

Chapter 3

Race and Resistance

The account so far of some of the key features of imperialist discourse would seem to suggest that only one of the sides involved was able to articulate their perception of the relation. It is indeed true that the whole weight of the imperial state machine and the particular practices and messages of its ideologues were geared to produce a message or messages that reflected and bolstered the dominance of the Western imperialists. Often, this meant that the ‘natives’ were simply silenced, by use of a variety of means, ranging from outright physical repression, through censorship of different types, to a range of methods of co-optation into the ideological realm of their colonial masters. In addition to these sustained and deliberate efforts to deprive the colonised of their voice, there were other more subtle ways of achieving the same result. However it was done, the silencing of the natives was an inherent corollary of the logic of maintaining colonial rule.

Yet the domination and hegemony of imperialism were never absolute. In addition to ongoing direct resistance to imperial rule, there was also the survival of elements of former modes of production. There were also vestiges, sometimes substantial, of previous forms of discourse and culture, as well as the emergence of new counter-discourses, which increasingly came into being to challenge the imperialists’ prerogatives and right to rule. Expressing themselves in any possible format, including newspaper journalism, political speeches and pamphlets, literature, songs, legal challenges and other forms, these would also take the form of developed theories, borrowing in some cases from the intellectual resources of the oppressor country.

We have seen that the revolt of the Black Jacobins of Saint-Domingue was bolstered by the ideas in which the French Revolution was being fought out, as well as drawing on other, equally important, strands of non-European origin, including the practices and beliefs known as voodoo, which formed the web of ideas and practices through which the revolt expressed itself. However, resistance was not a new phenomenon. Resistance to attack and invasion and, subsequently, revolt against the occupying forces and the condition of slavery were an ongoing feature of the imperialist experience.

In the immediate aftermath of the invasion of Algeria by the French in 1830, fierce resistance by Algerian tribal warriors was waged from the beginning, under the

leadership of the totemic figure of the Emir Abdelkader, who still carries a tremendous symbolic power for his significance to Algerian nationhood even today. He was a spiritual as well as a military leader, a *Sufi* disciple of Ibn Arabi, and drew on Islam as a powerful mobilising force. Although Abdelkader surrendered to the Duc d'Aumale in 1847 and was imprisoned in France, before ending his days in exile in Damascus, the resistance was not eliminated but continued in a variety of forms, some under the surface (Djebar 1985), until the war of liberation brought independence in 1962.

In Morocco in the 1920s, a determined and initially successful resistance was put up against both the Spanish and the French by Abd el-Krim in the Rif War, until his deportation in 1927. In the French West and Central African territories, such as Senegal, Upper Volta, Ivory Coast and Guinea, there was strong resistance to French colonialism. This resistance was particularly determined where there was a predominance of concessionary companies in control, subjecting the colonised to brutal treatment and forced labour (Londres (1929)/1998; Suret-Canale 2001). The Kongo-Wara War, which lasted from 1928 to 1935 in the colony formerly named Oubangui-Chari (now Central African Republic), is one example of such resistance. Resistance in Madagascar was met with savage repression in 1947. There was also strong resistance in Asia. The French occupation of Indochina was met with uninterrupted resistance from its beginnings in the nineteenth century.

The sources of inspiration for these expressions of resistance were multiple. In addition to the spontaneous gut reaction of revolt against conquest and brutality, the articulation of revolt in terms of ideas and ideology drew on a range of thought and belief systems, linked to a diverse set of experiences and cultures. These currents developed in new directions, as a result of experience and cross-fertilisation with other influences throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. There is no doubt that European socialism and communism developed a powerful attraction for those outside Europe, who were looking for tools of analysis of their oppression and strategies for their liberation. This was perhaps most notable in the case of Indochina, where the Vietnamese resistance, culminating in the declaration of independence in 1945, was very largely inspired by Marxist ideas, though it has to be said that, although leaders such as Ho Chi Minh spent time in France in their youth, these were mostly filtered through their Chinese and Soviet versions. If the Vietnam struggle, both against the French and then against the Americans, was fully integrated into the international communist movement and the wider international Left, it nonetheless retained a specifically Asian dimension. In other instances, socialist ideas were almost always even more clearly mixed in with, or set alongside, others that owed their origins to other sources.

Moreover, as the Black Jacobins had soon been confronted with the limitations of the humanism of the French Revolutionary project, so too did subsequent generations of the colonised and enslaved come to see the inadequacy of universal communism alone, as it was articulated in practice, and looked to alternative, or complementary, ideas through which to articulate their experience and struggle for freedom.

Although it is possible to tease out the elements of the different discourses and classify them according to their European or non-European sources, the fact is that, as an almost inevitable by-product of the processes of capitalist imperialism, these elements were in a close interrelationship and fed off each other to a large extent. There were a number of historical factors that gave an impetus to this cross-fertilisation, amongst which the involvement of troops from the colonies in both world wars, alongside, if not on a par with, metropolitan French soldiers, was highly significant in raising awareness of the predicament of the colonised and the possibility of struggle (Miller 1999). This awareness was heightened even further when the troops returned home to share their consciousness of their own humiliation and ill-treatment, but also to bring home the new ideas they had encountered regarding what struggle could and should be. These processes of exposure to and dissemination of European ideologies of struggle were reinforced by the increased migration of workers, students and intellectuals from the colonies to metropolitan France, which was given such a boost by the First World War. The coming together of people from Indochina, Africa and the Caribbean provided fertile conditions for the development of an anticolonial movement with an international dimension. It was enormously influential in building a common anticolonial consciousness, inspired by the ideas of the Marxist Left, but also developing its own concepts of analysis and struggle.

The 1920s were a time when, as well as intellectuals with Marxist and socialist ideas, such as Ho Chi Minh, radical, proletarian anticolonialist movements were being developed by Africans in Paris, such as Lamine Senghor and Tovalou Houénou (Miller 1999). Their voices were already raised in support of the specificity of the struggles of the colonised, particularly those of African origin, who had to endure the additional burdens of extreme exploitation and racism. Their ideas were expressed in newspapers such as *La Voix des Nègres*, *La Race Nègre* and *Le Cri des Nègres*, which acted as organs for debating questions of politics and strategy, but also cultural issues relating to self-identity, language and terminology. The Negritude movement, associated with Léopold Sédar Senghor, Aimé Césaire, Léon Damas and many others in the 1930s, further developed this cultural dimension and built on contacts and connections that had already been made with Parisian intellectuals and artists, such as the surrealists, particularly in the opposition to the Colonial Exhibition of 1931, organised by Lyautey. This is reflected in the work of Senegalese writer Ousmane Socé Diop, who collaborated with Césaire, Damas and Senghor on the student newspaper, *L'Étudiant noir*. His *Mirages de Paris* (Socé 1937) deals with the perceptions of Africans based in Paris when they were confronted with the depictions and representations of Africans at the Exhibition.

What was at issue here was the notion of 'difference' and how this was defined. Class was certainly one signifier of difference in a class society, but one that had proved inadequate to explain the situation of the colonised African, who had to deal with the extra dimension of exploitation and oppression, rationalised, overtly or covertly, on the grounds of racial difference. Negritude developed as a movement with the aim of proclaiming this difference as a positive attribute, glorifying in

blackness and using race itself to turn the tables on the racist oppressors. Thus, while the passage via the French Communist Party was practically *de rigueur* for those developing anticolonial struggles, the unidimensional focus on class as the sole tool of analysis and the founding principle of the struggle was rejected to a greater or lesser extent by those associated with the Negritude movement. Their inspiration came from elsewhere, but as much from American-based movements, such as the Harlem Renaissance and other struggles against racial oppression (Dewitte 1985), as their own African roots. Césaire, in particular, built on the work of the Martiniquan group, *Légitime Défense*, associated with Etienne Lero, as well as taking inspiration from the black American W.E.B. Du Bois.

Sometimes the interrelationship with the communist movement was conceptualised as part of a historical dialectic, in which, for instance, Negritude constituted a moment of essential opposition to an abstract universalism, before being re-synthesised into a fully concrete universal. This diachronic model was by no means the only form of interaction envisaged and, at times, the synchronic notion of a more complex web of reciprocal and countervailing influences would be more appropriate. These two models could be combined in the thought of the same individual or movement.

We shall now turn our attention to some of these non-European counter-discourses, and their relationship and evolution in respect of the European ideas with which they interacted. These have not been restricted to the political sphere. Indeed, their development and expression has often taken place in the cultural domain. In the literary sphere, for instance, one of the key sites of confrontation for European and non-European ideas of the colonised or enslaved Other has involved the re-creation and reworking of the Shakespearean figure of Caliban. The following section explores the dynamics of this confrontation, through a discussion of Aimé Césaire's version of Shakespeare's *Tempest*, *Une Tempête* (1969) to which allusion has already been made. Césaire is not the only non-European writer to have attempted a rewriting of the *Tempest*. For instance, there has recently been the Creole version by the Mauritian writer Dev Virahsawmy, which goes under the title, *Toufann*, and has been translated into English and was performed in London in 1999 (Virahsawmy 1991).

The Myth of Caliban

Unlike Shakespeare's original text, Césaire's version is resolutely modernist in scope, in which the primary reference point is the Enlightenment discourse that underpinned the French Revolution. As we have seen, the ideological legacy of the French Revolution was not without its contradictions. However, this was not merely of historical interest to Césaire. In 1969, when he wrote his version of the *Tempest*, his inspiration came from the topical reality of the black liberation struggles, which were then at their height in the United States, with a resonance in other countries with black populations.¹ This is not, however, a play about the United States. We are left in no doubt that the island in question is clearly located in the Caribbean, thus breaking with the indeterminate location of Shakespeare's original and explicitly

linking the subject of the play to Césaire's own experience in Martinique and to the struggle for black liberation worldwide.

Why, then, did he choose to deal with this subject in this particular way, through a rewriting of the Shakespearean text?

In an earlier play, *La Tragédie du roi Christophe* (1963), Césaire had used the historical framework of the events that took place in post-independence Haiti at the beginning of the nineteenth century to raise contemporary problems and issues confronting African countries on the threshold of their own independence.² It seems that he is using a similar technique here to engage with contemporary political debates, except that the overall framework is provided by the literary text *The Tempest*.

Shakespeare's *Tempest* evokes the power of the word to create a complete theatrical universe, where the imagination reigns supreme. In this magical world, human beings as well as the elemental forces of nature are controlled through knowledge of the powers of the occult, which are unleashed through the incantatory might of the word. Thus, the writer can summon up and control the spirit world of his imagination through his text. Should he choose to do so, he may also abdicate from his creative endeavours, like Prospero, who consigns his book to the waves and thus gives up his magic powers (*The Tempest*, Act V, Scene i). Indeed, *The Tempest* is Shakespeare's own parting gift to the theatre; he uses the Epilogue to say his own farewell to the stage, even though he may then have gone on to write *Henry VIII*. In leaving, he gives up his power to create a magical world out of his imagination, albeit a dream world, which is a metaphor for the brief passage of each human life on earth.

*We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep* (Act IV, Scene i)³

In short, what Shakespeare believed to be his swansong text could not appear further removed from the political concerns of Aimé Césaire in 1969 and his understanding of the material reality. Yet, in Césaire's text too, it is a question of the power of the word, not so much in the general sense, but in the particular shape and form of the discourses pertaining to French Republican ideology. The tempest itself has become transformed into a metaphor of the Revolution, thus allowing Césaire to explore the contradictory dialectic at play between the various ideological strands that form part of its legacy and still impinge on the liberation struggles in the French colonial and postcolonial context.

What appears to be clear is that Césaire did not go directly to Shakespeare's text. It seems that he approached Shakespeare by way of a reading of Ernest Renan and, in particular, his 'philosophical drama' of 1878, *Caliban, suite de La Tempête de Shakespeare*.⁴ Renan was an unlikely intermediary, whose writings date from the period of mid-nineteenth-century French imperial expansionism; indeed, Edward Said traces the origins of the phenomenon of orientalism to the work of Renan, whom he characterises as a 'realistic racist' (Said 1978: 6, 170).⁵ He had already made his appearance in Césaire's *oeuvre*, albeit as a target for criticism in the *Discours*

sur le colonialisme. In this essay, Césaire had made a point of comparing Renan's ideas with those of Hitler (Césaire (1955)/1970: 12).

According to Roger Toumson, Césaire's interest in Renan's play was likely to have been aroused by the racial overtones the latter had given to the master-slave dialectic, in line with his ideas on the inequality and hierarchy of the races, in which France owed its position to the superior racial composition of the French nation. Not only was Caliban, as a Negro, assigned to an inferior race, he also represented the people, who overthrow Prospero's civilised aristocratic regime in a display of barbarism and ingratitude upon the return to Milan (Toumson 1981: 576–81). Clearly, Césaire would not have had any sympathy with the ideas expressed in Renan's text, with the sole exception of his anticlericalism. This may explain the responsibility which Césaire attributes to the Inquisition for Prospero's exile (Toumson 1981: 615–17).

He is, however, able to extract from Renan's text the tools that he needs to deconstruct the rhetoric of French Republican discourse. Thus he is able to demonstrate to what extent the Republican conception of the nation as the political union of equal citizens has been penetrated by the genetic variant espoused by Renan, in which the nation is linked to its roots in the French soil, but even more to the ethnic, blood ties that constitute its organic unity and are the foundation of its racial superiority.

In Renan's text, there is no ambiguity: it is by dint of his race that Caliban is an inferior being and justly enslaved. We shall see that this does not represent the position of Shakespeare, which is far more complex. Nonetheless, regardless of the subtleties of the actual Shakespearean text, there is no doubt that the myth of Caliban has been portrayed as one of the founding myths of the colonial age. It is thus not surprising that the revolt of Caliban should be seen as the apt symbol of the overthrow of colonialism in modern times.

We must now look a little more closely at Shakespeare's own text, not least because parts of Césaire's own text are so closely related to the original, but also to be in a position to be able to measure the distance between the two.

The Caliban of Shakespeare

In 1611, when Shakespeare wrote *The Tempest*, the European world was still in the early stages of the modern imperialist adventure. Of course, the voyages of discovery that had set Europe on this course had already taken place, along with the conquests of peoples and territories in the 'New World', the resultant plunder and the persecutions, most often in the name of religion. Over the previous century and a half, the European conception of the world had been totally transformed; even the size and shape of the planet had assumed completely different dimensions. Moreover, the European world view was still in a state of flux, with competing versions of the real geography of the planet contending to become the new consensus.

Although it is a reasonable assumption that Shakespeare was aware of these developments, there is nonetheless some debate as to the extent to which his own view of the world had been influenced by the 'new geography'.⁶ Moreover, it would

be reckless to assume that his play was, either in intention or in effect, an accurate reflection of the contemporary geographical and political reality of the colonisation of the Americas. *The Tempest* remains primarily a work of the literary imagination, a work of fiction; its relationship to historical reality remains open to interpretation. This is not true, to anything like the same extent, of the work of Aimé Césaire, who is keen to dispel all such ambiguity regarding the relationship of his fictions to contemporary politico-historical questions.

Having thus taken due precautions, it is possible to say that the imaginary universe of *The Tempest* has its roots firmly planted in the Old World, rather more than in the New. The island itself is a magical space, belonging to the author's fantasy rather than the physical world of geographers' maps. Nonetheless, this fictitious place takes shape against the familiar background of the microcosm of the Mediterranean, considered the heart of the ancient world and united by a shared, albeit conflictual, history and culture. This is a world that has been thrown topsy-turvy by the discovery of a 'New World', but one that still has its feet firmly set in the culture of the Renaissance, drawing inspiration for its new ideas from the ancient sources on both sides of the Mediterranean from which they are derived. The birth pangs of modernity have only just begun; its travails will be long. It is only eleven years since Giordano Bruno was burnt at the stake in Rome in 1600 for his newfangled scientific notions. He will not be the last.

We do not have to involve ourselves in the controversy surrounding the precise location of the island. To a large extent, this may seem irrelevant, in the sense that it represents an imaginary space, much like the lost world of Atlantis, the golden land of Eldorado or the Utopia of Thomas More. Shakespeare would, of course, have been familiar with these earlier mythical utopias, and indeed takes the opportunity to satirise such idealist constructions, as expressed through the vision of Gonzalo, who would like to recreate the golden age on the island through the establishment of his ideal commonwealth (*The Tempest*, Act II, Scene i).

Just as the inventors of other such imaginary spaces, including the more modern spinners of space-based fantasies, are usually keen to establish some links with real, known, geographical locations, while maintaining a necessary imprecision, so Shakespeare is no exception. While never informing us specifically where his 'uninhabited' island is situated, his text nonetheless tells us that the shipwrecked travellers were returning from Tunis to Naples, where they had been celebrating the marriage of the daughter of the King of Naples to the King of Tunis. They had not embarked on a voyage of colonial conquest. The purpose of the journey was to seal an alliance between one Mediterranean country and another, which, in spite of its location on the further shore, was an integral part of the same world, the Carthage of antiquity. The sea still acts as a link, rather than a barrier, the unifying factor in this Mediterranean world, where the oppositions between Europe and Africa, between Europe and the Orient, have yet to develop the meaning that they will acquire in the age of imperialism.

It is true that Sebastian blames the marriage between the European and the African for being the cause of their misfortunes.

Sir, you may thank yourself for this great loss.
 That would not bless our Europe with your daughter,
 But rather lose her to an African; (*The Tempest*, Act II, Scene i)

However, there is no necessary implication that it is because of any racial miscegenation involved. Certainly, the African in question is the foreign Other. However, there is no textual basis for suggesting that he is thereby inferior and we should be wary of reading this passage retrospectively from the standpoint of a knowledge of subsequent developments in colonial history, with the notions of superiority/inferiority integral to a fully developed dialectic of racism. Sebastian's reasoning could be based on a greater or lesser degree of xenophobia, or even on a feeling that allowing the princess to marry a foreigner has disturbed the normal order of things. Clearly, on a practical level, he is right: if she had married a European, no sea voyage would have been required and therefore there would have been no shipwreck.

This is not to suggest that ideas and theories about race were unheard of in Shakespeare's time. On the contrary, the 'discovery' and colonisation of the New World had given rise to an ongoing debate about the status of the conquered peoples, as well as attempts to draw up a hierarchy of races, influenced by Aristotle's *Politics*. One of the most striking examples of this type of philosophising was the debate on the status of the American Indian, which took place in Valladolid in 1550 between Juan Ginès de Supúlveda, who spoke in favour of slavery based on the Aristotelian doctrine of 'natural inferiority', and Bartolomé de Las Casas, who argued that the Indians were part of the human race (Gillies 1994: 151). Montaigne's essay, *Des Cannibales* (1580), had just been published in English in 1603, and it has been suggested that the name of Shakespeare's character derives from the word 'cannibal'.

There would nonetheless be a quantum leap from the type of reasoning based on rationalisations of the models of slavery practised in antiquity, to the full-blown ideological apparatus developed in the modern imperialist age, which called on the whole paraphernalia of pseudoscientific theories of biology and genetics to construct an all-embracing categorisation and hierarchy of the races with which to justify chattel slavery, the slave trade and the subjugation of the colonised peoples.

To discover what Shakespeare really thought about race, we would have to scrape away these accretions and examine the available evidence. However, this is not our primary purpose here, which is rather to look at the figure of Caliban and the various interpretations that this ambiguous character has endured, not just for his importance to an understanding of literary history, but for his status as a mythical political figure in the representations of modern imperialism.

For all the ambiguity that surrounds the shadowy figure of the King of Tunis, one thing is clear and that is that Caliban is not in the same league; he is in a different category altogether. The difficulty lies in deciding in which category to place him. Various portrayed as the first New World representative of a colonised people to appear in English literature, as an ignoble savage who deserves enslavement, as the ignoble part (the Id) of Prospero's psyche, as a trailblazing critic of the American

dream – ‘the brave new world’ (*The Tempest*, Act V, Scene i), as the modern champion of a new Caribbean identity, as the true emblematic postcolonial hero, or as a completely fictional literary invention with no political significance whatsoever, Caliban remains one of the most discussed figures of our time. This suggests that there are major issues of topical relevance at stake.⁷

The web of Shakespeare’s dramatic universe is constituted, on the one hand, by the relations of human beings with the elements of nature – fire, wind, earth and water – and, on the other hand, by the relationships between human beings themselves, engaged in struggles for the commanding heights of power in societies that are based entirely on the hierarchical mode.

Often resorting to force of arms in these power struggles, the protagonists may also invoke a weapon that is every bit as mighty – the power of the word. Prospero’s brother, for instance, uses the rhetoric of his propaganda speeches to consolidate the power he has usurped, to such an extent that he ends up believing it himself.

He being thus lorded,
Not only with what my revenue yielded,
But what my power might else exact, like one
Who having into truth, by telling of it,
Made such a sinner of his memory,
To credit his own lie – he did believe
He was indeed the Duke. (*The Tempest*, Act I, Scene ii)

Yet the princes of this world, with all their might, cannot escape from the overriding power of the elemental forces of nature. The power of the human word is strictly limited in this domain and only rarely, through the intervention of prayer or magic, can human beings manage to control these natural forces. Prospero is one of these rare beings who attains mastery of fire, water and the wind of the tempest, through his spirit Ariel. He controls the earth, which occupies the lowest rank in the hierarchy of the elements, in the shape of Caliban, portrayed as an ignoble savage, who is destined only for manual labour as a slave. Caliban is literally equated with the earth: ‘What ho! slave! Caliban! / Thou earth, thou!’ (*The Tempest*, Act I, Scene ii). The lowly status of the earth is also borne out by Antonio telling Sebastian: ‘Here lies your brother, / No better than the earth he lies upon’ (*The Tempest*, Act II, Scene i).

The source of Prospero’s power lies in the texts that he has studied, which have given him the knowledge of the secrets of magic. Caliban is well aware of this and urges his allies to burn Prospero’s books and thus destroy his magical powers.

Remember
First to possess his books: for without them
He’s but a sot, as I am, nor hath not
One spirit to command; they all do hate him
As rooted as I. Burn but his books. (*The Tempest*, Act III, Scene ii)

The pure ethereal spirit, Ariel, shares this power, which is also the power of poetry; for it is through his poetical incantations that Ariel creates his magic spells. The power of the word can take on many different forms.

Caliban, however, is at the nether end of the spectrum. He, too, has acquired the power of speech, thanks to the efforts of Prospero and, in particular, his daughter Miranda, who undertook his education. She sums up thus its primary aim, which was to permit him access to language and thus to the possibility of communicating his purpose.

Abhorred slave,
Which any print of goodness wilt not take,
Being capable of all ill! I pitied thee,
Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour
One thing or other. When thou didst not, savage,
Know thine own meaning, but wouldst gabble like
A thing most brutish, I endow'd thy purposes
With words that made them known. (*The Tempest*, Act I, Scene ii)

He has learned his master and mistress's language, though the purpose to which he puts it is not that intended by them. As he says, if he has become fluent, it is all the better to curse them.

You taught me language, and my profit on't
Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you
For learning me your language! (*The Tempest*, Act I, Scene ii)

Learning the language has allowed him to articulate his awareness of his lot and his wretchedness with it, although it has not equipped him with the capability to transcend his natural condition. In Shakespeare's hierarchical conception, only Ariel's desire for freedom is worthy and noble. Caliban's desire for freedom is severely limited in scope; he wishes to free himself from his master Prospero, but is quite prepared to bow down before new lords, even at the feet of the unlikely pair Trinculo and Stephano, whom he worships as gods dropped from the sky (*The Tempest*, Act II, Scene ii). His freedom will be only to exchange one master for another. He is a hopeless case, whose devilish nature condemns him for ever to his lot as a slave. It is because of his nature that the efforts of Prospero and Miranda have been doomed to failure; in their efforts to educate him, they were well intentioned but misguided. As Prospero sees him, he is:

A devil, a born devil, on whose nature
Nurture can never stick; on whom my pains,
Humanely taken, all, all lost, quite lost ... (*The Tempest*, Act IV, Scene i)

We have already seen some of the problems associated with a retrospective reading of Shakespeare and the inevitable anachronisms to which it may give rise. Nonetheless,

in line with the development of colonial and postcolonial history, these readings have taken place, they have acquired their own reality and the Prospero/Caliban relationship has acquired new significance as it has been reinterpreted by subsequent generations. In real historical terms, this type of reinterpretation or reinvention of historical fictions has as one of its most significant examples the rewriting and propagation of the Tudor version of British history, in which the figure of the necromancer/scholar/cartographer and finally Prospero-like Dr John Dee played a not insignificant part, not least through the coining of the term 'the British Empire' and the propagation of the tale of the Welsh Prince Madoc, pre-Columbian 'discoverer' of America in 1170, with which to counter Spanish imperial ambitions in the Americas (Williams 1987).⁸

We shall be returning to a discussion of these issues. For the moment, let us venture to suggest that, were the educational efforts of Prospero and Miranda to be equated with the notion of a civilising mission, it would have to be construed as a complete failure, in this case at least. This is also true of Aimé Césaire's version of the *Tempest*, where the master's attempts to put his civilising mission into practice through the education of Caliban must likewise be viewed as a failure.

Césaire's Caliban

Just as in Shakespeare's play, Césaire's slave Caliban acquires his master's language and uses it to the same end – to hurl insults against him. However, here he is no longer confined to the rantings and ravings of an impotent verbal rage. In the first place, unlike the Caliban of Shakespeare, who only accedes to the world of language through the acquisition of his master's language, Césaire's Caliban remains in possession of his own original language, his mother tongue, derided by Prospero as a primitive, barbarous tongue. He does not simply have to speak with his master's voice and, indeed, he uses his own language to articulate his demand for freedom, 'Uburu!' (*Une Tempête*, p. 24). Secondly, he has learned to see the education that he has received for what it is. Prospero has trained him to do the practical tasks that are required of him; it is for this reason that he has taught him French, so that he can understand his master's orders, all the better to do his bidding.⁹ Césaire had already dismissed the pragmatic, utilitarian aims and outcomes of colonial educational policy and practice in his *Discours sur le colonialisme*, describing it as a 'parody of cultural education'.¹⁰ In the play, it is evident that Prospero has refused to share his knowledge of science; it remains his monopoly and prerogative – 'enfermée dans les gros livres que voilà' (*Une Tempête*, p. 25). If Prospero's books are now the repository of scientific knowledge, rather than the secrets of the magical arts, access to them is still denied to Caliban.

We are clearly now in a different world from that of Shakespeare. Whereas, as we have seen, Shakespeare's island occupied an imaginary space, reminiscent of the mythical islands of antiquity or Renaissance utopias, Césaire's island is firmly set within the frame of the historical reality of imperialism and contemporary politics. It is a world that has witnessed the unfolding of the whole history of modern

imperialism, in the name of European superiority over the primitive Other, including, in its most absolute form, the enslavement and trading of black people and the denial of human status that these entailed. Thus, there is no doubt about the location of Césaire's island; it is located with geographical precision in the Caribbean. This precision extends to the ethnic status of his version of Ariel, characterised as a 'slave, ethnically a mulatto', and his Caliban as a 'Negro slave'. In the case of Caliban, however, the epithet may vary to reflect other ethnic strands, in addition to his origins as a black African; he is also referred to as an 'Indien', i.e. indigenous Amerindian, as well as a 'Zindien', the creole term for an Indian originating in India or the East Indies and usually transported to the Caribbean as a bonded or indentured labourer. In this way, Caliban's composite racial and national origins make him into a representative of all three ethnic groups who have suffered from colonial servitude and oppression in the course of Caribbean history (Toumson 1981: 416–18). The subject of Césaire's play has become the legacy of colonialism.

However, the differences with Shakespeare's original *Tempest* do not arise merely as a result of the wedge of history that has come to pass in the intervening three and a half centuries, producing fundamentally different world views, although this obviously constitutes an important determining set of factors. There are also quite different conceptions of literature and the theatre at play here.

Thus, Shakespeare's avowed aim was quite simply to please his audience with his art, as he makes clear in the Epilogue to the play, spoken by Prospero.

Gentle breath of yours my sails
Must fill, or else my project fails,
Which was to please. (*The Tempest*, Epilogue)

Of course, his texts themselves have their own resonance and effects, which extend into the political domain, independent of their author's creative purpose. However, Césaire's political purpose is unambiguous; his conception of the relation between literature and politics belongs to the Sartrean school of *littérature engagée*. His play is thus a cry for freedom, articulating demands that have their equivalent in the real political world, and, in particular here, the preoccupations and concerns of contemporary American politics of race – the obsession with sexuality and rape (*Une Tempête*, p. 27), the reality of the ghetto (p. 26) and the slogan 'Freedom now!' (p. 36).

In line with the political thrust of this *Tempest*, the focus has shifted. The conflicts between the whites are given cursory treatment, for they are of merely superficial interest as compared with the primary struggle between the colonisers and the colonised. Yet, in this shortened version of the play, Césaire has retained the theme of the elemental forces of nature, albeit rewritten with a new significance. For, in his text, these natural forces take on the forms of the deities and devils of African animism; the whole of the animal and vegetable world is suffused with this spirit life.¹¹ Sycorax, Shakespeare's 'foul witch' and 'blue-ey'd hag', is now reinvented as the Mother Spirit of the natural world. Moreover, a new god makes his appearance, as Shango, the mighty god of the tempest, identified by Caliban with his struggle for

freedom in a world where the hierarchical order has been overturned. In the natural hierarchy, the earth is no longer the basest element. Caliban, who tills the soil, respects it as a living thing, just as he respects manual labour itself; the labourer is no longer the lowest of the low.

you think that the earth is something dead ... It's so much easier! It's dead, so you can walk all over it, sully it, trample it underfoot like a conqueror! But I respect it, for I know that it is a living thing and that Sycorax also is alive. (*Une Tempête*, pp. 25–26)

For the Europeans, the island is indeed a wonderland, '*un pays merveilleux*', no longer in the sense of a fiction, a product of the imagination, but as the Other of Europe and perhaps a foretaste of hell itself, '*un avant-goût de l'enfer*'.¹² It is no accident that brought the shipwrecked travellers to the island; they set out to conquer foreign lands (*Une Tempête*, p. 22). Like Prospero himself, these people are white colonial invaders, representing the whole gamut of colonial characters, from the most brutal to the most enlightened. Gonzalo, for instance, has pretensions to educate the others in the virtues of the primitive simplicity of the noble savage. In his view, civilisation can benefit from bathing in the 'fountain of eternal youth' of more primitive societies, which can be a source of revitalisation and a corrective to some of the failings due to world-weariness and over-sophistication (*Une Tempête*, p. 41).

Prospero himself claims to be a man of the Enlightenment, hounded from his homeland by the Inquisition, by 'beings of the night who fear the light'.¹³ His ambition is to hand on a world filled with reason, beauty and harmony, for which he has already laid the foundations (*Une Tempête*, p. 67). Yet he is also a man of action, for whom the ends justify the means (*Une Tempête*, p. 23); a white man who, in the face of the crisis caused by Caliban's revolt, has no difficulty making up his mind to join a common front, along with the other whites, hitherto considered his enemies, for they are not only of the same race but also of the right class.¹⁴ He is an arbitrary despot who allows his whims free rein (*Une Tempête*, pp. 43–44). In short, he is the boss, able to command the labour of others (*Une Tempête*, pp. 55–56). Prospero the wizard has become transformed into Prospero the scientist, using his scientific knowledge to master and manipulate the processes of nature, creating illusions to maintain his control. His hostility to nature is opposed by Caliban, who has become the advocate of more harmonious relations between man and nature (*Une Tempête*, p. 74).

Trinculo and Stephano are at the lower end of the social scale and have swallowed whole all the ideologies of empire and Republic that they have been fed. In their case, the *mission civilisatrice* is reduced to a desire to exploit their native find, to gain the maximum profit from him (*Une Tempête*, pp. 60–65). As it happens, it is these two drunkards who let the cat out of the bag, as far as the contradictions of the Revolutionary/Republican discourse are concerned. Stephano, the 'vieux républicain', with 'les tripes républicaines', rejoices at the fact that the tempest will sweep away a whole host of 'hurluberlus qui ont toujours empêché le pauvre monde de vivre' (*Une Tempête*, p. 62). However, if he welcomes the revolutionary whirlwind

that will rid the island of the ruling group, it is only because it gives him the chance to proclaim himself king in their place.

Away from the false rhetoric, the reality is that the revolutionary process is well under way and cannot be halted. So, when Prospero accuses Caliban of undermining the whole order of things, like the god-devil Eshu, who makes order from disorder and chaos from order (*Une Tempête*, pp. 70–71), he is right. Nothing will ever be the same again.

Where, then, does this leave the ideological problematic of the French Revolution? What, if any, is its significance for the liberation struggles of the enslaved and the colonised peoples? Césaire himself saw the historical process of the French Revolution as a potent force for change in the colonies, in the first instance, because of the destabilising and disrupting effect that it had on the monolithic class structure of colonial society, freeing its latent energy.¹⁵

In the latter half of the twentieth century, however, the revolutionary struggles of the oppressed had to first pass through the stage of rejecting the ideology that was shoring up their oppression. Thus, Caliban, revolutionary fighter on behalf of the colonised peoples, must first reject the ideology, the discourse, of the colonising power. He does this in the first instance by asserting the right to refuse the identity imposed on him by the coloniser. He will no longer accept the name of Caliban; what is more, he will refuse to take any name at all. In this way, by remaining nameless, he will be for ever aware that his name and, along with it, his whole identity were stolen from him. He will not allow the colonising power to redefine him with a new name. Just like Malcolm X, he opts for anonymity: 'Call me X. That will be better. Like calling me the man without a name. More exactly, the man, whose name has been stolen ... Each time you call me, it will remind me of the basic fact that you have robbed me of everything, down to my identity!' (*Une Tempête*, p. 28).

This is but the first stage of the revolutionary process. Ariel, who becomes his brother not just in suffering and oppression but also in the struggle and the hope of liberty ('frères dans la souffrance et l'esclavage, frères aussi dans l'espérance', *Une Tempête*, p. 35), gains his freedom by the end of the play. Caliban, though, is still continuing his struggle. The process has nonetheless become inexorable and the outcome no longer in doubt. For Caliban has become aware of the lie at the heart of Prospero's ideology and so is no longer subject to its power; the weakness of the colonial master's position, based as it is on an insoluble contradiction, has been exposed and his power undermined irredeemably (see Césaire (1955)/1970: 6).

This liberating change has not just taken place in Caliban; he has managed to undermine Prospero's confidence in the validity of his own discourse. As the latter acknowledges, Caliban has made him doubt himself for the first time in his life.¹⁶ At the end of the play, we are left in no doubt as to the de-civilising effect that colonisation has on the coloniser himself (Césaire (1955)/1970: 9). Caliban is the one who assumes a position of moral superiority, rejecting his master's model of civilised man, as the man who knows how to kill, who asserts his power through force alone.

(Prospero): Come on! You don't dare! You know you are nothing but an animal – incapable of killing.

(Caliban): Defend yourself then! I am not a murderer. (*Une Tempête*, p. 79)

Césaire's Prospero does not leave the island; he cannot bring himself to abandon his mission to 'defend civilisation' (*Une Tempête*, p. 92). Just as in the case of Martinique, which remains a French territory, the decolonisation process is not yet complete; the colonial power remains in place, even if fatally undermined. In the United States too, where no simple return to the *status quo ante* was possible, there has also been no definitive end to the struggle for freedom (Toumson 1981: 466).

The usefulness of Caliban as an emblematic figure may not, then, have run its course, in spite of those who point to the irony entailed in the adoption of a European creation as the symbol of black, anticolonial and postcolonial struggles (Vaughan and Mason Vaughan 1991: 162). This last point could be shrugged off as a purely mechanistic, superficial response that ignores the real appropriation and transformation of the myth of Caliban by non-Europeans into a qualitatively different figure. However, given the widespread use of similar arguments with regard to the use of the language of the colonising power by its former colonial subjects, as well as its ideological constructs, it cannot perhaps be dismissed so easily.

In the case of Caliban, it is not a simple reversal of the meaning or the value attached to the character, but a complex set of re-figurations and reinventions to match a new political and literary scenario. Similarly, postcolonial writers using the colonial language do not take it just as it is, but mould it into their own instrument for their own ends. Caliban himself rails against his master's language; however, his response is not simply to revert to his mother tongue in a simplistic about-turn. Rather, he enriches his own linguistic armoury through the use of both instruments as appropriate.

Through the character of Caliban, Césaire thus synthesizes the affirmations of Negritude together with reflections on the process whereby modernist Enlightenment ideology, used in part to rationalise French colonial domination, has also provided an instrument that can be transformed to give the dominated the means to overthrow their dominators. This has not meant taking over the ideology lock, stock and barrel in its original form, nor has it meant a simple polar reversal of terms. On the contrary, it has meant, on the one hand, pursuing the logic of the Revolution to its final conclusion and yet, at the same time, recognising its limitations and shortcomings and thus the need to draw on and invent new representations and ideas with which to articulate the potential for change in an ever-changing political situation.

This chapter will end with a brief consideration of the work of Albert Memmi.

Albert Memmi and Colonisation

Memmi's reputation as a major analyst of colonialism, whose work contributed to the theorisation of the anticolonial struggle, rests mainly on his essays, *Portrait du colonisé*, along with the *Portrait du colonisateur*, which were published in 1957, with a preface by Jean-Paul Sartre.¹⁷ It is a work that was inspired by his universalist, rationalist humanism.

Memmi emphasised the reciprocity or interdependence that is integral to the colonial relationship, as well as its inevitable tendency to disintegrate. The characteristic features and behaviour of both coloniser and colonised are mutually

defined and determined by this relationship (Memmi (1957)/1985: 13–14). Moreover, he also stressed the importance of economic exploitation to the colonial relation. While this relation could not be reduced to the economic element alone, this was the essential one and the other elements could be dispensed with provided that the economic advantage remained (Memmi (1957)/1985: 31–36). Yet in Memmi's analysis, it is the relation of people to people that is the important one, and more important than any class factors (Memmi (1957)/1985: 64). This is why, ultimately, he believes that those who cross the line, those he calls the *transfuges*, can never overcome their objective situation as part of the oppressing people and, whether they like it or not, will be 'doomed to share their fate, as they have shared their good fortune' (Memmi (1957)/1985: 64). Indeed, Memmi himself left his birthplace and settled in France, conscious that there was no place for such as him in post-independence Tunisia. His subsequent *Portrait du décolonisé*, published in 2004, draws a gloomy picture of the state of the countries of the Maghreb and the disappointing results of independence so far (Memmi 2004).

As he put it, the choice for the well-intentioned colonial Leftist is not between '*le bien et le mal*' ('good and evil'), but rather between '*le mal et le malaise*' (Memmi (1957)/1985: 68). Because of this notion of collective responsibility 'as a member of an oppressive national group' (Memmi (1957)/1985: 65), there is only one choice for the anticolonial European and that is to keep quiet and withdraw (Memmi 1957/1985: 69).

This was a notion that was certainly open to debate and, even more to the point, many European militants were prepared to put their commitment to the anticolonial struggle on the line in active and, at times, life-threatening ways (see Chapter 5). For someone from Memmi's background, growing up in a poor family in Tunisia, with a Jewish father and a Berber mother, whose only language was colloquial Arabic, the choices may not have been as clear-cut as some of his critics would have it. While he considered himself one of the colonised and qualified to write about the status of the colonised from the inside, he was also able to identify with and understand the mentality of the coloniser, even if he only took from his French education the best of the rational humanist tradition.

Some, if not all, of these ambiguities also applied in the case of Albert Camus. However, for all his empathy with the problems of the Algerian population, as reflected in his journalism for the communist newspaper *Alger Républicain* and political activism with the PCA (Algerian Communist Party), until his expulsion in 1937 for supporting Messali Hadj and his Parti du peuple algérien (PPA), Camus did not share Memmi's self-identification as one of the colonised and ultimately drew different conclusions from his experience. Camus had hoped to avoid the bitterness and violence of the armed struggle and campaigned for a truce to avoid harm to civilians, but lost his credibility as a potential arbiter after his off-the-cuff response to an Algerian student heckler at the Nobel Prize ceremony in Stockholm in 1957, in which he proclaimed that he would always put his 'mother' before 'justice'.

Memmi, on the other hand, developed a critique of the European Left for its lack of comprehension of the nationalist movements (Memmi (1957)/1985: 56). He

also described its malaise regarding the use of terrorism, as well as the importance often given to the reactionary or the religious in the ideology of the anticolonial struggle (Memmi (1957)/1985: 57–69), while, at the same time, raising questions regarding the universal applicability of socialism and Marxism (Memmi (1957)/1985: 63).

Yet, all through the *Portrait du colonisé*, Memmi draws on the analogy between the colonised and the proletariat, while making clear the differentiation between the two. He does this primarily in terms of the specific mystification of the colonised that has been developed by colonial ideology. According to this mystification, certain features are assumed to be typical of the colonised, not of any particular individual or group but of the colonised in general. For Memmi, this is what constitutes the essence of racism, which he describes as ‘giving substance to a real or imagined characteristic of the accused, for the benefit of the accuser’ (Memmi (1957)/1985: 103). Thus, the so-called ‘laziness’ of the colonised justifies the low wages they are paid (Memmi (1957)/1985: 101). Their ‘feeble-mindedness’ rationalises the need for a ‘protectorate’ (Memmi (1957)/1985: 103). Their criminal, violent disposition rationalises the need for a ruthless police force (Memmi (1957)/1985: 104). Their simplicity, absence of needs, ability to cope with poverty, rejection of progress are all cited as arguments in favour of their wretched condition. Even their perceived qualities are translated into failings: for example, hospitality is derided as feckless and wasteful (Memmi (1957)/1985: 105). With their ‘inscrutability’ and ‘unpredictability’, the colonised are systematically divested of all the qualities that would make them human beings. Dehumanised, they are also depersonalised, their individuality submerged in a collective ‘they’ who behave in the same way (Memmi (1957)/1985: 106). No freedom is allowed to the colonised, who is not able to leave his state. Unlike the coloniser, the colonised does not have the choice of being colonised or not and only exists in relation to the coloniser. Ultimately, the relation, in its pure form, taken to the extreme, ties the very existence of the colonised to the needs of the coloniser; (s)he only exists in the capacity of colonised – ‘*colonisé pur*’ (Memmi (1957)/1985: 107).

In his own take on the Hegelian master–slave dialectic, Memmi describes the deformed consciousness necessary to both sides of the relation to ensure the survival of colonialism. Objective control and mastery are not sufficient; psychological connivance and reciprocity are also required by both parties. For colonial mastery to be complete, physical control is not enough, the coloniser must also believe in his legitimacy. For this legitimacy to be complete, it is not enough that the colonised are enslaved or subjugated; they must also accept their enslavement or subjugation through recognition of the coloniser as master.¹⁸

When Memmi takes up the theme of the relation of the colonised to history, it is not to share Marx’s view of the positive input of colonialism in bringing the colonised into history, but to recognise that colonisation is the primary cause of the eviction of the colonised from the historical process, as well as from any involvement in public, political life.¹⁹ In no sense are the colonised the subjects of history or of their own destiny; they have been transformed into objects. At the same time, the

conditions are slowly being created for the realisation that they have the power to reverse this relation.

On the one hand, the developments of history itself undermine the perceived power of the colonising power. France's defeat in the Second World War by Germany in Europe and by Japan in Indochina destroyed any belief that French power was invincible. Yet, not only were the peoples of the colonised countries influenced by perceptions of France's weakness during the war and the occupation, there was also, as Memmi pointed out, the inspirational value of the Resistance movement and the defeat of the Axis powers to remind them of the possibility of waging armed struggle against tyranny, along with the reasonable expectation of achieving freedom by so doing (Memmi (1957)/1985: 115). The French, who were well aware of this danger, took steps to ban films about the Resistance in the colonies.

Nonetheless, Memmi also stresses the slow pace of development of nationalism amongst the colonised. On the one hand, this was seen by him as a consequence of colonialism itself, which objectively prevents the colonised from having any experience of national citizenship, unless it is defined in negative terms – not being part of the colonising nation.²⁰

Memmi's analysis thus stresses the negative effects of colonisation. Rather than speeding up the historical process, it contributed towards the stagnation of colonised society, especially as far as the institutions were concerned, which were divorced from the possibility of normal social development. The traditional family was reinforced and religion reduced to its more rigid formalistic aspects, in a reaction of self-defence (Memmi (1957)/1985: 118–121). This amounted to the petrification of the colonised, who were forced to live outside time, unable to plan and build for the future and limited to a present that was itself an amputated abstraction, whilst at the same time losing their grip on the past and the memory of the past, in the absence of real living institutions for the relay of this memory and in the overwhelming presence of commemorative rites and symbols glorifying the colonial power (Memmi (1957)/1985: 122).

There were, of course, ways forward for the colonised peoples. Memmi presents these as two options: on the one hand, the colonised person may try to become like the coloniser, 'become the other'; his other option is to reclaim all the dimensions of his humanity that colonisation had taken from him.²¹

The first option entails a process of imitation or mimicry. The role played by mimicry in Memmi's analysis needs to be distinguished from a number of other approaches. Memmi sees it as an aspiration to the elimination of difference, a way in which the colonised attempts to subsume his/her otherness by becoming as like the coloniser as possible. For him, the most extreme example of this sort of behaviour is demonstrated by those who undertake a mixed marriage with a partner belonging to the colonisers' camp.

Others had seen a potential for subversion of the colonial relation through mimicry, or parody, as it was portrayed, for instance, in the Hauka rituals filmed by Jean Rouch. In his film, *Les Maîtres fous* (1955), the participants, immigrants from Niger who work in Accra, take time out from their colonial situation in the city to

go off to the countryside on Sundays to engage in a subversive ritual, where they sacrifice a dog and fall into a trance, during which they are possessed by the spirits and act out the roles of various members of the colonial hierarchy – the governor general, the engineer, the doctor's wife, the corporal of the guard and so on, in a gross, comic parody of the colonial order. More recently, Homi Bhabha and others have theorised the subversive potential of mimicry and parody (Bhabha 1994). These later theorists have also stressed that it is not a one-way appropriation of the colonisers' culture, but is usually part of a two-way process of hybridisation (Braithwaite 1978). On the other hand, Fanon was clear that it was merely a further factor of alienation for the colonised and called for an end to mimicry of Europe, proposing as an alternative the creation of a new, 'total man', free of alienation.²²

Memmi, also, does not see mimetism or mimicry as a means of subversion or as a potential strategy of resistance. Instead of presenting it as a solution, he criticises the concept of assimilation that it implies, for this assimilation, so trumpeted in French colonial ideology, is actually impossible within the colonial context. This is not because the colonised person will be required to make unacceptable changes and turn his back on his own community, but because the colonisers will not permit him to join theirs. He will be subjected, not just to scorn, but also to ridicule by the colonialists, who will always find the telling sign, the lack of taste, the note that jars. As Memmi says: 'A person who sits astride two cultures is rarely in a comfortable position and it is a fact that he may not always hit the right note' (Memmi (1957)/1985: 141). Nonetheless, he insists that it was not the colonised who rejected assimilation; it was the coloniser who refused to allow it. His conclusion is not so much the failure of the vaunted assimilation policy, but rather its impossibility within a context of colonial relations. It could, in fact, only have worked if it had been possible not just for individuals but for the whole people – an impossibility without doing away with colonialism itself.²³ Memmi makes clear his sympathy for the ideal of assimilation – in principle and on the face of its pretensions to universalism and socialism, what he calls 'un parfum universaliste et socialiste qui la rend *a priori* respectable'. Yet the reality is that even the communists have not shown any particular or precise commitment to the assimilation project in the colonial context, as it represents 'the opposite of colonialism' and thus its inevitable demise (Memmi (1957)/1985: 161).

The only other route is revolt, a rupture with the colonial power. Yet Memmi does not see this as an absolute reversal of the previous desire for assimilation. As he says:

Even at the height of his rebellion, the colonised person still shows the traces of what he has borrowed and learned from such a long cohabitation ... This gives rise to the paradoxical situation (often cited as decisive proof of lack of gratitude) whereby the colonised make their demands and carry out their fight in the name of the very values of the colonisers, using their ways of thinking and their methods of struggle. (Memmi (1957)/1985: 144)

This is not the whole picture, however. At the same time as the colonised use the weapons of the colonisers against them, they also develop what Memmi calls a

'counter-racism', in which the deepening divide between colonialist and anticolonialist is articulated. This entails seeing the differences between the two sides as a Manichaeic division, in which they are absolutely opposed to each other in terms of black and white. Yet, in fact, Memmi stressed that what he calls the counter-racism of the colonised is not the mirror image of colonial racism. Unlike the latter, it is not based on notions of biology or metaphysics, but is social and historical in character. It is not based on the belief in the inferiority of the hated group but on an awareness of its aggression and harmfulness, on fear – and also admiration. All in all, it is defensive, not offensive, and, as such, can be the prelude to a positive movement forward by way of a reassertion of the colonised's own selfhood (Memmi (1957)/1985: 147). This analysis of 'counter-racism' as essentially reactive and part of a positive dynamic of change was taken up by many engaged in 'black nationalist' and 'black power' struggles.

In this connection, Memmi has important insights into the ambiguities surrounding moves by the colonised to reclaim their own identity. The first phase involves the acknowledgement of their separateness and difference, their 'otherness'. This may entail recognition that this difference has, in fact, been defined by the colonisers, most often in terms of their supposed religious, traditional, non-scientific, non-technical characteristics. Where it does not, there remains a large part of mystification (Memmi (1957)/1985: 151–52). In both cases, however, the colonised define themselves in terms of their negativity – they are not the colonisers. Even when, in a second phase, they pass to a glorification of their negativity, transforming it into positive attributes to form a 'counter-mythology', they remain defined in relation to the colonisers and colonialism. In fact, the reactive nature of the colonised's perceptions of self and the awareness of their situation provoke a deepening of the state of alienation, which can only disappear with the elimination of colonialism (Memmi (1957)/1985: 153–54).

It was by his analysis of colonialism and the psychological make-up of both colonised and coloniser that Memmi's impact was most felt, rather than at the level of political theory and strategy of the anticolonial struggle. Indeed, as Edward Said has pointed out, there is little discussion of the strategic options and debates (Said 1993: 328). Moreover, even his analysis of colonialism was criticised by Sartre, who disagreed with Memmi's depiction of it as a 'situation' with psychological implications for those involved, rather than as an economic and political 'system' (Sartre in Memmi (1957)/1985: 24–25). There are, however, two areas in which he expressed clearly held views on the politics of anticolonialism. One related to the area of traditional culture and religion and the role this may play in politics. The other was the political import of what seems to have been something of a hobby horse – mixed marriages.

Thus, he is suspicious of any attempts to revive traditional culture, especially when it concerned religion or ritual, and points to the dangers of breathing new life into these ancient rites and myths for political purposes. Indeed, he likens the political leaders who follow this path to sorcerers' apprentices, who will be unable to deal with the consequences of unleashing these forces (Memmi (1957)/1985: 148–49).

His position on mixed marriages is more bizarre. His claims that those political leaders who have European spouses (Habib Bourguiba, Messali Hadj, Ferhat Abbas are singled out for mention) are all the more fervent in their nationalism, because they travelled the furthest towards the colonisers through their marriages and then found their situations untenable, or 'unliveable', as he puts it. Not only does he see the marriage playing a vital determining role in convincing them of their patriotism, but he also implies that their commitment to the nationalist struggle (what he calls a 'complete submission' to the cause) is in part an attempt to assuage their guilt and make amends.²⁴ Although it appears to be making a political point, this cannot be considered a serious political analysis. Interestingly, Memmi himself married a European woman.

Memmi's analysis of the colonial situation can perhaps best be summed up in the context of his rational, universal humanism. The way forward he proposed was simple: the complete end to colonisation, to be achieved by revolution, not by reforms (*bourguibisme* is explicitly rejected) (Memmi (1957)/1985: 162). Although this revolution may not be completed in one fell swoop, but rather in stages, the ultimate aim was to be the transcending of nationalism, religion, tradition, ethnicity, all of which were considered to be colonial categories. In his vision of a universal rationalism, science and technology are exempted from the colonialist taint. In an echo of the controversy surrounding the French Communist Party's defence of a supposed division between the two sciences – bourgeois and proletarian science – in the 1950s, inspired by the theories propounded by Lysenko in the Soviet Union (Lecourt 1976; Majumdar 1995), Memmi insists that knowledge cannot be classified as either Western or Oriental. Knowledge is knowledge; its universal character is not questioned by him.

In his preface to the *Portrait du colonisé*, Sartre summed up well Memmi's faith in the redemptive power of reason:

between the racist usurpation of the colonialists and the future nation that the colonised will build, in which 'he suspects that there will be no place for him', he tries to live his particular situation by transcending it towards the universal. Not towards a universal Humanity, which does not yet exist, but towards a rigorous Reason which is incumbent upon everyone. (Memmi (1957)/1985: 32)

Memmi, in fact, extended his belief in the universal value of knowledge and reason to cultural acquisitions also: 'If oppression has come in the guise of the English or the French, it is nonetheless true that cultural and technical achievements belong to all peoples. Science is neither Western nor Oriental, no more than it is bourgeois or proletarian. There are only two ways to cast concrete – the right way and the wrong way' (Memmi (1957)/1985: 163). Memmi is, of course, referring to the achievements of the West for his examples.

Notes

1. The source of his inspiration was acknowledged by Césaire himself, according to Roger Toumson (Toumson 1981: 465).
2. See Jacqueline Sieger's interview with Césaire in 1961 (quoted by Megevand and Little 1994: 439).
3. All quotations from Shakespeare's *Tempest* are taken from the Tudor Edition of the complete works, edited by Peter Alexander, first published by Collins in 1951 in London and Glasgow.
4. On the intertextual relationship between the plays of Shakespeare, Renan and Césaire, see Toumson 1981.
5. See also Chapter 1.
6. This whole debate is dealt with in Gillies 1994.
7. On some of the debates around the character of Caliban, see Skura 1989.
8. He has himself been the subject of a reinvention through Peter Ackroyd's novel *The House of Dr Dee* (Ackroyd 1993).
9. 'à baragouiner ton langage pour comprendre tes ordres: couper du bois, laver la vaisselle, pêcher le poisson, planter les légumes', *Une Tempête*, p. 25.
10. 'en parodie de la formation culturelle, la fabrication hâtive de quelques milliers de fonctionnaires subalternes, de boys, d'artisans, d'employés de commerce et d'interprètes nécessaires à la bonne marche des affaires' (Césaire (1955)/1970: 18).
11. Sycorax ma mère!
Serpent! Pluie! Eclairs!
Et je te retrouve partout:
Dans l'oeil de la mare qui me regarde, sans ciller,
à travers les scirpes.
Dans le geste de la racine tordue et son bond qui attend.
Dans la nuit, la toute-voyante aveugle,
la toute-flaireuse sans naseaux!' (*Une Tempête*, p. 26).
12. As Gonzalo says: 'On a bien raison de dire que ce sont des pays merveilleux. Rien de commun avec nos pays d'Europe' (*Une Tempête*, pp. 16–17).
13. 'êtres de la nuit qui craignent la lumière' (*Une Tempête*, p. 21).
14. 'ce sont gens de ma race, et de haut rang' (*Une Tempête*, p. 29).
15. 'Le premier service – d'ordre temporel – que la Révolution ait rendu aux peuples colonisés c'est d'avoir existé, d'abord parce que la Révolution désorganisant le pouvoir et désarticulant le système qui comprimait les classes de la société coloniale, en libérait la latente énergie' (Césaire (1961)/1981: 343).
16. 'tu es celui par qui pour la première fois j'ai douté de moi-même' (*Une Tempête*, p. 90).
17. Memmi is also a renowned novelist, whose major novels include *La Statue de sel* (1953), *Agar* (1955) and *Le Scorpion* (1969).
18. Il existe, assurément – à un point de son évolution – , une certaine adhésion du colonisé à la colonisation. Mais, cette adhésion est le résultat de la colonisation et non sa cause; elle naît après et non avant l'occupation coloniale. Pour que le colonisateur soit complètement le maître, il ne suffit pas qu'il le soit objectivement, il faut encore qu'il croie à sa légitimité; et, pour que cette légitimité soit entière, il ne suffit pas que le colonisé soit objectivement esclave, il est nécessaire qu'il s'accepte tel. En somme, le colonisateur doit être reconnu par le colonisé. (Memmi (1957)/1985: 109).
19. 'La carence la plus grave subie par le colonisé est d'être placé *hors de l'histoire et hors de la cité*. La colonisation lui supprime toute part libre dans la guerre comme dans la paix,

- route décision qui contribue au destin du monde et du sien, toute responsabilité historique et sociale' (Memmi (1957)/1985: 112–13).
20. 'Par suite de la colonisation, le colonisé ne fait presque jamais l'expérience de la nationalité et de la citoyenneté, sinon *privativement: nationalement, civiquement, il n'est que ce que n'est pas le colonisateur*' (Memmi (1957)/1985: 117).
 21. 'Il tente *soit de devenir autre, soit de reconquérir toutes ses dimensions*, dont l'a amputé la colonisation' (Memmi (1957)/1985: 137).
 22. 'Décidons de ne pas imiter l'Europe et bandons nos muscles et nos cerveaux dans une direction nouvelle. Tâchons d'inventer l'homme total que l'Europe a été incapable de faire triompher' (Fanon (1961)/1987: 236). See also V.S. Naipaul's novel, *The Mimic Men*, which also used the theme of its alienating effect (Naipaul 1967).
 23. In Algeria, another solution was proposed to eradicate the problems of colonial relations, this time by colonialists of an extreme political hue, who found their home in the movement for *l'Algérie française*. Quite simply, this involved exterminating the native population, through giving each French settler a gun and nine bullets. This is not as far-fetched as it sounds. A similar policy was carried out elsewhere in the world, notably to deal with the native American population. The downside, however, as Memmi points out, is that extermination cannot save colonialism, only hasten its demise, since it would mean the end of the exploitation of the colonised (Memmi (1957)/1985: 160–61).
 24. Il est remarquable d'ailleurs qu'il sera d'autant plus ardent dans son affirmation, qu'il a été plus loin vers le colonisateur. Est-ce une coïncidence si tant de chefs colonisés ont contracté des mariages mixtes? Si le leader tunisien Bourguiba, les deux leaders algériens Messali Hadj et Ferhat Abbas, si plusieurs autres nationalistes, qui ont voué leur vie à guider les leurs, ont épousé parmi les colonisateurs? Ayant poussé l'expérience du colonisateur jusqu'à ses limites vécues, jusqu'à la trouver invivable, ils se sont repliés sur leurs bases. Celui qui n'a jamais quitté son pays et les siens ne saura jamais à quel point il leur est attaché. Eux savent, maintenant, que leur salut coïncide avec celui de leur peuple, qu'ils doivent se tenir au plus près de lui et de ses traditions. Il n'est pas interdit d'ajouter le besoin de se justifier, de se racheter par une soumission complète. (Memmi (1957)/1985: 151).