West of Eden

West of Eden:
Botanical Discourse, Contact Languages and Translation

By

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God makes the earth yield healing herbs which the prudent man
should not neglect;
Was not the water sweetened by a twig that man might learn his power?
—*The African Bible*. Sirach 38, 4-7

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Note

The individual contributions of the authors are as follow:

Rosanna Masiola: PART I; PART III; PART IV

Renato Tomei: PART II; PART V

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FOREWORD

The following study focuses on postcolonial literature and its interaction with contact and indigenous languages, pidgins and Creoles and the problems translators encounter when faced with vernacular phytonyms or a cultural system which is remote from that of the receiving culture. It is not simply a question of words for bookworms: the history of plant-names is also the never-ending story of misunderstandings in interpretation and translation from native languages, some of which were bound to disappear (as the many Algonquian languages).

The conquest of the New World and subsequent colonization and exploitation has often been represented as the conquest of a new Eden, further West, and this is implied in the title of our book. Regeneration of the Adamic man in a 'Promised Land' would thus be possible, but man also brought along his plants from the old world which he would there hybridize. Inevitably a new language and new words followed suit and 'made contact'.

Plant naming and plant description was essential to take possession of Eden and it is one of the first things that Western explorers and navigators attempted to do for their patrons. Identification was not always easy because of the different representations and perceptions of the land and of the plant kingdom. What seems to have happened was that plants were erroneously identified in name and their properties ascribed.

As the title of this book suggests, we look upon botanical discourse in interaction with the ideology that determines the names of plants, their lexicographic hierarchy and role within a complex cultural system at risk. The native linguistic context seems to be at constant risk of erosion, challenged as it has been by language variation and hegemony in lexicography and botanical repertoire. On the other hand, languages stemming from dynamic inter-contacts and intra-contacts (i.e. Creoles with other Creoles) provide evidence of which names have been imposed upon by settlers and botanist from the centre to the margins.

Part One – The inner circle: standards in botanical nomenclature highlights the influence of the 'Western canon' in botanical nomenclature. We set the scene for what is to follow and deal with the problem of the use of botanical Latin (Stearn 2000) and the meaning and definition of

plants in the 'old world' (Goody 1992) and the 'new world' in Thomas Harriot (Tuttle 1976). There are new words which come into a new variety of English, but there are also 'old' words which are currently used in a post-colonial context, as a phenomenon of shift in meaning, as in the Anglo-Saxon Plant-Name Survey ASPNS and the word *æspe*, the ancestor of aspen (Biggam 2000), which in the new world acquires new meaning. The influence of English on other contact areas is examined, as in the evolution of Jamaican English.

Part Two – The outer circle or the periphery: 'otherization' and heterogeneity sheds light on lesser-known aspects of the indigenous invisibility in vernacular phytonyms in contact languages. It gives examples of intricate relations between the empire in the naming of flowers (Orchids) and its West Indian colonies, as in the case of production of the West Indian Lime extract. The foregoing seems to be enhanced by the negative prejudice on status of Creoles and pidgins. Caribbean and Jamaican lexicography here is comparatively analyzed using a list of plant-names found in a song, 'The Guyana Herb Vendor'. Lexicographic and repertoire findings suggest that a large portion of phytonyms came from many different East and West African languages.

Part Three – The contact zone and translation: hybridization and circulation. The field of lexicography and vernacular phytonyms in the Caribbean and in Africa presents certain complexities which stem from an ethno-linguistic approach and encompass many disciplines from lexicography (Allsopp 2003; Cassidy and Le Page 2002) to botanical descriptions and songs, rituals and healing practices stemming from an oral tradition and symbolic values encompassing the group's identity and values (Alleyne 2004). Examples of literary representations of 'exotic' landscapes (French literature), and new world flora are given and analyzed with their translation into other European languages focussing on the complexity and hybridization of terminology. It itemizes frequent procedures in the translation of phytonyms.

Part Four – Trans-plants in translation: Babel in Eden. This section addresses the issue of different perceptions in the representation of nature in different cultures with diverse values. The primary problem with mapping, concerning what is left and what is lost in vernacular phytonyms, is dramatically shown by the constant loss of vernaculars and the impossible identification with the scientific nomenclature. Editorial policies and guidelines contrasted the use of explanatory notes and tight

budgeting seems to avoid glossary and prefacing. The study here expands to cover aspects of translational procedures from post-colonial literatures and migrant literature (Chitra Divakaruni, Jamaica Kincaid). It focuses on writers depicting floral landscape (Australia and New Zealand) and the 'flower-strange Spring' of Western Australia in November (D. H. Lawrence). The loss in Italian translation is in such cases considerable, as Italy did not have a colonial empire thus totally lacking a standard vernacular terminology for colonial plant-names. This may eventually explain the failure to convey the meaning of 'exotic' landscapes and culturally remote literatures because of inadequate translation and 'domestication' (Venuti).

Part Five – Babylon burning: plants in the garden of God. This last part focuses the role that Bible translation has played in the preservation of native languages. It offers examples of Bible translation into pidgins (Hawai'ian) and Creoles. The Bible is one of the most challenging texts for thematic analysis of the representational and ideational value that plants have in the Old (*Genesis*), the New Testament and Apocrypha ('The Song of Songs'). There are plants which are not only metaphors like the 'burning bush', but which exist as genus or species, as in the case of the Maltese Bible and the Maltese-Maghrebine word for the /bush/ species. This conclusive part also has a section on African plants and trees which have a major role in African society, have different names in the many different African languages, and are advertised online.

The case of African landscapes in the African English Bible offers a most interesting example of how plants which were domesticated from the ancient Hebrew (Aramaic) into Greek and Latin and thence to the various national idioms, are now 'transplanted' back into Africa again, via standard English. Commentary from the African Bible (Biblical Text of the New American Bible) emphasizes the links and associations with African landscape and botanical flora and values ascribed to fruits, trees and plants in general. Therefore, it happens that we have Jonah sitting under a 'gourd plant', but at dawn a woman (sent by God) comes and attacks the plant, which withers. Could this have a sexual connotation and other metaphoric implications? This English equivalent could. The glossary says that it could be two different plants, of the cucumber or castor bean variety 'a very common weed in the forests of Africa' (Jonah 4.1: 11). The definition of weed, cucumber, and castor bean is not conflicting here. It simply refers to a different perception and segmentation in taxonomic hierarchy not embedded in the Western canon.

In the case of medicinal plants, knowledge is handed down from one generation to the next. Unfortunately, a great deal of valuable information can be lost or distorted if a medicine man or herb vendor dies without revealing such knowledge. This we believe stigmatizes the risk of survival of a language, which, as it has been shown in the course of our survey, seems to overshadow the unrecorded history of the slave route, as in the case of the Caribbean area. In the case of the native Australian plant names, and to a lesser extent Maori, there is a lamentable vacuum in online glossaries and lexicography in general, when no reference to the native name for the plant is given and to meaning of the native plant name. Sadly, in this instance, the languages which have died are many, while there are plants which are no longer to be seen and only scientific names to refer to an extant recording in a botanical description.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AHD	*American Heritage Dictionary*
EPPE	*Aruban Papiamentu English Dictionary* (Jossy Mansur)
COD	*Cambridge Concise Dictionary*
CALD	*Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*
DIP	*Dizionario Inglese Italiano Inglese Paravia*
DCEU	*Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage* (Allsopp)
DOD	*Dizionario della Lingua Italiana* (Devoti Oli)
DIZ	*Dizionario Inglese-Italiano-Inglese* (Zanichelli)
PRC	*English French- French English Dictionary* (Le Petit Robert – Collins)
DIH	*Grande Dizionario di Inglese* (Hoepli)
JED	*Jamaican English Dictionary* (F.R. Cassidy and R. Le Page)
LDCE	*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*
MGH	*Mc Graw- Hill Encyclopedia*
MDC	*Mondesir's Dictionary of Caribbean English*
NCDW	*New Collegiate Dictionary Webster*
NCDUW	*New Collegiate Dictionary Unabridged Webster*
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*
OECD	*Oxford Concise English Dictionary*
TL	Target Language
SL	Source Language
TT	Translated Text

PART I

THE INNER CIRCLE: STANDARDS IN BOTANICAL NOMENCLATURE

> If you are buried under a Flamboyant tree…your soul is lifted up when it flowers
> …Flame trees are death reversed
> —Elaine Savory, *Flame Tree Time*

> I have no hesitation in saying that each one of us is as intimately attached to the soil of this beautiful country as are the famous jacaranda trees of Pretoria and the mimosa trees of the bushveld.
> —Nelson Mandela, Inaugural Presidential Address

1. Phytonyms and lexicography: introductory remarks

> You must not know too much, or be too precise or scientific about birds and trees and flowers…a certain margin…helps your enjoyment of these things.

When Whitman wrote these lines in his poem 'Specimen Days' (1881) little did he think of their readability and of a text based on botanical descriptions. His literary production did in fact contain American phytonyms resounding with exotic magic in the ears of readers throughout Europe. Yet, in this sense Whitman may have been right: pedantic specification and scientific nomenclature may mar the 'imagined landscape' the readers construct for themselves. His *chaparral* is a case in point. This term is currently entered in American dictionaries, while missing in British ones. Exotic as it may sound, the term is not a borrowing from any Amerindian language. It is described as "an ecological community occurring widely in southern California and comprised of shrubby plants" (*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*). The phytonym is derived from the Spanish via Basque *txapa*r, *chaparro* → 'dwarf evergreen oak'. Whitman here refers to a complex landscape, which is both geographical and emotional, an impenetrable thicket of

dwarf evergreen trees. There is no scientific name entered, as this is no single species or individual plant. This concept is contained in the precise word as it is used in the 'New World', in its expanded original meaning. Thus the term *chaparral* contains animals and other plants, which do have scientific nomenclature by which they are entered in dictionaries. In a *Dictionary of Scientific and Technical Terms* (MGH, 1974) three decades ago it was labelled under 'ecology' and not 'botany'. No territorial reference was featuring the term which seemed to have acquired international currency: "A vegetation formation characterized by woody plants of low stature, impenetrable because of tough, rigid, interlacing branches, which have simple, waxy evergreen, thick leaves". [1]

The current survey is an attempt to focus on the problem of plant-names and botanical description. More specifically it is centred on phytonyms in contact languages and their lexicographical treatment (Householder and Saporta 1962). If botanical lexis and nomenclature even at a quick glance appear to suggest lexical expansion in the vernaculars of the 'Old World', this appears to be even more perceivable in contact languages of the 'New World'. The Old World has been receiving the plants of the New World, but at the same time has given new names to plants which had their original native terminology. Consequently, the giving of names to the plants of the New World contains in itself an act of deliberate possession of the soil and coming to terms with a new environment. Seen either as a necessary fight for survival or an attempt to communicate a new reality, identification of plants was one of the many faceted and multilingual aspects of colonial encounters.

The description and naming of plants developed along the lines of what was known and familiar, such being the case of semantic shifts and extension of meaning. On the other hand, direct borrowing through calques and adaptations varied from territory to territory. The American and the African continent contained an enormous variety of languages which came into contact with the many languages of the colonizers. Written reports and selection of plant names always depended on the cultural attitude of the author and quality of sources and translations. Relations and descriptions often display the use of native names or names given by the colonist. And yet there are areas where identification is difficult and hazardous. When description is apparently minute and referenced, the plant name may cause misperception because of partial homonymy or homophony.

Thomas Harriot's *Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia in* 1590 is a promotion of exotic plants in their exotic names.

Description extends along careful hedging and markers of approximation, as if to distance description from absolute assertiveness. Harriot was offering truth and striving for scientific accuracy to counteract possible accusations of inaccuracy or plagiarism. There is careful linguistic hedging when associating or comparing categories: the following four examples offers three distinct linguistic hedges and approximation by simile (Lakoff 1972; Taylor 1989). As in Richard Haklyut relevant features are functional to possible exploitation. What seems to emerge here is a convention to accept that our common tree names do refer to something which is not 'that' Western common tree ('oak') and that there is a shift and extension in meaning to include something which is totally new. The praxis was accepted both at Home and abroad.

> *Of a kinde of fruite or berrie in the forme of Acorns*
> There is a *kind of berrie or acorne*, of which there are *fiue sorts* that grow on *seuerall kinds* of trees, the one is called *Sagatémener*, the fecund *Osamener*, the third *Pummuckoner*. These *kinds of* acorns they use to drie upon hurdles made of reeds with fire underneath *almost* after the manner as we dry malt in England. When they are to be used they first water them until they be soft & then being sod they make a good victual, either to eate so simply, or els being also pounded, to make loaves or lumpes of bread. These be also the *three kinds of which, I said before*, the inhabitants used to make sweet oyle.
> An *other sort* is called *Sapùmmener* which being boiled or parched doth eate and *taste like* unto chestnuts. They sometimes also make bread of *this sort*.
> The *fifth sort* is called *Mangummenauk*, and is the acorne *of their kind of oake*, the which being dried after the maner of the first sortes, and afterward watered they boile them, & their servants or sometimes the chiefe themselves either for variety or for want of bread, doe eate them with their fish or flesh (Harriot 1972 [1590], 19).

***

In terms of hierarchical segmentation and superordinates, the idea of 'plant' is far more complex than what we may see here, where the Indian word is thought to correspond to an English word, albeit considering the expansive hedging (e.g. /kind/, /sort/, /manner/, /acorne of their kind/ etc.). The point is that conceptual categories and abstraction could not be literally re-translated into similar Western patterns. The earth and the soil and all the living creatures upon it were one with the Great Spirit. A possible 'negotiation of meaning' could in no way rely upon a one-to-one dictionary correspondence automatically tapping equivalents for translation

in a totally different constellation of semantic areas and correlations in a codified system of values and beliefs. The plants and animals of the Bible are a case in point in conveying to the 'others' a Christian message, whether they be taken as symbols or as 'real' items. This, however, came at a later phase, after the 'first' impact, when knowledge of the native languages enabled written translation and communication.

In the Algonquian Bible translated from English into Algonquian by the C.E. missionary John Eliot the word 'plant' which apparently to the Western mind may seem to be a recognizable superordinate, corresponds on the contrary to the idea of a mystical vision of land and spirit, created by one Great Spirit and is / ohkehteau /, 'a thing on the earth'. The idea of 'plant' then here marks and partakes of the essence of the people which live on the earth. (See PARTS 4 and 5) Similarly, the Garden of Eden is a garden or 'place where things grow in the earth', *tanohketeaonk*.

A translation of the Algonquian Bible into English eventually turned out to be of paramount importance for the reconstruction of the almost lost native language. From this version a new standard English translation (American English) was carried out in recent times to reconstruct both syntax and terminology. Even if John Eliot aspired to bringing rules and framing out a grammar with a covert view to a New English of America, the Algonquian languages were treated as "real" languages uncorrupt from hybridization. Hybridization and language contact was seen in terms of impurity, following the 'fatal' contact with the colonizers. Apparently the fault lay in the absorption producing hybridity, contamination and miscegenation. The blame was given to the one who was contaminated, not the contaminator. This phenomenom occurred throughout the colonized geographical areas and territories, from Africa to America and Australia and was not confined to the anglophone world. There is however a trend in history where English as a world language or in its many standard varieties of world Englishes seems to oust other languages, in addition to combining with them in the scale of language penetration and use as lingua franca and pidgin. There are national standards of English (Jamaican, Kenyan, etc.) which coexist with local Patwa, suburban jargons as in Nairobi, and local vernaculars. As regards phytonymy, it is a hard task for the lexicographer to refer to specific geographic areas and sociolects in the use of synonyms, allonyms and heteronyms, when the text becomes 'a moving text' between localisation and translation (see Pym 2004).

In the pages that follow the focus will look more specifically at English in its Standard variety in different areas. The Caribbean area for example offers a highly intricate pattern, between Standard Jamaican English and

local Creole English. Phytonyms present in the Caribbean area and in other areas of contact with an anglophone base (South Africa, Tasmania, New Zealand and South East Asia) have not been neglected (Sebba 1997). Based on research findings various key points have emerged which call for reflection on the present confusion of plant names.

In general, in botanical literature this may vary from confessed fear of botanists for total confusion, to an ill-concealed yearning for impossible monosemy as expressed by taxonomists and translators. Last, but not least, the risk of unrestrained proliferation of plant-names or conversely, the risk of names without plants, as in the case of endangered species:

On-line botanical dictionaries: scientific phytonyms coexist with local vernaculars.
There are sites which are subject-oriented (i.e. trees, shrubs, ornamental plants etc.), and offer multilingual dictionaries, and there are other sites for e-commerce, tourism, plant-lore and traditional medicine. Images and personal comments are useful in offering the various definitions, and possible local, national, scientific variations. On-line shopping based on trade-names and the branding of plant-names is usually of the creative and emotional type, i.e. the more 'exotic' name is offered even in presence of other more current options. The same plant may be registered under different names in several online dictionaries: e.g. 'a typical Jamaican fruit known as *Otaheite*, or 'Jew plum' is also known as 'Otaheite apple'. Otaheite is the local name for Tahiti. The lexeme 'Jew plum' is not exclusive to Jamaica.[2]

Brand-naming and e-commerce medicinal plants: most essences and herbal products are sold on-line. This calls for their accurate description and definition. Random on-line consultation, however, may suggest a situation of uncertainty with respect to the descriptive protocols of the International Botanical Code. There are many synonyms and homonyms which can potentially cause erroneous identification. Product description and claim to a place of origin, is vital here. A case in point is the Australian and New Zealand brand-name for honey from manuka or tea−tree (Allan 1961).[3] In the former instance we have two different brands for 'almost' the same honey, but coming from a different place and with a different scientific name. There are also brand-names which have cultural relevance. 'Basmati rice' Punjabi and Pakistani watered by Himalaya glaciers is a quality rice and for the global market it is

more than just a brand-name. The word 'Basmati' means "The perfumed one" from sandal-wood aroma. It is also known as "The Queen of Rices". In any case it is a 'she'. Cultural significance and gender connotation is irretrievably lost when no translation is given to the meaning of the name.

Popular Taxonomies: Regarding Creole and pidgin[4] the names of medicinal plants points to a metaphor which is explicative of remedy and the ailment it cures, stemming from African languages. Failure in retrieving the original plant-name is parallel to the loss of the plant in itself. The possibility of stopping the process of de-creolization of phytonyms in Creole phytonymy seems not to be easily thwarted in a market which is heedless of their spiritual or religious roots.

On-line Bilingual Lexicography: A decade ago the Creole lexicography challenge came from Terry Crowley in "The socially responsible lexicographer in Oceania" (1999, 1−12).[5] The survey highlighted the failure of a bilingual dictionary (English and Vanuatu of Fiji) and gave reasons why. The native speakers did not have access to the dictionary. On the other hand, regarding some entries, it appeared to be embarrassing lexicographers to record metaphors perceived by the community as vulgar or obscene. In terms of readership it could have been embarrassing when it came to clearly defining ritual or taboo terminology, pertaining to the language of oral formulae and traditional beliefs. Probably an on-line dictionary with open contribution could have prevented these failures and critiques. So far all the bilingual dictionaries had only the *vantage point* of the lexicographer, and not that of the Creole speaking community. Priority was given to Standard English of local diversity. The author hoped for two different dictionaries serving two different communities and scopes.

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The need to offer a representation and to convey an adequate perception of plant terminology is indeed crucial, ranging from different text-typology and textual functions, involving Bible translation into Creole or Creole literature into other languages. Creole literature offers a privileged perspective on landscape and representation.

In this type of descriptions, geo-specific terminology and local determiners are indeed the key terms and at its core values. Within a spatial descriptive paradigm, botanical metaphors and similes enact an expressive-emotional language function enhancing lexical density and cultural remoteness (see also Fenton, 2003). Consequently, popular phytonyms may be present as lists in a detailed description, and also be present as similes and/or metaphors. Descriptive models defining geo-botanic space and place rely upon definitions and lists of local plants which evidently denote an emotional and ritual significance other than the stereotyped mass-mediated clichés stemming from distorted and manipulated visions of the South Pacific, as we will see further ahead.[6]

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Consequently, the problems of a bilingual lexicography[7] as we have seen in the above section, may also involve readers wishing to translate into non-Creole or pidgins, as well as those wishing to translate into Creole. The need to convey a pragmatic equivalent for the translation of the parable of the mustard seed into Creole and of defining what weed is referred to in the evangelical parable is then tantamount to a textual function which is only apparently 'vocative" or appealing.

Cultural filters as well as ascribed beliefs may be partial or total in the Western world. Regional variation acts as a filter and apparent geographical proximity may only mislead. Translation consequently can be either domesticated or localized in its culture-bound items: apart from the post-colonial world, ethno-botanical taxa of Great Britain, Scotland, Wales and Ireland are also a case in point (Allen and Hatfield 2004). Yet, the addition of explicative notes then has been considered a necessary evil. All the more so for translations from sensitive texts when given the priority of expressive function, the botanical taxa is equally vital, if dealing for example with colonial and post-colonial literature and discourse. The issues are far from being mere quibbles in the sense that translatability is on a par with readability, especially when 'negotiating the frontier' in colonial and post-colonial contexts (Pym 2000).[8] Anglophone literature in some European countries is still subject to a limited diffusion because of difficulties in fully rendering the descriptions to its level of exoticism (see last sections). Multilingualism, code-switching and register variation appear to be the other major filters.

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The lexicographer and translator alike have to know the values and beliefs ascribed to that plant if the plant does exists in Creole popular taxonomy. Until recently, access to botanical information and bilingual dictionaries was rather restricted and translators simply tried to guess what plant was being referred to or gave a misleading literal translation. Having a Creole or Patwa dictionary was what the translator of post-colonial literature needed most. But the lexicographers' task was not an easy one and it all rested within the debate of varieties of English around the world and the right of pidgins to be recorded in dictionaries. In the Caribbean the process of lexicography has been a long and debated issue.

We will note some of the essential phases of the historical conditions which have influenced Jamaican Creole, as noted by Cassidy and Le Page in their *Dictionary of Jamaican English* (DJE).[9]

> **1655-1700** There was an initial lack of unity. The slaves imported from the Western coast of Africa other than Madagascar although dominated by the Twi-Fante-Ga-Ewe groups, did not have a common language. The white administrators were modest people, coming from the rural parts of Ireland and Northern England: "…the emergent pidgin was influenced by established Caribbean usages of Amerindian, Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, French and English. In particular, its patterns may have been influenced by those already established over the previous century for the pidgin Portuguese and subsequent pidgin English of the West African trade" (Le Page 1977, 222-55; Cassidy and Le Page 2002, xli);
>
> **1700-1808** A further complication is an increased heterogeneity. With new arrivals of slaves from Benin, Congo and Angola there was a new interaction with the already established communities. The contact, however, and communicative exchange with the English was diminishing, which in this phase was mostly Scottish. The *lingua franca* or the contact language between the slaves and the administrators and between the white Creole was *Creole English*. The use of metropolitan dialect by the English was confined to the expatriates, including craftsmen, which would have then used Creole. By the end of the 18th century there was an influx of French refugees in Haiti. In the following century, educational instruction through the work of missionaries took on a fundamental role. The new arrival of slaves during that period included Africans who spoke Yoruba, and labourers in difficult subservience conditions, amongst the Chinese, East-Indians and Portuguese.

What emerged was a pervasive hybridity in contact situations, especially for plant names which were part of the local diet and staple food and were also employed in traditional medicine. The segmentation of taxa is derived from the so-called 'primitive' languages, not from any scientific classification.[10] Botanical representation and the naming of plants is consequently perceived from a focus on different functions and metaphors. The fact that the many local vernaculars did not match with the standard European names gave way to apparent disorganized confusion which was the stigma of pidgins and Patwa. The question becomes even more complex when we examine contact languages inclusive of the so-called primitive substrata in the 'Creole continuum' perspective. Botanical nomenclature may well offer full-evidence for discarding this assumption, and testify to the contrary, in both English-based and non-English contact areas, in Jamaica and elsewhere in the South Pacific and in the Americas. Unquestionably it was and still is the English language in Jamaica that plays a pivotal role in instruction: yet, through the dispersion of the former plantation slaves towards the hills into more remote communities of peasant small-holders, the more ancient Creole was preserved in its features compared to the new emigration which introduced "new idiosyncratic features" (Cassidy and Le Page 2002, xlii).

1900-2000 The 20th century with the return of labourers from Panama and other areas of Central American has introduced a number of Hispanicisms. From Cuba came an influx of a large number of plant names. Current ties between the United States, Canada and Great Britain have caused further modification to the local dialects towards these varieties of hegemonic English.

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Proceeding in order: at this point we would like to give a brief diachronic overview of English as a Creole language or contact language in colonial and post-colonial context. During the 1960s a *Local Language Guide to Jamaica* (Bailey Loftman 1962) and a *Jamaican Creole Syntax* (Bailey 1966) became available. Remembering that as temporal reference, the decades which followed reflect a new editorial upturn, both locally and globally. Just a few representative titles: *Understanding Jamaican Patois* by L. Emilie Adams (Kingston, 1991) and the 1996 edition of the exhaustive *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage* (DCEU), by Richard

Allsopp, re-edited to 2003. Painstaking seminal studies by Cassidy and later on by Le Page would finally result in the *Dictionary of Jamaican English* (DJE) which resulted in various editions from the first editions in 1967 until now. A more recent *Kwéyòl Dictionary* was edited by David Frank, for the Ministry of Education in St. Lucia (2001).

The significant change in attitude is officially recorded in the debate on rank and status of Jamaican Creole (the 'low-prestige' factor) and the seeds of change (Beckford Wassink 1999, 57-92). The Jamaican Lexicography Project (Jamlex) which is currently online with references to the above quoted dictionaries (DJE and DCEU) stresses the fact that while the two existing dictionaries are excellent works, no dictionary, no matter how large can fully exhaust the rich lexical store of any language. Joseph Farquharson explains the idea of Jamlex as it evolved from the growing use of internet in lexicography and began to take shape in 2002 when he started to collect words and quotations to compile a Dictionary of Contemporary Jamaican.[11] His comments online (August 26, 2007) are emblematic of the current changes and constant evolution of contact language lexicography. The Scottish reference is not casual and appears justified both in terms of devolution (and devolving literatures), contact language, and eventually by direct influence:

> My collection and storage methods have changed significantly over the past years, and so has my vision for the dictionary. The long-term plan is for Jamlex *to produce several dictionaries, both general and specialized*. However, the flag-ship of the project will be the Jamaican National Dictionary (JND) [a name inspired by the *Scottish National Dictionary*], which will be available mainly (or probably only) in electronic format via the internet. The JND will be a dictionary prepared on historical principles which means that it will provide etymologies of words, meanings will be ordered to show how each word has developed over time, and illustrative quotations will be included from written and oral sources in order to illustrate usage and provide evidence (Farquharson 2007; emphasis added).

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The changing perspective on contact languages was not unanimously and simultaneously accepted. If the true native languages enjoyed a status, contact languages or heteroglossic communities did not. To put it more simply, for a long time it has been recognised that 'natives' or the imported slaves possessed an outstanding knowledge of the plants pertaining to their natural environment. The remarkable extent of that knowledge, however, and the degree to which those resources can be

utilized, is becoming evident only in the light of relatively recent interests.[12]

The emergence of pidgin and Creole languages and the controversies surrounding current theories about them (Siegel 2008) cannot be disjoined from our overview of botanical discourse. In this sense, the more crucial approach to the question of cultural identity can in no way forego a representation of ethno-botanical knowledge.

As already mentioned, the persistence of a negative approach to the idea of creolization and pidginization has restricted language awareness, but, also triggered an upturn in defensive strategies (see also Valdman 1977; Hymes 1971; Decamp 1977).

A list of false assumptions was itemized by Nida—notably that pidgins are only simplified forms of standard languages, with self-evident concession to the ignorance of linguistic peculiarities of the so-called 'natives'. The impact on the complex system in which translation from and into Creoles and pidgins takes place is marred by such misconceptions about pidgin vis-à-vis Creole, trade language, lingua franca and *koiné*. Nida's detailed observations are here combined with his paramount field-experience as a Bible and translation scholar alike:

> … it is assumed that within a few minutes any speaker of the dominant language can adjust his speech so as to talk pidgin, or at least so as to understand it. In addition, it is assumed that pidgins really *have little or no stable structure*; that is to say, each speaker merely improvises as he goes along. Nothing could be further from the truth. *Pidgin languages are not merely simplified world languages, and one simply cannot throw words together in any form or order and expect local people to understand*. In fact, learning to speak a pidgin language well can be as difficult as mastering any foreign language, except for the fact that many of the lexical forms are at least familiar, but deceptively so, since the meanings assigned to them in the pidgin language are so often radically altered.
>
> Some people regard any so-called hybrid language as being a pidgin, long after such a language has become the only language of a relatively large speech community. In the early days the form of French spoken in Haiti by the slave population from Africa and the European plantation managers was obviously only a pidgin, but rapidly this form of speech became the only language for the largely Negro population. In this process it evolved from *pidgin into a Creole, with all the structural elaboration and vocabulary enrichment which is involved in any full-scale language* (Nida 1975, 131; emphasis added).

Historically, one of the pioneering approaches to the question of pidginization and creolization was that of Hugo Schuchardt (1842-1927)

and his ethnography of variation (Markey 1979), which definitely discarded the idea of subserviency or ancillary status for such languages (Valdman 1977).

Language hegemony in botany: Latin and varieties of English

Inside botanical language and botanical descriptions in English, uniformity has been a long work-in-progress when proceeding to the attributive definitions of a plant and when engaging in cross-research on phytonyms and their lexicographical treatment.

The ambiguity of colour terminology may confirm not only the existing tension between botanical Latin, local idioms and dialectal areas, but also between the usage of English in situations of contact. On the other hand when referring to endemic species and vernaculars, choices have to be made. Most lexicographers will focus on a specific botanical theme or domain in their foreword. Quoting from the Collins' Guide *Scottish Wild Flowers*, as a parallel to Farquhar's approach to the *Scottish National Dictionary*, highlights the contribution of the Scottish element in plant names. The dynamics of phytonym English standardization versus local tradition may dramatically be felt in borderland areas and in former colonized territories:

> The naming of flowers is another potential source of confusion. Whilst some plant names are in everyday use, less common and conspicuous species often lack popular names. Furthermore, common names can vary even around a small country like Britain. Thus, for example the 'Bluebells of Scotland' is known as 'Harebell' in England, and the plant known as 'Bluebell' in England is called 'Wild Hyacynth' in Scotland. In a bid to reduce ambiguity, The Botanical Society of the British Isles (BSBI) has produced a recommended list of names. And the style of these names has generally been followed, except where Scots names are in wide usage, in which case the 'official' English name is included in the text. (Scott 1995, 11).

The idea of a centre with which the borderland or margin has ideologically to come to terms with points to an existing linguistic tension. Aims which explain for selective choices and omissions must be manifest. A botanical dictionary may exclude 'southern plants' which are rare for example in Scotland and conversely include introduced species which have become a conspicuous part of the landscape.[13] If the title stresses the fact that it is focussing on flowers, grasses and sedges are virtually excluded. Coverage

of superficially similar plants, i.e.chickweeds and dandelion-like flowers, may be reduced, since 'these too can frustrate the uninitiated'.

But, there are also ideological issues at stake and the questions are many. Is the recording of synonymy and allonymy useful? Can the preservation of endangered plant species in terms of desired action be parallelled to preservation of vernaculars? This is the open-and-shut question we have been met with throughout our research. The question of Scottish wildflowers bears an impact as it is Gaelic and Scottish plant names which were imported over to the Caribbean with the influx of colonization. For scientific binomials, however, the central standard has always been the *International Code of Botanical Nomenclature* (ICBN):

> …the excessive punctuation of some recommended names has been avoided, so the widely-used name Cranesbill has been preferred, for example to the contrived Crane's-bill. The system of scientific nomenclature is designed to avoid such confusion and produce an international standard. Unfortunately, scientific names are in a state of flux as they are amended in the light of changing scientific understanding of plant relationships and as older names (which have priority by the rules of nomenclature) are unearthed. The scientific names used here follow the current standard British work (Ibid.).

This is a clear admission of the possible change and non-fixity of the *Botanical Code* and scientific binomials. The preservation of phytonyms in endangered or minority languages is the issue at stake in lexicography:

> However, so that at least one cultural tradition is not lost. Gaelic names of plants are included for the first time in a popular work of this sort. Gaelic is the traditional language of the north-west Highlands and islands of Scotland. Usage can vary from area to area, and by no means every flower has a Gaelic name (Ibid.).

The lexicographers refer to literal meanings of phytonyms provided by the compilers which are not necessarily in agreement with authoritative repertoires of *Gaelic Plants names* (Cameron, 1883). As with some plants, Gaelic is an endangered language. On the whole, both in Europe and the United States, the prevailing trend is to manifest and explain specific choices, and itemize them in the foreword if targeting the lay reader.

> The term 'creeper' is used here not in the botanical sense of a prostrate plant rooting at the nodes but, more loosely, to describe any trailing or sprawling plant (Niering and Olmestead 1998, 27).

Colour grouping may also be referred to and detailed: 'pink (includes lavender) blue (includes purple)'. The final note pays tribute to the base for scientific nomenclature.

There is a tendency likewise to shift the botanical terminology in relation to the various schools of botany, and to ascribed prestige: in the American *Plant Identification Terminology*,[14] the use of the term s*corpioid,* appears to be ambiguous and there are other botanists who prefer the use of *zigzag* which is quite different from s*corpioid* (Harris and Woolf Harris), depending on the different 'schools' of botanical nomenclature. But let us go back in time.[15]

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The use of Latin as the international language of botany may well reflect the debate on English as a world language versus the many existing varieties of English (Mair 2003) and English words and terminology used in world languages as an additional form of globalization (Rosenhouse and Kowner, 2008). There are now indeed as many Englishes as there were many Latins. Professor William Stearn has a strong point here for the use of Latin as the universal language of botany:

> Botanical Latin is best described as a modern Romance language of special technical application, derived from renaissance Latin with much plundering of ancient Greek, which has evolved, mainly since 1700 and primarily through the work of Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778), to serve as an international medium for the scientific naming of plants in all their vast numbers and manifold diversity (Stearn 2000, 6).

The life-long devotion of the late William T. Stearns testifies to the use of Latin in botany, with the awareness of the many thousands of plants for which names have to be provided as a means of reference. Description of new plants necessitates the recording of structures often much too small to be seen by the naked eye, and with effects which can be eiher therapeutic or lethal. Let us quote from Stearn's 'Apologia' for the writing of his book, *Botanical Latin*:

> *'Those who wish to remain ignorant of the Latin language, have no business with the study* of *Botany.*' So wrote John Berkenhout in 1789. A letter to the *Cambridge Review* of 29 January 1960 by E.H. Corner gives its modern echo: '*We botanists keep Latin alive. We read it, write it, type it, speak it when mother tongue fail, and succeed in putting such remarkable things as orchid-flowers and microscopic fungi into universal understanding through Latin*. If we didn't, the Babel of tongues and scripts