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Public Speaking
Advertising Paper - Analysis

The Greatness Ad

I found it difficult to find the ad but the one that came immediately to mind when hearing the topic, the one that sparked my interest most was: the Nike ad “find your greatness” which depicts an overweight Nathan Sorrell jogging down a road. This advertisement makes effective use of the Aristotels’ ethos, pathos, and logos to persuade its audience. Though some believe that is not the case. Though no matter how you cut it, the intentions were good, the ad tries to inspire viewers to pursue their own definition of greatness which is why I feel inclined by it in some ways; and obviously to associate Nike with that pursuit because it is a business at the end of the day. Their credibility, or rather their Ethos is enhanced dramatically by using real people, everyday people like you and I who could possibly be the person watching. Beyond this Nike has already gained a reputation as a name brand in athletic attire so that could act as credibility as well. The depiction of the boy running gets my heart to race at some moments which in my mind shows an effective message. Talking more personally, by showing someone who I believe to look like me and saying that greatness isn’t reserved for the prodigies and showing him attempting to achieve that greatness he is capable of just makes me feel included and boosts relatability. As far as I am concerned, this is also a great trust builder through the good message it has. In terms of pathos, the advert has incredible emotional appeal and does evoke strong emotions in the viewer. Just having almost the noise of nature in the background allows you to truly hear the

silence and pay attention when the narrator speaks and says “we’re all capable of it” strikes a chord on the emotional end. The visuals of the ad are incredibly powerful and add to this 10 fold, featuring a scene of a boy pushing their limits and overcoming challenges, jogging down an empty dirt road towards the future. These images give some feelings of inspiration and motivation almost beckoning the viewers to also pursue the greatness within them too. Finally, logic/logos is not lacking either, the British guy explicitly states that greatness is not reserved for a select few, but is within arms reach because “we are all capable of it” we just need to try. This message is reinforced by the tagline “Find Your Greatness,” which encourages viewers to focus on their own personal goals rather than comparing themselves to others. The ad also uses the tools of persuasion to make its point. The use of images, emotion, credibility, logic, sound, design, and more, to all work together creating a powerful and inspiring message. As an example of this, the idea of showing uncharacteristic plains and a dirt road makes it so that you focus on the focal point, the boy jogging. The design of the entire scene allows for the viewer to put the entirety of their focus on the boy, which is genius, and as mentioned before it is silent, allowing the viewer to take each word said to heart. The target audience of the ad appears to be people of all ages who are interested in sports, fitness, and physical activity, and those who need a push to pursue greatness or had the false belief they didn’t have it. By featuring a boy who seems fairly young, the ad also seems to be targeting parents who want to encourage their children to stay active and pursue their dreams, after all this is a superbowl advertisement so more likely than not it is the parents watching this. While I do believe it was a great advertisement I should recognize some other opinions briefly, the editor-in-chief of the

journal *Childhood Obesity*, David L. Katz, does think that Nike went “down the wrong road”. They recognize the intentions of the ad were pure but they also see that the idea of him running propagates the idea that Obesity is a barrier to greatness, which it is not. I see this critique fully after reading it but I do believe that it doesn’t change my opinion, not due to me believing they are wrong but more so due to the fact that I believe I see more value out of it than the negatives of that unintentional message. Even Alice G. Walton recognized the “disparaging critique of the ad” but still got goosebumps from it and also argued against that fact, saying “If the ad had featured him doing anything else besides the one to which his obesity is an obvious barrier, it would have not only made no sense, it would actually have been offensive.” These are the two best argumentative papers I found and I believe they have good critiques of the ad as a whole though I didn’t allow them to shape my thoughts of it. Overall, Nike’s “Find Your Greatness” advertisement is well done and uses Aristotels’ rhetorical appeals in a good way as well as various tools of persuasion, all in order to inspire greatness within the user and reach heights one could have never imagined.

Bibliography

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Find Your Greatness Ad: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XcbSCnUXOkk>