

## Faculti Summary

<https://faculti.net/left-kantian-perfectionism/>

This video discusses the evolution of German idealism, particularly focusing on the contribution of G.W.F. Hegel and the implications of his ideas for political philosophy. The speaker has been researching German idealism, proposing a new perspective that emphasizes the importance of alternative figures like Gottlieb Lessing (Leitz) rather than traditionally starting with Immanuel Kant.

The speaker examines the political dimensions of German idealism and how concepts evolved from 1650 to the late 19th century, tracing connections to Karl Marx. The speaker argues that the notion of spontaneity, which refers to action arising from within individuals as opposed to responding mechanically to external stimuli, is central to understanding later German thought.

Kant's work is highlighted, particularly his revolutionary ideas about negative freedom, which suggest that individuals are capable of independent thought and moral consideration beyond mere desire for happiness. The speaker emphasizes the difference between earlier perfectionist theories—which aimed at promoting happiness—and Kantian self-determination and political theories that prioritize autonomy and freedom.

The discussion expands to compare different thinkers' visions of the state, illustrating a division between minimalist and interventionist approaches, with figures like Wilhelm von Humboldt advocating for a state that protects individual freedoms without imposing paternalistic measures, contrasting with thinkers who support a more interventionist role for the state in ensuring conditions for freedom.

Incorporating Marx, the speaker argues that his notion of labor represents a form of spontaneity but also shows a tension between individual rights and a collective good. This video duality highlights Marx's synthesis of pre-Kantian ideals and post-Kantian thought.

Finally, the text suggests that this philosophical development has implications for how we perceive citizenship and the welfare state, advocating for a vision of the state that empowers individuals rather than merely providing for them, calling for an enabling state over a traditional welfare model. Overall, the speaker intends to publish a book that will trace these developments in German political thought, highlighting debates and distinctions between idealism and romanticism.