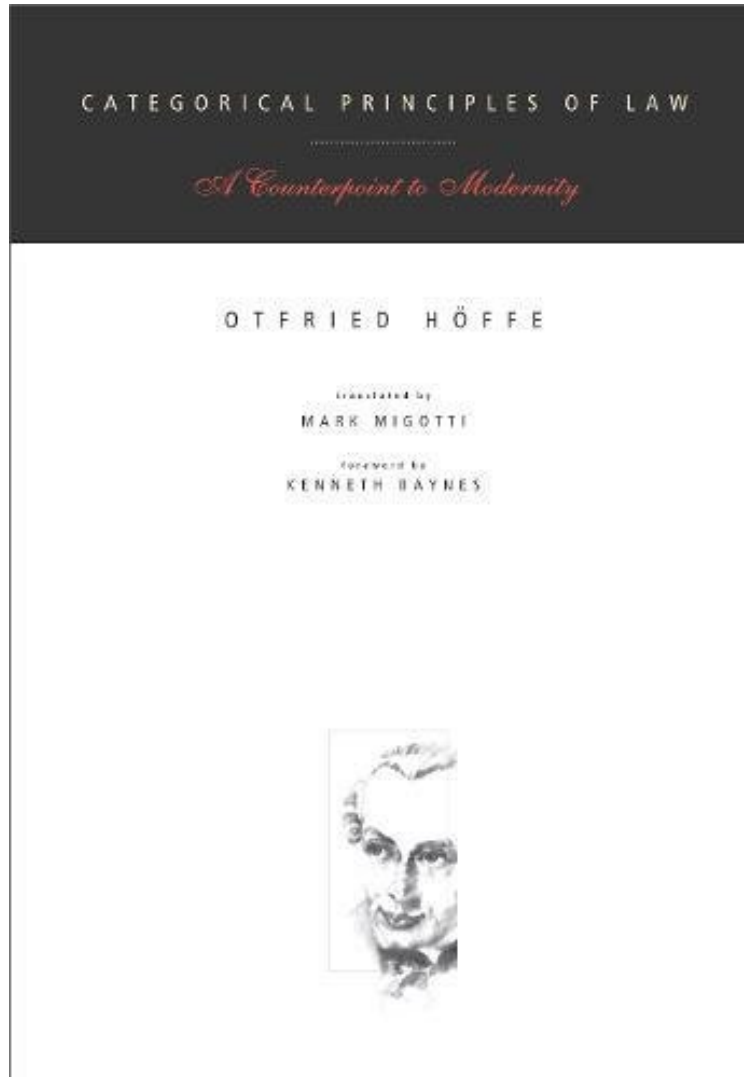


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# Categorical Principles of Law: A Counterpoint to Modernity

Otfried Hffe

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In Germany, Otfried Hffe has been a leading contributor to debates in moral, legal, political, and social philosophy for close to three decades. Hffe's work (like that of his contemporary, Jrgen Habermas), brings into relief the relevance of these German discussions to their counterparts in English-language circles. In this book, originally published in

Germany in 1990 and expanded since, Hffe proposes an extended and original interpretation of Kant philosophy of law, and social morality. Hffe articulates his reading of Kant in the context of an account of modernity as a "polyphonous project," in which the dominant themes of pluralism and empiricism are countered by the theme of categorically binding moral principles, such as human rights. Paying equal attention to the nuances of Kant's texts and the character of the philosophical issues in their own right, Hffe ends up with a Kantianism that requires, rather than precludes, a moral anthropology and that questions the fashionable juxtaposition of Kant and Aristotle as exemplars of incompatible approaches to ethical and political thought.

Kantian theories of law and politics are not well understood in English-language philosophy, which has tended to ignore Kants actual writings on these topics in favor of his more foundational ethical works, from which philosophers often draw erroneous inferences about what the Kantian view must be on issues of applied ethics and political philosophy. Hffes book is a much-needed presentation of a contemporary Kantian position by a leading German philosopher of law, containing a thoughtful critical response to the positions of Rawls and Habermas. Migottis translation is smooth, accurate, and a scholarly achievement all by itself. Allen Wood, Stanford University The book offers a highly interesting critical reinterpretation and defense of Kants doctrine of right. Lars Vinx, Ethics About the Author Otfried Hoffe is Professor of Philosophy at the Law School of the University of Tbingen. His books include Aristotle (SUNY, forthcoming). Mark Migotti is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Calgary.