INTER-ISLAND CONNECTIONS IN AN EARLY TRINIDADIAN NOVEL: PORTRAYALS OF THE LESSER ANTILLES IN E. L. JOSEPH'S *WARNER ARUNDELL: THE ADVENTURES OF A CREOLE*

Antony Hoyte-West
Independent scholar, United Kingdom

Abstract: *Set during the revolutionary upheavals of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Warner Arundell: The Adventures of a Creole (1838) is considered to be the first Trinidadian novel. Authored by E. L. Joseph, the novel is characterised by an intricate plot and considerable geographical mobility across the West Indies, South America, and Great Britain. Adopting a thematic approach synthesising historical and literary studies, this article presents and analyses the inter-island connections which feature in the opening chapters of the novel, including the travels taken by the novel's young hero from his birthplace on Grenada to Antigua and then subsequently to newly-British Trinidad. In examining the work's portrayals of family, language, trade, and news networks, as well as the racial politics of the time, the article thus evaluates the novel's fictionalised insights on life in the Lesser Antilles at that key point in time.*

Keywords: *E. L. Joseph; inter-island mobility; nineteenth-century Caribbean literature; the eastern Caribbean; Trinidadian literature; Warner Arundell.*

Introduction

Then as now, the eastern Caribbean consists of numerous small islands which display a high degree of sociocultural, economic, ethnic, political, linguistic, and geographical diversity, and which therefore can be said to be clearly differentiated from each other. Indeed, it could be argued that this differentiation and absence of an overarching identity may have been one of the many factors that ultimately scuppered attempts to unify the British-ruled islands as a single independent federation in the early 1960s (Sives), thus ensuring that the majority of the Anglophone colonies obtained their independence from the United Kingdom as discrete small states. This reality, however, belied the complex ties and networks which linked these very different islands together, and which have done so throughout history. Though modern-day intergovernmental frameworks such as CARICOM illustrate regional possibilities for collaboration at the political and economic levels, the web of intersections between these various islands dates back to colonial and even pre-Columbian times (Hofman et al. "Island Networks"; Hofman & Hoogland "Unravelling the Multi-Scale Networks"). Indeed, these interconnections can also be viewed through the prism of general scholarship on island studies, with scholars noting the "entangled" and at times contradictory notion of "islandness" (Foley et al. 1809). Moulded by forces

relating to migration, colonialism, slavery, language, and the assertion of ethnocultural identity, literary portrayals of the complexities of the eastern Caribbean – including by Nobel laureates Derek Walcott and V.S. Naipaul (see Brown) – have placed a cultural spotlight on the region as a whole.

In providing an analysis of these interconnections through the lens of the initial voyages featured in an early nineteenth-century Trinidadian novel by the author E. L. Joseph, this study outlines the intricate relationship between the various islands as portrayed in the opening chapters of the novel, noting the varied references to commercial, linguistic, and cultural interlinkages. Accordingly, this analysis seeks to see how these resources and networks are depicted and differentiated, thereby contributing to discussions on the challenges of small-island life at a critical point in the region's history. In viewing the eastern Caribbean as a discrete unit, consideration can be taken of the concept of spatial imaginaries. Briefly presented in general terms, this notion is important because of how it sheds light and contributes to the formation and definition of different identities. As such, especially in times and areas of political or military conflict such as the early nineteenth-century Caribbean, spatial imaginaries can arguably provide an anchoring identity framework (Lawson et al. 68), thereby illustrating close interlinkage with well-known concepts such as Edward Said's 'imaginary geographies' or Benedict Anderson's 'imagined communities' (Kothari and Rorden 1396). Indeed, parallels can perhaps be drawn between the eastern Caribbean and several Indian Ocean small island states in the colonial and post-colonial context, where Uma Kothari and Rorden Wilkinson write that tropical "islands have long featured in colonial imaginaries as initially unknown and mysterious", which on "'discovery' they were envisaged, simultaneously, as places of exquisite natural beauty and abundance of natural resources and as desolate, isolated outposts either uninhabited, or populated by 'uncivilised' people" – in other words, as a kind of "terra incognita" for European colonialism (1398) It could also be advanced that this notion of the eastern Caribbean could align with Lawson et al.'s assertion of the usefulness of spatial imaginaries for so-called "in-between regions" – i.e., those areas "where territorial borders have shifted dramatically over time" (74).

Given their importance to ethnic and linguistic identities, spatial imaginaries often permeate through expressions of literary, cultural, and artistic production, especially in island contexts (Metzger et al.). In the Caribbean, the important issue remains of recognising "the contribution of literary imagination in envisioning links between the way in which places are 'imagined', represented and lived" (Preziuso 146). In presenting an early textual representation of this concept through the analysis of E. L. Joseph's pioneering 1838 novel, this article aims to contribute to relevant discussions on the topic. As such, information regarding the relevant historical and

political setting will be provided, together with biographical details relating to the author and the novel's composition. Noting the focus of this study on the voyage taken in the book's opening chapters, this information will be analysed from a thematic perspective, focusing on the descriptions of family, language, trade, and news-based themes.

Historical and literary context

The late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century colonial history of the eastern Caribbean has been well-attested in a range of studies (for example, see Gaspar and Geggus, etc.). By that time, the region had been known to Europeans for over three centuries, and numerous colonial practices – including the abhorrent slave trade – had become embedded in the plantation-based economies of many of the different islands. With the various colonial powers (principally Great Britain, France, and Spain) vying for influence and dominance in the wider region, the fall of the monarchy in France following the 1789 revolution and the subsequent conflicts which convulsed the European continent until Napoleon's 1815 defeat at Waterloo meant that the Caribbean played an important proxy role in the theatre of war (see Régent). During that period, several islands changed hands between different imperial rulers – e.g., the British seized Trinidad from the Spanish in 1797, and islands such as St Lucia and Tobago were taken from French control. Though France's presence in the eastern Caribbean may have weakened politically at that time, its language and culture remained important. Given the complex situation, tensions in the eastern Caribbean were also heightened by the diffusion of the ideological tenets of *liberté*, *égalité*, and *fraternité* among sections of the enslaved and free black and mixed-heritage population (which spread to Grenada from Martinique and Guadeloupe), as well as the ongoing latent instability in the then-French colony of Saint-Domingue. This was to lead to the Haitian revolution and the proclamation of the colony's independence in 1804 as the first black-ruled country in the Western Hemisphere (see Geggus "The French and Haitian Revolutions").

It is against this background that the principal action of Edward Lanza[1] Joseph's 1838 three-volume work, *Warner Arundell: The Adventures of a Creole,* takes place.[2] Published in London by Saunders and Otley, it is primarily set just after the turn of the nineteenth century, and depicts a Caribbean riven by geopolitical turmoil between the major European colonial powers. Believed to be the first novel by a Trinidadian author, the book is essentially presented as a series of memoirs ostensibly by a white creole gentleman of the name of Warner Arundell. Born in Grenada at the end of the

[1.] The spelling 'Lanzer' also appears.

[2.] The title page of the novel displays the following: *Warner Arundell: The Adventures of a Creole, by E. L. Joseph of Trinidad, in Three Volumes.*

eighteenth century, the novel's eponymous main protagonist is the orphaned scion of a plantation-owning family of English descent who have long resided in the West Indies. The work charts the highly-competent hero's childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood through first-person narration, with the fast-moving plot also covering a considerable geographical expanse covering various islands of the Lesser Antilles as well as Venezuela, Guyana, and Britain.

Joseph, was born to humble Jewish parents in London in 1792 (de Verteuil 47) and came to Trinidad – presumably via both Antigua and Grenada (de Verteuil 50) – [3] after 1816, apparently aiming to seek his fortune by fighting in the Bolivarian wars of independence on mainland South America (de Verteuil 48-52, Brereton et al. xix). Though dissuaded (or prohibited) to do so as Trinidad was then ostensibly neutral in the conflict (a fictionalised version of this scene appears in his novel), Joseph opted to remain in the then newly-British colony for the rest of his life, pursuing various occupations, including as an overseer and later as a manager on several plantations.[4] He then embarked on a career as a journalist and writer, making an active contribution to Trinidad's theatrical scene (Brereton et al. xix). As the combative editor of the *Port of Spain Gazette* for a short stint in 1837-1838, he became well-known – even infamous - in the capital's society (de Verteuil 69-72; Brereton et al. xxii), drawing the ire of many prominent members of the colony's elite. At that point in the early nineteenth century, Trinidad could certainly be described as a "transimperial contact zone" (Soriano 115): a veritable mixture of cultures, languages, and societies, with the famous trial of Sir Thomas Picton illustrating the linguistic and political complexities occasioned by retaining a Spanish legal system in a British colony (Hoyte-West "On the trail"). Additionally, ideological debates relating to the abolition of slavery and discussions of revolutionary ideals could be added to the multifaceted milieu of this "imperial laboratory" (Soriano 115), as well as the omnipresent threat of military conflict with other colonial powers active in the region.

This "new" colony was where Joseph found his place in the world; it was in Trinidad that he was able to transcend his humble social origins and become a man of letters. Indeed, he appears to have been an individual of uncommon curiosity and diverse interests, as his endeavours as a historian, naturalist, and linguist attest. He also seemingly possessed a robust constitution and boundless energy (de Verteuil 62, 72), but sadly, the year of the novel's publication was Joseph's last, his promise sadly cut short by his early death in a fever epidemic. Joseph unfortunately left no autobiography or

[3.] Brereton et al. also posit 1793 as a possible birth year.

[4] As detailed by de Verteuil (54-56), this was an interesting choice given that Joseph's own sentiments seem to have been against slavery.

memoir, but many of the attributes and fascinations that his contemporaries ascribed to him are also featured in the events of *Warner Arundell: The Adventures of a Creole*. These include detailed descriptions of historical events; accounts of the flora and fauna of the various islands; analyses of the various religions, ethnicities, and languages that the hero comes across; as well as controversial opinions on topical matters and personages – which may be thinly-veiled fictionalisations of real events and which caused considerable debate in Trinidadian society at the time (Brereton et al. xxiii).

Perhaps unsurprisingly given its status as the first Trinidadian novel and the plethora of events, themes, and subjects that the work contains, *Warner Arundell* has been the subject of several studies examining its different facets. These include the co-authored comprehensive and wide-ranging Introduction (Brereton et al.) to Lise Winer's updated 2002 critical edition of the novel (Joseph and Winer), which deals variously with its social context, situating the work in broader Caribbean and British literary contexts, as well as analysing the role of law and medicine (which become Warner Arundell's chosen careers). In addition, other research has explored the novel both singly and together with other early examples of Caribbean literature, delving further into linguistic aspects (Winer and Rimmer), identity and culture (Barnett-Woods; Ward and Watson), as well as a recent analysis of Warner's activities as a translator and interpreter in the novel (Hoyte-West "Portrayals").

Yet, in common with the focus of this study on inter-island connections, it is apparent that little attention has focused on how the proximity of the different islands in the Lesser Antilles is portrayed. This study, therefore, utilises the concept of literary works as potential historical sources (Hudspith), mindful that Joseph was also an active journalist as well as the author of the very first *History of Trinidad* (this book also appeared in 1838). Though Joseph's history could be described as amateurish in many ways (see Brereton; also Brereton et al. xxi), nonetheless its compilation underscores Joseph's keen and profound interest in the culture and society of his adopted home and its surroundings. Indeed, Joseph's fascination with historical matters pervades *Warner Arundell* as a whole. As mentioned, he was also a keen amateur natural scientist who explored Trinidad's interior (Saillant "Walking as Englishmen" 379-380), and this aspect – particularly pertaining to the flora, fauna, and geology of selected islands – also marks his only novel.

The analytical material for the present study is taken from the opening chapters of the first volume of the novel, and draws mostly on the narrator's account of his ancestry, early childhood, and from two sea voyages taken after the deaths of his parents, where the young hero travels from his native Grenada (via stopovers in St Vincent and also in the Grenadines) to Antigua, where he receives part of his schooling. Subsequently, after a sojourn of two years there, he then proceeds to the newly-British colony of Trinidad where a relative

awaits him. As will be demonstrated, the locations, observations, and dialogues which feature in these chapters of the work are replete with references to other islands in the Lesser Antilles, noting the state of conflict with revolutionary and Napoleonic France which existed at the time. Indeed, these early travels profiled in this study also aptly demonstrate his wanderlust and strong personal desire for mobility.

Family

As mentioned previously, the opening chapter of the novel is where the hero writes about his family lineage; thus, from the very outset of the work, several Caribbean islands are featured (principally St Kitts, Antigua, and Grenada). Warner Arundell is "descended from one of the most ancient English families known in the West Indies" (Joseph 1), who "came to the New World when it was possessed by the Spaniards exclusively" – i.e., are of long-standing provenance. It is noted that the Arundells "essayed to establish a settlement in the island of St. Christopher" (Joseph 2) before one of Warner's direct ancestors chose to settle in Antigua.[5] The narrator writes, presumably an explanation for non-Caribbean readers, that his father was an "Antigonian" (Joseph 3), a member of the island's House of Assembly, but who ill-advisedly sought to become a Member of Parliament in Britain, a course of action which meant he "mortgaged an estate he held in St. Kitt's and another in Antigua (Joseph 10). These properties were subsequently damaged by a natural disaster, with Warner noting that "a hurricane having injured my father's St Kitt's and Antigua estates, he was obliged to give them in trusts to the mortgagees […] of St Christopher, and retire to live on a fine plantation he had in Grenada" (Joseph 11) – i.e., he was able to display mobility by moving his possessions from one British-ruled island to another.

After chapters recounting the events of the 1795 slave rebellion on Grenada, Warner later makes further reference to the Arundell family's interlinkage between the various islands, with the narrator noting that "during the war, all my father's papers relative to his Leeward Island plantations were either destroyed or carried off. He might easily have replaced them, by going to St. Kitt's and Antigua; but he deferred this from time to time, until he appeared to have forgotten the loss" (Joseph 43), thereby also losing Warner's considerable inheritance. Subsequently, after Warner's father succumbs to illness, a relative – George Arundell – appears at the funeral. He is described as Warner's "father's younger brother, who inherited some property in St. Christopher; but, being of a roving disposition, he obtained a commission in a regiment which had originally been raised in St. Domingo during the time the

[5.] As an aside, it becomes apparent later in the story that Warner's first name is derived from his mother's maiden name. On St Kitts in particular, that surname was a prominent one owing to Sir Thomas Warner's role in the British colonisation of the island (see Carter et al. 29-33).

British made their ineffectual descent on that noble island" (Joseph 62); i.e., when British interests sought "Hayti" as a potential acquisition. Noting that Warner's uncle had "been with his regiment at the reduction of Trinidad, he found that magnificent island so fertile" that henceforth "he sold his commission, as well as his St Kitt's estates, and became a Trinidad planter." With George Arundell surprised by Warner's natural gifts but lack of formal education, he undertakes responsibility for his nephew, arranging a trip "from the land of my birth to the land of my father's – namely, to Antigua; for, at this period, there was scarcely a good school in Grenada" (Joseph 67-68). Accordingly, Warner is offered passage to the island with an army officer, and it is noted, contrary to preconceptions relating to travel at that time, that "no objections were started to my making a voyage amongst the Antilles, as it was judged good for my health" (Joseph 68). Indeed, together with the traditionally health-giving attributes of the sea, this assertion can be said to demonstrate that at that time, travelling between the different islands was considered to be a positive activity.

In addition to Warner's family links with Trinidad through his uncle and cousin (though, this connection is interrupted by their untimely deaths), this initial journey also involves a stopover on the island of Bequia, now part of St Vincent and the Grenadines. In emphasising the strong familial connections between the islands, the narrator highlights that "in this island there lived, and I hope still lives, a family bearing my paternal name; one of whom invited my nurse and myself to pass our time on shore at his house" (Joseph 83), thus demonstrating the close ties between the different branches of the family. As an aside, Warner notes in almost anthropological terms that the small island "owns the completest specimen of white creoles that I have ever met with in the West Indies", describing them as a "slender race, with flaxen hair, keen grey eyes" (Joseph 83).

In providing a fictional portrayal of family links spread out between different islands, this approach also mirrors the contemporary reality of the time, especially regarding the Grenada-Trinidad context. An example can be found in the well-documented real-life case of the Philip family in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The Philips were originally Francophone plantation owners based in Grenada, with members settling in Trinidad in the last years of Spanish rule and having a wide network of contacts elsewhere (Candlin). Indeed, displaying similar motives to Warner's voyage to Britain later on in the novel, one of the wealthy members of the Trinidad-based branch of the Philip family, John-Baptiste Philip, matriculated at university in the United Kingdom to study medicine. This member of the Philip family (and whose physical appearance was described as being of mixed, or 'coloured' heritage) defended an important dissertation (written in

Latin) in medicine at the University of Edinburgh in 1815 (see Macdonald and Saillant).

Language

The complex linguistic situation of the contemporary Caribbean also plays a role in the novel which, as detailed elsewhere (Hoyte-West "Portrayals"), features several examples of Warner's multilingual prowess and natural talent as an interpreter and translator. In addition to smatterings of other tongues, by the end of the first volume of the novel, Warner is fluent in four languages: English, Spanish, French, and French Creole (*Kwéyòl*). The opening voyage of the novel also provides an opportunity for young Warner to showcase his skills, which occurs after leaving St Vincent on his eventful sailing onwards to Antigua. After a skirmish with a French vessel, the crew of the boat Warner is travelling on capture the French as prisoners. Here, Warner distinguishes himself as a linguist, interpreting between the prisoners and the British ship's captain via his "creole French", noting that "this patois is the mother tongue of about a million and a half of people in this part of the world" (Joseph 76). Implied in this (then vast) figure of 1.5 million speakers is the notion that this creolised form of French represents a lingua franca between different communities of speakers and, therefore, between the different small islands in the eastern Caribbean of that time.

A further example of the importance of French Creole can be seen during Warner's stopover on St Vincent. Once on the island, Warner observes that "we inspected the awfully grand and tremendous crater called the Soufriere [(footnoted as a general name for a volcanic mountain in the West Indies)], which a few years after this, opened its terrific jaws and blew from its infernal throat a burning flood, which spread ruin all over the island, and affright amongst the windward Caribbean islands" (Joseph 98-99).[6] By providing the reader with the information about the French Creole term and its generic usage throughout the region (e.g., in Montserrat, Guadeloupe, and St Lucia), the sense of interconnection between the various volcanically-active Caribbean is also underscored at this juncture. Various historical, political, and cultural factors ensure that the various French creoles spoken in the Lesser Antilles still retain a number of shared structural and lexical features even up to the present day (Daval-Markussen 183). This is particularly so given the strength of regular relations between the islands during the colonial era, thus providing a further example of its role as a common language utilised in inter-island contacts at that time.

6. For a scholarly examination of the real-life 1812 eruption of La Soufrière, please see the study by Smith.

Trade

With the principal protagonist's status as a member (albeit newly-impoverished) of the moneyed plantation-owning classes, the economic links between different islands can also be said to underpin the family networks outlined previously. In terms of trade, an early example between different islands can be seen in Warner's first port of call on his voyage, the island of Bequia. Here, he observes that for the whites there, a crucial part of their commerce relies on "selling the shell of the hawk's-bill turtle" (Joseph 84) by travelling to St Vincent at least once a year, thereby demonstrating the fundamental importance of inter-island trade. The narrator adds that these shells are subsequently exported to England for use as tortoiseshell, with the inhabitants of the island using the proceeds to buy themselves fishing nets.

Though indirectly mentioned, further commercial potential also features in the description of the ship's subsequent arrival in St Vincent. The landscape of the island is portrayed in regal terms with "its noble mountains", "crowned with mists" which appear to "look down with majesty" (Joseph 97), and is generally described approvingly, with the narrator observing that "the fertile plains and vales are hidden by these mountains, which have perpetual verdure" (Joseph 98), and offer a view of the Grenadines. The latter islands, though contrasted with St Vincent in terms of their lack of fertile soil, "are so beautifully placed and so fantastically formed" (Joseph 98). In observing of the Grenadines that "while a hundred vessels, sailing among those countless islets and rocks, appear like gigantic bees hovering about their hives", the use of this metaphor of bees and hives (thereby implying the production of honey) also serves to underline the inherent natural wealth and prosperity of these small islands, thereby hinting at their trade-related potential.

Trade and commerce do not feature during Warner's education on Antigua, but the issue of the plantation economy resurfaces towards the end of his two years of schooling there, when "Senor Thomaso", a "worthy creole Spaniard" from Trinidad (Joseph 136) who is a partner in his uncle's plantation there, writes to Warner to inform him that the housekeeper "had obtained an improper ascendancy" (Joseph 137) over his uncle". Accordingly, Warner travels to Trinidad with a relation of his mother (also surnamed Warner) from Bequia, a further example of the intermingling of family with business. On arrival in the colony, Warner draws attention to Trinidad's differentiation from other Caribbean islands, stating that "I viewed this fine island, which appeared to me totally different from any other in the West Indies" (Joseph 138). In terms of its cultivation, he observes that "Here and there I observed cane plantations, but these appeared to lack the neatness which the sugar estates have in Antigua; yet the canes of the latter place bear as great a resemblance, in point of size, to those of Trinidad, as a porpoise bears to a whale" (Joseph 145), thus commenting favourably on the fertile

nature of the soil and its agricultural potential, though its tidiness may have left something to be desired.

On his first impressions of the colony's capital, Port of Spain, he writes of "the mixed hue and costume of the population, and Babylonish variety of tongues" (Joseph 146), thus already highlighting Trinidad's considerable ethnic and cultural diversity at that point in time. Similarly to his earlier overview of the white creoles of Bequia, Warner provides a forensic description of the different races, their clothes and appearances, and the various languages and dialects that they speak (Joseph 147). The economic importance of the town was already clearly apparent to Warner; despite noting that the "although the Sunday market was, at that time, common to every town in this part of the world", he also observed that the colony's capital had "not the slightest appearance of respect for the Sabbath which I observed in Antigua" (Joseph 146). As such, notwithstanding Port of Spain's unpromising appearance as "a straggling town, composed of wooden houses" (Joseph 146), Warner provides further evidence of the colony's wealth and location as a trade nexus, noting that "its stores were crowded with rich merchandise, for commerce shed her golden smiles upon the island" (Joseph 146). This observation is borne out by the historical records demonstrating the level of inter-island trade –e.g.,, at the end of the eighteenth century, the French Caribbean was the origin of around forty percent of all vessels coming to the Trinidadian capital (Peters 164).

The news network

The concept of the inter-island news and rumour network in the Caribbean context has received interest in the scholarly literature, and aspects of this are also reflected in the novel's early events. After a brief "lay off the insalubrious island of St. Lucia" (Joseph 111), presumably owing to the dangerous military situation there, the book's thirteenth chapter opens with Warner's arrival in St John's, Antigua, with the island's educational prominence reiterated through the statement that "Antigua, [was] well chosen for my education, for it had several tolerable schools" (Joseph 119). In St John's, the colony's capital, the narrator attends a school kept by a "well-known" gentleman by the name of Tom Harris, who was "a true-born Barbadian" (Joseph 120) who oddly did not consider himself a creole. Harris appears to be quite a character, and offers us an interesting observation in terms of inter-island connections relates to rumour and hearsay. Warner writes that the headmaster Harris was "extremely fond of news, not general political news, but the gossiping intelligence of Antigua and the neighbouring islands" (Joseph 122) and the primary source was his pupils, a motley bunch of different ages and ethnic backgrounds. These titbits of information include news from various other islands – e.g., that a schooner "was wrecked off the Five Islands" (Joseph 123); or the reports

of another pupil informing the classroom of news that the body of a murdered Portuguese cooper had been found in a cask of madeira wine on boat recently arrived from St Kitts (Joseph 124).

A further case of inter-island gossip occurs with news from the French colonies, where a pupil states that "Captain Morris has run away from the French prison in Guadeloupe" , leading Harris to muse that "how could a man, with only one leg, run away?" (Joseph 125). In a moment of apparent comedy, the pupil answers that "he hopped away, sir: I saw him myself…" (Joseph 126); to complete the comedic timing, at that moment Captain Morris himself appears in the schoolroom. It transpires that Morris is a former pupil of Harris, and Morris provides his own lively account of his inter-island escape to the safety of British Antigua. Indeed, the power of such rumours can be seen later after Warner's arrival in Trinidad. When attending school there and demonstrating his "great facility in acquiring languages" (Joseph 152), Warner notes that the threat of conflict seems to be ever omnipresent, as he states that there are "frequent rumours and official accounts of a strong French and Spanish fleet" (Joseph 152).

Though often light-hearted in nature, such interchanges in the novel could be said to represent the fervent inter-island news and rumour networks prevalent in the days before mass media and its agenda-setting role. As demonstrated in other contexts (e.g., in the case of attempts to oust the Irish Roman Catholic priest Antony O'Hannan in 1820s Grenada (see Fricke)), these informal conduits of information can be highly relevant to the wider dissemination of local agendas. As a journalist and newspaper editor, Joseph would of course have keenly valued such insights, which can also be considered relevant to inter-island communication regarding commercial, military, and administrative activities.

Racial politics

As has also been discussed elsewhere, Joseph's own approaches to racial politics seems to be somewhat more harmonious compared to the dominant ideologies present at that time (Saillant "Dâaga the Rebel"). To this end, the novel's second chapter describes the political and racial context surrounding the book's setting, and thus is largely devoted to an account of historical events around the time of Warner's birth, many of which concern the interactions of the different islands and the specific composition of their populations. Accordingly, the narrator states that at the time the novel is set (the latter years of the eighteenth century), the French colony of "St Domingo" (Saint-Domingue) "was suffering from the united curses of a servile and a civil war" and British-ruled Jamaica "was ravaged by the maroon war" (Joseph 12). Alluding to the contemporary ideological fervour in the Caribbean, the narrator mentions that "Martinique, Guadeloupe, and St Lucia, having been

inoculated with the French revolutionary eruption […] took the infection; the people of these islands acted, on small stages, the bloody tragedies which were performing in Paris" (Joseph 12-13), and that "the scanty population of Trinidad, which, both in manner and language, were more French than Spanish, were ripe for rebellion." (Joseph 13). St Vincent is also mentioned, where it is noted that Victor Hugues (a real-life figure who crops up later in the novel) "excited the black Caraibes" (described in a footnote as being of "mixed-race") "to revolt" (Joseph 13), and in Warner's birthplace of Grenada, where the same Victor Hugues fomented rebellion between the French and the slaves, free blacks and coloured population so that "a war of the most cruel character was then continued" (Joseph 13). As illustrated above, in providing a picture of the general turmoil and instability that characterised the region at this time, the narrator highlights the profound sociopolitical upheaval which proved not to be limited to any one island. By demonstrating the interconnectedness of the flow of ideas between the various islands, the scene is therefore set for how their close links can also be illustrated in other ways. Indeed, showing their importance in the novel's events, the narrator states that he is "obliged to make the above historical sketch of the state of Grenada in 1795" (Joseph 14-15) in order to render the subsequent happenings understandable to the reader. These include the escape of Julien Fedon, the leader of the unsuccessful uprising in Grenada, who – as with Hugues – later plays an important role in the novel.

In practical terms, another example of the racial politics in the novel occurs during Warner's stopover on the island of Bequia. He observes that the white families there live seemingly in equality with their slaves (he notes that they typically have one or two of them) (Joseph 83); it is presumed that this observation is meant in terms of the standard of living, rather than to the legal, political, and other rights that slaves did not have at that time. Additionally, a further display of tolerance portrayed in the opening chapters of the novel can be seen regarding the general lack of prejudice displayed towards the French Creole language, commonly spoken by large segments of society but especially by mixed-heritage and black inhabitants of the Caribbean. This language was often denigrated as a corrupted, mixed, or incomplete form of French; however, despite its lower societal status, it is notable that Warner counts it among the languages that he speaks and, as exemplified earlier, as a language that also comes in useful for interpreting purposes.

Conclusion

The present study has aimed to provide an overview of the inter-island connections in the opening chapters of E. L. Joseph's only novel, *Warner Arundell: The Adventures of a Creole.* In this early section of the novel, it can be said that five eastern Caribbean islands feature to varying degrees of

prominence (Antigua, Bequia, Grenada, St Vincent, and Trinidad) and these are all visited by the principal protagonist on his two initial sea voyages. Other islands, including Guadeloupe, St Kitts, and St Lucia, also feature less prominently as the locations of various plot-related events, and still more are mentioned in passing owing to various historical or other occurrences. In terms of the inter-island connections, several features are particularly noticeable on these initial two journeys.

The first relates to the importance of family relations, as demonstrated by Warner Arundell's extensive network of familial linkages between the locations featured. Going beyond his birthplace of Grenada because of his father's financial woes, these include his ancestral islands of St Kitts and also Antigua, where Warner receives his initial education. In addition, these wider family linkages to Bequia and to Trinidad also prove to be important not only in this stage of the narrative but also later on in the work, where Arundell returns to several islands and also meets with his mixed-heritage half-siblings in St Kitts (Joseph 233-236), whose existence was previously unknown to him, but yet who welcome him and support him throughout the novel's hair-raising chain of events. Accordingly, these familial contacts and factors become much more pronounced as the work progresses, thereby setting the scene for the later events in subsequent volumes of the novel which involve Warner's travels to the Spanish Main, England, French Guyana, and Trinidad, as well as brief interludes on other eastern Caribbean islands.

Language – particularly French Creole – also plays an important role in inter-island connections in the novel as a means of communication between peoples from different races and communities as well as a common identifying factor (e.g., in placenames and customs). The commercial aspects of inter-island interlinkage also feature, not least in terms of how goods are traded from peripheral Bequia to St Vincent and subsequently onwards to the colonial power. In addition, the economic vitality of Port-of-Spain is also highlighted, in part to its role as a cosmopolitan hub for many different nationalities and ethnicities.

A further aspect of inter-island connections is the so-called news network, which is portrayed by the enthusiasm of Warner's schoolmaster for rumours and gossip during his stay on Antigua, demonstrating the power such informal knowledge can hold before the development of modern communications. Finally, awareness of the complex racial politics of the time are shown by the narrator's awareness to contextualise the novel's events through the lens of the region's recent history as well as his attitudes to languages and cultures.

Yet when viewed through a broader prism, it can be advanced that many of novel's descriptions of the islands of the Lesser Antilles, as well as the events that occur there, could be viewed as performative textual acts.

Indeed, Warner's experiences on these smaller islands offer him valuable opportunities to obtain skills and knowledge (e.g., education, language proficiency, and intercultural awareness) that allow him not only to become accustomed to life in Trinidad but also to thrive in the multitude of locations and situations he is confronted with as the novel progresses. Accordingly, in laying the groundwork for the principal character's subsequent adventures, the role of these early inter-island experiences proves to be fundamental.

Indeed, with its descriptions of multilingual and multicultural life in the islands, the portrayal of these aspects also allows us to gain an understanding of how contemporary societies were developing under colonialism, as well as reframing how we might consider regional identities and regionality in the Caribbean at that period in time. In this regard, the perceived racial harmony portrayed during Warner's early voyages – as well as the depiction of small, peaceful plantation-based societies – could arguably represent a possible template for diverse societies such as newly-British Trinidad. By contrasting it with the revolutionary upheaval which convulsed islands such as Haiti and Grenada at the turn of the century, Joseph could be said to be offering a different model for Trinidad and other places in the region, thereby helping to protect these colonial societies against wider unrest and the latent potential for open conflict.

This preliminary contribution has also established several points worthy of additional attention. Though outside the scope of the present study, further research could certainly focus on how the different interconnections of family, language, commerce, news, and race continue in the rest of the novel. Additionally, these relationships could be compared and contrasted with the portrayal of Warner's subsequent adventures on mainland South America and also in the United Kingdom. A larger-scale project could also aim to expand this analysis by looking for thematic parallels with similar topics in Joseph's journalistic output, thereby aiming to tease out any common threads that may exist. As such, in highlighting the important themes of family, commerce, news, and language, as well as racial considerations, this study has demonstrated that the opening chapters of Joseph's novel clearly display – albeit in fictionalised form - the interconnected nature of the islands of the eastern Caribbean during the early nineteenth century. Thus, this initial portrayal in these opening chapters of the work can certainly be said to be representational in this regard.

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