



West of Eden: Botanical Discourse, Contact Languages and Translation

Rosanna Masiola, Renato Tomei

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'West of Eden' is an extensive cross-disciplinary study covering a huge range of topics in the field of botanical discourse within colonial and post-colonial contexts. Stemming from an existing European tradition of name giving to take possession of the 'rarities' of the new world, it extends to female writing, songs and Bible translation into Creoles. It analyses the diversity of nomenclature in the different geographic areas: the Americas, the Caribbean, Australia, New Zealand and Africa. What is at stake here is also the loss of roots and identity when, as in the case of the Afro-Caribbean plants have been brought along the slave-route from the different parts of Africa. With other established authorities (Allsopp, Alleyne, Cassidy), the authors take vibrant stance against the prejudice that contact languages develop endless synonyms for one plant, when phytonyms are allonyms, i.e. coming from other places and other languages. But most of all 'West of Eden' tells us a lot about the richness of an eco-literature which is at risk. The loss of a flower or plant, may also mean the loss of the name it had in language system, and vice-versa. The two factors are inter-dependent.

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