

# Food and Culture

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# Experiments in Food

- How is your sourdough?
  - Did you get it active?
  - Did you bake any bread?
  - Did you have any issues? If so, how did you resolve them?
- How is your plant doing?
  - How big is it getting?
  - What issues are you facing?
  - If your plant is not growing properly, what will you do differently when you start again?
- Next experiment – Group Potluck and Bread Making!

# Discussion

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What is food?

- When is it food?
  - What is 'right' to eat?
  - When is it right to eat it?

What is culture?

What is the link between food and culture?





# What is Culture?

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## Raymond Williams

- A general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development.
- A particular way of life, whether of a people, period or group.
- The works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity.

## Nesbitt-Larking

- The general process of intellectual, spiritual, and artistic development of a people.
- The entire way of life of a people, in terms of those practices and facts through which they express their meaning.
- High culture – the works and practices of intellectual artistic activity
- Culture is the way of life of a people, in particular their evolving ideas, beliefs, and values as they are understood, communicated and represented.

## Bennett

- Culture consists of all those practices (or activities) that signify; that is, which produce and communicate meaning by the manipulation of signs in socially shared and conventionalized ways.

# What is Culture?

(Johnston, J., & Cappeliez, S. (2012) You Are What You Eat: Enjoying (and Transforming) Food Culture. In Critical Perspectives in Food Studies Second Ed. (2012), Koc, M., Sumner, J., Winson, A. Oxford University Press.

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## **Spillman**

Human process of meaning-making generating artifacts, categories, norms, values, practices, rituals, symbols, worldviews, ideas, ideologies, and discourses.

- institutions
- specific or defined group
- part of everyday interactions
- how social interactions convey meaning and how meaning is interpreted.

## **Anne Swidler**

- Culture is toolkit or repertoires
- A realistic cultural theory should lead us to understand that people are not passive 'cultural dopes' but rather active, sometimes skilled users of culture whom we actually observe
- Culture should be viewed as a collection of culturally defined elements
- From a reparatory, individuals can pick elements that sustain habitual behaviors or select tools to explore new ways of acting in the world
- People have agency but are also led by cultural norms

# What is Food Culture?

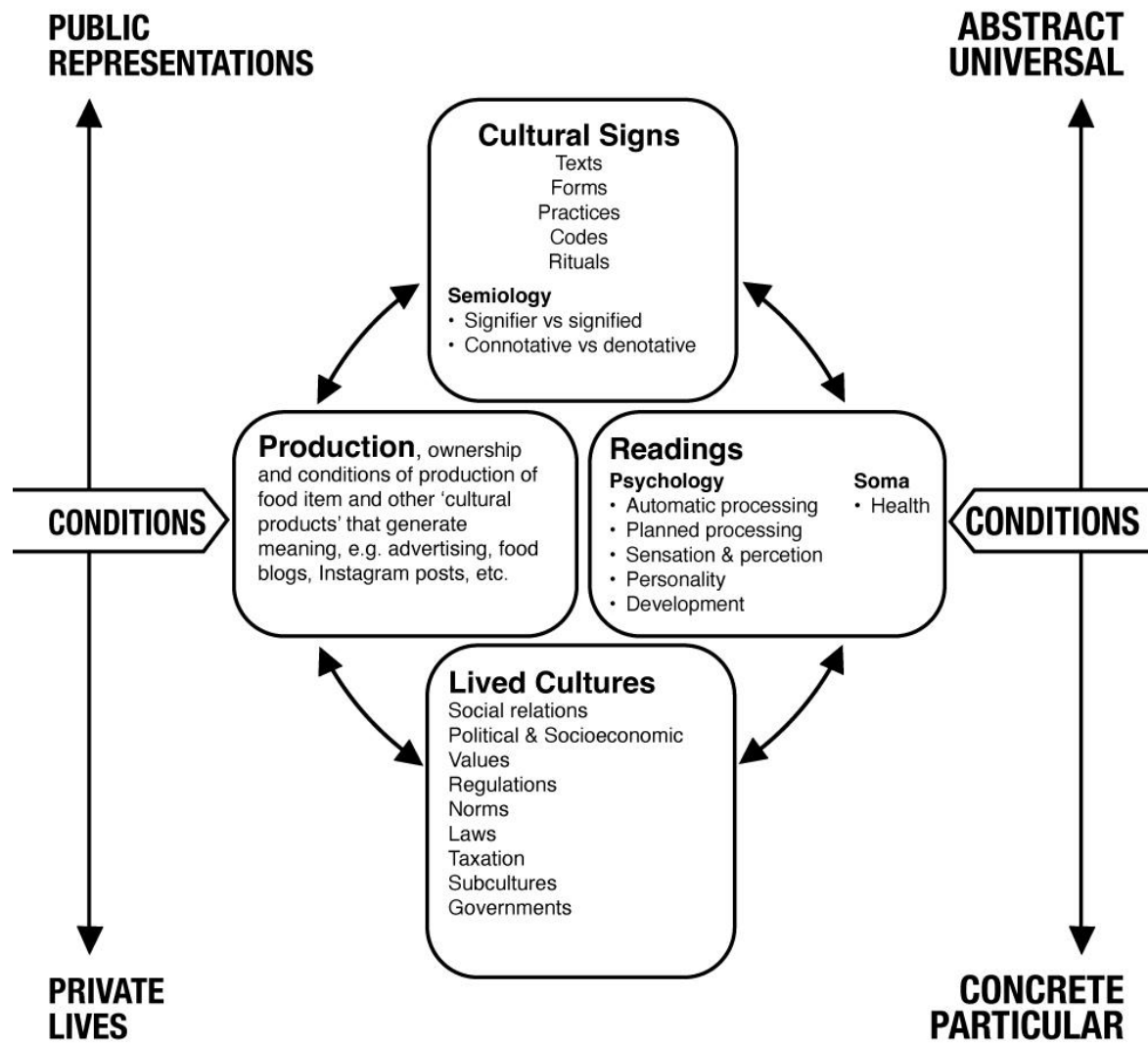
Food culture refers to the practices, attitudes, and beliefs as well as the networks and institutions surrounding the production, distribution, and consumption of food.

It encompasses the concepts of foodways, cuisine, and food system and includes the fundamental understandings a group has about food, historical and current conditions shaping that group's relationship to food, and the ways in which the group uses food to express identity, community, values, status, power, artistry and creativity. It also includes a groups' definitions of what items can be food, what is tasty, healthy, and socially appropriate for specific subgroups or individuals and when, how, why, and with whom those items can or should be consumed.

[Source](#)







# Production

Who produces the food item?

What means are used to produce the food item?

Labour conditions?

Materials?

Means of production?

Who produces the cultural signs of the food item?

What means are used to produce the cultural signs of the food item?

Labour conditions?

Materials?

Means of production?

Are the conditions of production more public or private?

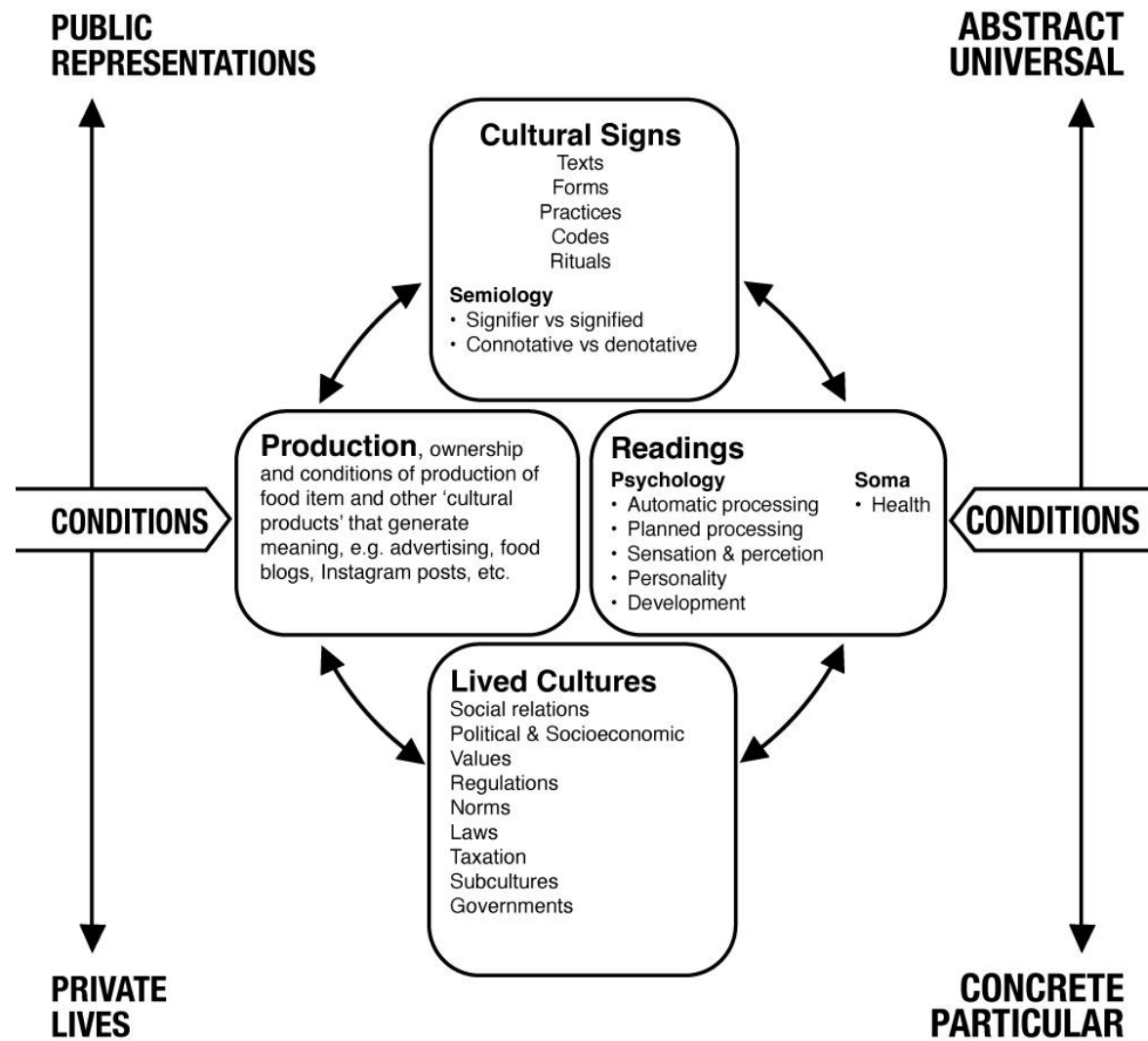
Are there any other conditions of production that are important to identify?

# Who Owns Froot Loops?

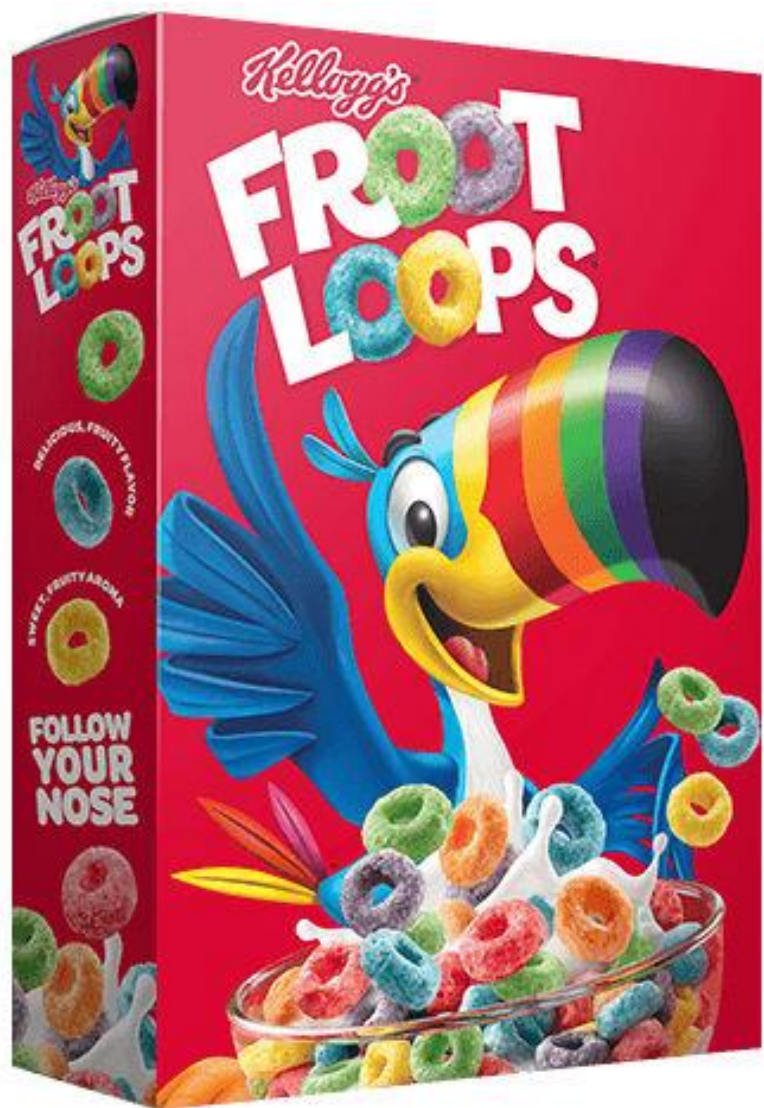
Kellogg Brand

The Ferrero Group

Nutrition Facts Valeur nutritive		
Serving 3/4 cup (27 g) Portion de 3/4 tasse (27 g)		
Amount per serving	Cereal	With 1/2 Cup 1% Milk
Teneur par portion	Céréales	Avec 1/2 tasse de lait 1 %
Calories / Calories	100	160
% Daily Value / % valeur quotidienne		
Fat / Lipides 1 g†	2 %	3 %
Saturated / saturés 0.5 g + Trans / trans 0 g	2 %	4 %
Cholesterol / Cholestérol 0 mg	0 %	2 %
Sodium / Sodium 105 mg	4 %	7 %
Potassium / Potassium 40 mg	1 %	7 %
Carbohydrate / Glucides 24 g	8 %	10 %
Fibre / Fibres 2 g	8 %	8 %
Sugars / Sucres 10 g		
Protein / Protéines 1 g		
Vitamin A / Vitamine A	0 %	8 %
Vitamin C / Vitamine C	0 %	0 %
Calcium / Calcium	0 %	15 %
Iron / Fer	25 %	25 %
Vitamin D / Vitamine D	20 %	45 %
Thiamine / Thiamine	40 %	45 %
Niacin / Niacine	6 %	10 %
Vitamin B6 / Vitamine B6	10 %	10 %
Folate / Folate	8 %	10 %
Pantothenate / Pantothénate	6 %	15 %
Zinc / Zinc	10 %	15 %
† Amount in cereal. / Dans les céréales.		
INGREDIENTS / INGRÉDIENTS :		
SUGAR, WHOLE GRAIN CORN FLOUR, WHEAT FLOUR, WHOLE GRAIN OAT FLOUR, OAT HULL FIBRE, CORN BRAN, MODIFIED POTATO STARCH, HYDROGENATED COCONUT AND VEGETABLE OIL, COLOUR, SALT, NATURAL FLAVOUR, BHT, VITAMINS AND MINERALS: IRON, NIACINAMIDE, ZINC OXIDE, THIAMINE HYDROCHLORIDE, d-CALCIUM PANTOTHENATE, CHOLECALCIFEROL (VITAMIN D3), PYRIDOXINE HYDROCHLORIDE, FOLIC ACID. CONTAINS WHEAT AND OAT INGREDIENTS. MAY CONTAIN SOY. SUCRE, FARINE DE MAÏS ENTIER, FARINE DE BLÉ, FARINE D'AVOINE ENTIÈRE, FIBRES DE BALE D'AVOINE, SON DE MAÏS, FÉCULE DE POMME DE TERRE MODIFIÉE, HUILES DE COPRA ET VÉGÉTALE HYDROGÉNÉES, COLORANT, SEL, ARÔME NATUREL, BHT, VITAMINES ET MINÉRAUX : FER, NIACINAMIDE, OXYDE DE ZINC, CHLORHYDRATE DE THIAMINE, d-PANTOTHÉNATE DE CALCIUM, CHOLÉCALCIFÉROL (VITAMINE D3), CHLORHYDRATE DE PYRIDOXINE, ACIDE FOLIQUE. CONTIENT DES INGRÉDIENTS DU BLÉ ET DE L'AVOINE. PEUT CONTENIR DU SOYA.		





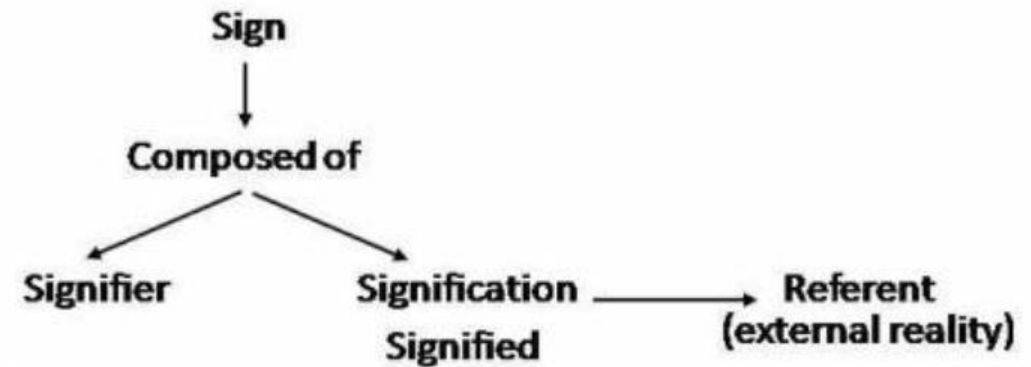


# Semiotics

- Is an analytic method that complements **context** and **medium** specificity, by focusing on broad **cultural processes** by which **meaning is produced and communicated across a range of cultural forms**.
- Is the study of **how meaning is produced and reproduced within a society**.
- Provides us with **powerful tools for analyzing the meaning of food** as well as helping us **gain some distance from everyday practices of communication of meaning**, so that we can look at them, with new eyes and understand them in new ways.
- Involves 'unnatural tasks' (Bignell, 1997) such as **abstracting the meaning from its environment**, and then **breaking it down into constituent parts (signs)**, working out **what they mean** and **how they're organized**, then trying to determine potential **ambiguities or alternative readings**.

# Semiotics

- Sign – Most basic discrete unit of meaning
  - Word, colour, sound, set of lines, shapes,
  - Like atoms, we can dissect individual units
- Assemblages – Collections of signs (that carry meaning)
  - Texts, codes, practices, rituals, forms.
- Ferdinand de Saussure – Understand power and flexibility of language as a social construction through which meaning is organized.
  - Language is a structure that allows for flexibility and consistency.
  - Meaning between signifier and signified is arbitrary (flexible and consistent)
  - Meaning is produced through cultural conventions
  - Langue – Giant system of grammar and vocabulary
  - Parole – Grammar and vocabulary can be manipulated





# Signs and Symbols

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- Break down meaning into constituent signs and coherent signs
  - Parts vs sum of parts vs complete whole
- Denotative meaning of a sign
  - Obvious, literal meaning of the sign
- Connotative meaning of a sign
  - Symbolic, seemingly secondary, more metaphorical meanings
  - More socially conditioned



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A large orange circle occupies the left side of the slide, partially cut off by the edge.

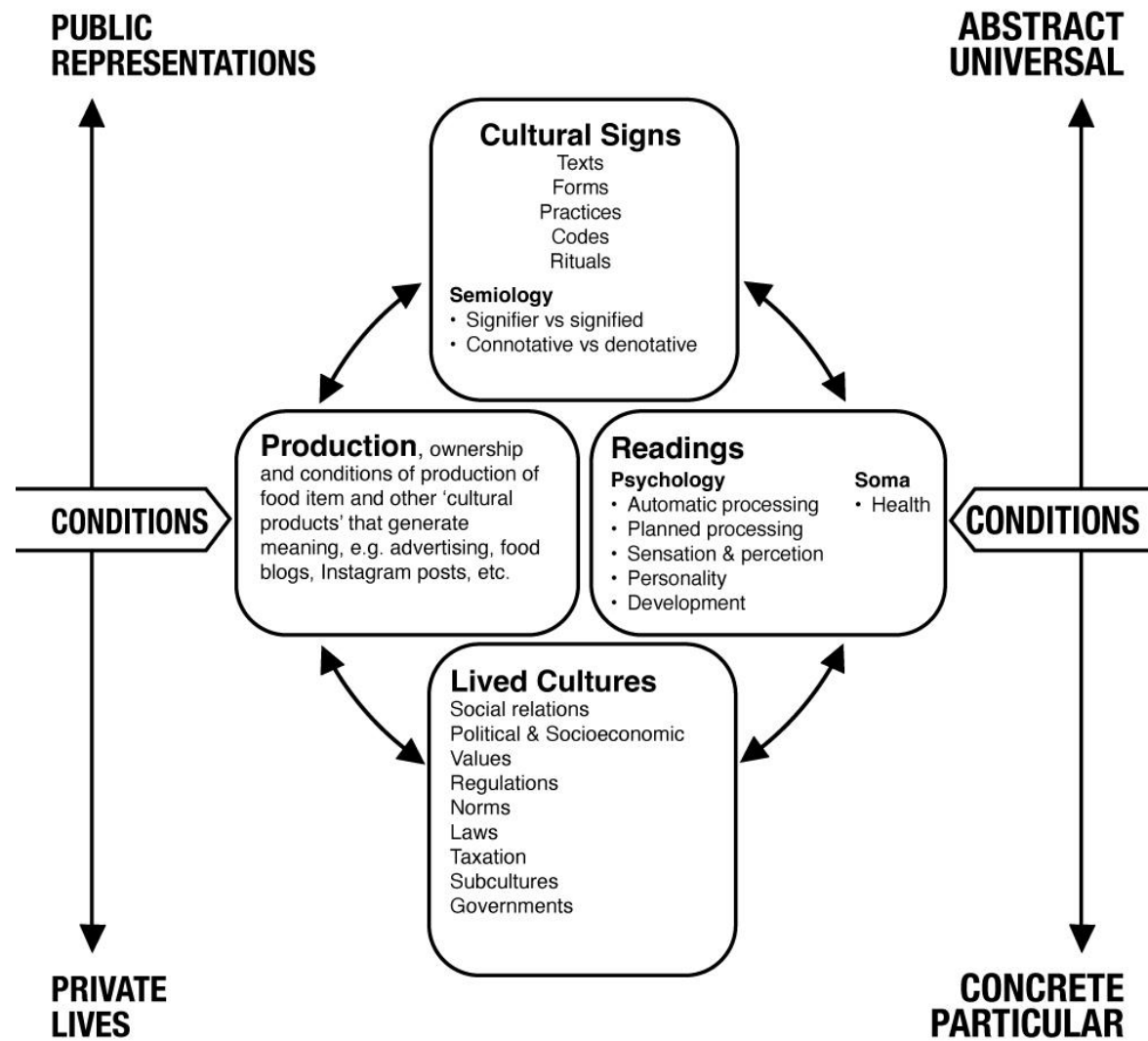
# Froot Loops Video Ad

[Video Ad](#)

[Video Ad](#)

[Video Ads from the past](#)





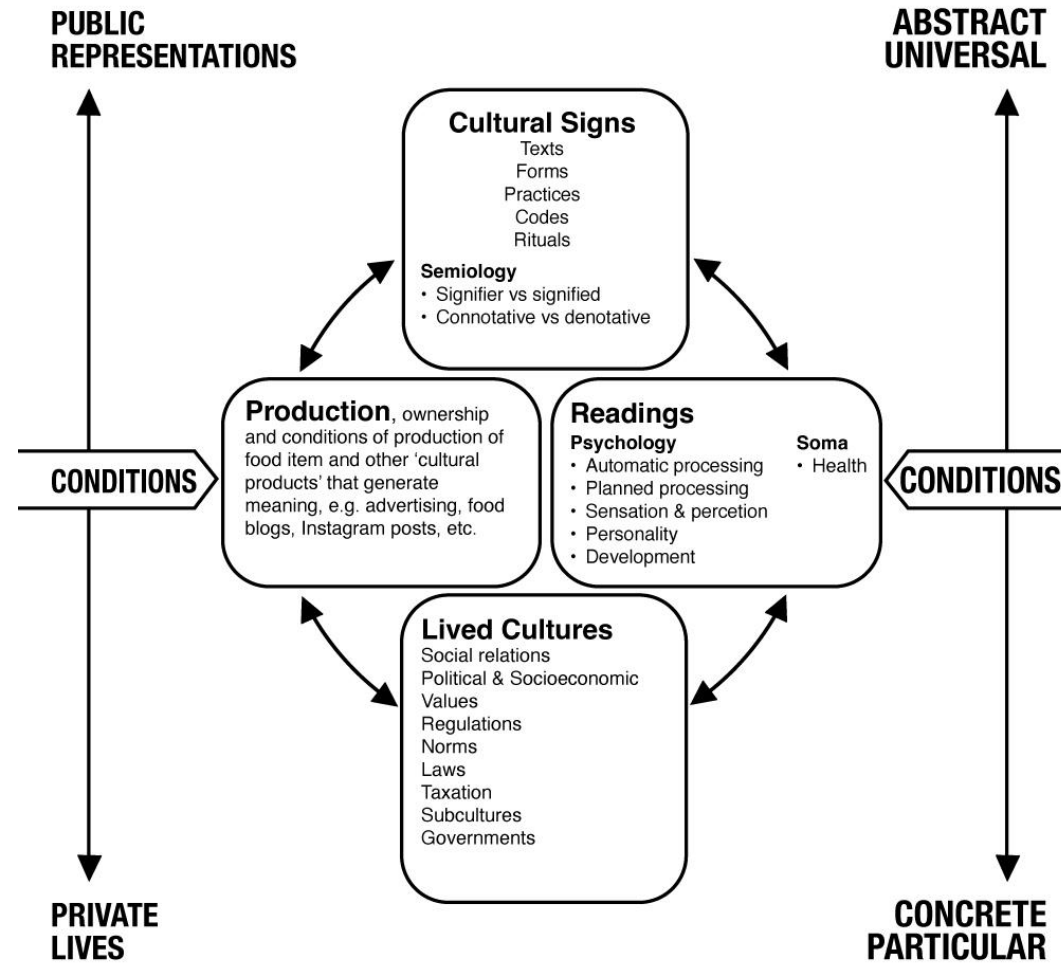




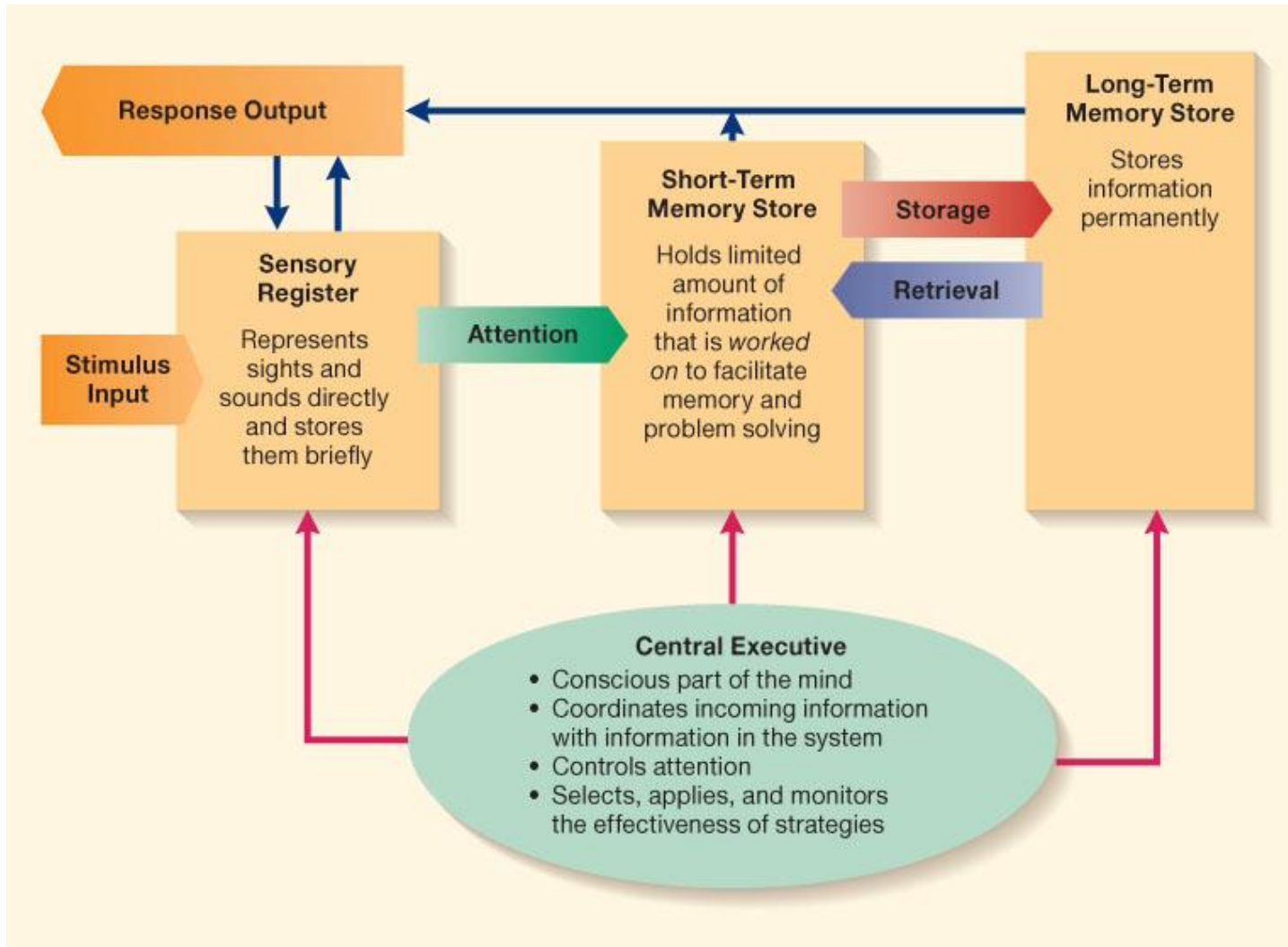












# Information Processing Model

# Automatic Thinking – Low Effort Thinking

- **Automatic thinking** – Is thought that is generally unconscious, unintentional, involuntary, and effortless.
- **Schemas** – Mental structures people use to organize their knowledge about the social world themselves and that influence the information people notice, think about, and remember.
  - We tend to fill in the blanks with SCHEMA-CONSISTENT INFORMATION.
- How People are Affected By Profuse Amounts of Publicity? – Advertising and Priming
- **Activity – Automatic Thinking!**

SAY THIS WORD OUTLOUD 10 TIMES

ROAST

**SAY THIS WORD OUTLOUD 10 TIMES**

Answer the following question?

What do you put  
in a toaster?





# Coffee

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A large orange circle with a white outline. Inside the circle, the word "Carrot" is written in white. Below the word is a white wavy line.

Carrot

A large orange circle serves as the background. A white, hand-drawn style wavy line is positioned horizontally across the middle of the circle, just below the word "Salad".

# Salad



A large orange circle serves as the background. A white, hand-drawn style wavy line is positioned horizontally across the middle of the circle, just below the word "Bread".

# Bread

A large orange circle with a thin white outline. A horizontal white line is drawn across the middle of the circle, positioned below the word "Eggs".

Eggs

# Dessert

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Soup

A large orange circle with a white wavy line across its center.

Rice

A large, solid orange circle serves as the background for the entire image. In the center of this circle, the word "Sandwich" is written in a white, sans-serif font. Below the word, there is a thin, white, slightly wavy horizontal line.

# Sandwich

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A large orange circle with a thin white outline. The word "Cake" is written in white, sans-serif font in the center. Below the word is a thin, slightly wavy white horizontal line.

Cake

A large, solid orange circle serves as the background for the entire image. In the center of this circle, the word "Breakfast" is written in a white, sans-serif font. Below the word, there is a thin, white, slightly wavy horizontal line.

# Breakfast

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A large orange circle serves as the background. A white wavy line is positioned horizontally across the middle of the circle, just below the word "Cheese".

# Cheese

A large orange circle is centered on a white background. Inside the circle, the word "Steak" is written in white. Below the word is a white, wavy horizontal line.

Steak



# Tomato

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# Fruit



# Candy

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Pizza

A large, solid orange circle serves as the background for the entire image. It is centered and takes up most of the frame.

# Fried Food

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A large orange circle with a thin white outline. A horizontal white line is drawn across the middle of the circle, positioned below the word "Corn".

# Corn

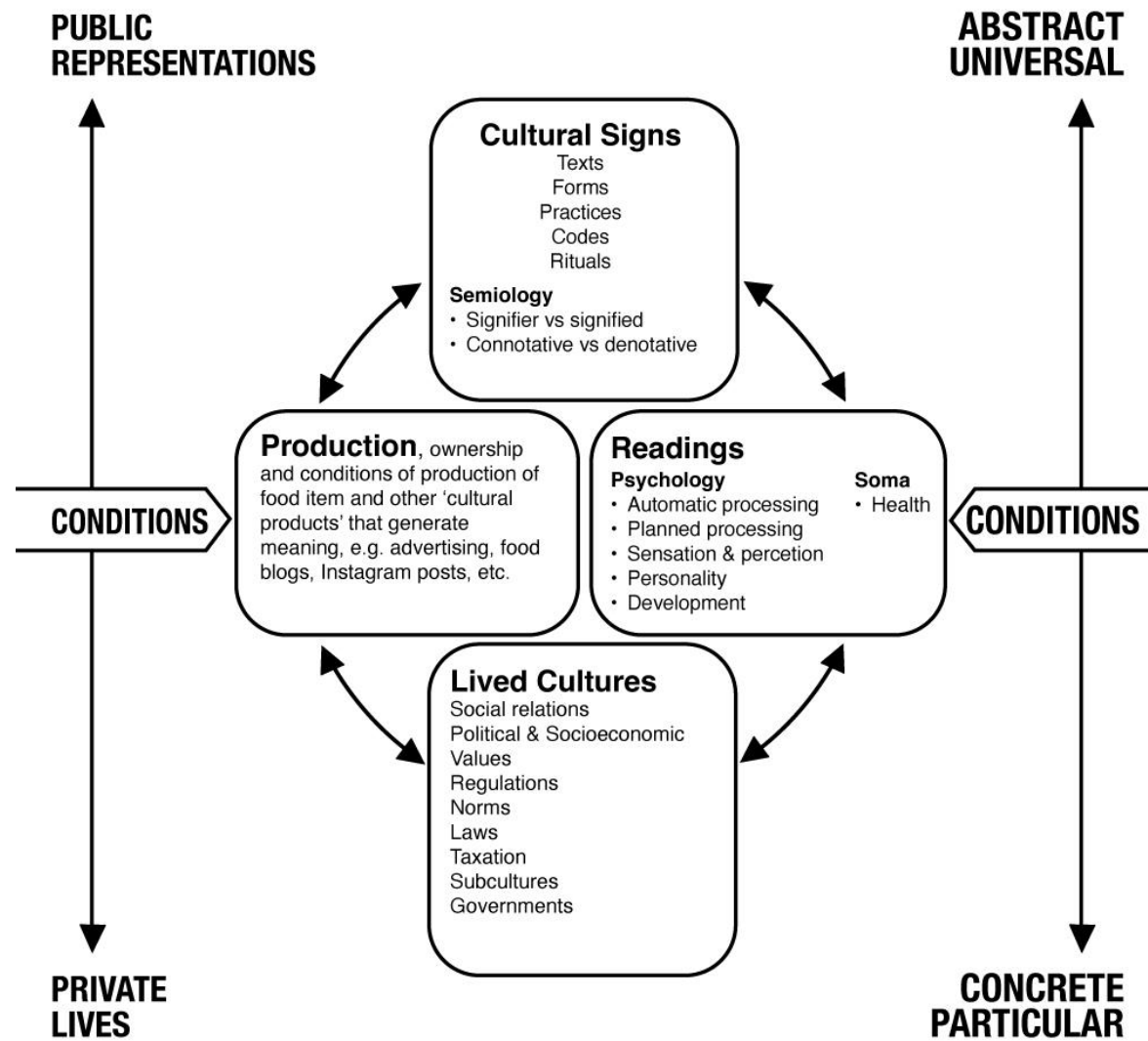




Potato

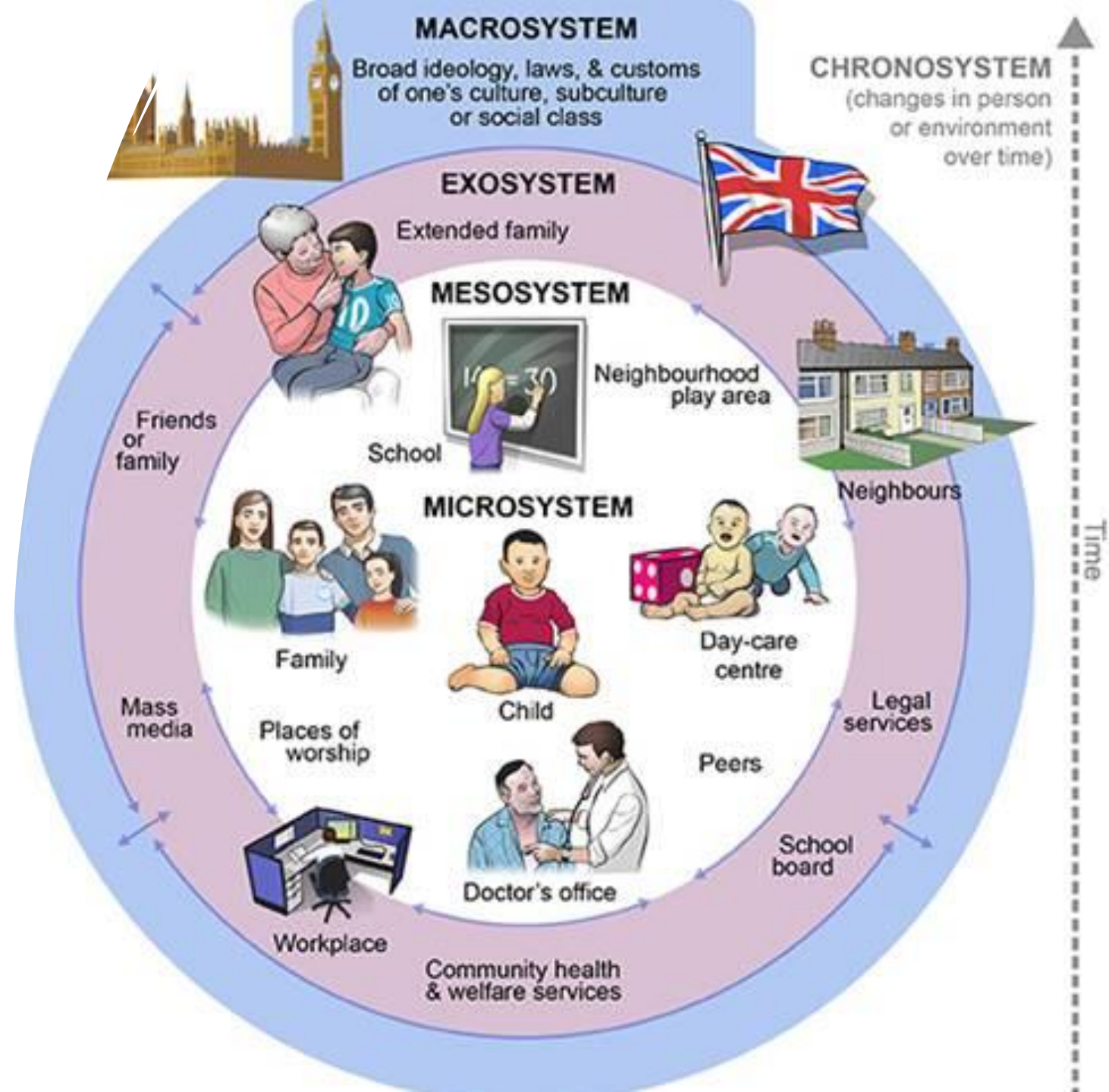
# Froot Loops

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# Ecological Systems Theory of Development

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# Please Think About and Answer the Following Questions

- How important is food to you – apart from eating for sustenance?
- What is the relation between food and your personal and/or cultural identity?
- How does culture influence your eating practices? How can your eating practices influence your cultural identity?
- When (and how frequently) do your food choices involve conscious awareness and how many choices are more automatic? Which food choices are more automatic, and which are more planned?
- What types of food practices do you participate in? What kind of rituals do you practice? Are they the same across social groups?
- **Choose a food item and perform a cultural analysis using the model.**

What Does it Mean to Eat Your Cultural Identity?

What does it mean to...  
“Eat like a Canadian”?

# Chapter Discussions

Get into groups of 3 – 5.

Summarize the chapter.

How does the information in the chapter relate to the information from the presentation today?

How can the chapter be used in your blog post?

Why should other students in the class also read the chapter?

Thanks!

Questions, Concerns, Comments?

