



Recreating a Sociohistorical Perspective on Shunko by Reading his Story (Ábalos, 1949) and Watching "The Progress" (Murúa, 1960): An Introduction to Decoloniality

Ana Fernandez

University of Ottawa, Canada

Abstract

Our Academia, diminished by the interests of neoliberalism, is in need of new epistemologies and experiences, which imply other teaching perspectives. Taking into account a sociohistorical perspective in the context of Latin American Studies, we propose a workshop in advanced Spanish (ELE, C1) to raise students' awareness of the interrelationship between decoloniality and knowledge. The syllabus is connected with fiction: the story of a young student called Shunko (Quichuan for the little one), who lives in the rural area of Santiago del Estero province, north-central of Argentina. All the activities (group and individual assignments, for instance: individual virtual quizzes, research and group presentation, Jeopardy game) are based on a variety of sources in the field of decoloniality, as well as narratology and film studies. The program features three parts: during the first part, three weekly lessons, the students read the novel Shunko (written in 1949 by the rural teacher, writer and scientist Jorge W. Ábalos) to study the relationship between the two main characters: a rural Quichuan student (Shunko) and his (urban) teacher. In the course of the second section, two weekly lessons, the students watch the movie "Shunko" to compare it to the original plot and analyse the way in which the audiovisual version is recreated and updated. In the last session, one weekly lesson, students offer in-class group presentations on their interpretations of Shunko in relation to (de)coloniality. We think that both, the roman and the movie will help students to develop a better comprehension not only of the sociohistorical Quichuan background of Santiago del Estero, but also of the complexity of some ethnocentric prejudices (hidden in the Eurocentric educational system of Argentina). Furthermore, at the end of this workshop, the students will be able to understand the main characteristics and importance of the Latin American movement known as decoloniality.

Keywords: Latin-American Studies, Decoloniality, Quichuan culture in Santiago del Estero, Shunko;