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TOWARDS TRUE SOCIETY: A DISCUSSION OF ASGER
SØRENSEN'S *CAPITALISM, ALIENATION AND CRITIQUE*

KA ISTINSKOM DRUŠTVU: RASPRAVA O KNJIZI
KAPITALIZAM OTUĐENJE I KRITIKA ASGERA SERENSENA

EDITORS' NOTE

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This issue presents four papers that discuss Asger Sørensen's *Capitalism, Alienation and Critique*, a work that is both a self-standing contribution to contemporary Critical Theory and part of a larger project – namely, *CAC* is Volume 1 of Sørensen's three-volume *Dialectics, Deontology and Democracy*, which formulates a comprehensive vision of a Critical Theory capable of addressing the fundamental challenges humanity faces today – economic, political, ecological, educational – and their intertwinement. Sørensen is a Danish critical theorist and philosopher of education based at Aarhus University, who firmly stands in the tradition of the “original”, “first-generation” Critical Theory from the early 1930s formulated at the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt. In *Capitalism, Alienation and Critique*, Sørensen undertakes the task of reconstructing the project of original Critical Theory and defending it against criticisms from what might be termed the “post-metaphysical camp”, i.e., perspectives which argue that first-generation Critical Theory is epistemologically authoritarian and normatively particularist.

Through an analysis of the Hegelian foundations of classical Critical Theory, as well as its commitment to democracy and to the political-economic critique of capitalism, Sørensen responds to the “post-metaphysicists” (including some contributors to the current issue) that they construct a straw-man in trying to reduce classical Critical Theory to simply one social-theoretical perspective among others. Critical Theory is, according to Sørensen, primarily a specific *epistemological* perspective that, due to its grounding in the concepts of dialectics and “determinate negation”, is intrinsically a critique of any standpoint that claims to possess the “whole truth” about society or a blueprint for realizing freedom and justice once and for all. Second, Sørensen argues that the very ideal of post-metaphysical thought is a form of capitalist ideology that should be discarded, as it constitutes a return to “traditional theory”, a false

universalism that contributes, through its claim of neutrality, to the reproduction of a decidedly particularist and unjust societal order.

The forum features four critical papers, which present elaborated versions of contributions to two seminar discussions on Sørensen's book, held at the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory in Belgrade (Ivković, Prodanović and Urošević) on November 5th 2019 and at the East China Normal University in Shanghai on November 24th of the same year (David Rasmussen, Tong Shijun and Andrew Benjamin), followed by Sørensen's reply.