cannot easily turn up evidence of the widespread occurrence of our metaphor in the West African dialects or in slavers' jargon, or in a West African lingua franca (perhaps on a creolised Portuguese base, cf. the beginnings of Papiamento 1), it would still seem unlikely that it was conceived in the West Indies unless it could be shown that it spread from island to island and territory to territory, carried by planters, buccaneers and slaves in the movements of population round the Caribbean in the 17th and 18th Century. Even then, it would be difficult to show how it has been adopted by at least three creolised European languages (English, French and Portuguese).

Returning once more to the riddle which began this note, we present a Haitian version 2 which expects a different answer: Kay a mub grá, sò sòl podo ki kòwé i 'House to me big, it is a single post which supports it'. Answer: Djëdjó, 'mushroom'. The variant yonyón is found in one small area of Porto Rico 3 and in Jamaica junjo is used in all parishes. The Haitian form has been recorded in Dominica 4 side by side with dialectal jòfò which lacks the d-element. Not only can these last forms designate 'mushroom' in Dominica but also, according to dialect, (improvised) 'plaything', "that is, an object, such as a rag or piece of wood to which a child attaches a special affection". This secondary meaning is not semantically distant from ébò 'twiddly-bit' 'thingummy-bob' in the French Creole of Mauritius 5 which arose from the contract or French sailors, slavers and planters with Malgache and African (including West African) slaves. Mauritian ébò and Dominican jòjò may of course not be related. Mauritian "umbrella" words are parapiti, frasol (= parasol) chatta (of Indian origin); "mushroom" words are sàmpé sàmpé (= champignon).

It seems to me, then, that the umbrella riddle, like many other West Indian riddles, came to the New World from Africa and that the umbrella-mushroom could well be an Africanism which has survived in many territories and several dialects of the West Indies.

It will be easier for us to solve such problems as these when the linguistic surveys at present being conducted by the University of Amsterdam and the University College of the West Indies have yielded up their harvest and when we know more of the slaves' Afrikaanse hoinè alluded to by Lichtveld 6 in a recent number of this periodical.

---

1) T. NAVARRO TOMAS: Observaciones sobre el papiamento, Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica 7, México, 1953, nrs. 1–2.
3) NAVARRO TOMAS op. cit., map 44.
4) Information supplied by Mr. DOUGLAS TAYLOR, Magua, Dominica.
5) Information on Mauritian creole supplied by Mr. I. RICHARDSON, S.O. A.S., London.