

Vincent Brilliant-Giroux

Anthropologist

Centre for Research on India, South Asia and its Diaspora – Associate Member
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Citizenship: Canadian

October 2026

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Anthropology of religion, rituals, anthropology of ethics, popular Hinduism, ancestor worship, spirit possession, myths, authenticity, religious diversity in Quebec, social change in Kerala and India, theyyam, Adivasis.

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

2019-2021 **SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Toronto**
Department of Anthropology UTSC
Project: *“From Ritual Performances to Everyday Ethics: Castes, Equality, and Dynamics of Change in Kerala, South India”*
Supervisor: Professor Michael Lambek

EDUCATION

2014-2019 **Ph.D. in Anthropology, Université de Montréal**
Doctoral thesis: *“Les dialogues de la possession : ritualité et divinisation des ancêtres chez les Mavilans et les Malavettuvans”* [*The Dialogues of Possession: Rituality and the Deification of Ancestors Among the Mavilans and Malavettuvans*]
Supervisor: Professor Karine Bates

2012-2014 **M.Sc. in Anthropology, Université de Montréal**
Master's thesis: *“Aspirations de la relève et nécessité de convaincre dans le culte du Teyyam”* [*Aspirations of the Next Generation and the Need to Convince in the Teyyam Cult*]
Supervisor: Professor Karine Bates

2012-2013 **Short Graduate Program: Gomukh, UQAM**
Études de terrain en Inde [*Fieldwork School in India*]
UQAM, Department of Religious Studies

2009-2012 **B.Sc., Anthropology, Université de Montréal**
Université de Montréal

1995-1999 **National Theatre School of Canada**
Acting Program

CAREER INTERRUPTION

2022–2025 Four-year health-related career break (fully recovered)

SCHOLARSHIPS

MAJOR FELLOWSHIPS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

2019	SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellowship, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (\$90,000)
2014	Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship, Doctoral Scholarship, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (\$105,000)
2014	Doctoral Research Scholarship, Quebec Fund for Research on Society and Culture (\$60,000) – declined
2013	Master's Research Scholarship, Quebec Fund for Research on Society and Culture (\$17,500)
2012	Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship, Master's Scholarship, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (\$15,000)

AWARDS, GRANTS AND DISTINCTIONS

2022	Seal of Excellence, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Postdoctoral Fellowship, European Commission
2021	Seal of Excellence, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Postdoctoral Fellowship, European Commission
2020	Mobility Scholarship, Center for Ethnography, UTSC (\$1,000)
2018	Merit Scholarship, J.A. DeSève Foundation (\$8,000)
2018	Grant to support Doctoral Thesis writing, Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies of Université de Montréal (\$10,000)
2018	Mobility scholarship, PARSECS, FAÉCUM, Université de Montréal (\$500)
2016	Michael Smith Foreign Study Supplements, SSHRC (\$6,000)
2016	Student Travel Grant, CASCA (\$100)
2015	Mobility scholarship, Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies of Université de Montréal (\$500)
2015	Scholarship for completion of Masters, Department of Anthropology, Université de Montréal (\$500)
2014	Grant to support Master's Thesis writing, Foundation Berthelet Aubin (\$3,500)

2013 Mobility scholarship, Quebec Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports (\$3,000)

PUBLICATIONS

My publication activity was interrupted by health issues between 2022 and 2025. I have since fully recovered and am actively working on several publication projects.

Works in Progress

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| Submitted | <i>Article</i>
Brillant-Giroux, Vincent. Proposes theoretical innovations in the study of ritual, based on fieldwork among Adivasi communities in Kerala, South India. |
| In preparation | <i>Article</i>
Brillant-Giroux, Vincent. Invited submission to a special issue on ethnographic research methods in South Asia. Drawing on long-term research in Kerala, the article reflects on how interactions in ritual settings shape ethnographic interpretation. |
| In preparation | <i>Book manuscript</i>
Brillant-Giroux, Vincent. Based on doctoral research, the book examines ritual processes of ancestor deification and their social significance among Kerala's Adivasi communities. |
| In preparation | <i>Special issue (co-edited)</i>
El Ibrahim, A., and V. Brilliant-Giroux, eds. Addresses questions of authenticity and legitimacy in cultural representations and political movements. |

Peer-Reviewed Articles

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| 2021 | Brillant-Giroux, Vincent. "Perspectives sur l'authenticité et conditions d'efficacité rituelle : Nécessité de convaincre et enjeux de transmission dans le rituel du Teyyam" [<i>Perspectives on Authenticity and Conditions for Ritual Efficacy: The Need to Convince and Challenges related to Transmission in Teyyam Ritual</i>]. <i>Studies in Religion / Sciences Religieuses</i> : 50 (1) |
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Working Papers

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| 2020 | Brillant-Giroux, Vincent. "Relations dévotionnelles, désir de transformation et support de la communauté : trajectoires des membres dans un centre Sathya Sai Baba de la région de Montréal". [<i>Devotional Relationships, Desire for Transformation and Community Support: Trajectories of Members in a Sathya Sai Baba Center of the Montreal Area</i>]. Working Paper. GRDU, CEETUM, Université de Montréal |
| 2020 | Book Review – Bernard Müller, Caterina Pasqualino, Arnd Schneider (dirs.) <i>Le terrain comme mise en scène</i> . <i>Anthropologica</i> : 61 (2) |

Book review

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| 2013 | Bordeleau, François and V. Brilliant-Giroux. "État des lieux sur le travail informel en Inde : Une revue de littérature" [<i>Overview of Informal Sector in India: a Review of Literature</i>], working paper PRACTA-GIREPS, no. 2, Montréal |
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TEACHING

- 2022 Mythes, rites, symboles [*Myths, Rites, Symbols*] – ANT2624, Université de Montréal, Department of Anthropology, Winter semester
- 2022 Atelier de rédaction [*Writing Workshop for PhD Students*] – ANT7919, Université de Montréal, Department of Anthropology, Winter semester
- 2021 Séminaire de rédaction de mémoire [*Master's thesis writing seminar*] – ANT6910, Université de Montréal, Department of Anthropology, Fall semester
- 2020 Popular Hinduism – ANTC88H3S, University of Toronto Scarborough, Department of Anthropology, July-August 2020

TEACHING ASSISTANT

- 2018 Department of Anthropology, Université de Montréal, seminar ANT6160, *Cultures, Justice, et Droits*, Professor Karine Bates
- 2018 Department of Anthropology, Université de Montréal, course ANT3172, *Inde contemporaine : idéologies et vécus*, Professor Karine Bates
- 2016 Department of Anthropology, Université de Montréal, course ANT1030 *La justice et les cultures*, Professor Karine Bates
- 2015 Department of Anthropology, Université de Montréal, course ANT3875 *Langue et Culture en Asie du Sud*, Professor John Leavitt

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- 2014- 2015 RESEARCH PROJECT COORDINATOR
Research project: Les Hijra au Maharashtra : enjeux identitaires, sociaux et culturels [*Hijra of Maharashtra: Many Communities and Various Identities*] (SSHRC 2014-2016), directed by Professor Mathieu Boisvert (UQAM)
- 2013 RESEARCH ASSISTANT – FIELDWORK IN INDIA
Research project: Syndicalisme et organisation collective des travailleurs atypiques et du secteur informel en Inde : vers un travail de traduction des savoirs et des pratiques [*Trade Unionism and Collective Organization of Atypical Workers in the Informal Sector in India*], (FQRSC 2012-2015) directed by Professor Yanick Noiseux, Université de Montréal
- 2012 RESEARCH ASSISTANT
Research project: Dimensions du pluralisme religieux québécois [*Dimensions of Religious Pluralism in Quebec*] (SSHRC 2010-2013), GRDU, directed by Professor Deirdre Meintel. Ethnographic study of an Eckankar Center in the St-Jérôme area, Québec
- 2011 RESEARCH ASSISTANT
Research project: Dimensions du pluralisme religieux québécois [*Dimensions of Religious Pluralism in Quebec*] (SSHRC 2010-2013), GRDU, directed by Professor Deirdre Meintel. Ethnographic study of a Sai Baba Center in the Montreal area

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

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| Upcoming
(2026) | “Conditions de confiance, sincérité et regards méthodologiques” [<i>Conditions for Trust, Sincerity, and Methodological Perspectives</i>]. Paper presented in the panel “Construire la relation d’enquête : éthiques du terrain en Asie du Sud ” [<i>Building the Research Relationship: Field Ethics in South Asia</i>] convened by Marwan Attalah and Mathieu Claveyrolas. Congress of the French Association of Ethnology and Anthropology (AFEA), Marseille, France, October 28–30, 2026 |
| 2022 | “Synchrétisme religieux, castes et résistance : négociation identitaire à travers les rites de possession des communautés adivasi du nord du Kerala” [<i>Religious Syncretism, Caste, and Resistance: Identity Negotiation through Possession Rituals among Adivasi Communities in Northern Kerala</i>] Conference : « À la fois autochtones et indiens : Réalités et enjeux adivāsi en territoire sud-asiatique» (MRIF / CERIAS / ULaval / USherbrooke / UMontréal / UQAM). November 17 |
| 2022 | “Modalities of Presence: Authority and Ritual Change in Kerala”. Annual Conference, Canadian Society for the Study of Religion (CSSR/SCÉR) May 28 – June 1st |
| 2022 | “Ritual, Rules and a Space for Agency” Annual Conference. Canadian Anthropology Society (CASCAS) Regina, Saskatchewan, May 11-15 |
| 2021 | “Ritual Process, Agency and Embodiment of Authority in Kerala”. Annual Conference on South Asia (ACSA) October 21-23 |
| 2021 | “Ritual Changes in Process: Embodying Authority in Rituals of Ancestor Worship in Kerala” Annual Conference, Association for Asian Studies (AAS), March 21-26 |
| 2019 | “Authority, Agency, and Conditions for Change Acceptance in Possession Rituals of Northern Kerala”. Annual conference, American Anthropological Association (AAA) Vancouver, November 20-24 |
| 2019 | “Ancestor Worship, Ethics and Leadership in a Tribal Community in Kerala, South India”. Annual Conference, American Academy of Religion, Eastern International Regional Annual Meeting (EIR-AAR), Montréal, Canada, April 13-14 |
| 2018 | “Ancestor worship, resilience and transmission of values: talking with the dead in a tribal community of Kerala” Annual conference, American Anthropological Association (AAA) San Jose, November 14-18 |
| 2018 | “Performing the Gods in Kerala: Identities, Castes and Values”. Annual Conference, European Association for the Study of Religions (EASR), Bern, June 17-21 |
| 2018 | “Process of Deification and Ritual Possession in a Tribal Community, Kerala, South India”. Annual Conference, Canadian Anthropology Society (CASCAS), Santiago de Cuba, May 16-20 |
| 2016 | “Speaking to the Gods’ Presence in a Ritual of Possession: Meaning and Authenticity” Annual Conference, Canadian Anthropology Society (CASCAS), Halifax, Nova Scotia, May 11-15 |

- 2016 “Enjeux disciplinaires et méthodologiques” [*Disciplinary and Methodological Issues*]. Presented in the panel: “Les hijra du Maharashtra : au-delà du genre”, Université du Québec à Montréal, May 9
- 2015 “Teyyam Gods, Castes and Dedication: Transmission of the Practice of Ritual Possession in Kerala, South India”, Conference on South Asian Religions at the 3rd Biennial University of Toronto Graduate Student Conference, October 8-9
- 2015 “Principles of Authenticity, Perception, Trust, and Fulfillment of Wishes: Convincing of Possession in the Teyyam Ritual”, 33rd ISSR Conference, International Society for the Sociology of Religion, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium, July 2-5
- 2015 “Contemplations, rêves et vies antérieures : parcours spirituels et existentiels dans un centre Eckankar” [*Contemplation, Dreams, and Previous Lives: Existential and Spiritual Paths in an Eckankar Center*], CEETUM, Montréal, March 18-20
- 2014 “La quête de soi par l’interprétation des rêves : recherche ethnographique dans un centre Eckankar” [*The Quest for the Self Through Interpretation of Dreams: Ethnographic Research in an Eckankar Center*], ACFAS annual meeting, Montréal, May 12-16
- 2014 “Transformations, crédibilité et reconnaissance : évolution de la pratique de la possession dans le culte du Teyyam, Inde du Sud” [*Transformations, Credibility and Appreciation : Practice Evolution in Teyyam Possession Ritual, South India*], CEETUM’s Conference, Montréal, March 19-21
- 2012 “Croyances et pratiques dans un centre Sathya Sai Baba : nuances et diversité” [*Beliefs and Practices in a Sathya Sai Baba Center: Diversity and Nuances*], CEETUM’s Conference, Montréal, March 14-16

PRESENTATIONS – TALKS, COURSES AND OTHER EVENTS

- 2026 “Introduction à l’hindouisme” [*Introduction to Hinduism*]. Invited by Professor Catherine Larouche in the course ANT1213, Université Laval
- 2021 “Rituels et traditions de l’hindouisme populaire au Kerala” [*Rituals and Traditions of Popular Hinduism in Kerala*]. Invited by Professor John Leavitt in the course ANT 3875, Université de Montréal, Department of Anthropology
- 2019 “Authority, Agency, and Conditions for Change Acceptance in Possession Rituals of Northern Kerala”. Annual conference, American Anthropological Association (AAA) Vancouver, Canada, Novembre 20-24
- 2019 “Rituals of possession, Castes and Ethics of Leadership in North Kerala”, UTSC, Centre for Ethnography, Speakers Series, October 9.
- 2018 “Mobilité sociale, mariage et classe moyenne au Kerala” [*Social Mobility, Marriage and Middle Class in Kerala*]. Invited by Professor Karine Bates in the course ANT1030, Université de Montréal

- 2017 “Rituels de possession et culte des ancêtres dans une communauté Adivasi au nord du Kerala” [*Possession Rituals and Ancestor Worship in an Adivasi Community of North Kerala*]. Invited by Professor John Leavitt in the course ANT3875, Université de Montréal
- 2017 “Teyyam and the Kerala Society”. Presented at Govt. Vocational Higher Secondary School Kadankode, Cheruvathur, Kerala
- 2017 “Religions and Tourism in Kerala”. Presented at Sky India Aviation Academy Kanhangad, Kasargod district, Kerala
- 2016 “Possession institutionnelle et résolution de conflits” [*Institutional Possession and Conflict Resolution*]. Invited by Professor Karine Bates in the course ANT1030, Université de Montréal
- 2015 “Quelques spécificités grammaticales du Malayalam” [*Basic Grammar Rules in Malayalam*]. Invited by Professor John Leavitt in the course ANT3875, Université de Montréal
- 2015 “Mobilités sociales et transformations rituelles au Kerala” [*Social Mobility and Ritual Transformations in Kerala*]. Invited by Professor John Leavitt in the course ANT3875, Université de Montréal
- 2013 “Jeunes performeurs et modernité dans la pratique du Teyyam” [*Young Performers and Modernity in Teyyam Practice*]. Gomukh Program 2012-2013
- 2012 “De l’intimité à la communauté : croyances et pratiques dans un centre Sri Sathya Sai Baba de la région de Montréal” [*Intimacy, Community and Beliefs in a Sri Sathya Sai Baba Center in the Region of Montreal*]. Invited by Professor Deirdre Meintel in the course ANT2020, Université de Montréal

EVENTS ORGANIZATION

- 2021 Reddington, Helena; Victoria Sheldon & Vincent Brillant-Giroux. “Authority and its Contradictions: Expressive Traditions and Contested Futures in Kerala, South India”. Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin–Madison, October 20-24
- 2015 Coordinator and member of the organizing committee for a workshop day held by the *Emerging Scholars of South-Asia Montreal Network*