The Cultural Politics of "Good Food"

Charlotte Biltekoff

California Department of Food and Agriculture

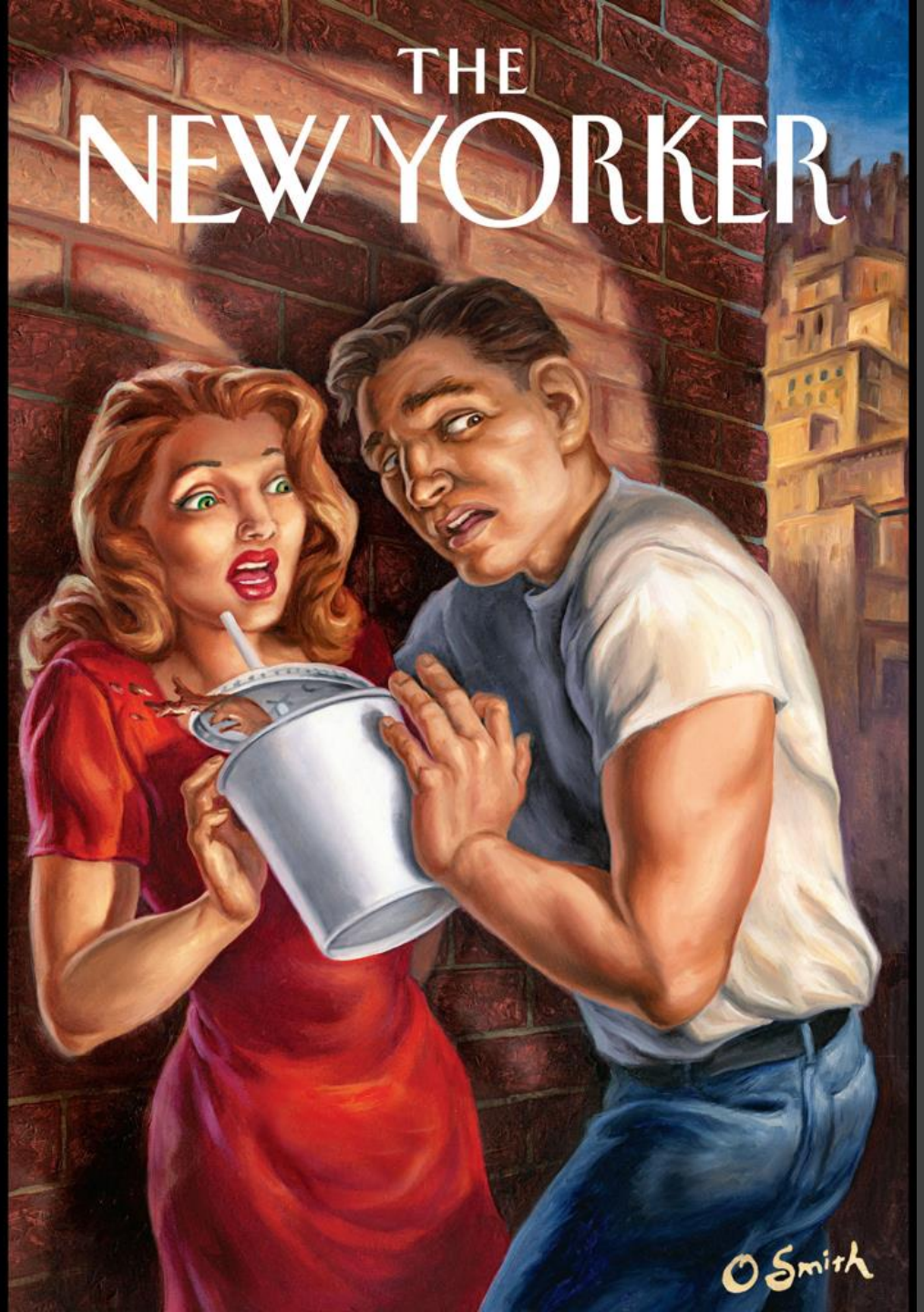
11.3.15

8AM
NVIGORATE
CLEANSE
16 fl.oz.
10AM
EMPOWER
CLEANSE
16 fl.oz.
1PM
EVITALIZE
CLEANSE
16 fl.oz.
Ingredients: Organic Carrot, Organic Orange, Organic Apple, Organic Ginger, Organic Pepper
4PM
RADIANCE
CLEANSE
16 fl.oz.
6PM
NOURISH
CLEANSE
16 fl.oz.
8PM
TRANQUILITY
CLEANSE
16 fl.oz.

ARE YOU POURING ON THE POUNDS?
DON'T DRINK YOURSELF FAT.
How to cut back on soda, juice and other sugary beverages.

YOU WOULDN'T EAT 22 PACKS OF SUGAR*. WHY ARE YOU DRINKING THEM?
Sugar
Sugar
*Sugar in a 20-oz. soda
Extra calories in sugar-loaded drinks may lead to obesity, diabetes, heart disease and some cancers. CHOOSEHEALTHLA.com

YES ON D
Berkeley vs. Big Soda
Paid for by Yes on Measure D, Healthy Child Initiative Ballot Measure Committee.
vs.
AP


THE
NEW YORKER
O Smith

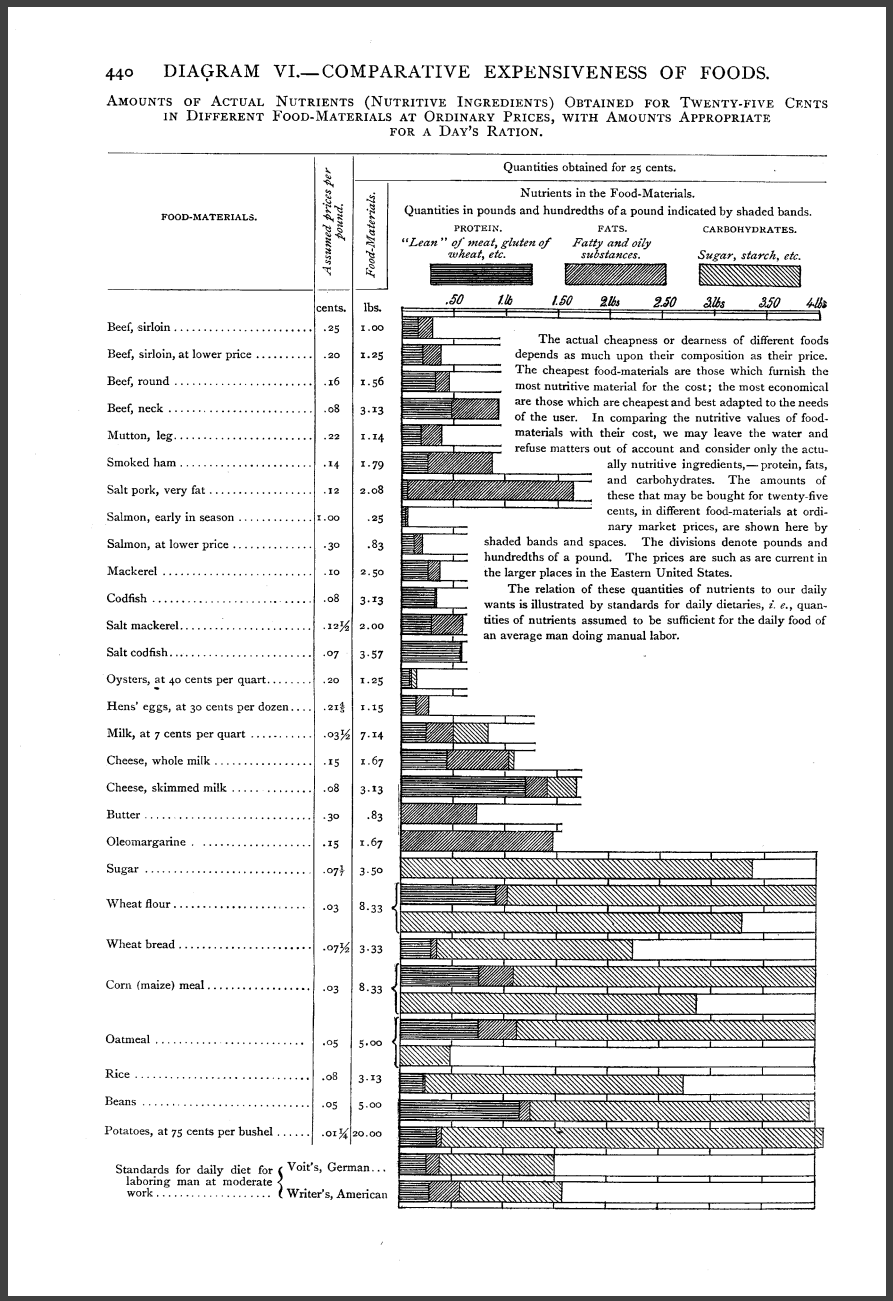
Don't drink yourself fat.
Choose water instead.
RETHINK YOUR DRINK
SODA
Start Living healthy!
StartLivingHealthy!!

CHARLOTTE BILTEKOFF

EATING RIGHT IN AMERICA

THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF FOOD & HEALTH

Dietary advice is always both empirical and ethical



440 DIAGRAM VI.—COMPARATIVE EXPENSIVENESS OF FOODS.

AMOUNTS OF ACTUAL NUTRIENTS (NUTRITIVE INGREDIENTS) OBTAINED FOR TWENTY-FIVE CENTS IN DIFFERENT FOOD-MATERIALS AT ORDINARY PRICES, WITH AMOUNTS APPROPRIATE FOR A DAY'S RATION.

FOOD-MATERIALS.	Assumed prices per pound.	Quantities obtained for 25 cents. Food-Materials.
	cents.	lbs.
Beef, sirloin	.25	1.00
Beef, sirloin, at lower price	.20	1.25
Beef, round	.16	1.56
Beef, neck	.08	3.13
Mutton, leg	.22	1.14
Smoked ham	.14	1.79
Salt pork, very fat	.12	2.08
Salmon, early in season	1.00	.25
Salmon, at lower price	.30	.83
Mackerel	.10	2.50
Codfish	.08	3.13
Salt mackerel	.12½	2.00
Salt codfish	.07	3.57
Oysters, at 40 cents per quart	.20	1.25
Hens' eggs, at 30 cents per dozen	.21⅞	1.15
Milk, at 7 cents per quart	.03½	7.14
Cheese, whole milk	.15	1.67
Cheese, skimmed milk	.08	3.13
Butter	.30	.83
Oleomargarine	.15	1.67
Sugar	.07⅓	3.50
Wheat flour	.03	8.33
Wheat bread	.07½	3.33
Corn (maize) meal	.03	8.33
Oatmeal	.05	5.00
Rice	.08	3.13
Beans	.05	5.00
Potatoes, at 75 cents per bushel	.01¼	20.00
Standards for daily diet for laboring man at moderate work: Voit's, German		
Standards for daily diet for laboring man at moderate work: Writer's, American		

Nutrients in the Food-Materials.

Quantities in pounds and hundredths of a pound indicated by shaded bands.

PROTEIN. "Lean" of meat, gluten of wheat, etc. — FATS. Fatty and oily substances. — CARBOHYDRATES. Sugar, starch, etc.

.50 1 lb 1.50 2 lbs 2.50 3 lbs 3.50 4 lbs

The actual cheapness or dearness of different foods depends as much upon their composition as their price. The cheapest food-materials are those which furnish the most nutritive material for the cost; the most economical are those which are cheapest and best adapted to the needs of the user. In comparing the nutritive values of food-materials with their cost, we may leave the water and refuse matters out of account and consider only the actually nutritive ingredients,—protein, fats, and carbohydrates. The amounts of these that may be bought for twenty-five cents, in different food-materials at ordinary market prices, are shown here by shaded bands and spaces. The divisions denote pounds and hundredths of a pound. The prices are such as are current in the larger places in the Eastern United States.

The relation of these quantities of nutrients to our daily wants is illustrated by standards for daily dietaries, *i. e.*, quantities of nutrients assumed to be sufficient for the daily food of an average man doing manual labor.

Atwater, "Comparative Expenses of Foods" (1888)

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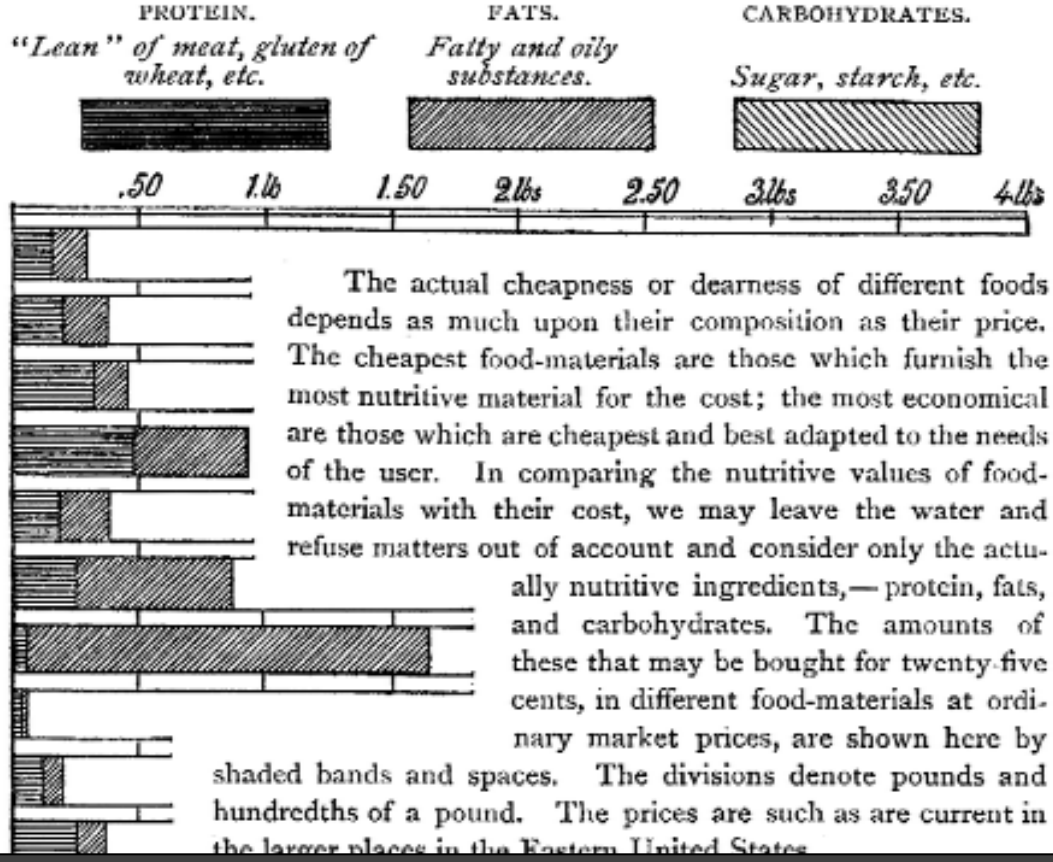

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World War II Era Poster, USDA

Dietary ideals = ideals of good citizenship

WORKER

Are You Helping Uncle Sam?

Then:

Eat a hearty lunch every day to help to keep you in top-notch physical condition, to make you feel like doing your job and "playing ball" with your fellow workers.

If possible, use whole-wheat bread. If you use white, be sure it is enriched with vitamins and iron. The slight extra money you pay is well worth the extra pep you get.

Keep your vision clear by eating plenty of green and yellow vegetables and fruits, salmon, and liver. These foods contain the vitamin A needed for good eyesight.

Make your lunch so hearty that it provides a large part of your day's need for vitamins, minerals, and proteins. The lunch period falls in the middle of your work day, and you need a good one to help you carry on. A good lunch is a good investment.

Include fruit in your lunch every day, such as an orange, apple, peach, or banana. Fresh or canned tomatoes and oranges help to protect you from scurvy.

Drink plenty of milk even if you feel that it is expensive. Remember it has many times the food value of any other drink.

Peanut butter, liver, eggs, salmon, cheese, pork, ham, beef, and chicken are muscle-building foods. Get one or two of these in your lunch every day. They will help to increase your capacity for work.

Plenty of water every day helps to flush waste products from the body. If you sweat a lot, drink extra water and eat extra salt to prevent fatigue.

Get plenty of rest and fresh air. Chew your food and eat slowly. Eat lunch with company you enjoy. Remember, no matter how good your lunch, it cannot give the best results if mixed with dirt and bacteria.

Learn about food values. Regulate your diet and thus enjoy good health and live to a ripe old age. You will have little trouble with constipation if your meals contain the vitamins in good meat, milk, and bread, as well as the roughage of vegetables and whole-grain cereals.

"Eat Well to Work Well: The Lunch Box Should Carry a Hearty Meal" (1942).

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Are You Helping Hitler?

Then:

Eat a poor lunch every day so that you will have many accidents, spoil much material, and keep your fellow-workers from getting their work done while you quarrel with them.

Eat only white bread—never whole-wheat or enriched. White bread has the fewest vitamins and will keep down your pep.

Don't eat eggs, liver, green vegetables, and yellow fruit; then the vitamin A in your eyes will be low. This will insure more accidents, because you see poorly. It may help you to smash your head or cut off your fingers.

Instead of thick sandwiches with good fillings, eat only a cake or a doughnut and some coffee for lunch. This may give you a headache by the end of the shift.

Don't eat oranges, tomatoes, cabbage, green peppers, or other fruits or vegetables in your lunch. Then you may get scurvy and your teeth may loosen. Dentists will then get too much of your pay check.

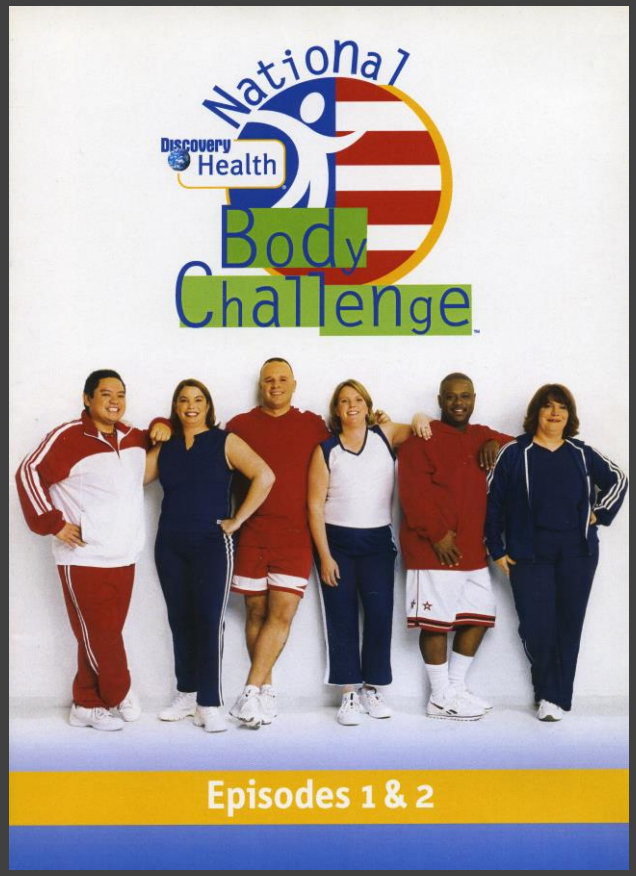
Let the other fellow drink your pint of milk each day. He will benefit from the calcium, protein, and vitamins in milk, and probably will do his work so well that the company will keep him busy after the war is over.

Don't eat sandwiches filled with peanut butter, liver, eggs, salmon, cheese, pork, beef, or chicken. These foods would keep your muscles in good condition, and you might feel as strong as a prize fighter and get more work done.

Don't drink much water; then the waste products in your body will accumulate in the blood and make you dopey. If you sweat a lot, don't eat extra salt—then you **really** will feel fatigued. This will keep you fighting with your boss so that he will not recommend you for promotion.

Don't wash your hands before eating; then you can get your peck of dirt. Swallow your food as fast as you can. You may have an iron stomach now but later on it may corrode and give you a goat's breath.

Don't learn anything about foods. If you do, you might choose a better diet, be able to forget your constipation, and quit fighting with your wife.



National Body Challenge (2004)

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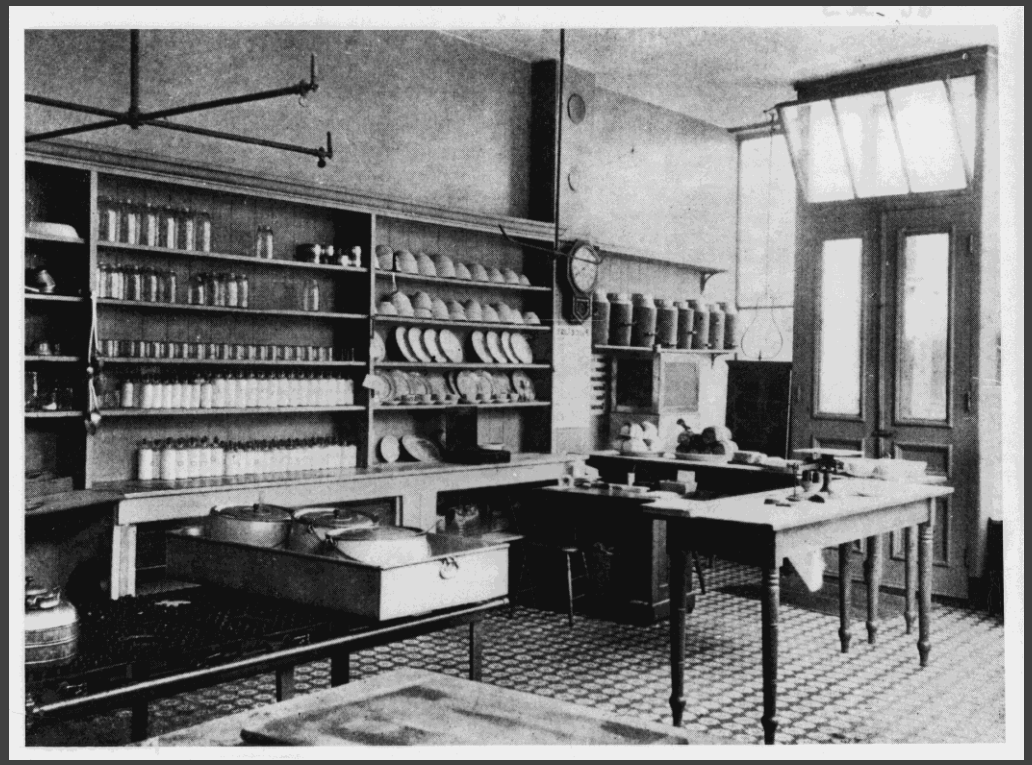

New England Kitchen

Rumford Kitchen, 1893 Worlds Fair

Dietary advice constructs a moralized social hierarchy

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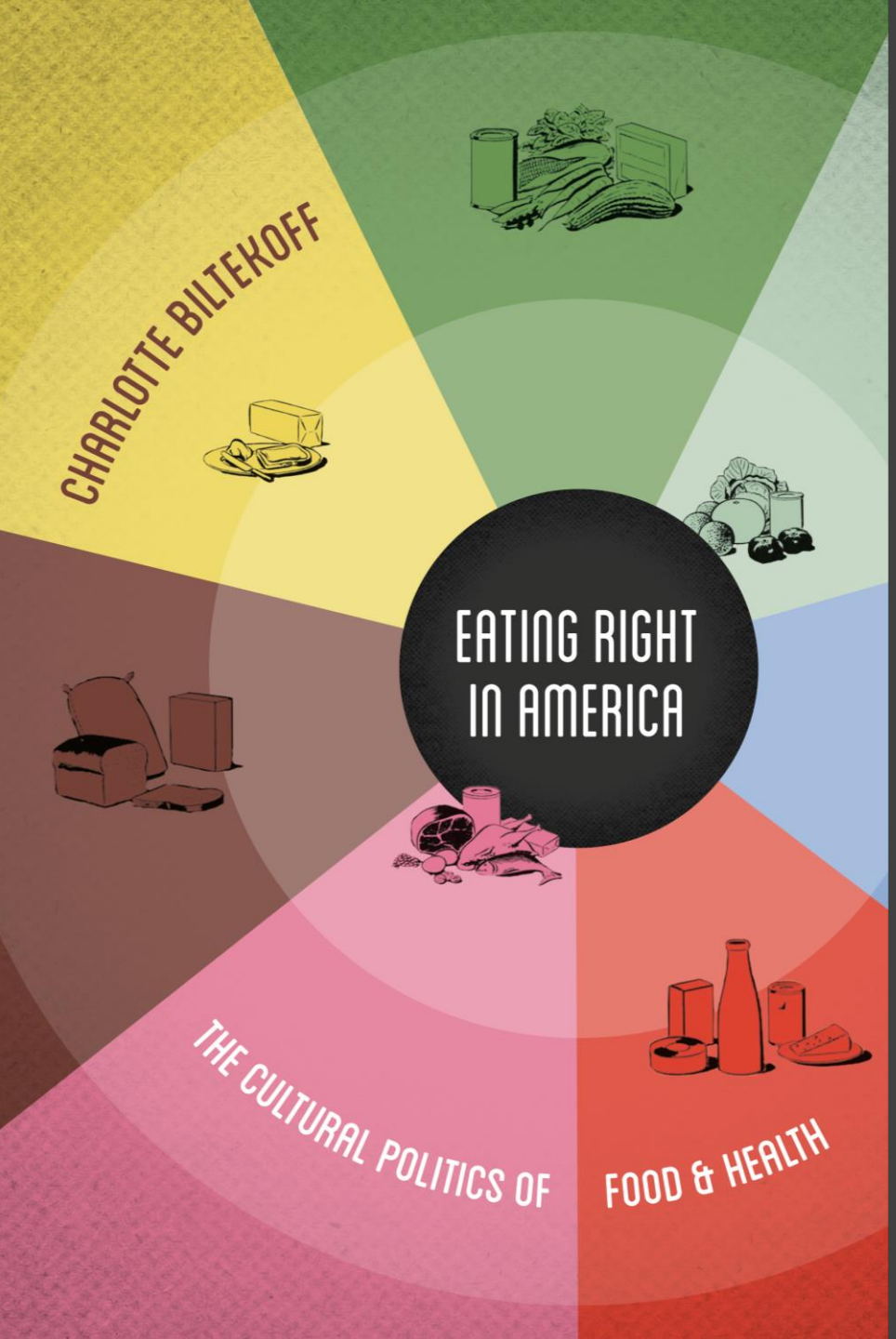

Thank You

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