

The Sociological Imagination

Sociology

Mills' move from private trouble to public issue, and why it frames the discipline.

The habit of placing a life inside history and structure: asking what about a society, rather than about a person, produces a pattern.

SOURCE

C. Wright Mills, 1959

MOVE

trouble to issue

- Mills, 1959: link personal troubles to public issues.
- One person out of work is a trouble. Ten million is an issue.
- Rates are social facts; single choices are not.
- Ask what changed in the structure, not in the person.
- It reframes blame as a question about institutions.
- It is a habit of attention, not a testable theory.

LOOK FOR IT

Divorce read as private failure, or as a rate that moves with law, wages and women's employment.

Educational reference. A framing device, not an explanation: it tells you what to ask, not what the answer is.