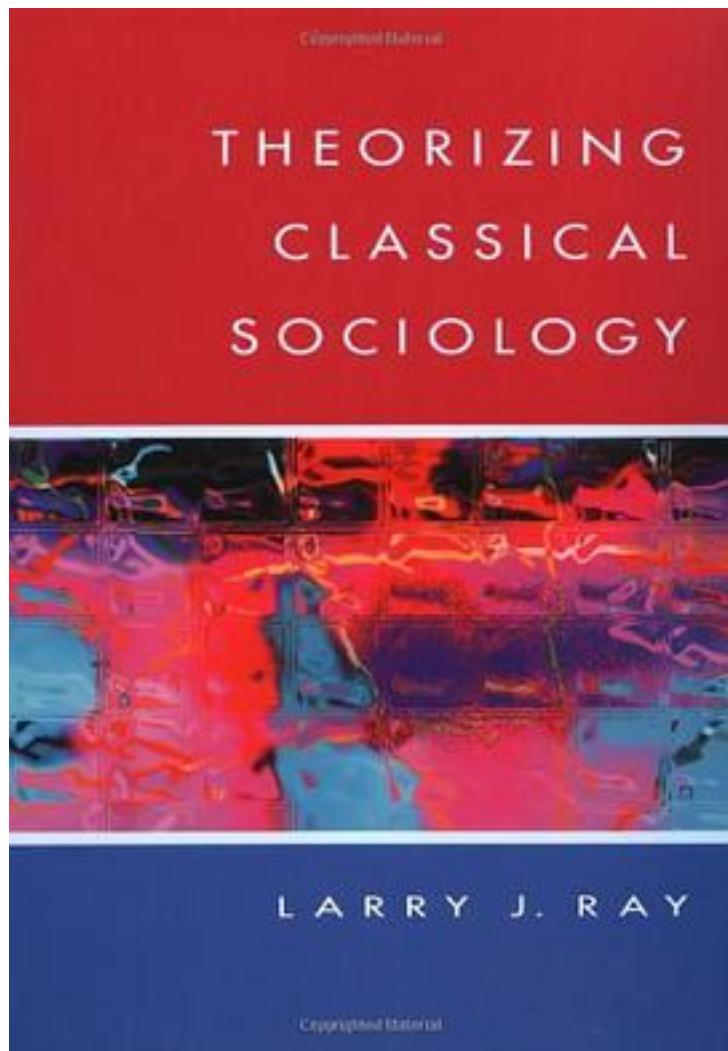


Theorizing Classical Sociology



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* How did classical sociology emerge and take shape? * What is the significance of classical sociology for current theoretical debates? * How can the classical tradition in social theory inform our understanding of the crisis of modernity? Social theory has been formed through elaboration and critique of the classical tradition, and this introductory volume illuminates current theoretical terrain by examining major classical theories - of Saint-Simon, Comte, Marx, Durkheim, Dilthey, Tonnies, Simmel and Weber - highlighting recurring themes and debates. It explains how classical sociology emerged through a debate with the Enlightenment, in which the concept of the 'social' took shape. This was constructed around various themes emphasizing contrasting components of social life - including material, cultural, rational and moral factors. These divergent theorizations set the scene for the play of theoretical oppositions that characterize much subsequent theoretical dispute. Along with these debates there were questions about the very identity of sociology, which in turn relate to a core issue in the discipline - grasping the crisis of modernity. This authoritative text introduces the key issues of classical sociology to undergraduates, making use of student-friendly features such as clear summaries, further reading and a glossary. It lays the foundations for an understanding of contemporary discussion, and will also be recognized at the postgraduate level as a key reference in the field.

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