

Writing response papers

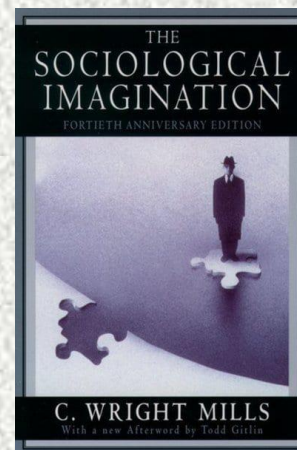
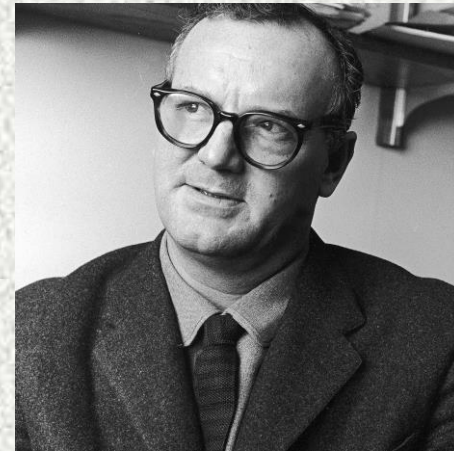
Academic Skills (GLCb1004)

Week 05

Alica Synek Rétiová

Charles W. Mills: The Sociological Imagination (1959)

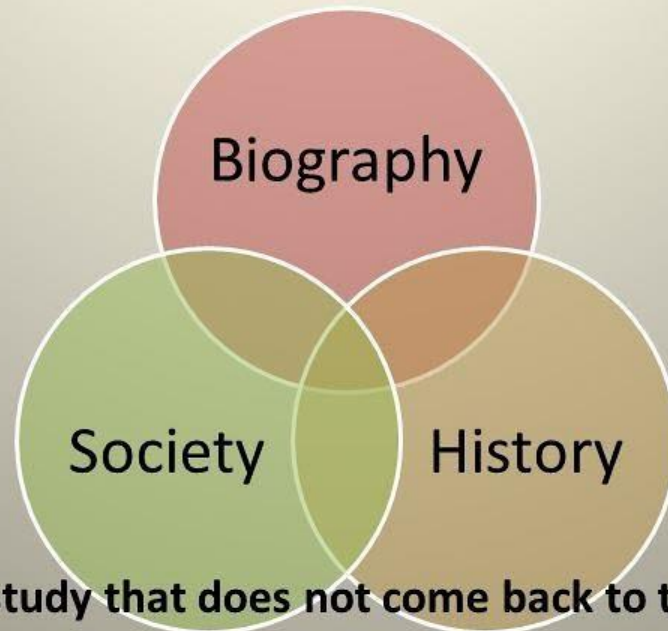
- Criticism of social science establishment
- Drawing attention on everyday lives of individuals
- The sociological imagination as an intellectual promise of social sciences nowadays



Summary of the main points

- Everyday lives are shaped by wider social and historical issues
- Ordinary people do not link their troubles with the issues of society as a whole
- A sociological imagination is **a quality of mind** that can grasp this link and help transform **individual lives** by tackling **social problems**
- Social scientists have a moral duty to reveal individual-social connections – the political meaning of studies of individual and society

The Sociological Imagination



" No social study that does not come back to the problem of biography, of history and of their interactions within a society has completed its intellectual journey." Mills-p.3

Examples

Migration

- Saving own life
- Migration as security problem
- Historical development of migration



Alcoholism

- Individual coping mechanism
- Excessive drinking of youth as public problem
- A consequence of increasing pressure to perform



In-class activity:

Applying sociological imagination

In pairs or groups of three choose 2-3 photographs and discuss the following:

1. What kind of individual challenges the photographs illustrate?
2. What kind of social (structural or public) challenges the photographs illustrate?
3. Can we think about these challenges as about symptoms of our times?



1



2



3



4



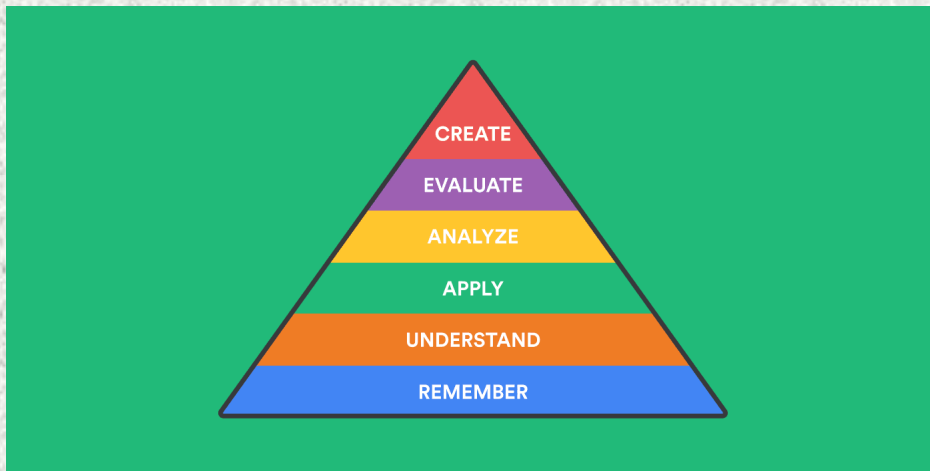
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1. What kind of individual challenge(s) the photographs illustrate?
2. What kind of social (structural/public) challenge(s) the photographs illustrate?
3. Can we think about these challenges as about symptoms of our times?

Why do we write response papers?



- **Create new original text**
- **Formulate own argument(s)**
- **Demonstrate or problematize the text (based on evidence)**
- **Illustrate the main argument on an example**
- **Summarize the point(s) of the text**
- **Remember what was the text about**

How to write a good response paper

- Selecting main points from the text (less is more)
- Interpreting the main points in *own words*
- Connecting the text with an example (literature, newspaper article, movie, own experience, ...)
- Formulating a response based on *evidence*
- Creating a clear and logical structure
- Being as specific as possible (no vague sentences)
- Sticking to formal criteria (assignment, e.g. wordcount)

Selection

- What is important? Why is it important?
 - Usually there is no one right answer
- Formulation of arguments, not description of the text
- Synthesis of the work of others

Interpretation

- No or minimum direct quotations
- Explaining (and evaluating), not reproducing
- As explaining the text to someone who has not read it

Finding connections

- Built on the previous knowledge
- Choose an example and apply the knowledge from the text
- Literature, experience, novel, movie, newspapers, ...

Evidence

- It is not enough to say you agree or don't agree
- Back up your reaction by an evidence (examples)
- What prompted the reaction in you, how, and why?

Structure

- One paragraph = one argument
- Structure follows content
- Structure helps navigate the reader

Language

- Be specific (evidence)
- Keep it simply
- No vague language
 - “it is interesting”
 - “something like that”,
 - “I read the text called XY written by XY”
 - ...

Formal criteria

- Follow the instructions of your teacher – can differ
- Always double check (before and after writing)
- Keep the wordcount in mind

In-class activity: Assessing own work

Assess the following elements of your response paper:

- Selection of main points
- Interpretation of the main points
- Formulation of a reaction based on evidence
- Clear and logical structure
- Comprehensible language, being specific
- Fulfilling formal criteria (wordcount)

What do you find the most difficult?

Would you do something differently?

Next Week:

Week #6: Peer review #1

Reading:

- K. D. Mahrer - Proofreading your own writing? Forget it!
- M. Trim - What every student should know about practicing peer review (Ch. 1)

Homework: Write a short peer review (150 words) of the response paper assigned to you.

Due in Information System Homework Vault before class.

Next Week:

Week #6: Peer review #1

Pairs for the peer review assignment:

Yevhenii Asanov – Lea Bartos

Svitlana Bratsuk – Patricia Flores Gutierrez

Alexandra P. Kéryová – Anna Mishchenko

Kateryna Omelchenko – Sára Petrásková

Illia Shnypko – Anna Sokolnikas