Currently my research breaks into two broad categories. The first has to do with philosophical issues related to Madagascar. Right now I have three intermediary projects and various long-term ones. My three intermediary projects are as follows:

- A paper that examines the extent to which the voice system of Malagasy (there is not merely an active and passive voice as in English but also a relative voice) and its pragmatics shapes Malagasy thought. In practice, native speakers greatly favor the non-active voices. The hypothesis here is that as a result of speaking so much in the passive and relative voices, Malagasy understand the world more in terms of objects and circumstances than do English speakers. The experimental test for this has been designed and my colleague will execute the experiment shortly. After that, we will review the results and then work out the details.

- Madagascar has a rich oral tradition. *Ohabolana* (proverbs) are a key to understanding the worldview. Arianala Ratiarivelo, arguably Madagascar’s most prominent living philosopher, and I are working on a paper that uses these proverbs to identify the traditional ethical system of the Malagasy worldview. We then will compare and contrast this with common elements in the ethical tradition in the West. Malagasy ethics has a realistic view of human nature (man is neither wholly good or bad). At its core is the concept of *fihavanana*, the idea of kinship. The most central tenet to Malagasy ethics is that people ought to be treated as if they are family.

- Many Malagasy proverbs are puzzling. They present contrasting ideas. A classic example is: *Ny tody tsy misy fa ny atao no miverina*, meaning that there is no cosmic retribution for what you do but your deeds return to you. This, on the surface, is puzzling because the proverb denies what it seems to assert. There are other proverbs that fit this mold. A colleague and I have a paper which examines these proverbs in greater detail, using some of the analytical tools established by another Fulbrighter to Madagascar (Lee Haring in his book *Verbal Arts in Madagascar*). We compare the structure of Malagasy proverbs with American ones and show that American proverbs are not nearly as puzzling. We show that Malagasy proverbs have a dialogic structure that explains why they are often puzzling. We also explain what this feature of the proverbs showcases about Malagasy thought and culture.

More long-term, my projects related to Madagascar are as follows:

- A book length treatment of Malagasy philosophy. The book will have two parts. The first part will be an explanation of the significance of *ohabolana* and how they shed light on many aspects of the traditional Malagasy worldview. The second part will be concerned with what Malagasy philosophers and intellectuals have actually written about Malagasy philosophy and the worldview of the people. Much of this is written in Malagasy which I
read and speak fluently. So far no one has covered this rich philosophical tradition in the West in a truly systematic way, though thinkers have touched on some aspects here and there.

- The work on linguistic relativity and determinism will continue. This will involve empirically testing various versions of the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis as it relates to Malagasy language and thought.
- Another project is to test empirically the extent to which fundamental philosophical concepts in the Western tradition exist in Madagascar. Are there significant differences? If so, why?

The second broad category of my research concerns topics in mind and language in mainstream analytic philosophy. My research currently focuses on intentionality, concepts, and issues related to debates about internalism and externalism, though I also work on philosophy of language, religion and ethics. The focus on concepts also relates to questions about how Western concepts get expressed or don’t get expressed in non-Western traditions, as well as issues that relate to the ability to compare distinct worldviews. So, there is certainly a connection between these two broad projects. I often use the tools from analytic philosophy to inform (but not dominate) my analysis of issues in the non-Western tradition.