Nike – Ripple (ft. Tiger Woods and Rory Mcllroy)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CdhWhgA8Y0A

**Signifier:** The signifier would be identified as Nike Golf equipment and apparel.

**Signified:** The signified and overall concept of the commercial is to demonstrate how Rory Mcllroy worshipped Tiger Woods as he was growing up and aspiring to become a professional golfer.

**Image:** This commercial shows the many stages of Rory Mcllroy’s life, as well as the progression of Tiger Wood’s career throughout the years. The commercial starts off by showing a young Mcllroy admiring Woods on the television and hanging up
posters of him around his room. Then, it shows McIlroy practicing and putting golf balls in his living room with a toy club. The commercial continues by showing McIlroy aging into a teenager and adult, where he would continue to watch Woods play on the television and at competitions. Woods inspired him to keep on practicing to become a better golfer. The ad shows McIlroy practicing in the cold and rain, telling us that he was determined. The end of the commercial shows McIlroy and Woods, side by side, competing at a tournament. The commercial leaves us with the strong thought that both of these men were inspired by someone to become a successful golfer, and they will inspire many other people in the world to follow the same path.

**Denotation:** At the denotative level, this is a Nike golf advertisement featuring professional golfers Tiger Woods and Rory McIlroy. This two-minute long commercial shows the different stages of McIlroy’s life, from childhood to adulthood, as he works hard at achieving his goal of becoming a professional golfer like his role model, Tiger Woods. He ultimately reaches his goal and has the ability to compete and win against the veteran golfer.

**Connotation:** At the connotative level, the ad focuses on the growth of McIlroy. From a young prodigy who used to chip golf balls into washing machines to a professional golfer, the ad emphasized how Woods was a constant influence and inspiration to McIlroy the entire way. The commercial is especially personal and emotional by how it shows the process of McIlroy’s hard work being paid off and him establishing a career.

**Interpellation:** The idea behind the making of this commercial was based on the great story told by McIlroy’s uncle to New York Magazine about how a 9-year-old McIlroy once wrote a letter to Tiger letting him know that a kid from Northern Ireland was coming after him. This tells us that from the very beginning, McIlroy was determined to be as good as, if not better than Tiger Woods. By the age of 21,
McIlroy had already established himself as a talent for the ages, which stuck interest with Nike wanting him as an endorser.

Symbol: On behalf of Nike, McIlroy represents the new face of Nike Golf. At the current age of 25, McIlroy is one of the youngest and most successful professional golfers. Tiger Woods, at the current age of 39, began his professional golf career when he was 20 years old. In 2000, Woods became an endorser for Nike Golf and became one of the highest-paid athletes of all time. Due to his more recent infidelity scandal, Woods’ reputation was tarnished. Despite his fallout and mistakes, Nike decided to keep Woods as an endorser, as they tried to gain back the respect and popularity from his fans through their advertising. Ultimately, Woods represents the old face of Nike Golf, and McIlroy can be viewed as his successor. McIlroy is Nike’s young, talented fresh face and symbolizes a new beginning for Nike Golf.

Synchronic Analysis: In the relative present, Tiger Woods is often viewed by the public as a washed up athlete due to his fallout and failure to win competitions. On the other hand, Rory McIlroy is a newly introduced, talented athlete that encompasses all of the exceptional traits Nike wants and sees in an endorser. Nike is using this commercial to show McIlroy and Woods in present time, side by side, creating a “ripple effect” and influencing aspiring golfers.

Diachronic Analysis: Over time, the commercial shows the different stages of McIlroy’s life as he progresses into the professional athlete he is today. Also, this commercial, “Ripple”, tells the story of two athletes and their respective paths to greatness. Over the years, McIlroy watched and admired Woods’ athleticism and he learned from him. Woods explained that he was in McIlroy’s shoes when he was growing up, as he idolized professional golfer Jack Nicklaus. Both athletes grew up admiring a specific athlete with the intentions of someday competing against them, and that is exactly what they did.
**Syntagmatic Analysis:** This commercial features a series of events that leads to McIlroy reaching his goal of someday competing against his role model. As a child and teenager, McIlroy watched Woods play on the television and even went to watch him win his first championship at the Masters. Woods was McIlroy’s inspiration for practicing and bettering his skills with the intentions of becoming an exceptional golfer. Because of Woods, McIlroy was determined to make it big, and the commercial successful demonstrates his fulfilled goal.

**Jingoism:** Both athletes have a strong fan base. Woods’ fan base is comprised of relatively older individuals, whereas McIlroy appeals to a younger audience. Both athletes are respectable and will continue to gain attention as endorsers for Nike.

**Intertextuality:** We have seen this sign before with other athletes who have looked up to professionals and used them as inspiration to become like them. Like mentioned before, Tiger Woods idolized professional golfer Jack Nicklaus when he was growing up. Like Woods and McIlroy, many young and aspiring athletes have professional role models and set goals for themselves. No matter what sport, current professional athletes all looked up to someone when they were young.