

COURTNEY STAFFORD-WALTER
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RESEARCH INTERESTS:

The thirteen months of ethnographic field research I conducted in Region 9, Guyana, focused primarily on indigenous education, boarding schools, and the impact of this educational shift on Amerindian youth, their families and their communities. I also describe and analyze ‘The Sickness’, a local term for spirit possession, which effects adolescent Amerindian girls living in boarding school dormitories. I strive to situate this phenomenon in the wider context of Amazonian theory and the anthropology of education.

EDUCATION:

- 2013–Present PhD in Social Anthropology, University of St Andrews, UK;
Working title of thesis: “The Sickness: Separation and Spirit Possession in Guyanese Boarding Schools”
Supervisor: Professor Peter Gow
Anticipated Completion Date: January 2018
- 2005–2009 BA in Cultural Anthropology, University of Virginia, USA;
“The Role of Creative Play in the Construction of Personhood of Makushi Children in Nappi Village Guyana”
Distinguished Major: Graduated with High Distinction

PAPERS AND PUBLICATIONS:

- 2011 “Forced Communitas: A Look Through the Lens of Humanism” Co-authored with J. Kelli Nash; Excerpts published in *Communitas: The Anthropology of Collective Joy* by Edith Turner
- 2009 “The Role of Creative Play in the Construction of Personhood of Makushi Children in Nappi Village Guyana”
Distinguished Majors Thesis based on undergraduate ethnographic research; Presented to the Anthropology Department of University of Virginia; Received High Honors

RELEVANT AFFILIATIONS AND EXPERIENCE:

- 2016-17 Student Representative for Post-Fieldwork PhD students at University of St Andrews
- 2015 Researcher, Co-founder of Center for Research and Collaboration of the Indigenous Americas at the University of Maryland (CRACIA)
- 2013–14 Student Representative for Pre-fieldwork PhD students at University of St Andrews

CONFERENCE PAPERS, SEMINARS AND WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS:

- August 2016 “The Sickness’: Spirit Possession through the Lens of Sociality”
To be presented at the University of Maryland
- July 2016 “The Sickness’: Attachment and Separation in Guyanese Boarding Schools”
To be presented at the ASA 2016 Conference, University of Durham
- June 2016 “The Sickness: Spirit Possession in A Guyanese Boarding School”
To be presented at the ‘Teaching and Learning in Amazonia’ workshop in Oxford
- May 2016 “The Sickness: An Ethnographic Glance at Possession in Guyanese Boarding School”
Seminar for the Center for Amerindian Studies, St Andrews
- May 2016 “Boarding Schools: The Impact of Separation on Family Life”
Presented at the IUAES 2016 Conference
- April 2014 “Different Forms of Knowledge: An Indigenous Perspective on Power”
Presented at the conference Steve Rubenstein and the Neo-Colonial Frontier

GRANTS AND AWARDS:

- 2014 Russell Trust Award, University of St Andrews.

ADDITIONAL SKILLS:

- Excellent organizational and event planning skills;
- Regional knowledge of Amazonian and Caribbean ethnography and theory;
- Extensive experience in an administrative role;
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills;
- Hardworking and dedicated.

LANGUAGES:

- English Fluent, native speaker
Spanish Fluent
Portuguese Working knowledge

REFERENCES:

- Professor Peter Gow – Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of St. Andrews
Email: pgg2@st-andrews.ac.uk Tel: +44 0133446 2817
- Dr. George Mentore – Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Virginia
Email: gm3c@virginia.edu Tel: (434) 924-7038
- Professor Joanna Overing- Emeritus Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of St. Andrews
Email: jo1@st-andrews.ac.uk Tel: +44 01334 880215