



PROGRAMA DE PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO EM EDUCAÇÃO

PROGRAMA DE PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO PROFISSIONAL EM LETRAS

Instituto de Ciências da Educação

Exame de proficiência de leitura em língua estrangeira – Inglês

Instruções gerais:

1. Esta prova tem como finalidade estrita verificar sua capacidade de ler e entender textos em língua inglesa na área de educação; não se espera de você nem a manifestação de avaliações sobre o tema nem a simples tradução de trechos.
2. Leia atentamente o texto e responda, em português as perguntas que se fazem.
3. O tempo de realização da prova é de três horas.

A escolha do texto que compõe essa prova é uma homenagem a Paulo Freire, por ocasião de seu centenário.

About objectivity and subjectivity in the Pedagogy of the Oppressed¹

Paulo Freire

(from Pedagogy of the Oppressed)

The oppressor is in solidarity with the oppressed only when he stops regarding the oppressed as an abstract category and sees them as persons who have been unjustly dealt with, deprived of their voice, cheated in the sale of their labor — when he stops making pious, sentimental and individualistic gestures and risks an act of love.

True solidarity is found only in the plenitude of this act of love, in its existentiality in its praxis. To affirm that men and women are persons and as persons should be free, and yet to do nothing tangible to make this affirmation a reality, is a farce.

Since it is a concrete situation that the oppressor-oppressed contradiction is established, the resolution of this contradiction must be objectively verifiable. Hence, the radical requirement — both for the individual who discovers himself or herself to be an oppressor and for the oppressed — that the concrete situation which begets oppression must be transformed.

To present this radical demand for the objective transformation of reality to combat subjectivist immobility which would divert the recognition of oppression into patient waiting for oppression to disappear by itself is not to dismiss the role of subjectivity in the struggle to change structures.

On the contrary one cannot conceive of objectivity without subjectivity. Neither can exist without the other, nor can they be dichotomized. The separation of objectivity from subjectivity, the denial of the latter when analyzing reality or acting upon it, is objectivism. On the other hand, the denial of objectivity in analysis or action, resulting in a subjectivism which leads to solipsistic positions, denies action itself by denying objective reality.

Neither objectivism nor subjectivism, nor yet psychologism is propounded here, but rather subjectivity and objectivity in constant dialectical relationship. To deny the importance of subjectivity in the process of transforming the world and history is naive and simplistic. It is to admit the impossible: a world without people.

¹ Transcribed from Freire, Paulo, **Pedagogy of the oppressed**; translated by Myra Bergman Ramos. New York; London: The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc. 2005.

This objectivistic position is as ingenuous as that of subjectivism, which postulates people without a world. World and human beings do not exist apart from each other; they exist in constant interaction. Man does not espouse such a dichotomy; nor does any other critical, realistic thinker.

What Marx criticized and scientifically destroyed was not subjectivity, but subjectivism and psychologism.

Just as objective social reality exists not by chance, but as the product of human action, so it is not transformed by chance. If humankind produce social reality (which in the “inversion of the praxis” turns back upon them and conditions them), then transforming that reality is an historical task, a task for humanity.

Reality which becomes oppressive results in the contradistinction of men as oppressors and oppressed; the latter, whose task it is to struggle for their liberation together with those who show true solidarity, must acquire a critical awareness of oppression through the praxis of this struggle. One of the gravest obstacles to the achievement of liberation is that oppressive reality absorbs those within it and thereby acts to submerge human beings’ consciousness.

Functionally, oppression is domesticating. To no longer be prey to its force, one must emerge from it and turn upon it. This can be done only by means of the praxis: reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it.

Hay que hacer al opresion real todavia mas opresiva anadiendo a aquella la conciencia de la opresion haciendo la infamia todavia mas infamante, al pregonarla.²

Making “real oppression more oppressive still by adding to it the realization of oppression” corresponds to the dialectical relation between the subjective and the objective. Only in this interdependence is an authentic praxis possible, without which it is impossible to resolve the oppressor-oppressed contradiction.

To achieve this goal, the oppressed must confront reality critically, simultaneously objectifying and acting upon that reality. A mere perception of reality not followed by this critical intervention will not lead to a transformation of objective reality — precisely because it is not a true perception. This is the case of a purely subjectivist perception by someone who forsakes objective reality and creates a false substitute.

² Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *La Sagrada Familia y otros escritos* (Mexico, 1962), p. 6. Emphasis added.

A different type of false perception occurs when a change in objective reality would threaten the individual or class interests of the perceiver. In the first instance, there is no critical intervention in reality, because that reality is fictitious; there is none in the second instance because intervention would contradict the class interests of the perceiver in the latter case the tendency of the perceiver is to behave “neurotically.”

The fact exists; but both the fact and what may result from it may be prejudicial to the person. Thus, it becomes necessary not precisely to deny the fact, but to “see it differently.” This rationalization as a defense mechanism coincides in the end with subjectivism. A fact which is not denied but whose truths are rationalized loses its objective base. It ceases to be concrete and becomes a myth created in defense of the class of the perceiver.

QUESTIONS

1. In Freire's view, what is required for the oppressor to be in solidarity with the oppressed?
2. What is that Freire is calling "a farce"?
3. To which radical requirement does the author refer when he considers the demand for the objective transformation of reality?
4. According to the author, why can we not conceive objectivity without subjectivity?
5. What does Freire mean when he says that a specific situation would be an "inversion of the praxis"?
6. What does the author consider "one of the gravest obstacles to the achievement of liberation"?
7. Explain shortly what is, according to Freire, "a true perception". Elaborate on the example he gives as argument.
8. Freire sustains that there are two different types of false perception. Identify and explain both in a few words.
9. What "becomes necessary not precisely to deny, but to see differently", according to Freire?
10. In no more than ten lines, write a summary of the text, including the topic, the thesis and the main arguments.