is well known. Fr. Labat 1) published an engraving entitled Couronnement du Roy de Juda à la Coste de Guinée au Mois d’Avril, 1725. Amongst the distinguished foreigners attending this coronation — European ambassadors and others anxious to purchase black slaves — sits a Grand du Pays tenant un Parasol, which is round-shaped and wide like our modern beach umbrellas, and quite unlike the rough, irregular leaf-umbrella often used nowadays in various parts of Tropical Africa. In an earlier Africa the umbrella may have been ceremonial as well as functional.

Let us turn now from umbrellas and parasols to mushrooms! In the West Indies the most common generic term for ‘mushroom’ is a metaphor involving the parasol and, often, a supernatural parasol. Forms such as paraguata(s), paraguata(s), paraguito are common in Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Porto Rico. Jumbi umbrella is heard in St. Kitts, Antigua, Montserrat, Trinidad and British Guiana; duppy umbrella in Barbados and Jamaica (where it is restricted to a few areas — junjo is the usual term). The duppy and jumbi are African spirits which have survived in the New World. They are related to the zombi of the French-Creole-speaking islands — the mushroom is parésol zombi in parts of Dominica. A „Christianised” rendering of this form is parésol dijob (< F. diable), heard in St. Lucia. A parallel version is parasol di diablo in the Papamiento of Curacao. Sranan tongo (Taki-taki) uses a form which fits the umbrella image into a familiar European pattern: todo-prasoro ‘toad-parasol’ (cf. Eng. toad-stool, Dutch paddestool etc.). A proverb in the same language 2) plays on this word: Mi no can tro’ todo fo ope prasoro gi sneki ‘I cannot change the toad so that he will open a parasol for the snake’.

The supernatural nature of the mushroom is well attested in the folklore of both Europe and Africa and the fairy ring of the pasture is as awe-inspiring to the rural Irishman as mushrooms are to the Fulani of Adamawa 3) who dislike them “because they spring up overnight, the implication being that they are associated with nocturnal spirits”. It is therefore difficult to decide whether the supernatural umbrella-mushroom came wholly from Africa, or whether it is a hybrid Eurafican growth which developed in the West Indies. It is not likely that the image is purely European as it is not documented in the classical works on the dialectology of the colonising nations of Europe. It certainly does not appear in Gilliéron’s 4) nor in Peninsular Spanish which is singularly poor in terms for ‘mushroom’ as compared with say the sub-dialects of Porto Rico and Cuba 5), nor in the English of the British Isles which has bequeathed ‘mushroom’ alone to the New England States 6). Even if the Africanists

2) Herskovits op. cit., Taki-taki proverb no. 104.
3) Letter from Dr. J. Berry, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.
5) T. Navarro Tomas: El español en Puerto Rico. Río Piedras, P. R., 1948, map 44. Also communications from Ing. Julian Acuña, Estación experimental agrónoma, Santiago de las Vegas, Cuba.