End in Itself, Freedom, and Autonomy: The Place of the *Naturrecht Feyerabend* in Kant's Moral Rationalism

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1. The Strange Case of the *Naturrecht Feyerabend*

The significance of the Feyerabend notes from Kant's lectures on natural right has been beyond dispute for at least a couple of decades, although the scholarship has often failed to pay due attention to it. The *Naturrecht Feyerabend* provides valuable insights into Kant's incredibly active laboratory in 1784 that are especially important for understanding his practical philosophy. The main part of the lecture notes presents the only extended exposition of Kant's view on natural right before the later phase, which includes, along with the *Doctrine of Right*, the Vigilantius notes and numerous drafts of the published work. If this were not sufficient to make these lecture notes a highly significant document of Kant's work on practical philosophy, the proper treatment of natural right is preceded by an introductory section that sketches some of the most central thoughts around which Kant's view on the foundations of practical philosophy was taking shape at that time. Remarkably, in the introductory section, the reader encounters the first occurrences of the notions of an end in itself (XXVII 1319 ff.) and autonomy (XXVII 1326) that can be dated with any precision.[1] Immediately after, in the first section of the main part of the lecture, the notes record Kant as presenting a view on obligation that matches central claims of the *Groundwork* and a fairly

[1]All references to Kant's writings are given by volume and page number of the Academy Edition. For the *Naturrecht Feyerabend*, I follow the text given in the *Kant-Index* volume. For the *Ethik Kaehler*, I follow the edition provided in Kant, *Vorlesung zur Moralphilosophie*. Ed. Werner Stark. Berlin–New York: De Gruyter 2004. The English translation of the quotations is taken from the Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant, where available, and, for the *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, from Jens Timmermann's revision (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

extended treatment of the different kinds of imperatives (XXVII 1322-1324, XXVII 1332 f.).[2] These features put the *Naturrecht Feyerabend* alongside those documents of Kant's work that are most closely connected to the *Groundwork*, along with the *Idea for a Universal History*, which Kant published at approximately the same time as he was giving the natural right course recorded in these notes, and the so-called *Moral Mrongovius II*, which goes back to a course on moral philosophy that Kant would have given immediately after the publication of the *Groundwork*.[3]

Yet at the same time, the *Naturrecht Feyerabend* is also characterised by puzzling features and remarkable limits, which give rise to certain gaps between it and the other documents of Kant's work on practical philosophy from the same years, both the published writings and the other texts. This makes it more difficult to understand how the Feyerabend notes should fit into Kant's path, which was especially multifaceted in the extraordinary years between the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Groundwork*. With specific regard to the development of Kant's moral philosophy and the topics touched upon in the introductory section of the *Naturrecht Feyerabend*, some structural features make the interpretation of these lectures more difficult. As happens in all students' notes from Kant's lectures, the introductions, or *proemia*, unfold independently of the leading thread provided by the corresponding textbook, without directly commenting on it. The introductory sections are thus especially important for clarifying how Kant frames the matter at issue. In interpreting the introductory sections in the lectures on moral philosophy, we can rely on the various versions that are available to us, which through careful comparison can reveal both similar patterns and noteworthy differences in the exposition.[4] Unfortunately, we cannot rely on any analogous parallel to the Feyerabend lectures, to which the corpus of Kant's writings does not admit of any proper comparison, since no further students' notes from the natural right courses are extant. Arguably, some features of the notes would depend on the context and purpose of that course, which required a different background than those in moral philosophy. The only other lecture notes that includd a treatment of natural right are those

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[2]On the *Naturrecht Feyerabend* as a source of Kant's account of imperatives, see Schwaiger 1999.

[3]Because of their close connections, it is tempting to label the corpus of the three main texts on practical philosophy from the year 1784/85 (*Groundwork*, Feyerabend, Mrongovius II) a trilogy. I would rather resist this temptation, however, if only because of the heterogenous nature of the three items involved, a published work and two student lecture notes from courses in different disciplines. Specifically on the significance of *Moral Mrongovius II* with regard to the *Groundwork* and the development of Kant's moral philosophy in general, see Timmermann 2015.

[4]Bacin 2015, 16.

published as *Metaphysics of Morals Vigilantius*, which document a later stage of Kant's work and follow the unified conception of right and ethics that Kant presented a few years later in the two volumes of the *Metaphysics of Morals*.[5] Thus the Vigilantius notes do not report a course on natural law as such, like the one that Kant would have taught in the mid-1780s, and are therefore not directly comparable with the *Naturrecht Feyerabend* as to their outline and general conception.

Not only the argumentative organization but also the content of the Introduction to the *Naturrecht Feyerabend* give rise to certain issues in assessing how this important document fits into the development of Kant's view on the foundations of morals. On the one hand, the Feyerabend notes do mirror several defining claims of the novel account presented in the *Groundwork*, displaying an especially close, not merely chronological, connection with that work. On the other hand, even its correspondence with the *Groundwork* is limited in important respects. Furthermore, most of the main lines of thought that unfold in the prior writings and the lectures on moral philosophy are notably either absent from the *Naturrecht Feyerabend* or deployed rather differently.[6] For instance, while a central topic in the discussions documented in the moral philosophy lectures is how to conceive of the principle of morality, nothing of the sort is included in the lecture notes on natural right, which lack any explicit mention of the principle of morality.[7]

Against this general backdrop, I shall address here what I take to be the two most distinctive points of the Introduction to the *Naturrecht Feyerabend* concerning the foundations of morality, namely the notions of an end in itself and autonomy, both of which occur here for the first time in the lecture notes on practical philosophy presently available to us. Arguably, the differences between this text and the *Groundwork* and other documents of Kant's work on moral philosophy from the mid-1780s can be regarded as no less significant to the interpreter than their similarities, as they can be helpful in revealing elements of Kant's view in the published work that are otherwise not entirely clear. I shall argue that the distinctive character of the points presented in the Feyerabend notes depends primarily on the proper aim of a

[5]On the Vigilantius notes in comparison with the published *Metaphysics of Morals*, see Louden 2015. Note that I do not mean to suggest that some fundamental difference distinguishes Kant's conception of the unity or separateness of right and ethics in the *Groundwork* and the Feyerabend notes from the later conception of the 1790s. (I have discussed the issue in Bacin 2016.)

[6]For a recent examination of the various stations in the development of Kant's moral philosophy up to 1785, with a specific focus on the crucial notion of autonomy, see Bacin & Sensen 2019.

[7]For a brief survey of the lectures on moral philosophy with regard to this key topic, see e.g. Sensen 2015.

natural right course. Still, Kant's explanations appropriately frame the progress of his observations in the Introduction. He first states this aim when, after an opening lesson that is to a certain degree confusing (or "unsystematical [*tumultuarisch*]", as the notes say), he again begins to unfold his introductory remarks (cf. XXVII 1321). The first step in making the Introduction less confusing than the first few pages is in fact to clarify its purpose. Correspondingly, the aim is stated again at the end of the Introduction, looking back on the first result of the reasoning up to then (cf. XXVII 1329). The Feyerabend Introduction explicitly targets the general voluntarist conception of right defended by Achenwall, who maintains that right is grounded in God's command, aimed at the happiness of his creatures (cf. XXVII 1329).[8] Analogously to the organisation of the material in other lectures, the Introduction thus has the main task of putting the matter in the right perspective, thereby also rectifying the general take on the subject that characterises the relevant textbook.[9] The introductions to the lectures on moral philosophy also include, for this purpose, a discussion of the main principles of morality and their shortcomings.[10] In the course on natural right documented in the Feyerabend notes, the relevant assessment can be brief and focused on a single target, which is the underlying conception of right that is presupposed in Achenwall's *Jus Naturae*. Against Achenwall, Kant is reported to have argued that "here neither happiness nor a command of duty […] is the cause of right" (XXVII 1329).

The place of the *Naturrecht Feyerabend*, specifically the Introduction, within Kant's project can be assessed more precisely in this light. The Feyerabend notes cannot be regarded as merely mirroring or integrating the views of the *Groundwork* as to the foundations of moral philosophy. Their role in the development of Kant's view does not embrace the entire scope of an account of the foundations of morality but is limited to an explanation of the ground of right, as distinct from a justification of moral obligation in general, as Kant remarks (cf. XXVII 1321, 1329, 1332). I shall argue, therefore, that the points reportedly made by Kant here are an important application of his novel general account of the foundations of morality with regard to the specific issue of the basis of right. Continuity with and departures from the *Groundwork* should be interpreted with this purpose in view.

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[8]Kant is probably referring to Achenwall 1763, §§ 52 and 58. On Achenwall's eudaimonism, see Hruschka 1987, 161-163.

[9]Nothing in the text suggests, however, that this aim includes critiquing "the traditional assimilation of right to morals undertaken by natural law", as maintained by Zöller 2015, 357.

[10]See Bacin 2019, 49 f.

2. An End in Itself as a Concept of Pure Reason

The Introduction to the Feyerabend notes is immediately characterised by the imposing presence of the notion of an end in itself, which takes centre stage from the beginning of the manuscript. The second sentence puts forward one of the main claims that Kant unfolds in the following pages:

"Considered rationally [*durch Vernunft betrachtet*], things in nature can be viewed only as means to ends but a human being [*der Mensch*] alone can be viewed as himself an end" (XXVII 1319).

The first part of the Introduction elaborates on this characterisation as a starting point for arguing for freedom, which Kant presents as the basis for an appropriate account of right. Thus the first few pages of the lecture notes revolve around how to understand the nature of an 'end in itself'. Remarkably, Kant is reported to have clarified the status of the assumption of an end in itself through an analogy with the assumption of an independent being at the top of the causal order of nature:

"That something must exist as an end in itself and that not everything can exist merely as a means is as necessary in the system of ends as *ens a se* in a series of efficient causes." (XXVII 1321)

This remark is puzzling because it does not seem, at least *prima facie*, to correspond to similar steps in the argument of the *Groundwork* and has no parallel in the lectures on moral philosophy or in other prior texts, such that it is distinctive of the Feyerabend Introduction. More importantly, however, the analogy with the assumption of an *ens a se* appears to significantly weaken the justificatory strength of the appeal to an end in itself from the start because it equates it with a claim of the sort that Kant had already clearly diagnosed as necessary but ultimately unwarranted in the first *Critique*. In the Transcendental Dialectic, he had argued that any attempt to infer the givenness of the unconditioned culmination of an order of things from the existence of the conditioned elements of that order cannot yield claims that are valid within the realm of possible experience (cf. KrV A308f./B365f.).

This puzzling feature has led some to suggest that the way in which Kant presents the end in itself in the Feyerabend Introduction entails that it provides a foundation for morality which is valid only for finite rational beings.[11] In these terms, the notion of an end in itself would be the product of a merely subjective necessity that affects the human mind. If this reading is correct, the view presented in the Feyerabend Introduction not only fails to sketch a

[11]See Kohl, forthcoming.

persuasive account of the foundations of the universal demands of morality, but is also quite difficult to square with the general outlook that Kant's thought on the matter had been taking for a while by then, up to the strongly anti-subjectivist views presented in the *Groundwork*. Before 1785, Kant had always stressed that morality must be grounded in terms that make sense of the objective, universal validity of its demands. Thus an interpretation that attributes to Kant a subjectivist view on the foundations of morality, especially in 1784, would be difficult to accept, not so much because of the internal weakness of the view but primarily because a position of that sort would counter a fundamental thread of Kant's work in practical philosophy from at least the late 1760s. The fact that we encounter clearly anti-subjective views in earlier lectures, not to mention the *Groundwork*, speaks against the plausibility of a reading that attributes a subjective conception to Kant during those years. If the Feyerabend notes did in fact present a subjectivist view of morality, this would amount to a further, profound anomaly with regard to other documents of Kant's practical philosophy from this phase, reaching well beyond those mentioned in the previous section. It would be especially implausible to accept this anomaly in an exposition that cannot be regarded as a self-standing text because of its non-authentic character. To allow space for such an intepretation, one might even argue that the allegedly subjectivist view expressed in the *Naturrecht Feyerabend* hints at a path of thinking with which Kant had toyed for a while but eventually did not take. This too seems unrealistic given the chronological coincidence of the class documented in the *Naturrecht Feyerabend* and the composition of the *Groundwork*. The subjectivist reading, however, poses a challenge than can be defused, since the puzzling passages that seem to support it can be better interpreted differently.

On an alternate reading of the apparently problematic analogy with the assumption of an *ens a se*, the weakness that Kant diagnoses in the Transcendental Dialectic does not apply in the same way to the assumption of an end in itself because the argument presented in the Feyerabend Introduction "takes us from appearances not to things in themselves, but to ends in themselves *in nature* (namely human beings)".[12] This way of addressing the difficulty with this version of the End in Itself claim is not entirely convincing either, though. This way of construing the meaning of the claim conflicts with the connection between the status of end in itself and freedom that is crucial in the following steps of Kant's exposition. In spite of the differences that I shall stress in the present analysis, nothing suggests that the Feyerabend notes can be taken to presuppose a different conception of freedom than the *Groundwork*,

[12]Willaschek 2019, 145.

where freedom is precisely the capacity that allows, or even requires, us to go beyond nature.[13] Analogously, the Feyerabend notes maintain that "[i]f the actions of a human being lie in the mechanism of nature then their grounds would not be in him but outside him" (XXVII 1322). Thus the status of being an end in itself is not to be construed as entirely belonging to nature. The starting point of Kant's remarks is, after all, the notion that the system of ends offers a different perspective than the order of nature (cf. XXVII 1319). Thus the possibility of viewing an assumption analogous to that of an *ens a se* (like that of an end in itself) as a legitimate claim cannot merely rest on the absence of an unwarranted transition from the sensible to the supersensible. After all, the unconditioned *as such* is to be regarded as supersensible. As Kant remarks when commenting on the general need of reason to infer the unconditioned for the given conditioned, "the principles arising from this supreme principle of pure reason will […] be transcendent in respect of all appearances" (KrV A308/B365), without qualification. If an end in itself is considered unconditioned with respect to a series of conditioned items, it cannot be reduced to an empirically given item that merely belongs to the natural order of things.

What makes the End in Itself claim as presented in the Feyerabend Introduction less problematic than the assumption of an *ens a se*, however, is quite simply that it is not taken to provide knowledge of anything, which makes it irrelevant that no corresponding intuition can ever be given to finite rational subjects. Nevertheless, the claim is not an instance of the *speculative* use of reason but rather, crucially, still a non-theoretical instance of a general subjective principle of reason that is stated in the Transcendental Dialectic as its "logical maxim", namely that "the proper principle of reason in general (in its logical use) is to find the unconditioned for conditioned cognitions of the understanding" (KrV A307-8/B364).[14] According to the Feyerabend notes, the same maxim of reason is also applied to means-ends connections, thereby yielding the assumption of a self-standing end which can make sense of the worth attributed to all of the items in the conditional ends-means connections. The assumption of an end in itself follows from what Kant calls, both in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and in the Feyerabend Introduction, a "need of reason" (cf. KrV A309/B365, XXXVII 1321). This, however, does not make the assumption a mere contingent consequence of the

[13] See e.g. IV 453: "when we think of ourselves as free, we transfer ourselves as members into the world of understanding". Cf. also IV 455.

[14] On the distinction between the logical maxim of reason and Allison, Grier, and now Willaschek 2018, see especially chap. 2 and 4. On the logical maxim's being valid not only for the speculative use of reason but for reason in general, see specifically Willaschek 2018, 64 ff.

subjective constitution of *human* rationality. It makes it "subjectively necessary" (cf. e.g. KrV A648/B676) with respect to reason *in general*.

Notably, if the analogy with the assumption of an *ens a se* is not repeated as such in the *Groundwork*, the point that is made through the analogy does find correspondence there. In the published work, after introducing the notion of an end in itself as an objective end, Kant observes that "if all worth were conditional, and hence contingent, then *for reason* no supreme practical principle could be found at all" (IV 428; emphasis added). In the published work, Kant is probably more careful than in his lectures, and the potentially controversial reference to the transcendent claims of pure reason in its speculative use is now avoided, but the thought that reason needs to assume an unconditional worth in the shape of a self-standing end is equivalent to the claims in the Feyerabend Introduction.[15] The comparison with the lecture notes helps us to grasp that a point made in passing in the *Groundwork* is in fact to be regarded as following from the general conception of reason presented in the Transcendental Dialectic. As in the Feyerabend Introduction, the fundamental need for an unconditioned yields the notion of a supreme worth that concludes the series of ends-means connections. Conversely, the parallel with the published work confirms that the point made in the lecture is compatible with the position defended in the *Groundwork*.

The role that the notion of an end in itself plays in the Feyerabend Introduction is to be understood along these lines, as an occurrence of the dynamics stated in the general subjective principle of pure reason that Kant calls its "logical maxim". This angle reveals that the significance of that notion in Kant's exposition, as recorded in the Feyerabend Introduction, is twofold. First, since it is an instance of a fundamental principle of reason as such, the End in Itself claim concerns both finite and infinite rationality. Second, as an instance of the practical use of pure reason, the End in Itself claim expresses a constitutive element of practical thinking. Through these two aspects, Kant rejects Achenwall's conception of right and paves the way for a different view. I shall clarify these two aspects in turn in the next two sections.

[15]I do not mean to suggest that greater care with regard to the implications of the analogy was the only reason that Kant had to eventually give up this connection between reason's drive towards the unconditioned and the thought of a self-standing end, which later does not play a role comparable to that in the *Groundwork*. Kant's further development of this line of thought, however, is a matter for a different occasion. For an examination of Kant's idea of the search for the unconditioned in the practical realm, see Willaschek 2018, chap. 10.

3. An End in Itself as an Anti-Voluntarist Point

The worry that the End in Itself claim makes Kant's view on the foundations of morality purely dependent on a feature of human, i.e. finite, rationality does not take into account the fact that this claim instantiates a general principle of pure reason that is a trait not only of finite rationality but of reason in general. The need to reach the unconditioned for the conditioned given is an underlying feature of reason that goes beyond the limits of finite beings.[16] The limitations that affect human reason, making it impossible for it to fully satisfy that need, rather follow from the impossibility of relying on intuitions that correspond to the assumption of an unconditioned and confirm the relevant existential statement. This, however, does not make the appeal to an unconditioned arbitrary or contingent, as it would be if it were a projection of features of human nature.

According to the Feyerabend notes, in the Introduction to his natural right course Kant therefore uses an instance of a fundamental maxim of reason to put forward a claim — the End in Itself claim — that is valid for reason as such. Kant's exposition thereby counters from the beginning the voluntarist conception of morality that was endorsed by Achenwall, among many others. As emerges from the moral philosophy lectures and the many passages in which he directly addresses the matter, Kant considered theological voluntarism the most serious threat to an adequate understanding of the foundations of morality, especially serious because it was widespread.[17] When Kant began a course on Achenwall's textbook, one important priority was thus to set the students straight about the inadequacy of the general conception of morality that Achenwall defended.

In the first section of the main part of the lecture notes, Kant is reported to have observed:

"[T]he author bases himself on the claim that obligation rests on divine command. But we have already refuted that by claiming that it would be useless to refer here to God." (XXVII 1334)

Indeed, two pages before, the Feyerabend notes present a recurrent argument against a theological view, namely that to ascertain the "agreement of the laws with the divine will", "I must still know what duty would be and how the divine will would be constituted

[16]See again the distinction between the logical maxim of reason and its objective transformation into a principle of the real use of reason: see Allison 2004, 329-332 (who distinguishes between P1 and P2) and Willaschek 2018, chap. 2 (who distinguishes between the Logical Maxim and the CU-Principle).

[17]In the almost contemporary *Moral Mrongovius II* notes, for instance, Kant is reported to have observed that "a majority has fallen back on the theological principle, because the metaphysical one lacks force" (XXIX 622). Cf. IV 433. On the special significance of theological voluntarism from Kant's perspective, see Bacin 2019, 60 ff.

[*beschaffen*]" (XXVII 1332; cf. e.g. *Moral Mrongovius II*, XXIX 627; Kaehler 62). Kant's response to the weakness of a theological voluntarist view like Achenwall's reverses voluntarism in a revised form of rationalism and revolves around the thought that rational laws provide insight into the divine will: "In order to know by means of reason what God wants I must conceive of the most perfect will. The idea of that will contains in itself all practical laws" (XXVII 1333).[18] However, Kant's rejection of Achenwall's divine command conception of right had already been provided by then, in the Introduction, namely in the exposition of the End in Itself claim. In a striking passage in the Feyerabend notes, Kant is reported to have observed:

> "I say a human being exists in order to be happy. But why does being happy have value? It has only a conditioned value, namely because the existence of a human being has value. But why does that existence have value? Because it pleased God. Then it has no value in itself. I can now also ask: why does the existence of a God have value? The human being is an end in itself, never just a means; that is against his nature" (XXVII 1321).

The aim of the remark is to reject a view like Achenwall's by a sort of *reductio ad absurdum*. Assuming a eudaimonist view requires further justification, which should be given by referring to the divine will. God's choice would confer value on the existence and happiness of human beings. But this, so the argument goes, would then in turn require us to justify the value of God's existence as a support for his choice. Kant thereby argues that no value-conferring power can be self-justifying. Thus an unconditional value cannot depend on the act of such a power, which God's will exercises to the highest degree, but rather requires rational recognition. Even the infinite rational will cannot by itself determine a different unconditional value and is bound, in fact, to the same underlying demand as that of any other rational being. The remark leading to the question of the value of God's existence thus suggests that the subjective rational necessity of assuming an unconditional value also applies to the perfect will.[19] The unconditional worth of rational agents as such, following from a fundamental need of reason, also concerns infinite rationality and determines a constraint that is valid for both the infinite rational will and finite subjects. This reading is confirmed by

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[18]Several analogous passages to the same effect are in other texts. See e.g.: "God has commanded it because it is a moral law, and His will coincides with the moral law" (XXVII 277). See Bacin 2019, 63 ff.

[19]Willaschek similarly observes that the remark on the value of God's existence shows that "given that human beings are ends in themselves, there is no need to invoke God to end the regress of means and ends". God's will thus cannot provide any explanation for an unconditional value. However, since God's own rational will is in fact bound to acknowledge such a value, I do not agree with Willaschek that therefore the argument "is not vulnerable to the objection that it rests on an illicit transition from appearances to things in themselves" (Willaschek 2019, 145).

an analogous remark in one of Kant's private notes, where Kant similarly explores the possibility that God's choice is not bound by any constraints:

"God's faculty of choice is never absolutely unconditioned, but perhaps with regard to the moral quality of a person, as despotism, for God's intention could be directed at the greater good of the world as a whole, and this would be the condition. (*Here it is assumed that God uses the rational creature merely as a means to the perfection of the whole. But there is no moral worth in a world in which rational beings are used merely as means.*) God cannot sacrifice a rational creature to the world as a whole, though he can allow that he sacrifices himself." (Refl. 3699, XVII 202; emphasis added.)[20]

The remarkable, if sketchy, observation reported in the Feyerabend Introduction shows an instance of the regress from conditioned to unconditioned that reason's necessary assumption of an end in itself is intended to stop. The End in Itself claim thus entails an anti-voluntarist thesis that counters the foundation of Achenwall's conception.

Kant thereby provides an argument against the divine command view of the foundations of morality that is in fact very much in agreement with those he deploys in the lectures on moral philosophy. Kant's discussion of the traditional voluntarist account of the principle of morality primarily revolves around the risk of arbitrariness, which makes moral demands contingent, whereas the point made in the Feyerabend notes highlights the necessity, for any rational will, of referring to a non-positive value. Despite its different angle, this remark is fully consonant with the more extended discussion in the ethics lectures, as it points out the impossibility of conceiving of a rational will as an arbitrary power.[21] The foundation of moral demands on God's will is possible only on the prior assumption of its goodness, which justifies its authority. But this is warranted precisely in virtue of constraints of rationality.[22] The Feyerabend Introduction's insistence on the End in Itself claim completes Kant's general rejection of divine arbitrariness with a less traditional argument than those deployed in the lectures on moral philosophy, which nevertheless underscores the necessity of an underlying principle of rationality.

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[20] My translation. The original reads as follows: "Schlechthin unbedingt ist die Gottliche Willkühr niemals, aber vielleicht unbedingt in ansehung der moralischen Qvalitaet der persohn als despotism; denn auf das Weltbeste im Ganzen könnte doch Gottes Absicht und Gerichtet und dieses die Bedingung seyn.* Gott kan ein (vernünftig) Geschöpf nicht dem Weltganzen aufopfern, aber wohl zulassen, daß es sich selbst aufopfere.* (Hier wird angenommen, daß Gott das vernünftige Geschöpf blos als Mittel zur Vollkommenheit des Ganzen brauche. Aber da ist kein moralischer werth in der welt, wo die vernünftige Wesen blos als Mittel gebraucht werden.)"

[21] The traditional accusation of arbitrariness, however, is also made later in the Feyerabend notes: see XXVII 1333: "If I posit God before duty then I consider him as being acting according to mere choice and need".

[22] For a review of Kant's arguments against moral voluntarism, see Bacin 2019, 55 ff.

The remarkable passage in the Feyerabend Introduction that examines the option of a divine command account also shows that the End in Itself claim provides a refutation of both elements of a view like Achenwall's, namely not only the underlying thought of a divine command theory but also the eudaimonist assumption that happiness can be considered an unconditional value. The End in Itself claim is also relevant as an argument against eudaimonism. It has been suggested that part of the weakness of the argument for the End in Itself claim in the Feyerabend Introduction is that it can also lead us to identify happiness as an apt conclusion of the series of means-ends connections, as an "unmoved mover of empirical means-ends relations".[23] On this reading, happiness could be regarded as an end that cannot be a means to further ends and would thus satisfy the need of reason to assume a *bonum a se*. But this possibility is the first to be rejected in the argument at issue, as Kant is reported to have observed that "being happy [...] has only a conditioned value, namely because the existence of a human being has value" (XXVII 1321). Although the passage does not elaborate on this further, the immediate context does provide the needed background for Kant's immediate rejection of the most natural, and traditional, candidate for the role of an end in itself. Happiness might be given this role from an individual perspective at best – one in which, however, the well-known vagueness problem of the notion of happiness applies, as suggested later in the Feyerabend notes, in a passage parallel to the canonical remarks to that effect in the *Groundwork* (cf. XXVII 1324 f., IV 399). However, reason in general demands that we recognize an end in itself that represents the culmination of a system of ends that embraces reality as a whole (cf. e.g. XXVII 1321). But again, if happiness is meant as the universal happiness of mankind, then its value is dependent on the existence of human beings as rational agents. Moreover, Kant's points against voluntarism maintain that not even God's higher will can confer on happiness unconditional value beyond rational contraints.

The End in Itself claim thus primarily presents Kant's rejection of the main tenet of the account put forth by author on which he is commenting in the natural right course. This role in the argument already justifies the prominent position of the End in Itself claim in Kant's exposition. However, this does not exhaust the significance of the claim, a further aspect of which I shall consider in the next section.

[23]See Kohl, forthcoming.

4. An End in Itself as Rooted in Practical Thinking

The second main aspect of the significance of the notion of an end in itself as presented in the Feyerabend Introduction is its internal connection with the exercise of a rational will. According to these notes, the notion of an end in itself is not a claim about the metaphysical structure of reality but rather has a primarily subjective status. This means first and foremost that the status of an end in itself is that of a willing subject.

In the Feyerabend Introduction, this is the point of the case of the contract. Kant is reported to have observed that "if I make a contract with my servant, then he must also be an end just as I am and not a mere means". This is equivalent to the claim: "He must also will it" (XXVII 1319). The status of an end which cannot be regarded as a means to anything else in turn is that of a subject who, in virtue of his will, can contribute to deliberation. The Feyerabend Introduction also describes the feature that gives a person the status of being an end in himself in terms of his having "a will of his own [*einen eigenen Willen*]" (XXVII 1319; cf. XXVII 1322, 1326). Quite literally, this denotes the ability to confirm a practical proposition or norm with one's own will, making the relevant deliberation one's own. Recognising the status of an end in itself, as in the case of the contract, amounts to giving the other space for deliberation through his own will.

The End in Itself claim, however, is subjective not merely because of the object of the claim, that is, because it is about the status of willing subjects. The claim also expresses an essential aspect of the distinctive perspective of a willing subject as such. The End in Itself claim describes not so much what it is to be a willing subject but primarily how a willing subject represents himself; namely, a rational will represents itself as an end in itself. Correspondingly, the students' notes on natural right report Kant as observing that:

> "without reason a being cannot be an end in itself for it cannot be conscious of his own existence, cannot reflect on it" (XXVII 1322).

This point can be obscured by Kant's insistence that freedom, not reason, is the proper ground of the higher status of rational agents (cf. XXVII 1322). Still, even if reason is not a sufficient condition for regarding something as an end in itself, it is a necessary condition nonetheless, since reason is (a) the faculty that drives the necessary assumption of an end in itself and (b) enables agents to regard themselves (and each other) as such ends.

The End in Itself claim thus also contributes to the project of "self-understanding" of rational beings that is essential to the aims of the *Groundwork*.[24] These two aspects of the meaning of the End in Itself claim as presented in the Feyerabend Introduction are confirmed in the *Groundwork* in similar terms. Kant there introduces the corresponding claim as a direct statement that finds corroboration in common practical thinking:

"Now I say: a human being and generally every rational being exists as an end in itself. The ground of this principle is: *a rational nature exists as an end in itself*. That is how a human being *by necessity represents* his own existence; to that extent it is thus a *subjective principle* of human actions. But every other rational being also represents its existence in this way, as a consequence of just the same rational ground that also holds for me; thus it is at the same time an *objective principle*" (IV 429; emphases added).

The subjectivist reading that has been suggested in relation to the *Naturrecht Feyerabend*[25] is thus a possibility that the *Groundwork* explicitly mentions and rectifies in terms that are present in the Feyerabend Introduction. Since the subjective necessity of the End in Itself claim corresponds to a general necessity of reason, it is rooted in practical thinking for every rational agent.[26]

The clarity on this point already achieved in the Feyerabend Introduction is connected to a further remarkable element that is much more present there than in the *Groundwork*. The assumption that a willing subject constitutively represents himself as an end in itself is embedded in a more general teleological outlook that underlies the determination of a rational will. This feature of the perspective of a rational will is clearer in the Feyerabend Introduction than in the *Groundwork* because, in contrast to the published work, the introduction to the natural right course devotes greater space to the idea of a system of means-ends connections. In fact, as far as it is recorded in the Feyerabend notes, Kant's exposition starts off by emphasizing that the exercise of a rational will entails a teleological consideration of reality:

[24]I borrow this formulation from Guyer 2000, chap. 6.

[25]See Kohl, forthcoming.

[26]Note that the main statement of the End in Itself claim in the Feyerabend Introduction, which immediately follows the remark on the insufficiency of God's will in terms that are as peremptory as the *Now I say* sentence in the *Groundwork*, is similarly justified through an example that is supposed to display the implicit ascription of the status of end in itself to the other subjects (cf. XXVII 1321).

"To the will of the human being [*Für den Willen des Menschen*], the whole of nature is subject" (XXVII 1319).[27]

In exactly the same vein, further remarks in the introduction describe the teleological perspective of a rational will in the following terms:

"One thing [*Ein jedes Ding*] in nature is a means for another; that continues on and on and it is necessary in the end to think of a thing that is itself an end, otherwise the series would have no end. In the series of efficient causes there is *ens ab alio*, but finally I must come upon as an *ens a se*." (XXVIII 1321).

The contrast with a similar key passage in the *Groundwork* is revealing. In the second section of the *Groundwork*, the main argument starts off by stressing the difference, within the general lawfulness of reality, between natural items, which are subject to laws, and rational agents, who act in accordance with the representation of laws ("Every thing in nature works according to laws. Only a rational being has the capacity to act according to the representation of laws, i.e. according to principles, or a will"; IV 412).[28] The Feyerabend Introduction instead stresses from the very beginning (cf. XXVII 1319) that a rational will considers everything in terms of means and ends. Both things and agents belong to the system of ends that a rational will represents to itself, in which only agents enjoy the higher status of ends in themselves.

The compact exposition in the Feyerabend Introduction thus contributes to clarifying how the notion of an end in itself can be deployed in the *Groundwork* to bring the content of a formal principle of morality "closer to intuition" (IV 436). This is possible precisely because it matches an 'intuition' that is implicitly present in the exercise of a rational will, which includes a teleological outlook in terms of means and ends, whose series comes to an end only when considering the status of the willing subject himself.[29] In this respect, the End in Itself claim belongs to the common, pre-philosophical outlook that underlies any act of a rational will and

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[27]Here I have modified Fred Rauscher's translation, which reads: "The whole of nature is subject to the will of a human being". (The Italian translation by Gianluca Sadun Bordoni has an analogous rendition.) I am not disputing the linguistic correctness of the translation. Still, it obscures an aspect of the meaning of the sentence that in fact has some importance, as I aim to show. Arguably, the rather objective statement of a teleological outlook that is expressed in the English translation would have been formulated in German not with 'Für' but through the dative, roughly as follows: "Die ganze Natur ist dem Willen des Menschen unterworfen". Yet, the phrasing with 'für', especially with its prominent position at the beginning of the sentence (in fact, of the entire course!) suggests a rather different emphasis, namely on the perspective of the will as a starting point. This is what my modified translation is meant to convey.

[28]Note that this contrast was already made by Kant in previous lectures on moral philosophy. See Kaehler 178 (= XXVII 345): "Animals act according to rules because they are not free. But free beings can act in a regular fashion [*regelmäßig*] only insofar as they restrict their freedom by rules". In addition, the claim that everything in nature operates according to rules occurs at the opening of each set of the lectures on logic.

[29]In this respect, I find myself in agreement with Oliver Sensen, who argues that, in deploying the notion of an end in itself, "Kant […] merely talks about how one has to judge" (Sensen 2011, 42).

thus provides the ground for the philosophical investigation of morality. Because it is deeply rooted in practical thinking as such, the notion of an end in itself can provide an apt starting point for the exposition. In this respect, the Feyerabend Introduction follows the methodological guidelines of the *Groundwork*, which recommend that we start off "from common cognition" (IV 392). Accordingly, the Feyerabend Introduction sketches an argument that takes as its starting point essential features of the common practical use of reason. The main difference in the argumentative strategy depends on the different aims of the exposition. I shall focus on this and the connection between the End in Itself claim and the assumption of freedom in the next section.

Before considering the reasons for certain significant argumentative differences between the *Groundwork* and the Feyerabend Introduction, however, it must be pointed out that this examination of the End in Itself claim shows that this distinctive notion marks an important step in the development of Kant's views. The significance of the progress is best understood in comparison with corresponding yet profoundly different claims in previous texts. In the years before the *Groundwork* and the Feyerabend notes, Kant had still held that a not merely subjective appeal to ends in morality could be accounted for in terms of an appeal to the "essential ends of mankind". In fact, such ends would provide the boundary that actions should not overstep. Notes on moral philosophy from the mid-1770s report Kant as maintaining that:

> "The prime rule whereby I am to restrict freedom is the conformity of free behaviour to the essential ends of mankind. [...] If a man freely follows his inclinations, [...] he contravenes the essential ends of mankind in his own person, and is acting against himself"(Kaehler 178; cf. XXVII 345).

It was within such a framework that, in the first *Critique*, Kant had characterized moral philosophy as the "the entire vocation [*Bestimmung*] of human beings" insofar as the vocation of mankind is the supreme end among "essential ends" (KrV A840/B868). In this picture, the normative role of such ends is roughly the same as that of the end in itself in the later account. The most striking departure from the Feyerabend notes and the *Groundwork*, however, is that the notion of an end in itself determines that standard much more precisely, by virtue of the features to which I have called attention. Instead of a rather vague appeal to essential ends or the "vocation of human beings", Kant now suggests that the essential end that indicates a necessary constraint for action is to be construed as the unconditional end (a) which any rational will needs to assume due to a fundamental demand of reason in general and (b) in which any rational will necessarily recognizes itself.

5. Freedom as the "Cause of Right" and the Principle of Autonomy

The last distinctive feature of the introductory remarks on morality in the Feyerabend notes is the transition from the End in Itself claim to freedom. According to the train of thought recoreded in the Feyerabend notes, a fundamental principle of reason generates the necessary representation of an end in itself. This, in turn, makes sense only through the attribution of freedom, which Kant is reported to have called a "necessary hypothesis" (XXVII 1322):

"The freedom of a human being is the condition under which a human being can himself be an end" (XXVII 1320).

Since the status of an end in itself is linked to the capacity of willing freely, the necessary condition for that status is freedom insofar as freedom is specifically construed as the capacity of being "a law to itself" (cf. XXVII 1322).[30] In the wake of this characterisation of freedom, Kant is reported to have also mentioned the "principle of autonomy" (XXVII 1326), thereby introducing a crucial notion for his conception.

Although it is remarkable in its concision and its closeness to the *Groundwork* at several points, this strand of the exposition in the Feyerabend Introduction is odd in more than one respect, in comparison with the argument of the *Groundwork*, of which it presents a modified version. The most notable differences concern the place of the notion of autonomy. Autonomy is mentioned not in direct connection to the characterization of freedom as "a law to itself" but rather a few pages later (cf. XXVII 1326), and indeed the term 'autonomy' is left unclarified. Its antonym, 'heteronomy', which is an important counterpart of the exposition of the notion of autonomy both in the *Groundwork* and in the second *Critique*, does not occur here either. Furthermore, whereas in the *Groundwork* autonomy is consistently presented as a "property of the will" (cf. IV 440, 447), the Feyerabend Introduction does not establish any direct connection between it and the will. The only recognisable connection that explains the rather abrupt occurrence of the term 'autonomy' is the characterization of freedom as a law to itself in the previous pages. But again, being a law to itself is, in the *Groundwork* and

[30]In this respect, I find myself in disagreement with Paul Guyer, who interprets the Feyerabend Introduction as arguing for the "intrinsic value of human freedom" (Guyer 2000, 156 f.; again Guyer 2012, 113), even "deriving an ought from a metaphysical fact" (Guyer 2012, 113). That Kant could not endorse such a characterisation of his position is suggested, for instance, by a passage like the following, from later in the Introduction: "Whether we are free or can at least assume freedom is for metaphysics to decide; through freedom alone we are also enlightened with an explanation of why we are already obligated out of respect for the law alone" (XXVII 1331). Freedom is here characterised as a necessary explanation rather than a metaphysical value.

elsewhere, a distinctive characteristic of the *will*. These peculiar aspects of the Feyerabend Introduction and its general significance for Kant's moral rationalism can be properly explained if we take the purpose of that exposition into account.

As the notes report from the beginning, the first aim of the introductory lectures of the course is to explain the notion of right, which "is easier to explain than duty" (XXVII 1321). Having rejected the grounds of a voluntarist account of right like Achenwall's through the End in Itself claim, Kant can finally proceed to explain what it means to construe right as a "limitation of freedom" (XXVII 1320, 1321; cf. XXVII 1329). He intends to defend the view that freedom is "the cause [*Ursache*] of right" (XXVII 1329). While neither God's will nor happiness can play that role and justify the boundaries that right imposes on free actions, this can be explained by virtue of the nature of freedom itself. The solution to the question of the possibility of right is that freedom is a "law to itself". Through this traditional phrase,[31] Kant apparently aimed to explain right as a self-limitation of freedom (cf. also XXVII 1335) by specific laws, which are independent of the laws of nature but enjoy the same universal validity. *Per se*, the characterisation of freedom as a law to itself does not provide anything more than the exclusion of the determination by foreign, alien principles.

In the Feyerabend notes, the clarification that freedom must be a law to itself is abruptly followed by a presentation of the different forms of imperatives (cf. XXVII 1322-1326), which amounts to a sort of summary of the first part of the main argument in the second section of the *Groundwork* (IV 413-420). This lengthier part of the exposition has the primary task of explaining that the laws of freedom are to be conceived of as categorical demands, which excludes any external determining principle.[32] As Kant is reported to have remarked only after that part, previous writers on natural right could not adequately understand its nature because they lacked "a science of the laws that one can be coerced to observe" (XXVII 1328). Since these are laws of freedom, that is, universal practical principles, they can only be restricted because of their own universal validity. A proper self-legislation, or a relation to moral demands which is centred on the thought that rational agents are subject to them insofar as they can regard themselves as their authors through their subjective principles (cf. IV 431), is lacking in the picture that unfolds in the Feyerabend Introduction.

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[31] For a brief discussion of alternate takes on the Pauline formulation in prior moral philosophy, see Bacin 2013, 61 f.

[32] Whereas Willaschek (2019, 148) reads the part on the imperatives in the Introduction as "an independent argument for the same conclusion (moral autonomy)", I would rather stress the continuity of the train of thought. Having reached the claim that freedom is a law to itself, a clarification about what qualifies as a law of freedom is in order.

A similar result is reached by closer examination of the connection between the End in Itself claim and the assumption of freedom, as presented in the Feyerabend Introduction. The link between them corresponds to a puzzling transition in the argument in the second section of the *Groundwork*. There, Kant appends to the important claim that "every other rational being also represents its existence" as an end in itself the following footnote:

"Here I put this proposition forward as a postulate. The grounds for it will be found in the final section."[33]

The comparison with the Feyerabend Introduction gives further support for interpretation. The all too brief footnote in the *Groundwork* must be read as suggesting a direct link leading from the End in Itself claim to freedom. This is in fact the path taken in the Feyerabend Introduction, which follows an argumentative strategy that was also considered in the background in the *Groundwork* but was not fully adequate to its more ambitious purposes. Thus, the comparison also reveals that the Feyerabend notes present only part of the argument that the *Groundwork* unfolds in its entirety. The focus on the connection between being an end in itself and freedom leaves out one crucial part of the argument in the *Groundwork*, that is, the part where autonomy is introduced, explained, and presented as the solution to the general issue of grounding moral obligation. In the Feyerabend Introduction, the notion of autonomy is not merely underdetermined and unexplained but rather bypassed, if we construe autonomy in the specific terms of the *Groundwork* (cf. IV 431 ff.). The train of thought of the Feyerabend Introduction links the notion of an end in itself directly to the "necessary hypothesis" of freedom, thereby expunging the real treatment of autonomy of the will.[34] Oddly enough, then, one of the very first occurrences of the word 'autonomy' in the Kantian corpus does not correspond to a genuine elaboration of the related idea.

Strictly speaking, 'autonomy' occurs in the Feyerabend notes only when embedded in the phrase 'principle of autonomy' and within the definition of obligation: "Obligation is moral necessitation of action, i.e. the dependence of a will that is not good in itself on the principle of autonomy or objectively necessary practical laws" (XXVII 1326). The "principle of autonomy" is mentioned just that once because for Kant, at this stage, obligation is to be

[33]For the terminological adjustment from the "necessary hypothesis" invoked in the Feyerabend notes (XXVII 1322) and the postulate mentioned in this footnote, see e.g. Kant's distinction between a mere "hypothesis", which is grounded in a pragmatic interest, and a "postulate, that is, an absolutely necessary presupposition of pure reason", which is grounded in a moral interest (cf. Refl. 6111, XVIII 458).

[34]Unlike Willaschek (2019), I thus cannot make out a genuine "argument for autonomy" in the Feyerabend Introduction but rather an argument for a different claim in which autonomy plays a qualified role.

defined in those terms, as he puts forward in the *Groundwork*.[35] That striking passage — all the more striking in its comparative isolation — provides Kant's own definition of moral obligation, along with an important indicator that he had developed the notion of autonomy by then. It does not, however, provide either the path to it or a more in-depth treatment.[36] Unlike the *Groundwork*, the Feyerabend notes do not devote attention to the steps that are needed to fully justify that understanding of obligation. Crucially, even the idea of lawgiving through the individual rational will — which in the *Groundwork* leads to the notion of autonomy of the will (cf. IV 431 ff.) — is missing. This subordinate role of the notion of autonomy also finds correspondence in the absence of the notion of a kingdom of ends, in which, in the *Groundwork*, the ends in themselves partake insofar as they are lawgivers.[37]

Remarkably, when obligation is mentioned again in the Feyerabend notes, its proper foundations are not investigated any further. Later, according to the notes, Kant simply refers to the "principle of lawfulness" under which all actions stand (XXVII 1330). This should be taken as equivalent to the principle of autonomy, if we follow the connected remarks to the effect that "universal lawfulness alone places me under obligation", and that "all laws can necessitate the will through their lawfulness" (XXVII 1326). According to the Feyerabend notes, Kant only provides his students in the natural right course with a simplified version of his view of obligation, stressing that its sole ground lies within the realm of freedom and its

[35]Cf. IV 439: "The dependence on the principle of autonomy of a will that is not absolutely good (moral necessitation) is obligation."

[36]Note, incidentally, that in the *Moral Mrongovius II* the notion of autonomy occurs in a similarly sudden fashion, in the remark that "[w]hen reason determines the will through the moral law it has the force of an incentive, and then it has not merely autonomy but also autocracy" (XXIX 622). Unlike in the Feyerabend notes, however, some clarification is provided, if only a few pages later (cf. XXIX 626). Furthermore, at that stage the *Groundwork* had just been published.

[37]Accordingly, the notion of a systematic connection of ends undergoes a change, once the thought of the will's lawgiving through maxims is put in place, as this passage from the almost contemporary *Moral Mrongovius II* displays: "We must make all our resolutions thus, as if we were legislating with the maxim of our will. *The human being sees himself in a system of rational beings as a legislating member, otherwise we are mere instruments*" (XXIX 610; emphasis added). Whereas the Feyerabend Introduction talks about the connection between means and conditional ends that must be brought to a conclusion in an end that cannot in turn be regarded as a means, the "system of ends" mentioned in the Mrongovius notes encompasses only rational agents as ends, and thus corresponds to the kingdom of ends of the *Groundwork*. Note that, prior to the Feyerabend notes, the first *Critique* had already described Leibniz's kingdom of grace as encompassing "rational beings and their interconnection in accordance with moral laws" (KrV A812/B840).

laws and that this yields a non-consequentialist account of morality (cf. XXVII 1326).[38] In Kant's first public mention of this new crucial notion, autonomy is not so much explained and justified as applied with specific regard to the sphere of right.[39]

As far as the report in the Feyerabend notes goes, Kant limited his exposition of being "a law to itself" to the idea of independence from foreign determination.[40] What is presented is not an instance of self-legislation in the proper sense because there is no hint of a lawgiving moment, specifically not through the determination of the will. Even the conspicuous absence of the term 'maxim' from the distinction between objective and subjective principles (which are here accordingly presented not as principles of the will, as they usually are, but as objective and subjective laws of freedom) suggests a clear intention to focus on the objective side of being a "law to itself". Right is "easier to explain than duty" first and foremost because it concerns not motivation and deliberation but merely the harmonisation of the effects of one's freedom with universal freedom (cf. XXVII 1327; cf. also XXXVII 1337 f.). Autonomy of the will as genuine self-legislation through maxims is thus not directly relevant here. Freedom is characterized as a law to itself only because its laws do not have any ground outside of freedom and its limitation must be conceived of in terms of internal, non-alien laws. In the picture sketched in the Feyerabend notes, self-regulation is the constitutive feature of the domain of freedom. This is a different, if related, notion than that of the autonomy of the will. For Kant, however, it was no less important or innovative: "on this point all teachers of natural right have erred, they simply never noticed it" (XXVII 1322). The different turn that is given to the idea of being a law to itself in the lectures on natural right reflects the aim of the relevant discussion. Thus, in spite of the term 'autonomy', which Kant otherwise understands as the positive sense of freedom, freedom in the Feyerabend notes is instead characterized in negative terms, as independence from foreign determination.

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[38]The qualified role of obligation in the Feyerabend notes should not be taken to imply that obligation (*Verbindlichkeit*) only belongs to the sphere of ethics, as strictly separated from that of right, as maintained by Zöller 2015, 358 ff. This reading obscures not only Kant's reason for mentioning the notion of obligation in an elucidation of right, as is the case in XXVII 1326, but also his reason for discussing, on the very next page of the Feyerabend notes, obligation with regard to a juridical case, that is, the obligation regarding a contract (cf. XXVII 1327). See also the discussion of specific juridical obligations in the first sections of the main part of the course.

[39]This should not suggest, however, that Kant could assume that his students were already familiar with the idea of the autonomy of the will from a prior course on moral philosophy. According to Arnoldt 1909, 173 ff., Kant never taught natural right in the same semester as moral philosophy or in the semester following a course in moral philosophy.

[40]On the negative characterisation of freedom in this context, see also Willaschek 2019, 148 f.

6. Concluding Remarks

Although the Feyerabend Introduction can be regarded as "Kant's own summary of the *Groundwork*",[41] it is in fact a summary that is focused on clarifying one specific issue, that is, the character of the limitation of freedom in the sphere of right. The resulting take on the two key notions of an end in itself and freedom as autonomy is an important distinctive feature of the Introduction to the Feyerabend notes. They contribute to a better understanding of the former notion by highlighting aspects that are not as conspicuous in the *Groundwork*, although they do find correspondence there. First, the representation of unconditional worth is a structural element of the practical use of reason. Second, this representation belongs to the understanding of morality that underlies common moral practice and, more specifically, that concerns the necessary self-understanding of moral subjects. These two features determine the subjective necessity of the End in Itself claim. Furthermore, in the Feyerabend Introduction the End in Itself claim is also presented to counter a voluntarist conception of morality and right.

On the other hand, because of the specific aim of the class on natural right, the Feyerabend notes do not provide a comparable parallel to the *Groundwork* with regard to freedom and autonomy. Although the Feyerabend Introduction includes the first occurrence of the notion of autonomy in Kant's corpus that can be dated with a fair degree of precision, this occurrence does not match the richer form that the notion had been assuming in the development of his thought. In fact, the notion of autonomy hardly plays a role in the argument that is presented in the Feyerabend Introduction.[42] Oddly enough given that this was the first public occurrence of the term, the idea is largely presupposed and applied to a more limited issue. The train of thought in the Feyerabend Introduction instead focuses on a simpler characterisation of freedom as a self-regulating domain, which is also described as "being a law to itself". At the very least, the Feyerabend version of Kant's view, especially with regard to the notion of autonomy, lacks one fundamental core, namely the conception of practical reason and will.[43]

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[41] Rauscher 2012, 264.

[42] This does not preclude the possibility that Kant's conception of political lawgiving, as presented in the main part of the Feyerabend notes, could have provided him with an important analogy for developing the concept of autonomy of the will. For an interpretation in these terms, see Kleingeld 2019.

[43] See Willaschek 2019, 154 f.

In this light, the similarities and differences between this treatment and the full account of Kant's view in the *Groundwork* allow for a better assessment of the place of the *Naturrecht Feyerabend* in the development of Kant's views on practical philosophy. This unique set of lecture notes contributes to a better understanding of his moral rationalism in several important respects insofar as it presents a first selective application of the conception presented in the *Groundwork*. The specific character of the matter at issue in the natural right course, on the other hand, accounts for the limits of the Feyerabend notes in comparison with the lectures on moral philosophy and for their argumentative weaknesses.

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