

MAIN RESEARCH AREAS

Over three decades of philosophy teaching and research at academic institutions in Europe, Israel, US and Australia, I have written on problems in ethical theory, political philosophy, and philosophy of law, such as moral conflict, the limitations of consequentialism, political obligation, and the moral justification of legal punishment. I have also done much work in applied philosophy, and written on topics such as capital punishment, sexual morality, civilian immunity in war, the definition and moral justification of terrorism, and the ethics of lying.

In my work on **punishment** I offer a rationale of legal punishment solely in terms of desert and justice, with no concessions to utilitarian considerations, and a qualified defense of capital punishment. Publications in this area include sixteen book chapters and journal articles, a monograph on Hegel's theory of punishment, published in Germany (*Banquos Geist. Hegels Theorie der Strafe*, Hegel-Studien, Beiheft 29, Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1986), and a systematic book-length study of the subject, *Justifying Legal Punishment* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ and London: Humanities Press International, 1989, 2nd edn. 1997). In the monograph on Hegel I trace the development of his view on punishment from his early theological writings to the theory of punishment in his mature philosophical system. I also seek to provide a convincing interpretation and defense of the two distinctively Hegelian tenets concerning punishment: that punishment "annuls" the crime, and that it is a right of the criminal himself/herself. The book *Justifying Legal Punishment*, among other things, offers a comprehensive critical discussion of the "mixed" (utilitarian *cum* retributive) theories of punishment, and a sustained analysis of the debate about the "punishment of the innocent" argument, widely considered to be crucial for the assessment of the utilitarian approach to the morality of punishment and of utilitarianism in general.

In my research on **terrorism** I have looked into both conceptual and moral issues. Publications on the subject include "What Is Terrorism?", in which I seek to overcome the relativism plaguing most debates on terrorism by constructing a definition that captures the traits central to its moral evaluation, without begging the moral question at issue. It highlights (i) the innocence of its victims, (ii) the use (or threat of use) of violence, and the aims of (iii) intimidation and (iv) coercion. Other articles and book chapters on terrorism deal with the main types of its moral justification, the view of terrorists as "enemies of humanity", the phenomenon of state terrorism, the use of terrorism in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the terror-bombing of German cities by the Allies in World War II. An edited anthology was published in 2004 (*Terrorism: The Philosophical Issues*, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan). Jointly with C.A.J. (Tony) Coady, I am now at work on a book entitled *Contemporary Terrorism: Ethical and Conceptual Issues* (under contract with Oxford University Press). The book aims to develop a philosophical framework for a moral assessment of both terrorism and counterterrorist measures and policies. It will provide the first systematic and detailed discussion of all the main philosophical issues, conceptual and normative, raised by terrorism and responses to it from states, alliances of states, and the international community. These issues will be explored with an eye to the urgent concerns of legislators and policy-makers.

In my work on **patriotism** I seek to construct a position beyond the choice (suggested by much current research) between universalism and moral and political parochialism. With regard to the usual type of patriotism, which is concerned to promote non-moral interests of the *patria* such as political and economic power or cultural vibrancy, I reject sweeping universalism and argue that patriotic loyalty, when constrained by universally valid considerations of justice and basic human solidarity, must be morally allowed. However, contrary to the dominant view, this type of patriotism lacks positive moral significance: it is neither morally required nor morally valuable. On the other hand, a patriot can put his/her country's mundane interests to one side and focus on its moral well-being, seeking to make sure that its laws and policies are just and that it shows a decent degree of human solidarity, both at home and internationally. I argue that this distinctively ethical type of patriotism is, under certain fairly common circumstances, a stance we ought to adopt. Publications in this area so far include one book chapter, three journal articles, and three edited collections.

In my work in the **philosophy of sexuality** I defend the “plainer sex” view, which is a radical, minimalist version of the understanding of sex as essentially but a source of a certain kind of pleasure. I also attempt to show that most (not all) tenets of our sexual morality cannot withstand critical scrutiny, and that there is no “sexual morality” in any strong, philosophically interesting sense of the term, since sexual behavior can be morally evaluated and regulated by the same moral considerations that also apply elsewhere. Publications in this area include five articles, a book entitled *Ethics and Sex* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), and two edited anthologies on the philosophy of sexuality. *Ethics and Sex* offers a systematic discussion of the main conceptions of the nature and moral significance of human sexuality – the procreation view, the “romantic” view, the understanding of sex as a body language, and the hedonist view – and of the main issues in sexual morality: monogamy, adultery, jealousy, prostitution, sexual perversion, homosexuality, pedophilia, rape, and sexual harassment.