

Seeing Benevolently: Representational Politics and Digital Race Formation on Ethnic Food Tour Webpages

Introduction

In this paper we examine racialised and gendered representations on the website for *Taste-Tours*, a social enterprise which offers ethnic food tours in southwestern Sydney, a region with large numbers of refugees and migrants from Vietnam and Lebanon racially demonised in newspapers, radio and television. Established in 2011, *Taste-Tours* forms part of a community development programme with The Benevolent Society, Australia's oldest not-for-profit organisation. The espoused aims for *Taste-Tours* are to change 'negative perceptions' of southwestern Sydney, provide jobs for local residents and generate sales for local ethnic food businesses. The website is designed to sell both the tours and the social mission to prospective customers: providing information about the tours, their purpose and the tour guides. Such food social enterprises offering employment creation and training for refugees and new migrant groups are burgeoning in Australia (Flowers and Swan 2015). Given their hybrid character in pursuing both commercial and social goals, food social enterprises' representational work takes on a complex hue (Douglas 2015). Race and gender representation form part of their social mission and often underpin their economic aims, their digital marketing and public communications.

Whilst scholars study food media extensively, for instance: television programmes (Jones & Hollows 2010; Hollows 2003; Pike & Leahy 2012); food writing (Mennell 1996; Gallegos 2005); and films such as *Food Inc.* or *Chocolat* (Lindenfeld 2010), analyses of food websites and representational politics are relatively rare. For instance, we acknowledge that Signe Rousseau's work (2012a/b) makes an important contribution to analysis of social media and food but note that her work gives little attention to representational politics of race and gender. Indeed, although the growing body of work by critical race food theorists show how racism and racialisation underpin the production, consumption and representation of food, including debates about the politics of 'eating the Other', the racialised representations of food websites are neglected (Guthman 2008, 2011; Slocum 2007, 2008, 2011; Williams-Forson 2006, 2010; Williams-Forson and Walker 2013; Heldke 2003; Hage 1997; Duruz 2010; Cappeliez & Johnston 2013; Johnston and Baumann 2007, 2009).

Analysis of food webpages and representational politics matters because the Internet forms part of daily life and is a site of racialised and gendered power. As Lisa Nakamura (2002, 2008) insists, the Internet is a race-making technology, reproducing offline stereotypes online, and reconfiguring them as cybertypes through distinct media processes and affordances. Whilst tourism media may seem clichéd and inconsequential, ethnic food tour websites are of particular significance because they construct and reinforce asymmetrical power relations and systems of inequality.

Motivated by the lack of writing on new media, racialisation and food, and informed by studies of touristic Othering, our paper focuses on how *Taste-Tours* does racialised and gendered touristic representational work on its website. Given *Taste-Tours*' hybridity as an ethnic food social enterprise, the site operates with both commercial and social mission webpage 'sub-genres' in a context in which circulating images and narratives of the region and its people are deeply racist (Cranny-Francis 2007). The tours are visiting places not widely seen as tourist attractions and yet, to attract attention, commercial webpages have to advertise 'seductively' (Holman 2011: 95).

To analyse the website meaning-making processes, we deploy a social semiotic multimodal approach designed to examine visual and verbal texts, and interactive affordances on webpages. In particular, we focus on 'digital race formation', namely how the *Taste-Tours* webpages construct race and gender through these resources to produce cybertypes (Nakamura, 2002, 2008). We identify how the website promotes the tours and its social mission, representing a region and people framed by offline racist stereotypes. Accordingly, through our multimodal analysis, we explore cultural processes of racialisation through discourses, representation, symbols and multimodal meaning-making, in contrast to food studies writers who examine economic and material practices of racialisation. Thus, we examine the representational practices of *Taste-Tours* on a website, and not material or cultural practices on their tours. We note that *Taste-Tours* operates in a context where racist representations of refugees, asylum seekers and racialised migrants dominate Australian media and politics. These sustain harsh policies towards, and austere funding of, support services for refugees and new migrants. Nonetheless, *Taste-Tours*' guides report how much they enjoy working for the enterprise and running the tours and feedback from tourists is positive.

To situate our analysis, we discuss briefly how texts make meaning. Richard Johnston's (1986) influential cultural circulation theory emphasises the need for a holistic analysis of how meanings are produced through stages of production, representation, consumption and lived experience. We recognise the complexities of meaning-making in relation to the production and consumption of the *Taste-Tours*' website, including how actual users negotiate the meanings of the *Taste-Tours* pages and how actual web designers put together the website. We suggest, however, that a single case study enables a close-up analysis of verbal, visual and interactivity meaning-making strategies, which whilst partial, offers important insights into representational politics, digital racialisation, and Othering on websites. Such an approach is useful because websites are a relatively new genre and yet, ubiquitous and more work is needed on how website-specific strategies activate meaning-potential, draw on conventionalised meaning-making resources and position imagined users in distinctive ways (Cranny-Francis 2005). Webpages reverberate with culturally resonant ways of thinking and at the same time, provide glimpses of oppositional ideas (Fürsiche 2009: 247).

Drawing on these ideas, we ask how *Taste-Tours*' webpages promote the organisational social mission and represent a region framed by racist stereotypes 'seductively' to tourists (Holman, 2011: 95). In focusing on one case study, we are able to examine in detail how the modes work to produce digital racialisation through Othering. Our paper makes three contributions to studies of food, media and politics. First, we extend media analyses through our focus on food websites; secondly, we build on studies of racialisation and

food, extending Nakamura's concepts of digital racial formation and cybertyping to food websites through applying analytical frameworks on visual racism and interactivity. Thirdly, we show how visual and verbal strategies produce gendered racial Others and cybertypes, positioned in relation to an imagined non-other. The paper begins by introducing Othering, racialisation, and cybertyping, followed by an explanation of our analytic framework and a detailed analysis of how distinct webpage modes of the visual and verbal and inter-active affordances represent race and gender.

Touristic Othering

Tourism has been described as the industry of Othering. Scholars have analysed how tourism media objectifies, essentialises, exoticises and homogenises the Other, reducing rich and complex lives to negative stereotypes (Mellinger 1994; Santos, Belhassen & Caton 2008; Santos & Buzinde 2007). Typically, racialised Others are ascribed deferential, passive, subservient or demeaning roles. Tourism brochures, advertising, TV programmes, and guide books consolidate racist stereotypes, shape how people look at objects, people and places, and racialise the tourist's gaze: all of which affect how locals are treated (Crawshaw and Urry 1997; Bunten 2013; Jaworski, Ylanne-McEwen, Thurlow & Lawson 2003; Santos 2006). In essence, tourism media constructs knowledge about racially minoritised people in harmful ways, erasing histories of colonialism and racism. Through these processes of Othering, tourists can affirm their sense of superiority. Moreover, racialised Others rarely have access to systems of representation and thus become the object rather than the subject of touristic 'representational work' (Hanna, Del Casino, Selden & Hite 2004).

As we argue elsewhere, Othering works in highly specific ways depending on a range of relations, histories and contexts (Flowers and Swan, 2012). Research on ethnic neighbourhood tourism as urban regeneration reveals how particular forms of Othering are used to produce 'touristified' ethnic suburbs. Hence, ethnic suburbs are marketed as 'somewhat exotic and alien places that are quasi-foreign, where interesting food can be found, exotic people can be observed, and even a lurking danger...can be sensed (Conforti 1996: 831). Whilst a whiff of danger and risk are part of touristic Othering, these are balanced with more positive qualities of ethno-cultural heritage and novelty. Too much fear would keep the tourist away. Touristification creates a desirable but contradictory version of the Other as safe and friendly, and simultaneously exotic and foreign. Hence, race is 'repackaged' into an 'inviting commodity' within the contours of a discourse 'celebratory of diversity and multiculturalism' (Santos, Belhassen and Caton 2008: 1003). The 'touristification' of ethnic suburbs can produce an attenuated version of ethnic culture, amplify media-driven racial stereotypes and marginalise other representations of people, places and culture (Conforti 1996; Santos, Belhassen and Caton 2008).

Writing on culinary tourism shows how touristic processes Other ethnic food to sell 'marketable and attractive identities' (Long 2004). To analyse these processes, Tanachai Pandoongpatt insists that studies of 'ethnic food' should deploy the concept of racialisation because 'ethnicity' and 'ethnic' are reductive forms of Othering. Indeed, 'ethnic food itself is a racialised term used to invoke the "exotic" non-white Other, and that some ethnic foods are indeed more "ethnic" than others' (2011: 85). Scholarship which

sees 'food practices, its procurement, representation, and consumption as [only] a reflection of ethnic or cultural traditions', essentialises culture (2011: 85). Racialising ethnic food means we can examine its embeddedness in social hierarchies, racial thinking and power asymmetries. To do this, in the next section, we discuss how racialisation has been defined, and then show how Nakamura extends it in relation to the Internet.

Racialisation

As indicated in our introduction, critical race theorists in food studies draw on the concept of racialisation taken from wider social theory. Racialisation refers to interpersonal, structural, and institutional practices which produce race on ongoing basis (Murji & Solomos 2005). Hence, race is an 'effect of racialisation' rather than its cause (Ahmed 2000: 47). Intersecting with class, gender and sexuality, race is gendered, and gender racialised (Ramji 2009). Race-making processes categorise people by body-type, and visible markers of race like skin colour, hair texture, eye and nose shape which supposedly signify 'essential' differences. Through these processes, race becomes seen as the property of minoritised material bodies not the product of social processes. These classifications of people into 'races' build hierarchies of value based on the idea that the body is the truthful signifier of race (Lewis 2000). Whilst phenotypical notions of race and racism have dominated understandings of racialisation, Alia Al-Saji (2010) argues that the concept be extended to explain how the category of 'Muslim' becomes racialised. Across all the workings of racialisation, imagined biological and cultural differences are mobilised to hierarchise and Other people through binaries: civilised/uncivilised; rational/emotional; modern/primitive (Garner 2010; Omi & Winant 1986).

Visual and textual representations are pivotal to the ongoing production and reconfiguration of racial difference (Rose 2007). Photography represents a significant visual technology, routinely categorising people racially, whether on behalf of the State (ID photographs); the Academy (anthropology); and importantly for this paper, tourism industry (catalogues and advertisements) (Chinn 2000). Visual images and scopic regimes have been sites of struggle in which dominant groups attempt to secure symbolic power in representing race and minoritised people, practices and places. The Internet and webpages are now part of these struggles.

Cybertyping

In spite of extensive scholarship on critical race theory, few new media scholars study the Internet in relation to race. Nakamura is an exception, with a body of work examining race in social media, avatars, and music videos (2002, 2008). She insists that the Internet is not the utopian post-race space that transcends embodiment nor the force of grassroots democracy it was imagined to be. To stress the importance of representation in making race, and to highlight the specificities of racialisation processes in new media, she coins the term 'digital racial formation.' As a race-making technology, Nakamura's main point is that the Internet has its own technological 'affordances', defined as the actions its material properties facilitate (Lister et al. 2003). Affordances include being interfaced, networked, interactive and digitalised, all of which make the Internet a particular type of medium

(Nakamura 2002; Cranny-Francis 2005). The visual is central to digital racial formation. The Internet is a 'visual technology, a protocol for seeing that is interfaced and networked in ways that produce a particular set of racial formations' (Nakamura 2008: 14). Underpinning digital racial formation is what Nakamura calls 'cybertyping,' which refers to how offline racial stereotypes become racial categories in digital environments. Race becomes 'cybertyped' as the offline get 'transcoded' through both online content and technological affordances. This means there are processes at play that are specific to new media. For example, cybertyping works through images and discourses but also interface design elements like drop-down menus with lists of racial identities. Cybertyping is reconfiguring, not simply reproducing, how race is constructed offline.

Whilst Nakamura examines digital racial formation, she does so in gaming and videos but not on webpages. Given our analysis is of webpages, we developed a social semiotic multimodal methodology, augmenting the idea of cybertyping with the work of Elisabetta Adami on blog aesthetics and Theo van Leeuwen (2008) on visual racism which we outline below, after a brief introduction to the background of *Taste-Tours*.

Taste-Tours

At the time of our research in 2012/3, *Taste-Tours* had been running for three years under the aegis of *The Benevolent Society*. Staff included a team-leader, marketing manager, and a team of tour guides. Attracting between five and 20 tourists each tour, with extensive, positive media coverage, *Taste-Tours* expanded to several suburbs. All women and local residents, they are contracted on a casualised basis tour by tour. Most are from non-Anglo Australian ethnic backgrounds – Lebanese, Chinese, Greek, Egyptian and Pakistani – some second-generation, and others, recently arrived migrants. Aged between 30 and 50, the guides have tertiary qualifications and various kinds of specialist food expertise. Elsewhere we have written about the work of the guides, emphasising its complex, gendered, racialised and skilled nature (Flowers and Swan 2015). *Taste-Tours* in its commercial capacity, touristifies southwestern Sydney and repackages Vietnamese and Lebanese ethnicities, but as a social enterprise seeks to change racist public perceptions of the region.

This social mission derives from the racist marginalisation of south-western Sydney in the media and white public imaginary (Collins & Poynting 2000). Comparatively poor, the region has large numbers of recently arrived migrants and refugees from southern Europe, Vietnam, the Middle East and Africa. The target of racist and Islamophobic media constructions about ‘ethnic’ violent crime, the ‘criminalised Arab,’ ‘Vietnamese drug dealers’ and young male ethnic gangs, suburbs like Bankstown and Cabramatta are portrayed as ‘no-go’ enclaves for Anglo-Celtic Australians (Collins 2009, Noble 2009, Dreher 2003). Categories such as the ‘Arab,’ ‘Vietnamese,’ ‘Muslim,’ ‘Middle Eastern’ and ‘Lebanese’ are demonised in news reports. Consequently, there is extensive racial discrimination and even violence towards men and women from these backgrounds. The racialisation of the region is gendered, with Muslim women seen to be under the thumb of criminal, oppressive and patriarchal men and Vietnamese women demure, docile and passive (Dreher 2003, Elder, 2003). The history of Othering Vietnamese, Arab and Muslim Australians has had profound and harsh consequences for these groups. Moreover, the media and politicians construct southwestern Sydney as Australian multiculturalism gone wrong (Dreher 2003).

Taste-Tours seeks to ‘rewrite’ the racist perception of the region through using food tours as a form of multicultural pedagogy. But as we have highlighted, *Taste-Tours* is not a typical gourmet or a food-adventuring tour. First, *Taste-Tours* has a social purpose mission of generating jobs and income and changing racist perceptions. Secondly, the destination for *Taste-Tours* is a poor, criminalised and racially maligned migrant and outer-metropolitan region, rather than the city centre, with its culinary tourism attractions of fancy restaurants, department store food-halls, growers’ markets and organic grocers. Hence, whilst a whiff of risk and the Other is tantalising, too much in the form of imagined violent crime, and perceived Islamic extremism is alienating. Participants explained to us that before going on a *Taste-Tours* food-tour, they would not have felt safe travelling to southwestern Sydney on their own, let alone shopping and eating out there. Thirdly, most of the region at the time of the research was not even seen as an ethnic food-adventuring destination. Given this context, the webpages have some representational work to do to achieve *Taste-Tours* hybrid aims: to render southwestern Sydney a desirable food-tourist destination, and to persuade tourists of the value of its social mission.

Methodology

Our literature review brought certain questions to the fore: how does digital racial formation work through the multimodal resources on the website for *Taste-Tours*? Given that *Taste-Tours* wants to challenge racism and sell tours, how is race and gender mobilised through the affordances of the *Taste-Tours* webpages? Do the webpages reproduce cybertyping and Othering strategies, and if so how? To answer these questions, it was important for us to understand the specificities of websites as forms of food media.

Websites are multimodal media bringing together graphics, photographs, videos, and verbal text which carry meanings (Pauwels 2005, Cranny-Francis 2005). Furthermore, a website is designed for a specific purpose, located on the Internet through a server and used by browsers who 'activate' and negotiate the meanings (Cranny-Francis 2005; Engholm & Klasttrup 2010). Thus, webpages are distinct 'hybrid' genres with verbal, aural, kinetic and visual meaning-making practices which work independently but also interact in combinations. Visual meanings extend, elaborate or contradict verbal meanings, and vice versa. In our analysis we move beyond the textual: from 'a constellation of writing and the medium of the book/page' to a 'constellation of mode of image and medium of screen' (Kress 2004: 110). Hence, we address a gap in the food media and food tourism literature by presenting a multimodal rather than simply a textual analysis of the *Taste-Tours* webpages. Emerging new media scholarship in tourism studies (Dorsey, Steeves & Porras 2004; Maci 2007; Holman 2011) treats websites as discursive not hybrid, multimodal artefacts (see Caldas-Coulthard 2008, Thurlow & Jaworski 2011; Francesconi 2014 for exceptions).

To attend closely to how multimodal strategies produce and carry meanings about race, gender and food, we provide a single-site analysis. The webpages of *Taste-Tours* comprise our case study, which we take from a wider comparative data set of ethnic and gourmet food tourism websites which we reference in our analysis. Following the principles of case study principles, and in line with other in-depth case studies of websites, we focus on a single-site analysis of the *Taste-Tours* webpages to obtain a sample of analytical units and provide a rich understanding of how visual, textual and interactive strategies of digital race formation operate in tandem with food tourism and social enterprise aims.

In this study, we examine the design of the webpage, visual and verbal meaning-making systems and affordances of interactivity, and not how tourists orient to the webpage through their computer usage. To analyse the webpages we followed the social semiotic multimodal approach detailed by Adami (2014, 2015), Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), Cranny-Francis (2005), and Pauwels (2005), using them recursively rather than in linear fashion. We combined analysis of the:

- source organisation for the webpage, and its subgenre function;
- appearance such as the overall design, page layout, mix of modalities, images, verbal text and visual composition of the pages;
- technical and semiotic properties such as the level and type of interactivity and the hierarchy of the multilayered structure;

- topics and content covered by the verbal and visual text;
- visual racism and Othering - how are people portrayed through processes of distancing; objectivation; homogenization; and culturally or racially categorized (Van Leeuwen, 2008).
- how the overall look and feel of the webpage, and values are expressed aesthetically and address an imagined user (Adami, 2014).

Our analysis complements our ethnographic research which extends our interest in the representational work of the *Taste-Tours* webpages by exploring the complex nature of the guides' guiding representational work.

Taste-Tours Webpages

One of the most remarkable features about *Taste-Tours* webpages is that users have to navigate via the 'source organisation,' *Benevolent Society's* website (Cranny-Francis 2007). *Taste-Tours* forms part of a ten-year community development project called *Growing Communities Together*. The website has multiple purposes: to promote *Benevolent Society's* brand; provide information on its services to clients; construct an authoritative and trustworthy identity; raise funds from donors and recruit volunteers. As such, *Benevolent Society's* webpages represent a mix of commercial and social mission sub-genres (Cranny-Francis 2005). A user accesses the *Taste-Tours* webpages through the main menu of *The Benevolent Society* homepage which has hyperlinks to its care, research and community programmes. The *Taste-Tours* webpages visually connect to *The Benevolent Society's* website through the mirroring of colours and logo/banner. This location and framing of *Taste-Tours* in relation to children's and aged-care services is astonishing for an ethnic food tourism organisation and produces distinctive meaning-making potential which we discuss below.

The Benevolent Society website creates and addresses an 'implied user' through aesthetic, interactive, compositional and textual strategies. Hence, the flow and hierarchy of the webpages from *Benevolent Society* to *Taste-Tours* influences how they are to be read. Thus, the first page that the *Taste-Tours* user encounters is serious and professional and through its visual and verbal features, conveys values of tradition and charity, and through its use of several photographs of older people, highlights with a sense of 'benevolence' to vulnerable groups. These elements position *Taste-Tours* in an unexpected, jarring way, the culinary tourist not being the imagined addressee of *Benevolent Society* webpages. Indeed, to navigate to *Taste-Tours* takes some determination as the user has to click from a verbal link on *The Benevolent Society* homepage to the webpages of the *Growing Communities Together* programme. This page also has direct hyperlinks to other community projects. Moreover, the *Taste-Tours* webpages are branded by the *Growing Communities Together* and *Benevolent Society* colours, 'look' and overall 'community development feel.' Discursively the *Taste-Tours* webpages echo this look and feel through textual references to its social aims. At the same time, the pages shift aesthetic and textual gear as they seek to sell food tours and touristify southwestern Sydney suburbs for the imagined user.

To examine meaning-making strategies, we offer a close-up analysis of interactive, verbal and visual resources of the first two webpages. We selected these as they are first in the

hierarchy of the 'designed' reading pathway and represent the tours, guides and food. We begin by examining interactivity, a core meaning-making system in digital media, which performs representational work through the politics of its links and how it addresses the user. Adami defines interactivity as the 'affordance of a text being acted upon' and notes that hypertextuality – how users access texts through hyperlinks – is just one element of interactivity on blogs and websites (2015: 133). Hypertextuality enables users to create their own reading paths as they make decisions about which links to click on. But users perform other actions: such as accessing, providing and sharing texts, all of which constitute interactivity. Interactive signs- words, images, shapes, colour, underlined text - are places on a webpage which enable certain actions – clicking, hovering, clicking and typing – and produce effects – the access, provision or transfer of texts. They are also semiotic forms endowed with meaning, depending on their shape, style, dynamics, colour etc. Hence, she coins the term: site/sign.

The webpages for *Taste-Tours* have low levels of interactivity and networking, more typical of Web 1.0 (one-to-many information dissemination) than Web 2.0 (many-to-many co-authoring and interactivity). The simple interactivity takes recognisable forms: social media buttons link to *Taste-Tours* Facebook site, twitter and email on the banner of each page. In addition, verbal links take the user to a pdf brochure, recipes and information on cooking classes; and a visual link to purchase the tours. The site/signs on *Taste-Tours* afford limited interactive acts, such as controlling the sequence of movement through the webpages by clicking to other *Taste-Tours* texts; and following the designed pathways or bypassing designed steps to create more individualised reading paths. The most complex interactive act is when users choose a date and tour and complete a payment form, thereby transferring information to the site owners.

Site/signs work to communicate broader meanings about power relations and values through the types of hypertextuality, connectivity and directionality between external links, users and webpages (Adami 2015). External links to other sites and sources of information influence how users read websites, and can indicate political agendas. Links to external websites can enable webpages to show users other discourses, lexical fields, imagery and forms of knowledge. In relation to hypertextuality, the site/signs on *Taste-Tours* prohibit access to other webpages related to either commercial or social aims; for example, food businesses, refugee networks and migrant community centres. The pages link externally but only to *Taste-Tours* social media: Facebook, twitter and blog. Hence, most links loop internally to other pages on the *Taste-Tours* or *Benevolent Society* website. Whilst external links to social media are par-for-the-course for commercial food tour organisations, internal links to recipes and cooking classes, as found on *Taste-Tours*, are unique in our sample. The cooking classes form part of a nutritional education programme aimed at low-income families. The recipes provided are basic, family-friendly food such as chocolate brownies and tabouleh. Simple recipes, they do not require skilled techniques or exotic ingredients as might be found on a classic 'foodie' website. As a result, these internal links show traces of the social mission of the *Benevolent Society* and suggest a lower middle-class female imagined user.

Turning to the affordances of connectivity and directionality, the webpages steer a clear direction back to *Taste-Tours* and the *Benevolent Society* in 'recursive' and 'self-referential' ways (Adami 2015). This closed structure reinforces the asymmetrical power between

Taste-Tours and the *Benevolent Society* to control verbal and visual texts which represent people and places of southwestern Sydney. Local community users, potential consumers and previous tourists cannot exert influence through interactive strategies such as providing content, uploading comments, or other material. Whilst such participatory interactivity might seem idealistic or functionally complex, the *Growing Communities Together* webpages have open forms of interactivity which allow users to upload self-produced materials such as videos, comments and stories. Hence there is a politics of representation in the limited external links and technological affordances of interactivity on the *Taste-Tours* webpages which reproduce the symbolic power of the *Benevolent Society* to control how tour guides, local residents, and the region are seen.

Composition

Other meaning-making systems on webpages include visual and verbal multimodal strategies, and in this next section we examine how verbal text, layout, colour, font and images are composed and combined, and contribute to the touristification and representational work of *Taste-Tours*' webpages.

Verbal Text

Verbal text introducing the tours is presented in the centre of the first page in 'washed out' light-grey font on white (see screenshot 1 below).

Screenshot 1: First half page of Taste-Tours webpages

The verbal text is in short simple, colloquial sentences. Consistent with a commercial webpage sub-genre, much of it is written in promotional discourse, using emotive adjectives such as 'fantastic,' 'amazing'; and sales phrases such as 'showcase,' 'there's something for everyone,' and 'value', emphasising affordability, a quality not usually characteristic of foodiesm (Johnston and Baumann 2009). A tourism cliché a 'journey of discovery' is used. At the same time, the social mission is referenced through terms such as 'social enterprise', 'give something back' and 'community.' Even though verbal text invokes the category of 'foodie,' unlike food-tour websites we surveyed, it does not use middle-class 'foodie' terms such as 'cuisine', 'heritage' and 'gourmet', as found on the webpages for *Secret Food*, *Queenie's Food*, and *Taste Harlem* tours.

On the right of the page, there is separate verbal text in the form of a rhetorical interrogative, 'Love Food?' which visually stands out by being framed by a box and written in large font, white on green. The question addresses the user directly and conversationally, tactics typical of promotional discourse used to suggest a personal

connection between the represented addressor and imagined user. There is generic use of 'food' and absence of foodie adjectives such as luscious, local, organic, fusion or region-specific epithets such as South American, Nepalese, Szechuan. This lack, together with the emotive, 'love' give the impression of the imagined user positioned as someone with a hearty, some what indiscriminating appetite rather than having the aesthetic detachment of the middle-class gourmet (Hage 1997; Johnston and Baumann 2009).

The other significant verbal text is the large white 'speech' bubble icon at the top of the page, framed in green. This displays the word 'Taste' in four languages: English, Arabic, Vietnamese and Chinese; and in two non-Roman and two Roman scripts, representing the major language groups in southwestern Sydney, and signalling the types of racialised Others tourists might meet. The speech bubble works as a logo for 'touristified' multiculturalism in which its semantic content is less important than the aesthetic qualities of signs of foreignness (Lou 2010; Leeman & Modan 2010). Foreign scripts have status as 'a readily identifiable index of ethnicity,' often used to sell exoticised people, food and places (Leeman & Modan 2010). Indeed, marketers describe typefaces designed to evoke foreign cultures on packaging as 'exotypes' (Celhay, Boysselle and Cohen 2015).

Arabic, Chinese and Vietnamese languages are marginalised elsewhere on the webpages and thus, the non-English languages sit in isolation: a soundbite of multiculturalism. In contrast to the marginalisation on the website; in the streets and shops, Arabic, Chinese and Vietnamese languages are highly visible, seen on shop fascia, posters for Asian popstars, and handwritten cardboard signs on food stalls. In using English as the main language, and mobilising the odd 'ethnic' word to signify the Other and combination of 'ethnic words' to designate multiculturalism, the website erases the ethnic, linguistic vitality and practices of people living and working in these suburbs and privileges the white English-speaking tourist as the imagined user (Jaworski & Thurlow 2010).

The webpage provides little information about local people, businesses or food to touristify the region or promote *Taste-Tours'* mission aims. Webpages from commercial 'foodie' tours touristify more directly by offering information about cooking techniques, histories of ingredients, stories about food culture, and 'people, places and events surrounding the food and the food's social meaning and uses' (Johnston and Baumann 2009: 178). Other food social enterprises in Australia do more representational work on their websites on their social mission providing information about their aims, their histories, the types of problems they attempt to address and the difficult circumstances their beneficiaries experience. In summary, on the *Taste-Tours* webpages, the verbal text does represent the hybridity of *Taste-Tours'* commercial and social mission aims but the commercial text is weakly 'touristified' and weakly 'foodie', and the social mission text, weakly educational.

Whilst the verbal text on *Taste-Tours* provides meaning-making potential, it also works in tandem with visual text. Van Leeuwen (2008) makes the point that verbal and visual texts can elaborate, extend or contradict each other. Visual texts are prevalent in new media and more open to connotation and interpretation, appealing to barely conscious knowledge, conditions which means that images can communicate racist and racialised meanings in less blatant ways than verbal text, and it is to these race and gender meaning-making processes we turn to next in screenshot 1 (van Leeuwen 2008).

Visual Text

The most striking images on the first page are the large photographs of Lebanese pastry, baklawa; multi-coloured wrapped confectionery; and two smiling men of middle-eastern appearance standing in front of a Lebanese café, which scroll across a banner at the top of the webpage, and a still photograph of a Muslim woman shopping taken from a video not playable at the time of our research. The three photographs in the scrolling banner create an equivalence between the confectionery and the smiling men, offering a sense of southwestern Sydney as a place to find middle-eastern treats and friendly foreign shopkeepers, visually challenging the stereotypes about the region as dangerous, criminal and alien. A more detailed look at the photograph of baklawa in Screenshot 1 illustrates this point.

The image is taken as a medium shot, representing a conventionalised sense of 'close social distance' in actual social interaction in which the tourist's body would be a step removed from the sensory properties of getting close-up and intimate with one piece of baklawa (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996). Highly stylized, carefully lit and angled, the visual characteristics highlight the sheer abundance of 'ethnic' treats on offer. Whilst the image is in a sensory modality that signifies temptation, offering the potential for a 'sensual thrill,' it is not taken as the usual foodie close-up shot (Dennis 2008). Typical characteristics of 'foodiesm' are the search for the exotic and authentic (Johnston and Baumann 2009). In Sydney, baklawa would not be regarded as an excitingly exotic food or a marker of middle-class foodie status as it can be found in many cornershops and cafes. But the image does connote qualities of the authenticity of the baklawa because it is shown in a middle-eastern shop in southwestern Sydney which make it attractive for the tourist because it offers connections to the Other: middle-eastern shoppers, family bakers and their ethnocultural traditions.

Desserts generally have a seductive appeal and are seen as feminine foods. For Anglo-Celtic Australians, baklawa represents a small, fragile, refined and yet indulgent morsel, known for its' intense, sweet, aromatic flavour of orange water and spices. Though ubiquitous, the sensory properties of the baklawa mean that it connotes Orientalist fantasies of faraway lands. The row of multi-coloured wrappings at the side of the trays emphasises their role as a 'treat' for the tourist and mirrors 'happy multiculturalism' images of bright crayons and pots of paint used to signify racial diversity and vibrancy on websites, posters and policy brochures (Swan 2010). The image works, alongside the other photographs of smiling men, and brightly coloured confectionery, to 'touristify' the region, particularly by lowering its imagined racialised and masculinised riskiness. The baklawa offers a bite-sized nibble of the 'sugar-coated' Arab Other - sensuous, feminine, exotic and traditional (Mehta 2009) - who stands in contrast to the dangerous, masculine, criminal Arab or patriarchal, regressive, domineering, male 'Muslim'; both forms of masculine Other very closely associated with the region through intensely racist and longstanding media reporting. Thus, the representational work of these images deploys gendered racialised Otherness to offer 'edible diversity' to the imagined user, which make racial difference digestible (Ahmed 2012).

The notion of palatable ethnicity under control is reinforced through other food imagery. Compared to other food-tour websites, the photographs of food on *Taste-Tours* webpages are presented in a neat aesthetic fashion as an object for visual rather than bodily consumption. *Taste-Tours* webpages do not show images of people eating. In contrast, other websites feature photographs of tables groaning with heaving, glistening dishes of food; empty plates with the last traces of food scraped off; and happy indulgent satiated eaters. Greedy pleasure, conviviality and appetite are highlighted. On *Taste-Tours*, the order and restraint represented through neat images of food serve to act as a foil to the widely held perception that southwestern Sydney is a hotspot of crime and racial conflict fuelled by ethnic drives, excesses and appetites.

The other image in the bottom right-hand corner features a Muslim woman shopping in a non-descript fruit and vegetable shop. This image works in tandem with the banner photographs of smiling middle-eastern men and Arab confectionery to highlight racialised femininity. Van Leeuwen (2008) outlines visual strategies for Othering racialised people as 'not like us': distancing – representing people visually as not close to us, as strangers; showing people doing actions held in low esteem; symbolic objectivation – where a depicted figure is not addressing the user with eye contact, and therefore viewed voyeuristically as if they are not aware they are being looked at; and cultural visual categorisation – where items of dress such as the hijab connote negative associations attached to Muslim women. Such strategies are clearly evident in this image. Hence, the woman is shot from a distance, on her own; doing everyday 'chore' shopping, a low status feminised, domestic activity; she is looking down, therefore an object for scrutiny; and she wears a hijab. Muslim women's clothing, and in particular, the hijab are at the centre of intense debate in the Australian media. Stereotyped as a symbol of religious and patriarchal oppression, images of the hijab are used to Other Muslim women as too traditional, passive and foreign, which fuel racist verbal and physical attacks on women and girls wearing the hijab (Poynting 2002; Dreher 2003).

Commentators note that images of Muslim women have shifted from Orientalist stereotypes to those showing Islam as anti-modern (Brasted 2001). As a result, Muslim women are presented as 'foreign, exotic, oppressed or threatening others rather than as one's unexotic, unthreatening next-door neighbours' (Bullock & Jafri 2000: 7). Using Nakamura's concept, we can say that this representation of Muslim women in digital media is a cybertype. Of significance for our discussion is that the woman on the webpage is shown undertaking unexotic, unthreatening, almost neighbourly activities. In her analysis of post 9/11 representations of Arabs in the US media, Evelyn Alsultany (2012) charts a shift to 'sympathetic' portrayals of Muslim women as in need of rescue rather than as alien and dangerous. These images evoke 'benevolent emotions' such as pity and sympathy and work to suggest that dominant groups have nuanced, enlightened multicultural feelings. Whilst Alsultany's work focuses on US TV dramas and news reporting, similar images can be found on the Internet, such that it can be seen as a new cybertype of Muslim women.

On *Taste-Tours*, the Muslim woman is Othered through raced, classed and gendered differentiation from the imagined user. The choice of the image is instructive because the region is populated by large numbers of Vietnamese and Christian Lebanese, and almost 50 per cent of residents are Christian. Not only seen as oppressed because she is veiled, a

potent symbol of passivity, she is further associated with domestic, non-educated and non-professional femininity, meanings amplified by stereotypes of southwestern Sydney. The Muslim woman represents the most Othered. Hence, the *Taste-Tours*' image works, alongside the verbal text about the mission of *Taste-Tours*, as 'sympathetic' in Alsultany's sense. Echoing conventionalised images and paternalistic discourses of saving Muslim women, the image positions the user as a potential benefactor, purchasing a tour to help disempowered residents.

Whilst positioned as someone who can 'help', the user is not addressed as a middle-class foodie. Adami stresses that webpages create an imagined user through their aesthetics, interactivity and content. Typically, food tours signal the middle-classness of the imagined 'author' and addressee through minimalist layout; colours like gold, black and white; prominent use of gourmet foodie terms such as 'quality' and 'research'; specialist-shop names like chocolatiers; brand-names written in artisanal, hand-written font-style; and a significant number of close-up, well-lit photographs of shop displays, people eating unusual, rare, authentic and norm-breaking foods (Johnston and Baumann, 2009). *Taste-Tours* is, in contrast, aesthetically plain, interactively simple, and commercially focused on non-exotic foods and value for money. The verbal text is not highly informational about food, region, culture or history. Furthermore, information about the local shopkeepers and business owners whom *Taste-Tours* claim are beneficiaries of their social mission are missing. Taking these elements together, *Taste-Tours* can be seen to address an imagined user who is female, lower middle to working class, and white, who has what Sarah Cappeliez and Josee Johnston call a tentative, cautious, lower income, mode of cosmopolitan eating as opposed to an intellectually curious, knowledge-oriented middle-class connoisseur mode (2013: 435).

As we argue elsewhere, it is important when discussing the project of eating the Other to examine who is eating what Other through which Othering processes (Flowers and Swan 2012). *Taste-Tours*' webpages offer a sanitised image of the Other with sufficient difference to seem enticing through the possibility of eating nice treats, and non-threatening in its Othering of the Arab Muslim as a women tied to tradition and the home. Accordingly, the touristified version of southwestern Sydney is shown as feminised, friendly, and exotic; and not masculine, criminalised and dangerous as represented in the media, and therefore a suitable and even seductive touristic destination for 'tentative' tourists. Thus, touristification is gendered and racialised through visual and verbal relays between stereotypes offline and online, and oscillations between verbal and visual texts on each page and between the webpages. With these relays in mind, the next section focuses on the second level of the website and the representation of the tour guides.

The Guides

Verbal and visual text about the guides can be accessed by clicking on a hyperlink labeled 'Our Tour Guides,' the second link on the menu at the top of the page, foregrounding the tour guides in the designed reading path. Websites for other ethnic food tours such as *Gourmet Food Safaris* and *Harlem Tours* put information about the guides further 'back' in the hierarchy of pages. In positioning the guides upfront, and locating their photographs

in the centre of the page, *Taste-Tours* signals that that guides are central to its representational work.

Visual Analysis

INSERT

Screenshot 2: Second webpage showing tour guides

Whilst the webpages' reading path draws the user's attention to the guides, the visual and verbal resources on the second page Other them in ways which homogenise, de-individualise and de-professionalise. Strategies for representing Otherness include showing people as homogenised groups, neglecting their individual characteristics and differences, and depicting people as passive non-actors, all of which can be seen in screenshot 2 (van Leeuwen 2008). Taking visual homogenisation: this works at several levels. First, the images are all the same size. Secondly, they are all studio headshots against identical backgrounds. Thirdly, the images of the guides' faces are consistent in appearance with few indexical markers of ethnic difference in terms of clothing, jewellery, and make-up; although eye, nose, mouth shape and skin colour work to signify racial difference. Two Muslim women in hijabs stand out, but even then their hijabs are white, a soft colour, and so blend in with the white background almost to the point of disappearance. The guides have almost identical smiling expressions. Fourthly, the photographs are standardised through their ordering in uniform squares, laid out in rows and columns, all of which are contained in a larger box shape. Whilst race and difference are visually represented to some degree, and verbally signalled through the guides' names which mark a range of ethnicities, spanning Vietnamese, Spanish, Greek, Lebanese and Egyptian, these are undercut by the repetitive visual grammar of sameness. This visual grammar works through the echoing rhythm of the smiling faces against the flat, standardised studio background. Each face is in a separate box as if a type - not an individual - in an ethnic taxonomic table- ordered, classified and contained- framed as a group visually by the standardised layout and colours.

The webpage further visually Others the guides in its representations of them as passive non-actors (Van Leeuwen 2008). Most strikingly, the guides are not shown guiding. This is in stark contrast to other food tour websites where tour guides are depicted in brightly-coloured full-body shots, out on the streets, active and enthusiastic, gesticulating with expansive hand gestures, and animated postures, pointing, eating, talking and dominating space in masculinist fashion. On *Taste-Tours*, the guides simply smile. The washed out colour palette on the page, and the 'boxing in' of the guides, underlines this sense of feminised racialised passivity (van Leeuwen 2008).

Not only are the guides inactive, the studio shots are abstracted from any domestic or public context. The passivation and de-contextualisation of represented people through these visual strategies means that they are seen as generic social types. In this way, the guides are depicted as de-individualised, prototypical southwestern Sydney 'ethnics' and not as particularised, concrete individuals (van Leeuwen 2008).

The guides' smiles carry further meaning which cybertype them. The guides are not shown smiling sociably at tourists in-situ as on other websites. Rather Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) suggest this kind of image – with faces in close personal distance, smiling, gazing directly – is addressed at a user as if in an imagined interpersonal relationship. Such images create a 'demand,' of the user, a relational call for a response, inflected by the facial expression, posture and setting. In their writing Kress and van Leeuwen suggest a smiling image demands affinity from the viewer. They do not, however, discuss the semiotics of smiles and their meanings in the service industry. In contrast, we argue that guides' smiles need to be understood as hostessing emotional labour performed under asymmetrical power relations (Flowers and Swan 2015). Moreover, smiles from 'ethnic' guides not only have gendered but also racialised connotations. The popular stereotype of 'ethnic' smiling faces dates back to colonial images of black people as 'happy natives' (Hall 1997: 245). As Irvin Painter puts it, 'white people want their black people to be unfailingly sweet-tempered and smiling' (in Jones 2006: 152). Taking these offline meanings into account, together with offline stereotypes of southwestern Sydney as scary, the addressed user is 'comforted' by friendly feminine faces rather than 'challenged' by intensely foreign, masculine, demanding racialised Others. Hence, this page relays verbal and visual meanings from the first page. Both show that racialised femininity is being deployed to touristify the region.

Verbal text

The feminised and racialised Othering between guides and imagined users is accentuated further by the short verbal text underneath each headshot in which guides talk in the first-person about their connection to food, southwestern Sydney and/or guiding. The autobiographical descriptions of the guides all sound more or less the same in terms of content, sentence structure and lexical choices. All are written in an informal, enthusiastic first-person feminine style as if the guides are personally speaking to the imagined user:

I love food and I love cooking.
 I love connecting with others.
 I'm happy to be able to share my knowledge about Asian foods.
 Food adventures are what I really love.
 I haven't worked...and I am learning so much.
 I have a passion for food and my Lebanese heritage and culture.

We learn little about the guides' backgrounds, culinary knowledge, history or lives. In this way, the autobiographies are generic and not very specific, personal or individual and thus, the verbal text homogenises the guides like the visual text. In terms of social aims, the *Taste-Tours* webpages provide little background on the history of Bankstown, local residents and patterns of migration, or on the tour guides. Nor is there much visual

attention to place or people. This is particularly notable given that the tours – a social enterprise – aim to change the racist perception of southwestern Sydney.

The repeated use of love and passion echoes the rhetorical question ‘Love Food?’ found on all of the webpages. The repetition of the emotive phrase ‘I love’ in each autobiography conveys a gendered eagerness to please, amplifying the visual images of the smiles and signs of deferential feminine racialised service, and gendered meanings of care heightened by positioning of the guides in the verbal text in relation to home-cooking. In contrast, guides on other webpages we surveyed are shown as having codified culinary expertise. Indeed, the verbal text does not tell the user about the credentials of the guides, although the guides we met had university qualifications and several had other food-related, part-time jobs. Other websites depict guides as cosmopolitan travellers, who speak several languages, can teach about local culture, trade-secrets, shopping and cooking. Contra this, *Taste-Tours* guides are positioned as learners rather than teachers, as quotes from the autobiographies attest:

‘My family ask me what I have learned from each tour’; ‘I haven’t ever worked’; ‘the tours are helping me improve my English.’

Through the verbal text, the guides are represented as stay-at home, amateur domestic cooks. (Considerable changes have since been made to the webpages and the information on the guides now profiles their credentials, culinary expertise and life experiences more extensively).

Having compared *Taste-Tours* broadly to other sites, it is illustrative at this point to contrast the representation of the guides on *Taste-Tours* with its main Sydney-based competitor *Gourmet Safaris*, a commercial food tour company in a little more detail. It is striking that there are stark differences in verbal and visual styling. First, *Gourmet Safaris* portrays its guides as individual personalities with expertise. This is shown through the photographs of the guides which are of different sizes, and with varied layouts, compositions, coloured frames and backgrounds, and show guides in full body shots, many in active roles. Secondly, the verbal text is organised vertically underneath each image and thus, each guide is presented one by one as the user scrolls down, emphasizing their individuality. Thirdly, biographies for *Gourmet Safaris* guides are in the third person, and include richer use of adjectives and adverbs making the descriptions more individualised, concrete and lively, and describe their qualifications, food expertise and food knowledge. *Gourmet Safari* guides are verbally and visually presented as ‘model’ masculinised, entrepreneurial migrants, ‘bon viveurs’ and teachers. In contrast, *Taste-Tours* guides are represented as family cooks and learners: feminised, traditional, and dependent.

The verbal and visual text about the guides reverberates visually and textually with the first page and its images of the Muslim woman and reference to ‘multicultural food traditions’. The connection of the guides to the domestic sphere, the erasure of their qualifications and public lives references offline media representations of ‘mythologised ethnic family life’ (Gallegos and Newman 1999). This ‘myth’ assumes that all ethnic food is home-made, based on recipes handed down the matrilineal line, and served to large

families eating convivially. At its centre stands the 'nurturing ethnic mother' in the kitchen (Chez 2011), the 'cooking ethnic woman' (Duruz 2004), representing ethnic tradition, self-sacrifice, and authenticity. Whilst she is valued by the dominant culture for her nourishing food, and positively Othered in food-media as a 'nonna' figure, a skilled 'authentic' home cook, she is also negatively Othered as 'trapped in tradition,' fixed in old-fashioned gender roles, in contrast to modern white women.

Traditional tourism media depict racialised guides in servile or folksy entertainment roles (Santos 2006). In analysing new media, Christine Holman (2011) extends our insight into representations of guides to show how Amazonian tourism websites present Western white guides as skilled professionals with individualised biographies and photographs, their academic qualifications, travelling experiences and language skills emphasised, whereas the depictions of the racially minoritised, local guides de-individualise, de-professionalise and de-skill them. Our analysis of Taste-Tours reveals a similar pattern of representing the guides, although we build on Holman to show how visual strategies homogenise and do this in specific gendered ways. The overall effect of the visual and textual representation of the guides is that they are interchangeable 'ethnic types', substitutable cybertypes of friendly multiculturalism, rather than as individuals with specific skills, histories, forms of expertise and racial backgrounds (Swan, 2010).

Holman argues that the Othering of the racialised guides worked to hierarchise the white western guides as superior and benevolent helpers. There are some resonances with how benevolence on the Taste-Tours website is evoked. The guides are Othered through both homogenisation and a pejoration strategy in which they are positioned as traditional domestic cooks, unworldly and eager to learn. Hence, the invocation of 'benevolent emotions' such as pity and sympathy follows on from the first page of the website, signaling the generosity and multicultural feelings of *Taste-Tours* and the tourists. The guides are represented as in need of a helping hand from both.

The Othering of the racialised food and people on the webpages operates in relation to a specific imagined non-other: the lower middle class white woman user. As we have identified, drawing on Adami's classed analysis of webpage aesthetics, and Cappeliez and Johnston's research on food cosmopolitans, the webpages address a feminised tentative food tourist. The webpages incite the imagined user through the potential pleasure to be had by being benevolent to the needy, racialised, gendered Other, indulging in feminised Orientalist treats and being able to do these at an affordable price.

Conclusion

We argued at the beginning of this paper that food webpages have been under-researched, particularly in relation to racialised and gendered politics of representation. Even though there is growing literature on food and racialisation, little attention to date has focused on the Internet and its medium-specific modes of meaning making around race, what Nakamura calls digital race formation and cybertyping. Our paper examines the representational work of the website for an ethnic food tour, an organisation which is also a social enterprise. Ethnic food tourism and food social enterprises are growing in cities

and towns in North America, Europe and Australasia. Analysing their communication practices, including webpages, matters because they reproduce notions of the racialised and gendered Other to sell to, and educate potential, and actual consumers. And as we discuss, media representations of the Other have been shown to reproduce symbolic and material inequalities.

This study offers a close-up multimodal analysis of a single case study, studying meaning-making potential. We did not examine the production or the reception of the website which would enable us to understand how the meaning-making potential was designed and negotiated. This paper augments our ethnographic research on the representational work of guides on the tours.

Methodologically the paper makes a contribution in bringing together Nakamura's work on digital racial formation and cybertyping with frameworks more suited to website multimodal analysis from van Leeuwen on visual racism and Adami on interactivity. In applying these, we show how the verbal and visual text and interactive affordances produce meanings about race, gender, and class through 'realistic' photographs and coded visuals such as colour, foods, veils, fonts and layout. Our findings reveal how Othering is multilayered, gendered and racialised, and effected through visual and textual strategies. An important element in our argument is that the webpages produce a racialised, gendered and classed imagined addressee and which shape how racialised Others are depicted. Moreover, we argue that such meanings are inflected by online oscillations between verbal and visual texts, between pages on the website and offline historical, racialised and place-based meanings circulating in the media. Our approach emphasises the significance of applying medium-specific methods and analytic frameworks to digital media, an area ripe for further study and elaboration in food studies.

Our paper extends our argument elsewhere that the specificities of Othering matter (Flowers and Swan 2012). Hence, on *Taste-Tours*, racialised femininity is mobilised to touristify a region and to counter racism about that region. In doing its representational work, the webpages of *Taste-Tours* has to balance the hybrid aims of commerciality and social mission, both of which were visually and verbally anchored in tentative feminised foodie imagery and racialised feminine cybertypes, and addressed to a lower middle class white user. The social mission was underpinned by evocations of benevolent feelings of pity and sympathy. The webpages provided very little verbal text to educate users about the racialised conditions of southwestern Sydney, the problems faces by its residents, racist processes in the labour market, harsh politics towards refugees and asylum seekers or the histories of migration, all of which can ameliorate culinary tourism power dynamics (Heldke 2003). But there is little evidence whether providing this information to amplify the social mission would sell the tours.

Thus, we make a theoretical contribution to studies on racialisation and food. Motivated by Padoongpatt's idea that ethnic food must be understood through the concept of racialisation, we show the multimodal strategies through which ethnic food and people get racialised on food social enterprise websites. Nakamura highlights the specificities of race-making in new media spaces and ethnic tourism studies stress the power dynamics in touristifying regions through racialised Othering. But none of these have analysed how racialised Othering is gendered or how representational work racialises and Others on

digital food media.

Our study points to broader issues given the rise of food social enterprises. An important political issue here is that food social enterprises such as *Taste-Tours* operate on a shoe-string, with volunteers and employees putting in many unpaid hours, including doing the digital labour required for websites and other social media. That said, food social enterprises which sell racial difference and promote social aims around intercultural communication and anti-racism need to attend to how their representational work, on webpages and beyond, not only promotes their social mission but is part of their social mission, given how representations online cybertype, racialise and reproduce social and material inequalities and power asymmetries. Hence, our study raises wider questions about how food social enterprises can involve racialised Others in the representation of themselves and their lives.

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