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**Exploring Ethics and Metaphysics in Contemporary Critical Theory:
Moving Beyond the Post-Metaphysical Shift**

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Abstract

This article explores the relationship between ethics and metaphysics in critical theory through immanent criticism of Fabian Freyenhagen's reconstruction of Adorno. Endorsing Freyenhagen's overall defence of Adorno's position, it argues that several important features of Adorno's position as Freyenhagen interprets it can be made intelligible only on broadly Aristotelian metaphysical presuppositions. These should be thematized explicitly rather than ignored. Moreover, these metaphysical presuppositions are on independent grounds plausible, as recent Aristotelian and critical realist work has indicated, and special difficulties arising for them in the context of a radical negative critical theory can probably be overcome. Further conversation between critical theorists, Aristotelians and critical realists should prove fruitful in elaborating and defending a radical critical theory alternative to the dominant Post-Metaphysical paradigm. Progress in this direction, though, will entail rejecting the basic post-metaphysical premise that critical theory must proceed in a metaphysically neutral way.

Keywords: Adorno, Aristotelianism, critical realism, critical theory, ethics, Freyenhagen, metaphysics