

LECTURE NOTES: C. WRIGHT MILLS, THE PROMISE

Charles Wright Mills (August 28, 1916, Waco, Texas – March 20, 1962, West Nyack, New York)

What is the Sociological Imagination?

In Class writing

- Defining “history” and “biography” –The Personal is political.
- Some examples?
- The Three Questions.

History and Biography...together

Calls for awareness of their interconnected nature.

1. What is the structure of this particular society as a whole?"
 - A. What are its essential components, and how are they related to one another?
 - B. How does it differ from other varieties of social order?
 - C. Within it, what is the meaning of any particular feature for its continuance and for its change?
- 1) 2. Where does this society stand in human history?
 - A. What are the mechanics by which it is changing?
 - B. What is its place within and its meaning for the development of humanity as a whole?
 - C. How does any particular feature we are examining affect, and how is it affected by, the historical period in which it moves?
 - D. And this period...what are its essential features?
 - E. How does it differ from other periods?
 - F. What are its characteristic ways of history making?
- 2) 3. What varieties of men and women now prevail in this society and in this period?
 - A. And what varieties are coming to prevail?
 - B. In what ways are they selected and formed, liberated and repressed, made sensitive and blunted?
 - C. What kinds of "human nature" are revealed in the conduct and character we observe in this society in this period?
 - D. And what is the meaning for "human nature" of each and every feature of the society we are examining?