes to the idea of AIDS as villainous. Thus the logic which presents itself in the narrative representation of the image's story is that the host bodies of those infected with AIDS are exposed and vulnerable, but more so than that, they are victims. The idea of victimage is an important tool in advocacy communication, as it has the opportunity to evoke alignment between the audience and the cause, evoking a sense of pathos.

Vector lines play an important role in guiding one's attention to the bottom section of the image. In both Figures A3 and A4, the main subject's right arms are used to create a path, which leads from their heads, down to below the copy. The inevitable ending to the vectors within the two documents are at the point when both the main subjects ("Hitler" and "Hussein") make contact with female erogenous zones. The duality of the power of this path is rooted in the conceptual representation of the image, showcasing both the narrative function of the document, while highlighting the objectification of the female body. The vectors in both documents demonstrate how gender is portrayed here, with the female figures being subservient to either Hitler or Hussein, and the audience forced to look only at specific physical attributes, rather than a body in its entirety.

Such a singular use of gender roles in the visual conception of this document also plays upon specific cultural biases. It appears natural within the narrative representations of Figures A3 and A4 that the female subjects can be manipulated in such a subverted manner, allowing for the aggressive and dominating traits of the male subjects to be highlighted. In portraying this idea,

the image's rhetoric fashions the experience of sexual pleasure to accompany the unsettling reality of the message's advocacy concern. The role of sexual pleasure consequently affects the pace of the audience reading it. One is drawn into specific vector pathways in the advertisement, and introduced to representations of sexuality and gender through illicit imagery.

These vector pathways make the document appear quite multidirectional, as the viewer is drawn between the colour and photography to the narrative message by following many lines. However, once the warning has been communicated, the audience can then be left to wander about in the bricolage of historical appropriated imagery and the sexually explicit photography created by the document's design.

The visual design techniques used to produce the narratives in Figures A3 and A4 deliver the intended advocacy message at a slow pace. Viewers are forced into extracting it from a document which embellishes representations of human sexuality and places the over arching theme of HIV/AIDS awareness as a secondary point. In this campaign's successful visual construction, its goal appears to be able reach a large audience, thus having a mass appeal (to an extent). It does so, however, by depicting specific gender profiles and cultural biases.

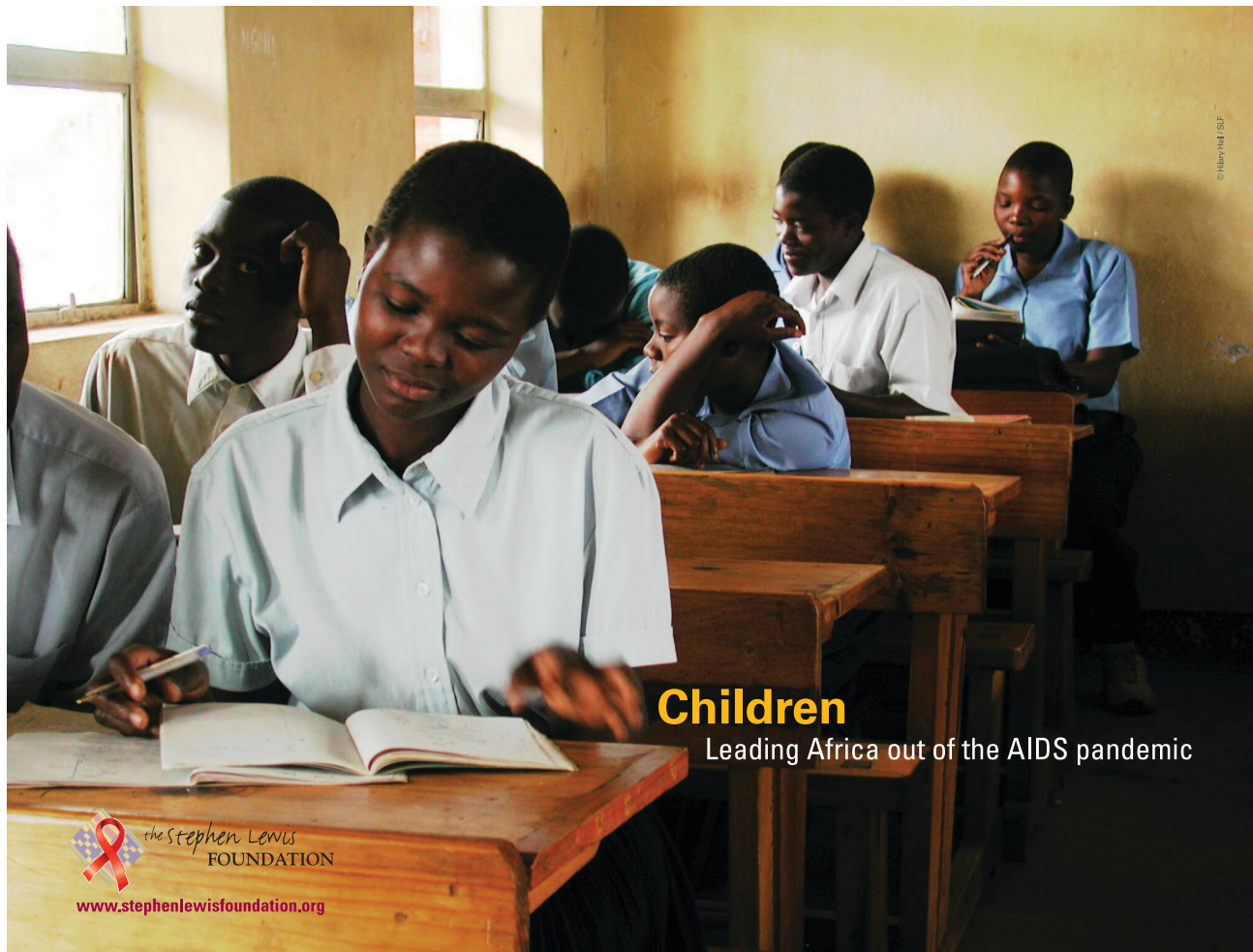Section 3.3.1 Analysis – Children (Stephen Lewis Foundation)

Figure A5
Children
Stephen Lewis Foundation

Children are the focal point of the message in Figure A5, and their representation is used to entice the audience with ideas of prosperity and positive change, thus relaying these attributes to a specific age group. There is a sense of timelessness to the image; the depiction of a group of children working together has the ability to impact a viewer's emotional connection to the cause time and time again. In creating such an impact, there is also a level of immediacy presented to the audience. The visual strategies of photography and typography selected for Figure A5 work in unison to illustrate ideas of depicting the experience of trying to combat the AIDS pandemic.

Using the photograph of children in a classroom embodies certain cultural norms, which are hard to argue against, or resist. The classroom, and how it is depicted in the photograph is a scene that can be understood throughout the developed world. By using said photograph, traditional cultural concepts such as learning and community are embedded in the document, thus creating an appeal to the viewer's logical and emotional values. The persuasive power of capturing and using this scene is that it evokes what Barthes describes as a "lived experience" (1977, p.33). The viewer is able to associate aspects of their life, or their cultural surrounding with the photograph to interpret a meaning. In the case of the particular photograph of children in a classroom in Figure A5, one can associate the potential for positive change embodied in the message, to the logic of achieving such a feat through an already existing set of cultural values. In other words, the photograph provides an illustration of what the population of children are in need of, rather than what cultural settings are valuable in order to make the cause worthwhile.

The positioning of the subjects within the frame of the photograph is also an important aspect of the document's visual design. Much of the weight is carried on the left hand side, thus

allowing for the typography to rest on its own platform on the right. The photograph is not

interrupted by the placement of the typography, and its light and unintimidating colours are able

to stand out, for the viewer to easily read both the headline and caption. The selection of the

typeface is also complimentary to the colours found within the whole of the photograph, keeping

consistent visual themes in the structure of the document. The golden shade used for the word

"Children" is reflective of the light, which illuminates the desks and provides a warm tint

throughout. Although the typeface is not a stark contrast to the aesthetic the colours present in

the document, it is able to stand out on its own, tying together the narrative flow of the entire

image.

The second line of main text, which reads, "Leading Africa out of the AIDS pandemic" is

written in a white sans-serif typeface and can be seen as contrasting to the dark shadowed

portions on the lower right corner of the document. The design decision to juxtapose a white

typeface over cast shadows and the warm aesthetic of the photography performs two distinct

functions. First, this creates a legible section where the viewer is afforded an area dedicated to

engaging with the written word. The second function of the typeface is to carry the tone set by

the photography into the copywriting. What is most important about these choices is that they are

consistent with presenting the conceptual representation of the message. The balance of colours

in the typeface places it in the foreground of the document and the words appear to be in front of

the photograph, which presents the viewer with a call to action. They are then able to explore the

narrative the document has developed by feeling comforted by the aesthetic produced by the

combination of typography and photography.

In designing a document, which embodies warm colours and an inviting selection of typography, the advocacy message is able to be separated from a dystopian or negative tone, and be present in an optimistic environment. The designer's choice to strategize this creates a narrative representation of the idea of positive community experiences, generated from the goal of ending the AIDS pandemic. The designer's choice to manifest such a notion into Figure A5, which uses representations of children, may be problematic though. The selection of colour and typography used to invite the audience to a less intimidating representation of the AIDS pandemic is overshadowed by the empathic nature of the photograph. Evoking a viewer's empathy to articulate the relevance to the Stephen Lewis Foundation to the cause, undermines the message. The design of the document articulates a set of visual cues which call upon the audience for pity as opposed to engaging them in understanding the role of the organization, or the importance of their work.

Section 3.3.2 Analysis – Turning the Tide (Stephen Lewis Foundation)

Figure A6
Turning The Tide
Stephen Lewis Foundation

The use of photography to evoke empathy is also apparent in the visual design of Figure A6. Stephen Lewis, who is the founder of the Stephen Lewis Foundation is seen in the photograph as taking an active role in the cause of working towards ending the AIDS pandemic. Although there is no distinct evidence of fighting the disease occurring within the image, there is however, a narrative generating a representation of doing so. Showcasing children walking hand in hand with Stephen Lewis, down a beaten path with various other local community figures around, constructs a messiah theme within the photograph's narrative structure. The image of Lewis is a literal embodiment of the organization's work in Africa, allowing the viewer to see how affluent cultural influences impact this scenario in a perceived positive manner. In creating such a narrative, the design of the photograph positions such influence as a heroic intervention.

What appears to be the key for successfully capturing the narrative of positive, influential intervention is that the photograph frames the stride of the three main subjects in the foreground of the document. In highlighting the two children holding Stephen Lewis' hand, and Lewis himself, the photograph is able to create rhetoric, which provides logic to the validity of The Stephen Lewis Foundation's work. Thus, asserting the foundation as an integral role in the development of the particular community depicted. The photograph does not communicate a sense of tension, or struggle, instead it offers a story of complacency. Each subject in both the foreground and background appears to be naturalized in this setting, as if it is the only possible one they are expected to be part of. The juxtaposition of the community in the background and the children with Stephen Lewis in the foreground shows a distinct division of class and ethnicity. Such a division can be attributed to Lewis' presence in the photograph itself, because it highlights his celebrity status, while depicting the rest of the community in relation to him.

Within the photograph, there are key colour marks throughout, which also correspond to the colours of the branding and typography selection in the document. The colour red is introduced subtly, first apparent on the subjects in the foreground of the image. The colour red presents itself on the "Fight AIDS" T-shirts worn by the two African boys, and as well as on the tie donned by Stephen Lewis. The use of the colour red becomes more apparent in the document, as it is the main colour in the foundation's branding and can be seen most dominantly in the illustration of the ribbon on the top left hand corner. What is interesting to note is how the colour red becomes synonymous in this design with the shade of white. The two appear to be codependent upon each other in the aesthetic of the document's design. The red logos on the boy's white T-shirts, the red tie contains a white dotted pattern and the red branding on the top is positioned close to a white typeface. The combination of the colour red and the shade of white are part of the conceptual representation put forward by the document.

The use of red and white throughout the document articulates a familiarity that viewers are asked to associate with HIV/AIDS advocacy material. Such familiarity produces a sense of comfort in the branding, as it is associated with an already established cultural understanding tied to the cause. The repetition of red and white throughout the document can be seen as a rhetorical mechanism keeping the conceptual representation consistent throughout, and allows the viewer to retain familiarity with the message at visual markers such as the branding and the photograph used in the design of Figure A6.

Section 3.4.1 Discussion – Emerging Conventions

The visual analysis conducted on Figures A1 through to A6, revealed some emerging trends regarding conventions. These emerging conventions can be placed into two categories:

1) The use of Colour to authenticate that a document is correlated to HIV/AIDS advocacy

2) The use of victimage in the construction of the representation in various cultural groups

All of the documents were selected with the purpose of examining a variety of advocacy institutions' interpretation of how to represent HIV/AIDS through visual design. At first glance, each set of documents communicated their message in varying ways. Upon close examination, however, specific issues in visual design were apparent in the analysis of the entire body of the documents collected.

Among the trends identified as part of these emerging conventions is the use of colour as a signifier for defining moral codes. Specifically, the use of red is used to justify the construction of the document as something which is ethically sound, and the idea that it represents its subject accurately. In the body of case examples analyzed, it is apparent that creating sections where the colour red is used, can be seen as a tool to create a conceptual representation of the documents' relevance to the cause they advocate for. In turn, the use of the colour creates a sense of familiarity in the audience, and thus limits the reflexivity of how the message is interpreted. In other words, the use of red within a document, which is intended to advocate on behalf of HIV/ AIDS awareness, creates a cultural logic, where the message conveyed can be seen as an absolute truth. Questioning the validity of such a design choice can be seen as immoral, which thereupon demonstrates the power of the colour over the cause itself, reducing it to an inarguable

message. What this implies is, any campaign which does not use the colour red would be out of step with the genre of HIV/AIDS advocacy because it is so prevalent.

What can be seen as a simple juxtaposition of colour, should be understood as a method used to lure an audience into a frame which assumes positive intent. The frame of positive intent can be extrapolated from how Figures A2, A5 and A6 are able to represent victimage, and how Figure A1, A3 and A4 are able to represent constructions of human sexuality and gender bias. They are permitted to create such conceptual representations due to their appropriation of the distinct use of the colour red within the documents visual make up. The design's alignment of images which would otherwise be deemed unsuitable in representing the actual infection or disease themselves, are used to produce representations of cultural values by creating specific stereotypes. In pandering to these stereotypes, the design of the document makes the message of advocacy more palpable to an audience. By the nature of its use, the colour red is able to create a moral objectivity by framing the composition of the collected documents as truthful to what they represent. Thus, ideas of gender, race, and sexuality can be represented in a variety of different contexts without facing much cultural recourse because they are blanketed under the colour.

The narrative representation of victimage is dependent on assumptions made by the audience to create a logical connection to what is being depicted. Both photography, and the layout of typography are the main design strategies used to manifest the narrative of victimage within the documents. The victimization of children in the Stephen Lewis Foundation's posters (Figures A5 and A6) makes sense because it shows a narrow scope of what the subjects face within an assumed cultural context. Victimage within the context of HIV/AIDS advocacy can be

deemed as logically sound because one can only assume that the two are correlated based on what the photographs used represent.

As previously discussed, Figures A5 and A6 use representations of victimage (consistency with previous uses) to articulate a message of advocacy on behalf of the Stephen Lewis Foundation. The production of cultural stigma can be seen as a rhetorical tool by photographing vulnerable populations and having these images juxtaposed next to written narratives packaged in an aesthetically cohesive typeface. Examples of photography and typography used together to highlight stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS can be noted as being used in Figure A2. A man reflecting about his position as someone who is HIV negative, while relating himself to HIV positive people in his community creates a sense of demonization, or perhaps even a sense of moral superiority.

Figures A3 and A4 achieve the construction of victimization through photography and typography by different means than Figure A2. The photography depicts the hyper-sexualization of infection, and the audience is faced with the words "AIDS is a Mass Murderer" strewn across the focal area of the document, stylized using a combination of red strokes and transparent typeface. The combination of the photography and typography layout, contextualize victimage on their own as separate design elements, but also work together to represent the stigmatic implications of AIDS throughout the entire narrative structure of the document.

What is demonstrated for the most part in the body of collected documents is that a dependency on victimizing people living with HIV or AIDS is a regularly practiced tactic. A tactic which is used to align an audience's sympathy with the rhetorical exploitation of emotionally charged visuals to formulate a narrative representation of what it means to have, live

with, or be affected by HIV/AIDS. Victimizing the subjects in the photograph creates and

emphasizes negative cultural connotations associated with the disease and infection through

design strategies such as colour, type and vector. Such strategies create a system of logic by

which the representations depicted in the documents themselves are seen as truthful or culturally

accurate, and thus deemed morally sound. When the other design strategies come together to

support what is being depicted in the photograph, it appears that victimage is an accurate form of

representation. The danger of the emerging conventions of creating a narrative of victimage in

HIV/AIDS advocacy material is that a reliance on evoking stigma becomes synonymous with the

cause, in the visual design of such communication strategies. In doing so, the misrepresentations

of specific cultural groups will be made into a convention in the production of visual media used

in advocacy communication.

Section 3.4.2 Discussion – Pace and Visual Design

      Representing disenfranchised cultural groups, who can be portrayed as victims within a

visual context requires an understanding of the implications certain design choices have on the

meaning embedded within a message. Such choices include how photography, typography,

vector and colour are used to define how a narrative is composed. The pace of each of the

selected documents (Figures A1 to A6) has demonstrated how the myriad of design strategies

effects how the audience retains meaning from the message. The concept of pace, is essentially a

term borrowed from Gunther Kress' analytical idea surrounding multi-modality. For the purpose

of this study, the idea was re-appropriated to fit within the confines of visual analysis. Defining

pace can be done in two ways:

1. A Slow Pace is found in messages, which are designed to draw the reader in with complex imagery, bold colour selections or a multifaceted narrative that require interpretation. An example of a slow pace within the selected documents is Figure A3, where Hitler is shown having sex with a woman, foregrounded by the text "AIDS is a Mass Murder", which is layered over top a stroke of red.

2. A Fast Pace can be seen in messages, which are used to evoke already existing cultural assumptions and contribute to the communication of already established representations of people, or ideas. Fast Pace is achieved by reinforcing the already familiar in the visual design of a document, where the reader is able to quickly understand the cause for advocacy. An example of Fast Pace can be found in Figure A6, a document produced for The Stephen Lewis Foundation. The document uses the familiar scene of African children set in the backdrop of a developing village road. The photograph itself does not necessarily signify HIV/AIDS advocacy , but it does depict a need for assistance or charity. The audience is able to fully understand the context of the message's advocacy capacity by seeing the photograph juxtaposed with the organization's red logo to give a context to what the message is communicating. In this case, the message itself revolves around the organization's role in the realm of HIV/AIDS awareness. Although the pace is reliant on the use of both photography and colour, the audience is able to contextualize what is being represented on the basis of pre-existing cultural assumption embodied in the design of the document.

It seems then that the narrative function, and by proxy the means of representation is established to evoke either a quick reading, or a lengthy gaze by the audience. In other words, the more complex a representation, i.e, the more unfamiliar one is with it, the more a reader is asked

to formulate their own interpretation. Figure A3 depicts themes of violence, death, and sexuality to relay its message. On the other hand, the more familiar an image is, the less the reader is asked to question the means of representation. Figure A6 is composed of imagery which already exists within the cultural memory of the audience it is appealing to, and is thus accepted without much resistance.

What can be extracted from the influence of pace are the types of rhetorical functions the design methods of the collected documents produce. These rhetorical functions essentially polarize the moral paradigm of the documents by appropriating representation into already established cultural values and assumptions, or by re-appropriating imagery into values not already associated with the topic of HIV/AIDS.The narrative representations which the designers create can be categorized as either:

I) Fast paced, with specific cultural assumptions used to produce an advocacy message.

   Included in this category are Figures **A2**, **A5** and **A6**.

II) Slow paced, with imagery which is not customarily linked to the topic, thus being re-
   appropriated to fit the context of the advocacy message.
   Included in this category are Figures **A1**, **A3** and **A4**.

What is concerning about this dimension of how HIV/AIDS advocacy documents seek to represent people is that the scope of how they are represented seems narrow. Themes of victim-age as well as cultural stigma are still social values embedded within the production of such material. Due to sudden emergence of AIDS as a globalized, and culturally significant health issue, certain cultural groups were identified through racial and gender stereotypes. Using such base level markers of identification is harmful. This is to suggest that, an issue which graphic

designers and professional communicators should be aware of, is that their strategic choices can create inaccurate and/or harmful representations of people through design.

Section 4.1 Discussion – A Hierarchy of Ethical Design Practices

Even in the more benign of the HIV/AIDS advocacy documents, there is a tendency to generalize and create stereotypes in order achieve a cohesive message. Using the documents that were analyzed in this study, a hierarchy of ethical design practices will be illustrated. The ordered list will rate Figures A1 through to A6 based on the following criteria:

C1. How the narrative or conceptual representation of the cultural group depicted within the document is constructed.

C2. The severity of victimization portrayed in the narrative of the document.

figure t3

Document	How Representation is Constructed (C1)	Portrayal of Victimization (C2)
Figure A1 **"Welcome to Condom Country"** AIDS Committee of Toronto	• Affluent caucasian men, which are a characterized in relation to the mimetic nature of the document, referencing imagery from popular culture.	• Notions of victimage are articulated in the text "HIV is on the Rise" in Toronto, which is laid out in a bold typeface. • The design of the document combats the notion of victimage however, by structuring a humorous tone through photography and the headline "Welcome to Condom Country".

Document	How Representation is Constructed (C1)	Portrayal of Victimization (C2)
Figure A2 **"HIV Negative"** AIDS Committee of Toronto	• A gay male figure of Asian descent used as main subject, used to show cultural diversity in the gay community of Toronto. • Personal story is used to convey a fact based, or accountable narrative structure. The story is manifested in both the reflective tone of the copywriting and illustrated in the lethargic nature of the photograph.	• The idea of victimization is found in the narrative text, relaying the burden of his positive status. • It is represented conceptually in the use of shadows to illustrate a dynamic within the photograph to work metaphorically as s symbol for solitude or exclusion. The opaque red wash covering the document accentuates the relationship of the narrative and conceptual representation of the document to the notion of victimage.
Figures A3 and A4 **"AIDS is a Mass Murderer, Hitler and Hussein"** International AIDS Day 2009	• A hypersexualized and violent outlook on how HIV is transmitted. • People with AIDS can be equated to history's most notorious and well recognized villains.	• A dichotomy between demonizing those living with AIDS and victimizing those who are HIV negative is present in the conceptual use of colour, photography and vectors and typography.
Figure A5 *"Children"* The Stephen Lewis Foundation	• Children are seen as passive, and subservient to the charitable structure they are supported by. Intervention by the organization is encouraged and needed.	• Children are at the mercy of their physical/cultural surroundings

Document	How Representation is Constructed (C1)	Portrayal of Victimization (C2)
Figure A6 **"Turning the Tide"** The Stephen Lewis Foundation	• The representation of poverty is achieved through the juxtaposition of Stephen Lewis to children he is holding hands with. • The position of power and dominance the SLF has over the problem. The organization can be viewed as the only ones with the solution.	• Africa is depicted as a burden to both the subject captured in the photograph, and presented as such to the audience reading the imagery. • Both Africa and Children are seen as victims, and synonymous with one another.

Based on the visual analysis conducted on each individual document used in this study, as well as the overview of emerging conventions noted in the discussions section, a set of best practices have been highlighted. The goal of highlighting trends such as best practices is to continue the development of ethical and morally sound ways of developing representations of cultural groups, in the visual design of HIV/AIDS advocacy texts. The following areas of harm reduction have been identified in the production of future campaign advocacy texts:

(I) <u>An awareness of the potential harm that victimizing groups presents</u>; noting cultural inaccuracy, demonization and stigma inducing characteristics in the artist's conception of a document's visual design.

(II) <u>Developing visual representations without aligning people or groups to negative stereotypes</u>. An example of how this is achieved can be seen in the AIDS Committee of Toronto's "Welcome to Condom Country" campaign (Figure A1). The document represents the issue of the rise of

HIV transmission in Toronto's gay community, but does so by deflecting any negative

stereotypes by using humorous narrative. The appropriation of images and conceptual structures

found in popular culture is a key design choice that provides an accessible and less abrasive tone

than many of the other documents analyzed in this study.

(III) Actively focusing on accurately explaining the issue of HIV/AIDS and preventative

measures , instead of solely relying on narrating cultural tensions. Figure A3 can be seen as the

antithesis to the ethical practice of explaining the issue and presenting helpful information.   The

document's main communicative strength is the ability to present narrative tensions while

representing those infected with the virus in a negative light. Figure A2 however, is a step in the

right direction in regards to the explanation of the issue and doing so without solely relying on

cultural tensions. Although the document itself depicts cultural issues or differences that exist

between the community of people infected with HIV versus those who are not, that is not the

sole communicative function of its design. In fact, the main call to action highlights the services

available to gay men, ensuring an informative and articulate solution to the problem the

advertisement presents is explained.

Conclusion

The HIV/AIDS pandemic emerged as a global issue very suddenly, leaving little time for

discourse surrounding any cultural concerns, which have arisen from it. Due to the severity of

the disease, organizations around the world have begun advocating for those affected by HIV/

AIDS. By taking on this task, they have been required to appeal to, and ask an audience to

support their efforts, and have done so by creating a branding of their values through

advertisements. The AIDS Committee of Toronto, The AIDS is a Mass Murderer Campaign and

The Stephen Lewis Foundation have all strategized the production of visual media to promote themselves and their agenda.

This particular study analyzed documents from the aforementioned groups in order to examine what emerging conventions are arising in the production of HIV/AIDS advocacy and awareness advertisements. Design techniques such as the use of colour, the alignment of vectors, the framing of photography, and the layout of typography were closely examined in the six documents collected. Although each of the documents utilized them in unique ways to compose their message, certain emerging conventions were identified. There were two major conventions which were discussed: The first was the use of the colour red as a mechanism to align the documents with the cause they advocated for. The second was the portrayal of victimage through photography and typeface selection, which occurred in a number of the documents. Even though the selection of design techniques was vital in the construction of the advertisements, the understanding of how a message is interpreted through its pace was also a significant aspect of the analysis. Half of the documents (Figures A2, A5 and A6) were categorized as having a slow pace, while the other half (Figures A1, A3 and A4) were categorized as having a fast pace. Categorizing the pace as well as isolating the individual design strategies used in each document proved to be beneficial in understanding the critical and cultural dimensions they produced.

The analysis mostly focused on how representation was achieved through the use of design strategies and pace. By examining how constructions of class, gender, and race were depicted the study was able to draw connections between the application of graphic design and the representation of cultural groups. Through the recognition of the correlation between visual design and theories of representation, a critical evaluation of the moral and ethical values

projected by the documents was also developed. The result of said evaluation was a suggested set

of best practices to be used going forward in the field of professional communication,

specifically in the practice of graphic design and visual communication.

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