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SECTION 1A: INTRODUCTION: THE SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

Chapter 1: The Promise, C. Wright Mills

Multiple Choice

1. Mills suggests that individuals feel trapped in the modern world because of
   a) impersonal structural changes within the entire society
   b) the pressures of modern life impinging on personal happiness
   c) how fast-paced modern urban living has become
   d) the reduction in leisure time for the average person

2. According to Mills, contemporary history is created through
   a) structural movements within a society
   b) the cyclical passing of social time
   c) the success and failures of individual men and women
   d) the superseding of capitalism over feudalism

3. According to Mills, the individual successes and/or failures of men and women create
   a) tensions within modern marriages
   b) contemporary history
   c) the unpredictable nature of capitalism
   d) the sociological imagination

4. Mills argues that neither the life of the individual nor the history of a society can be understood without
   a) psychological and economic investigation
   b) examining global historical trends
   c) qualitative and quantitative investigation
   d) understanding both

5. Mills suggests that people tend not to understand their problems in terms of
   a) historical changes and institutional contradictions
   b) their relation to their economic condition
   c) historical significance
   d) none of the above

6. Mills suggests that the modern world has created a greater need for the “sociological imagination” because
   a) people are generally more educated in the present time
   b) never in the history of the world have we experienced such fast and monumental change
   c) academics have demonstrated the limits of psychology
   d) globalization requires the development of tolerance for diverse groups of people
7. According to Mills, one of the difficulties with the vast changes in the modern world is
   a) the change is outstripping peoples’ capacity to develop an adequate moral compass
   b) technology is creating economic and social crisis
   c) the global market cannot sustain the overproduction of trade goods resulting in greater economic hardship
   d) people are generally unable to cope with the changes and this is leading to increased mental illness

8. According to Mills, what people need in this rapidly changing world is
   a) greater access to information
   b) greater access to the skills of reason
   c) the sociological imagination
   d) the political power to influence structural changes

9. The sociological imagination can be defined as
   a) the ability to grasp the implications of globalization
   b) a creative approach to the study of sociology
   c) the integration of multiple sociological narratives into a cohesive and useful subject area
   d) the ability to grasp history and biography, and the relations between the two in society

10. According to Mills, the ability to grasp history and biography, and the relations between the two is called
    a) a sociological imagination
    b) an integrative academic approach
    c) a multi-disciplinary academic approach
    d) historical biographic investigation

11. Mills refers to the sociological imagination as
    a) the best possible investigative stance
    b) the promise
    c) a tricky and difficult mind frame to obtain
    d) the end result of sociology

12. The three main areas of inquiry involved in any great social investigation, according to Mills, are
    a) social structure/social order, the nature of social change, and the kinds of people a society permits or creates
    b) economic systems, the nature of social conflict and distress, and family systems
    c) the forces of globalization, the patterns of social order and organization, and the personal struggles within milieu
    d) the nature of social change, economic systems, and family struggle
13. Another benefit to the sociological imagination as outlined by Mills, is that it enables its possessor to
   a) see past the social and examine the individual personality systems that influence decision making
   b) evaluate the larger historical context in terms of its personal meaning to the individual and his/her own personal career
   c) creatively envision multiple solutions for complex social issues
   d) transcend the specific historical context of the individual and see the real social structures that create their social reality

14. According to Mills, troubles can be defined as
   a) situations which challenge society as a whole
   b) situations which disrupt the economic well-being of a nation
   c) situations which occur within the character of an individual and their immediate social relations
   d) situations which inhibit the social growth of particularly situated groups within a social complex

15. According to Mills, milieu can be defined as
   a) the global context impinging upon a nation
   b) the ecological environment that structures the experiences of a nation state
   c) the patterning of social structures within a particular political framework
   d) the social setting that directly impinges upon one’s personal experience

16. According to Mills, issues are those things that
   a) occur within the character of an individual and their immediate social relations
   b) illuminate the global context that impinge upon a nation state
   c) are created through multiple milieus as they are organized into institutions
   d) are created through multiple troubles that create personal crisis for individuals

17. According to Mills, those aspects of social life that are created through the organization of milieus into institutions of an historical society are called
   a) issues
   b) habitus
   c) troubles
   d) social structures

18. According to Mills, those aspects of the social setting that are directly open to one’s personal experience, and to some extent one’s willful acts, are called
   a) habitus
   b) social structures
   c) troubles
   d) milieu
19. According to Mills, those aspects of social life which occur within the character of the individual and within the range of her/his immediate social relations are called
   a) psychosocial phenomena
   b) habitus
   c) troubles
   d) issues

20. According to Mills, an example of a/an ____________ occurs when, in a nation of 50 million employees, 15 million are unemployed.
   a) trouble
   b) issue
   c) structural failure
   d) capitalist crisis

True or False

1. According to Mills an example of an issue occurs when the divorce rate during the first four years of marriage is 250 out of every 1000 attempts. (T)
2. According to Mills what people require in a rapidly changing world is access to information. (F)
3. The sociological imagination can be defined as the ability to grasp history and biography and the relation between the two. (T)
4. According to Mills, an example of an issue occurs when in a city of 100 000, only one person is unemployed. (F)
5. According to Mills, milieu can be defined as the institutional organization of a particular society. (F)
6. According to Mills, the facts of contemporary history are also the facts about the individual successes or failures of people. (T)
7. According to Mills, troubles can be defined as those aspects of social life which occur within the character of the individual and within the range of her/his immediate social relations. (T)
8. A benefit to the sociological imagination is that it enables the possessor to see past the social and examine the individual personality systems that influence life course. (F)
9. Mills argues that neither the life of the individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both. (T)
10. Mills suggests that the modern world has created a greater need for the sociological imagination because never in the history of the world have we experienced such fast and monumental change. (T)

Short Answer

1. According to Mills, define milieu. (10)
2. According to Mills, define troubles. (10)
3. According to Mills, define issues. (10)
4. According to Mills, define the sociological imagination (8–9)
5. What is it about the modern world which leads Mills to argue the necessity of the sociological imagination? (8–9)
6. Why does Mills say that the modern person is experiencing “moral stasis”? (8)
7. Explain how milieu relates to issues, according to Mills. (10)
8. What are two examples that Mills gives to illustrate the difference between troubles and issues? (10)
9. How can war be both a personal trouble and a social issue? (10)
10. How can marriage be both a personal trouble and a social issue? (10)

Discussion

1. What does Mills mean when he talks about the sociological imagination? (8–9)
2. What are the three sorts of questions that Mills suggests are the foundation to social investigation and how do they relate to the sociological imagination? (9)
3. How does Mills discussion of trouble, milieu and issues relate to the sociological imagination? (10)
4. Why do people have a sense of feeling trapped in the modern world according to Mills? (7)
5. Why does Mills suggest that information and skills of reason are not enough to equip people for the strains of the modern world? (7–8)
6. Can you think of any examples that demonstrate the difference between personal troubles and social issues and how they converge? Refer to Mills examples on page (10)
7. Why does Mills argue that unemployment is often not the responsibility of an individual? (10)
8. Do you find his argument around the nature of unemployment convincing? (10–11)
9. What are the issues that Mills outlines that translate marriage problems out of the personal and into the social? (11)
10. What does the sociological imagination allow one to accomplish? (11)