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Rhetorical Analysis Paper

A pivotal moment overshadows the global airline industry. The decline of US airlines, the skyrocketing of ticket prices, and the skydiving of air traffic all suggest such a capsizing in the market. According to research by the independent firm Skift, U.S. airline market share has dropped 16% in the last seven years. This is despite the fact that, as stated by Anna Incorporated, the average American today would travel 45% more frequently than 10 years ago if inflation-adjusted prices were held constant. Without a doubt, we Americans possess a commonplace that we value global exploration. Thus, from such a kairotic moment in the industry results the germination of foreign competition in the US market; airlines from the Middle East to Germany alike are in heated competition in the domestic market; their ads litter both America's billboards and Super Bowl ads. Emirates' online video commercial hailing their American-built Boeing 777 and Lufthansa's emotional roadside billboard adhering their service to individual travelers only inflate such a phenomenon of rivalry. The successes and weaknesses of both the Emirates commercial and the Lufthansa billboard ad germinate from their divergent constructions of their audience, in that Emirates prioritizes collective American society as a whole while Lufthansa only casts light onto the individual travelers.

The magnetic repulsion of the ads is immediately palpable in their appeals to ethos. Both airlines claim to provide an appealing product for *all* their customers, but the nature of Emirates organization and their consistently higher ranking than their rival renders their arguments in the commercial more linkable to the customer's crevices. Yes, the Lufthansa billboard does exhibit ethos through its membership as "A Star Alliance Member," the same airline alliance as the major

US carrier United Airlines. Such an implication does attract certain frequent fliers but fails to pull the entire American public audience the same way Emirates does. Emirates directly articulates that their 777 is built by Boeing, a nameplate in the American industry since its founding in 1916, and much a more recognizable brand to the average American than Star Alliance. The fact that the workers place their grunt into their job and always look back at the great American plane unfolding gives a sense of reality that this 777 isn't a cheaply made product like a knockoff iPhone or Coach Bag. Lufthansa also flies an array of primarily Boeing aircraft, but such a connection to its American audience lies outside the billboard's 4 corners. While Lufthansa has won a couple regional air awards, none are expressed in the ad that flying with Lufthansa would qualify as a memorable experience. Emirates, meanwhile, not only states an award but goes above and beyond in that their "2011 Airline of the Year" award is given by the USA-based Air Transportation World Award. Such an appeal to credibility gives even the most opinionated Americans that their own community has recommended Emirates as the best way to explore our world; thus it entices a whole community to fly with their "award winning" air services.

However, Emirates could have articulated its diversity more effectively. Yes, the construction workers are a diverse team, but their cabin crew itself is kept off the sideline. Emirates' cabin crew come from 140 countries; why not show a sense of pride in this? Meanwhile, the position of the light shine onto the traveler's face in the Lufthansa commercial makes his ethnicity one of many. He could be Indian, European, American, South African, among others, which in turn emphasizes the vast array of destinations that Lufthansa flies to, or possibly the fact that Lufthansa's services will be offered to all customers regardless of race or ethnicity. Had Emirates celebrated its diversity throughout the cabin and behind the galley, the airline could have

easily attracted a wider range of America's cultural mosaic, but such a strict focus on particular groups limits the carrier's broader appeal.

There is no denying though that both advertisements take pride in the presentation of their tones, but the two deliveries have differentiated impacts on the public audience. In both commercials, a casting white light shines above, taking each commercial off from the runway of reality into the dreamy skies of the future. The lullaby music presented in the Emirates commercial has a very similar impact to the basking traveler in the Lufthansa billboard, as both usages of art have the audience's brains gears set to the tick of a daydream. In Emirates' case, the linkage between travel and our future expectations of travel is stated directly by the airline: "It's the aircraft of tomorrow, arriving *slightly* ahead of schedule." And despite the logical placement of such a message, the casual tone of that sentence, especially with the connotation of the word "*slightly*," suggests the hospitable nature of Emirates. A calming mood envelopes the Lufthansa commercial, but through a visual representation of the traveler rather than any speech. The choice of apparel, from the light pink, buttoned down shirt to the black casual trousers and "less-than-symmetrical" hair shows the audience that Lufthansa is not arrogant company. Most typical millennials would be attracted by the chic artwork accentuated in the Lufthansa billboard. However, the airline seems to succeed at its mission almost too much, in that the middle-aged or older adult may find Lufthansa to be a "party airline" and thus would defer to a more seduced setting. Meanwhile, the Emirates commercial's fusion of lullaby music and dreamscape spans the formality of both high school proms and country club gatherings, drawing millennials and baby boomers alike into the calm, semi-formal rhythm.

The logic in the advertisements, however, presents the most apparent diversion of the airlines' strategies. While the URL of each airline resides in its respective commercial, the fact

that the Emirates ad has the company's URL presented with "/usa" visibly presents a USA operations branch that is easily approachable to customers. Lufthansa also has a major American operations branch in Newark, NJ, but its existence is not hinted at anywhere on the billboard, let alone its URL.

On another level, however, the Lufthansa billboard's view of the individual customer propels ahead of Emirates' in regards to its focal point preference. To qualify a bit, Emirates does set its massive, American-built Boeing 777 in center stage, with its logo peeking through the upper-left corner. Such choreography of the jetliner's position only bolsters the Emirates video's game-plan on collectivized American society, as the company's plane casts a uniform shadow over a *squad* of domestic workers. Lufthansa's billboard, on the other hand, only situates *one* customer in the center, implying the one-on-one nature of air travel. The carrier thus conveys an arguable message of travel, a carefree experience meant to flush society's daily struggles down the drain. Its emphasis on the individual, with his or her unique desires and needs, molds a stronger bond to individual audience members in a way that is absent from the more egalitarian view alluded to in the Emirates advertisement. In principle, Emirates presents its American fortress prominently, while Lufthansa strives as a foreign airline to catch the souls of us individual diverse Americans into a *fresh* way of customer-centric travel.

The medium choice of both commercials has immense implications, especially stemming from recent trends. That Emirates presented its message through a 30-second YouTube pre-video advertisement made it susceptible to the internet's latest demon: AdBlock. In fact, according to the independent reviewing company Verge, approximately 42% of all internet users have this ad-blocking software installed, effectively limiting the eventual outreach of such a campaign. Though, to qualify, one would still be much more likely to watch the Emirates video, as it is in principle

forced on the consumerist society constructed by YouTube. Meanwhile, the Lufthansa billboard requires taking one's eyes off the road ahead, and thus only attracts a subset of our society, albeit the subset with a higher propensity to react to the ad. Though, importantly, with raging traffic ramping up in urgent centers, the billboard may be in its primetime as an unavoidable artifact in the eyes of lingering drivers.

There is no doubting that the respective commercial's strategies are successful along that set of rails, through their appeals to societal trust, subconscious emotion, and their highlighted elements. However, most commercials, including those of Emirates and Lufthansa, naturally struggle to capture larger audiences. The likely effect from the divergent presentation of the commercials is that each attracts its own audience, separating our society into a diverse mosaic of interest groups. In this regard, both advertisements succeed beautifully, not necessarily in increasing their load factors, but rather in attracting a specific clientele and mirroring the liberty and diversity of our nation as a whole.

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