Karoline Reinhardt has dedicated a well-documented and well-argued monograph to what we can learn from Kant on migration. It has now been published as a revised version of the dissertation she defended at Tübingen in 2018, under the direction of Otfried Höffe. The dissertation was awarded the Kant-Stiftung’s Kant-Förderpreis in 2018 and the Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften’s Walter-Weitzmann-Preis in 2019.

Migration has become a highly controversial issue in politics in recent years, both in the media and within the public discourse, but it has also emerged as an important theme in philosophy. For this reason, Reinhardt’s book is a very welcome contribution. It provides a systematic presentation of Kant’s positions on migration while also discussing the relevance of Kantian approaches to twenty-first century issues, which it does, most importantly, without assuming that Kant can ultimately clarify all aspects of the current problems.

Reinhardt’s dissertation is an excellent example of the fact that systematic questions and problems can be fruitfully dealt with by means of the history of philosophy. It provides a significant case study of the interweaving of historical-philosophical analyses with systematic questions. As regards Kant on migration, much precision is needed, which is exactly what Reinhardt is aiming at. Her main argument revolves around the assumption that Kant’s views on cosmopolitanism lie in productive disharmony with the philosophical and political camps currently represented in the migration debate (30).

In the first part, Geschlossene Grenzen – Offene Grenzen (35–77), Reinhardt deals with the debate on closed and open borders in contemporary political philosophy (see Richard Pevnik, Immigration and the Constraints of Justice. Between Open Borders and Absolute Sovereignty, Cambridge University Press 2011). She distinguishes three main positions in the current debate: communitarianism, egalitarian cosmopolitanism and liberal nationalism, which she discusses with reference to Michael Walzer, Joseph H. Carens and David Miller, respectively.

In the second part, Kants Weltbürgerrecht (81–206), Reinhardt addresses the question of the extent to which Kant provides arguments in his writings that deal with migration issues that are useful to current debates – in particular in Zum
ewigen Frieden and in the Rechtslehre of the Metaphysik der Sitten. Reinhardt shows that what Kant has written on the right of visit (Besuchsrecht), hospitality (hospes) and sovereignty (hostis) can be effectively used as the basis for shaping new forms of philosophy of migration, first and foremost because in the commentary to the third definitive article of Zum ewigen Frieden Kant states that “originally, no one has more right [Recht] than another to live on a particular place [Ort] on the earth.” When actually considering late eighteenth-century colonialism, Kant envisaged a form of ius cosmopoliticum (Weltbürgerrecht), the consequence of which is universal hospitality (allgemeine Hospitalität), which is to be acknowledged as the right of the foreigner (das Recht eines Fremdlings), although hospitality does not entail the right of the foreigner to rob, exploit, or enslave.

At the center of Reinhardt’s consideration is Kant’s notion of cosmopolitan right, which she refers to as the systematic basis for justification, and which she analyzes comprehensively in terms of its implications for migration. Reinhardt provides insightful clarifications of the terms ‘cosmopolitan’ and ‘cosmopolitan right’ (87–88). In particular, she emphasizes that Kant’s notion of cosmopolitan right emerges in the context of two central concepts: hospitality and colonialism. Hospitality implies the right of everyone arriving in a state not to be treated with hostility. As regards colonialism, Reinhardt gives evidence of a shift in Kant’s position: while in the early writings he accepts colonialism, he later takes a critical stance against violent European expansionism and the enslavement of overseas peoples (146–154).

Reinhardt argues convincingly that Kant can contribute substantially to contemporary debates on migration, provided – as she makes very clear – one does not confine Kant behind the simplistic screen of moral universalism. In fact, Kant does not commit himself to the notion that the moral equality of all men and women translates to the political equality of migrant men and women. Reinhardt maintains that equating moral equality with political equality implies a misunderstanding of the justification basis of cosmopolitan right, which should instead be seen as an innate right of men and women. She thus proposes an alternative strategy of justification that includes the conditions of human existence (210).

Reinhardt rightly emphasizes Kant’s resistance to some of the current demands of moral universalism. She shows that Kant was in no way in favor of open borders or universal freedom of movement (66). Generally, Reinhardt reviews many critical objections to Kant’s views on migration, hospitality, and colonialism, to which she replies by reconstructing the grounds on which Kant might have countered them. It is important to point out that while doing this she is concerned neither with apology or apotheosis nor with an unconditioned updating of Kant’s positions.
In the third part of her work, *Weltbürgerrecht und Migration* (209–307), Reinhardt examines Kant’s cosmopolitanism in relation to topics such as refugee status, legitimate and illegitimate grounds for refusal, statelessness, naturalization, the right to emigrate, individual duties of assistance, and a cosmopolitan attitude. Her focus is on three thematic issues. First, is global citizenship an adequate basis on which to grant people rights as refugees and the right of first admission? Second, how can one differentiate between legitimate and illegitimate grounds for the exclusion of migration movements other than flight? Third, how to handle statelessness and naturalization (p. 210)? Referring to Pauline Kleingeld’s *Kant and Cosmopolitanism* (Cambridge University Press 2012), Reinhardt shows how Kant’s cosmopolitanism may be seen as an anticipation of today’s non-refoulement rule, which forbids a country receiving asylum seekers from returning them to a country where they are at risk of serious human rights violations and would likely be in danger of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion (212). Reinhardt comes to the conclusion that one of the great strengths of Kant’s notion of cosmopolitanism lies in its negative wording. It does not constitute an unlimited obligation to admit, but it does constitute a complete legal obligation not to refuse (224).

In addition to considerations of international law, Reinhardt highlights the moral dimension of the duties of aid and philanthropy (289–294), so that participation, gratitude and many other civil attitudes such as sympathy and charity all “lie at the basis of morality, as subjective conditions of receptiveness to the concept of duty” (MS, AA 06: 399). Reinhardt points out that Kant describes an obligation to “sympathize actively” with others (295), insofar as we have “an indirect duty to cultivate the compassionate natural (aesthetic) feelings in us, and to make use of them as so many means to sympathy based on moral principles and the feeling appropriate to them” (MS, AA 06: 457).

In this important book, Reinhardt does not simply provide an overview of the current debate on cosmopolitan right; she also outlines a Kantian theory of migration upon which scholars and policymakers can draw when the time comes – no doubt sooner rather than later – to begin crafting visions for a United Nations declaration of global mobility. In a nutshell, Reinhardt shows that Kant’s philosophy on the right of visit, hospitality, and sovereignty could be a basis for shaping new forms of philosophy of migration.