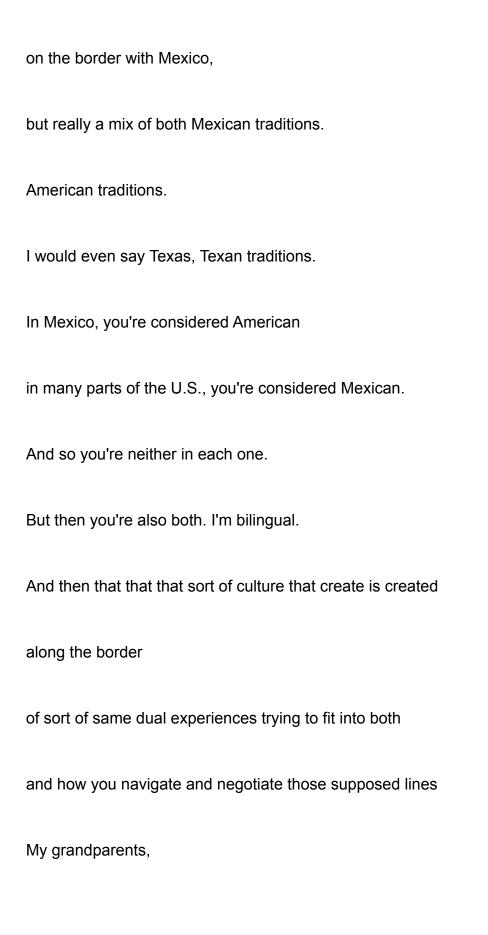
Reckoning With Racism in Nursing

Caroline Ortiz Duration: 11:26
We're addressing racism in nursing
I work at Pacific College of Health and Science,
and that is primarily a Chinese medicine school.
In addition to Chinese medicine, they have a program
that is a holistic nursing program.
And that's where I teach
It wasn't my first choice,
but it was the first demonstration of any sort of career.
My mom's a nurse.
I wanted to be a doctor.
Why? I'm not sure

But I soon changed my mind when I was actually signing on the dotted line. And I thought, well, nursing, like my mom doesn't look so hard It is much harder than I thought. Just as watching as a child, watching my mom do it fell in love with that oath that we take as nurses that, you know, to be of service, to be of health in in such true human to human heart to heart ways Bring to the classroom, I think a very unique experience. Though I was born right practically right on the Rio Grande River

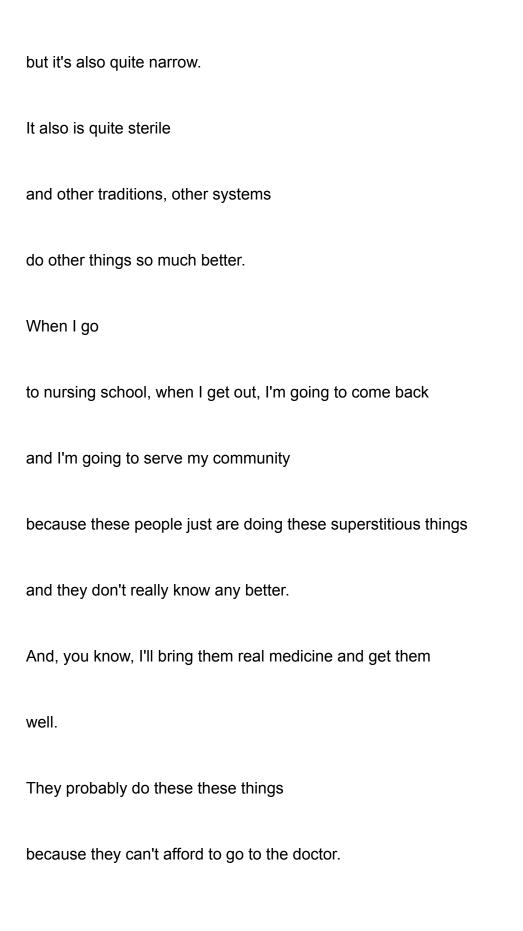


both sides are originally from Mexico. They came to the U.S. and settled on the border because my mom worked so much. We often would stay with my grandmother when we got sick, and I was somebody that always had tonsillitis. If I was with my mom, she'd take me to the pediatrician. But if I was with my grandmother, she would either pick some herbs and make me take it some God awful tea or if there was another situation that she either couldn't handle or thought would be better handled by somebody else,

she would take me to the local curandera,

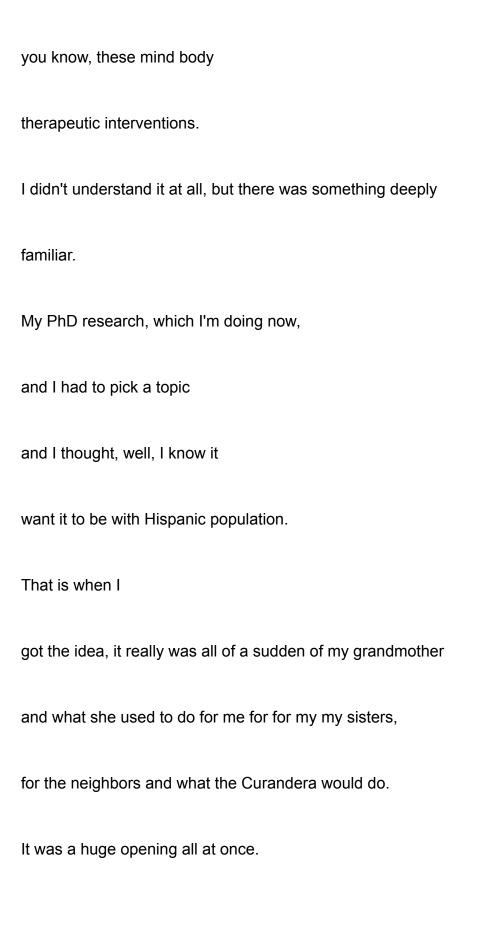
who would also give me terrible teas, but then add some sweeping of my body with branches and as a kid I didn't know what she was doing. I just knew that the tea was terrible. But I felt better. The care and the love that was in part, it made me feel just so cared for Western biomedicine, the way we practice it in this country, is the racist system that we we kind of shun or even label the medical, the medicine systems, the healing practices of other people as alternative. Well, alternative to what? Because if we were in their country or in their communities,

bio medicine is the alternative medicine.
Other cultures have a lot to teach us,
and we need to remain open and curious
and humble.
I was one of those people that was thinking that, you know,
my own
the people of my own culture were
unsophisticated and ignorant.
And I was perfectly fine thinking that until I wasn't.
I did all
disparaging of kind of Western biomedicine.
It has saved my life and it has its absolute
benefits,

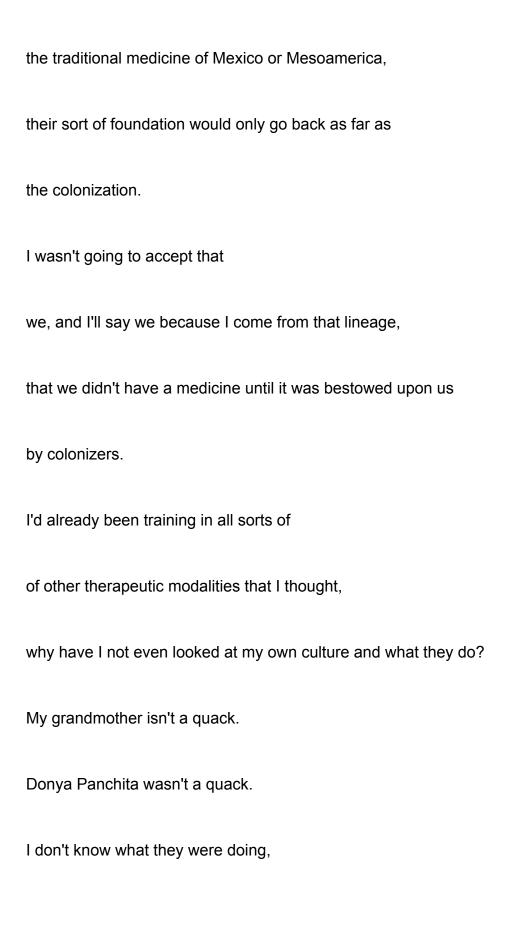


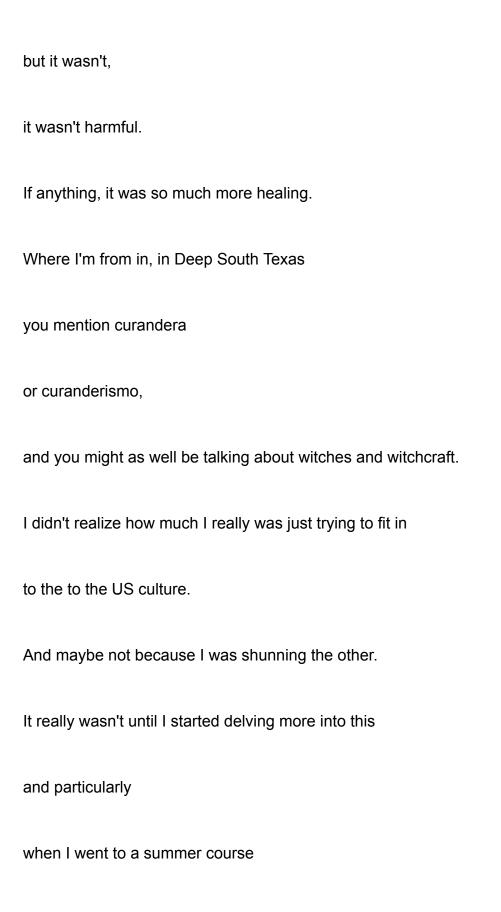
The attitude of there was some level of of ignorance
in what they did, and I eventually do come back.
Donya Panchita, who was the local Curandera, was one of my patients.
I was so full of myself. In my heart
trying to teach them the right ways.
Unfortunately, Donya Panchita
passed on soon after she came under my care,
as did my grandmother shortly thereafter.
But I still stayed with this idea of saving my community from the
superstitious nonsense.
Part of
my job was going into their homes
and asking to see their medications,

and they would bring these plastic bags
full of pills and bottles and ointments and creams,
things that they were prescribed
or that they were taken or recommended to take.
But they didn't look any better, you know,
they didn't look well.
The thought that would cross
my mind was are not those big bags of all this stuff
that they're taking supposed to help them feel better
and they don't.
I met a nurse who came in to our class.
Something about all that she was talking about was use of,



And then comes this.
'But people are going to think I'm weird'
As I started reading and looking at this for,
you know, the different class assignments
and continuing to develop the idea I started getting angry,
angry in that it was all so hidden.
When it wasn't hidden it was presented that those people believe
they're the unsophisticated,
you know, indigenous people of Mesoamerica.
In particular.
When I would come across more than just a few
supposedly reputable articles on this topic,
when they would explain





in, in New Mexico, on curanderismo, hosted at the University of New Mexico that I saw just this other side and the beauty of the traditions and the, the science base really for for so much more we rarely know anything about their traditional practices or the tools or you know, what their system, their ancestral system has to teach us. Yes, this is for us to be able to better understand and truly care for our patient the way the patient centered care wants us to do. It's also about

maybe we can learn something from those approaches.

If I can help be a bridge

or a liaison or whatever term that sort of looks like

that's what I want to do.

As a gift to my grandmother, and to

the curanderas and to all of these people

that brought it to me.