

In this work, I relate to the path of *conocimiento*, a concept developed by Gloria Anzaldúa, which is a form of spiritual inquiry/activism, reached via creative acts—writing, art-making, dancing, healing, teaching, meditation, and spiritual activism. In writing and drawing, I weave lines to different realities: the rural upbringings of the women who raised me, my migration from the Third World, the meaning of home and belonging, and my connection to all that exists on the planet as political consciousness.

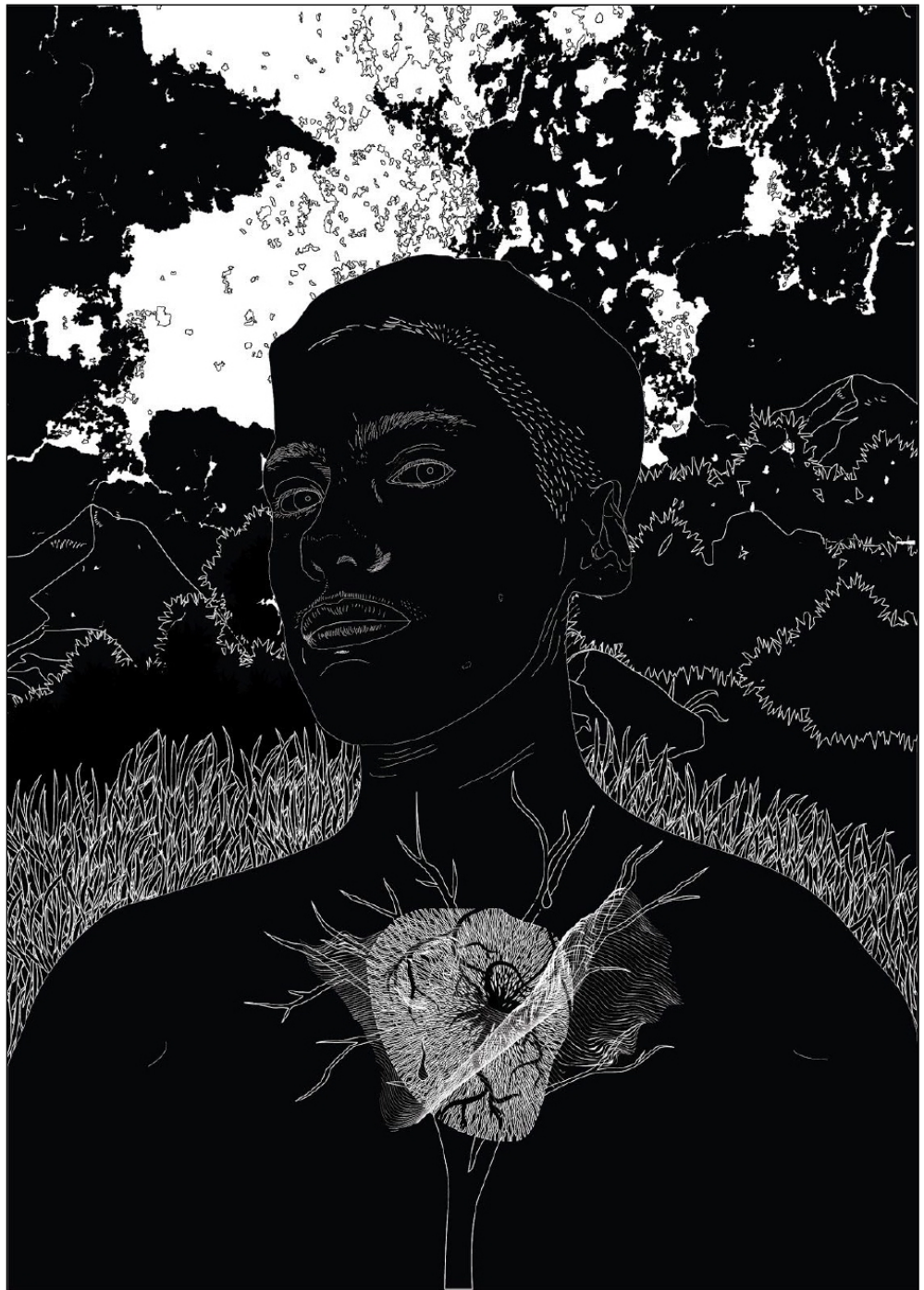


Abb. 1
The Path of Conocimiento, 2018
Digital pencil drawing
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In this work, I weave lines to different realities: the rural upbringings of the women who raised me, my migration from the Third World and the fragmentation of home and belonging, my connection to all that exists on the planet as political consciousness, and the wounds that are the source of a spiritual inquiry leading to a decolonial healing.

A wound that is felt as a crack and as an explosion, that releases waves of exhaustion, that overflows and drips until it evaporates everything that was. An oceanic feeling against that which seems immovable. A

subterranean pain that connects us politically; a collective commotion that materializes in a vocabulary of meaning making and regeneration...

The Eurocentric narrative on which many of us were compelled to build our way of understanding the world tells that the West has a genealogy. According to this narrative, ancient Greece conceived Rome, Rome conceived Christian Europe, Christian Europe conceived the Renaissance, the Renaissance the Enlightenment, and the Enlightenment political democracy and the Industrial Revolution. Industry, crossed with democracy, in turn yielded the Western world, embodying the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. This evolutionary schema portrays history as a story of moral success, a tale of civilization and progress, in which successive runners pass on the torch of progress and liberty.¹ This narrative explains how ideas about civilization and progress became influential factors in the theory and practice of colonialism, and why we need to undo them.

In talking about the colonial wound, I have in mind the work of the Chicana writer Gloria Anzaldúa and the Peruvian thinker Aníbal Quijano. I relate to decolonial theory as a dialogical partner and as one of the spaces in the hegemonic map, where our existence, with all its intricacies and complexities, is acknowledged—knowing nevertheless that all theory is the condensation of practice, and that there have been centuries of people living with these wounds, surviving and resisting, long before *coloniality* or other terms were there to address them. And, also knowing that thousands of female, transgender, and queer writers, poets, and artists have paved out a completely different way of having this conversation, by bringing up their personal voices—“the way how things feel, as a knowledge inscribed in the body”—to all those borders, folds, and creases into which previously unheard voices had fallen, far outside the main Eurocentric subjectivity imposed in the process of modernity.

When I talk about colonial wounds, I mean the weight of several axes of history in our biographies. I mean the structural systemic racism we experience every day, the colonial looting of our cultures for the existence of ethnological museums, and disinheriting peoples of their cultural production, their meaning as a culture, and their sense of reality. I mean the celebration of the murderers of our ancestors, such as Christopher Columbus, who is commemorated in statues, murals, streets, malls, and squares in Vienna and across Europe. I mean the erasure of our histories from school curricula, which seems to say we didn't do something valuable enough to be recorded. I mean the associations that connect us with what is underdeveloped, uncivilized, and nonprogressive—specifically when it comes from thinkers who are deemed canonical, such as Kant or Hegel. I mean the distorted and renamed geographies, the celebration of discoveries of what we already knew about, the historiographies that always begin in the north of the world. I mean the preaching of a binary understanding of gender rather than the continuous spectrum that was reconstituted and racialized through colonial relations of power.² I mean a history where art is the neutral description for Occidental European art, to which inclusions are now being added, but whose origins remain untouched; I mean our art deemed as crafts, and a history that says we have no genealogy of aesthetics we could claim as our own. I mean the violence enacted at borders when we want to travel, and a migratory control system with its crowded camps, crashed boats, detention centers, and forced deportation flights.

Our existence is marked by these wounds. My practice is crossed by these realities and my art is therefore bound to disturb history, telling my truth and bringing my body to the fore. A body who has a gendered history, a Third-World history, a colonized history, a history of disability, of labor exploitation, a racialized, impoverished, migrant, nonheteronormative, spiritual history, of learning and of unlearning. Coming from these histories, my practice is bound to be a healing of colonial wounds as a transformation that passes through the body and implies the development of a new consciousness.

If in the culture I come from, *curar* means to heal the body and the soul,

channeling the knowledge that beings such as plants and animals hold about life. Then, to heal I reach my inner potential as a *curandera* to access and produce knowledge. To be healing, the knowledge I access and produce needs to dismantle hierarchies and canons, to consider its potential for freedom but also for violence. And to remind us that beings that are non-human also produce knowledge. That non-human beings are capable of knowing and generate knowledge.

We are all related to one another. We are connected to one another in multiple overlapping realities. A truth not very well known says that bacteria should be considered among the first humans, that stones are alive, and that plants, the same beings that sustain and nurture our existence, also possess age-old wisdom. Vegetable epistemologies. Humans have isolated themselves from the world by their belief in a unique rational mind, and by seeking to statically identify and label something they called nature, distancing themselves from everything nonhuman. Yet each of our voices is inhabited by other presences, other souls, and other histories. Each of us is only ourselves because we are inhabited by others.

When I think of my role as an artist I think of the necessity of a praxis that contemplates multidimensional ways of understanding knowledge. A practice that connects to healing as an indigenous and feminist tradition, and that contributes through a plurality of mythos to the reconfiguration of a new consciousness.

We work within a community of senses, getting involved in a wider political work for the radical re-imagination of society. We produce self-made initiatives under our own propositions, where we bring alternatives of production, access, and of communal meaning making.

*Interwoven with notions of the spiritual activism of Gloria Anzaldúa, the teachings of Eve Tuck, the rhythm of Victoria Santa Cruz, the poetry of Pedro Lemebel, the indignation of María Galindo, the combative insight of James Baldwin, the transmodern view of the world of Enrique Dussel, the analysis of Aníbal Quijano, and the struggle of the Movimiento Zapatista, among several others.

- 1 Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 5.
- 2 María Lugones, „Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System,“ *Hypatia*22, no. 1 (2007): 202.