



Images of Athena and Hera in Nike's 'Goddess' Campaign

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abstract

In 2002 Nike launched a new initiative, its 'Goddess' campaign in an attempt to overcome its historical inability to market effectively to women. The campaign sought to differentiate the physical space of its Niketown stores from a more feminine 'Goddess' inspired retail space. The perceived necessity of this campaign, along with the status of the Nike case as a management education classic, prompted a re-examination of the culture in the senior levels of the company. The lens through which this re-examination took place was a small quilt, which played with ideas about goddesses and gender, and which allowed a close critical reading of the coverage of the campaign in the media. Through the lens, a picture of Nike emerges which is hyper-masculine and which distorts images of the feminine to the point where it seems unlikely that the 'Goddess' initiative will have a great deal of lasting success.

About two years ago I was teaching an undergraduate module called 'Managing Change'. We used two cases on the programme, Pepsi and Nike. Of the two, I found the Nike case the more interesting, and I began to scan newspapers and journals for material on the company that I could use to supplement the course material. One of the key questions on the module was about the impact of history on organisational ability to change, and it seemed from my reading of the case and the supplementary material that Nike had certain striking characteristics, almost all of them historical, that meant that it was extremely unlikely that it would be able to change radically. One article in particular caught my eye: 'Nike Women's Movement' which appeared in *Fast Company* in August 2002. *Fast Company* is an American magazine which luxuriates, as its name suggests, in the discourse of rapid and discontinuous change. Protean, speed-driven change, often with a confrontational or even gladiatorial edge is celebrated in its articles. The cover of the issue in question, for example, featured headlines such as, 'Why IBM wants to SMASH strategy' and 'Power Play: what women can teach men about business'. In the Nike article, Fara Warner set up a story about Nike, frustrated in its attempts to market to women, launching a new marketing campaign. In a brilliantly incisive headline to the article, Warner asked:

Can a famously high-testosterone company, built on brash ads and male athletic fantasies click with female customers? That's the challenge behind Nike Goddess, whose goal is a once-for-all shift in how the company sells to, designs for and communicates with women. (Warner, 2002: 70)

This one elegantly concise headline seemed to me at once to pose and answer its own question. What follows here attempts to demonstrate why.

It is worth stating at the outset that the case that I was working with was what is sometimes euphemistically described as a 'classic'. This inevitably means 'old' and this particular case dated from 1984 (Rikert and Christensen, 1984; Christensen and Rikert, 1984), although it had been revised in 1999. The merit of the case, however, was that it outlined the origins of the company, and had, presumably, been signed off by Nike as an accurate account of events. From my reading of the A case and the B case, a picture of a company emerged which I was able to triangulate through other published sources and a trip to Niketown in Oxford Circus, London. The cases established a truly 'high-testosterone company', in fact one which seemed to have emerged fully-formed from the Fraternity House. Thus:

Nike's senior group was unique. In the words of one inside observer, 'They are entrepreneurs - with a capital E.' While many were athletes, or at least read the sports pages first, the strong bonds among them seemed to reflect a camaraderie based on deeper, shared values: a desire to accomplish something of value, a healthy cynicism, self-confidence, a willingness to be a part of a team. They were proud of their achievements, but most could step back and poke a little fun at themselves, too. (Christensen and Rikert, 1984: 3)

Applying to work with this senior group, also known as the 'Friday Club', must have been like trying out for the football team, and indeed the structure chart forming Exhibit two of the case showed no women in the company in its top five levels, and the only one in the chart was Mary Ann White as head of Design-Apparel. Bob Woodell, head of worldwide marketing, added to this macho image in his nostalgic description of the early days of the company:

Del Hayes [head of manufacturing and development] has an expression we quote a lot: 'We like people who aren't afraid to strap on a tin bill and pick s--- with the chickens.' We really like that. One of my frustrations is that I don't get to do anything anymore. I just *talk* - to people all the time. In the olden days, we had shipping problems once, and Hayes and Knight [founder and president] and I started going over to the warehouse to help ship shoes. We probably f----- up more orders than we got out, but we felt great - we were *doing* something about a problem. Actually we did get a few shoes out, and we had fun ourselves, and I think that sent a signal to some people. (Christensen and Rikert, 1984: 4)

Warner picks up the locker room mentality at the company in the *Fast Company* article:

For much of its history, Nike's destiny was controlled by its founders, the running buddies who sold shoes out of their trunks, signed up athletes in locker rooms and made executive decisions at retreats called 'Buttfaces'. (Warner, 2002: 72)

So a picture emerges of a bunch of guys 'goofing around' and having fun - if you are an insider, although the frat pack mentality seemed to have struck the case researchers forcibly. Christensen and Rikert felt moved to include the following in their preamble to the case:

One final note: the researchers found the NIKE language system studded with expletives. We have attempted in these pages to find that perhaps elusive line between scholarly accuracy and out-of-context impropriety. (Christensen and Rikert, 1984: 2)

The machismo of the company can also be glimpsed in Woodell's account of decision making at the company:

[A]ll four of us look at different things from different points of view, too. We're able to challenge each other and fight like hell. But there is never ever a doubt that you are arguing and fighting with one of the best friends you've got in the world, so the issue is not the friendship, not the human being. The issue is the issue. We just argue like hell, and have the ability to come to a common agreement, if that in fact is what's required. (Christensen and Rikert, 1984: 4-5)

The model here is of decision making by endurance or by combat: the one who wins the fight gets his own way.

The hyper masculinity of the company was confirmed for me on my first visit to Niketown. Before I even entered the store I was struck by the hubris behind the name. The shop stands on one corner of Oxford Circus at one of the busiest intersections of some of the most famous streets in the world and yet the territory had been claimed for Nike, and indeed, by implication, one of the great cities of the world, London, colonised by the company. Inside the shop I was struck by two things, the design aesthetics and the corporate mythology. The building has the feel of a temple. It is approached under a cupola and the customer is invited to ascend to a platform which leads to a massive pillar which goes right to the roof, and, as our view is obscured, by implication, to the sky. There are a number of floors in the building with the merchandise carefully ranged around the outer circumference of the circular inner space. At intervals one can move along passages guarded by mannequins and approach the inner sanctum of the central pillar. The pillar is encrusted with images of honed bodies engaged in vigorous athletic pursuits like a technicolor gymnasium. The invitation to encircle and mount the central column is extended through the baroque use of brightly coloured images which, combined with the loud rap music and brilliant lighting, assault and overwhelm the shopper/worshipper. Once inside the core there are relics to be admired from the early days of the company and wise words from Phil Knight's mentor, Bill ('Coach') Bowerman. Bowerman was the co-founder of Nike with Phil Knight, and he is credited with inventing jogging through his co-authored book *Jogging: A Physical Fitness Programm for All Ages*. Although Bowerman is no longer present, his influence lives on in the company. An advertisement included in the case has the headline: 'The Spirit that Moves Us' and opens with the following paragraph:

For 24 years at the University of Oregon, he never recruited. And when the athletes came to him, he put them to work in sawmills. Cut anyone who couldn't keep up the grades. He knew more people succeed because of mental toughness than physical ability. (Christensen and Rikert, 1984: 21)

Thus Bowerman's association with a macho image of development and coaching is ensured. This is not a business for wimps. The copy also contains another theme which is vital to the Nike culture:

Bill Bowerman. Stubborn, demanding. Given to sudden outbursts and moments of magical insight. (Christensen and Rikert, 1984: 21)

The theme of magic and the supernatural runs throughout Nike lore. It is not enough to be tough, one must be heroically tough in the manner of the Greek heroes. This is a theme which will be seen to be important later. To return to Niketown, Bowerman's spirit infuses the core as legends such as the following are painted on the wall: 'If you're not training for match day, you'd better have a pole through your gut' and 'Taped nipples don't chafe, they just hurt like bloody hell when the tape comes off'.

Speaking from a position of embodied knowledge and felt meaning, it seems to me that not only will this kind of discourse not attract women customers, it will actively alienate them, and a proportion of male ones too. With all this in mind, I began to reflect on this question of Nike and its Goddess campaign.



My own reflective practice contains an unusual element. I make textile pieces. I begin with a stimulus such as a case I have to teach or a quotation in something that I am reading that leaps out at me (such as Audre Lorde's [1984] chilling analysis of so much that is undertaken in the name of organisational diversity: 'The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house'). I let the text incubate for a while and make notes on it in a research diary. Making a note of ideas I have or letting them emerge during the writing, I then sit down at my sewing table and make a piece of work spontaneously which allows me to represent in non-verbal form my thoughts and feelings about the texts. When I have done this I put the piece on the wall or somewhere else where I can see it and ask it what it has to tell me. I carry on this dialogue through a research diary in which I begin writing and wait to see what emerges. None of this process is particularly easy to explain, but I believe that it accesses tacit or subconscious thoughts and ideas about the text based in my own experience.

I began to think about Nike and to play with ideas about it as a gendered entity. It seemed entirely appropriate to think in archetypes as the goddess is just such a notion. The corporate lore is also full of references to events given supernatural significance by

the language in which they are recorded and the reverence with which they are treated. An example is found in the following quotation from Ned Frederick, one of Nike's R&D specialists:

When we do it right, the shoe has magic. You pick it up and it glows with the concern that Nike has with the athlete, the care we take in designing and making the shoe. There is something in our shoe that is special. (Rickert and Christensen, 1984:13)

And the very name of the company, which began as Blue Ribbon Sports, and was to become Nike, came to the company's first full-time employee, Jeff Johnson, "in a dream" (Rickert and Christensen, 1984: 8). One of the strongest and most enduring of Nike's foundation myths is also recounted in these terms:

Around that time [1972] Bowerman had an *epiphany* at the kitchen table while his wife was at church. He was staring at the waffle iron when the idea hit him so hard that he forgot to spray the inside of the family waffle iron with the greasy release compound he used to make his molds. He stuffed the waffle iron full of modeling clay, but he couldn't get the clay out without a pliers [sic]. Then he drove to the store and came home with six new waffle irons, disappeared into his basement, and went to work. The result was a black, waffle shaped sole that made the new bright blue and yellow-Swooshed Nikes brought to market in 1977 feel like bedroom slippers. (Katz, 1994: 65; emphasis added)

The waffle iron story, which has the same momentous quality as Alfred burning the cakes, is retold often. In a children's book about Nike and the value of partnership working, the story is told in similar terms:

In 1972, Bill made what was probably his greatest contribution to Nike. While sitting at the breakfast table, he began eating waffles and thinking about sneaker soles. Suddenly he had an inspiration. He ran to the garage with the waffle iron and poured rubber on it. With that one idea, Bill created Nike's now famous 'waffle sole'. (Greenberg, 1994: 34-5)

The waffle iron story is retold in Niketown and at the time of writing the store was selling a shoe called 'Waffle'. These moments of seemingly divine intervention, then, are central to Nike's corporate culture. The company frames its origins in mythologised terms and seeks to promulgate them through the artefacts lovingly displayed in its London store at least, and in its nomenclature for its merchandise.



With this in mind, I decided to work with the idea of the goddess. I did some free association and the name of Sean O'Casey's play, *Juno and the Paycock*, came to mind. But because Nike is a Greek goddess of victory, it seemed more fitting to think about Hera, the wife of Zeus and chief among the Greek female divinities. As I played with this idea, from somewhere I had the inspiration to make the body of the peacock a gigantic Nike swoosh. The swoosh is vital to Nike's brand. Goldman and Papson, discussing the cultural significance of this trademark, state:

We live in a cultural economy of signs and *Nike's swoosh* is currently the most recognisable brand icon in that economy. *Nike's swoosh* is a commercial symbol that has come to stand for athletic excellence, a spirit of determination, hip authenticity, and playful self-awareness. (Goldman and Papson, 1998: 1)

Other, less kind, responses are to call it the 'swooshstika' or the 'fat check'. The quilt became titled, *Nike and the Swooshcock*.

I created the peacock tail from a piece of hand-dyed fabric and appliquéd the eyes in its tail from extreme close-ups of high-tech fibres, in this case a cagoule and a pair of swimming trunks creating a new fabric from a colour photocopy transferred to a laminate of PVA adhesive, which struck me as appropriate in a work about a company devoted to the technological excellence of its products. Around the eyes I worked chain stitch by hand with a heavy thread. The body of the peacock was made from gold lamé fabric which was quilted to suggest stylised feathers. When I had finished the piece I was slightly disappointed with it. It lacked the depth and ambivalence of some of my other pieces. It was too obvious and too clinical. It was too pat. It has never been one of my favourite pieces of work.



What was interesting about this piece, however, was its afterlife. I made it to take to a conference and showed it to a few interested people. Stating what I had missed, but what was absolutely directly in front of my eyes, an Australian man took one look and said, 'That's a great big golden erect penis'. And, of course, it is. This was my most interesting insight. Even when I, at a complete remove from the company, try to create something associating Nike with the feminine, something hyper-masculine emerges. I went back to the case. There, at the back of the A case, was an advertisement for a women's shoe, the Aurora, part of the Columbia range. The copy was startling:

To be honest, our Columbia isn't *exactly* like their Columbia. But talk about thrust. Wait until you're atop that refined AirSole™. It's not quite the same as 6.65 million pounds of rocket propellant. But it's enough to move you about two percent faster, or two percent farther.... The Aurora. For women only. (Rikert and Christensen, 1984: 22, emphasis in original)

And the photograph was of a sports shoe blasting, entirely perpendicular, from the earth, propelled by two jets of flame. The phallic nature of the imagery was inescapable.

Over and above considerations of phallic imagery, it seemed to me that a critical examination of Nike's notion of the goddess itself might bear further investigation. Hera was an obvious starting point given the quilt that I had made, but so also was Nike, or Nike Athena, herself.

Definitions of what the goddess might be tend to fall into two categories: the goddess as a bundle of cultural assumptions about femininity, and a representation of psychic energy. Thus, Woolger and Woolger, in their consideration of the sorts of goddess roles open to contemporary women, suggest:

By *goddess* we mean a psychological description of a complex female character type that we intuitively recognise both in ourselves and in the women around us, as well as in the images and icons that are everywhere in our culture. (Woolger and Woolger, 1987: 7)

Baring and Cashford add an evaluative element in their definition of the goddess as

the feminine principle, which manifests itself in mythological history as 'the goddess' and in cultural history as the values placed upon spontaneity, feeling, instinct and intuition. (Baring and Cashford, 1993: xii)

The insistence on the place of intuition in these two accounts is significant, as it is my feeling that the making of the quilt in a spontaneous way also allows me to work with my intuition about the company and the case. Finally, Bowles (1993), following Jung, suggests that both gods and goddesses represent transpersonal psychic energy through their manifestation as archetypes. This notion of an archetype, whether supernaturally or culturally produced, is important in understanding Nike's relationship to the goddess.

What, then, do Hera and Nike Athena represent? Hera was the starting point for the quilt. Hera appears to have been an appropriation of a pre-existing Great Goddess archetype in the territories conquered by the Greeks (Baring and Cashford, 1993). In this incarnation she is the Queen of Heaven:

I sing of Hera on her golden throne:
immortal queen, daughter of Rhea,

eminent indeed:
she was the sister and the wife
of great Zeus, the thunderer,
glorious is she, honoured on Olympus,
revered of all the gods,
the equal of Zeus, wielder of lightning
(The Homeric Hymn to Hera quoted in Woolger and Woolger, 1987: 175)

Hera's forced marriage to Zeus, however, is not a happy one, and the queen of heaven with her diadem, her pomegranate, symbol of conjugal love and fruitfulness, and her peacock, "whose spangled plumage reveals the stars in the vault of heaven" (Guirand, 1974: 106) is soon turned by her husband's continual infidelities into the stereotypical nagging, scheming, shrewish wife. Her power has been taken from her through a campaign of ridicule, and, as Woolger and Woolger point out, she becomes largely male identified hanging onto what little power she has through the position of her husband. In this way she is the perfect embodiment of the voice in the controversial Nike advertising campaign in 1995 which centred on the line 'If you let me play'. Goldman and Papson (1998) describe what they call the 'spot' which

features a turn-taking of girls' voices as they recite the long-term advantages in their lives if they play sports. Shown in tight facial close-ups, the young girls solemnly speak in soundbites that sound as if they have been scripted by social scientists and women's health advocates. The encounter with children speaking adult thoughts is initially startling, as they stare into the camera and flatly intone:

If you let me play
If you let me play sports
I will like myself more.
I will have more self-confidence.
If you let me play sports,
If you let me play
If you let me play
I will be 60% less likely to get breast cancer
I will suffer less depression.
If you let me play sports
I will be more likely to leave a man who beats me.
If you let me play
I will be less likely to get pregnant before I want to.
I will learn
I will learn what it means to be strong
To be strong
If you let me play
Play sports
If you let me play sports.

Just do it
[Swoosh symbol] (Goldman and Papson, 1998: 132-133)

The advertisement caused controversy because of the dependent image of women it embodied. Its aim, according to Goldman and Papson, was to raise awareness and to be provocative, but if we consider it in the light of the Hera archetype, it is less convincing in its irony. Hera was beaten, the outcome of her pregnancies were not entirely successful (Woolger and Woolger, 1987), and she learned how to be strong in a very particular way. As Woolger and Woolger suggest, Hera-energy at its worst can be about

living under male jurisdiction and through male permission. This is more rather than less likely to lead to depression as Hera learns to deal with “the pain of powerlessness” (Woolger and Woolger, 1987: 200). The theme is echoed in Darcy Winslow’s conditions before she took on the role of head of Women’s Global Footwear:

I wanted men and women to be allies, not competitors... And I wanted a seat at the table. The women’s business had to be core to Nike. (Warner, 2002: 74)

The fact that she felt that she had to ask suggests the relationships were not in place.

If Hera is dependent for her power and influence on her husband, Zeus, Athena is dependent on him for her very existence. Athena is remarkable because she sprang, fully formed and armed, from the head of Zeus. Graves retells the story:

Zeus lusted after Metis the Titaness, who turned into many shapes to escape him until she was caught at last and got with child. An oracle of Mother Earth then declared that this would be a girl-child and that if Metis conceived again, she would bear a son who was fated to depose Zeus, just as Zeus had deposed Cronus, and Cronus had deposed Uranus. Therefore having coaxed Metis to a couch with honeyed words, Zeus suddenly opened his mouth and swallowed her, and that was the end of Metis, though he claimed afterwards that she gave him counsel from inside his belly. In due process of time, he was seized by a raging headache as he walked by the shores of Lake Triton, so that his skull seemed about to burst, and he howled for rage until the firmament echoed. Up ran Hermes, who at once divined the cause of Zeus’s discomfort. He persuaded Hephaestus, or some say Prometheus, to fetch his wedge and beetle and make a breach in Zeus’s skull, from which Athena sprang, fully armed, with a mighty shout. (Graves, 1955/1960: 46)

Graves suggests that one reading of this myth is as a “desperate theological expedient to rid her of her matriarchal conditions” (Harrison, cited in Graves, 1955/1960: 46) and the establishment of wisdom as a male attribute. Thus the myth of the birth of Athena can be seen as the appropriation of wisdom and the previously female prerogative of childbearing. Certainly Athena was “the most masculine of the ancient Greek goddesses” (Shepherd and Shepherd, 2002: 105). She is male-identified. She is one of the boys. She is on the side of men in just wars. She loves battle cries and the noise of war. She was “called the companion of heroes by the Greeks” (Woolger and Woolger, 1987: 45). She is associated with the *metis*, the mind, and the role of the mind in solving problems and unravelling dilemmas. Although she is also associated with ‘womanly’ crafts such as wool working and embroidery, as well as carpentry, the success of these crafts “depends upon holding in the mind an image of the end” (Baring and Cashford, 1993: 338). However, two things have happened to Athena by the time she comes to represent these qualities. The first is that her representation as a terrifying figure “wreathed in snakes” (Baring and Cashford, 1993: 332) and carrying the severed head of her enemy has disappeared. She wears the helmet of truth and intellect. The second is that her virginity is intact. Her temple on the Acropolis in Athens is called the Parthenon from *parthenos* meaning ‘virgin’. So while Athena is identified as the friend of heroes, the relationship is platonic. She is a mate, a friend, rather than a lover. The relationship is mental rather than inconveniently physical.

The final aspect of Athena as a Nike goddess is highlighted indirectly by Bowles. He quotes from Bolen; “The Goddess did not concern herself with asking, “Is it fair or is this moral?” (Bolen, 1989: 103). Bowles goes on:

Effectiveness is the only criterion for Athenean consciousness; there is little or no ethical dimension. This explains the capacity of organizations characterized by an Athenean consciousness to enter in areas of illegal and/or unethical action. (Bowles, 1993: 408)

Nike has not been short of critics of its business ethics (Carty, 1997; van Tulder and Kolk, 2001; Beder, 2002; Skapinker, 2002, *Ecologist*, 2003). And it is deeply ironic that the company has frequently been criticised for its treatment of its female workers in the developing world. Boje has been one of its most vocal and sustained critics citing the abuse of women workers in several Asian locations:

There have been abundant reports of Nike corporal punishment: women in China being locked in cages for poor sewing (Chan, 1996), arrests of workers for organizing in Indonesia (Ballinger, 1997), seven toilets for ten thousand workers in Indonesia, forced marching while chanting corporate slogans like 'Loyalty to your boss, loyalty to your boss' (Manning, 1997), sexual abuse in Vietnam (Nguyen, 1996, 1997), and the 'ophoi nang' method of employee discipline (Manning, 1997). In Vietnamese, ophoi nang means sun-drying. (Boje, n.d: 3)

As Boje points out, Nike's status as a virtual company which does not manufacture anything directly allows it to absolve itself of any misdoing. Female workers are abused by factory owners and supervisors who are not Nike employees.

To summarise the implications of this revisiting of the goddess archetypes that my intuition provided for reflection on Nike and its difficulties selling to women, we can see that the images of the feminine are impoverished and trivialised in some way. As Baring and Cashford suggest:

At a superficial glance, for instance, the great goddess Hera becomes a jealous vengeful wife... Athena, goddess of the snake and shield, becomes the masculinized daughter of intellect, born through the forehead of Zeus as though she were exclusively the product of his own creative mind. (Baring and Cashford, 1993: 302)

The goddesses are diminished, male-identified, and dependent on the patriarchy for their power.

How, then, does this fit with the thinking behind Nike Goddess? The point of the campaign was to create spaces in Nike stores that were more welcoming to women than the hyper-masculine stores described above. John Hoke, "star designer and Nike veteran" (Warner, 2002: 72), explains his vision:

'I got used to hearing people describe us as brutal,' says Hoke, the designer behind most Niketowns. 'But that's because our initial reaction to selling the Nike brand was to turn up the volume. Goddess is about turning the volume down. 'I wanted people to come in and take a breath.' (Warner, 2002: 74)

The diminution of the imagery or psychic energy available to women has begun before the first store is off the drawing board. Hoke looked for his inspiration to the 1950s designers and Palm Springs Modernism. He thought that this would capture everything that women would want in a shop:

'Women weren't comfortable in our stores', he says. 'So I figured out where they would be comfortable – most likely in their own homes. The store has more of a residential feel. I wanted it to have furnishings, not fixtures. *Above all, I didn't want it to be girly.*' (Warner, 2002: 74, emphasis added)

In this statement Hoke embeds two thousand years of misogyny beginning with the extraordinarily patriarchal culture of the Greeks. There is no question here of Nike transforming itself to achieve inclusiveness. If the girls don't want to come and play in our space we will make them one of their own. And the space is that of Hera, the domestic interior. The choice becomes the home in a reinvention of the dualistic framing of the public for men and the private for women. Except here it is not even a real home, but an aspirational one of the TV makeover show, or glossy interior magazine:

It's light blue and white, with dark wood floors. Milky white mannequins with muscles fill floor-to-ceiling windows. Shoes are displayed on tables or wooden shelves alongside pieces of Jonathon Adler pottery and white orchids. (Warner, 2002: 74)

There is Athena in the guise of a 'milky white mannequin', frozen, immobile, incarcerated in a male fantasy of a domestic interior, provided for her as the all-powerful alpha-male husband might provide for Hera. Other possibilities such as bars and cafes, or school playgrounds, do not seem to have been considered. Even this diminished vision of a woman's space is further diluted:

Lady Foot Locker will incorporate part of Nike Goddess's retail philosophy into its 600 stores. Nordstrom plans to take much of the Goddess look, shrink it, and install it in its highest traffic stores. Macy's Herald Square, in New York is getting a smaller version of a Goddess store later this year. (Warner, 2002: 74)

But the most striking part of Hoke's vision is that, 'Above all, I didn't want it to be girlie'. For Nike, the feminine is Athena: the battle ready, honed and toned friend of heroes who doesn't bother the boys with all that leaking and oozing, messy 'girlie' stuff. The energy of Athena informs the initiative as a whole. Nike Goddess is a heroic, masculine project; this is one last titanic battle, one last push for victory, a "once-and-for-all shift" (Warner, 2002: 70). And it is Athena and Nike, rather than an elemental Mother Goddess or a distracting Aphrodite who are pressed into service to help.

As the quilt, *Nike and the Swooshcock*, suggests it is a fundamentally masculine energy which suffuses Nike and will continue to inform its relations with its female customers. The quilt is a lens which allows me to examine the case closely in order to make sense of it for myself, but it is also a receiving device which allows me to hear the intuitive signals from the case. And the method, embroidery and textile work, possibly allows me to reclaim some of Athena's neglected feminine energy and reintegrate it into with my own Athena-identified life of the mind.

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