

BHRIGUPATI SINGH

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ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, Brown University, July 2014 onwards
Associate Director, Center for Contemporary South Asia, Brown University July 2016 onwards
Member, Steering Committee, Center for Contemporary South Asia, Brown University July 2012 onwards
Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, Faculty Fellow, July 2014 onwards

Assistant Professor (UK equivalent: Lecturer): in Anthropology and Religious Studies, King's India Institute, King's College, London. 2013-14.

Visiting Faculty Member, Department of Psychiatry, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi. July 2015 – August 2016. [During Research Sabbatical from Brown University]

Brown University, Watson Institute, Postdoctoral Fellow in Anthropology and International Studies. 2011-13.

Harvard University, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Postdoctoral Scholar. 2009 - 2011

Sarai-Center for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Delhi. Research Fellow, 2001-2002.

EDUCATION

Johns Hopkins University
Ph.D., Department of Anthropology, December 2009
Dissertation Title: *Gods and Grains: Lives of Desire in Rural Central India*

School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, U.K., 2000-2001
M.A. in Anthropology of Media
SOAS Taught Masters Prize for Highest Marks Across all Anthropology Masters Courses

St. Stephen's College, Delhi University, India, 1997-2000
B.A. (Honors) in English
Muriel Wasi Prize for Highest Marks in Delhi University

AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Institute for Advanced Study, Berlin (Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin), Invited Residency Fellowship, 2018-19

Award for Excellence in the Study of Religion, American Academy of Religion, 2016 Book prize Awarded to *Poverty and the Quest for Life: Spiritual and Material Striving in Rural India*

Joseph W. Elder Prize for the Indian Social Sciences 2015, American Institute of Indian Studies, Awarded to *Poverty and the Quest for Life: Spiritual and Material Striving in Rural India*

Finalist, 2016 Clifford Geertz Prize for the Anthropology of Religion, Society for the Anthropology of Religion, American Anthropological Association for *Poverty and the Quest for Life: Spiritual and Material Striving in Rural India*

American Institute of Indian Studies, Senior Research Fellowship, January-May 2016 [For *Transformations of Sadness in Contemporary India: Explorations within Cinema, Psychiatry and the Everyday Life of Urban Poverty*]

Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, Post PhD Grant, 2015-2016 [For *Transformations of Sadness in Contemporary India: Explorations within Cinema, Psychiatry and the Everyday Life of Urban Poverty*]

Dean's Teaching Fellowship Prize, Johns Hopkins University, 2008.

Nominated for Excellence in Teaching Award, Johns Hopkins University for course on Religion and Moral Economy, taught at the invitation of the Program for the Study of Women, Gender and Sexuality, 2007.

Andrew Mellon International Dissertation Research Fellowship, Social Science Research Council (SSRC), USA, 2005-2006.

Graduate Research Fellowship, Institute for Global Studies in Culture, Power and History, Johns Hopkins University, 2003.

Taught Masters Prize (for Highest Marks across all Masters Courses). School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, U.K. 2000-01.

British Foreign Office - Chevening Open Social Sciences Scholarship for Masters Studies in the U.K., 2000-01.

Muriel Wasi Prize for Highest Aggregate in B.A. (Honors) English literature, St. Stephen's College, Delhi University. 1997-2000.

Scholarship for Proficiency in the German language from Max Mueller Bhavan (Goethe-Schule), New Delhi, 1996.

PUBLICATIONS

Book Series

Thinking from Elsewhere Flagship Cultural Anthropology series for Fordham University Press, co-edited with Clara Han (Johns Hopkins University).

Series manifesto statement available upon request. Series launched at 2017 AAA meetings.

Books

Works in Progress

Life Unsettled: Urban Poverty and Psychic Distress in Contemporary India

Projected date for first draft of manuscript: August 2019. Invited to Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin (Institute for Advanced Study, Berlin) for Writing Residency to complete first draft in 2018-19

Steps Towards a Global Thought: Thinking from Elsewhere

Edited volume with Leela Gandhi on what comes “after” postcolonial theory and creating a place for “non-western” philosophy in contemporary critical theory. Book workshop held on October 6th and 7th 2017.

Published

Poverty and the Quest for Life: Spiritual and Material Striving in Rural India

University of Chicago Press (2015), Oxford University Press (South Asia Edition, 2015)

Winner of the Joseph W. Elder Prize in the Indian Social Sciences, 2015

Winner of the Award for Excellence in the Study of Religion (Category: Analytical-Descriptive), American Academy of Religion, 2016

Finalist, Clifford Geertz Prize for the Anthropology of Religion, 2016

Panel discussions on *Poverty and the Quest for Life*:

Book panel: Jaipur Literature Festival, Jaipur, India, January 2017

Panel at the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Washington DC, December 2014, titled “Vitality, Sovereignty, Agonistics, Ethics: A Conversation with Bhrigupati Singh on *Poverty and the Quest for Life*”

Somatosphere Book Discussion Forum, 2015 – Essays in response to the book by William Mazzarella, Lisa Stevenson, Naveeda Khan, William E. Connolly, and others:

<http://somatosphere.net/2015/03/book-forum-bhrigupati-singhs-poverty-and-the-quest-for-life.html>

South Asia edition book release and discussion jointly hosted by the American Institute for Indian Studies and Oxford University Press at the India International Center, New Delhi, with responses to the book by leading anthropologists, artists, and non-fiction writers. January 2016

Brown University Book Adda (book event) on *Poverty and the Quest for Life*
Featuring responses to the book by Sudipto Kaviraj, Michael Taussig, Amanda Anderson and Leela Gandhi, and art works in response to the book by ten leading Indian artists.

Edited Volumes

The Ground Between: Anthropologists Engage Philosophy
Co-edited with Arthur Kleinman, Michael D. Jackson & Veena Das.
Duke University Press, 2014.

Articles in Peer-Reviewed Journals

Works in Progress (Co-authored)

“Circuits of Mental Health Care in India: Psychiatric Insights from a Sufi Shrine”, co-authored with Professor Pratap Sharan (Department of Psychiatry, AIIMS, Delhi) to be submitted to *Transcultural Psychiatry* in June 2018

“Can a Neighborhood Fall Sick?” co-authored with Professor Ravindra Rao (Department of Psychiatry, AIIMS, Delhi) to be submitted to *Medical Anthropological Quarterly* in July 2018

“Household Dynamics and Mental Health” co-authored with Professor Mamta Sood (Department of Psychiatry, AIIMS, Delhi) to be submitted to *Culture, Medicine, Psychiatry* in August 2018

Works in Progress (Single-authored)

“The Vitality of Smack Addicts: First Thoughts on Sanity, Vitalism and Skepticism”, to be submitted to *Current Anthropology* in September 2018.

“The Caste Question in Contemporary South Asian Islam: An Ethnographic Response to the Sachar Committee Report”, to be submitted to *Modern Asian Studies* in November 2018.

Under Review

“Anthropological Investigations of Vitality: Life-force as a Dimension distinct from Space and Time”, under review with *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, as part of a Special Issue titled *Anthropology and Life Itself*

Published

“An Uncritical Encounter between Anthropology and Psychiatry: AIIMS Psychiatrists reading *Affliction*”, in *Medicine Anthropology Theory*, Issue 4, No. 3, pp.153-165

“Depression”, *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, in Special Issue on “Keywords in Indian English” (eds.) Craig Jeffrey, Assi Doron and Meera Ashar. Vol.40, No.2, pp.297-300.

“Introduction: A Joyful History of Anthropology”, with Jane Guyer, *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, Vol.6, No.2, (2016) as part of a Special Issue titled *A Joyful History of Anthropology* (eds.) Bhrigupati Singh and Jane Guyer. Pp. 197-211.

“The Lives of Others as a Preparation for our own”, *Religion and Society: Advances in Research*, Vol.7 (2016), Issue 1, pp. 17-22

“On the Killing and Killability of Animals: Non-moral Thoughts for the Anthropology of Ethics”, with Naisargi Dave, in *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*. Vol. 35, No.2, September 2015. Published with a response by Wendy Doniger (University of Chicago)

“Botched Enlightenment”, with Leela Gandhi, in *E-flux: Journal of Contemporary Art, Culture and Theory*, Special Issue for the 56th Venice Biennale, (eds.) June 2015.

‘The Headless Horseman of Central India: Sovereignty at Varying Thresholds of Life’, *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 27, Issue 2, May 2012, pp. 383-407

‘Agonistic Intimacy and Moral Aspiration in Popular Hinduism: A Study in the Political Theology of the Neighbor’, *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 38, No. 3, Aug 2011, pp.430-450

‘Frugality and Excess in Gandhi, Thoreau and Nietzsche’, *Borderlands*, Special Issue on Religion and Sexuality, Vol.9, No.3, December 2010, pp.1-34

‘*Adamkhor Haseena* (The Man-Eating Beauty) and the Anthropology of a Moment: A Study of Cinema in an Un-cinematic City’, *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 42, 2, May 2008. pp. 249-279.

‘Narrating *Injustice*: British Cultural Studies & its Media’, *Television and New Media*. Vol. 7, No.2, May 2006. pp. 135-153.

‘Another Investigation of Postcolonial Failure’, *Journal of Cultural and Religious Theory*, Vol. 7. No.1, Winter 2005. pp. 55-82.

‘A Critical Look at the Films of Anand Patwardhan’ in *Critical Asian Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 4, December 2002. pp. 623-636.

Edited special issues of journals

Anthropology and Life Itself, Special issue on Anthropology and Vitalism under review with *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*.

Edited Book Forum on *The Mana of Mass Society* by William Mazzarella, with contributions by Jean Comaroff, Leela Gandhi, Aarti Sethi, Bhrigupati Singh and Michael Taussig. *Public Books* (Forthcoming in April 2018).

A Joyful History of Anthropology, Special issue on rethinking approaches to the history of anthropology (eds.) Bhriqupati Singh and Jane Guyer, December 2016, *HAAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*

Guest edited and wrote introduction to 'Unsettling Cinema', Special issue of the journal *Seminar* on Cinema Studies in India. Issue 525, May 2003.

Chapters in Edited Volumes

"Hunger and Thirst: Crisis at Varying Thresholds of Life", in *Living and Dying in the Contemporary World: A Compendium*. (Eds.) Clara Han and Veena Das. November 2015. University of California Press: Berkeley.

"Photography and *Prana* (Life-force): Towards a Vitalist Reading of Images" in *Origins* (eds. Raahab Allana and Nandita Jaishankar), British High Commission (India) and the Alkazi Foundation for the Arts (Delhi), October 2015. Accompanied by an art show on view at galleries in Delhi, Bangalore and London.

"Conceptual Vita" in *Wording the World: Veena Das and Scenes of Inheritance*. (ed) Roma Chatterji. 2015. Fordham University Press: Fordham. Published in South Asia by Orient Blackswan.

'How Concepts make the World Look Different: Affirmative and Negative Genealogies of Thought' in *The Ground Between: Anthropologists Engage Philosophy*. (eds.) Arthur Kleinman, Michael D. Jackson & Veena Das and Bhriqupati Singh. 2014. Duke Univ. Press: Durham, NC.

'Re-inhabiting Civil Disobedience' in *Political Theologies* (eds.) Hent deVries and Lawrence Sullivan. 2006. Fordham University Press: Fordham. pp. 365-382

Other Scholarly Publications

"Foreword" to the new edition of *Critical Events: An Anthropological Perspective on Contemporary India* by Veena Das. Oxford University Press (2018 reprint).

"Writing with Love and Hate" in "Writer's Workshop" (a series on anthropologists reflecting on the practice of writing) in *Savage Minds: Notes and Queries in Anthropology*, December 2015.

'Race, Violence and Media Flows' in *Cities of Everyday Life*, Sarai Reader 02, Sarai-CSDS and Society for Old & New Media, De Waag, Delhi/Amsterdam 2002. pp. 85-91.

'One Week in Aman Chowk: On the Aftermath of Collective Violence in Gujarat, India', *Seminar*, Issue 517, September 2002. pp. 78-85.

PRESENTATIONS

Invited Lectures and Selected Conferences

“Caste, Mental Health and Suspicions of the Other”, in a panel on *Concepts, Experience and Claims to the Real* at the Annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Washington DC. November 2017

“How the Spell of a Theory Breaks” in a panel on *The Mana of Mass Society* at the Annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Washington DC. November 2017

“Other Minds as an ‘Indian’ Problem”, in a panel on *What is Indian about this?* at the Annual Conference of South Asian Studies, Madison, Wisconsin, October 2017

“Circuits of Mental Health Care in India: Ontological Insights from a Sufi Shrine”

Brandeis University, Benson Saler Annual Lecture in the Anthropology of Religion, Dec 2017

Princeton University, Department of Anthropology, December 2017

London School of Economics, Department of Anthropology, Colloquium series, October 2017

Johns Hopkins University Department of Anthropology, Colloquium series, April 2017

“Spiritual Afflictions and Mental health in Contemporary India”, in a panel titled *Hawa: Air, Spirit, Wind and Breath in South Asian Moral and Medical Imaginaries*, Annual Conference of South Asian Studies, Madison October 2016.

“Opium for the Masses” (on heroin addiction and urban poverty in two resettlement colonies of Delhi) in a panel titled, *Rituals of Death, Rituals of Debt*, American Anthropological Association Meetings, Minneapolis, November 2016.

Poverty and the Quest for Life: Somewhere between Rural and Urban India [Lecture on how the themes of my book *Poverty and the Quest for Life* relate to my new ethnographic research on urban poverty and mental health in India]

Emory University, Department of South Asian and Middle East Lecture Series, August 2016.

Syracuse University, Anthropology and Religious Studies, Invited Lecture, October 2016

McGill University, Institute for the Study of International Development, November 2016

University of Minnesota, Department of South Asian studies, November 2016

University of Washington, Seattle South Asia Center, February 2017

Poverty and the Quest for Life: Spiritual and Material Striving in Rural India

Book talks: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Delhi (August 2015); Azim Premji

University, Bangalore (August 2015), South Asia University (October 2015), Mumbai Literary

Festival (October 2015).

“Metaphysics as a Threshold between Life and Death”, in *Annual Conference on Metaphysics and Politics*, organized by the Backwaters Metaphysics Collective (consortium of scholars in the US and India) and the Kochi Biennale, Kochi (Kerala, India) – 16th July 2016

“After Life: Design Ideas from the Spirit World” in *Critical Design/Critical Future*, Rhode Island School of Design, April 24th, 2015

Organizer and Discussant, Brown University India Initiative Book Adda on Leela Gandhi’s *The Common Cause: Postcolonial Ethics and the Practice of Democracy, 1900-1955* (University of Chicago Press, 2015)

Anthropology and Philosophy: Affinities and Antagonisms, Book Discussion, Institute for Education, University of London, April 2014

Discussant, “Animate Encounters: Responses to the Ontological Turn in Anthropology”, Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, December 2014.

Caste and Conflict in Contemporary India: Thoughts on the Political Theology of the Neighbor

- King’s India Institute, King’s College, London, March 2014
- Harvard University, Department of South Asian Studies, November 2013

Sacrificial Life and Death in Contemporary Hinduism, Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University, February 2013.

“On the Killability of Animals in India: Immoral Thoughts for the Anthropology of Ethics” on a panel entitled ‘Undeading Death’, Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Chicago, December 2013.

“Against the Dominance of History in the Study of South Asia: Thoughts for the Present from Mythologies and Political Theologies”, on a panel entitled ‘Other Times in South Asia’, Annual Meeting of the South Asian Studies Association, Madison, Wisconsin, October 2013.

‘The Quality of Life (A non-economist’s view) on a panel entitled ‘Anthropology and Life Itself’, Executive Panel, Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, San Francisco, November 2012. Co-organized panel with Robert Desjarlais and Clara Han

What does Accumulation do to us? An inter-disciplinary conversation at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston. November 2012.

‘Gods and Grains: Political Theologies of Popular Hinduism, Invited lecture, Street Scholars Collective, Bangalore (India), January 2011.

‘Erotics and Agonistics in Rural Central India: Notes on the Political Theologies of Neighborliness’

- Harvard University, Department of Anthropology Colloquium Series, September 2010.
- Brown University, Department of Anthropology Colloquium Series, September 2010.
- UC Berkeley, Department of Anthropology Colloquium Series, October 2011
- University of Pennsylvania, Department of South Asian Studies, November 2012
- UNC-Chapel Hill, Department of Anthropology, October 2010

‘The Vulnerability of Power’ on a panel entitled ‘Anthropology and Political Theologies’ Invited Panel, Society for Cultural Anthropology, Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Montreal, November 2011. Co-organized panel with Stefania Pandolfo.

‘Mitra-Varuna: A Bipolar Concept of Sovereign Power’, on a panel entitled ‘Law and the Politics of Religion’, Lassnet (Law and Social Science Network) Conference, Pune (India), December 2010.

‘Philosophical Allegiances and Ethnographic Attentiveness’, on a panel entitled ‘Deleuze and Anthropology’, Invited Panel, Society for Cultural Anthropology, Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, New Orleans, November 2010.
Co-organized panel with Joao Biehl & Peter Locke

TEACHING

Life Itself (Graduate Seminar)
Fall 2017, Department of Anthropology, Brown University

Anthropology of State Power and Powerlessness (Graduate Seminar)
Fall 2016, Fall 2014, Department of Anthropology, Brown University.

Writing India (Graduate Seminar, Co-taught with Ian Jack, Founding Editor, *Granta*)
Fall 2013, King’s India Institute, King’s College London

Introduction to Cultural Anthropology (Undergraduate)
Spring 2018, Spring 2017, Department of Anthropology, Brown University

Anthropology of Mental Health (Undergraduate)
Fall 2016, Department of Anthropology, Brown University

Religion and Culture (Undergraduate)
Spring 2017, Spring 2015, Department of Anthropology, Brown University

History of Anthropology (Undergraduate)
Fall 2014, Fall 2012, Department of Anthropology, Brown University

The Politics of Religion and Secularism (Undergraduate)
Fall 2011, Watson Institute, Brown University. Cross-listed with International Relations.

Religion and Moral Economy (Undergraduate)
Fall 2007, Program for the Study of Women, Gender & Sexuality, Johns Hopkins University.
Nominated by students for JHU Excellence in Teaching Award.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Associate Director, Center for Contemporary South Asia, Brown University, July 2016 onwards

Member, Steering Committee, Center for Contemporary South Asia/Brown India Initiative, Brown University, July 2012 onwards

Associate Editor, *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, July 2013 onwards

Reviewer for *Cultural Anthropology*, *Critique of Anthropology*, *American Anthropologist*, *Asian Ethnology*, *Political Theory*, *Journal of Cultural and Religious Theory*, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*

Brown University First-Year Advising Program AY2016-17: Ananya Poddar, Eleanor Meshnick, Srinjoy Srimani, Mengqi Wang

Brown University First-Year Advising Program AY2017-18: Ananya Poddar, Eleanor Meshnick, Srinjoy Srimani, Mengqi Wang, Kai Barshack, Emmie Kiely, Bill Ma, Fabiola Meyer Garza, Mason Warble

PhD Dissertation Committee Member (Department of Anthropology, Brown University):
PhD completed: Rama Srinivasan, Yana Stainova
Currently in PhD program: Brian Horton, Andrea Wright, Malay Arora, Jessica Katzenstein, Parsa Bastani, Samee Sulaiman, Mariz Kelada, Yifeng Cai

Undergraduate Thesis Advisor (Brown University):

Current AY 2016-17: Jonas Johnson (Anthropology) *Winner of Best Anthropology undergraduate thesis 2016-17*, Elizabeth Gaccione (Anthropology) *Winner of Best Undergraduate Engaged Anthropology Thesis 2016-17*, Stefanie Kaufmann (Contemplative Studies), Pranav Sharma (Development Studies/Watson) – Article version of thesis published in *The Caravan: A Journal of Politics and Culture* (a leading long-form magazine in India), Steven Velasquez (Anthropology)
2015-16: Pia Brar
2014-15: Theo-Peck Suzuki,
2011-12 (as Postdoctoral fellow): Ana Carolina Barry Laso

Member, Search Committee, Watson Institute – Department of Anthropology junior faculty search, Fall 2014.

External Examiner for MA/PhD Thesis: Indian Institute of Technology (IIT, Delhi), Temple University, Rhode Island School of Design, Harvard Graduate School of Design