

THE “ETHICS” OF TERRORISM: ONE PHILOSOPHER’S PERSPECTIVE

by

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First of all, I would like to thank the Center for Global Tolerance & Engagement, for sponsoring this event. Let me read the mission statement of the Center to inform you of its purpose: “To help foster a sustainable environment for global tolerance and engagement in our pluralistic world. To promote understanding of different worldviews on religion and ethics.”

Second, I would like to thank Debi Campbell, the Chair of the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, for encouraging me to give this talk, and for creating and advancing the PowerPoint presentation you’ll be seeing today.

Third, the reason that I thought about giving this talk is that I’ve seen forums here on campus where my colleagues from the political science, history, and even religious studies answered questions about the political, historical, and religious backgrounds of 9/11, tensions in the Middle East, etc. Though I thought they were very worth having and very valuable to conduct, I felt that someone who studies ethics for a living should be heard on the issue as well. So, without necessarily disagreeing with anything that any of my colleagues have said on this issue, I would like to give my perspective on terrorism and the events of 9/11.

INTRODUCTION AND WARNING

I am hoping by the end of this talk that I am not arrested for corrupting the youth or investigated by the FBI for possibly being a terrorist. I may annoy you by asking some uncomfortable questions and by making some uncomfortable claims, but I want to briefly assure you of four points: First, I am not intending to annoy you as I explore this issue and try to answer its questions. Second, I do sincerely believe that these questions are very important for each of us to ask and to try to answer before we perhaps negatively affect not only each other’s happiness but also our own happiness (individually and as a nation). Third, let me also say that though I am of the opinion that the terrorists of 9/11 were wrong, when I ask myself exactly *why* they are wrong, and attempt to give good reasons for this opinion, I find some problems with those reasons, as you’ll see. Lastly, I do not believe that we, in any sense, “deserved” to be attacked. By making this statement, I hope to differentiate my view from some of the more liberal voices out there that say that the attacks were brought on by the U.S. and its actions.

So, with these disclaimers stated, let me tell you what I will be arguing: First, that we should not use solely our emotions to determine what is right in this case; second, that neither individuals nor cultures should be the sole determiners of what is right and wrong; third, that it is not easy to give good reasons that show why what the terrorists did was wrong (without, that is, implicating the U.S. as well); and so, fourth, the best action that we can take is to be tolerant of other nations and groups, at least to the extent that we make a serious effort to understand their position and engage in meaningful dialogue with ourselves and these nations and groups (while we defend ourselves against possible violence). First, then:

EMOTION V. REASON, & WHY I PREFER USING REASON INSTEAD OF SOLELY EMOTION

Especially since the events of 9/11, people have been reacting emotionally to that situation and feeling a great sense of loss, and that we should do something in response to the attacks. For example, President Bush and the media have claimed that we are at war with terrorism (even though Congress has not officially declared war with any nation or entity recently). Moreover, President Bush has attacked Senator Tom Daschle for caring more about partisanship than for home security. Further, he has also claimed that Osama bin Laden is evil, that all members of Al Quida (or Al Queda) are evil, and has recently added that Saddam Hussein is evil as well. These attacks are definitely an emotionally charged issue – I have seen about 10 different websites that were sent to me by friends, of power point vignettes with musical soundtracks, of vigils throughout the world shortly after the attacks, and recently a memorial of many flags set up in Utah, one for each victim of the attacks. Before I more specifically discuss terrorism and the events of 9/11, I would like to talk about the role of emotion in ethics, and what role it should play therein.

If whatever we *feel* about the ethics of a situation is the correct theory of ethics, then I, for one, would be very concerned about that theory. The main reason for my concern is that everyone does not seem to have a well-functioning conscience; so what can we say if an “offender” (i.e., a committer of anything from stealing, rape, murder, and so on) does not regret what they have done, if we think that the offender has done something wrong? An excellent case in point is Tim McVeigh. McVeigh showed absolutely no remorse after bombing the Murrah building in Oklahoma City. On the contrary, he felt that he was doing a just action, that the U.S. deserved his bombing, and he was happy to be starting a new revolution. Fortunately for us, there were pretty near zero followers of that revolt; however, if we base our ethical assessment of that action on McVeigh’s emotions (or any other offender), we would need to claim that it was a good action. Or, if we make ethics relative to everyone’s emotions, then we would have it be that the same action would be both good and bad at the same time. This brings me to the inadequacies of Ethical Relativism, which I will discuss in just a moment.

Before I do, however, let me say that, although the German philosopher Immanuel Kant argued that emotion has *absolutely no place* in ethical reasoning (which is one option), others such as Plato have argued that there is a role that emotion can play in ethical reasoning. For example, according to Plato, there is a right time to grieve, a right time for anger, etc.; he believes the expression of emotion is to be “filtered” or “approved,” so to speak, through one’s reason, and when that happens, the emotion is a proper or true expression of virtue. For example, if I get angry that someone stole my computer, I do not have to argue that this action of stealing is wrong because I’m angry; instead I can use reason to argue that I have a property right to my computer, and that it was therefore unjustly taken from me, or that the thief would not appreciate having the same thing happen to him or her, etc. So notice that reason and emotion do not necessarily have to be at odds with each other in ethical disputes, depending on the issue.

THE INADEQUACIES OF INDIVIDUAL AND CULTURAL RELATIVISM

Individual Relativism (also known as Subjectivism) is the view that the sole determiner of right and wrong actions is the individual. If Individual Relativism is true, then whatever every individual thinks is correct about ethical questions, is correct. For example, if I think what terrorists do is wrong, then these actions are wrong. If you think what terrorists do is right, then

these actions are right. On this view, Hitler didn't merely have an *opinion* that killing Jews was a good idea, he is CORRECT that we should kill Jews. Jeffrey Dahmer, McVeigh, etc. are all correct about their views. If you're not already convinced about the wrongness of Individual Relativism, here's an academic way of attacking the view. There are two problems with Individual Relativism, which I see as being unanswerable: (1) The theory refutes itself, and (2) there can be no arguments as to what is right or wrong.

First, one can argue that the theory refutes itself, because of the following case: Say that you believe in a very common view that God exists, and that when we die (whether or not we believe in your conception of God), we get punished or rewarded for our actions. Note that this is by definition an objective view, applying to everyone. What's the problem? Remind yourself of the definition of Individual Relativism: Each individual determines what is right or wrong – if you are correct about your view (about God's punishing or rewarding us), then it is NOT true that each individual is correct about morality, since all we need is one person on earth who does not agree with your view, and they would have to be wrong, if you are right.

The second problem is that it wouldn't make any sense for us to argue about our positions if everyone is correct about their ethical assessments. Note that this objection works for the "emotion" ethical view as well. If Individual Relativism is true, as I like to argue to my students, I would love to have them sign an affidavit to that effect, and it would be a fun experiment to fail an otherwise "A" student, only to have a meeting with the Chair and/or Dean, and show them that the student thinks that whatever I think is ethically right *is* ethically right, and I believe there couldn't be much argument. Or, worse, if there were an argument, the student and I would *both* be right, and that wouldn't help either the Chair or Dean to resolve the issue, would it?

It is an interesting question as to why people would ever arrive at this view: My theory (briefly) is that as Americans, we're raised to believe that we have the right of free speech, everyone has a right to his or her opinion, tolerance is a virtue, the individual is supreme, etc. However (and we can talk more about this in the discussion afterwards), (1) simply stating an opinion (the free speech point) does not imply that every statement is correct; (2) having a right to an opinion is not identical to claiming that everyone is correct about ethics; (3) a person with an objective ethical theory can still be perfectly tolerant of others, so by itself tolerance does not necessarily imply Individual Relativism; and (4) even if every individual must sort out the answers to these questions, even if this view is true, it does not imply that Individual Relativism is true either.

Now, Cultural Relativism (also known as Conventionalism), or the view that the sole determiner of right and wrong is one's culture, seems to have some of the same problems as well as some additional and unique ones of its own.

- (1) **Though helpful as an explanation of other cultures, it does not justify them.** This view may help us to *understand* why cultures have accepted cannibalism, slavery, sexism, racism, genital mutilation, having no human rights, etc., but it does not give a good *argument* or *ethical justification* as to why these actions are ever moral. Even if we have a complete psychological profile on Tim McVeigh, e.g., we are not any closer to making an argument in favor or against what he did. Similarly, if we can explain why a culture has accepted a practice as being moral in the past, this explanation does not amount to a justification of that practice. The analysis of Cultural Relativism concerns ethics and so the discipline of philosophy, not psychology (which asks a different question than philosophy). (Please note that this criticism of Cultural Relativism is not a legitimate or sound criticism of anthropology, sociology, psychology, or history.)

- (2) **There can be no argument about what is right and wrong between cultures, no matter how sure your culture is that some other culture has done something wrong.** Hitler's Germany is ethically right, Stalin's Russia is right, Afghanistan's (former?) policy of not educating females, the mandatory wearing of burkas, and so on, are right; every action any culture has ever done (as long as the culture thought it was right), is right.
- (3) **If you do not follow the culture's beliefs, you are immoral.** It is unclear how one can go about changing the culture's belief or practice, if one finds oneself thinking that the culture is wrong. Anyone who thinks abortion should be illegal is wrong, and if they perform any action on that belief, they are immoral.
- (4) **What proportion counts?** Is it 51%? 75%? 90%? Who takes the polls and how often? How do we know what our culture thinks about LOTS of *recent* ethical questions: cloning, genetic engineering, etc.?
- (5) **Whose culture is relevant?** What culture do I count as my own? What if my father is from one culture and my mother is from another? Which culture is right? What about the sub-culture of being in a religion, being a professor, being an Arizonan, being a gang member, etc. What if these cultural beliefs conflict?

From these considerations, and assuming you agree with me thus far, it is apparent that what I think about terrorism may or may not be correct, and that what our culture thinks about terrorism may or may not be correct. If I am correct about the inadequacy of Individual and Cultural Relativism, then terrorism will not be right or wrong simply either because you or I believe it is wrong, or because our culture believes it is wrong.

So, even though Individual and Cultural Relativism have their problems, it is far from obvious what the "correct" objective theory is. I do not have enough time to go through the more popular objectivist ethical theories. So, I will have to move on, but keep in mind these shortcomings of Individual and Cultural Relativism, and let me now finally address what terrorism is (or at least what it seems to be).

WHAT IS TERRORISM?

According to the website [terrorismfiles.org \(http://www.terrorismfiles.org/encyclopaedia/terrorism.html\)](http://www.terrorismfiles.org/encyclopaedia/terrorism.html), terrorism is defined as "the systematic use of terror especially as a means of coercion." A second definition they give is:

The systematic use of terror or unpredictable violence against governments, publics, or individuals to attain a political objective. Terrorism has been used by political organizations with both rightist and leftist objectives, by nationalistic and ethnic groups, by revolutionaries, and by the armies and secret police of governments themselves.

The U.S. Code of Federal Regulations defines terrorism in the U.S. as:

The unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives (28 C.F.R. Section 0.85).

The same website claims that Hitler adopted terrorism as virtually a (officially unacknowledged) state policy in Nazi Germany, as did Stalin in Russia. They arrested, imprisoned, tortured, and executed people without legal guidance or restraints, to create a climate of fear and to encourage adherence to the national ideology of the state (See the following website: <http://www>).

terrorismfiles.org/encyclopaedia/terrorism_20th_century.html). Other, more familiar, examples are the individuals or groups that attempt to destabilize or overthrow existing political institutions (e.g., Ireland v. the United Kingdom, Algeria v. France, Palestinians v. Israelis, Catholics v. Protestants in Northern Ireland, and so on; see the same website).

Philosophers R. G. Frey and Christopher W. Morris, in their work *Violence, Terrorism, and Justice* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), have a great discussion concerning terrorism. Frey and Morris' definition of terrorism is: "a particular use of violence, typically for social/political ends, with several frequently conjoined characteristics: (1) usually involving creating terror or fear and/or a sense of panic in a population; (2) seemingly random or arbitrary use of violence; and (3) targeting of the innocent or of 'noncombatants'" (106c2). However, contrary to the part of the definition that says that terrorism involves targeting the innocent, Frey and Morris argue that terrorists try to justify their acts by arguing that their victims are not (wholly) innocent (107c1). Here, note that it is true that bin Laden has been quoted in a 1999 Newsweek interview as saying that any citizen of America supports what we stand for by simply living here and paying taxes, and so we are all guilty of being wrong and deserve suffering.

Frey and Morris' Questions:

Frey and Morris also ask some really relevant and interesting questions, even though they asked these questions in 1991, 10 years before the 9/11 attacks. Let me mention some of them here:

- When, if ever, may one intentionally harm the innocent?
- Is the justification of terrorist violence to be based entirely on consequences, beneficial or not?
- Or are terrorist acts among those that are wrong independently of their consequences?
- What means may one use in combating people who use violence without justification?
- What does it mean for people to be innocent, that is, not responsible for the acts, say, of their governments?
- May there not be some justification in terrorists' targeting some victims but not others?
- May terrorists' acts be attributed to groups or to states?
- What sense, if any, does it make to think of a social system as terrorist?
- May we execute terrorists or inflict forms of punishment that would, in the words of the American Constitution, otherwise, be "cruel and unusual"?
- What obligations might we, as officials of the state, have in our dealings with terrorists?
- Is bargaining a justified response to terrorism?
- How, if at all, should our responses to terrorists be altered if we admit or come to admit, to some degree, the justice of their cause (107c1)?

These are great questions to ask. Frey and Morris also argue that **terrorism, broadly or narrowly construed, as a type of violence or a type of force, is difficult to condemn out of hand**. Force is a common feature of political life – we secure compliance with law (e.g., tax law and crime) by the use and threat of force (107c1).

So with a sense of a definition of "terrorism," and with some questions out there about what it involves and why it may or may not be wrong, let us attempt to analyze the events of September 11.

WHY ARE THE ACTIONS OF THE 9/11 TERRORISTS ETHICALLY WRONG?

According to Frey and Morris' definition (and in this section I'll have their definition in mind), the events of 9/11 would probably be construed as terrorism: First, the attacks involved violence, but not really for social or political ends; rather it seems from what we are told to be for fundamentalist religious ends. Second, there is no question that the events involved terror, fear and a sense of panic in our population. Third, on the one hand, the events did not seem to be random or arbitrary – the World Trade Center was already a terrorist's target as a symbol of America's power, and there was a lot of planning and flight training that went into this. Before we knew about all the planning, however, the events looked to be random and an arbitrary use of violence. Also, one might argue that the attacks were random, since the terrorists killed many Muslims and non-Americans as well as their targeted population, Americans. Lastly, as for the third criterion, they targeted innocents and noncombatants. As I said, though, bin Laden had advocated attacks against the United States in general, claiming that every American was innocent, since we did not respect what Islam stood for, and that by supporting the American culture and government, we were, so to speak, guilty by association. So according to us, they attacked innocent people, and according to the terrorists, they attacked guilty people.

Now, before I had read Frey and Morris (and so, even without the fancy, multi-parted definition of terrorism), I found myself asking what it precisely was that made the attacks morally wrong. When I formulated the following two reasons, however, I found that the United States itself had committed the same kinds of acts in the past. For example:

Possible reason #1: Innocent people were intentionally killed – Here are just a few examples from the U.S.'s past where we seemed to have committed the same actions: In World War II, the U.S. killed anywhere from 35,000 – 135,000 citizens while bombing Dresden (ruining the city); we killed approximately 80,000 civilians and left 1,000,000 homeless in Tokyo with conventional weapons; and of course with atomic weapons killed 70,000 – 80,000 people in Hiroshima and 39,000 people in Nagasaki (and in Nagasaki 25,000 others were injured). Moreover, note that these numbers for Hiroshima and Nagasaki do not include the other deaths from radiation, and genetic damage. (By the way, estimates of how many civilians were killed in WWII are anywhere from 35 to 60 million people!) More recently, from what I understand, the U.S. military also intentionally killed innocents in Vietnam, when the military could not “sort out” the Viet Cong enemy from the good/innocent people. Recently, we have (probably not intentionally) killed thousands of innocent people in the Afghanistan “Enduring Freedom” operation. In fact, any time we enter into a war (such as the one contemplated and being argued for by the Bush Administration against Iraq), we expect to kill innocent people, although the argument is made that we will try to minimize the casualties. If we intentionally enter into a war where we know that innocent people will be killed, then we are still intentionally killing innocent people in these cases. There is no question that in most of these cases (especially, e.g., the bombings of Dresden, Tokyo, Hiroshima and Nagasaki), the intent of the U.S. was to strike as much fear and terror as possible into the hearts of the Germans, the Japanese as well as the Russians (to show the then superpower what new destructive weapons we had and their capabilities).

Possible reason #2: Property (that didn't belong to the terrorists) was destroyed – *First example:* The U.S. destroyed much of Dresden, 1,000,000 people's homes worth of property in Tokyo, about 40% of the buildings in Nagasaki, and all of the buildings in

Hiroshima except for one, which became a memorial for peace. *Second example:* To rebel against the King of England, on December 16, 1773, American “patriots” (note the phrasing of *Encyclopædia Britannica*) disguised as Indians, led by Samuel Adams, threw 342 chests of tea from three British ships into Boston Harbor. In other words, our country was founded at least in part via destroying someone else’s property.

So, to sum up the point of these examples, if killing innocent people or ruining other countries’ property is wrong, it seems that we have done something wrong as well. Following the implications further, if we feel justified in killing every Al Quida and Taliban member based on these reasons alone, then it seems that in order to be consistent with our reasoning, first, we should be willing to admit that we have committed terrorist actions; and second, we should be advocating the same punishment for ourselves.

Now, let me be clear about what I’m arguing and what I’m not arguing: I want to assure you, in case you’re wondering, that I do not hate America by any means. First, I think America is a great country, and second, I believe that hate is a result of ignorance, so I do my best to rid myself of that feeling. What I *am* arguing is that it is rather puzzling to attempt to explain both why what the terrorists did was wrong, while at the same time holding that we as a country have not done anything wrong. I will discuss the implications of this view more below.

My more personal assessment concerning the ethical wrongness of the terrorists’ action is this: I feel that the terrorists had a mistaken conception of happiness and what would lead them to happiness, though they did what they *thought* was best and what they *thought* would bring them happiness. In my opinion, however, they did not achieve their objective, though I will not attempt to prove this here today. Here is a consideration in that direction, however: The terrorists who died left everyone of their Al Quida and Taliban groups alive to take the punishment from the U.S. Also, to try to express a sense that there may be such a thing as an objective ethical theory, I was a bit amazed and impressed that, from what I could tell, 99% of the world thought the terrorists did something morally wrong (at least immediately after the incident).

ARGUMENT BY ANALOGY: ADMITTING OUR IMPERFECTIONS AS INDIVIDUALS

We’re all pretty familiar with the Biblical story of Jesus’ saying, “Let he who is without sin cast the first stone,” the Biblical passage that says that instead of looking for a toothpick in someone else’s eye, we should pull the pole out of our own eye first, and popular phrases such as “people who live in glass houses should not throw stones.” (There is also a Buddhist version of this saying in the *Dhammapada*.) Consider this simple example: I am a person who has made mistakes in the past (and if you don’t believe me, my wife would be happy to confirm this for you if you wish). So I realize that I am not perfect. But neither is anyone I deal with on a day to day basis – no offense to any of you out there to whom that remark applies. Thus, isn’t it important for each of us (instead of focusing on examining others, trying to find ways of making enemies, and criticizing others) to focus on working on ourselves first, and maybe even model in our actions the kind of behavior we’d like to see in other people? If this is true on an individual level, perhaps we can look at what this would look like for our country.

ADMITTING OUR IMPERFECTIONS AS A COUNTRY, AND THE ARGUMENT FOR TOLERANCE (I.E., SOME REACTION OTHER THAN MURDER)

Let's take that simple example of working on ourselves and apply it to the current situation. On an international level, suppose that the U.S. is persuaded by my arguments (though we seem to be in absolutely no danger of that happening), and that the U.S. is willing to admit that it has done some immoral actions in the past. Our current policy as I understand it (and I'm certainly not an expert in this area) is that we are at so-called war with terrorism, and are seeking to either capture or murder every member of Al Quida and the Taliban, and obviously Osama bin Laden. However, given what I have said above about our reasoning as to why the acts of terrorism were wrong, and the fact that the U.S. seems to be guilty of doing the same kinds of actions (with the same kinds of intentions and consequences), let me ask the following, admittedly uncomfortable, question: In order to be consistent with our current policy against Al Quida and Osama bin Laden (leaving out Hussein) and given our past actions, are we willing to have the rest of the world team up against us and either capture us or murder us? If not, then it seems we must learn to tolerate others *to some degree* (though I certainly believe it is right for us to defend ourselves against any further attacks). For instance, would it not be beneficial for us to attempt to understand what it is that they despise about us, and to try to come to an understanding about what the ground rules for the future will be? We may need to do such things as have some forums about world religions, and hash out philosophical questions about what our evidence is for the different religions, what the similarities and differences are, and whether it is worth having terrorist attacks and world wars over these religions. Moreover, it may be necessary to try to get fundamentalist sects of all religions to see that we all are in this together, there is only one planet we inhabit (at least for now), and that the answer as to the "correct" religion is much more difficult than they may currently believe.

I think that if everyone would take a world religions class, educate him or herself about these religions, and see past the differences to the many similarities between Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, our culture could really change its current views about how different and foreign Islam is. Perhaps then we could find some common ground and start working out a strategy for engagement instead of first thinking of revenge or terrorism. While I'm not an expert in these religions by any means, I do know that each of these religions teaches that it is important to love and take care of one another as a community, so those in each faith who think that the right idea is to attack anyone purely for reasons of theology (and there have been groups within each of these religions who have thought that was a good idea) are not officially following their faith.

Lastly, it is my solemn belief that if all citizens of the world (not merely Mesans) were required at 18 or so to take a philosophy class (including theories of what exists, what we can know, and how we should live), his or her mind would be opened to new possibilities, and he or she would realize how many fundamental questions there are out there, questions which are very difficult (if not impossible) to answer, such as what can we know with absolute certainty, can one rationally prove God's existence, what is justice, what exists, how should we live, etc. For example, as far as ethics go, I teach at least 13 different and unique ethical theories in my Introduction to Ethics class, and this does not include Individual and Cultural Relativism. There is no consensus among philosophers which of these 13 is correct (or even if we'll ever agree that there is such a thing as a correct ethical theory). If this policy were carried out, I believe that every individual would be much less likely to do such things as judge others immediately as being evil, definitely wrong, or immoral, etc., and that these consequences would only help and in no way harm the entire world situation as it is today.

SOME LAST, RELATED, QUESTIONS

- Will not harm come to us from declaring that we will act unilaterally whenever we wish (even if every other nation on earth thinks that our proposed move is unwise or unwarranted), or that we have the power to determine which countries can have and which countries cannot have nuclear weapons?
- What will we do if and/or when we are not the most powerful country in the world? If China becomes the next major economic power and makes many more nuclear weapons, will we agree to whatever orders or limitations that China might place on us? How can we think then, consistently, that we should be able to determine who can and who cannot have nuclear weapons?
- On negotiating and/or engaging in dialogue with Saudi Arabia – why would we not want to be talking to the government to see what kinds of anti-American movements they're allowing to exist in their country, or how they're educating Saudi citizens on American culture, etc.? Why do we not want to ensure that our culture is being accurately portrayed, and that hate groups there are debated with and argued against by the government and others? If the fundamentalists are really upset that we have a base there, and if by pulling our base we could save many future lives, is it worth it for us to keep the base there just as a matter of principle? Islamic fundamentalists apparently think that Americans and their culture do not care enough about the poor. However, can we not reply to that objection by arguing the point that America is the most generous country in terms of donations and humanitarian aid? Perhaps that would be a way that we could start dialogue with these people.
- Hypothetically, assume we kill every Taliban and/or Al Quida member on earth. First, it seems impossible to do so, and second, doesn't it seem highly likely that some other group that we don't even know the name of (because it hasn't been formed yet) will be very upset that we rid the world of some people who disagreed with our policies (but who didn't directly have a role in killing anyone else) and will propose violence against the U.S.? In that case, the cycle will continue and we will in essence get nowhere.
- Revenge (= exchanging a wrong for a wrong) versus justice (= the concept of a proper proportion between a person's deserts (what is merited) and the good and bad things that befall or are allotted to him or her *Encyclopædia Britannica*). E.g., compare shooting someone who stole a CD from me, versus suing him or her in a court of law. Is revenge always the right way, and how do we know that?

CONCLUSION

I hope I have outlined some important questions about terrorism, what it seems to involve, and how difficult it is to really articulate what makes it wrong, as well as the shortcomings of Individual and Cultural Relativism, and the possible inconsistencies of certain reasons that can be given as to why the 9/11 attacks are morally wrong. I would like to be able to find a consistent way of arguing that the attacks are wrong and feel justified in our current position as a country, but I am unable to do so as of this moment. I will conclude by merely acknowledging my puzzlement, in the hope that you are not so confused, so that perhaps we can work some of these issues out in the discussion period. Thank you for your time.