Postcolonial Key Concepts:

Agency: refers to the ability to act or perform an action. In contemporary theory, it hinges on the question of whether individuals can freely and autonomously initiate action, or whether the things they do are in some sense determined by the ways in which their identity has been constructed. Agency is particularly important in post-colonial theory because it refers to the ability of post-colonial subjects to initiate action in engaging or resisting imperial power. The term has become an issue in recent times as a consequence of post-structuralist theories of subjectivity. Since human subjectivity is constructed by ideology (Althusser), language (Lacan), or discourse (Foucault), the corollary is that any action performed by that subject must also be to some extent a consequence of those things. For the colonial discourse theory of Bhabha and Spivak,which concurs with much of the post-structuralist position on subjectivity,the question of agency has been a troublesome one.However,many theories in which the importance of political action is paramount take agency for granted.They suggest that although it may be difficult for subjects to escape the effects of those forces that 'construct'them,it is not impossible.The very fact that such forces may be recognized suggests that they may also be countermanded.

Ambivalence A term first developed in psychoanalysis to describe a continual fluctuation between wanting one thing and wanting its opposite. It also refers to a simultaneous attraction toward and repulsion from an object, person or action (Young 1995: 161). Adapted into colonial discourse theory by Homi Bhabha, it describes the complex mix of attraction and repulsion that characterizes the relationship between colonizer and colonized. The relationship is ambivalent because the colonized subject is never simply and completely opposed to the colonizer. Rather than assuming that some colonized subjects are 'complicit' and some 'resistant', ambivalence suggests that complicity and resistance exist in a fluctuating relation within the colonial subject. Ambivalence also characterizes the way in which colonial discourse relates to the colonized subject, for it may be both exploitative and nurturing, or represent itself as nurturing, at the same time. Most importantly in Bhabha's theory,however,ambivalence disrupts the clear-cut authority of colonial domination because it disturbs the simple relationship between colonizer and colonized. Ambivalence is therefore an unwelcome aspect of colonial discourse for the colonizer. The problem for colonial discourse is that it wants to produce compliant subjects who reproduce its assumptions, habits and values – that is, 'mimic'the colonizer.But instead it produces ambivalent subjects whose mimicry is never very far from mockery. Ambivalence describes this fluctuating relationship between mimicry and mockery, an ambivalence that is fundamentally unsettling to colonial dominance. In this respect, it is not necessarily disempowering for the colonial subject; but rather can be seen to be ambi-valent or 'two-powered'. The effect of this ambivalence (the simultaneous attraction and repulsion) is to produce a profound disturbance of the authority of colonial discourse.

Ambivalence therefore gives rise to a controversial proposition in Bhabha's theory,that because the colonial relationship is always ambivalent, it generates the seeds of its own destruction. This is controversial because it implies that the colonial relationship is going to be disrupted, regardless of any resistance or rebellion on the part of the colonized. Bhabha's argument is that colonial discourse is compelled to be ambivalent because it never really wants colonial subjects to be exact replicas of the colonizers – this would be too threatening. For instance,he gives the example of Charles Grant, who, in 1792, desired to inculcate the Christian religion in Indians, but worried that this might make them 'turbulent for liberty' (Bhabha 1994: 87). Grant's solution was to mix Christian doctines with divisive caste practices to produce a 'partial reform' that would induce an empty imitation of English manners. Bhabha suggests that this demonstrates the conflict within imperialism itself that will inevitably cause its own downfall: it is compelled to create an ambivalent situation that will disrupt its assumption of monolithic power. Robert Young has suggested that the theory of ambivalence is Bhabha's way of turning the tables on imperial discourse.The periphery, which is regarded as 'the borderline,the marginal,the unclassifiable,the doubtful' by the centre, responds by constituting the centre as an 'equivocal, indefinite, indeterminate ambivalence' (1995: 161). But this is not a simple reversal of a binary, for Bhabha shows that both colonizing and colonized subjects are implicated in the ambivalence of colonial discourse. The concept is related to hybridity because, just as ambivalence 'decentres' authority from its position of power, so that authority may also become hybridized when placed in a colonial context in which it finds itself dealing with, and often inflected by, other cultures. The hybridity of Charles Grant's suggestion above, for instance, can be seen as a feature of its ambivalence. In this respect, the very engagement of colonial discourse with those colonized cultures over which it has domination, inevitably leads to an ambivalence that disables its monolithic dominance.

Centre/margin (periphery) This has been one of the most contentious ideas in post-colonial discourse, and yet it is at the heart of any attempt at defining what occurred in the representation and relationship of peoples as a result of the colonial period. Colonialism could only exist at all by postulating that there existed a binary opposition into which the world was divided.The gradual establishment of an empire depended upon a stable hierarchical relationship in which the colonized existed as the other of the colonizing culture.Thus the idea of the savage could occur only if there was a concept of the civilized to oppose it. In this way a geography of difference was constructed,in which differences were mapped (cartography) and laid out in a metaphorical landscape that represented not geographical fixity, but the fixity of power. Imperial Europe became defined as the 'centre'in a geography at least as metaphysical as physical. Everything that lay outside that centre was by definition at the margin or the periphery of culture, power and civilization. The colonial mission, to bring the margin into the sphere of influence of the enlightened centre,became the principal justification for the economic and political exploitation of colonialism, expecially after the middle of the nineteenth century. The idea is contentious because it has

been supposed that attempts to define the centre/margin model function to perpetuate it. In fact, post-colonial theorists have usually used the model to suggest that dismantling such binaries does more than merely assert the independence of the marginal, it also radically undermines the very idea of such a centre, deconstructing the claims of the European colonizers to This has been one of the most contentious ideas in post-colonial discourse, and yet it is at the heart of any attempt at defining what occurred in the representation and relationship of peoples as a result of the colonial period. Colonialism could only exist at all by postulating that there existed a binary opposition into which the world was divided.The gradual establishment of an empire depended upon a stable hierarchical relationship in which the colonized existed as the other of the colonizing culture.Thus the idea of the savage could occur only if there was a concept of the civilized to oppose it. In this way a geography of difference was constructed,in which differences were mapped (cartography) and laid out in a metaphorical landscape that represented not geographical fixity, but the fixity of power. Imperial Europe became defined as the 'centre'in a geography at least as metaphysical as physical. Everything that lay outside that centre was by definition at the margin or the periphery of culture, power and civilization. The colonial mission, to bring the margin into the sphere of influence of the enlightened centre,became the principal justification for the economic and political exploitation of colonialism, expecially after the middle of the nineteenth century. The idea is contentious because it has been supposed that attempts to define the centre/margin model function to perpetuate it. In fact, post-colonial theorists have usually used the model to suggest that dismantling such binaries does more than merely assert the independence of the marginal, it also radically undermines the very idea of such a centre, deconstructing the claims of the European colonizers to

Colonial discourse This is a term brought into currency by Edward Said who saw Foucault's notion of a discourse as valuable for describing that system within which that range of practices termed 'colonial' come into being. Said's Orientalism, which examined the ways in which colonial discourse operated as an instrument of power, initiated what came to be known as colonial discourse theory,that theory which,in the 1980s,saw colonial discourse as its field of study.The best known colonial discourse theorist, apart from Said,is Homi Bhabha,whose analysis posited certain disabling contradictions within colonial relationships, such as hybridity, ambivalence and mimicry,which revealed the inherent vulnerability of colonial discourse. Discourse, as Foucault theorizes it, is a system of statements within which the world can be known. It is the system by which dominant groups in society constitute the field of truth by imposing specific knowledges, disciplines and values upon dominated groups. As a social formation it works to constitute reality not only for the objects it appears to represent but also for the subjects who form the community on which it depends. Consequently, colonial discourse is the complex of signs and practices that organize social existence and social reproduction within colonial relationships. Colonial discourse is greatly implicated in ideas of the centrality of Europe, and thus in assumptions that have become characteristic of modernity: assumptions about history, language, literature and

'technology'. Colonial discourse is thus a system of statements that can be made about colonies and colonial peoples, about colonizing powers and about the relationship between these two.It is the system of knowledge and beliefs about the world within which acts of colonization take place. Although it is generated within the society and cultures of the colonizers, it becomes that discourse within which the colonized may also come to see themselves. At the very least, it creates a deep conflict in the consciousness of the colonized because of its clash with other knowledges (and kinds of knowledge) about the world. Rules of inclusion and exclusion operate on the assumption of the superiority of the colonizer's culture,history,language,art,political structures,social conventions,and the assertion of the need for the colonized to be 'raised up'through colonial contact.In particular,colonial discourse hinges on notions of race that begin to emerge at the very advent of European imperialism. Through such distinctions it comes to represent the colonized, whatever the nature of their social structures and cultural histories, as 'primitive' and the colonizers as 'civilized'. Colonial discourse tends to exclude, of course, statements about the exploitation of the resources of the colonized, the political status accruing to colonizing powers, the importance to domestic politics of the development of an empire,all of which may be compelling reasons for maintaining colonial ties. Rather it conceals these benefits in statements about the inferiority of the colonized, the primitive nature of other races, the barbaric depravity of colonized societies, and therefore the duty of the imperial power to reproduce itself in the colonial society, and to advance the civilization of the colony through trade,administration,cultural and moral improvement.Such is the power of colonial discourse that individual colonizing subjects are not often consciously aware of the duplicity of their position,for colonial discourse constructs the colonizing subject as much as the colonized. Statements that contradict the discourse cannot be made either without incurring punishment, or without making the individuals who make those statements appear eccentric and abnormal.

Contrapuntal reading A term coined by Edward Said to describe a way of reading the texts of English literature so as to reveal their deep implication in imperialism and the colonial process. Borrowed from music, the term suggests a responsive reading that provides a counterpoint to the text, thus enabling the emergence of colonial implications that might otherwise remain hidden. Thus a reading of Jane Austen's Mansfield Park, for instance, can reveal the extent to which the privileged life of the English upper classes is established upon the profits made from West Indian plantations, and, by implication, from the exploitation of the colonized.By thus stressing the affiliations of the text,its origin in social and cultural reality rather than its filiative connections with English literature and canonical criteria, the critic can uncover cultural and political implications that may seem only fleetingly addressed in the text itself. 'As we look back at the cultural archive,' says Said, 'we begin to reread it not univocally but contrapuntally (1993:59).The overarching implication is the extent to which English society and culture was grounded on the ideology and practices of imperialism

Counter-discourse A term coined by Richard Terdiman to characterize the theory and practice of symbolic resistance. Terdiman examines the means of producing genuine change against the 'capacity of established discourses to ignore or absorb would-be subversion' (1985: 13) by analysing nineteenth-century French writing. He identifies the 'confrontation between constituted reality and its subversion'as 'the very locus at which cultural and historical change occurred' (13). Terdiman's work focused exclusively on French literature, but his term has been adopted by post-colonial critics to describe the complex ways in which challenges to a dominant or established discourse (specifically those of the imperial centre) might be mounted from the periphery, always recognizing the powerful 'absorptive capacity' of imperial and neo-imperial discourses. As a practice within postcolonialism, counter-discourse has been theorized less in terms of historical processes and literary movements than through challenges posed to particular texts, and thus to imperial ideologies inculcated, stabilized and specifically maintained through texts employed in colonialist education systems. The concept of counter-discourse within post-colonialism thus also raises the issue of the subversion of canonical texts and their inevitable reinscription in this process of subversion. But Terdiman's general address to this problem is also useful here, in that an examination of the ways in which these operate as naturalized controls exposes their 'contingency and permeability'. Thus, such challenges are not simply mounted against the texts as such but address the whole of that discursive colonialist field within which imperial texts – whether anthropological, historical, literary or legal – function in colonized contexts

Eurocentrism The conscious or unconscious process by which Europe and European cultural assumptions are constructed as, or assumed to be, the normal, the natural or the universal. The first, and possibly most potent sign of Eurocentrism, as José Rabasa explains (1993), was the specific projection employed to construct the Mercator Atlas itself,a projection that favoured the European temperate zones in its distribution of size. This map of the world is not merely an objective outline of discovered continents, but an 'ideological or mythological reification of space' which opens up the territories of the world to domination and appropriation. 'The world' only acquired spatial meaning after different regions had been inscribed by Europeans, and this inscription, apart from locating Europe at the top of the globe or map, established an ideological figuration,through the accompanying text and illustrations, which firmly centralized Europe as the source and arbiter of spatial and cultural meaning.

Edward Said's Orientalism examines the ways in which Eurocentrism not only influences and alters, but actually produces other cultures. Orientalism is 'a way of coming to terms with the orient that is based on the orient's special place in European western experience'(1978:1) or 'the western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the orient' (3). This authority is, in Said's view, a product of a systematic 'discipline'by which European culture was able to construct and manage the Orient during the post-Enlightenment period.

Hybridity: The term 'hybridity'has been most recently associated with the work of Homi K.Bhabha, whose analysis of colonizer/colonized relations stresses their interdependence and the mutual construction of their subjectivities (see mimicry and ambivalence).Bhabha contends that all cultural statements and systems are constructed in a space that he calls the 'Third Space of enunciation'(1994:37).Cultural identity always emerges in this contradictory and ambivalent space, which for Bhabha makes the claim to a hierarchical 'purity'of cultures untenable.For him, the recognition of this ambivalent space of cultural identity may help us to overcome the exoticism of cultural diversity in favour of the recognition of an empowering hybridity within which cultural difference may operate: It is significant that the productive capacities of this Third Space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance.For a willingness to descend into that alien territory . . . may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures,but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity. (Bhabha 1994: 38) It is the 'in-between' space that carries the burden and meaning of culture, and this is what makes the notion of hybridity so important.

Hybridity has frequently been used in post-colonial discourse to mean simply cross-cultural 'exchange'. This use of the term has been widely criticized, since it usually implies negating and neglecting the imbalance and inequality of the power relations it references. By stressing the transformative cultural, linguistic and political impacts on both the colonized and the colonizer,it has been regarded as replicating assimilationist policies by masking or 'whitewashing'cultural differences.

The idea of hybridity also underlies other attempts to stress the mutuality of cultures in the colonial and post-colonial process in expressions of syncreticity, cultural synergy and transculturation. The criticism of the term referred to above stems from the perception that theories that stress mutuality necessarily downplay oppositionality, and increase continuing post-colonial dependence.There is,however,nothing in the idea of hybridity as such that suggests that mutuality negates the hierarchical nature of the imperial process or that it involves the idea of an equal exchange.This is,however,the way in which some proponents of decolonization and anti-colonialism have interpreted its current usage in colonial discourse theory.It has also been subject to critique as part of a general dissatisfaction with colonial discourse theory on the part of critics such as Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Benita Parry and Aijaz Ahmad. These critiques stress the textualist and idealist basis of such analysis and point to the fact that they neglect specific local differences.

The assertion of a shared post-colonial condition such as hybridity has been seen as part of the tendency of discourse analysis to de-historicize and de-locate cultures from their temporal, spatial, geographical and linguistic contexts, and to lead to an abstract, globalized concept of the textual that obscures the specificities of particular cultural situations. Pointing out that the investigation of the discursive construction of colonialism does not seek to replace or exclude other forms such as historical,geographical,economic,military or

political,Robert Young suggests that the contribution of colonial discourse analysis, in which concepts such as hybridity are couched, provides a significant framework for that other work by emphasising that all perspectives on colonialism share and have to deal with a common discursive medium which was also that of colonialism itself: . . . Colonial discourse analysis can therefore look at the wide variety of texts of colonialism as something more than mere documentation or 'evidence'. (Young 1995: 163) However, Young himself offers a number of objections to the indiscriminate use of the term. He notes how influential the term 'hybridity' was in imperial and colonial discourse in negative accounts of the union of disparate races – accounts that implied that unless actively and persistently cultivated, such hybrids would inevitably revert to their 'primitive' stock. Hybridity thus became, particularly at the turn of the century, part of a colonialist discourse of racism. Young draws our attention to the dangers of employing a term so rooted in a previous set of racist assumptions, but he also notes that there is a difference between unconscious processes of hybrid mixture, or creolization, and a conscious and politically motivated concern with the deliberate disruption of homogeneity. He notes that for Bakhtin, for example, hybridity is politicized, made contestatory, so that it embraces the subversion and challenge of division and separation. Bakhtin's hybridity 'sets different points of view against each other in a conflictual structure, which retains "a certain elemental, organic energy and openendedness"' (Young 1995: 21–22). It is this potential of hybridity to reverse 'the structures of domination in the colonial situation' (23), which Young recognizes, that Bhabha also articulates. 'Bakhtin's intentional hybrid has been transformed by Bhabha into an active moment of challenge and resistance against a dominant colonial power . . . depriving the imposed imperialist culture,not only of the authority that it has for so long imposed politically, often through violence, but even of its own claims to authenticity' (23). Young does, however, warn of the unconscious process of repetition involved in the contemporary use of the term. According to him, when talking about hybridity, contemporary cultural discourse cannot escape the connection with the racial categories of the past in which hybridity had such a clear racial meaning. Therefore 'deconstructing such essentialist notions of race today we may rather be repeating the [fixation on race in the] past than distancing ourselves from it, or providing a critique of it (27). This is a subtle and persuasive objection to the concept. However, more positively, Young also notes that the term indicates a broader insistence in many twentieth-century disciplines, from physics to genetics,upon 'a double logic,which goes against the convention of rational either/or choices, but which is repeated in science in the split between the incompatible coexisting logics of classical and quantum physics' (26). In this sense, as in much else in the structuralist and poststructuralist legacy, the concept of hybridity emphasizes a typically twentieth-century concern with relations within a field rather than with an analysis of discrete objects, seeing meaning as the produce of such relations rather than as intrinsic to specific events or objects. Whilst assertions of national culture and of pre-colonial traditions have played an important role in creating anti-colonial discourse and in arguing for an active decolonizing project, theories of the hybrid nature of post-colonial culture assert a different model for resistance, locating

this in the subversive counter-discursive practices implicit in the colonial ambivalence itself and so undermining the very basis on which imperialist and colonialist discourse raises its claims of superiority.

Imperialism: In its most general sense, imperialism refers to the formation of an empire,and,as such,has been an aspect of all periods of history in which one nation has extended its domination over one or several neighbouring nations. Edward Said uses imperialism in this general sense to mean 'the practice, theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory', (Said 1993: 8), a process distinct from colonialism, which is 'the implanting of settlements on a distant territory'. However, there is general agreement that the word imperialism, as a conscious and openly advocated policy of acquiring colonies for economic,strategic and political advantage,did not emerge until around 1880. Before that date, the term 'empire' (particularly the British variety) conjured up an apparently benevolent process of European expansion whereby colonies accrued rather than were acquired. Around the mid-nineteenth century,the term 'imperialism'was used to describe the government and policies of Napoleon III, self-styled 'emperor',and by 1870 was used disparagingly in disputes between the political parties in Britain. But from the 1880s imperialism became a dominant and more transparently aggressive policy amongst European states for a variety of political, cultural and economic reasons.

Mimicry: An increasingly important term in post-colonial theory, because it has come to describe the ambivalent relationship between colonizer and colonized. When colonial discourse encourages the colonized subject to 'mimic' the colonizer, by adopting the colonizer's cultural habits, assumptions, institutions and values, the result is never a simple reproduction of those traits. Rather, the result is a 'blurred copy' of the colonizer that can be quite threatening. This is because mimicry is never very far from mockery, since it can appear to parody whatever it mimics. Mimicry therefore locates a crack in the certainty of colonial dominance, an uncertainty in its control of the behaviour of the colonized.

The term mimicry has been crucial in Homi Bhabha's view of the ambivalence of colonial discourse. For him, the consequence of suggestions like Macaulay's is that mimicry is the process by which the colonized subject is reproduced as 'almost the same, but not quite' (Bhabha 1994: 86). The copying of the colonizing culture, behaviour, manners and values by the colonized contains both mockery and a certain 'menace', 'so that mimicry is at once resemblance and menace' (86). Mimicry reveals the limitation in the authority of colonial discourse, almost as though colonial authority inevitably embodies the seeds of its own destruction.The line of descent of the 'mimic man' that emerges in Macaulay's writing, claims Bhabha, can be traced through the works of Kipling, Forster, Orwell and Naipaul, and is the effect of 'a flawed colonial mimesis in which to be Anglicized is emphatically not to be English' (1994: 87).

Other: In general terms, the 'other' is anyone who is separate from one's self. The existence of others is crucial in defining what is 'normal' and in locating one's own place in the world. The colonized subject is characterized as 'other' through discourses such as primitivism and cannibalism, as a means of establishing the binary separation of the colonizer and colonized and asserting the naturalness and primacy of the colonizing culture and world view. Although the term is used extensively in existential philosophy, notably by Sartre in Being and Nothingness to define the relations between Self and Other in creating self-awareness and ideas of identity, the definition of the term as used in current post-colonial theory is rooted in the Freudian and post-Freudian analysis of the formation of subjectivity,most notably in the work of the psychoanalyst and cultural theorist Jacques Lacan.

Lacan's use of the term involves a distinction between the 'Other'and the 'other',which can lead to some confusion, but it is a distinction that can be very useful in post-colonial theory. In Lacan's theory,the other – with the small 'o'– designates the other who resembles the self, which the child discovers when it looks in the mirror and becomes aware of itself as a separate being.When the child, which is an uncoordinated mass of limbs and feelings sees its image in the mirror, that image must bear sufficient resemblance to the child to be recognized,but it must also be separate enough to ground the child's hope for an 'anticipated mastery'; this fiction of mastery will become the basis of the ego. This other is important in defining the identity of the subject.

In post-colonial theory,it can refer to the colonized others who are marginalized by imperial discourse, identified by their difference from the centre and, perhaps crucially, become the focus of anticipated mastery by the imperial 'ego'. The Other – with the capital 'O'– has been called the grande-autre by Lacan, the great Other, in whose gaze the subject gains identity. The Symbolic Other is not a real interlocuter but can be embodied in other subjects such as the mother or father that may represent it. The Symbolic Other is a 'transcendent or absolute pole of address, summoned each time that subject speaks to another subject' (BoonsGrafé 1992: 298). Thus the Other can refer to the mother whose separation from the subject locates her as the first focus of desire; it can refer to the father whose Otherness locates the subject in the Symbolic order; it can refer to the unconscious itself because the unconscious is structured like a language that is separate from the language of the subject. Fundamentally, the Other is crucial to the subject because the subject exists in its gaze. Lacan says that 'all desire is the metonym of the desire to be' because the first desire of the subject is the desire to exist in the gaze of the Other. This Other can be compared to the imperial centre, imperial discourse,or the empire itself,in two ways:first,it provides the terms in which the colonized subject gains a sense of his or her identity as somehow 'other', dependent; second, it becomes the 'absolute pole of address',the ideological framework in which the colonized subject may come to understand the world.In colonial discourse,the subjectivity of the colonized is continually located in the gaze of the imperial Other, the 'grand-autre'. Subjects may be interpellated by the ideology of the maternal and nurturing

function of the colonizing power, concurring with descriptions such as ‘mother England’ and ‘Home’. On the other hand, the Symbolic Other may be represented in the Father. The significance and enforced dominance of the imperial language into which colonial subjects are inducted may give them a clear sense of power being located in the colonizer, a situation corresponding metaphorically to the subject’s entrance into the Symbolic order and the discovery of the Law of the Father. The ambivalence of colonial discourse lies in the fact that both these processes of ‘othering’ occur at the same time,the colonial subject being both a ‘child’of empire and a primitive and degraded subject of imperial discourse. The construction of the dominant imperial Other occurs in the same process by which the colonial others come into being.

Othering: This term was coined by Gayatri Spivak for the process by which imperial discourse creates its ‘others’. Whereas the Other corresponds to the focus of desire or power (the M–Other or Father – or Empire) in relation to which the subject is produced, the other is the excluded or ‘mastered’ subject created by the discourse of power. Othering describes the various ways in which colonial discourse produces its subjects.In Spivak’s explanation,othering is a dialectical process because the colonizing Other is established at the same time as its colonized others are produced as subjects.

Post-colonialism/Postcolonialism: Post-colonialism (or often postcolonialism) deals with the effects of colonization on cultures and societies. As originally used by historians after the Second World War in terms such as the post-colonial state, ‘post-colonial’ had a clearly chronological meaning, designating the post-independence period. However, from the late 1970s the term has been used by literary critics to discuss the various cultural effects of colonization.

Subaltern: Subaltern, meaning ‘of inferior rank’, is a term adopted by Antonio Gramsci to refer to those groups in society who are subject to the hegemony of the ruling classes. Subaltern classes may include peasants, workers and other groups denied access to ‘hegemonic’power.Since the history of the ruling classes is realized in the state, history being the history of states and dominant groups, Gramsci was interested in the historiography of the subaltern classes.In ‘Notes on Italian history’ (1934–5) he outlined a six point plan for studying the history of the subaltern classes which included:(1) their objective formation;(2) their active or passive affiliation to the dominant political formations;(3) the birth of new parties and dominant groups; (4) the formations that the subaltern groups produce to press their claims; (5) new formations within the old framework that assert the autonomy of the subaltern classes; and other points referring to trade unions and political parties (Gramsci 1971: 52). Gramsci claimed that the history of the subaltern classes was just as complex as the history of the dominant classes (52),although the history of the latter is usually that which is accepted as ‘official’history.For him, the history of subaltern social groups is necessarily fragmented and episodic (54), since they are always subject to the activity of ruling groups,even when they rebel.Clearly they have less access to the means by which they

may control their own representation, and less access to cultural and social institutions. Only 'permanent' victory (that is, a revolutionary class adjustment) can break that pattern of subordination, and even that does not occur immediately.

The term has been adapted to post-colonial studies from the work of the Subaltern Studies group of historians, who aimed to promote a systematic discussion of subaltern themes in South Asian Studies.It is used in Subaltern Studies 'as a name for the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way' (Guha 1982: vii).The group – formed by Ranajit Guha,and initially including Shahid Amin, David Arnold, Partha Chatterjee, David Hardiman and Gyan Pandey – has produced five volumes of Subaltern Studies: essays relating to the history,politics,economics and sociology of subalterneity 'as well as the attitudes, ideologies and belief systems – in short, the culture informing that condition' (vii)

THIRD WORLD (FIRST, SECOND, FOURTH) The term 'Third World' was first used in 1952 during the so-called Cold War period, by the politician and economist Alfred Sauvy, to designate those countries aligned with neither the United States nor the Soviet Union. The term 'First World' was used widely at the time to designate the dominant economic powers of the West, whilst the term 'Second World'was employed to refer to the Soviet Union and its satellites, thus distinguishing them from the First World. The wider political and economic base of the concept was established when the First World was sometimes used also to refer to economically successful ex-colonies such as Canada,Australia and,less frequently,South Africa, all of which were linked to a First World network of global capitalism and Euro-American defence alliances. Very quickly, 'Third World images' became a journalistic cliché invoking ideas of poverty,disease and war and usually featuring pictures of emaciated African or Asian figures, emphasizing the increasing racialization of the concept in its popular (Western) usage.The term was, however,also used as a general metaphor for any underdeveloped society or social condition anywhere: 'Third World conditions', Third World educational standards', etc., reinforcing the pejorative stereotyping of approximately two-thirds of the member nations of the United Nations who were usually classified as Third World countries. As obvious economic differentials began to emerge within this group, with economic developments in the various regions, notably Asia, the term 'Fourth World' was introduced by some economists to designate the lowest group of nations on their economic scale. Recent post-colonial usage differs markedly from this classic use in economics and development studies,with the term 'Third World'being less and less in evidence in the discourse. This has been defended by some post-colonial critics on the grounds that the term is essentially pejorative.But in the United States in particular the increasing tendency to avoid the term in post-colonial commentary,as well as the decline in the use of terms such as anti-colonial in course descriptions and in academic texts, has sometimes been criticized as leading to a depoliticization of the decolonizing project.The term 'Second World'has been employed also in recent post-colonial criticism by some settler colony critics to designate settler colonies such as Australia and Canada (Lawson 1991, 1994; Slemon 1990) to emphasize their difference from colonies of occupation. The term 'Fourth World' is also now more commonly employed to designate those groups such as presettler indigenous peoples

whose economic status and oppressed condition,it is argued,place them in an even more marginalized position in the social and political hierarchy than other post-colonial peoples (Brotherston 1992).