I am an interdisciplinary researcher in the philosophy of language and linguistics. My area of specialty is semantics, and I have a keen interest in biolinguistics. Questions I ask include: what kind of communication systems do various animals have, what is different about human neurology that allows for a radically different kind of language skill, in what way is language innate, how is truth related to meaning, how do the arts and sciences contribute to understanding the world, why is promoting linguistic diversity important? My work explores all these issues.

Most philosophers would agree that although we should never give up striving for truth, understanding the world is more of an approximate affair. A theory that does nothing more than list the facts is not a theory or explanatory. Theories, models, maps, diagrams are valuable precisely because they are false in the right ways. What good, for instance, would a map be if its scale were equal to existing dimensions? Architectural models are not made of bricks, concrete, and wood, and drawings are never exact but allow for tolerances, say 1/8 of an inch. Schematics have symbols that represent but do not exemplify or resemble properties of elements they denote, and idealizations are valued because we can compare the ideal abstraction to concrete cases. For example, an idealization of a pure liquid would not cause an object to look bent, but the angle of diffraction can be used to calculate the amount of sediment present in the sample (Snell's Law, *see* Nancy Cartwright 1983, 46-47). An epistemological analysis of models, maps, and diagrams reminds us that what counts is explanatory value and the possibility of good prediction. Truth is therefore rendered model-dependent. More correctly, models are judged as right or wrong; they are what has been called "felicitous fictions" (Catherine Z. Elgin 2004, 113-131).

I believe that these observations regarding models and theories ought to apply as well to theories of meaning. Until recently, meanings were thought of as recipes in the mind, used to build concepts of varying complexity, and these recipes must be quite simple and organic as they have evolved.

On the other hand, many philosophers maintain that understanding the meaning of an expression is knowing when applying it yields truth. Here again, we focus on truth but what kind of truth are we expecting? It cannot be the formalized truth we learn about in logic. Ask most anyone who has taken a logic course and they will agree that natural deduction is anything but natural. Or perhaps meanings are wrapped up in the truths of chemistry? Is the sentence "water is H_2O" true or does it just mean *water is water*?

Polysemy is ubiquitous in natural language and metaphors are rarely true. I offer arguments to support the thesis that meanings come before truth and that we should avoid conflating regimented meanings of the sciences with the rich meanings of natural language. Importantly, both the arts and sciences contribute to how we understand the world, and both employ felicitous falsehoods or, as I have termed them in other work, facetted fictions.

I have presented my perspective in public talks and exhibitions from 2010 until the present. In 2010, I exhibited 13 artworks based on Catherine Z. Elgin's article "True Enough." My work on multilingual children's books has been studied at the University of Ottawa because it allows children to map parts of speech from more than one language effectively.

My candidacy paper was successful, my thesis abstract has been accepted, and I have submitted a first draft to my linguistics supervisor. I am on track to complete my PhD in early 2024.

I am currently discussing the possibility of doing a post-doc at UQAM on linguistic diversity.

Thank you for the opportunity to apply to……………..

Community Service Involvement and Athletic Activities

- Outreach: being a fan of both the arts and sciences in various public talks
- Defending the arts in academia
- Art donations to foundations
  - Canadian Hadassah-WIZO (CHW)
  - Jewish General Hospital Fundraiser
  - Trevor Williams Kid's Foundation
  - Casa Italia
  - Congrès National des Italo-Canadiens
  - Amnesty International
  - Cedar's Cancer Foundation
  - Offered weekly soup dinners for poor Montreal artists
- Donations to charities
  - Dans la Rue
  - St- Michaels Mission
- Union work (IATSE 514; DGC; SARTEC)
  - Signed petition and testified in support of victims of psychological abuse
  - Risked, jeopardized, or lost work due to solidarity
  - Fought for the improvement of working conditions for more vulnerable workers
  - Mentored many young union members
  - Insist on the inclusion of older workers
  - Letters of reference for union members
- Caregiver for seniors
  - Decorated places for elderly acquaintances and friends when they have moved
  - Administered end of life protocol for spouse's mother
  - Cared for psychiatric patient
  - Create holiday & birthday cards to send to elderly acquaintances & friends
  - Visit elderly friends weekly
- Created a bilingual children's book series and give drawing classes to recent arrivals
- Created layout and ordered the production of a book for a person with cerebral palsy
- Presentations on philosophy and art.

Athletics:
- Played Rugby for Westmount Rugby Football Club (1985-1988)
- Yoga practice (2008-present)
- Indoor hockey as goaltender (2006-2015)

- Regular walks with friends.
- Swimming YMCA (2002-2008)