

1) Define the "sociological imagination" and discuss how this "quality of mind" would apply to you as a university student.

Answer:

Sociological imagination – the ability to understand the dynamic relationship between individual lives and the larger society.

As a university student, this quality of mind would allow you to see the impact of social variables such as class, gender, race, age, family background, community, etc. on the learning environment (i.e. choice of courses and programs) and on the interactions between the various categories of people at the institution (students, faculty, employees, administrators, etc.).

Diff: Moderate

Type: ES

Page Reference: 4-5

Skill: Applied

Objective: Describe, and provide personal reflections about, C.W. Mills' concept of the sociological imagination.

2) Choose a social problem and explore it from a sociological perspective, making reference to the ideas of C.W. Mills and Peter Berger. How has this exploration impacted your initial views on the social problem? Explain Peter Berger's use of the terms *general*, *particular*, *strange*, and *familiar*.

Answer:

Answers will vary.

General – the larger social forces acting on an individual in society

Particular – seemingly unique events or circumstances

Strange – asking why things are the way they are rather than just accepting them as normal and familiar

Familiar – the usual and normal – our acceptance of the way things are without really understanding the reasons

Diff: Challenging

Type: ES

Page Reference: 4-7

Skill: Applied

Objective: Describe, and provide personal reflections about, C.W. Mills' concept of the sociological imagination, explain Peter Berger's use of the terms *general*, *particular*, *strange*, and *familiar*.

3) Choose three social factors that you believe have been most influential for defining the person you have become. From a sociological perspective, discuss how these social factors have had an influence on your life.

Answer:

Answers will vary. Choice of: minority status (visible minority, physical disability, mental disability, LGBT), gender, socio-economic status, family structure, urban-rural differences.

Understanding of the way these factors can influence one's opportunities or life chances.

Diff: Challenging

Type: ES

Page Reference: 7-12

Skill: Applied

Objective: Describe, and provide personal reflections about, C.W. Mills' concept of the sociological imagination.

4) Discuss some of the key features of Canadian sociology and some key Canadian sociologists whose work embodies these features.

Answer:

Feedback: *Four defining features and sociologists:*

1. geography (survival; harsh and hostile elements) and regionalism (Quebec) – Brym and St. Pierre
2. political economy (peace, order and good government) – Wallace Clement
3. staples thesis (hewers of wood, drawers of water) – Harold Innis
4. Canadianization movement (the Canadian sociological perspective) – Dawson, Hughes, Innis
5. Radical nature (macrosociology, feminism, social change – structures of power) – Margrit Eichler, Dorothy Smith

Diff: Challenging

Type: ES

Page Reference: 22-26

Skill: Conceptual

Objective: Describe the defining features of Canadian sociology.

5) Peter Berger is an American Sociologist who defined the sociological perspective as the ability to see the world from two distinct and complimentary perspectives—seeing the general in the particular and the strange in the familiar. Apply your sociological imagination to any event of your choosing; it could be a sporting event, preparing dinner, attending class, or any other activity which you carry out. Write a few paragraphs describing your chosen event. At the end of your 'seeing the strange in the familiar' ensure that you include a description of the event in familiar language.

Answer:

Answers will vary. Students can refer to page 5 of the textbook.

Diff: Challenging

Type: ES

Page Reference: 5

Skill: Applied

Objective: The Sociological Perspective

6) Discuss the sociological perspective and the relationship between social forces and personal social identity and give a modern example.

Answer:

C.W. Mills suggested that people who do not, or cannot, recognize the social origins and character of their problems may be unable to respond to these problems effectively. In effect, failing to appreciate how individual challenges are influenced by larger social forces diminishes a person's ability to understand and resolve them. For Mills, the individual and the social are inextricably linked and we cannot fully understand one without the other. As such, many personal troubles never become social issues because people rarely equate what is happening to them with the larger social worlds in which they exist.

Mills argued that sociologists need to expose individuals to what he called the **sociological imagination**, which is the ability to understand the dynamic relationship between individual lives and the larger society. It involves stepping outside of your own condition and looking at yourself from a new perspective—seeing your -self as the product of your family, income level, race, and gender.

Examples will vary by student.

Diff: Challenging

Type: ES

Page Reference: 4–11

Skill: Applied/Conceptual

Objective: The Sociological Perspective and What Makes You, You?

7) Using Mill's concept of the sociological imagination and Berger's concept of seeing the general in the particular, explain why Canada's Aboriginal peoples have high levels of poverty despite ongoing government assistance.

Answer:

The sociological imagination allows us to see the relationship between individuals and society, while seeing the general in the particular is the ability to look at seemingly unique events or circumstances and then recognize the larger features involved. By applying these processes, we can see how the poverty that affects Aboriginal peoples is not a result of individual circumstances, but rather an outcome of their position within the larger society, and the historic and current processes of discrimination enacted against them, which government assistance does nothing to ameliorate. Colonization, isolation, segregation, loss of culture, loss of independence, loss of resources, loss of governance; all of these general processes enacted against Aboriginal peoples have led to their individual circumstances, and to their position in the larger society which puts them in a disadvantaged position.

Diff: Challenging

Type: ES

Page Reference: 4–6

Skill: Applied

Objective: The Sociological Perspective

8) Discuss the three Revolutions that inspired the rise of sociology, and state the major contribution each made to the discipline.

Answer:

Feedback:

1. The Scientific Revolution – the development of the scientific method and explanations of the social and physical world based on science rather than the supernatural and the religious.
2. The Political Revolution – the development of democratic principles and the promotion of ideals such as individual rights, social responsibility, and equality of opportunity.
3. The Industrial Revolution – the development of capitalism and the movement from a agricultural and rural economy to an industrialized and urban one.

Diff: Challenging

Type: ES

Page Reference: 12-18

Skill: Factual

Objective: Three Revolutions: The Rise of Sociology

9) Discuss the anti-positivists challenges to the primary assumptions of positivism. Which side do you agree with more and why?

Answer:

1. ***While hard science may be useful for exploring the physical world, the social world cannot be understood solely through numbers and formulas.*** Anti-positivists assert that the formulas that positivists use to explain the universe have meaning only when we collectively assign social value to them—that is, numbers have only relative importance.
2. ***All sciences will not merge over time and no single methodological approach (i.e., science) can reach a complete understanding of our world.*** Science has been able to teach us a great deal about our physical world, but anti-positivists suggest that to truly understand the human condition we need to appreciate and validate emotions, values, and human subjectivity. In fact, as we begin to understand more about our world, scientists are finding entirely new areas to research, and in this sense our sciences are becoming more unique over time.
3. ***Science cannot be separated from our values.*** Sociologists define **values** as those cultural assessments that identify something as right, desirable, and moral. As we have seen, positivists argue that all sciences are equal and should not be tainted by value judgments; after all, science is science. However, anti-positivists suggest that what we choose to study is also a social expression. Responses will vary by student.

Diff: Challenging

Type: ES

Page Reference: 14-16

Skill: Conceptual

Objective: Three Revolutions: The Rise of Sociology

10) How is the 1967 Royal Commission on the Status of Women an example of the radical nature of Canadian sociology?

Answer:

The final report was released in 1970 (with 167 recommendations) and became the blueprint for mainstream feminist activism. The women's movement inspired a new generation of women to reflect on their social surroundings and question social convention. The influence of the movement on early women pioneers was equally

important, as it allowed them to critique their own intellectual foundations and their approach to sociology specifically and to society generally. The Royal Commission report opened the debate on women's position in Canadian society and also resulted in the formation of the Status of Women Subcommittee of the Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association, which still exists today as the Canadian Sociological Association.

Diff: Challenging

Type: ES

Page Reference: 23-24

Skill: Conceptual

Objective: Understanding sociology in Canada