

Activating Pondicherry Creole: Conversation as Method

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From May 2020 until May 2022, I, an English- and Bangla-speaking academic and literary critic, collaborated with a French and Tamil-speaking writer of historical fiction (Ari Gautier) as co-founders of the cultural platform, Le Thinnai Kreyol. Shared interests in memory, multilingual mess and creolisation drew us together and sparked our relationship. We located ourselves at the convergence of intellectual curiosity, creative expression, generosity and emotional openness.

Through this collaboration, I explored and consolidated my understanding of creolisation: how it enfolds historical process, cultural theory and the creative praxis of resistance. Taking a cue from linguistic Creoles, I apply creolisation to understand the genesis of diverse cultural products through the unexpected encounter of different peoples in compacted spaces under unequal power dynamics. Negotiation, compromise, collaboration, innovation and improvisation characterise the processes of exchange that ensue. The creolised culture that emerges typically manifests itself on the body and domestic habitus, merging the intangible with the material, evading standardisation and marketisation, and proliferating orally and ephemerally.

Some creolised cultural products lend themselves to technological capture and enter the archive as a stable repository. But on the whole, the informal life of creole things, languages and practices urges us to reconceptualise the archive in dynamic relation to the repertoire.¹ In South Asia, normalisation of exclusionist discourses of caste and religious purity, the power of English and ‘classical’ Indic languages, and ethnolinguistic silos inherited from colonial classifications, have pushed creolised cultural expressions to the margins of the public sphere. On Le Thinnai Kreyol, as an in-person event in Amsterdam we organised in November 2021 confirmed,² our quest was to taste, hear and touch ‘creole’ again through activating memories of the creolised Indic habitus and its relationship to other, transoceanic, creolised worlds. As a platform now maintained by myself as the Facebook page named ‘Creole Indias’, Le Thinnai Kreyol remains interested not in storage but retrieval.

During our collaboration, Gautier wrote several pieces in response to my theorising on Indic creole cultures. Subscribing to my views of Pondicherry’s creole culture and its linguistic traces,

¹ See Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, Duke University Press,

² See ‘Le thinnai kreyol presents Kreyol Warung’, November 2021, on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=nsdMJ-pJE4

he tried to reproduce them in his own voice. My interrogation of those attempts provoked various conversations, which are the basis of what follows. As a literary critic, I understand the symbiotic relationship between form and content. Through our collaboration, I was able to privilege the fugitive, the disappearing, the fragmented and the forgotten. The public intimacy of conversations broadcast live on Le Thinnai Kreyol,³ were replete with laughter, pauses, interruptions and cacophony. Here, its written counterpart uses conversation as method to enlase speculation – the domain of the fiction writer – with analysis – the tool of the scholar – and personal memories of each.

Gautier withdrew from the collaboration unilaterally in May 2022, abruptly ending the conversation between us. Nevertheless, I continue to advocate conversation as method for the activation of linguistic resources that seem to have lost their vitality. Both the conversations that Gautier and I hosted and conducted on Le Thinnai Kreyol, and Pondicherry Creole itself, are historical ‘facts’, but, in reactivation, they also become the possible memory of a different future.⁴ The final version of the fragment that I offer opens the door to another remembered future by putting two subaltern languages of Creole India into mutual activation.



The building at 28, Rue Bazar Saint Laurent, Pondicherry, that houses the mutual aid association for the Pondicherry Creole community, ‘Société Mutuelle des Créoles’, founded in 1883

³ See ‘Le Thinnai Kreyol’ on YouTube: www.youtube.com/c/lethinnaikreyol

⁴ As noted above, this ‘conversation’ has been recreated by me based on several actual conversations between myself and Ari Gautier around Pondicherry creole/s. The two versions of the passage in ‘Pondicherry Creole’ that I provide in this essay were written by Gautier in response to our joint explorations of Creole languages as a form of resistance. I am grateful to Gautier for giving permission to reproduce them here. See also Ananya Jahanara Kabir and Ari Gautier, ‘Creolisation in Pondicherry: The Superfluous Necessity’, *ZIST* 23, Spring 2022, <https://www.zist.co/2022/02/14/creolisation-in-pondicherry-the-superfluous-necessity>; and Ananya Jahanara Kabir, ‘Creole Indias, Creolizing Pondicherry: Ari Gautier’s *Le thinnai* as the Archipelago of Fragments’, *Comparative Literature*, vol 74, no 2, June 2022, pp 202–218

Pondicherry Creole: Take 1

Le ciel part don! Madame de Rosario s'assit lourdement sur le banc en ciment et sortit son éventail. La légère brise du front de mer ne pouvait rien contre la chaleur estivale de Pondichéry. L'air était suffocant. Laissant ses amies dans l'impatience, elle s'éventa coquettement avec son éventail espagnol en bois de Poirier. Elle allait reprendre son récit que Thérèsine de Gonzaga arriva.

Tirer la sappate don! Pourquoi même acheter bagarre avec moi tout le temps?

Thérèsine avait cette manie de se disputer tout le temps avec le rickshaw.

Quelle grippe-sou don Thérèsine! Pinailler pour deux sous, trois paisas avec le pousseur. Pourquoi prendre pousse-pousse, elle habite ici-même? Marie David marmonna entre ses dents.

Ari, you sent me these lines because you've finally started writing your short story using Pondicherry Creole. And I've run into translation trouble with the very first line. *Le ciel part don...* What is that? *Don*, I understand – it's what linguists call a 'discourse particle', and you've told me it is from the French *donc*.⁵ But *le ciel part*? It doesn't make sense.

Ananya, to understand Pondicherry Creole, you have got to be either very good or very bad – in both Tamil and French. There is a Tamil expression *maanam poidichu* ('honour is gone'), which refers to the loss of family honour. Pondicherry Creole speakers mistakenly understand *maanam* (Tamil, 'honour') as *vaanam* (Tamil, 'sky'). And so, 'honour is gone' becomes 'the sky goes (*le ciel part*).'

I see! Mishearing the Tamil idiom leads to a mistranslation into French. This is creolisation in action: the unpredictable emergence of something unexpected from an unplanned encounter!⁶ Well, here is my translation of your opening lines:

"What a scandal!" Madame de Rosario sat down heavily on the cement bench and took out her fan. The light breeze from the seafront could do nothing against the summer heat of Pondicherry. The air was suffocating. As her friends waited, impatient, she flirtatiously wielded her Spanish pear wood fan. Just as she was about to resume her story, Thérèsine de Gonzaga arrived.'

And now: *Tirer la sappate, don*. *Sappate* is obviously from *sapato* (Portuguese, 'shoe'). Not surprisingly, it appears in Konkani too.⁷ But what is it doing in Pondicherry French?

⁵ See John T Platt and Mian Lian Ho, 'Discourse Particles in Singaporean English: Substratum Influences and Universals', *World Englishes*, vol 8, no 2, 1989, pp 215–221; on 'donc', see Joeri Vlemings, 'The Discourse Use of French *Donc* in imperative Sentences', *Journal of Pragmatics*, vol 35, no 7, 2003, pp 1095–1112

⁶ On 'mishearing' and 'mistranslation' in creolising milieus, see Carolyn Cooper, 'Cross Talk: Jamaican Popular Music and the Politics of Translation', in Susanne Mühleisen, ed, *Contested Communities*, Brill Rodopi, Leiden, 2017, pp 277–289

⁷ See Edward de Lima, *Influence of Portuguese Vocabulary on Konkani Language*, Vikram Publications, Porvorim, 2014, p 60; see also Ananya Jahanara Kabir, 'Rapsodia Ibero-Indiana: Transoceanic Creolization and the Mando of Goa', *Modern Asian Studies*, vol 55, no 5, 2021, pp 1581–1636

Ananya, between French Pondicherry and Portuguese Goa there were many connections.⁸ Indo-Portuguese women frequently entered relationships with French arrivals into Pondicherry, for instance. You see this Portuguese influence in the Iberian surnames I have given the characters: *de Rosario*, *de Gonzaga*. Pondicherry Creole is full of Portuguese-derived words, especially in the domains of food, drink and familiar interactions.



Graves of representatives of the Pondicherry Creole community in Pondicherry's Ouppalam (Uppalam) Cemetery, with Portuguese-derived surnames on the tombstones

These are exactly the domains where Portuguese words entered Bangla, Ari.⁹ And even Henry Derozio, the fiery pioneer of the Young Bengal movement, derived his surname from *de Rosario*.¹⁰ The Portuguese were certainly the first instigators of creolisation in Indic space. So, I'll translate *tirer la sabbate don* as 'pull out the slipper, don!' But since *tirer* is not the imperative 'pull' but the infinitive '(to) pull', it seems best to translate it as 'to pull out the slipper, don!' Clearly, Pondicherry Creole doesn't believe in conjugating too many verbs. Actually, that also helps me with *pourquoi même acheter bagarre avec moi tout le temps*: Thérèsine's accusation to the *rickshaw-walla* is part of her 'mania for constantly arguing with him'. Isn't she really saying something like, 'Why even *to buy brawl* with me all the time?'

⁸ See Adrian Carton, *Mixed-Race and Modernity in Colonial India: Changing Concepts of Hybridity across Empires*, Routledge, London, 2012; and Gauri Parasher, 'Between Saree and Skirt: Legal Transculturality in Eighteenth-Century Pondicherry', *Comparativ*, vol 24, no 5, 2014, pp 56–77

⁹ See J J A Campos, *History of the Portuguese in Bengal*, Butterworth & Co, Calcutta, 1919, at p 215; on food, language, and performance as constituting a Creole habitus, see Roger Chaudenson, *Creolization of Language and Culture*, Routledge, London, 2002

¹⁰ See Rosinka Chaudhuri, 'The Politics of Naming: Derozio in Two Formative Moments of Literary and Political Discourse, Calcutta, 1825–31', *Modern Asian Studies*, vol 44, no 4, 2010, pp 857–885

Absolutely. This is how Pondicherry Creole plays with French. You know, Ananya, how Creole languages are full of ‘mistakes’.¹¹

I’m getting the hang of it now, Ari. Marie David calls Thérèsine a *grippe-sou*. Is that ‘someone who holds on tightly to small change?’

Indeed it is! *Sou* was a small, old, French coin.

So, here we go with the final line: “‘What a miser don, Thérèsine! Quibbling over two cents, three *paisas* with the *rickshaw-walla*. Why even take a rickshaw, she lives right here,” Marie David muttered between clenched teeth.’ And look! *Pousse-pousse* (‘push-push’, rickshaw) is a great example of Indic reduplication for emphasis.¹² Well Ari, we have now encountered some key features of Pondicherry Creole: the discourse particle ‘don’, syntactical and grammatical simplification, misheard and mistranslated Tamil idioms, sedimentation of Portuguese lexis, reduplication...

But you know what the linguists say, Ananya: Pondicherry Creole doesn’t exist!¹³

Indeed! As one researcher says, ‘one cannot seriously claim that PCF is a Creole... this variety can be termed as *Indianized French*’.¹⁴ So, Ari, did you make it up?

Ananya, for some, it doesn’t exist; for others, it is endangered. But, growing up in Pondicherry, I heard it spoken. It is what French becomes in the mouths of the group historically called the Bas Créoles (‘Low Creoles’) of Pondicherry.¹⁵

Yet Ari, the same scholar who concludes that this ‘Indianised French’ is not Creole also labels it ‘PCF (Pondicherry Creole French)’, and reminds us that it is often difficult to maintain a strict distinction between Creole and non-Creole languages.¹⁶ What is at stake in both calling this language *Creole* and disavowing its creoleness? Your desire to write an entire story in Pondicherry Creole seems to arise from this gap. Fiction’s task is to imagine possible worlds, retrieve that which might have been from that which used to be, or even that which could never become.

¹¹ See Derek Bickerton, ‘Creole Languages’, *Scientific American*, vol 249, no 1, 1983, pp 116–123

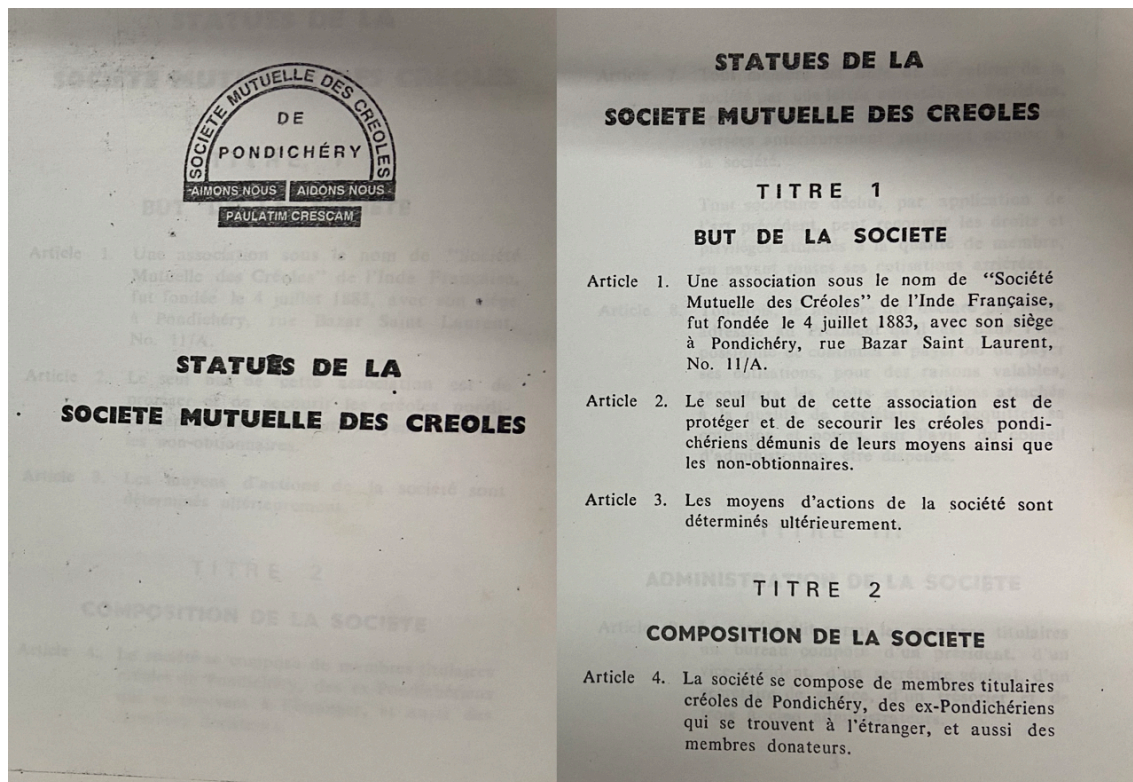
¹² See Anvita Abbi, *Semantic Grammar of Hindi, A Study in Reduplication*, Bahri Publications, Delhi, 1980

¹³ See Leena Kelkar-Stephan, *Bonjour maa: the French-Tamil Language Contact Situation in India*, Martin-Luther-Universität, Halle-Wittenberg, 2005, pp 104–108

¹⁴ Ibid, p 108

¹⁵ On Pondicherry’s Haut Créoles (direct descendants of Europeans) and Bas Créoles (descendants of racially mixed unions), and the restriction of ‘Creole’ to these demographic group rather than the language they speak, see *ibid*, pp 69–79

¹⁶ See *ibid*, p 78



The first page of the Founding Statute, Société Mutuelle des Créoles, courtesy of Monsieur Robert Xavier

You know, Ananya, that my novel *Le Thinnai* already included a Creole-speaking character: Lourdes, the domestic help.¹⁷ As its translator Blake Smith notes, ‘Lourdes is the only character in the novel presented as speaking Pondicherrian Creole, a language that has received almost no scholarly attention or literary documentation outside of Gautier’s novel’.¹⁸ Blake describes Lourdes’s Creole as ‘an ambiguously translingual presence, one that appears to some characters (and sometimes to the narrator) as an independent language marking its speaker’s social exclusion, at other times as a degenerate and corrupted French, yet also as a potentially hopeful example of *métissage*’.¹⁹

Yes, Ari, Creole is never monolithic. But don’t hide behind Blake now! Confess... when you wrote *Le Thinnai*, you were not yet ready to activate an entire universe of Pondicherry Creole speakers.²⁰ Lourdes’s Creole actually marginalises her in the world of the novel. She is the only one who speaks it, and various people, including the protagonist’s father, are highly negative towards the way she speaks. Indeed, Blake finds that ‘the narrator’s own attitude towards Lourdes’ language is inconsistent’.²¹

¹⁷ Ari Gautier, *Le Thinnai*, Le lys bleu, Paris, 2018

¹⁸ Blake Smith, ‘Translingualism in Francophone Writing from South Asia’, *L’Esprit Créateur*, vol 59, no 4, 2019, pp 68–80, p 77

¹⁹ Ibid, p 78

²⁰ See Andrew Apter and Lauren Derby, eds, *Activating the Past: History and Memory in the Black Atlantic World*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Cambridge, 2009

²¹ Blake Smith, ‘Translingualism in Francophone Writing from South Asia’, op cit, p 78

Ananya, I won't deny it. I wasn't ready then to embrace fully the radical potential of Creole. As I declare in *Le Thinnai*, Pondicherry Creole, or 'French compounded with Tamil and Portuguese words, spoken in a Tamil style... should have been an ideal language. This mix of French and Tamil could have been our family's *lingua franca*. But my father violently resisted the idea of Lourdes speaking to us in it.'²² This paternal interdiction was actually placed on me as a boy, by my own father. The regret that the narrator feels, about Pondicherry Creole not being a *lingua franca*, is my own regret.

So, Blake is right: Lourdes leads us to 'questions that will require us to undo our monolingual assumptions'.²³ While your Franco-Tamil novel reminds us that European languages other than English circulated in the Indic space, Lourdes reminds us of the emergence – and disappearance – of Creole languages in India.

Ananya, I write in French not to celebrate my Frenchness, but to acknowledge those creolising fissures that shape my identity. The Bas Créoles stand for a way of life that impacted everyone in Pondicherry. As you have analysed in such detail,²⁴ their Indian Ocean creole songs, their version of Mascarene sega dance, their pre-Lenten masquerades: Lourdes's language activates these memories for my readers.

Indeed, Ari, you are attracted precisely to what the father banned! The Bas Créoles are 'banished to live in the fishing villages or amongst the lowest of the outcastes', rendered invisible as 'pariahs amongst the pariahs', but you endow them with 'mysterious carelessness and a lightness mixed with a certain pride'. You insist that 'Lourdes had inherited this freshness and lightness'.²⁵

Ananya, this is how I bring to my novel what you have called 'alegropolitics'.²⁶ Precisely the sorrows of the Bas Créoles enable me to describe their resistance through joy. It is what you and I have called 'Alegroparai',²⁷ the resistance sounded through the *parai* drums – drums of the same 'outcaste' community that has given the world the reviled word 'pariah'.²⁸ And our events on Le Thinnai Kreyol in turn motivated me to write a poem on the theme of 'Alegroparai'.²⁹ Thank you for editing and translating it!

²² Ari Gautier, *Le Thinnai*, op cit, p 69; the English translations are from Blake Smith, *The Thinnai*, Delhi, Hachette India, 2021

²³ Blake Smith, 'Translingualism in Francophone Writing from South Asia', op cit, p 78

²⁴ See Ananya Jahanara Kabir, 'Creole Indias, Creolizing Pondicherry', op cit

²⁵ Ari Gautier, *Le Thinnai*, op cit, p 70

²⁶ See Ananya Jahanara Kabir, 'The Fleeting Taste of *Mazaa*: From Embodied Philology to an Alegropolitics for South Asia', *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, vol 43, no 2, 2020, pp 243–254

²⁷ See 'Le Thinnai Kreyol – Alegroparai Drum Circle with Guests' on YouTube: <https://tinyurl.com/Alegroparai>

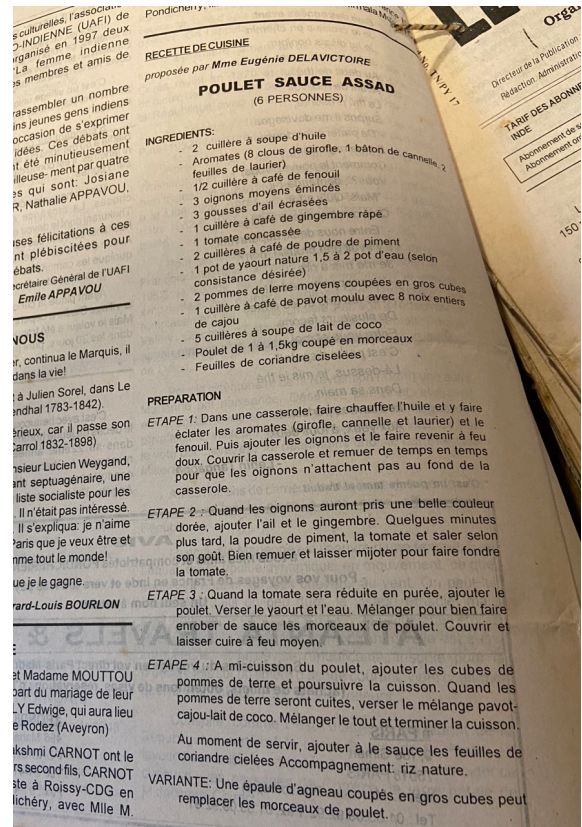
²⁸ See C Joe Arun, 'From Stigma to Self-Assertion: Paraiyars and the Symbolism of the Parai Drum', *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, vol 41, no 1, 2007, pp 81–104

²⁹ Ari Gautier, 'Alegroparai', edited and translated by Ananya Jahanara Kabir (English) and Luca Raimondi (Italian), *Il Tolomeo* 23, 2021, pp 55–57

Ari, that work of editing and translating your poems was a great opportunity to amplify the concept of Alegroparai for the wider public, because I find it a key that unlocks Creole as a living archive for the Indic world. The body as source of joy is exactly why your Lourdes cooks the most delicious Pondicherry Creole food, which everybody, including the protagonist's father, devours. The love you lavish on those food passages is remarkable! And it is that sensibility that made me first reach out and ask you about your understanding of 'Creole' in the context of Pondicherry.

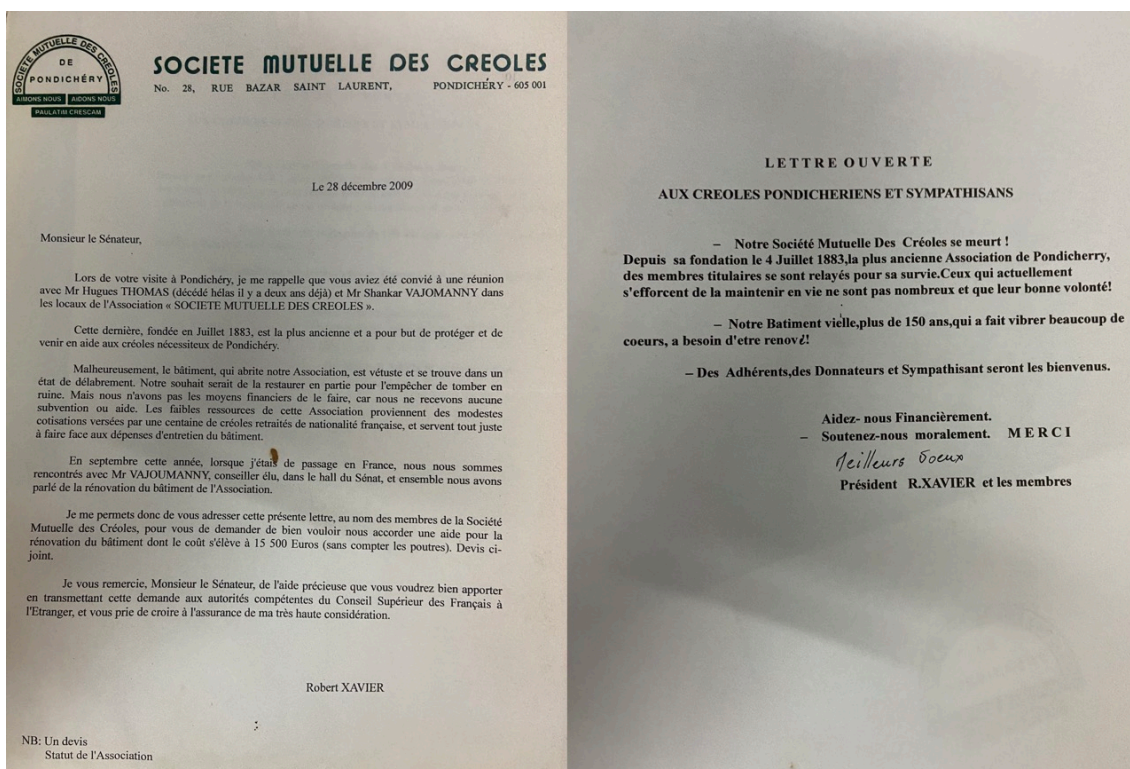
Yes, Lourdes became a touchstone for Le Thinnai Kreyol, our 'living laboratory' for retrieving the disappeared or disappearing pasts of Creole Indias. On Le Thinnai Kreyol we show how food, music, dance and language constitute the living archives of 'Creole Indias'. It is a somatic, sensed identity that somehow eludes colonial and postcolonial standardisations.

The *thinnai* of your novel, Ari, is not just an architectural element in a Franco-Tamil home that connects exterior and interior worlds. It is a contact zone where creolisation occurs – much like Pondicherry itself. On our virtual *thinnai*, since May 2020, we have been connecting people, too, activating India's creole pasts to rethink the postcolonial present.³⁰ We have been reminding people what it means to dance a joyous *dappankuttu*, beat the *parai* drum, puff on a *suruttu*, toss down some *kallu*. To those who will dictate what we must eat, what we must wear and how we must speak, and who we must love: *tirer la sappate, don!* we say. But first, you must finish your short story in Pondicherry Creole. The living archive needs a written avatar to circulate in the world...



Recipe for Chicken Assad ('Poulet sauce assad'), a Pondicherry Creole dish, from *Trait d'Union*, Vol LIV, No 7, June 1998, a magazine founded by Pondicherryans returned from Saigon and published monthly from Pondicherry

³⁰ For an analysis of Le Thinnai Kreyol's formation and work, see Luca Raimondi, 'Literary Geographies in Virtual Space: The Multiple Lives of a Creole Veranda', *Literary Geographies*, vol 6, no 2, 2020, pp 178–184; see also the 'Creole Indias' Facebook page at www.facebook.com/lethinnaikreyol, and the archives of live broadcasts on Le Thinnai Kreyol's YouTube channel www.youtube.com/channel/UCjXKpDlXuNZe6Lmn9MVxyw



Letters detailing the present state of disrepair of the building housing La Société Mutuelle des Créoles, written, with the aim of fund-raising, by its current president, Monsieur Robert Xavier, courtesy of Robert Xavier

Pondicherry Creole: Take 2

Ciel part don! Madame de Rosario assit lourdement sur banc en siment et sorti éventail à elle.

La légère brise du beach pas assez contre chaleur de Pondichéry.

Il fait chaleur, don! Ses amies étaient impatientes même. Madame de Rosario prit éventail espagnol en bois de Poirier et coquette, elle agita. Thérèsine de Gonzaga vient quand elle commence parler.

Tirer la sappate don! Pourquoi même acheter bagarre avec moi tou l'temps?

Thérèsine disputer disputer tou l'temps avec rickshawpaiya.

Grippe-sou don Thérèsine! Pinailler pour deux sous, trois paisas avec pousseur.

Pourquoi prendre pousse-pousse, elle habite ici-même, non? Marie David parla entre dent elle.

Ari, one year after we submitted the first version of this conversation to our editors, you decided to take matters a step further. You have now introduced some changes in the orthography, syntax and lexis of the original dialogue between the Pondicherry Creole ladies. More importantly, you have also creolised the narrator's reportage through similar touches!

Ananya, it was, in fact, in response to your observation made regarding the first version. You pointed out to me the linguistic divergence there between the dialogue, which was in my rendering of Pondicherry Creole, and the narratorial voice, which was in standard French. And so I decided to try and close that gap.

Voilà! So, that's why we get here *beach*, an English word that enacts the seepage of Anglophone culture into Francophone and Tamil domains within the frame of postcolonial India, and *rickshawpaiya*, that combines 'rickshaw' with the Tamil word 'paiya', which means 'small boy' but with a derogatory touch. You have also changed the orthography of *tout* to *tou* and *ciment* to *siment* to make sound conform more closely to the written form. With regard to syntax, *son éventail* has become *éventail à elle*, and *ses dents* to *dent elle*, which reflect the syntactic transformations that creolisation processes introduce. There is an additional reduplication in *disputer*, *disputer*. In that vein, we also see the removal of the definite article in *le ciel* to *ciel*.

Ananya, in order to write the first literary text in what I want to offer as my version of 'PCF', I need to draw from my creative thought an imaginary language that is as close as possible to an existing way of speaking and communicating. Even as I take inspiration from Caribbean and Indian Ocean Creoles, I want this 'PCF' to be unique in its own way without respecting any rules that issue from the French language of the Hexagon, or the French metropolitan region.

Ari, if our conversations have stimulated you to take further in your creative writing the potential of activating a seemingly disappeared and disappearing Creole, these developments in turn offer me, the literary critic and theorist of creolisation, additional provocations. Fiction deals with making possible worlds seem achievable. As a writer, you are pushing open the door, bit by bit. You invite us to pass through that door into a closed, creolised world, but you also enable elements from that world to escape, and to sit on your *thinnai* with us.

...On our *thinnai kreyol*! Ananya, what is the point of taking memories out of archives if only to dust them off, admire them and put them back in new boxes – to be taken out again, perhaps, a hundred years later? Le Thinnai Kreyol aims to bring to life these forgotten archives through our conversations, and through new writing – creative, theoretical, even inbetween categories like this piece you are writing. While the academic world argues that *kozé kreyol* and creolisation do not exist in Pondicherry, Le Thinnai Kreyol challenges this perception and invents, for the first time, literary fragments of Pondicherrian Kreyol. This is how archives live, don't they? *Si créole pa existé, nous inventé ça nou-même!* If Créole doesn't exist, we will invent it ourselves!

And in the wake of that invention, Ari, I have also infused the translation with another flavour: the old creolised English of India, that which I heard around me while growing up in Park

Circus, Calcutta.³¹ Here, in the following, is my translated offering, with some Anglo-Indian touches!

From one Creole into another: Take 3

Uff men, what a bleddy bugger! Madame de Rosario sat down heavily on the cement bench and took out that fan of hers. The light breeze from the beach could do nothing against the summer heat of Pondicherry. This blessed heat, men! As her friends waited, impatient, she fluttered her Spanish pear wood fan like those fast girls eying the boys after Sunday mass. Just as she was going to resume her story, Thérèsine de Gonzaga arrived.

Give you a slipper-whack, men! Why only to do jhagra with me all the time?

Thérèsine keeps fighting fighting all the time with the rickshaw chhokra.

What a miser, that Thérèsine, baba! Making tamasha over two three naiya paisas with that fellow.

Why to take the push-push, abli she lives here only, no? Marie David muttered between clenched teeth.

All photographs were taken by Ananya Kabir in December 2022. The help of Monsieur Robert Xavier, President, Société Mutuelle des Créoles, and Madame Shanty Rayapoullé of the École Française d'Extrême-Orient, Pondicherry, is gratefully acknowledged. Travel to Pondicherry in December 2022 was made possible through a King's College London Arts and Humanities Small Research Grant. King's College London resources were also used to run Le thinnai Kreyol Facebook page from May 2020–May 2022.

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³¹ There is no study yet that considers Anglo-Indian varieties of English as creolised language. This lacuna might be ascribed to a popular and scholarly reluctance in imagining any variety of English in India to be native, let alone creole. Nevertheless, some suggestive examinations of Anglo-Indian English do exist: see, for instance, Gail M Coelho, 'Anglo-Indian English: A Nativized Variety of Indian English', *Language in Society*, vol 26, no 4, 1997, pp 561–589; John Spencer, 'The Anglo-Indians and their Speech: A Socio-Linguistic Essay', *Lingua* 16, 1966, pp 57–70; and Robyn Andrews, 'English in India: Reflections Based on Fieldwork among Anglo-Indians in Kolkata', *India Review* 5, nos 3–4, 2006, pp 499–518. See also 'Anglo-Indian-isms', Go More Films' interviews with Anglo-Indians about the unique words and phrase used in Anglo-Indian communities: www.youtube.com/watch?v=QoCS8fTVUgI