

**UWI****IGDS**INSTITUTE FOR GENDER &
DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

LUNCHTIME SEMINARS WEDNESDAYS – 12 NOON

On September 8, 2011, *La Divina Pastora*, locally and fondly known as *La Divin* reappeared before the congregation in Siparia celebrating her birth, having "regained her strength" and "had her face lifted" through four months of restoration in Port-of-Spain. The restorers condemned female caretakers of the statue in Siparia for their "ignorant" and "superstitious" caretaking practices that had put year on this time-honored "artifact" faster than her chronological age: First, the caretakers had applied heavy makeup to the statue's face. Oil and chemicals contained in these beauty products had wreaked havoc on her face and blurred her facial relief. Second, they had clothed the statue in a layer of "smeary and smelly" undergarments. They were all soaked with oil and contained lots of moldy rice-grains showered on the statue as a way of gift-giving and bodily engagement by Hindu devotees as they usually do on *murtis*, statues of the Hindu divine spirits. Clad in dirty underwear for years, the statue's body had got many termite holes.

These findings have raised the questions that this research addresses: First, why have the female caretakers put makeup on the "artifact" and clothed it in many-layered undergarments? Second, how have these particular caretaking practices been engaged with devotees' faith in cross-religious, miraculous power of this "artifact"? And how has this "artifact" dressed and made up in the particular ways affected social relationship of devotees? With these questions, this research aims at revealing how caretakers and devotees have crafted the image of the statue, which has simultaneously crafted their spirituality and sociality. For this purpose, the study weaves together findings from ethnographic observation and archival research to give a detailed description of historical transitions in arrangement of the statue and its appearance on the two major festive occasions in honor of this Marian statue: One is on Good Friday, which was once known as the "Coolie Fête," and the other is on Good Shepherd Sunday that has been known as "Siparia Fête" and once was referred to as "Creole Fête."



You are invited to the IGDS, St. Augustine Unit Lunchtime Seminar

DRESSING THE STATUE SPIRITUALITY, SEXUALITY, AND SOCIALITY OF VIRGIN MARY/"INDIAN LADY"

with

Teruyuki Tsuji

Research Fellow, Institute of International Relations, The UWI
Visiting Scholar, National Museum of Ethnology, Japan

Wednesday, January 28th 2015 | 12 Noon

IGDS Seminar Room, The UWI, St. Augustine Campus

Teruyuki (Terry) Tsuji is a Research Fellow / Diplomat-in-Residence at The UWI's Institute of International Relations. He completed his PhD in Sociology at Florida International University in 2006 and his postdoctoral training at Saint Louis University's Center for Intercultural Studies in 2014.

His research has focused on implications of the articulated discourse of religion and race for social inclusion and nationalism in Trinidad, and implications of religion for social capital development in Indo-Caribbean immigration in South Florida.

His recent publications include "'They don't do culture': Mother Kali as a Matrix of National Culture in Trinidad" in *Wadabagei* (12.3, 2009), "The Struggle for Civic Social Capital in West Indian Churches" in *Charity and Churches in the Immigrant City* (A. Stepick, ed., Rutgers U. P., 2009), and "Toward the Materiality of Intercultural Dialogue, (Still) a 'Miracle Begging for Analysis'" in *Perspectives on Interculturality* (M. Rozbicki, ed., Palgrave-Macmillan, forthcoming).

For more information contact IGDS: Tel: 662 2002 Ext 83573/83577 | **Email:** igds@sta.uwi.edu

[Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Directions](#) to the venue | For media visit [Flickr](#) | [YouTube](#)