

*Review of Schulz's*  
Attempt at an introduction to a doctrine  
of morals for all human beings regardless  
of different religions

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## Introduction

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Kant's review of Part I of Johann Heinrich Schulz's work (the full title of which is given in the text of the review) was published in a Königsberg journal, *Räsonirenden Bücherverzeichnis*. Part I of Schulz's work, like Kant's review of it, appeared in 1783. Part II was published in the same year, whereas Parts III and IV did not appear until 1790. The dates are of interest.

As for Kant's review, it is worth noting that he wrote it shortly before the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. A reviewer, Kant says, should first present briefly the author's position and then judge the work as a whole. Kant's judgment might profitably be compared with Part III of the *Groundwork*.

Schulz's career is of interest in the context of political events in Prussia. He was a preacher, in Gielsdorf, whose defiance of the ecclesiastical establishment extended from his personal appearance to his views on the relevance of orthodox religion to the relation of subject and sovereign. His refusal to wear a wig while preaching to his congregation earned him the nickname *Zopfschulz* ("pigtail-Schulz"). Such behavior was symptomatic of the philosophic position that made him suspect to the church authorities. Frederick the Great had protected Schulz from prosecution by the Brandenburg Consistory, but he was brought to court under the religious edict drawn up by Frederick William II and his minister Wöllner. Although the judges found Schulz not guilty of contradicting the teachings of Christianity, the king reversed their verdict, fined the judges, and dismissed Schulz from his appointment.

Kant, too, would eventually be censured by the authorities for his own unorthodox view of the relation of religion to morality. Such concerns are, however, rather tangential to Schulz's principles and to Kant's judgment of them. What is at issue, in this review, is the more fundamental question of moral agency.



*Review of*  
*Schulz's*

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*Part I*

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes that this is essential for ensuring transparency and accountability in the organization's operations.

2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods and tools used to collect and analyze data. It highlights the need for consistent and reliable data collection processes to support informed decision-making.

3. The third part of the document focuses on the role of technology in modern data management. It discusses how advanced software solutions can streamline data collection, storage, and analysis, leading to more efficient and effective operations.

4. The fourth part of the document addresses the challenges associated with data security and privacy. It provides guidance on how to implement robust security measures to protect sensitive information from unauthorized access and breaches.

5. The fifth part of the document explores the importance of data governance and compliance. It discusses the need for clear policies and procedures to ensure that data is managed in accordance with relevant laws and regulations.

6. The sixth part of the document discusses the benefits of data-driven decision-making. It explains how analyzing data can provide valuable insights into organizational performance, customer behavior, and market trends, enabling leaders to make more strategic and data-backed decisions.

7. The seventh part of the document concludes by summarizing the key points discussed throughout the document. It reiterates the importance of a data-centric approach and the need for continuous improvement in data management practices.

Attempt at an introduction to a doctrine of morals<sup>a</sup> for  
all human beings regardless of different religions,  
including an appendix of capital punishment. Part I.  
(Berlin, Stahlbaum, 1783)

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This first part is supposed to be only an introduction to a new moral system, setting forth the psychological principles to be built upon subsequently: principles about the place a human being occupies in the scale of beings, about his sensitive,<sup>b</sup> thinking, and volitionally active<sup>c</sup> nature, about freedom and necessity, about life, death, and a future life. It is a work that – because of its candor and, still more, because of the good intentions of its independently thinking author,<sup>d</sup> which are evident even in its many striking paradoxes – must raise in every reader impatient expectations as to how a doctrine of morals based on such premises will turn out.

A reviewer will first trace briefly the course of the author's thought and conclude by adding his judgment on the whole.

At the very beginning the concept of vital force is extended in such a way as to apply to all creatures indiscriminately; that is to say, it becomes simply the concept of *the sum of all forces present in a creature and belonging to its nature*. From this follows a law of the *continuity* of all beings, such that on the great ladder each is aligned<sup>d</sup> above and below another but in such a way that every species<sup>e</sup> of creature remains between limits, which creatures cannot overstep as long as they remain fellow members of the same species. Hence nothing is really inanimate but is only less animate, and what distinguishes one species from another is only its degree of vital force. A soul, as a being distinct from the body, is a mere creation of the imagination; the most exalted seraph and a tree are both artful<sup>f</sup> machines. So much for the nature of the soul.

The same sort of graduated connection is present in all cognitions. Error and truth are not specifically different but differ only as the lesser from the greater: there is no absolute error; instead, every cognition, *at the time* it arises in a human being, is true *for him*. Its correction is only the addition of representations that were previously wanting, and what was once truth is subsequently changed into error by the mere progress of cognition. Our cognition is sheer error in comparison with that of an angel. Reason cannot err: every force is assigned its track. Reason's criti-

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<sup>a</sup> zur Sittenlehre

<sup>b</sup> empfindenden

<sup>c</sup> durch Willen tätigen

<sup>d</sup> hat seinen Nebenmann

<sup>e</sup> Gattung

<sup>f</sup> künstliche

cism of itself<sup>g</sup> does not take place in judging but afterwards, when one is already in another place and has acquired more information. I should not say that a child errs but rather that he does not yet understand so well as he will understand in the future, that this is a lesser judgment. Wisdom and folly, science and ignorance, do not, therefore, deserve either praise or censure; they are to be regarded merely as the gradual progress of nature, with respect to which I am not free. As for the will: all inclinations and impulses are included in a single one, namely *self-love*, though with respect to this every human being has his particular frame of mind,<sup>h</sup> which can still never deviate from a general frame of mind. Self-love is always determined by all our sensations<sup>i</sup> together, but in such a way that either the more obscure or the more distinct sensations have the greatest part in it. *There is, therefore, no free will*: the will is subject to the strict law of necessity; however, if self-love is determined by no distinct representations at all but merely by sensation this is called an *unfree* action. All *remorse*<sup>j</sup> is idle and absurd; for a wrongdoer appraises his deed<sup>k</sup> not from his former but from his present frame of mind which, if it had existed in him then, would certainly have prevented the deed, though the supposition that it also ought to have prevented the deed is false because it was not actually present in his former state. Remorse is merely a misunderstood representation of how one could *act better in the future*, and in fact nature has no other purpose in it than the end of improvement. Resolution of the difficulty, how God could be the author of sin. *Virtue and vices are not essentially different.* (So here again what is otherwise taken as a *specific* difference is changed into a mere *difference in terms of degrees.*) Virtue cannot exist without vices, and these are only occasioning grounds<sup>l</sup> for becoming better (hence for rising a step higher). Human beings cannot compare themselves in regard to what they call virtue except in regard to that without which no human welfare is possible, that is, *general virtue*; but it is absolutely impossible for a human being to deviate from this, and one who does deviate from it is not vicious but out of his mind.<sup>m</sup> A human being who practiced a general vice would act contrary to self-love, and this is impossible. Accordingly the path of general virtue is so even, so straight, and so fenced in on both sides that all human beings absolutely must remain on it. What makes a difference among human beings in general virtue is nothing other than the particular frame of mind of each; were they to exchange their positions, one of them would act just as the other.

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<sup>g</sup> *Die Verurteilung der Vernunft durch sich selbst*

<sup>h</sup> *Stimmung*

<sup>i</sup> *Empfindungen*

<sup>j</sup> *Reue*

<sup>k</sup> Or "action," *Tat*

<sup>l</sup> *Gelegenheitsgründe*

<sup>m</sup> *aberwitzig*



REVIEW OF SCHULZ'S *ATTEMPT AT AN INTRODUCTION*

Moral good or evil signifies nothing more than a higher or lower degree of perfection. Human beings are vicious in comparison with angels, as are angels in comparison with God. Accordingly, since there is no freedom all retributive punishments are unjust, especially capital punishments; in place of them, only restitution and improvement, but by no means mere admonition, must constitute the purpose of penal laws. To bestow *praise* because of a useful deed indicates but little knowledge of human beings: the human being was just as much determined and moved to it as was the arsonist to set fire to a house. The only purpose of praise is to encourage the author and others to similar good deeds.

The author calls this doctrine of necessity a *blessed doctrine* and maintains that by it the doctrine of morals obtains for the first time its real worth; in this context he remarks incidentally that, with regard to wrongdoing, certain teachers who depict how easy it is *to make one's peace with God* should lay claim to it. In this one cannot fail to recognize our author's good intentions. He wants to do away with mere painful and idle remorse, which is nevertheless so often commended as in itself propitiating, and to put in its place firm resolutions to lead a better life; he seeks to vindicate the wisdom and kindness of God through the progress of all his creatures toward perfection and eternal happiness though on various paths, to lead religion back from unproductive beliefs to deeds, and finally also to make civil punishments more humane and more useful for the particular as well as for the common good." Moreover, the audacity of his speculative assertions will not seem so frightful to one acquainted with what Priestley<sup>2</sup> – an English theologian esteemed as much for his piety as for his insight – has said in unison with our author and expressed even more boldly, and what several clergymen of this country, though far beneath him in talent, are already repeating unreservedly – indeed, what Professor Ehlers<sup>3</sup> just recently put forward as a concept of free will, namely that of the faculty of thinking beings to act in keeping with the *existing state of their ideas*.

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However, no impartial reader, especially if he is sufficiently practiced in this sort of speculation, will fail to note that the general fatalism which is the most prominent principle in this work and the most powerful one, affecting all morality, turns all human conduct into a mere puppet show and thereby does away altogether with the concept of obligation; that, on the other hand, the "ought" or the imperative that distinguishes the practical law from the law of nature also puts us in *idea*<sup>o</sup> altogether beyond the chain of nature, since unless we think of our will as free this imperative is impossible and absurd and what is left us is only to await and observe what sort of decisions God will effect in us by means of natural causes, but not what we can and ought to do *of ourselves*, as authors. From this must arise

<sup>2</sup> *Beste*

<sup>o</sup> *in der Idee*

the grossest enthusiasm,<sup>p</sup> which does away with any influence of sound reason, even though the author has taken pains to maintain its rights. In fact, the practical concept of freedom has nothing to do with the speculative concept, which is abandoned entirely to metaphysicians. For I can be quite indifferent as to the origin of my state<sup>q</sup> in which I am now to act; I ask only what I now have to do, and then freedom is a necessary practical presupposition and an idea under which alone I can regard commands of reason as valid. Even the most obstinate skeptic grants that, when it comes to acting, all sophistical scruples about a universally deceptive illusion<sup>r</sup> must come to nothing.

In the same way, the most confirmed fatalist, who is a fatalist as long as he gives himself up to mere speculation, must still, as soon as he has to do with wisdom and duty, always act *as if he were free*, and this idea also actually produces the deed that accords with it and can alone produce it. It is hard to cease altogether to be human. The author, having justified every human action, however bad it may seem to others, on the basis of one's particular frame of mind, says on page 137: "May I lose everything, absolutely and without exception everything, that can make me happy temporally and eternally (a daring expression), if you would not have acted just as badly as the other had you only been in his position." Still, according to what he himself affirms, the greatest conviction in one point of time can provide no assurance that in another point of time, cognition having progressed further, what was formerly truth will not afterwards become error: How would that extremely risky protestation look then? Although he would not himself admit it, he has assumed in the depths of his soul that understanding is able to determine his judgment in accordance with objective grounds that are always valid and is not subject to the mechanism of merely subjectively determining causes, which could subsequently change; hence he always admits freedom to think, without which there is no reason. In the same way he must also assume freedom of the will in acting, without which there would be no morals, when – as I have no doubt – he wants to proceed in his righteous conduct in conformity with the eternal laws of duty and not to be a plaything of his instincts and inclinations, though at the same time he denies himself this freedom because he is not otherwise able to bring his practical principles into harmony with speculative principles. But even if no one were to succeed in this, in fact not much would be lost.

<sup>p</sup> *Schwärmerei*

<sup>q</sup> *woher mir ursprünglich der Zustand . . . gekommen sei*

<sup>r</sup> *Schein*