IAN S. MARKHAM

DO MORALS MATTER?

A Textbook Guide to Contemporary Religious Ethics

SECOND EDITION

WILEY Blackwell

Do Morals Matter?

Do Morals Matter?

A Textbook Guide to
Contemporary Religious Ethics

Ian S. Markham

Second Edition

WILEY Blackwell

This second edition first published 2019

Edition History
John Wiley & Sons Ltd (1e, 2007)

Registered Office(s)
John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, USA
John Wiley & Sons Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

Editorial Office
9600 Garsington Road, Oxford, OX4 2DQ, UK

For details of our global editorial offices, customer services, and more information about Wiley products visit us at www.wiley.com.

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats and by print-on-demand. Some content that appears in standard print versions of this book may not be available in other formats.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Markham, Ian S., author.
Title: Do morals matter? : a textbook guide to contemporary religious ethics / Ian S. Markham.
Description: Second edition. | Hoboken, NJ, USA : Wiley, [2018] | Includes index. |
Identifiers: LCCN 2018020241 (print) | LCCN 2018020812 (ebook) | ISBN 9781119143536 (Adobe PDF) | ISBN 9781119143543 (ePub) | ISBN 9781119143512 (pbk.)
Subjects: LCSH: Ethical problems. | Christian ethics.
Classification: LCC BJ1275 (ebook) | LCC BJ1275 .M366 2018 (print) | DDC 170–dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2018020241

Cover Image: © FatCamera/E+/Getty Images
Cover Design: Wiley

Set in 10/12pt Warnock by SPi Global, Pondicherry, India

For Luke Stephen Austin Markham
Continue to be you

Contents

Acknowledgements

A new edition is a privilege. The response from readers and professors using this textbook has been a delight. I am therefore pleased to work again on producing a new edition of this textbook.

I was blessed with two research assistants who helped with this new edition. Sam Smith (then Gottlich) started the journey with me, and then Sharon Williams took over. Together they worked hard to create a new, fresh textbook.

I am grateful to the team at Virginia Theological Seminary that gives me the space to write. My board chair, David Charlton, is very supportive. My senior team – Melody Knowles, Jacqui Ballou, Katie Glover, Linda Dienno, and Jim Mathes – is amazing. My executive assistant, Katherine Malloy, made sure that I had the space to progress this project, and she produced the excellent index.

Writing for Wiley Blackwell is always a delight. Rebecca Harkin commissioned this new edition. I am proud to count Rebecca among my friends; she combines wisdom with passion. Catriona King took over from Rebecca; she saw this book through to publication and her interest and insight improved the book considerably. Elisha Benjamin provided appropriate reminders and took the manuscript through production. I am grateful to Caroline Richards for her work at the copyediting phase. Finally, Vimali Joseph was the outstanding production editor who took the book to publication. Thank you, Wiley Blackwell.

My lovely wife, Lesley, came home from long days at work and sat and read various chapters and helped create discussion and reflection questions. It takes real love to do that for a spouse.

Finally, I dedicate this new edition to my son, Luke. The first edition had the following dedication for Luke: 'Above all things, I pray, may you be virtuous.' Luke is now 22; he has graduated from Boston University; and his values are solid. For this I am deeply grateful. My prayer now is that he might simply continue to build on those values.

Preface

The first edition of *Do Morals Matter?* appeared in 2007. It is amazing how in 10 years the world can change so much. The sanguine assumptions about market economies, epitomized by the declaration of Francis Fukuyama that liberal democracies are the 'end of history', were brutally challenged in the great depression of 2008. With Brexit in Britain and the election of President Trump in the United States, our picture of an ever-connected global village is dissipating. Attitudes to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons have changed in the United States and Europe much faster than anyone could have foreseen. New ethical areas are emerging – for example, cyber ethics. In medical ethics, dramatic advances are being made. In 2007, the first edition discussed screening, but the idea that for just $199 you could purchase a medical assessment of your genetic medical propensities was difficult to imagine.

Reviewers were positive about the first edition, so much of the original material has been maintained. The chapter surveys set out options; the author's judgement is offered towards the end of the book. The concept of a morally serious person (MSP) remains the core argument of the book. The most significant change in this new edition is that the book is more obviously a textbook. Boxes that provide clear and succinct student-friendly summaries have been created. Goals and outcomes of each chapter are explained at the beginning of each chapter. Questions are provided for reflection and discussion at the end of the chapter.

Perhaps the 'normal' that characterized much of the latter part of the twentieth century in Britain and America is coming to an end. And perhaps having some sort of ethical map is more important than ever. This book seeks to provide an ethical map that might, hopefully, help us live through the uncertainty of our time.

1

Thinking about Ethics

Goals of this chapter:

- to reflect on the complex relationship between ethical reflection and moral behaviour;
- to explore the difference between ethics and morals;
- to explain the structure of the book;
- to introduce the concept of a morally serious person.

Thinking about ethics can be dangerous, so it is with some nervousness that I invite you to join me on a journey around the ethical world. The problem is this: rational reflection can expose certain tensions in a person that were hitherto hidden. As the old slogan goes: ethics are caught, not taught. Parents are the primary vehicle for ethical education and the process for this is not argument but example. In a healthy family, children are provided with good role models. Kindness and love permeate the home. Constructive mutual affirming habits are formed – one learns that as one is kind to others so others are kind to you. Discipline does not need to resort to violence and uncontrolled violence is never seen. In this environment, the basis of morality is laid. Certain assumptions – do unto others as you would have them do unto you – become part of the furniture of your mind.

Given all this, the trouble with ethical reflection as an adult is that you can inadvertently unpack all the good work that your parents did when bringing you up. You start asking awkward questions: what is wrong with selfishness? How do I know what is right and good? Given that sex is pleasurable, why not seek as many pleasurable sexual experiences as possible? As the questions are raised, so the unthinking assumptions are challenged. Suddenly, alternative answers which have not occurred to you before emerge. These alternatives become temptations. In short, this book needs a health warning: thinking about ethics can damage your ethical health.

Do Morals Matter?: A Textbook Guide to Contemporary Religious Ethics, Second Edition.
Ian S. Markham.

So why write it? And from your point of view, why read it? The term 'globalist' has become a term of abuse as 'populist' movements start getting attention. The Supreme Court in the United States is likely to revisit the abortion consensus. Interest is growing in cyber ethics, especially around privacy. With this renewed interest in ethics, we do need a new map of the ethical territory. This map must include all the major landmarks from the past, and add comment, reflection, and analysis in the light of this changing world. In writing this book my goal has been simple – it is to provide an up-to-date, accurate, interesting map of this changing ethical world.

Any map that opens up new ethical questions will have to face the possibility that some readers will become preoccupied with some of the old fundamental questions and perhaps arrive at answers that damage their current healthy ethical assumptions. This is an unavoidable risk.

However, to mitigate this a little, this map does have a suggested route – a message. It will introduce you to the concept of a *morally serious person* (MSP). This is a person who takes ethical discourse seriously and strives to live in a positive and constructive way. As you work through each chapter, you will see serious ethical exchanges about the nature of ethical discourse and the appropriate way to think about certain questions. At the end, I shall argue that, regardless of the position you actually take on many questions, the responsible obligation on us all is to take part in the conversation and be motivated by the quest for a position that is life enhancing and committed to the care of others.

In the more descriptive chapters, I have attempted to be as fair as I can be to the main arguments and positions in the various debates. I have tried to be 'objective'. Naturally, in this postmodern age, we now know that strict objectivity is impossible. Value judgements are involved at every stage. I have made a selection of views that I consider important: at this point, I am clearly making a judgement. Perhaps more seriously, there are certain points in the narrative where I develop an argument. In Chapter 4, I strongly suggest that consequentialist and deontological positions (terms that will be explained in that chapter) can be transcended with appropriate emphasis on the 'responsible self'. In Chapter 9, I argue that Roman Catholics are the only major group who can consistently oppose homosexuality. And in Chapter 10, I attempt to show that business ethics is in the interests of good business. However, beyond this, my goal has been to describe the options – not to decide between them.

Naturally I do hold opinions on such tricky issues as the significance of religion, abortion, and environmentalism. So, in the very last chapter I do present my ethical world-view. In so doing, I trust it will help to demonstrate how one goes about making ethical judgements. The danger of just being presented with arguments on both sides is that it compounds the impression that there is no way of deciding between options. This last chapter should help overcome that impression.

Before we start the journey, there are certain preliminaries that need to be established. This we shall do now.

1.1 Ethics and Morals

For many, these two words are synonyms. However, a distinction between 'morals' and 'ethics' can be helpful. Ethics is the realm of 'rational reflection upon human behaviour'. As Peter Baelz (1977, p. 2) puts it: 'Ethics, then, is a reflective, or theoretical, business. It aims in the first instance at understanding rather than decision. It takes stock of the moral scene. It steps back from the immediately practical and attempts to discover some underlying pattern or order in the immense variety of moral decisions and practices both of individuals and societies.' Morals are the actual practical problem that we face in a particular situation or circumstance. Although most chapters start with a moral problem, this book is a primer about ethics – therefore it stands back and deals with the big picture.

Another distinction is commonplace in the literature. This is the distinction between *descriptive ethics* and *normative ethics.* Descriptive ethics simply – as the word implies – describes the major ethical traditions both historically and today. The task is understanding. Normative ethics, on the other hand, will try to adjudicate between positions. It will attempt to suggest what is right, rather than describing the ways that others believe are right. This book weaves these two types of ethics together: it will describe the main ethical traditions, yet also offer the arguments of those who take a position. The last chapter is where your author and guide offers an adjudication about the strength and weakness of the arguments that have been considered in this book.

1.2 Thought Exercises and Case Studies

Each chapter (with the exception of the last two) will start with a thought exercise or a case study. A thought exercise is an abstract exercise that seeks to think through a principle. It constructs an imaginary scenario, which often serves as part of an argument. The famous article by Judith Jarvis Thomson called 'A Defense of Abortion' started with a thought exercise that she hoped would invite the reader to concede a principle that she wants to use in her pro-abortion argument. You will find this thought exercise reproduced at the start of Chapter 11. A case study is an actual moral problem that identifies a pivotal issue for decision-making. Case studies are realistic and often actual dilemmas.

The reason why each chapter begins with a thought exercise or case study is that ethical discourse needs to be grounded. In other words, thought exercises and case studies link our ethical reflection with moral problems. The ethical arguments in this book have implications for the way that we behave, the things we do and say, and the priorities for our future. The thought exercise or case study should make these connections.

Do, please, use the thought exercise or case study as dinner-time conversation. As you find your guests exhausting the normal topics of children, schools, mortgages, and pensions, it is good to introduce a few moral problems into the conversation. It may liven the whole thing up!

1.3 Let the Journey Begin

With these preliminaries out of the way, you are now ready to embark on the journey. The book is divided into three sections. Chapters 2 to 8 deal with meta-ethics (or philosophical ethics). We start with the basic question 'Why not do wrong?' and move through the whole debate about the fundamental nature of moral discourse and its relationship with religions. You will be introduced to Immanuel Kant and John Stuart Mill; natural law and virtue ethics will be described; and by the end of this section, your vocabulary will include such terms as 'deontological' and 'consequentialist'. Although the focus is on the Western philosophical traditions, Chapter 6 does look at the key areas of ethical agreement and disagreement across the major world religions, and Chapter 8 provides a sympathetic description and critique of the secular humanist tradition.

The second section is much more applied. Chapter 9 looks at the realm of human sexuality; Chapter 10 examines business ethics; Chapter 11 embarks on the complex area of medical ethics; Chapter 12 explores the moral problems involved in war; Chapter 13 takes up the problems of government and power; Chapter 14 looks at environmental ethics; and Chapter 15 engages with the ever-changing world of the Internet. It is perfectly possible to move straight to the second section or to read particular chapters. Each chapter is a separate entity that can be read on its own.

As already mentioned, it is in the third section that I become a conversation partner. In Chapter 16, I make explicit the implicit argument of the book that we all need to take ethical discourse seriously. You can be almost anything and an MSP (gay, Catholic, or rich); it is an approach or disposition to life that is characterized by the sense that moral discourse matters. In the last chapter, I discard my apparent neutrality and explain precisely how I see the issues that we have explored together. If you don't want to be subjected to my ethical prejudices, then feel free to skip this section.

Finally, I do hope this book is enjoyable. Although my goal is to cultivate an MSP, the seriousness is not meant in terms of being sober or miserable. Indeed, the opposite is true: our seriousness should run parallel with the capacity to appreciate the ironies of life that cannot help but produce a smile. The moral life can and should be fun; and reading about it should also be fun.

Reflection Questions

1 What, if anything, is the difference between ethics and morals?

2 What is the difference between 'descriptive ethics' and 'normative ethics'?

Discussion Questions

1 Do you agree that learning about ethics can damage your ethical health?

2 Do you think there are some types of positions or views that are incompatible with the concept of a morally serious person?

3 The author promises to provide a neutral summary of the main issues in most chapters, saving his position for the end of the book. Do you think a neutral summary is possible? Do you think the author might be deluding himself?

Reference

Baelz, Peter. 1977. *Ethics and Belief*. London: Sheldon Press.

Part I

Philosophical Ethics

2

Why Not Do Wrong?

Goals of this chapter:

- to consider the nature of moral language – in particular, words such as *right* and *ought*;
- to explore the thought of Nietzsche.

2.1 Thought Exercise

Imagine, if you can, a large lever located in an extremely secure computer room within a prestigious university. Imagine further that this lever triggers a complex cyber reaction which, courtesy of numerous satellites, results in the death, ostensibly of natural causes, of a middle-aged man in Bangladesh. The obscenely rich independent backer of the project invites you to pull the lever. He offers you $5 million to do so. Would you accept the offer?

The place to begin our exploration of ethics is with a simple fundamental question. What is wrong with being selfish? The word 'ethics' implies that we need to reflect upon our behaviour. However, reflection is simplified considerably if we start with the assumption that the 'right' action (and the inverted commas captures the potential ambiguity of that word) is simply the one that furthers most effectively our self-interest. This thought exercise challenges us to decide whether an ostensibly 'immoral act' can be justified by the enormous potential personal gain. The dilemma is simple: would you murder another human being for a large financial gain? And if not, why not?

There are a whole set of obvious questions that need to confronted. How could I be sure that the backer would indeed pay me? How would I cope with the guilt? Surely I should not pull the lever because I wouldn't want someone to pull the lever on me?

For the purpose of this case study, let me respond to these objections as follows. The financial backer has the cash there in front of you; he can clearly

Do Morals Matter?: A Textbook Guide to Contemporary Religious Ethics, Second Edition.
Ian S. Markham.

afford to pay you and anyway you know from others in different situations that he has indeed paid up. He also offers you a course of Prozac and a team of personal and confidential counsellors to help you talk through any post-lever guilt. And given that the technology underpinning the lever is unique, you need not worry about the lever being pulled on you.

At this point you might object that the whole exercise is a nonsense: the lever doesn't exist. Murdering for money is difficult and messy. Yet the thought exercise does confront us with the basic issue about the character of morality. For a person with considerable power, for example Stalin, there are moments when human life can be sacrificed for a personal gain. And the thought exercise is intended to eliminate all the other factors that often cause us to be moral, such as detection, guilt, and fear of reprisal. Detection is eliminated because it is not in the interests of anyone to expose the deed; guilt is eliminated by the promise of medication and therapy; and reprisal is eliminated because this is a unique machine underpinned by unique technology. It zooms in, then, on our fundamental attitude to human life. 'Thou shalt not kill', decrees the Ten Commandments, and the question is: are we committed to that truth even when the potential gain would be enormous?

2.2 Standing Back from the Thought Exercise

At the heart of this thought exercise is the question about the nature of 'ethics'. On one level, a definition of 'ethics' is easy: it is an attempt to analyse the reasons for certain actions. But on another level, the definition of ethics is extremely difficult. This is because the ethical vocabulary is a little strange.

Consider the words 'ought', 'right', and 'wrong'. This is the language of ethics. Yet what precisely do they mean? When I say, 'I really *ought* to go to my son's soccer match', I am not, normally, saying, 'I really *want* to go to my son's soccer match'. I construct that sentence when a friend has turned to me and said, perhaps, 'Would you like to come to the baseball game tonight?' The implied explanation is that my personal preference would indeed be to see the Yankees beat the Red Sox; however, I am feeling this obligation that makes me think that to do that particular action would be wrong. My sense of obligation makes me think that the right thing to do is to watch my son's soccer match. So, we seem to have a clash between our personal preferences and our ethical obligation. It almost sounds as if something external to myself is pushing down on me and telling me that the right thing to do is something that I don't want to do (or at least, left to myself, it would come in as a second preference to the baseball option).

Or let us think about the language of 'right' and 'wrong'. Imagine a conversation where you are discussing an old man wanting a sexual relationship with a 10-year-old child. Now, I think that is wrong. I have a variety of reasons

for thinking it is 'wrong', even if the 10-year-old is showing exceptional maturity or expresses a desire for the relationship. If others disagree with me, then the word 'wrong' extends to them. I would say that they are 'wrong'; they are 'mistaken'. In invoking the word 'wrong', I seem to be making a universal claim that applies to everyone. It isn't simply my opinion but it is a universal claim that I expect everyone to agree with.

So, the word 'ought' seems to imply an external agency pushing down on me that requires me to take a course of action that conflicts with my preferences; the word 'wrong' (and conversely when I use the word 'right') seems to imply a universal claim that applies to all people, even if (perhaps especially if) they disagree with me.

2.3 Ethics and Religion

Once this point is grasped about ethical language, you can immediately see why one doesn't go very far in the ethical discussion before one encounters religion. It might come as a surprise to a 'secular' Westerner that religion still matters, but when it comes to ethics, it matters a great deal. It is clear, as Alasdair MacIntyre (1985) has shown, that ethical categories emerged in a culture that assumed the truth of a religious universe. The 'ought' made sense because God had built into the universe certain moral truths that are then binding upon us. We will look later in the book at precisely how this works – it is called the idea of 'natural law'. But for now, let us note how the external nature of moral discourse coupled with its all-embracing universal claims make perfect sense if you believe in a God who created the world and cares for it.

Now, the project of providing a secular account of moral discourse has been a major preoccupation of many post-Enlightenment secular thinkers, and we will look at some of the major secular accounts, especially Utilitarianism, in later chapters. However, before we all go along with the assumption that any convincing account of morality needs to do without God, because many people today are irreligious, it is worth pausing and challenging that assumption.

There is a widespread view, most recently defended by Steve Bruce (2002), that with the European growth in science and technology there comes, inevitably, an increasing lack of commitment to religion. This lack of commitment to religion, or, to put it more accurately, the decline in the authority of religious institutions, is often called the secularization process. However, it is worth noting that this view has come under increasing attack. The obvious exception, which was always recognized, is 'America'. Religious participation in the United States remains steady and strong at approximately 40%, and, moreover, the true 'exception' is not the United States but Europe! It is clear that as other parts of the world embrace technology and science (e.g.

Asia, the Middle East), they are not embracing secularism. As Grace Davie (2000) has shown, European secularism is marked by both a growing failure of memory and an inability of people to engage in common activities. It is often claimed that football is the new religion of Britain, but this is clearly false. Gathering at football matches has itself declined since the 1950s in even faster numbers than gathering at churches. Many more watch football on television than attend games, and it is equally true that many millions watch religious activities on television. The funeral of Princess Diana might be seen as the religious equivalent of the World Cup Final – and the religious ceremony won by a large margin. In addition, not only churches and football matches but also trade unions, political parties, and women's organizations are all in trouble. In fact, church attendance decline is less dramatic than many of these 'secular' activities. People in Europe are simply ceasing to 'gather'. It is clearly a separate point whether Europe's exceptionalism is desirable or not.

Religion will be a significant theme in this book about ethics, but it will not assume that to be ethical one need be religious. Empirically, it is clear that is not the case: there are plenty of remarkable people who are deeply virtuous (to lapse into moral language without any explanation of what precisely I mean); and there are plenty of religious people who are deeply unpleasant, intolerant, and cruel. However, at the level of justification and common usage, it does look at first sight as if the religious people have an advantage. The words 'ought' and 'wrong' often seem to make more sense or to be more at home within a religious world-view.

With these preliminaries out of the way, we are now at the point that we can return to the question underpinning our thought exercise. Why not do wrong? What is wrong with selfishness? One possible answer to this question is 'nothing'. This was the answer given by the nineteenth-century genius, Friedrich Nietzsche.

2.4 Introducing Friedrich Nietzsche[1]

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) was the son of a Lutheran pastor. He had a strict classical education. At age 8 there were signs of a philosopher emerging. At 12, his slightly obsessive streak was beginning to show: he would wake up extremely early and then work all day, long into the evening. Perhaps because of this punishing schedule, he was to be haunted by illness throughout his life. At the age of 24, when he was made Professor of Philosophy at Basle, his mind would play tricks on him: he worried about unseen forces 'behind the chair'. More generally, he suffered from stomach pains, vomiting, headaches, and pains in and around his eyes. All things considered, perhaps, it is not surprising that his life was relatively short. He died when he was 56; and for the last 10 years of his life, he was unable to construct any coherent arguments. It is as if this genius worked himself to death.

His intellectual journey had several significant resting places. When he was a young man, in his twenties, he was sympathetic to the philosophy of Schopenhauer (1788–1860). However, Schopenhauer proved insufficiently radical for Nietzsche, so he moved on. He devoured the work of Charles Darwin; he sensed the growing scepticism about God in his culture. He anticipated both naturalism (i.e. the view that asserts there is nothing beyond the natural world) and certain forms of 'postmodernism' (i.e. the challenge to the belief of modernity and premodernity that there is an explanation for reality that we can identify as true). He left a considerable corpus of writing, and he covered a range of themes: the need to regenerate European culture; the nature of education; the implications of science for our view of ourselves; a 'yes to life'; the nature of morality; the death of God – and many more. Anyone wanting to appreciate our modern period needs to grapple with the thought of Friedrich Nietzsche.

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900)
A deeply provocative thinker who sought to confront the implications of Darwinian science. His work went through a range of different stages. Interpretations of Nietzsche vary considerably, from the pragmatic existentialist to the philosopher of the Nazis. The quest for the new Nietzsche tends to emphasize his postmodern sympathies and his radical view of truth.

2.5 Interpreting Nietzsche

Nietzsche (1844–1900) is probably one of the most controversial of all philosophers. The range of interpretations of Nietzsche's work is considerable. It has, for example, been viewed with considerable suspicion because of the use made of it by Hitler and the Nazis; he was apparently Hitler's favourite philosopher. It was thanks to Walter Kaufmann (1974) that this suspicion was overcome and Nietzsche was liberated from such associations. Kaufmann turned Nietzsche into a relatively straightforward humanist existentialist (i.e. one who places considerable stress on experience) and pragmatist (one who uses the criterion of 'usefulness' to evaluate assertions), who denies all metaphysics – and then confronts the ethical implications of such a denial. The problem with this interpretation is that there are just too many parts of Nietzsche that are much more radical than it implies. Repeatedly, he denies the possibility of all knowledge, describing science as 'an interpretation and arrangement of the world … and not an explanation of the world' (Nietzsche 1990, section 14, p. 44). This led to the quest for the 'new Nietzsche', with which I am in sympathy. On this view, Nietzsche's views are a radical challenge to truth and morality as traditionally understood.

His initial work operated within the accepted conventions of academic writing. For example, he delivered five very clear lectures called 'On the Future of Educational Institutions' at the University of Basle. However, fairly rapidly he moved beyond such conventions. He uses wit, irony, and hyperbole to make his point. Stylistically, he is confusing. He does not provide a neat, clear, exposition of an argument or a position. Indeed, his style is part of the problem of interpreting Nietzsche. Because of this, along with the Hitler association already mentioned, many philosophers do not read him. What they miss, however, is that Nietzsche's style is clearly part of his message. In *Ecce Homo*, he comments explicitly on his style:

> I shall at the same time also say a general word on my art of style. To communicate a state, an inner tension of pathos through signs, including the tempo of these signs – that is the meaning of every style; and considering that the multiplicity of inner states is in my case extraordinary, there exists in my case the possibility of many styles – altogether the most manifold art of style any man has ever had at his disposal. Every style is good which actually communicates an inner state, which makes no mistake as to the signs, the tempo of the signs, the gestures – all rules of phrasing are art of gesture. My instinct is here infallible. – Good style in itself – a piece of pure folly, mere 'idealism', on a par with the 'beautiful in itself', the 'good in itself', the 'thing in itself' … (Nietzsche 1992, p. 114)

Nietzsche here contrasts his style with 'good style' (i.e. good and clear arguments). The problem with good argument is that it is pure folly: it is comparable with other equally foolish ideas like reality or goodness. The style is internalized. He talks elsewhere in *Ecce Homo* of the pain involved in writing and his capacity to intuit, even 'to smell'.[2] Thus the picture emerging here is of a man who has internalized the cultural moment forced on Europe by the Enlightenment. And as he writes, his opaque prose is itself part of the message: knowledge is difficult; truth is fiction; and, for our purposes, morality now must be invented.

In *The Joyful Wisdom*, Nietzsche tells the story of the 'madman'. The scene starts in a marketplace, where people are completing the normal chores of life. The 'insane man' is trying to disrupt this normality and point out what exactly has happened culturally, namely the achievement of the Western world to make God redundant:

> The Madman – Have you ever heard of the madman who on a bright morning lighted a lantern and ran to the market-place calling out unceasingly: 'I seek God! I seek God!' – As there were many people standing about who did not believe in God, he caused a great deal of amusement. Why! is he lost? said one. Has he strayed away like a child?