Post-Blackness and Culinary Nostalgia in Marcus Samuelsson's *Yes, Chef*

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On a recent Sunday afternoon, I found myself lying on the couch indulging in an afternoon marathon of my favorite television show, *Chopped*, which airs on The Food Network. I cannot explain why I take such perverse pleasure in watching the anxiety-ridden countenances of "chef-testants" upon being given a hodge-podge of four ingredients as disparate as calf's liver, gummy bears, Swiss chard, and smoked gouda and charged with transforming them into a tasty dish in less than 20 minutes. In one particular episode, while introducing the illustrious panel of judges, host Ted Allen referred to Marcus Samuelsson as the "New Harlem Renaissance" chef.[1] Naturally, I was intrigued. As a scholar of contemporary African-American literature and culture, I have been careful to stay abreast of emerging black artistic movements and trends. But the "New Harlem Renaissance" was a moniker for a seemingly localized black cultural, artistic, and apparently, culinary, rebirth of which I knew little.

Ultimately, this led to an afternoon of pursuing all things Marcus Samuelsson. While doing so, I came across the November 2008 issue of *Food and Wine* that featured an article entitled, "The New Harlem Renaissance," highlighting the easy friendship and culinary collaboration between Chef Marcus Samuelsson, owner of the Red Rooster restaurant, and Thelma Golden, director of the Studio Museum of Harlem. The article in *Food and Wine* details Golden and Samuelsson's plans for an elaborate dinner party to celebrate the publication

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of his then-new cookbook, *The Soul of a New Cuisine*, which pays homage to the African food cultures that Samuelsson believes have gone virtually ignored in Western culinary spheres. Among the invited guests were famed artist Kara Walker, jazz pianist Jason Moran, and choreographer Bill T. Jones, the latter two of whom were "touring with new works and in the past six months have been in more than 45 cities, from Rio de Janeiro to Melbourne."[2]

It is fitting that this august group assembled at a gathering cohosted by Golden, who is, perhaps, most well-known in academic circles for her coinage of the term "post-black," in reference to the 2001 *Freestyle* exhibition at the Studio Museum of Harlem. Golden, along with artist Glenn Ligon, defined post-black artists as "adamant about not being labeled 'black' artists, though their work was steeped, in fact, deeply interested, in redefining complex notions of blackness."[3] Indeed, many of the artists featured in the exhibition, including Ligon, Rico Gatson, Rashid Johnson, and Susan Smith-Pinelo, among others, are less (if at all) invested in representing the celebratory notes of blackness and more intent upon signifyin' tropes of blackness through various forms of satire and play.[4] After Golden's iconic exhibition, the expression "post-black" quickly morphed from mere description of a singular artistic event to characterize the experiences of an entire generation of blacks who came of age in the post–civil rights era. This generation is marked by the critical distance from its civil rights forebears (who are most often and most directly their parents) at the same time that its members have benefitted both materially and socially from the activist struggles that exemplified the civil rights and black power eras. However, what truly distinguishes this generation is its desire to live outside what had previously been the rather tight strictures of racial allegiances and expectations.[5] In fact, the most common strain in post-black works is the expression of a desire to exist as an individual composed of many distinct attributes. Blackness, in this case, operates within a pretty vast sea of subjectivity.

The shared sensibilities of the artists in attendance at Golden and Samuelsson's dinner party all reflect a post-black/post-soul aesthetic in which the concept of "blackness" has been negotiated and renegotiated both as a site of subjectivity and as an aesthetic object. But the intention of this particular fellowship was not to provide a discourse about visual or musical art but rather to familiarize guests with Samuelsson's take on contemporary African cuisine. To set the mood, Samuelsson played a CD entitled *Afrikya* that includes "Cape Verdean, Arabic, Afro-Cuban and Bahian sounds." Similar to Samuelsson's cookbook, "the CD mirrors the cultural exchanges between Africa and the rest of the world—Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, Asia." The menu Samuelsson prepared, "crunchy okra in a roasted sweet potato salad tossed with wilted spinach and tangy capers" and "quince *sambal* served with lamb," is much less a straightforward presentation of traditional African fare and more a diasporic riff that echoes his own complex travels.[6] For Samuelsson, who was born in Ethiopia and adopted by Swedish parents at the age of three, the project of remixing African cuisine is both personal and professional, driven by his

desire to reclaim the African "home" he lost as a child and as a way to "chase flavors"—a phrase Samuelsson frequently invokes to describe his never-ending quest to create a fundamentally new cuisine.

Nostalgia operates in funky ways in this dinner party scene: the unconventional African fare, the remixed diasporic mood music, and the event's moniker, "the New Harlem Renaissance," are all indicative of a complex engagement with different forms and figurations of blackness. Samuelsson's distinct imperative to revise and elevate African cuisine reveals the extent to which his culinary style evokes a narrative of post-blackness that hinges on nostalgic allusions to a multiplicity of flavors and homelands. Specifically, his aesthetic and culinary mission is to productively distort history and tradition. Using Samuelsson's memoir, *Yes, Chef*, as a framework, I examine the nostalgic impulses of post-blackness vis-à-vis food culture, specifically the ways in which taste, space, and subjectivity materialize as a function of both real and imagined histories, homes, and flavors.

I want to discuss food as something more than an aesthetic object that maintains the power to transport us to our past; undoubtedly, our plates and our palates emerge as reflections of what we are, who we are, where we are from, and what we remember. However, just as food reflects the self, it also enables the production of the self. As Elspeth Probyn notes, "we really are what we eat, but equally what, how, and with whom we eat radically bites into any stable and molar formation of identity."[7] Food is reflective of a past, but our food choices also represent the self-in-process—in Samuelsson's case, the act of chasing flavors emerges as a pursuit of a space with which to identify and reconcile, though not collapse, the collectivity of cultural, ethnic, and racial experiences by which he has been constituted. Through the manipulation of food and flavor, the chef, as both an historian and an architect of taste, self-fashions through culinary style. With Samuelsson, such self-fashioning is enabled through a nostalgic reclamation, reanimation, and refiguration of the past. Interestingly, Marcus Samuelsson's self-labeling as a New Harlem Renaissance chef harkens back to the modernist impulses of the old Harlem Renaissance moment in which nostalgic invocations of an imagined past were the basis of artistic, social, and political agendas designed to instantiate sentiments of racial pride. Samuelsson's adopted lineage to craft a new space of black subjectivity, albeit through his culinary creations, is not too far afield from the aims of the arbiters of the New Negro Renaissance. His dual role as cook and consumer of food allows for a degree of agency with respect to how that past is internalized, psychically and physiologically. I locate Samuelsson within a matrix of post-black cultural arbiters whose artistic impulses have been to shift and dehomogenize static representations of blackness. In this vein, I am less concerned about Samuelsson's achievements as a chef and more about how his quest to chase flavors reflects the multivalent ways that nostalgia enables the production of new black subjectivities through a post-black culinary praxis. Although nostalgia as a concept is generally disparaged as overtly sentimental and politically impotent, I turn

to more expansive formulations of nostalgia that argue for its efficacy beyond mere affect. As Julia Sushytska argues, "when approached creatively, nostalgia's phantasms allow us to become more receptive to that which exceeds the existing order of the world."[8] In other words, nostalgia enables and produces subjective shifts that emerge as a "longing for something that *is not* part of our current situation, it can help up bring about the new." Samuelsson draws upon the blurred past of his Ethiopian childhood, an invented lineage to the Harlem Renaissance as well as his Swedish upbringing, to develop not only a new culinary sensibility but also a more capacious notion of blackness, more generally.

What we have in *Yes, Chef* then is a delicate push-pull between past and present—Samuelsson's imperative to engage a range of personal, ethnic, and cultural histories in his food designs is propelled by the seemingly contradictory desire to fashion an entirely new breadth of tastes moving our culinary sensibilities forward. In this way, Samuelsson's project as a chef functions as an exemplar of the inherent value and potentiality of nostalgia, not only in terms of the acts of creation manifested through food preparation but also in terms of the series of identifications that emerge in the process. If eating, as Probyn notes, is yet another act of identity formation, then cooking or creating dishes for others to consume reads as an act of agency, or perhaps more precisely, articulation. In *Carnal Appetites*, Probyn smartly draws upon Stuart Hall's definition of "articulation" as a way to discuss how the act of eating "conjoins us in a network of the edible and inedible, the human and non-human, the animate and the inanimate." Significantly, she asserts that we are "'articulated' subjects, the products of the integration of past practices and structures" but "also always 'articulating' subjects: through our enactment of practices we reforge new meanings, new identities for ourselves."[9] Probyn's analysis nicely denotes the point I want to make here concerning the ways in which Samuelsson's culinary projects are not merely motivated by the aspiration to create new dishes but also to reflect alternative formulations of black subjectivity.

Yes, Chef reads as a culinary bildungsroman in that it details the life story of Marcus Samuelsson who, born in Ethiopia and adopted by a Swedish family at the age of three, confronts the challenges of alienation and belonging in a geographic context in which he and his adopted siblings are the only dark-skinned persons in a country where most inhabitants are known for their particularly Nordic (blond-haired and blue-eyed) features and a culinary context where most chefs are similarly white and European. Inasmuch as Samuelsson's memoir "narrativizes" the tumultuous path he took on the road to becoming a global celebrity chef, it is equally concerned with the myriad of ethnic, cultural, and racial quandaries with which he was faced. Informed by the reconstituted memories of his African birthplace, his childhood experiences as a "black" Swede, and later the historical landscape of his new adopted home, Harlem, Samuelsson creates a complex articulation of blackness that emerges as a fundamental aspect of his identification as a post-black subject and his new African/American cuisine.

The memoir opens with Samuelsson's imagining of the mother whose face he cannot remember. Drawing upon his sister's memories of their mother's sacrifice—walking miles to a hospital so they could all be treated for tuberculosis, navigating the crowded space so her children could see a doctor, and then finally succumbing to the disease herself—Samuelsson wistfully attempts to relocate himself in a past of which he has no memory. It is fitting that Samuelsson begins his memoir with this absence as it is this particular void that guides one of his foremost objectives as a chef—to reconnect with his homeland, Ethiopia, and symbolically with his biological mother through food. In the opening pages of the narrative, Samuelsson writes, "I have never seen a picture of my mother, but I know how she cooked. For me, my mother is *berbere*, an Ethiopian spice mixture."[10] Samuelsson explains later in the chapter that berbere is a spice present in all Ethiopian homes, and it is a key ingredient in Ethiopian cuisine. His identification of it with his now-deceased mother structures his feelings of loss as well as the culinary process he endeavors in an attempt to recapture them both. Furthermore, he notes, "I have taught myself the recipes of my mother's people because those foods are for me, as a chef, the easiest connection to the mysteries of who my mother was. Her identity remains stubbornly shrouded in the past, so I feed myself and the people I love the food that she made. But I cannot see her face."[11]

In an interesting riff on Brillat-Savarin's maxim, "tell me what you eat and I'll tell you what you are," Samuelsson attempts to reconstruct the past and reproduce the self through the creation and consumption of food—it becomes a way of filling the void of his maternal loss and a sincere approach to reclaim some aspect of her identity that "remains stubbornly shrouded in the past." Given that his mother died while he was young, there is no actual memory, for him, of the foods that she made. The nostalgic impulses of this scene operate entirely at the level of the imaginary. Ethiopian food becomes a synecdochical medium that enables the fantastical reconstruction of his maternal memory. Samuelsson describes time and again his desire to "see" his mother either through gazing at his own image in the mirror or through the use of berbere. Inextricably tied to the search for his mother, of whom no photograph exists, is Samuelsson's own project to piece together his history. The memoir begins with the recognition of his own fractured subjectivity that he can only try to reconcile through the invocation of his own imagination and the smell and taste of an indigenous spice mixture. In his discussion of the term *wei* or "flavor" in Chinese literary criticism, Eugene Eoyang briefly introduces the concept of *hui-wei*, which refers to "a recollection of previously encountered flavor."[12] For Samuelsson, berbere is this flavor, but the hui-wei detailed in the above scene has nothing to do with revisiting what he once knew, but rather is creating memories of a never-experienced past.

Samuelsson consistently references his loving parents who generously rescued him and his sister from a tuberculosis-plagued Ethiopia. Though Ethiopia's signature flavor, berbere, has a significant influence on Samuelsson's cu-

linary subjectivity, he acknowledges that "if [he] had to try to pinpoint [his] earliest food memory it would not be a single taste, but a smell—my grandmother's house."[13] Much of the narrative is spent with Samuelsson attempting to find a literal and figurative "home," which in many respects places his text and his journey in context with diasporic or immigrant literatures in which displaced subjects endeavor to create a space of belonging. But while he consistently points to various experiences of alienation, he readily acknowledges that his primary identification, first and foremost, is as a Swede. The first few chapters of the book detail his *mormor's*, his grandmother's, cooking. He notes that, "Mormor treated her house like it was her own little factory. She made everything herself: jams, pickles, and breads. She bought large cuts of meat or whole chickens and game animals from the butcher and then broke them down into chops and roasts at home."[14] He also recalls the fishing trips with his father, Lennart, and his uncle, Torsten, who owned a smokehouse where he "cured eel, herring, or mackerel."[15] It was in this context that Samuelsson learned "how important it is to let the dishes be reflective of your surroundings."[16] Inasmuch as this moment is about the imperative to "eat local," the dishes that chefs create are not simply about the foodstuffs they put on the plate, they are also reflective of the chef's subjectivity as well as his aesthetic sensibilities.

The dishes that one creates are as much about interiority as they are about the external conditions in which food is produced. It is fitting that the first moments in *Yes, Chef* begin with Samuelsson's reveling in the imagined past of Ethiopia and his birth mother, as well as vivid descriptions of Swedish home cooking of which his mormor was a primary influence. While it is common, especially in the context of the memoir, to begin with an often romanticized remembrance of one's childhood, nostalgia maintains a more critical function in the framing of Samuelsson's narrative: it not only provides a glimpse into the past but also highlights the ways in which that past actively shapes the construction of the present moment. The nostalgia evinced in Samuelsson's memoir is not the oft-derided futile sentiment that disables the subject from progressive movement or action. In fact, Samuelsson's memoir provides good evidence to defy such critiques; nostalgia is front and center in *Yes, Chef*, but not as a commemoration of what was, but rather as a portal to contemporary modes of being that are consistently in process and in flux. Nostalgic invocations of food become the medium through which, in this case, racial and ethnic identities are forged, reimagined, and remixed to convey a post-blackness that speaks to the future of the racial imaginary and the unleashing of static and seemingly fixed structures of blackness.

Food and its rather complex relationship to all matters of (national, cultural, ethnic, racial, sexual, gender, and class) identity have maintained a rather consistent presence in academic scholarship, particularly within the last two decades. In a recent *New York Times* article, "A Critic's Tour of Literary Manhattan," Daniel Halpern, who serves as editor of Ecco Press, is quoted as stating, "The passion my generation felt about poetry and fiction has gone into food, I

think, into making pickles or chocolate or beer."[17] Halpern's observation that the New York literary scene has been displaced by a new world of self-proclaimed foodies is, for better or worse, spot on. The politics of food has become a lively site of academic discourse and has inspired a flurry of scholarship ranging from studies of regional and global eating traditions, dietary movements, and cultures of food consumption to works that address multiple and diverse representations of food in literary, film, and cultural studies.

The study of food is perhaps one of the most interdisciplinary subjects in our contemporary academic discourse, as it bears relevance across class lines, gender, race, cultures, sexualities, and spaces. The authors of *Consuming Geographies: We Are Where We Eat*, David Bell and Gill Valentine (1997), deploy social and cultural theory to explore "different aspects of food consumption at each scale," producing what is referred to as "'circuits of culinary culture' as they map across space," specifically "scaling *body-home-community-city-region-nation-global*."[18] Theirs is perhaps one of the most ambitious and comprehensive endeavors to examine the multitude of spaces encountered in the production, consumption, and "thinking through food."[19] Indeed, there is no relationship more individual and more intimate than that between food and the body. While it is tempting to explore the myriad of questions and concerns that the study of food and its consumption raises, for now I am more interested in a singular key term: "flavor."

The through-line of Samuelsson's text is the notion of chasing flavors, a phrase that he uses to describe his global culinary quest to locate new foods and spices, then combining them in unexpected ways to create a signature dish. "Flavor" emerges as something more local, culture specific, and distinctive, especially when contrasted with "taste," which is used to express an often indescribable sensation we experience when food touches our tongues. Allen Weiss describes taste as the "sense by which we distinguish flavors; the discriminative activity according to which an individual likes or dislikes certain sensations; the sublimation of such value judgments as they pertain to art, and ultimately to all experience; and, by extension and ellipsis, taste implies good taste and style, established by means of an intuitive faculty of judgment."[20] In this sense, the origin of one's "taste" can be either biological or psychological (or both), yet it is highly individual and, as Allen Weiss notes in the above quote, largely "intuitive." Undoubtedly, taste is indelibly tied to history and to memory, assuming that it is, like most aspects of our subjective being, constituted by and through a series of identifications and disidentifications over time. Weiss continues to note that

> selectiveness of memory creates both identities and differences, so that culinary idiosyncrasy is in the vanguard of invention, and any adequate answer to the question of taste must entail a discourse of inclusion, not exclusion; of openness, experimentation and risk, not reticence, denial and reaction. Thus a recipe is not a canon, code or regulation, and

> the typicality or "authenticity" of a dish is but a range of possibilities, an indeterminate ideal, a pole of transformations. Taste is the mark of a personal singularity that draws its sense from collective tradition, and its possibilities from continual creativity. This is not to discount tradition, but merely to historicize it, in the context of a hedonism that is a moveable feast.[21]

Weiss's assessment of a recipe as "a range of possibilities, an indeterminate ideal" speaks directly to the relationship I posit in this piece between food and post-black identity. The desire to move outside the proscribed confines of blackness has created the conditions of post-blackness as an ever-shifting, ever-evolving site of subjectivity. The "post" in this instance is not indicative of a transcendence but rather a critical and temporal distancing from historical renderings of race. Indeed, Michael Eric Dyson describes blackness in all of its indeterminancy as "episodic, vastly complicated, genre-blending, shape-shifting, anatomy-defying, ramshackle, improvisational, antiphonal," and the list goes on.[22]

Samuelsson's formulations of nostalgic memory and post-black identity couched within his mission to chase flavors makes his memoir less the quintessential ethnic/immigrant bildungsroman in which the subject through various trials and errors reconciles the multivalent self and more a celebration of the various fragmentations that constitute the self. Weiss's rendering of "taste" as "a sign of individual style, a mode of constituting the self, a mark of social position, an aesthetic gesture" speaks to the way that Samuelsson ultimately constructs his particular brand of blackness—as an "aesthetic gesture" that is intimately connected to his role as a (post-black) chef.[23] In his memoir, Samuelsson admits that

> no matter who you are, whether you've got a small town Italian restaurant or you're an Iron chef, you want to create a signature dish—one you create or execute in a way that becomes forever associated with you. . . . One approach to a signature dish is taking something famous like coq au vin, and making it so well that everyone knows it's yours. The other approach is to go out and create something entirely new.[24]

"Flavor," as opposed to "taste," is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as "an olfactory *suggestion* of the presence of some particular ingredient" (italics mine). This sentiment is echoed in one of the few critical works on flavor in which Eugene Eoyang explains that the "student of Chinese literary criticism will notice how frequently one encounters the work wei, meaning 'flavor' or 'savor,' in discussions of literature. For the Western-trained critic, this reliance on such an elusive quality is an inevitable source of frustration. Wei cannot be

abstractly described or defined." In a literary context, "flavor, then, is the soul of writing; while sounds and images convey some of the thought, only flavor can convey its essence."[25] Taste, therefore, acts as the body, while flavor is the soul. For Samuelsson, the process of chasing flavors is inextricably bound to the project of attempting to forge a culinary aesthetic or sensibility that reflects his own multiethnic, multicultural subjectivity.

While Ethiopia is Samuelsson's point of origin, Sweden is his primary point of influence. However, his efforts are not simply to create a mish-mash fusion cuisine. Instead, Samuelsson endeavors to shift culinary paradigms to reflect a more third-world-centric perspective. Without question, French-style cooking techniques serve as the gold standard in the culinary world. But as Zilkia Janer notes, such superiority was only made possible by the "subordination of indigenous and many other culinary knowledges."[26] For Janer, the

> belief that knowledge of French technique enables cooks to prepare any world cuisine is based on the assumption that other cuisines lack their own techniques or that such techniques are expendable. Academics, cooks and diners alike seem resistant to revise the myth of the superiority of French cuisine in spite of the influence of postcolonial and postmodern analyses and their critique of Eurocentric metanarratives.[27]

As one of the few prominent black chefs, Samuelsson engages the issue that Janer introduces by attempting to acclimate Western palates to cuisines that are more reflective of the world they inhabit. Admittedly, Samuelsson's fame is largely due to his European culinary training in Sweden, Switzerland, and later, France. His admission into the realm of the culinary elite was undoubtedly due to the nature of his credentials. However, Samuelsson has used his celebrity to encourage a paradigm shift that decenters Europe as the epicenter of the culinary world and attune a broader public to the sophisticated flavors produced by African cultures.

Since I've already made clear my guilty pleasure—culinary reality television—there is no further shame in revealing that I was completely rapt during the second season of Bravo TV's *Top Chef Masters* in which Samuelsson competed and won. In a customary (and dare I say, hereditary) show of racial allegiance, I cheered for Samuelsson week after week from the comforts of my couch. However, what made the finale episode especially meaningful was that the multicourse meal Samuelsson prepared for the table of esteemed chefs and critics was influenced by African cuisine.[28] The moment was transformative: a black chef winning *Top Chef Masters* having prepared an East African menu. But this was Samuelsson's intent. In *Yes, Chef* he remarks that he wanted to "show the many ways in which American and West Indian food links back to Africa, how strong the flavor connection is between Senegal and North Caro-

lina, how the cuisine of Mozambique resembles the foods of Portugal."[29] His goal was to "communicate the sense of a vibrant, sophisticated Africa,"[30] to "capture African cool."[31]

Samuelsson's desire to expose the American palate to a new African cuisine was inspired by a trip back to his homeland, Ethiopia, at the age of 28. About this visit, he notes that "[o]n the plane from New York to Addis, I was so aware that for the first time in my adult life, I was traveling not as a chef, chasing flavors—but as an orphan, chasing history."[32] Despite the fact that Samuelsson makes a distinction between his journey as a chef and the journey to locate his past, the two remain interrelated. His story is one that describes how cuisine, like his own subjectivity, (im)migrates. Without his travels back to Ethiopia, he never would have been able to draw upon and remix the flavors of that country, which made possible his *Top Chef Masters* victory.

As Samuelsson acknowledges in *Yes, Chef*, his goal was never to create a cuisine that was authentic to a specific geographical locale, but rather to create something that was indicative of his own sense of authenticity, specifically his multiethnic, multicultural subjectivity.[33] However, given that his Ethiopian past is partially constructed in an imagined nostalgic fantasy, this authenticity is largely of his own making. The external pressure of authenticity—to make something or someone conform to a popular or accepted version of the "real"—is absent in this case as Samuelsson maintains the agency as a chef to construct what is real on his own terms. As Inga Bryden notes, "[n]ostalgia makes way for adaptation and an acknowledgement that food is provisional, always on the move, and that recipes are not perfect."[34] In Samuelsson's case, nostalgia does not necessarily make way for adaptation but rather makes possible adaptation. Given that there is no concrete remembrance to romanticize, nostalgia emerges as a catapulting force that produces innovative recipes. Samuelsson's emphasis on chasing is imperative here as it consistently signifies the refusal of stasis in terms of both food and race. The act of chasing flavors, in particular, is inextricably tied to Samuelsson's own sense of ethnic and racial mobility—a diasporic subjectivity that "emerges from deeply subjective processes of racial memory, of grieving for losses which cannot always be articulated and longing which hang at the edge of possibility."[35]

Eoyang notes, "for the Chinese critic, the distinctiveness of a work lies in that quality called flavor . . . the mark of true savor lies in the authenticity with which the writer expresses his feelings."[36] Clearly, these terms resonate for the chef in ways similar to that of the writer. In Samuelsson's case, the fragmented multiculturalism by which he is constituted speaks to the processes he undergoes in order to construct a new cuisine. His culinary creations are not merely a reflection of technical skill but, more importantly, his fragmented multiculturalism. Particularly useful is Eoyang's idea that "savor" or "flavor" exists as something that both "establishes [the] original character" of a work, and "makes it new."[37] The simultaneity of the past and present as the flavor-defining element of the poem, for example, is yet another expression of the possibilities inherent

in nostalgia and, in fact, delineates a constructive relation between these terms. Nostalgia is not simply a concept that suggests a longed for past, but is a gateway into contemporary and future experience. Attempting to locate that quality we can't quite put our finger on, the subtle indetermination of "some particular ingredient" forms the core of Samuelsson's journey as a chef and also speaks to his ongoing process of subject formation as it pertains to nostalgic memory.

Samuelsson's insistence on the continual chase of both history and flavor makes "post-blackness" an appropriate term to denote his particularly complex and somewhat nebulous relationship to both past and present articulations of blackness. At one point in the memoir, Samuelsson admits that he often still thinks of himself as a failed football (soccer) player rather than an accomplished chef. His first love had been football, but after being cut from his elite team, he turned to cooking. But it was in those years as a football player that Samuelsson, who had been used to dealing with his ethnic difference, began to forge a sense of communal belonging:

> My new teammates—even the white Swedes—all called themselves *blatte*, a historically derogatory term for immigrants that my generation claimed with pride. *Blatte* meant someone who was "dark" but, more, someone who was an outsider. It wasn't quite as charged as the term *nigga* that was favored among hip-hop-loving black people, but it was a term that made liberal-minded Swedes deeply uncomfortable. I liked that *blatte* covered everyone from displaced Ugandan Indians to former Yugoslavians to someone like me.[38]

Though he admits that the term "blatte" was not as racially charged as "nigga," the reappropriation of blatte by younger generations echoes the ways in which nigga has been, often affectionately, reinscribed within the African-American lexicon, primarily among "hip-hop–loving black people."

But of greater interest is the way that Samuelsson conceives of himself as existing within a community among other "dark" folks but that his community of "outsiders" is inclusive of even "white" Europeans. In many senses, blatte opens multiple spaces of identification and as a result is far more inclusive than the term "black" or "nigga." It incorporates the terms of nation, or nationality, as well as multiple and varying forms of displacement. "Blatte" has very little, if anything, to do with skin color and instead incorporates a vast yet broad field of alienation. Samuelsson carries this identification with him when he settles in New York and finds a community of expats that become his "chosen family." He writes,

> what drew me to New York was the chance to blend in, to *not* stand out for once because of the color of my skin. In my personal life, I found a chosen family. On the subway

> and streets, I found my deepest, truest community. I was still playing soccer on the weekends with other Swedish expats. We called our team Blatte United because we were a multicultural tribe of guys who has [sic] all grown up as outsiders, in one way or another: our patois of Swedish, English, and soccer slang felt good on my tongue as a cold beer at the end of a long, hot shift.[39]

Samuelsson's rather elastic construction of racial, ethnic, and cultural subjectivities allows him an expansive space in which to self-define and self-identify. That he locates his "deepest, truest community" on the "subway and streets" also reinforces the significance of movement and fluidity in Samuelsson's construction and perception of an ethnic and racialized identity.

While Samuelsson explicitly documents his experiences of racism growing up as an African child in Goteburg, Sweden, and coming of age in a predominately white culinary industry, those moments are presented to the reader as mere inconveniences rather than identity-forming experiences. In a direct address to his audience Samuelsson notes, "it's important that you know that growing up black in Sweden is different than growing up black in America. I have no big race wounds."[40] In an interview with the *Washington Post*, Samuelsson admits, "I'm an American chef. I'm American. I live here. I love being here. But, of course, it is different. A black man's journey is different."[41] Though he identifies as black, in both this interview and his memoir, his blackness is unlike that of black Americans, yet his experience as a black man in America also is distinguished from the "journey" of [white] Americans. His reference to the "race wounds" suffered by many black Americans identifies racism as both a traumatic experience and a traumatic memory—something with which he cannot readily identify. His memoir is peppered with accounts of the racism he experiences throughout his life. For example, Samuelsson recalls that a "little Sambo had long been used to advertise *negerboll* cookies in Sweden and [he] felt a sense of dread anytime [he] saw a boy open a package of them at lunch because [he] knew that the wrapper would soon be coming [his] way."[42] Despite moments like this, Samuelsson characterizes such racist acts as random incidents rather than subject-forming experiences. Since Samuelsson did not grow up in the United States or any territory indelibly marked by the specter of that peculiar institution, he appears to remain unscathed from the race wounds African-Americans, in particular, must bear. Perhaps it is this quality that marks him as a quintessential post-black subject in that race and racism play a critical, but not defining, role in the lives of those from this particular generation.

In *The End of Blackness*, Debra Dickerson critiques modern-day African-Americans who lack what she refers to as "civic confidence,"[43] meaning that they place so little stock in their own Americanness that they chose to live as victims rather than embrace the possibilities that their very Americanness allows. It can be easily and appropriately argued that there is a world of explicit

and underlying issues that have little to do with a lack of civic confidence on the part of African-Americans that inspire feelings of racial ill will toward white Americans and that her critique overwhelmingly relies on instances of black exceptionalism. However, Dickerson's larger point is well-taken; generally speaking, Samuelsson's representation of his experiences with racism nicely illustrates her general argument that "freedom and citizenship are things that whites have no right to dispense, nor blacks to accept. ..."[44] While Samuelsson's European blackness allows him to escape black American race wounds, his decision to make New York his home was due to the perceived lack of possibilities available to raced and ethnic subjects in Europe. He notes that, "[m]y decision [to move to New York] was made when I saw that there was a black Other—there was David Dinkins, mayor of New York. There was a black middle class, upper middle class. I didn't see that in Europe anywhere. In Europe I couldn't be anything but a black cook working for somebody. Which was fine, but my inspiration was to own, to be the chef."[45] In New York, Samuelsson was able to use as a model multiple instances of black achievement and success in order to craft his own narrative of possibility. The expansiveness of blackness played out in an American context enabled him to realize the various ways in which his distinct "flavor" of African-Americanness did not have to be subverted in favor of a more revered and respected European culinary tradition—a French one, specifically—but by maintaining his own flavor, or wei, he was free to create dishes that were expressive of his own cultural and culinary aesthetic.

Notably, Samuelsson is highly aware of the malleability of identity, which largely explains why he does not feel the need to narrowly define the terms of his own blackness but rather understands his identity as a shifting set of identifications that are self-determined. In an especially poignant passage, he references not only the mutability of identity but also the externality of it as well. He writes, "I represent so many things to so many different people. In Ethiopia, I am *ferengi* or 'white' because I am an American of means. In Sweden, I represent 'new Sweden,' which to them means an integrated Sweden. In America, I'm black or African-American or an immigrant; it depends. For me, the labels aren't as important as the journey."[46] With an emphasis on identity-as-process (the journey), Samuelsson is able to structure from the chaos a modicum of coherence, which he claims to find in Harlem.

At first take, one might find it disappointingly reductive that Samuelsson, a global chef and a global citizen, has chosen to call the 3.8 square miles that constitute Harlem "home." However, he notes, "I spent so much of my life on the outside that I began to doubt that I would ever truly be in with any one people, any one place, any one tribe. But Harlem is big enough, diverse enough, scrappy enough, old enough, and new enough to encompass all that I am and all that I hope to be. After all that traveling, I am, at last, home."[47] The term "home" is, of course, one that is particularly fraught, especially within the context of immigrant or diasporic subjects. While it is tempting to read Samuelsson's journey as a chef and as a black subject within the framework of

immigrant and/or diasporic experience, there is no explicit sense of the dislocation or nebulousness that often structures such narratives. Instead, Samuelsson appears entirely at ease with his ability to claim a psychical and geographical space of his own, even if this space is, in part, constructed through a largely imagined nostalgic sensibility. In fact, his series of movements have enabled him to choose a "home" as yet another site of self-conscious identification. The space in which he chooses to identify becomes as central to his subjectivity as the cultural, racial, ethnic, and culinary identifications he incorporates over the course of his life.

Samuelsson's engagements with a nostalgic past come into full relief in his vivid praise of Harlem, the location of his most recent restaurant, Red Rooster. Making certain that no reader overlooks or underestimates the centrality of Harlem in Samuelsson's life, *Yes, Chef* opens with the following epigraph:

> Chant another song of Harlem.
> Not about the wrong of Harlem.
> But the worthy throng of Harlem.
> Proud that they belong to Harlem.
> They, the overblamed in Harlem,
> Need not be ashamed of Harlem.
> All is not ill-famed in Harlem.
> The devil, too, is tamed in Harlem.
> Anonymous, circa 1925[48]

If the epigraph is the author's way of offering his reader a lens through which to approach his text, then this anonymously written ditty is certainly meant to celebrate all that Harlem has to offer and reframe the readers' (or perhaps the listeners') perspective of Harlem as a denigrated space to one that maintains a strident sense of pride among its denizens. Inviting the reader/listener to attend to the "worthy throng" of Harlem definitively invokes an image of the original Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s and its selective cast/e of arbiters who set the standard for black artistry, intellectualism, and activism. Similarly, the "worthy throng" of Harlem Samuelsson gathered at his and Golden's dinner party speaks to a twenty-first–century desire to reclaim and reproduce yet another black Renaissance with Harlem at its center.

In one of his romantic invocations of Harlem, Samuelsson refers to the memory of its past and also its present condition:

> there are still church ladies and bow-tied Muslims in Harlem selling bean pies. On any given Sunday, you can see whole clans rolling deep and looking spiffy on their way to a gospel brunch that is their reward for surviving yet another back-breaking week and a longer-than-necessary sermon by a minister whose greatest sin is that he loves to hear himself talk.

> The south side of Central Park is all horse-drawn carriages and bygone-era hotels turned into luxury apartment buildings, but the north side of Central Park sits squarely at the feet of Harlem. Our Central Park is different. Why? More color on the skin and in the clothes. More passion in the loving and the fighting. More impromptu renditions of the Isley Brothers' "Between the Sheets" than you've ever heard in your life. When I lived uptown and cooked downtown, I knew—and yet didn't know—how much living was being packed into the 3.8 square miles that I now call home.[49]

Of note in this passage is his use of the possessive, "*[o]ur* Central Park," followed by his declaration of Harlem as "home." Though he is Ethiopian born, raised in Sweden, and has traveled the world, at the prime of his life and career he decides to root himself in the "3.8 square mile" space that is Harlem. While the general tone and tenor of *Yes, Chef* is reminiscent of the familiar immigrant success narrative, it is Samuelsson's Harlem restaurant, Red Rooster, that serves as the cultural and social space through which Samuelsson merges his global experiences with his localized identity.

In his *New York Time*s review of Red Rooster, Sam Sifton observes,

> There were four elderly black women in hats at Red Rooster Harlem the other night, across the aisle from a group of white men who had come north to 125th Street by subway. Also present were a mixed-race family sharing apple pie, a stroller beside them; an Asian same-sex couple, drinking wine; and mixed-gender black couple eating Swedish meatballs. Above them all was a Philip Maysles painting depicting the artist Norman Rockwell staring into a mirror and painting a portrait of himself—as Ruby Bridges, the African American girl who integrated an all-white elementary school in New Orleans in 1960.[50]

The image Sifton paints in this moment further exemplifies the nostalgic riffs Samuelsson engages as a way to collapse the present and the past. Rather than take a literal approach by perhaps featuring a reproduction of the original Norman Rockwell painting, Maysles's original work depicts Rockwell envisioning himself as Ruby Bridges.

The original painting by Rockwell entitled, "The Problem We All Live With," speaks to the collective tragedy of segregation and its attendant violence, and as Maysles's painting represents, the complicity of everyday citizens in that everyday tragedy. By collapsing the figures of Ruby Bridges and Norman Rockwell, Maysles's work reinforces the idea that racism remains a "prob-

lem we all live with," even on a psychical level. Inspired by the question, "to what degree have we been able to transcend those same racial issues today?," Maysles's painting suggests that race and racism are still very much operative in the day-to-day lives of America's raced and ethnic citizens.[51] However, there also exists a clear departure from Rockwell's rather straightforward image of a brave little black girl being escorted to school by the National Guard. The scene Sifton observes does much in the way of addressing the very question that motivated Maysles's painting—the "four elderly black women in hats," "mixed-race family sharing apple pie," "Asian same-sex couple" all sharing together in this space—and speaks to the degrees of racial and social progress that have been made since 1960 when Bridges entered William Franz Public School. Yet the scene exemplified by Maysles's painting is a deft reminder that our present condition is only made possible by that dark and turbulent past.[52]

His project almost paradigmatically invokes a post-soul/post-black artistic endeavor through the strategic deployment of black historical memory to create a new black aesthetic:

> When I think about my purpose as a black chef, the mission seems clear: to document, to preserve, to present, to capture, to inspire, and to aspire. I'm documenting Harlem's history at the Rooster, preserving the fine history of African American cuisine while presenting it through my own unique Swedish-Ethiopian lens. I want to capture the imagination of New York's dining communities, inspire a new generation of chefs and I aspire, always, to make food that makes a difference.[53]

Samuelsson understands his Red Rooster enterprise as instrumental to this:

> Just as Thelma transformed the Studio Museum into an institution that preserves the legacy of African American artists while promoting new voices in art from around the world, I dreamed of creating a similar space for food. I wanted Red Rooster to guard the history of black cooks in America while starting new conversations in food. During the long, doubt-filled, crazy-making months between my exit from Aquavit and the opening of Rooster, I had little more than a logo to show for my dream. But in my head, I used that time to immerse myself in the history of Harlem. And I meant to apply all that learning in the most ambitious way possible. Harlem, I know, deserved nothing less.[54]

Samuelsson's approach points to the role that nostalgic history plays in shaping what may best be described as his post-soul culinary praxis. His emphasis to "guard the history of black cooks in America" speaks to the imperative to

preserve the past while at the same time "starting new conversations in food," which points, again, to nostalgia's creative possibilities. Further, by acknowledging Golden's influence on the way he approaches food (as art) and history, Samuelsson understands his work as part of a larger cultural and racial aesthetic.

While the chef memoir cannot be reasonably considered an altogether new genre of literature, the meteoric rise of the celebrity chef has certainly enlivened the literary market for a class that has historically been relegated to the kitchen. In recent years, we have seen the publication of Anthony Bourdain's *Kitchen Confidential: Adventures in the Culinary Underbelly* (2000), Jacques Pepin's *My Life in the Kitchen* (2003), Julia Child's *My Life in France* (2006), Jeff Henderson's *Cooked: My Life from the Streets to the Stove* (2008), Grant Achatz's *Life, on the Line: A Chef's Story of Chasing Greatness, Facing Death, and Redefining the Way We Eat* (2012), Gabrielle Hamilton's *Blood, Bones and Butter: The Inadvertent Education of a Reluctant Chef* (2012), to name a few. Samuelsson's memoir is one among hundreds that have been published in the past decade alone, which demonstrates the new status of chefs as persons whose lives maintain meaning for those who may never even have tasted their food. The release of *Yes, Chef* shortly after the opening of the Red Rooster can simply be read as yet another strategic marketing ploy to lure white Manhattanites from their comfy surroundings to venture north of 96th Street. But regardless of whether or not Samuelsson's imperatives are sincere or capitalist in nature, his deployment of the nostalgic memory of Harlem, and the Harlem Renaissance specifically, reveals his own understanding of the currency such nostalgic references maintain in the present. Thus, even if he only draws upon the cultural memory of the Harlem Renaissance to attract diners to his establishment, he does so with the intent to reestablish Harlem as a vibrant, cutting-edge community. And, according to many, he has accomplished this task.

In his *New York Times* review of the restaurant, Sifton also recognizes that the work Samuelsson is doing with Red Rooster is more than simply adding yet another restaurant to the New York culinary scene. In his review of Red Rooster, there is as much attention to the culinary culture that emerges within and is, arguably, produced by Samuelsson's conscientious efforts to move beyond food as an aesthetic object. Sifton notes that

> [t]he scene was unusual, notable, a view of a city many believe in and few ever see, at least in the presence of Caesar salads and steak frites. New Yorkers are accustomed to diversity on sidewalks and subways, in jury pools and in line at the bank. But in our restaurants, as in our churches and nightclubs, life is often more monochromatic.… The racial and ethnic variety in the vast bar and loft-like dining room are virtually unrivaled. The restaurant may not be the best to open in New York City this year (though the food is good). But it will surely be counted as among the most important. It

> is the rarest of cultural enterprises, one that supports not just the idea or promise of diversity, but diversity itself.[55]

Furthermore, Sifton is attuned to the significance of nostalgia in Samuelsson's Red Rooster. Nostalgia is integral to Samuelsson's project in that he is not only invested in remixing and representing the multivalent cultural heritages with which he identifies, reflecting a post-black, twenty-first century articulation of black identity, but also to imagine himself within an historical lineage of multiple and diverse food traditions. It is this conflation of the past, present, and future that marks Red Rooster as more than mere culinary experience but rather as a representation of a particular racial and cultural moment.

> At Red Rooster Harlem he has staked the biggest claim of his career, with a restaurant meant to channel the spirit of the neighborhood's present as well as memories of its past. It is a restaurant for a modern Harlem, a gentrifying one, a business at ease with well-heeled patrons of whatever skin tone, that has more in common with the integrated Savoy Ballroom of the 1940s than the whites-only Cotton Club or, for that matter, the tourist-trapped Sylvia's soul food restaurant down the block. There may be fried chicken on the menu (and oxtails, too). But there are some greatest hits from Aquavit as well, and a 2005 Brunello that costs $229.[56]

I quote here at length to point to the extent to which nostalgia plays a role not only in Samuelsson's subjective experience but also in the culmination of his culinary career. Significantly, Sifton's mention of the "tourist-trapped Sylvia's" offers a remarkable analogy between models of black authenticity and post-blackness. While food crosses cultures in the most unexpected and inventive ways, the notion of an authentic cuisine remains part of our culinary conversation. While it may be easier to connect particular foods with specific geographic spaces, the concept of an American cuisine is one that is perhaps more difficult to pin down, particularly when we speak of African-American cuisine. Soul food or Southern cuisine is most closely associated with blacks in the United States, and this is what made Sylvia's restaurant so notable when it opened in 1962. The 1960s is defined by the era of civil rights, black power, and their attendant (global) programs of protest, politics, and black liberation. The 1960s may also be defined as that moment when the concretization of blackness reached its apex. The sociopolitical imperative to construct visible symbols of black unity and empowerment consciously created the conditions of black authenticity. The racial terrorism experienced by African-Americans in those years left little space to play with alternative formulations of blackness.

To now make the uneasy transition from revolutionary politics to food, Sylvia's Restaurant functioned, then and now, as a space of black cultural au-

thenticity. Sifton's reference to Sylvia's as "tourist trapped" indicates the extent to which the restaurant has ceased to exist as a hangout for Harlemites. I, too, have been witness to the waves of tour busses that seem to permanently reside in front of the restaurant. In a touching memoriam to Sylvia Woods, who passed away in July 2012, the *New York Times* compiled the recollections of her family and famous New Yorkers who were also her customers. Half-jokingly, David Paterson (former governor of New York) recalled, "One day I went in there, and it was all white and Japanese. I said to Sylvia: 'Hey, when are we going to have some affirmative action? When are you going to let some black people in here?'"[57]

Like most tourist destinations, Sylvia's is reminiscent of an older era and culminates any tour in Harlem—after snapping photos of the Apollo Theater and the Savoy Ballroom from the comforts of an air-conditioned bus, what better way to satiate one's appetite than scarfing down a plate of collard greens and fried chicken at a Harlem institution? Certainly, the reason Sylvia's is "tourist-trapped" is because it stands as a monument of black Southern cuisine and its dishes as consumable historical objects, and of blackness more generally**.** To Paterson's point, Sylvia's serves as such an authentic marker of blackness that blacks no longer maintain a dominant presence there—sadly, it has become a place where blackness is no longer lived, but objectified. This is not meant as a critique of traditional soul food. However, Sylvia's has come to signify an authentic form of blackness vis-à-vis food, while Samuelsson's project reflects more modern articulations of black subjectivity and, as Sifton notes, "a modern Harlem." While the menu at Sylvia's boasts its traditional Southern roots featuring menu items like "Sylvia's Down Home Fried Chicken" and "Grandma Julia's Cornmeal Catch of the Day," the Red Rooster draws upon Samuelsson's African, Swedish, and African-American influences, offering plates of gravlax with pickled plums and injera as well as beef kitfo, fried "yardbird," and his Swedish grandmother's famous meatballs. While the tourists at Sylvia's desire authenticity, the fare at Red Rooster perhaps aligns more with the range of tastes that actually constitute the American diet. As Donna Gabbacia explains, "Two characteristics distinguish American eating habits from those of other countries: our tastes for standardized mass-produced processed dishes and for a diverse variety of multi-ethnic specialties."[58] Thus the cuisine offered at the Red Rooster, in many respects, corresponds to Gabaccia's sentiment that the United States is "not a multi-ethnic nation but a nation of multi-ethnics."[59] Without constructing a reductive (and unnecessary) binary between Sylvia's and Red Rooster, the point I make here is that Samuelsson's imperative to chase flavors is a chef's reminder to remain challenged by the pursuit of taking culinary risks; but it can also be read as an attempt to avoid the pitfalls of "monumentalizing" blackness. The kind of consistent motion that the term "chase" connotes is as much a culinary dictum as it is a strategic refusal to be pinned down and objectified as historical object. The concept of post-blackness is inclusive by definition so that there is a space for Sylvia's and a space for the Red Rooster as well—

one form of blackness doesn't have to displace another, but there exists room to accommodate them both.

A noted booster for the New York Giants, George Edwin Woods was the owner of the original Red Rooster, which in its heyday attracted a high-profile black clientele, such as noted baseball player Willie Mays, politician Adam Clayton Powell, and writer James Baldwin. Nicknamed the Stork Club of Harlem, the Red Rooster was one of many Harlem haunts that contributed to the borough's reputation as a place of artistic inspiration and social and political activism. While the original Red Rooster was a gathering spot for Harlem notables, it was also characterized by its very exclusiveness. Samuelsson's Red Rooster, on the other hand, captures the spirit of a new era. In its manifestation of flavor, the restaurant "establishes the character of the original work" and simultaneously "makes it new"[60] by incorporating all of the chef's ethnic and cultural influences: "You can't take the A train to Addis Ababa but you can take it to Red Rooster, where I'll happily make you a plate of *doro wat* and serve you the finest Ethiopian coffees and teas.…"[61] To appropriate Bourdieu here, the palate is "a product of history reproduced by education."[62] In this way, the Red Rooster emerges as the product of nostalgic memory, historical knowledge, and a post-black sensibility. Through its redefined African/American cuisine, its attention to visual art, and the diversity of its patrons, the Red Rooster functions as a space in which culture is both consumed and produced. It is, in fact, this last point that informs both Samuelsson's Red Rooster project and the complexity with which he approaches the terms of blackness.[63] Through his post-black culinary praxis, Samuelsson demonstrates the ways that nostalgia functions, not just as a product of memory, but also as a quality that makes possible continual creative imaginings of a present and a future.

Notes

1. "Champions' Tournament: Part 1," *Chopped* (August 30, 2011; The Food Network).
2. Ogunnaike, Lola. "The New Harlem Renaissance." *Food and Wine.com*. November 2006.
3. Cathy Byrd, "Is There a 'Post-Black' Art? Investigating the Legacy of the 'Freestyle' Show," *Art Papers* 26, no. 6 (2002): 14.
4. John Bankston, one of the artists featured in this exhibition, noted that his work acknowledges the persistence of race in American culture, in particular, but he then attempts to "complicate that reading by layering it with so many things—issues of gender, high/low culture, painterliness, color/absence of color, drawing/painting" (Byrd 38).
5. I write this with the understanding that even though the black arts/black power movement has generally been regarded as "complicit in denying the full range of black identities," the arbiters of that period as well as proponents of black respectability, as Mark Anthony Neal points out in *Soul Babies: Black Popular Culture and the Post-Soul Aesthetic* (New York: Routledge, 2002), engaged in a rather willful erasure of black identities deemed "detrimental" to the political and social advancement of "the race" (8). However, I want to make clear that the historical and critical "distance" to which I refer doesn't necessarily point to the evolution of new black identities, but rather to the illusion of homogenous and monolithic notions of blackness made prevalent in earlier black historical moments.
6. Ogunnaike.
7. Elspeth Probyn, *Carnal Appetites: FoodSexIdentities* (New York: Routledge, 2000): 9.
8. Julia Sushytska, "Tarkovsky's Nostalghia: A Journey to a Home That Never Was," *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 49, no.1 (2015): 37.
9. Probyn, 17.
10. Marcus Samuelsson, *Yes, Chef: A Memoir* (New York: Random House, 2012): 4

11. Ibid., 7.
12. Ibid., 105
13. Ibid., 20.
14. Ibid., 21.
15. Ibid., 31
16. Ibid., 35
17. Quoted in Dwight Garner, "A Critic's Tour of Literary Manhattan," *New York Times.com,* December 14, 2012.
18. In "'An Aroma of Spices [...] Magnified the Sense of What It Meant to Live in England': Travel, 'Real' Food and 'Misshapen' Identity," in *Mapping Appetite: Essays on Food, Fiction and Culture,* edited by Jopi Nyman and Pere Gallardo (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2007), Inga Bryden remarks that "revitalising food as an object of everyday life means that culinary practices become, in and of themselves, narratives about cultural identities and cultural politics" (24).
19. David Bell and Gill Valentine, *Consuming Geographies: We Are Where We Eat (*New York: Routledge, 1997): 12.
20. Allen S. Weiss, Introduction to *Taste, Nostalgia: Childhood Nostalgia, Aphrodisia, Gastro-Ethnicity, Virtual Gourmandise*. edited by Allen S. Weiss (New York: Lusitania Press, 1998): 7.
21. Ibid, 8-9.
22. Michael Eric Dyson, "Tour(é)ing Blackness," foreword to *Who's Afraid of Post-Blackness: What It Means to Be Black Now*, by Touré (New York: Free Press, 2011): xiv.
23. Weiss, 10.
24. Samuelsson, 205.
25. Eugene Eoyang, "Beyond Visual and Aural Criteria: The Importance of Flavor in Chinese Literary Criticism," *Critical Inquiry* 6, no.1. (1979): 100.
26. Zilkia Janer, "(In)Edible Nature: New World Food and Coloniality," *Cultural Studies* 21, no. 2–3 (2007): 391.
27. Ibid., 392.
28. "Top Chef Master," *Top Chef Masters* (June 9, 2010; Bravo Network).
29. Samuelsson, 265.
30. Ibid., 266.
31. Ibid., 263.
32. Ibid., 243.
33. Samuelsson notes that if he had "been interested only in delivering authentic, traditional dishes, [he] would have left that to the existing African restaurants, the ones that are cordoned off into ethnic enclaves, down a few flights of steps from the street, serving to expat cabdrivers and budget-conscious but adventurous college students" (263).
34. Bryden, 24.
35. Lily Cho, "The Turn to Diaspora," *Topia: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies* no. 17 (2007): 15.
36. Eoyang, 101.
37. Ibid., 104.
38. Samuelsson, 43.
39. Ibid., 209.
40. Ibid., 36.
41. Tim Carmen, "Marcus Samuelsson on Cooking and Controversy," *The Washington Post.com*, August 10, 2012.
42. Samuelsson, 39.
43. Debra Dickerson, *The End of Blackness: Returning the Souls of Black Folk to Their Rightful Owners* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2004), 11.
44. Ibid., 253.
45. Carmen.
46. Samuelsson, 314.
47. Ibid., 315.
48. Quoted in Samuelsson.
49. Ibid., 283.
50. Sam Sifton. Review of Red Rooster Harlem, *New York Times.com,* March 8, 2011.
51. Phillip Maysles, "Phillip Maysles' New Art at Red Rooster," October 20, 2011.
52. In *Jim Crow Nostalgia: Reconstructing Race in Bronzeville* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), Michelle Boyd notes that "[l]eaders and residents of urban black neighborhoods increasingly argue that the communities formed in the wake of the Great Migration represented a more authentic, successful expression of blackness, one that would have remained intact had it not been for the unfortunate experience of integration" (xiv). Specifically, Boyd describes Jim Crow nostalgia as the desire for a return to a pre–civil rights segregation era that "celebrates the image of insular black communities in segregated spaces during a time when racial boundaries were frequently crossed in work and social life" (158).

53. Samuelsson, 312. “We want then to walk around in the community. We made a map, an artistic map, so people can know where else to go from here. If you had corn bread and beer with me and I brought you up here and you decided to go to a jazz concert 20 blocks up, I’m fine with that because I brought you up here and you are in the community” (312).
54. Ibid., 283.
55. Sifton.
56. Ibid.
57. Quoted in Eric Spitznagel, “Sylvia Woods,” *New York Times.com,* 2012.
58. Donna Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 226
59. Ibid., 232.
60. Eoyang, 104.
61. Samuelsson, 315.
62. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste (*Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 3.
63. “Mr. Samuelsson cooks down and talks to no one. In doing so, he has created something that is at once new and entirely familiar: perhaps the only restaurant in the city to serve, alongside corn bread and pickles, both cauliflower sauteed with black vinegar and Jamaican beef patties served with Mexican salsa verde” (Sifton).