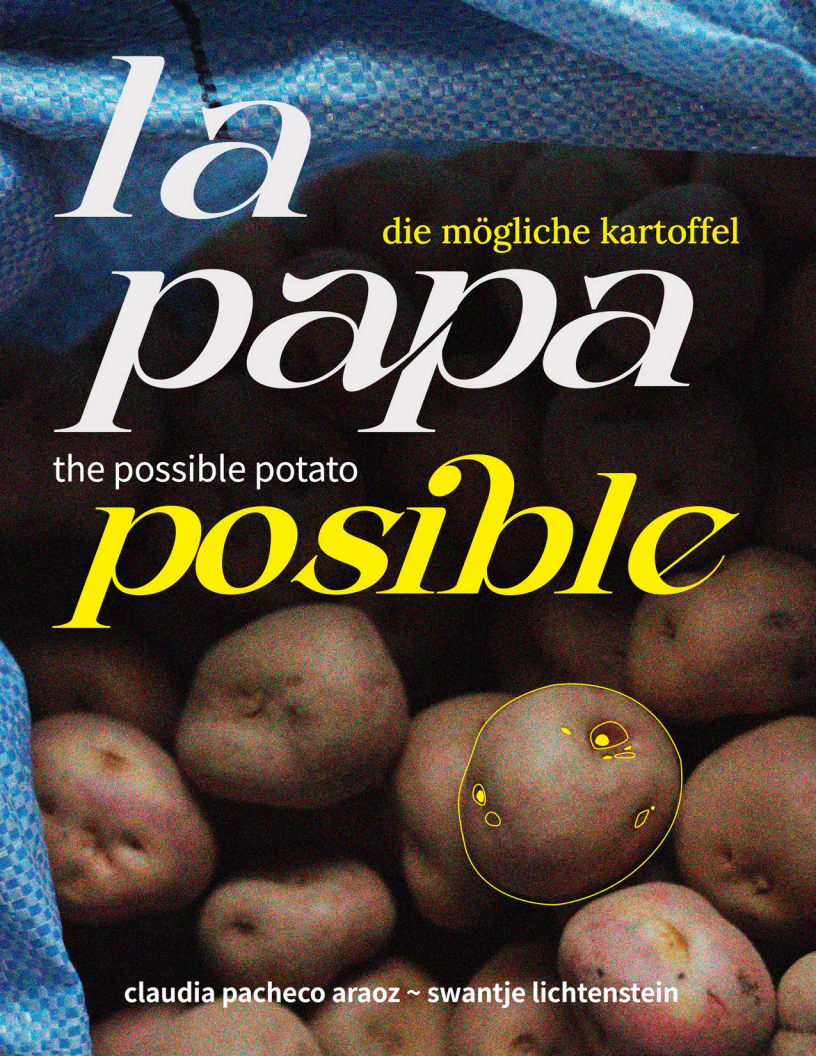




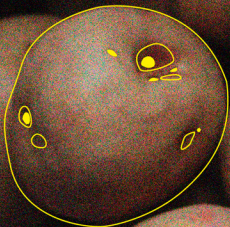
la

die mögliche kartoffel

papa

the possible potato

possible



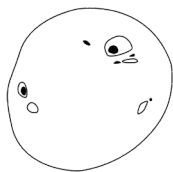
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claudia pacheco araoz

el límite de
la cultura
está en
la tierra

cultivo

Hace sesenta millones de años, las hormigas cultivaban hongos para alimentar a sus colonias: cortaban hojas, regulaban la humedad y limpiaban los espacios para mantener un recurso común. Esa tarea antecede cualquier idea humana de agricultura, propiedad o jerarquía. No es un origen moral ni un ejemplo naturalista. El cultivo aparece en un terreno que no pertenece a la cultura, sino en la coordinación directa entre el trabajo, el tiempo y las condiciones que marca el entorno. Esa coordinación genera efectos que las categorías culturales solo pueden registrar después y de forma parcial. Allí se marca un límite: la cultura clasifica y documenta prácticas —puede incluso inventariar sus vínculos con el entorno—, pero ese registro no capta la lógica material que las sostiene ni las decisiones que se toman en el momento mismo de actuar. Al describirlas como objetos estables, las separa de la relación viva con el entorno que las hace posibles.

Cuando los humanos comenzaron a manipular plantas —seleccionando semillas, almacenándolas, protegiéndolas y regándolas— no iniciaban el cultivo. El cultivo existía antes de la

intervención humana, pero en los humanos ese trabajo tuvo un efecto distinto: generó excedentes. Y esos excedentes reorganizaron el día: quién decide, quién ejecuta, quién administra y quién puede dedicar horas a actividades ajenas y quién puede dedicar horas a actividades que no forman parte del trabajo necesario del día.

Con el tiempo, el verbo *colere* (cultivar, habitar, atender) pasó a nombrar tareas concretas: sembrar, administrar la casa, ocuparse de los cultos. Más tarde, con Cicerón, apareció la cultura *animi*, el “cultivo del espíritu”. Ese uso introdujo una separación práctica: estudiar o formarse era posible solo para quienes tenían tiempo libre del trabajo cotidiano. La noción moderna de cultura nació de esa división, en la que el acceso a ciertas actividades dependía del tiempo que otras personas dedicaban al trabajo que atendía las necesidades básicas del día a día.

La modernidad europea profundizó esa arquitectura del tiempo. Monarquías, academias, iglesias y Estados usaron la cultura para fijar posiciones sociales según la relación de cada grupo con el trabajo cotidiano. Esa forma de ordenar el tiempo se convirtió en parte estable de sus institu-

ciones y de sus criterios de autoridad. La expansión imperial impuso esa lógica fuera de Europa y reorganizó prácticas que respondían a otros modos de trabajo y de tiempo. Prácticas que articulaban ciclos agrícolas, trabajos colectivos o sistemas locales de redistribución fueron clasificadas como “culturas primitivas” o “tradiciones locales” y tratadas como expresiones menores porque no seguían el modelo europeo.

Hoy, la palabra cultura parece amplia y neutral. Nombra muchas cosas —memoria, creatividad, identidad, patrimonio—, pero ya no organiza la vida entera como lo hacía el cultivo: opera en un ámbito separado de ella, y esa separación permite gestionarla. La institucionalidad cultural reparte recursos y reconocimiento según quien pueda ajustarse a sus ritmos y procedimientos, y esas categorías funcionan como filtros que orientan qué recibe atención o financiamiento. Para sostener ese orden, las instituciones traducen diversas prácticas en formatos —proyectos, indicadores, audiencias— que encajan en su modo de gestión. Lo que queda fuera de esos formatos no desaparece, pero deja de contar en las decisiones que fijan el valor, la visibilidad y la prioridad. Así, la desigualdad se formula como “déficit cultural”,

y los conflictos por tiempo, recursos y decisiones se desplazan a un lenguaje que los desactiva y los convierte en asuntos de gestión.

El presente está marcado por fuerzas que la cultura nunca estuvo en condiciones de traducir y que hoy se imponen con una intensidad nueva. La tecnología interviene directamente en la organización del tiempo y del trabajo, apropiándose de actividades cotidianas sin aparecer como forma de explotación; la deuda y la concentración extrema de riqueza fijan el futuro por adelantado y reducen el margen de decisión individual y colectiva; y los territorios quedan sujetos a decisiones tomadas lejos de quienes viven en ellos, produciendo condiciones de existencia cada vez más frágiles.

La cultura, en su formulación moderna, mantiene la apariencia de abarcar la vida entera, pero su alcance es selectivo: solo interviene en lo que puede describirse y gestionarse. Lo que no puede estabilizar en ese marco—conflictos, tensiones y transformaciones que organizan la vida en la práctica— queda fuera de su lenguaje. Lo que la cultura nombra sigue teniendo relevancia, pero ya no coincide con lo que define el presente.

Ese límite toma forma en la gestión: la cultura transforma lo que puede procesar en dispositivos administrativos —indicadores de participación, mediciones de audiencia, circuitos de validación— que permiten demostrar actividad sin intervenir en las condiciones que organizan el día. La clasificación sustituye a la acción y las categorías operan como equivalentes de los problemas que deberían enfrentar, sin tocar aquello que los produce.

Esa disminución no proviene de un error reciente, sino de una estructura que nunca fue revisada. Al separarse de la vida diaria, la cultura reduce sus límites a fallas de participación, cuando en realidad son más profundos: solo puede actuar sobre lo que logra fijar en categorías; no interviene en la distribución del tiempo, ni en la organización del trabajo, ni en las condiciones materiales —ingreso, movilidad, cuidado, territorio— que definen quién puede estar presente. En este punto aparece la desigualdad, no como un juicio moral, sino como el ejemplo más claro de este límite: al traducirse al lenguaje cultural, deja de ser un problema práctico y se convierte en un tema de representación. Puede describirse, pero no trans-

formarse en su base material, y termina preservando lo que pretende señalar.

En ese vacío, la cultura se vuelve utilizable para casi cualquier propósito. Puede servir a programas educativos, campañas identitarias, estrategias de promoción territorial, dispositivos administrativos o agendas orientadas a administrar poblaciones —con sus exclusiones, jerarquías y disciplinamientos—, incluso aquellas que distorsionan o niegan las transformaciones ambientales que ya afectan las condiciones básicas de la vida. Esa amplitud no expresa alcance, sino la consecuencia directa de sus límites: al no poder intervenir en los soportes concretos del día —tiempo, trabajo, recursos, cuidados, territorio—, la cultura se adapta a lo que cada institución necesita justificar. Opera como un recurso flexible en un mundo que exige transformaciones que ella no puede producir.

La cultura es la cristalización administrativa de una separación histórica. La papa aparece cuando ese concepto ya no alcanza. No es un símbolo ni un patrimonio, sino una operación concreta en la que territorio, trabajo, clima y tiempo se articulan para responder a situaciones

que nunca son idénticas. Su práctica no depende de gestionar representaciones, sino de decidir en relación con un entorno. Allí donde la cultura organiza lo ya fijado en categorías, la papa trabaja en el momento en que se forman las relaciones que estructuran la experiencia.

papa

Aquí, la cultura no nombra la capacidad humana de significar, recordar o narrar, sino el régimen histórico que separó ciertas prácticas de la vida cotidiana para clasificarlas, administrarlas y gestionarlas desde afuera. Es ese marco —no la experiencia humana en su amplitud— el que entra en tensión con el modo en que la papa organiza el mundo.

La historia de la papa comienza en los Andes centrales, por encima de los 3.500 metros, donde el frío, la altura y las heladas delimitan lo que puede crecer. Allí, la vida se organiza leyendo con precisión el terreno y el clima: no se aplica un modelo; se responde al día. Cultivar papa no es una actividad separada de la vida, sino la práctica que define qué trabajo debe hacerse, cuándo y en qué condiciones. Las decisiones que la forman

producen una relación continua entre territorio, afecto, trabajo y tiempo. Las jornadas de trabajo común y la distribución de la cosecha no expresan una “cultura” en sentido moderno: son la manera de resolver, en cada ciclo, cómo vivir en ese entorno concreto.

No es una práctica aislada: es una relación histórica entre condiciones y decisiones.

Cuando la papa llegó a Europa, en el marco de la expansión colonial que trasladaba productos sin las formas de trabajo y de decisión que daban forma a su cultivo, lo que se incorporó no fue la práctica, sino el tubérculo como materia disponible. Ese traslado reveló algo que en los Andes no hacía falta nombrar: la papa podía convertirse en una mercancía estable, apta para integrarse en circuitos de abastecimiento, cálculo y acumulación. La papa no llega sola, pero la forma europea de recibirla separó el tubérculo de la operación que la producía: la lectura situada del entorno, el ajuste del trabajo al clima y al suelo, y la diversificación como modo de decidir en cada ciclo.

En ese sistema, su valor pasó a definirse por rendimientos, costos, márgenes y posibilidades de

administración. La papa se convirtió en un indicador: alimento para ejércitos, herramienta para regular salarios, insumo para planificar poblaciones y territorios. Su práctica fue reducida a categorías generales —productividad, seguridad alimentaria, desarrollo— que permiten gestionar mercancías, pero no comprender la operación que produce el cultivo: la relación variable entre suelo, clima, afecto, trabajo y decisión.

Este fue un punto de inflexión. Europa adoptó la papa como recurso, pero sin advertir que el cultivo seguía operando según una lógica propia que no podía ser absorbida por el dispositivo administrativo. La institucionalidad emergente —lo que más tarde se llamaría “cultura institucional”— clasificó la papa como un bien utilizable, pero no percibió que la práctica que la hacía existir no respondía a sus categorías. La papa podía ser mercancía, pero no solo mercancía: seguía operando con una autonomía material que ningún sistema podía clausurar. Allí comenzó la distancia entre lo que una práctica hace y lo que un sistema necesita que sea para poder administrarla.

Las prácticas andinas de lectura del entorno, trabajo común y conocimiento de las variaciones climáticas fueron reclasificadas por las administraciones colonial y republicana como folclore, costumbre o patrimonio, separándolas de su dimensión de conocimientos, técnicas y materiales. Se preservaba el nombre, pero se perdía la operación.

Sin embargo, la papa conserva una lógica que no se ajusta a esos criterios de clasificación. Su cultivo se funda en un intercambio directo entre trabajo y entorno: leer el cielo, anticipar una helada e intervenir a tiempo no es un gesto simbólico, sino un conjunto de técnicas y conocimientos que ordenan el ritmo del trabajo y la viabilidad y el cuidado del cultivo. Esa relación —entre entorno, afecto, tiempo y decisión— define lo que la papa permite en cualquier territorio donde se la cultiva. La variación del tubérculo —sus múltiples formas, colores y resistencias— es el registro material de esa relación continua. Quien la cultiva no aplica un modelo universal: responde a lo que el suelo permite en cada ciclo y en cada lugar.

Esa lógica de respuesta situada viajó con la papa. En cada nuevo territorio —las tierras altas

de Europa, las planicies de Norteamérica, los valles asiáticos— no llegó un modelo previo, sino una exigencia: establecer una relación entre trabajo, tiempo y entorno para que el cultivo pudiera realizarse. Italia, Alemania, Irlanda o Estados Unidos no recibieron un origen cultural; recibieron un cultivo cuya práctica los obligó a componer sus propias respuestas. De esas decisiones y relaciones —y no de ningún espíritu nacional previo— surgieron cocinas, cuentos, expresiones creativas, descanso y entretenimiento, ritmos laborales y usos del tiempo que más tarde serían clasificados como patrimonio.

Aquí se revela el núcleo del conflicto. La cultura institucional traduce estas respuestas en categorías estables —patrimonio, identidad, sistema alimentario— para gestionarlas, distribuir recursos y medir su alcance. El cultivo de la papa opera fuera de esos marcos. No administra representaciones: interviene directamente en la organización del trabajo y del tiempo. No fija repertorios: introduce variaciones concretas en la forma de vivir. Mientras la política cultural se orienta a audiencias, circuitos y proyectos, la papa actúa en la base material —tiempo disponible, esfuerzo

corporal, división del trabajo— de la que dependen los vínculos sociales.

La historia de la papa permite identificar la separación que sostiene la noción moderna de cultura y de política cultural. La cultura institucional trabaja con prácticas estabilizadas y convertidas en categorías que puede clasificar y administrar. El lenguaje permite recordar y transmitir esas prácticas, pero llega después de la operación que las hace posibles: conserva la experiencia, no la produce. La memoria es necesaria, pero no opera desde afuera; está integrada en la práctica misma.

El cultivo de la papa opera en ese plano material: cada ciclo forma de nuevo la relación entre trabajo, tiempo y entorno según condiciones que nunca son idénticas. No responde a modelos previos ni a repertorios fijos; funciona a partir de variaciones que se resuelven en la práctica. Ese modo de operar queda fuera del alcance de la cultura, cuya lógica requiere formatos estables para convertir las prácticas en objetos de gestión. La variación propia de la papa se decide en el lugar y en el tiempo del hacer, mientras que la cultura solo puede registrar fragmentos una vez

ocurridos. Ese desfase marca su límite: la papa organiza un tipo de operación material que la clasificación cultural no alcanza.

El origen andino de la papa constituye una posibilidad que se actualiza en cada territorio donde se cultiva. Las formas que adopta —variedades, resistencias, usos— no provienen de un repertorio cultural fijo, sino de cómo cada lugar forma la relación entre práctica y entorno. De allí emergen diversidad e identidades, pero como efectos materiales, no como continuidad de un origen intacto. La papa mantiene su procedencia, pero su cultivo abre siempre algo distinto: una manera de organizar la vida que no parte de categorías, sino de operaciones.

La operación que permite cultivar papa no produce solo continuidad vital: produce mundos humanos en toda su amplitud. Alimenta celebraciones y economías domésticas, pero también ejércitos, ciudades en expansión, industrias del ocio y mercados globales. Su potencia organizativa no es moral ni simbólica: es material. La cultura suele leer en ella identidad o tradición, pero no reconoce que estas prácticas sostienen tanto la vida común como las formas de desigualdad y

violencia que acompañan la historia humana. La papa no idealiza la vida: la compone.

No se trata de sustituir conceptos, sino de reconocer un orden de prioridad. Antes que cualquier clasificación cultural están las operaciones materiales —suelo, clima, trabajo, tiempo— de las que depende que una práctica sea posible. La papa no es una categoría interpretativa: actúa en el punto donde se forman relaciones que aún no tienen nombre. Su multiplicidad es el registro acumulado de decisiones tomadas para hacer viable la vida en territorios que nunca son iguales.

Allí donde la cultura estabiliza y administra lo que ya pasó, la papa opera en el momento en que se forman las relaciones que sostienen la vida.

Esa diferencia marca el umbral: la cultura conserva; la papa organiza.

una papa es muchas veces

Quien entra a Toralapa y se relaciona con la papa encuentra persistencias, pausas, reactivaciones y latencias que se sostienen en frascos, en cámaras frías y en suelo. Son maneras distintas de trabajar el tiempo. En el vidrio, un fragmento de tallo crece despacio y protegido, en un desarrollo que puede durar meses o años. En el frío, mini-tubérculos y paquetes sellados mantienen la papa en pausa sin perder su capacidad de activarse cuando regrese al cultivo. En la tierra, la planta muestra su vínculo con el entorno: cómo brota, cómo se ajusta a una lluvia intensa o a una helada que llega fuera de estación.

Toralapa es cultivo: laboratorio, banco y comunidad de pensamiento. En esos espacios permanece abierta la posibilidad de que más de mil variedades vuelvan a ser cultivadas.

La papa trae una biografía: la altura del lugar de donde proviene, su forma —todas distintas—, el color de la flor y el tiempo del primer brote. Esos datos orientan el trabajo, permiten reconstruir un origen cuando vuelve a la tierra y comienza otra relación.

Cortar, limpiar, refrescar, volver a sembrar. Son técnicas repetidas en el laboratorio, el invernadero o el cultivo, pero nunca idénticas. En cada etapa, la papa decide algo: adelanta la floración, ajusta el follaje o modifica el tubérculo. No reaparece igual; responde al lugar donde crece.

Esas variaciones componen su rango de expresión: lo que una papa puede mostrar cuando atraviesa distintos suelos. La diversidad no es un inventario: es lo que una variedad puede hacer en más de un tipo de cultivo.

En el banco se reúnen tiempos.

El trabajo es cuidar que nada se reduzca a un patrón único:

la papa permanece como posibilidad abierta, la diferencia es el lugar donde la realidad se hace posible.

Nota: El Instituto Nacional de Innovación Agropecuaria y Forestal de Bolivia (INIAF) es la entidad pública encargada de proteger las semillas y variedades nativas, según la Constitución de 2009, que reconoce la soberanía alimentaria y prohíbe la modificación genética de este material. Su Centro Nacional de Recursos Genéticos, en Toralapa (Tiraque), guarda más de veinte mil materiales —papas, tubérculos, raíces, granos, quinua, frutas, árboles y otras especies andinas— en laboratorio, cámaras frías y parcelas de campo. Nada se altera genéticamente: las variedades se mantienen tal como existen en territorio, como reserva viva para enfrentar pérdidas de cultivo o cambios ambientales sin depender de semillas externas.

swantje lichtenstein

kar- to- ffelwel- tkultur

Die Idee, Deutsche als Kartoffeln zu bezeichnen zeigt einige Abgründe, einerseits einer kolonialen Erinnerungspolitik, die so sehr von Aneignung, Leugnung, Verdrehung und Vergessen gezeichnet ist, dass selbst die Außenansicht von dieser fälschlich abgespeicherten Information so überzeugt zu sein scheint, dass sie sie bernommen hat,¹ andererseits markiert sie die Grundlage für die Industrialisierung und damit auch einer erzwungenen Fortführung der Begriffe von (Hoch-)Kultur und Entwicklungskultur, die seit mindestens 500 Jahren Macht- und Erinnerungskulturen prägte. Ausgehend von dieser kleinen Wunderknolle, magischen Wurzel, der untergründigen, unterirdischen, Kriege überlebenden Krummbeere, versuchen wir ein Gespräch zwischen erster und zweiter Welt über die Kartoffel,

1 Vgl. Lana Kvitalashvili: Essen und Identität. Nahrungsmittel als Ausdruck nationaler Identität und Stereotypisierung am Beispiel der Zuschreibung „Deutsche Kartoffel“, März 2019 <https://www.uni-potsdam.de/de/romanistik-kimminich/kif/kif-analysen/kif-essen-identitaet>,

Christopher Kloë: Komik als Kommunikation der Kulturen: Beispiele von türkischstämmigen und muslimischen Gruppen in Deutschland. Springer Fachmedien, Wiesbaden 2017, S. 238, Cordula Weißköppel: Ausländer und Kartoffeldeutsche: Identitätsperformanz im Alltag einer ethnisch gemischten Realschulklasse. Juventa, Weinheim / München 2001, S. 158 ff.

Batate, den Erdtrüffel also. Die Frage nach den Entscheidungsträgern und Machtverhältnissen bei der Übernahme, Einverleibung ² von Land, Geschichte und Kultur lässt sich am Beispiel der Kartoffel einfach und doch weitreichend aufzeigen.

Alle mögen Kartoffeln. Kartoffeln haben Europa vom Hungertod bewahrt, doch wie alles, was anderswo gestohlen und aufgegabelt wurde, war auch die Kartoffel, als Nachtschattengewächs erst als giftige Gabe, als Hexen- oder Teufelszeug in Europa zunächst in Verruf geraten. Da die Kartoffel ohne ihre Kultur, ohne Rezeptur, ihrer kontextuellen Bedeutung entnommen wurde, wusste niemand so recht, was damit anzufangen war. Die Kartoffel war vielleicht damit schon sehr lange transversal, global, transkulturell. Sie hat sich angepasst und breit gemacht. Erst kolonisiert, weiter migriert und in viele Richtungen gewa-

2 Monika Schmitz-Emans: Kartoffelpoetik, Wortmahlzeiten, poetische Metabolismen. Poetologische Metaphorik der Nahrung, des Essens und der Verdauung bei Ludwig Harig/Kartoffelpoetik, Wortmahlzeiten, poetische Metabolismen. Poetologische Metaphorik der Nahrung, des Essens und der Verdauung bei Ludwig Harig, in: In: Ars metabolica. Stoffwechsel und Digestion als literarische und kulturelle Prozesse. Hg. v. Vanessa Höving, Peter Risthaus. Baden-Baden (Nomos) 2023, S. 21-51.

chsen. Es gibt inzwischen über 3000 Kartoffelsorten, angepasst an viele Bedingungen, divers, transversal, transkulturell.³

Die Kartoffel hat einen langen Weg genommen⁴ und ist ein Indikator für Kultur oder das, was im Globalen Norden daraus gemacht wurde. Wenn Kultur eine individualisierte, exklusive, feudale Einbettung erfordert und nicht mehr zu einem Speicher für ein gemeinschaftliches, teilbares, übertragbares Wissen wird, wird dieser Mangel bemerkbar. Monica Juneja schreibt ihn ihrer Untersuchung zur Möglichkeit oder Unmöglichkeit einer globalen Kunstgeschichte über den Begriff der Kultur:

When framed within the space of the nation, culture is invariably conscripted to attributes such as stability, linguistic homogeneity and authenticity; belonging to the nation

³ Vgl. die Liste mit den 3000 Kartoffelsorten a.a.O.

⁴ Vgl. Lemma: kartoffel, f. In: Jacob Grimm, Wilhelm Grimm (Hrsg.): Deutsches Wörterbuch. Band 11: K – (N). S. Hirzel, Leipzig 1873, Sp. 244–245 (woerterbuchnetz.de). <https://woerterbuchnetz.de/?sigle=DWB&lemid=K02117>.

*rests on valorising containment and consensus; and ends up conseiling the turbulances that are consitutive of all culture.*⁵

Vielleicht ist das ein Grund dafür, dass die Kartoffel in Deutschland eher für etwas Einfaches, Rohes, Schmutziges steht und den Ruf einer hässlichen Knolle hat, die sehr anspruchslos ist und verfügbar gemacht werden kann. Selbst wenn die Kartoffel in ihren europäischen Anfängen, von Spanien, über die Niederlande, Deutschland, England und Osteuropa eine sehr exklusive Kost für die Königshäuser war, ist es die Adaptionfähigkeit der Kartoffel der leichte Anbau und rasche Wachstum, der den großen Hunger Europas im 15.-17. Jahrhundert stillte und das Überleben eines Kontinents ermöglichte. Papa Patata sorgte für alle, als klar war, dass die Hexenknolle nur gekocht werden musste, um ihre halluzinogene Wirkung zu verlieren. Papa Patata machte auch in Europa das Überleben zuallererst möglich und damit auch überhaupt dem Fort- und Festschrei-

⁵ Monica Juneja: Can art history be made global? Meditations from the periphery, Berlin/ Boston (De Gruyter) 2023, 15.

ben von Kultur. Alles hatte wieder halt, die Lager waren voll.

In unserem Transformationszeitalter, in dem der Kulturbegriff und die Erinnerungskultur mit einem neuen Lagerungs- und Speicherproblem zu tun hat, lässt sich am Beispiel der Kartoffel aufzeigen, inwiefern der Umgang mit indigenen, nativen, alternativen Ideen im Umgang mit Ressourcen, Archiven, Speichern und Dokumentationen auch ein Hinterfragen eines Kulturbegriffs bedeutet, der viele, länger existente Kulturen ausschloss, aber nie in der Lage war alle Möglichkeiten zu beenden.

Orale Kulturen und Dokumentationen, die nicht unabhängig von Gemeinschaft, Verkörperung, Geschichten, Aktionen denkbar sind, zeigen sich in der Kartoffelkultur, als Speicher, der Europa nie erreicht hat. Die indigene Kultur der Kartoffel ist auch eine der Speicherung, der Erinnerung und einer gemeinschaftlichen Aktivität.

In den aktuellen Diskussionen über den Umgang mit AI und den dafür notwendigen Speichern, die wiederum die Ressourcen unserer Erde auffressen, zeigen auf, dass ein kultureller Wandel

im Umgang mit Kultur, dem Löschen von Daten und der Auflösung von Archiven, Lagern, Bibliotheken, Museen und anderer kultureller Erinnerungsorte notwendig macht.

Hinzukommt, dass auch der globale Norden sich mehr und mehr darüber bewusst zu werden scheint, wie allein das bloße Aufbewahren von Dingen, Kunstwerken, kulturellen Objekten, ein kultureller Prozess ist, der konkurriert mit dem Überleben aller. Die Frage, ob der kleine Teil der Welt, der zum globalen Norden zählt, über alle Lebewesen der Erde und des Universums bestimmen kann steht immer mehr im Vordergrund der Forderungen an einen gerechteren Umgang mit dem Planeten für eine möglichst große Zahl der Lebewesen, die es bevölkern.⁶

Es geht dann auch darum darüber nachzudenken, welche Möglichkeiten es gäbe Speicherplatz freizumachen, Ansprüche aufzugeben, um die durch die immensen klimaschädlichen Kapazitäten, die wir benötigen, um (kulturelle und digi-

⁶ Vgl. ebenda.

tale) Speicherung zu gewährleisten, zu hinterfragen. Für wen bewahren wir kulturellen, künstlerische Artefakte auf, wenn wir soviel Energie aufwenden müssen, um diese zu bewahren? Wer erinnert sich, wenn wir Erinnerung an Geräte und Konzerne delegieren? Warum verlieren wir Vertrauen in unsere eigene Erinnerung und unsere Fähigkeit zu abzuspeichern, was wichtig ist und zu vergessen, was vielleicht nicht mehr wichtig ist? Es ist ein kompliziertes Feld, zumal in Zeiten und in Ländern, in denen immer noch viele Erinnerungen zum Stillschweigen gebracht werden oder lange dafür gekämpft werden musste, gehört und gesehen zu werden.

Und auf der anderen Seite ein Speicherüberfluss besteht von sehr unwichtigen Informatio-



nen, die nur für den Moment wichtig waren und dennoch nie wieder gelöscht wurden. Ich frage mich, in welchem Datensee Kultur zu ertrinken droht?

Der Körper von Mensch, und Kartoffel ist ebenso ein Speicher, ein Lager von Erinnerungen, um das Leben und die darin enthaltene Kultur lebendig zu halten, schmackhaft und verdaulich zu gestalten, diese Kultur der Teilhabe erfordert ein Gespräch oder einen Kontakt mit anderen Körpern, denn die kulturelle Idee ist ja dennoch darin enthalten. In mir und in der Kartoffel. Und in der Kartoffel in mir. In einem Kartoffelzirkel.

Collective wordlist to let go of the word “culture”

We don't know how to start a manifesto, but we know why we need one: the word culture stopped serving life a long time ago. It became a system of order, a delicate machinery for arranging bodies, lands, stories, and desires. A word that pretends to be protected, but quietly disciplines.

“Culture” created the cultivated and the unculti-

vated.

The refined and the disposable.

The visible and the administrable.

It sorted the world with confidence, convinced that naming was a benevolent act. It turned landscapes into categories, experiences into files, people into moral positions. Culture is a cult. Culture is a border.

It disguised command as knowledge.

It gave elegance to domination.

It made hierarchy feel like heritage.

By sanctifying certain identities and calling them “ancestral,” culture froze lives that were never still. It turned memory into display, struggle into symbolism, and entire worlds into a polite narrative of resilience.

We are not the moral reservoir of humanity.

When those who were celebrated move across borders, admiration becomes suspicion.

Labels travel faster than people.

And while culture proliferates as festivals, sectors, subcultures, and protected traditions, it stabilizes the same architecture of obedience. Deconstructing that scaffolding may be part of a process—but sustaining it is not.

Meanwhile, the system smiles.

Not kindly. With certainty.

Because as long as we keep repeating the word, we reinforce the order it built.

We refuse that inheritance.

We refuse to be sorted by a concept designed to manage life.

We refuse to be archived into legibility or displa-

yed as evidence of diversity.

Something else calls. Not ornament, not representation—a way of creating life without asking authority for vocabulary.

A shared ground: messy, ecological, interdependent, and free from the logic that measures existence through value.

What if we let the word go?

Not because everything becomes culture,

but because the frame itself restricts what can be imagined.

What if meaning does not depend on classification?

What if creation does not require categories?

What if life can exist without being explained first?

We live in an unfinished world. We build, collapse, rebuild, and continue. Agriculture already knew

this: rotate seeds, let the soil rest, allow the ground to breathe. Culture promises order, not transformation.

Language is not innocent.

Our tongues carry imposed grammars, borrowed metaphors, words that entered softly and stayed as rules.

We speak systems that were not made for us.

But enough is enough.

We refuse to inherit a term that reduces life to exhibition.

We refuse to mislead those who come after us with a concept built to organize obedience.

Culture taught us we had value only when displayed, translated, curated.

As if history needed glass to exist.

As if transparency were ever neutral.

As if a life could be frozen for preservation without losing its pulse.

Identity became its favorite trick—a tidy label for a complex existence. A way to separate those who define meaning from those who must embody it.

Culture is not innocent. It administers power.

It organizes, legitimizes, pacifies.

It trades stories for influence.

It transforms struggle into brand.

It turns survival into an aesthetic.

A root crossed an ocean and lost its world in the journey.

What once fed us in silence became inventory.

A plant that anchored entire territories became a symbol someone else could market.

A food that held people together became a badge, a commodity, a national joke without its soil.

There is no pride in being harvested as metaphor.

Images travel. Contexts are erased.

And what grows from the ground becomes material for someone else's identity.

Culture disguises extraction as celebration.

It rewrites necessity as tradition.

It turns pain into performance.

It hides inequality behind admiration.

So what do we do?

We do what has already begun.

We gather. We think with others.

We create without adherence to institutional scripts.

We build from gestures, from errors, from listening.

We are movement.

We are not products.

We are not for sale.

We take what we need.

We are part of earth, not of culture.

Bodies transform faster than classifications.

Life reorganizes itself faster than any category.

Tenderness is the engine that drives dignity.

It cannot be bought, measured, or domesticated.

It holds what remains when systems fail.

It builds alliances where recognition cannot reach.

Silence was demanded of us.

The cost was losing tenderness, clarity, truth.

Replacing uncertainty with order.

Replacing life with description.

Some worlds ended because everything ends.

But ending an idea can open space.

Letting a structure fall can make room for life again.

We need new words.

Or forgotten ones.

Or none at all.

Not fitting is a sign of transformation, not failure.

We refuse to be part of the stage set of progress.

We refuse to be counted, curated, or translated into metrics of importance.

We are here to interrupt.

To say: what we are doing didn't exist before—
now it does.

It adjusts, rebalances, shifts the climate.

We do not ask any word for permission.

Growth has its own logic.

Invention is not metaphor.

It is a necessity.

If we stop inventing, we repeat.
If we repeat, the system continues.

The system is an old idea tied to a term that no longer speaks for us.
Its time is over.
Life already surpassed it.

Meaning belongs to everyone.
Understanding is shared labor.
Interpretation is common ground.

If the system wins, everything becomes spectacle.
A performance with no body behind it.
A stage without soil.

To invent is to build forms of life that escape classification.

To resist is to create without hierarchy.
To hold space where categories cannot rule.

What if we don't name it?
Maybe the name will arrive later.
Maybe it won't.
Maybe rest is also creation.
Maybe silence grows roots.

The ground is ready.
The seeds are there.
They know what to do.

This is not an ending.
This is continuity.
A circle anyone can enter when they are ready.

If we keep using "culture" like it means nothing,
we return to the same orbit.
If we release it, something else can emerge.

Something nameless, but already alive.

Held by firmness.

Held by tenderness.

It is ready when we are.

So let's be ready. Today.



potato
world
culture

swantje lichtenstein

The idea of referring to Germans as potatoes reveals some dark aspects, on the one hand a colonial politics of memory that is so marked by appropriation, denial, distortion, and forgetting that even the outside world seems so convinced by this falsely stored information that it has adopted it.¹ On the other hand, it marks the basis for industrialization and thus also a forced continuation of the concepts of (high) culture and developmental culture, which have shaped cultures of power and memory for at least 500 years.

Starting from this small miracle tuber, magical root, the subterranean, underground, war-surviving currant, we attempt a conversation between the first and second worlds about the potato, sweet potato, or earth truffle. The question of decision-makers and power relations in the takeover and incorporation of land, history, and culture can

1 See Lana Kvitelashvili: Food and Identity. Food as an Expression of National Identity and Stereotyping Using the Example of the Attribution "German Potato," March 2019 <https://www.uni-potsdam.de/de/romanistik-kimminich/kif/kif-analysen/kif-essen-identitaet>, Christopher Kloë: Comedy as Communication Between Cultures: Examples from Turkish and Muslim Groups in Germany. Springer Fachmedien, Wiesbaden 2017, p. 238, Cordula Weißköppel: Foreigners and Potato Germans: Identity Performance in Everyday Life in an Ethnically Mixed Secondary School Class. Juventa, Weinheim / Munich 2001, p. 158 ff.

be illustrated simply yet comprehensively using the example of the potato.²

Everyone likes potatoes. Potatoes saved Europe from starvation, but like everything else that was stolen and picked up elsewhere, the potato, as a nightshade plant, was initially discredited in Europe as a poisonous gift, as witchcraft or devilry. Since the potato was taken out of its cultural context, without recipes or contextual meaning, no one really knew what to do with it. The potato was perhaps already very transversal, global, and transcultural. It adapted and spread. First colonized, then migrated further and grew in many directions. There are now over 3,000 varieties of potato.³

The potato has come a long way and is an indicator of culture or what has been made of it in

2 Monika Schmitz-Emans: Potato poetry, word meals, poetic metabolisms. Poetological imagery of food, eating, and digestion in Ludwig Harig Potato poetry, word meals, poetic metabolisms. Poetological imagery of food, eating, and digestion in Ludwig Harig, in: *Ars metabolica. Metabolism and Digestion as Literary and Cultural Processes*. Edited by Vanessa Höving, Peter Risthaus. Baden-Baden (Nomos) 2023, pp. 21-51.

3 See the list of 3000 potato varieties, op. cit.

the Global North. When culture requires an individualized, exclusive, feudal embedding and no longer becomes a repository for communal, shareable, transferable knowledge, this deficiency becomes noticeable. Monica Juneja writes about it in her study on the possibility or impossibility of a global art history...⁴

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⁴ See entry: kartoffel, f. In: Jacob Grimm, Wilhelm Grimm (eds.): Deutsches Wörterbuch. Volume 11: K – (V). S. Hirzel, Leipzig 1873, col. 244–245 ([woerterbuchnetz.de](https://woerterbuchnetz.de/?sigle=DWB&lemid=K02117)). <https://woerterbuchnetz.de/?sigle=DWB&lemid=K02117>. Cf. German Dictionary by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, entry “Kartoffel

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The potato has come a long way and is an indicator of culture or what has been made of it in

the Global North. When culture requires an individualized, exclusive, feudal embedding and no longer becomes a repository for communal, shareable, transferable knowledge, this deficiency becomes noticeable. Monica Juneja writes about it in her study on the possibility or impossibility of a global art history based on the concept of culture:

When framed within the space of the nation, culture is invariably conscripted to attributes such as stability, linguistic homogeneity and authenticity; belonging to the nation rests on valorising containment and consensus; and ends up concealing the turbulences that are constitutive of all culture. (Can art history be made global? Meditations from the periphery, Berlin/Boston 2023).⁵

Perhaps this is one reason why potatoes in Germany tend to be associated with something simple, raw, and dirty, and have a reputation as an ugly tuber that is very undemanding and readily

⁵ Monica Juneja: Can art history be made global? Meditations from the periphery, 2023, p. 15

available. Even though potatoes were a very exclusive food for royal houses in their European beginnings, from Spain to the Netherlands, Germany, England, and Eastern Europe, it was the adaptability of the potato, its ease of cultivation, and rapid growth that satisfied Europe's great hunger in the 15th-17th centuries and enabled the survival of a continent. Papa Patata took care of everyone when it became clear that the witch's tuber only had to be cooked to lose its hallucinogenic effect. Papa Patata also made survival possible in Europe in the first place and thus also the continuation and codification of culture. Everything was stable again, the warehouses were full.

In our age of transformation, in which the concept of culture and the culture of remembrance are faced with a new storage and preservation problem, the example of the potato shows the extent to which dealing with indigenous, native, alternative ideas in the use of resources, archives, storage, and documentation also means questioning a concept of culture that excluded many long-existing cultures but was never able to eliminate all possibilities.

Oral cultures and documentation that cannot be conceived independently of community, embodiment, stories, and actions are evident in potato culture, as a repository that never reached Europe. The indigenous culture of the potato is also one of storage, memory, and communal activity.

Current discussions about the use of AI and the storage space it requires, which in turn consumes our planet's resources, show that a cultural shift is needed in how we deal with culture, the deletion of data, and the dissolution of archives, warehouses, libraries, museums, and other cultural memory sites.

In addition, the global North also seems to be becoming increasingly aware of how the mere storage of things, works of art, and cultural objects is a cultural process that competes with the survival of all. The question of whether the small part of the world that belongs to the global North can rule over all living beings on Earth and in the

universe is increasingly at the forefront of demands for a more just treatment of the planet for the greatest possible number of living beings that inhabit it.⁶

It is also important to consider what possibilities there are for freeing up storage space and relinquishing claims in order to question the immense climate-damaging capacities we need to ensure (cultural and digital) storage. For whom are we preserving cultural and artistic artifacts if we have to expend so much energy to do so? Who remembers when we delegate memory to devices and corporations? Why are we losing confidence in our own memory and our ability to store what is important and forget what may no longer be important? It is a complicated field, especially in times and countries where many memories are still silenced or where people have had to fight long and hard to be heard and seen.

⁶ See Juneja, *ibid.*

On the other hand, there is an abundance of storage space for very unimportant information that was only important for a moment and yet was never deleted. I wonder in which sea of data culture is threatening to drown?

The human body, and the potato, is also a repository, a storehouse of memories, keeping life and the culture it contains alive, making it tasty and digestible. This culture of participation requires conversation or contact with other bodies, because the cultural idea is still contained within it. In me and in the potato. And in the potato in me. In a potato circle.

the limits
of culture
lie in the
earth

claudia pacheco araoz

groundwork

Sixty million years ago, ants cultivated fungi to feed their colonies: they cut leaves, regulated humidity, and cleaned spaces to maintain a common resource. This task predates any human idea of agriculture, property, or hierarchy. It is not a moral origin or a naturalistic example. Cultivation appears in a realm that does not belong to culture, but rather in the direct coordination between work, time, and the conditions set by the environment. This coordination generates effects that cultural categories can only record afterward and partially. This marks a limit: culture classifies and documents practices—it can even inventory their links to the environment—but that record does not capture the material logic that sustains them or the decisions made at the moment of action. By describing them as stable objects, it separates them from the living relationship with the environment that makes them possible.

When humans began to manipulate plants—selecting seeds, storing them, protecting them, and watering them—they did not initiate cultivation. Cultivation existed before human intervention, but in humans that work had a different

effect: it generated surpluses. And those surpluses reorganized the day: who decides, who executes, who administers, and who can devote hours to activities unrelated to work and who can devote hours to activities that are not part of the necessary work of the day.

Over time, the verb *colere* (to cultivate, to inhabit, to care for) came to refer to specific tasks: sowing, managing the household, attending to religious rites. Later, with Cicero, *cultura animi*, the “cultivation of the spirit,” appeared. This usage introduced a practical separation: studying or training was possible only for those who had free time from their daily work. The modern notion of culture was born from this division, in which access to certain activities depended on the time that other people devoted to work that met basic daily needs.

European modernity deepened this architecture of time. Monarchies, academies, churches, and states used culture to establish social positions according to each group's relationship to daily work. This way of organizing time became a stable part of their institutions and criteria of authority. Imperial expansion imposed this logic

outside Europe and reorganized practices that responded to other modes of work and time. Practices that articulated agricultural cycles, collective work, or local redistribution systems were classified as “primitive cultures” or “local traditions” and treated as minor expressions because they did not follow the European model.

Today, the word culture seems broad and neutral. It names many things—memory, creativity, identity, heritage—but it no longer organizes entire lives as cultivation once did: it operates in a separate sphere, and that separation allows it to be managed. Cultural institutions distribute resources and recognition according to who can adjust to their rhythms and procedures, and these categories function as filters that guide what receives attention or funding. To maintain this order, institutions translate various practices into formats—projects, indicators, audiences—that fit their management style. What falls outside these formats does not disappear, but it ceases to count in decisions that determine value, visibility, and priority. Thus, inequality is formulated as a “cultural deficit,” and conflicts over time, resources, and decisions are shifted to a language that deactivates them and turns them into management issues.

The present is marked by forces that culture was never able to translate and that today impose themselves with new intensity. Technology intervenes directly in the organization of time and work, appropriating everyday activities without appearing to be a form of exploitation; debt and the extreme concentration of wealth determine the future in advance and reduce the scope for individual and collective decision-making; and territories are subject to decisions made far from those who live in them, producing increasingly fragile conditions of existence.

Culture, in its modern formulation, maintains the appearance of encompassing the whole of life, but its scope is selective: it only intervenes in what can be described and managed. What it cannot stabilize within that framework—conflicts, tensions, and transformations that organize life in practice—remains outside its language. What culture names continues to be relevant, but no longer coincides with what defines the present.

This limitation takes shape in management: culture transforms what it can process into administrative devices—participation indicators, audience measurements, validation circuits—that

allow it to demonstrate activity without intervening in the conditions that organize the day. Classification replaces action, and categories operate as equivalents of the problems they should address, without touching on what causes them.

This decline does not stem from a recent error, but from a structure that was never revised. By separating itself from daily life, culture reduces its limits to failures of participation, when in reality they are much deeper: it can only act on what it manages to fix in categories; it does not intervene in the distribution of time, nor in the organization of work, nor in the material conditions—income, mobility, care, territory—that define who can be present. At this point, inequality appears, not as a moral judgment, but as the clearest example of this limitation: when translated into cultural language, it ceases to be a practical problem and becomes a matter of representation. It can be described, but not transformed in its material basis, and ends up preserving what it seeks to point out.

In this vacuum, culture becomes usable for almost any purpose. It can serve educational programs, identity campaigns, territorial promo-

tion strategies, administrative devices, or agendas aimed at managing populations—with their exclusions, hierarchies, and disciplines—even those that distort or deny the environmental transformations that already affect the basic conditions of life. This breadth does not express scope, but rather the direct consequence of its limits: unable to intervene in the concrete supports of daily life—time, work, resources, care, territory—culture adapts to what each institution needs to justify. It operates as a flexible resource in a world that demands transformations that it cannot produce.

Culture is the administrative crystallization of historical separation. The potato appears when that concept is no longer sufficient. It is not a symbol or a heritage, but a concrete operation in which territory, work, climate, and time are articulated to respond to situations that are never identical. Its practice does not depend on managing representations, but on deciding in relation to an environment. Where culture organizes what is already fixed in categories, the potato works at the moment when the relationships that structure experience are formed.

Potato

Here, culture does not refer to the human capacity to signify, remember, or narrate, but rather to the historical regime that separated certain practices from everyday life to classify, administer, and manage them from the outside. It is this framework—not human experience in its breadth—that comes into tension with the way the potato organizes the world.

The history of the potato begins in the central Andes, above 3,500 meters, where cold, altitude, and frost limit what can grow. There, life is organized by carefully reading the terrain and climate: no model is applied; one responds to the day. Growing potatoes is not an activity separate from life, but rather the practice that defines what work must be done, when, and under what conditions. The decisions that shape it produce a continuous relationship between territory, affection, work, and time. The days of communal work and the distribution of the harvest do not express a “culture” in the modern sense: they are the way of resolving, in each cycle, how to live in that specific environment.

This is not an isolated practice: it is a historical relationship between conditions and decisions.

When the potato arrived in Europe, as part of colonial expansion that transferred products without the forms of labor and decision-making that shaped their cultivation, what was incorporated was not the practice, but the tuber as an available commodity. This transfer revealed something that in the Andes did not need to be mentioned: the potato could become a stable commodity, suitable for integration into supply, calculation, and accumulation circuits. The potato did not arrive alone, but the European way of receiving it separated the tuber from the operation that produced it: the situated reading of the environment, the adjustment of work to climate and soil, and diversification as a way of deciding in each cycle.

In that system, its value came to be defined by yields, costs, margins, and management possibilities. The potato became an indicator: food for armies, a tool for regulating wages, an input for planning populations and territories. Its practice was reduced to general categories—productivity,

food security, development—that allow for the management of goods, but do not allow for an understanding of the operation that produces the crop: the variable relationship between soil, climate, affection, labor, and decision-making.

This was a turning point. Europe adopted the potato as a resource, but without realizing that the crop continued to operate according to its own logic that could not be absorbed by the administrative apparatus. The emerging institutional framework—what would later be called “institutional culture”—classified the potato as a usable commodity, but did not perceive that the practice that made it exist did not respond to its categories. The potato could be a commodity, but not only a commodity: it continued to operate with a material autonomy that no system could enclose. This is where the distance began between what a practice does and what a system needs it to be in order to manage it.

Andean practices of reading the environment, communal work, and knowledge of climatic variations were reclassified by colonial and republican administrations as folklore, custom, or heritage, separating them from their dimension of

knowledge, techniques, and materials. The name was preserved, but the operation was lost.

However, the potato retains a logic that does not fit these classification criteria. Its cultivation is based on a direct exchange between work and environment: reading the sky, anticipating a frost, and intervening in time is not a symbolic gesture, but a set of techniques and knowledge that order the rhythm of work and the viability and care of the crop. This relationship—between environment, affection, time, and decision—defines what the potato allows in any territory where it is grown. The variation of the tuber—its multiple shapes, colors, and resistances—is the material record of this ongoing relationship. Those who grow it do not apply a universal model: they respond to what the soil allows in each cycle and in each place.

This logic of localized response traveled with the potato. In each new territory—the highlands of Europe, the plains of North America, the valleys of Asia—it was not a pre-existing model that arrived, but a requirement: to establish a relationship between work, time, and environment so that cultivation could take place. Italy, Germany,

Ireland, and the United States did not receive a cultural origin; they received a crop whose practice forced them to compose their own responses. From those decisions and relationships—and not from any pre-existing national spirit—emerged cuisines, stories, creative expressions, rest and entertainment, work rhythms, and uses of time that would later be classified as heritage.

Here, the core of the conflict is revealed. Institutional culture translates these responses into stable categories—heritage, identity, food system—in order to manage them, distribute resources, and measure their scope. Potato cultivation operates outside these frameworks. It does not manage representations: it intervenes directly in the organization of work and time. It does not establish repertoires: it introduces concrete variations in the way of life. While cultural policy is oriented toward audiences, circuits, and projects, the potato acts on the material basis—available time, physical effort, division of labor—on which social bonds depend.

The history of the potato allows us to identify the separation that sustains the modern notion of culture and cultural policy. Institutional culture

works with stabilized practices that have been converted into categories that it can classify and manage. Language allows us to remember and transmit these practices, but it comes after the operation that makes them possible: it preserves experience, it does not produce it. Memory is necessary, but it does not operate from outside; it is integrated into the practice itself.

Potato cultivation operates on this material level: each cycle reshapes the relationship between work, time, and environment according to conditions that are never identical. It does not respond to previous models or fixed repertoires; it functions on the basis of variations that are resolved in practice. This mode of operation is beyond the reach of culture, whose logic requires stable formats to convert practices into objects of management. The variation inherent in the potato is decided in the place and time of doing, while culture can only record fragments once they have occurred. This gap marks its limit: the potato organizes a type of material operation that cultural classification cannot reach.

The Andean origin of the potato constitutes a possibility that is actualized in each territory

where it is grown. The forms it takes—varieties, resistances, uses—do not come from a fixed cultural repertoire, but from how each place shapes the relationship between practice and environment. From this emerge diversity and identities, but as material effects, not as the continuity of an intact origin. The potato retains its provenance, but its cultivation always opens up something different: a way of organizing life that does not start from categories, but from operations.

The operation that allows potatoes to be grown does not only produce vital continuity: it produces human worlds in all their breadth. It feeds celebrations and domestic economies, but also armies, expanding cities, leisure industries, and global markets. Its organizational power is neither moral nor symbolic: it is material. Culture often reads identity or tradition into it, but fails to recognize that these practices sustain both common life and the forms of inequality and violence that accompany human history. The potato does not idealize life: it composes it.

It is not a question of replacing concepts, but of recognizing an order of priority. Before any cultural classification, there are the material

operations—soil, climate, labor, time—on which a practice depends. The potato is not an interpretive category: it acts at the point where relationships that do not yet have a name are formed. Its multiplicity is the accumulated record of decisions made to make life viable in territories that are never the same.

Where culture stabilizes and manages what has already happened, the potato operates at the moment when the relationships that sustain life are formed.

That difference marks the threshold: culture preserves; the potato organizes.

a potato is, often.

Those who enter Toralapa and interact with potatoes encounter persistence, pauses, reactivations, and latencies that are sustained in jars, cold storage rooms, and soil. These are different ways of working with time. In glass, a fragment of stem grows slowly and protected, in a development that can last months or years. In the cold, mini-tubers and sealed packages keep the potato on pause without losing its ability to activate when it returns to cultivation. In the ground, the plant shows its connection to the environment: how it sprouts, how it adjusts to heavy rain or an unseasonal frost.

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82

Toralapa is a cultivation: laboratory, bank, and community of thought. In these spaces, the possibility remains open for more than a thousand varieties to be cultivated again.

The potato brings with it a biography: the altitude of the place where it comes from, its shape—all different—the color of the flower, and the time of the first sprout. These data guide the work, allowing us to reconstruct the origin when it returns to the earth and begins another relationship.

Cutting, cleaning, refreshing, replanting. These techniques are repeated in the laboratory, the greenhouse, or the field, but they are never identical. At each stage, the potato decides something: it advances flowering, adjusts the foliage, or modifies the tuber. It does not reappear the same; it responds to the place where it grows.

These variations make up its range of expression: what a potato can show when it passes through different soils. Diversity is not an inventory: it is what a variety can do in more than one type of crop.

Times are gathered in the bank. The work is to ensure that nothing is reduced to a single pattern:

The potato remains an open possibility, difference is the place where reality becomes possible.

Note: Bolivia's National Institute for Agricultural and Forestry Innovation (INIAF) is the public entity responsible for protecting native seeds and varieties, according to the 2009 Constitution, which recognizes food sovereignty and prohibits the genetic modification of this material. Its National Center for Genetic Resources, in Toralapa (Tiraque, Cochabamba, Bolivia), stores more than 20,000 materials—potatoes, tubers, roots, grains, quinoa, fruits, trees, and other Andean species—in laboratories, cold storage rooms, and field plots. Nothing is genetically altered: the varieties are kept as they exist in the territory, as a living reserve to cope with crop losses or environmental changes without relying on external seeds.



BANCO NACIONAL DE GERMOPLASMA DE BOLIVIA



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Photographs (in order of appearance)

1. Potatoes, Cochabamba farmers' market.
2. Potato sellers, Cochabamba farmers' market.
3. Potato sale, El Morro Market, Sacaba.
4. Potato flower, greenhouse at the Toralapa Technological Innovation Center (INIAF), Tiraque, Cochabamba.
5. Potato seller, El Morro Market, Sacaba.
6. Potato foliage, greenhouse at the Toralapa Technological Innovation Center (INIAF).
7. In vitro cultivation of potato accessions, Bolivian National Germplasm Bank, Toralapa Technological Innovation Center (INIAF).
8. Potato field, Tiraque, Cochabamba, Bolivia.

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To Ivone Araoz
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Thank you.

Hace sesenta millones de años, las hormigas cultivaban hongos para alimentar a sus colonias: cortaban hojas, regulaban la humedad y limpiaban los espacios para mantener un recurso común. Esa tarea antecede cualquier idea..



Der Beauftragte der Bundesregierung
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