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### International Pallet Paper

During a trip to South Carolina, I went to a well established restaurant called “Hyman’s Seafood”. Hyman’s, one of the most popular restaurants in South Carolina, is a seafood restaurant that specializes in Southern Cuisine. The restaurant is located in Downtown Charleston, SC and has been there for over 121 years.

A. How were you addressed when you entered the restaurant? Did you need to make reservations? How long was the wait before you were seated? How was this experience different due to COVID? Did you have to show your vaccination card?

Arriving at the restaurant’s entrance, my mother and I briefly spoke to a friendly hostess. She was a brunette, with her *hair* down, and black shades *adhered* to her face. Her outfit consisted of a black t-shirt with the white Hyman’s logo, on the top left side of her shirt, black tights and black athletic sneakers. She accessorized her outfit, with a black Apple Watch wrapped around her right arm. We asked if we needed to make reservations, and she replied ‘no’. We also asked if we needed masks, as well as proof of vaccination to enter, and she again replied ‘no’. She then asked us how many people were attending the eatery, and my mother replied ‘just two’. The hostess welcomed us in, and gave us directions to our seats.

B. What are the cultural differences you notice? (Use class notes and cite in APA 8th ed) Using your five senses of taste, touch, sight, smell, & sound describe some of the cultural differences that you are not accustomed to in comparison to All-American restaurants or restaurant chains. For example, one can describe but not limited to the sights in the restaurant décor, odors from unusual foods, and sounds from music. One should use all five-senses in this cultural experience. Be sure to write in third person...one will or would see, smell, etc.

I’ve always found it interesting that both Americans and foreigners alike, are either uneducated or ignorant of real American culture. Most people aren't even aware of American subcultures that cook

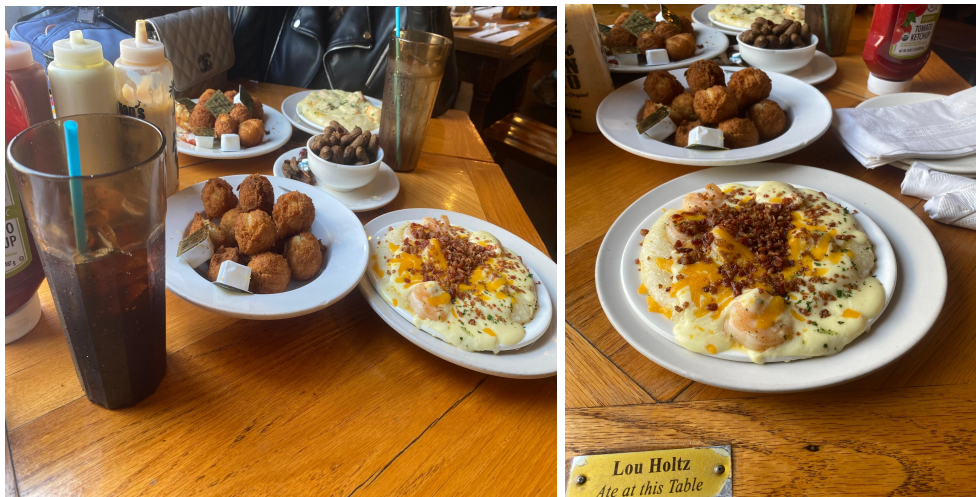
and eat differently than the average fast-food eating American. Even though Hyman's is a American restaurant, it's not like applebees where one would eat fast foods, but a restaurant that serves home cooked meals, inspired by subcultures like Louisiana Cajuns and Creoles, Seminole Indians, Afro-Seminoles, and Gullah Geechee. Inside the restaurant the decor was built like the inside of a wooden home, something one would see in the deep woods of the low country. I don't remember smelling any food, nor hearing any music. The restaurant was very busy and packed, so music could've been playing, but the chatter of the people overpowered the music. On the glossy wooden walls, there are photos of celebrities who frequented the restaurant, as well as pictures of sweetgrass baskets that Gullah Geechee folks are known for making down south. Upstairs where I sat, there were smooth feeling, glossy wooden tables and chairs with names of people who ate there. Phoebe Cates, Lou Holtz and Itzhak Pearlman ate at my table. From Samuel L. Jackson, to Patti Labelle, to James Brown, Hyman's from the door lets one know, they're not just walking into any ol' cheeseburger and fries restaurant, but a restaurant that holds a significant place in the food industry.



C. Look at the menu. What are the types of foods they offer? What are some unusual items? Do they describe the ingredients in the food? List various food items from the menu. What menu items did you order? Is there more than one language used to describe the foods on the menu? How does this relate to cultural geography? Be sure to use and cite lecture notes appropriately in APA 8th ed.

An employee with long blonde *hair*, dressed in a navy blue hoodie, with Hyman's written in white, on the top left side of her hoodie, with black leggings, and black athletic sneakers, walked up to my table and took my order. As a Geechee person, I went for the 'Shrimp-n-Grits'. It's a delicacy in my culture, seafood in general. My shrimp-n-grits were loaded with butter, bacon bits, and cheese. An

unusual item I saw on the menu is gator tail. I know gator is very popular with the Cajun community, but it was weird seeing how accessible it is. Growing up devouring gators was seen as dirty and taboo. All of these cultural dishes, at Hyman's believe or not, were seen as taboo because of the cultural geography of these subcultures and foods. At one point in time, these foods were considered peasant foods, due to '*conspicuous consumption*'. These foods were not of the wealthy, so it's quite humorous to see how peasant, slave food like shrimp-n-grits became the staple dish of a whole state.



D. Is a traditional salad offered? If not, describe what is offered. What types of breads are offered (flat, pita, tortilla chips)? What type of desserts (cheesecake, fortune cookie, coffee)? What are they like? Describe the ingredients as well.

Skimming through the menu, it had different kinds of selections and appetizers like their popular 'Carolina Delight' which is a fried grit cake, topped with shrimp or salmon. They carried entrees such as garlic bread, french fries and cajun fries. Seafood tacos, homemade soups, seafood platters, with a selection of salads were also on the menu. One could request specialized salads, with chicken, fish, and shrimps with a Caesar Salad, Chef's Salad made with (turkey, ham, egg, bacon, cheese with fresh greens), or even an almond salad, if they were vegetarian, vegan, or on a diet.

E. What types of beverages are offered? Do they have an alcohol menu? What is not typically offered in an American chain restaurant? Be sure to address what is different in the menu.

On the menu there were also drinks and desserts. I'm not much of a drinker, but they did have a nice selection of wines like Merlot, Chardonnay, Rose, and Pinot Noir, and Heineken, Budweiser, Bud Light, and Miller Light, for the beer drinkers. The list of drinks are probably located in most American restaurants, even the ones created by different cultures. I, on the other hand, went with a fountain soda, Pepsi to be specific. I didn't get dessert, because I barely eat sweets, but the selection of desserts were ok, nothing too crazy. The desserts ranged from Vanilla Ice Cream, Key Lime pie, Fudge Brownie, Bourbon Street Pecan Pie, Bread Pudding and Cheesecake. I am a chocolate lover, so I recommend the 'Homemade Fudge Brownie a la Mode'.

F. How is the food reflective of the cultural geography and the economic geography (Use class lecture notes)? (i.e., spices are abundant in India which is rich in spices & fish (sushi) is popular in Japan & it is part of the G8). Describe approximately where in the world (continent & location) and from country this culture's food is best known. Be sure to relate the geography with the country's food. Include a map. Be very detailed.

The food is reflective of economic & cultural geography. As I stated before, these dishes were inspired by indigenous subcultures. These foods are more common down south, than up north. My Geechee culture for example, had to make use of what they had, back in the days of slavery. After the Gullah Wars, Many Gullah Geechees were free and owned land. These lands are referred to as the Gullah Geechee corridor, or The Sea Islands. The islands stem from North Carolina to Florida. Gullah people weren't financially supported, plus they lived by water. They had to find ways to eat, as well as create sturdy shelter for natural disasters like hurricanes. Gullah people in order to survive, developed strong agricultural skills, men and women alike. Fishing, and planting food are popular within the culture. I did say seafood is a staple. People of the culture preserved many of their West African, and Native American customs, but are fiercely protective of the culture, and won't share or trade much

unless they benefit for it.



G. Describe the dress? (Dress is inclusive of all five senses - you smell perfume, hear jewelry, see make-up, etc.....) What are the employees, such as hostesses or wait staff wearing? Please use Eicher-Roacher-Higgins (1992) article to define dress and answer appropriately. Be sure to use all five senses in each description.

Entering the restaurant, there is a bar. Everyone, including myself, was dressed casually. Charleston was at least 80 degrees, so many people who frequented the restaurant, wore button up shirts, blouses, shorts, skirts, dresses, shoes, and sneakers. The restaurant didn't seem to have a strict dress code. Any outfit is fine, as long as one doesn't look inappropriate or unkempt, as it is a family eatery as well. My *hair* was styled in a brown afro bun. My ears were *clipped* with small gold hoop earrings, accompanied by a gold nameplate necklace *wrapped* around my neck. A golden bracelet with a black apple watch *wrapped* around my wrists, and I wore a golden cubic zirconia ring. My outfit consisted of a black sleeveless bodysuit, with jeans *adhered* to the lower half of my body, with black, white and red Comme des Garçons converse sneakers. I was not questioned on my appearance. I looked just as casual as everyone else. The employees wore a similar outfit of the hostess. Black pants, black shirt with the logo on the top left, and black sneakers. The cooks wore similar outfits, but wore hair nets over their heads, with white aprons *adhered* to the lower half of their body, and white chef hats on their heads.

H. Rate your experience as a food critic (as in the LA Times or Houston Chronicle). Ratings should be dependent on taste, service, décor, cleanliness, authenticity, quality and price and should range from A-F ("A" being the best). Explain why you chose this rating. Be thorough and detailed in your explanations.

If I were a food critic, I would give them a rating of 7.5 or a B. The decor was nice, the place was clean, and the employees were very friendly. The service was charitable. The manager, the chef, and the waitresses would come out and talk with me and many other customers, to make sure we were receiving great hospitality. I Received free hush puppies, as a first time guest at the restaurant. Before I ate my food, I requested another fork, because I didn't like the one I had. The waitress brought me another fork and hot water to sanitize it, something my mom taught me as a child. The prices weren't bad, but if one wants a bigger dish, one should pay a bigger price. I loved looking at the pictures of the celebrities that ate at the restaurant. I had a great time but it was the food. The food wasn't bad, but it did taste gentrified. It tasted good, but it lacked seasoning. When it comes down to my culture's food, I am a little biased. Nothing beats shrimp-n-grits made by an actual GG person, in my opinion, but they tried.

I. What did you learn from this experience that you could contribute to a multicultural experience in a class discussion?

What I learned from this experience, is how ethnic foods, whether within the United States or abroad, are viewed so poorly until someone who's not of that culture decides it isn't. Seeing all these indigenous foods like jambalaya, seafood and grits and gumbo, reminds me how all these dishes were considered peasant foods at one point. Now these indigenous American dishes are copied and sold everywhere, and the original creators are either not fully compensated for it, or barely mentioned for their contributions. It's why cultures like mine are so protective over their foods, agricultural, and spiritual practices.

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Figure 1-3. Young, Isis "Low Country Authentic Dinner Images" *Hyman's Seafood Co.* February 2023,

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