



The Early Essays (Heritage of Sociology Series)

Talcott Parsons

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With the publication in 1937 of his first book, *The Structure of Social Action*, Talcott Parsons (1902-79) established himself as one of America's most important social theorists. Yet Parsons's essays from the decade preceding 1937 are virtually unknown to theorists and historians of sociology. By gathering the majority of Parsons's articles and book reviews published between 1923 and 1937, Charles Camic supplies the first comprehensive selection of the writings of the "early Parsons."

In his superb introductory essay, Camic situates Parsons's early writings in their sociointellectual and biographical context. Drawing upon extensive historical research, he identifies three overlapping but relatively distinct thematic phases in the early development of Paron's ideas: that on capitalist society and its origins, that one the historical development of the theory of action, and that on the foundations of analytical sociology. Camic correlates the emergence of these phases to Parsons's experiences at Amherst College in the early 1920s, in London and Heidelberg during the mid-1920s, and at Harvard University in the important period from the late 1920s to the mid-1930s. Reproducing in full each of twenty-one selections, this volume charts the changes and continues in the early development of some of Parsons's most fundamental ideas.

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