The ECPR Standing Group on Kantian Political Thought is delighted to present the next installment of the online seminar series, “Kantian Conversations (Virtually Speaking),” co-organized by Macarena Marey, CONICET, Zachary Vereb, University of Mississippi, and Christoph Hanisch, Ohio University. The next seminar will be given by Huaping Lu-Adler (Georgetown University) on “Kant and Slavery – Or Why He Never Became a Racial Egalitarian” with Lucy Allais (Johns Hopkins University and University of the Witwatersrand) as commentator.

Thursday 7 April, 14:00 – 16:00 GMT (15:00 – 17:00 CET)

“Kant and Slavery – Or Why He Never Became a Racial Egalitarian”

Speaker – Huaping Lu-Adler, Georgetown University

Commentator – Lucy Allais, Johns Hopkins University and University of the Witwatersrand

More details (including information about the speakers and the registration for the event (no fee required!)) can be found here: <https://ecpr.eu/Events/172>

To attend the event, you need a MyECPR account. To join is free and easy: complete the online form (https://ecpr.eu/MyEcpr/Account/Create) and click ‘Submit’.

Once a member, please consider joining the Kantian Standing Group: again, it is free and easy: after you login, go to the page of current standing groups and research networks (https://ecpr.eu/Groups), find the Kantian Standing Group, click 'Details' and, then, 'Join'.

Abstract: According to an oft-repeated narrative, while Kant maintained racist views through the 1780s, he changed his mind in the 1790s. Pauline Kleingeld constructed this narrative out of passages from Kant’s *Metaphysics of Morals* (1797) and “Toward Perpetual Peace” (1795), which allegedly show that he categorically condemned slavery (as well as colonialism) and thereby became more racially egalitarian. This turned out to be baseless. The passages in question, once contextualized, either do not pertain to modern chattel slavery at all or at best suggest that Kant mentioned it as a cautionary tale for labor practices in Europe. A more systematic and historically informed analysis reveals that Kant never considered slavery as a moralproblem to be evaluated on its own. Rather, he consistently presented it as primarily a non-moral issue to be assessed in terms of its role in human history. If he ended up expressing some qualms about certain practices of slavery and the slave trade, he did so from the recognition that they could deepen intra-European power struggles and thereby erode the hope for perpetual peace. The wellbeing, dignity, or freedom of the enslaved/traded “Negroes” never entered the equation. This was not just an unfortunate oversight on Kant’s part. Rather, it reflects the extraordinary complexity of his philosophical system: everything he did or did not say about slavery begins to make perfect sense once we take into account his views on human history and on the relation between morality and political conditions as well as how he racialized “Negroes.”

Looking forward to seeing you on 7 April and the following events!