

Philip H. Knight, a Stanford University graduate, founded Nike in 1972. In ancient Greek mythology, "Nike" is referred to as the winged goddess of victory, symbolizing 'honored conquest' on the battlefield. Their main purpose of creating such mythical products was to help world's greatest athletes find new levels of achievement, and to also create a new realm of athleticism for average individuals. Nike assures that each customer's wish, needs, cravings, demands, and desires are taken care of. This guarantees that the customer's wants are communicated by their willingness to buy their products. Nike's marketing strategy is one of the main sources of their success. Their idea behind this incredible strategy is to get the best athletes in the world to endorse their product. People all around the world want Michael Jordan's shoes, the want shoes worn by Tiger Woods, Lebron James, etc...

Nike for years has represented their celebrities as sport idols, all knowing, talented humans who are so because they've indulged in the Nike brand. Celebrities provide the images or "Faces" that need no further identification. Wherever they go, they are recognized, and moreover, recognized with some excitement and awe. Whatever they do has publicity value. More or less continuously, over a period of time, they are the material for the media of communication and entertainment. And, when that time ends, as it must, and the celebrity still live as they may from time to time; it may be asked 'Remember him? That is what celebrity means. That is what Nike holds.

After analyzing my favorite ad, Nikes "Find your greatness: The Jogger", I came to the conclusion that greatness is just something we made up. Somehow we came to believe that greatness is a gift reserved for chosen few. For prodigies, for super stars, and the rest of us can only stand by, watching. We can forget that. Greatness is not some rare DNA strand. It's not some precious thing. Greatness is no more unique to us than breathing. WE are all capable of it, all of us.

Nike reached into a controversial sector within the American society and exploited it to their fullest potential. As a company it is extremely unethical to target people like this in order to boost sales around the country. First, Americans could relate to the story. According to the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, obesity affects approximately 35.7% of American adults and 17% of American children. By using a real person, and referring to an issue that harms millions of Americans, Nike gave people a story that was very similar to their own. Second, Americans were inspired by the story. If an overweight boy in Ohio could become active and find his greatness, so could they. Third, Americans were moved by the story. Local Ohio news site Record Herald interviewed Nathan about his experience shooting the commercial, and learned that Nathan and his mother had decided to help each other lose weight and become healthier. Nike had encouraged this decision, suggesting a follow up commercial if they were successful.

On the surface, the signifiers all suggest the "hopeful" messages Nike initially intended for the audiences. However, when we give ourselves more time to think

about the signifiers they are a bit strange and unnatural in many ways. It becomes more evident that the video was scripted and artificially crafted for the audience to brew sympathy for the jogger, who is an obese individual who is breathing heavily in order to achieve his goal. And frankly, such images are not very "usual" or "realistic."

Yet again, Nike's "The Jogger" ad is subtly reminding us with such stereotypes by putting two seemingly "opposite" subjects together. The audience automatically will assume that the jogger is going through a tough time because he is overweight. And it is not only the jogger but also the place setting of the ad seems very odd and surreal. There is only one person (the jogger) that appears in the ad because he is the only person running on the road. Remembering our usual, everyday circumstances, there should be other people running or even walking pass by you. We would start to feel scared and anxious when we are the only ones walking on the street. So, Nike, by attaching stereotypes to the obese protagonist, is actually contradicting its intended message that greatness does not belong to any specific group. "Greatness" shines even brighter when achieved by someone unexpected like the overweight jogger.

Through Nikes exploitation of markets one can see how they always contradict themselves. They are an American based company, but make their products in sweatshops overseas in other countries. My position is that Nike is a major shoe company who is taking advantage of not only our country, but countries all around the world. Though they preach the evil of sweatshops, they continue to exploit them in developing countries. Children working in a sweatshop are held under gruesome working conditions. Many of them are forced to work a 9-hour workday. When the workers started to get better wages, Nike decided to look for new places to build sweatshops. These places were China and Vietnam. These two countries were perfect because of their relaxed labor laws. In China and Vietnam Employees are prohibited from making independent trade unions. This is a big plus for Nike because there are no organized groups to strike or fight for more rights in the workplace. Child Labor laws are very lenient in most of the countries that Nike has established its self in. Nike is currently working with these developing nations to make their child labor laws stricter, which masks the vast amount of exploitation occurring. Research shows that as of now Nike has established sweatshops, which are located in South Korea, Taiwan, China, Indonesia, and Vietnam.