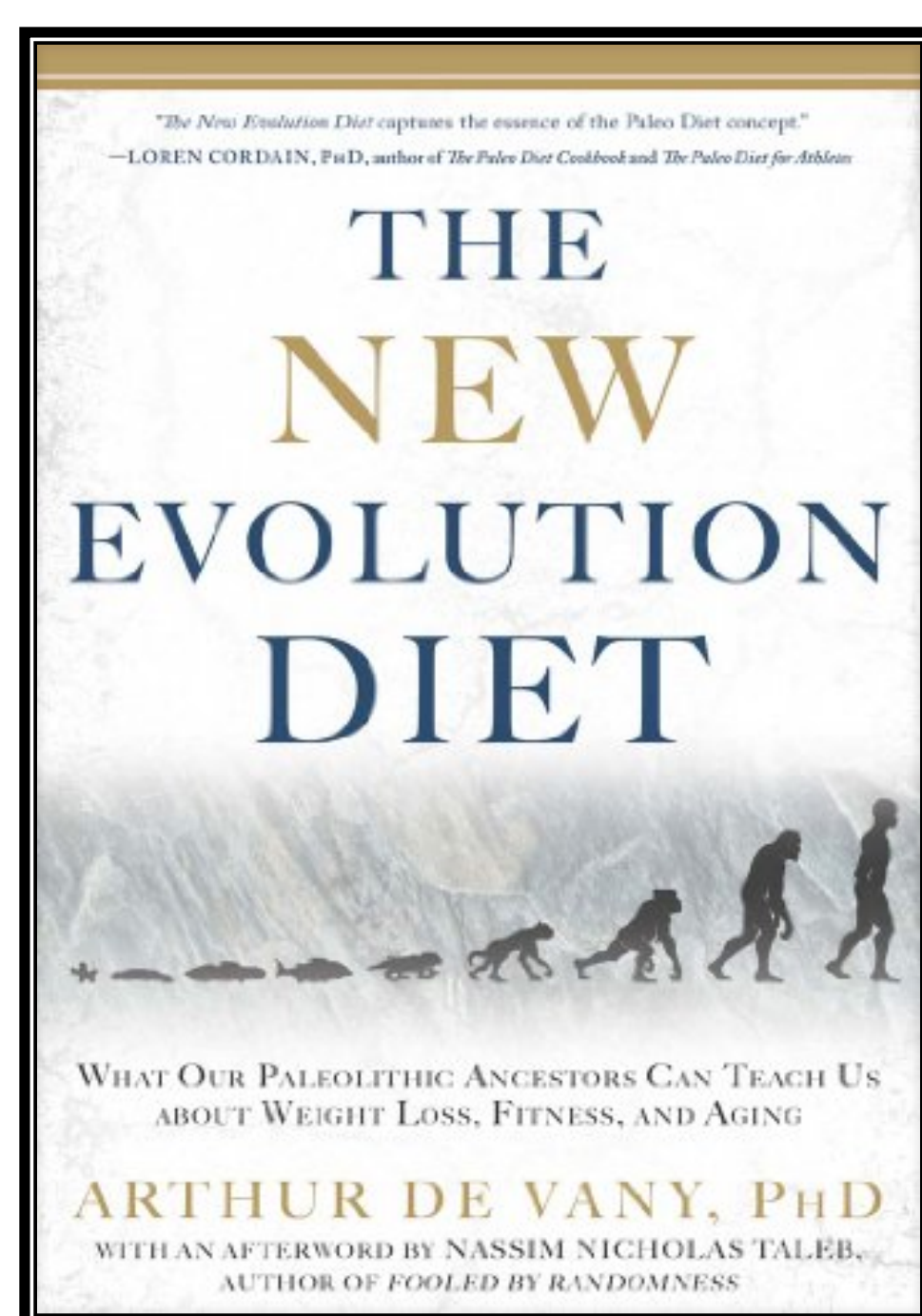


Drawing on interviews, archival research, and the close study of more than 500 published diet books, I have argued that diets draw from American traditions of perfectibility to create a new type of embodied utopia in response to changing discourses of civilization. My four chapters each address how different genres of diet advice have answered the question: What kind of ‘nature’ is the cure for civilization? How is civilization understood in terms of health and disease? How is human nature defined? To what historical end?

# Chapters



## Paleolithic Diets and the Weight Loss Utopia, 1977-2014

“Of course you are a human being! Everybody is. But did you know that you are also an animal – a carnivorous animal? All humans are.”  
Walter Voegtlin, *The Stone Age Diet*. 1975

“Who are we? Where do we come from?” S. Boyd Eaton, *et al.* *The Paleolithic Prescription*. 1988.

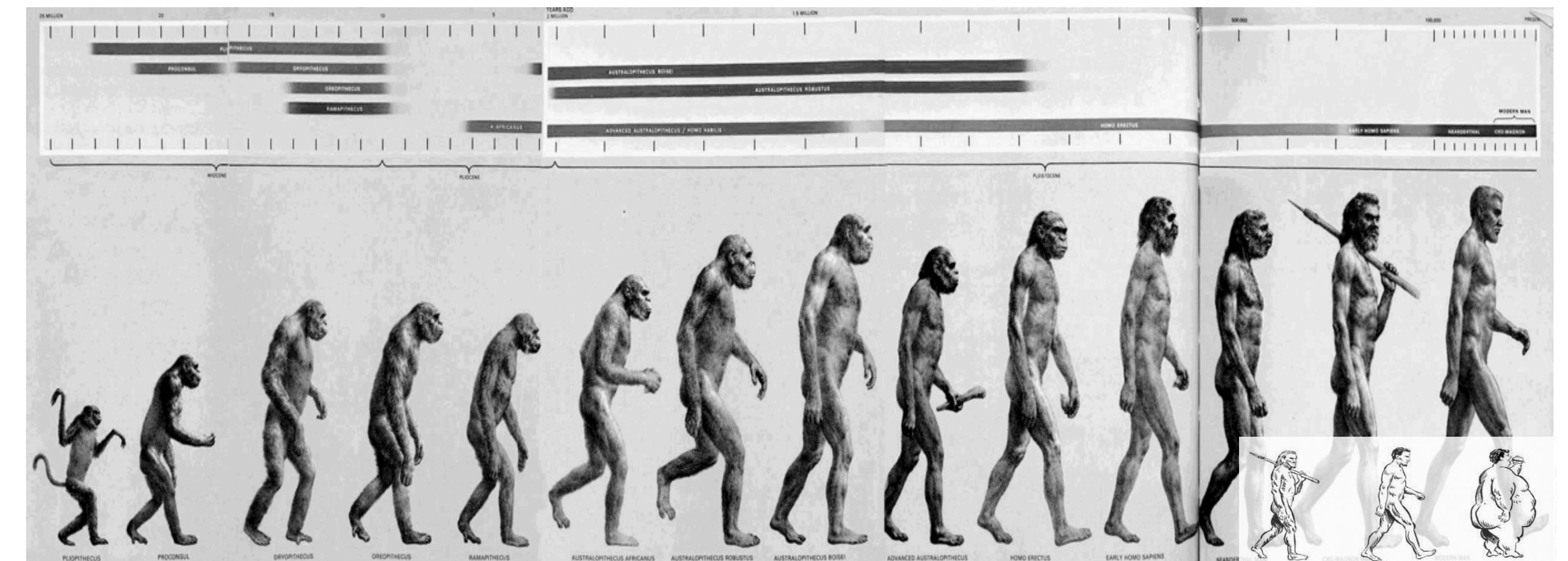
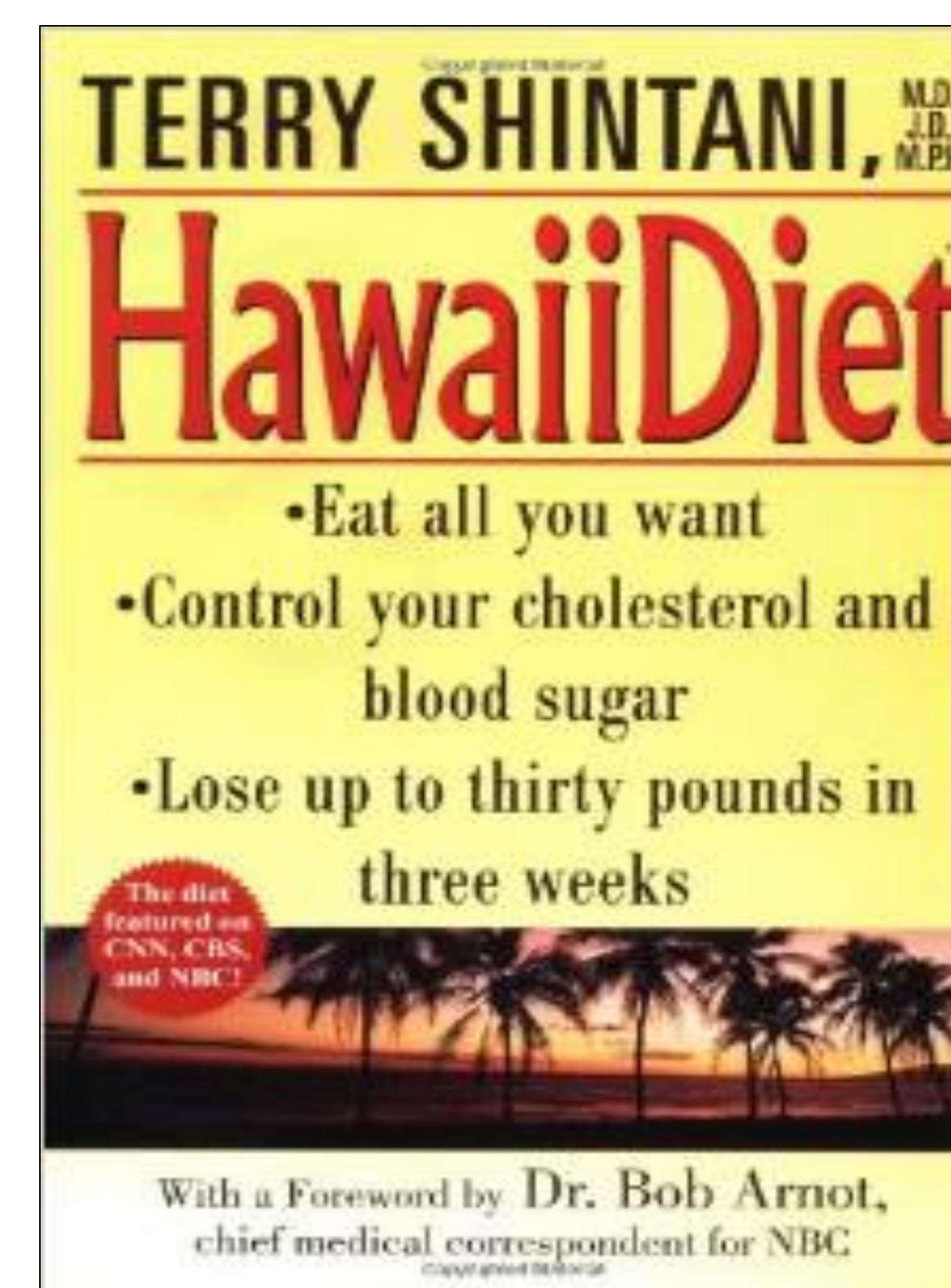
“Man still bears in his bodily frame the indelible stamp of his...origin.”  
Charles Darwin, qtd in Elizabeth Somer, *The Origin Diet*. 2001.

# The “Paradise Paradox”: Rethinking Diabetes and Obesity in the Pacific Islands

“The Pacific Islanders and their social, cultural, and economic patterns had remained untouched...In the space of a few years, the Pacific Islanders were parachuted into the 20th century.” Paul Zimmet, *Diabetes Care*. 1979.

“Bad diet is the greatest killer of Hawaiians today.” Terry Shintani, *HawaiiDiet*. 1999.

“I saw a sea of jubilant Native Hawaiian faces. They were pleased—if not jubilant—to once again be *eating in place, eating with their ancestors, and eating what was fit for their genes and their cultural identity.*” Gary Paul Nabhan, *Food, Genes, and Cultural Diversity*. 2004.



# Nature

## Faith

## Progress

## Modernity

## Immortality

## Lineage

## Birthright

## Expertise

## ‘Unbiologic’

## Tradition

# Time

## Ignorance

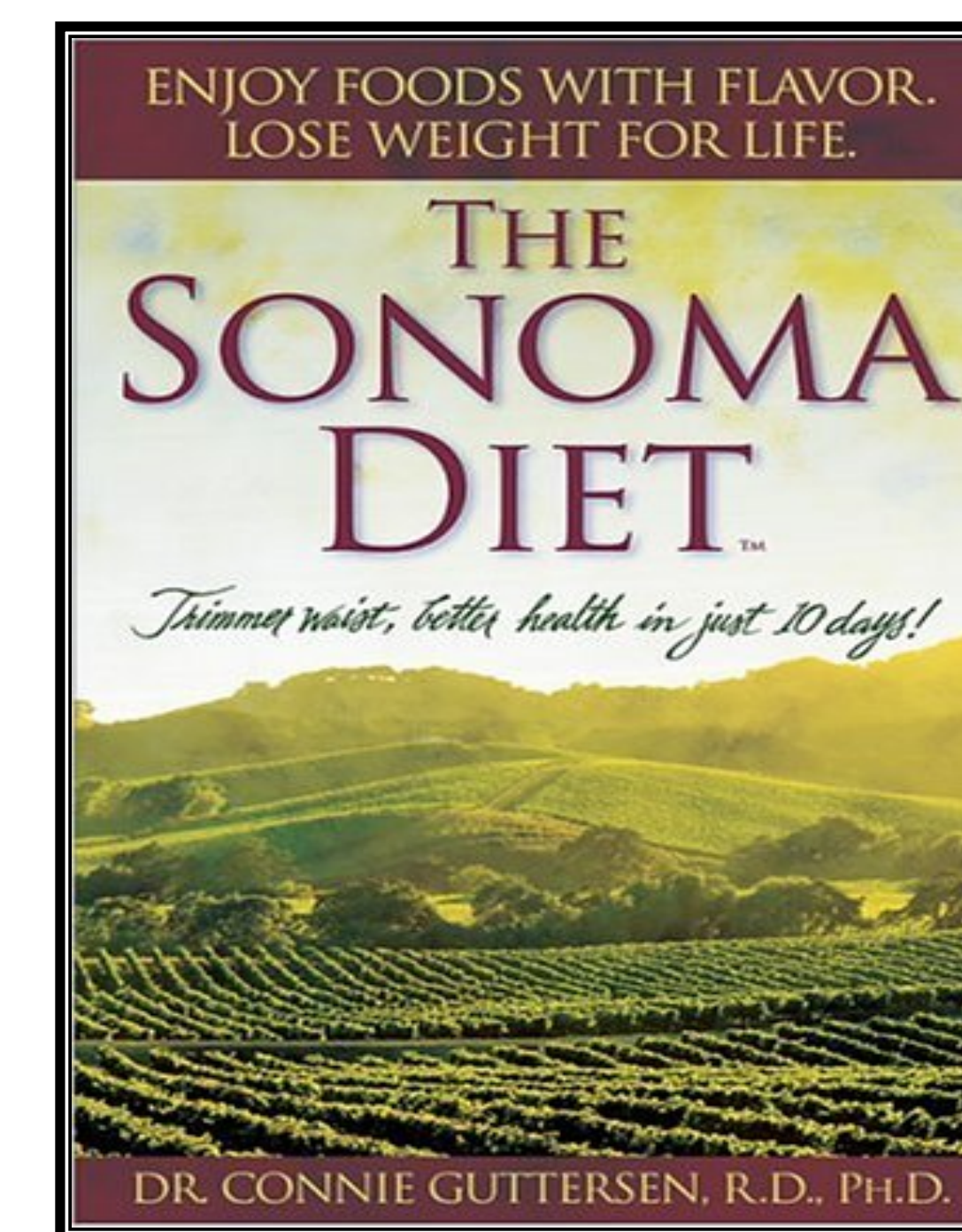
## Instinct

## Knowledge

## Primitive

## Civilization

## Disease



## The Therapeutic Landscape: Class and the Regionalization of Health

“It is inspired by the great-tasting, sun-drenched foods that make California’s beautiful Sonoma County a paradise of healthy eating.”  
Connie Guttersen, *The Sonoma Diet*. 2005.

“Wouldn’t it be nice if you could move to one of the beautiful countries with a breathtaking diamond blue coastline along the Mediterranean Sea?” Denise Hazime, *The Mediterranean Diet Cookbook*. 2014.

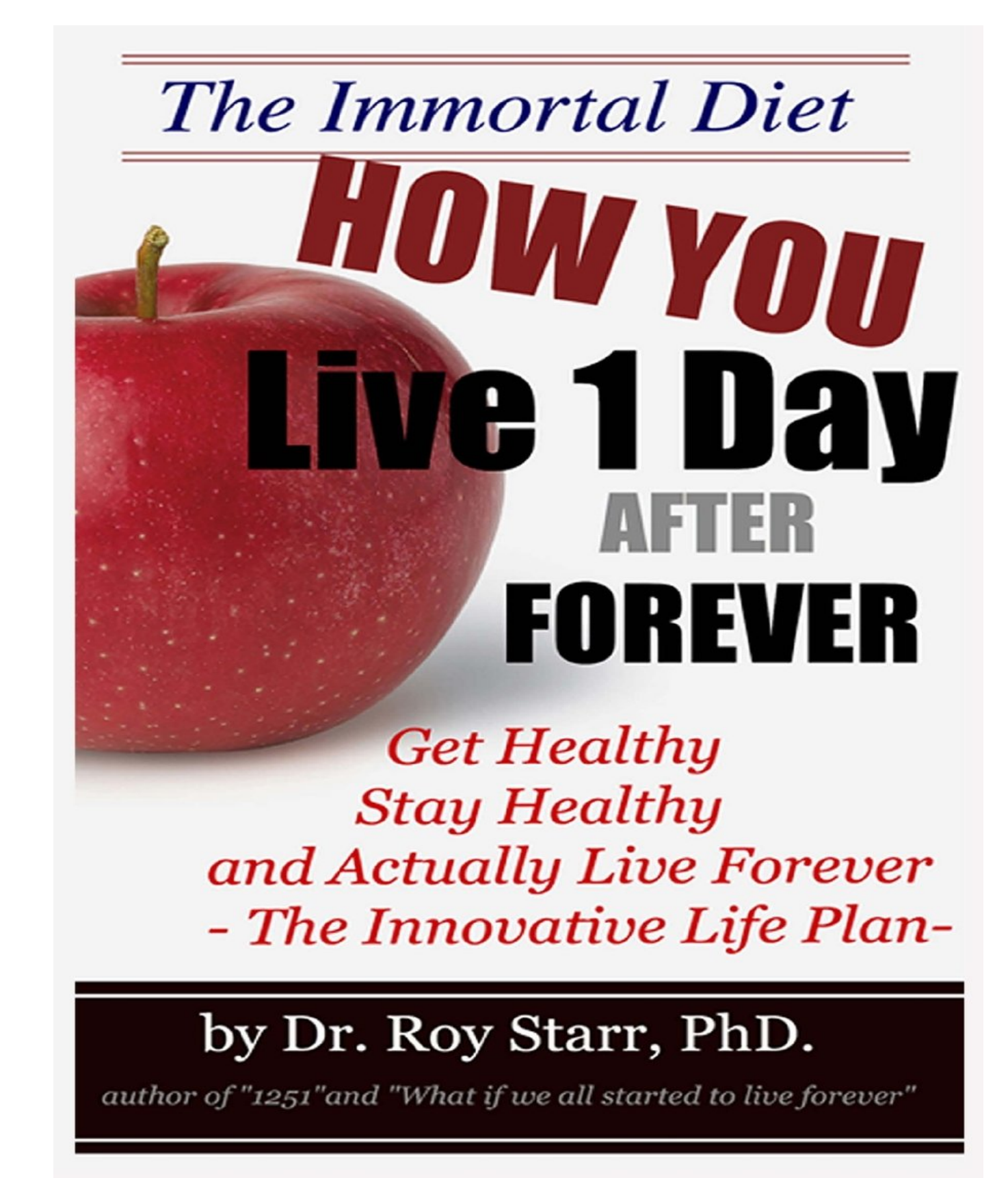
“Some lose upwards of 30 pounds. You’ll also experience clearer thinking; shed anger, guilt, and stress; and alleviate allergies.” Roni DeLuz, *The Martha’s Vineyard Diet Detox*. 2007.

## Immortal Diets and the Prolongevity Movement

“Modern man is a very old-fashioned animal, but he is trying to live in an altogether new and unbiologic manner.” James Henry Salisbury. *The Relation of Alimentation and Disease*. 1886.

“Life insurance experience has clearly shown that weight is an important factor in influencing longevity.” Life Extension Institute, *How to Live*. 1919.

“If you did it right, you are built to last 150 years. Food is what keeps us alive, but it’s also what kills us. That is why fat people are always sweating and their hair turns gray sooner. They literally age faster.” Doug Ikeler, *Life Extension*. 2008.



Adrienne Rose Johnson is a PhD student in Modern Thought and Literature at Stanford University. Broadly, she studies concepts of modernity in American popular culture and her dissertation examines utopianism and the historical imagination in medical advice literature, particularly 20th century American diet book bestsellers.