

## **A Postcolonial Reading of Student-writers' Choices in a Foundation Course in Literature**

**Jen Stacey, University of the Witwatersrand**

I want to begin with a view amongst postcolonial theorists that what is most interesting to consider in postcolonial contexts is not what colonialism did to the colonized but what the colonized did with colonialism. The analysis of student writing in this paper was done in this spirit – that what is most interesting about student writing during their first year is just what the students do with academic literacy.

Mary Louise Pratt provides an educational perspective to this view when she comments on how educators describe the learning situation:

...usually only legitimate moves are actually named as part of the system, where legitimacy is defined from the point of view of the party in authority – regardless of what other parties might see themselves as doing. (1991:38) (my emphasis)

As readers and markers of student essays we have all been puzzled at times by the odd moves made by students in their essays. Drawing on both these comments I want to consider some of the things students do and what they see themselves as doing with academic literacy in their writing.

And so in the main part of this paper I'll be examining brief, but I hope representative, extracts from the essays of three students on the Foundation Course in English Literature (FCEL) at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) to highlight the choices and strategies they use in their writing.

Of course, we are all aware of the complexity of the writing context - that our students are affected by the larger social and historical context and that they bring a range of discourses with them. And using colonialism as an educational metaphor is not new - a number of writers on academic literacy have compared the teaching of academic literacy to colonization with some using Pratt's famous term the 'contact zone' to describe the academic literacy classroom. And that is one of the two ways in which the term can be applied relevantly in this discussion.

\* Because, firstly, it can be useful to think of the academic literacy classroom as involving colonization to the extent that it imposes a more or less 'foreign' literacy system and, therefore, as already mentioned, to see what it is that students do with this 'foreign' system.

\* But, secondly, of course, the situation is not metaphorical for our students – they are living many of the dilemmas of a postcolonial society, especially those of one in transition within a rapidly globalising world. And our students are very aware of this as Thuso's comment from his questionnaire shows:

I see myself as a black African in Africa. My Africaness is however going throughh a transformation (more rapidly than normal). I want to be an African intellectual without losing my roots (which) I am struggling to find.

The second student we'll be looking at, Veli, had this to say in an interview:

Well every time I come here at Wits, I just tell myself that no, you have to leave everything, your cultural identity at home. And then face a different life, academic life ... I'm quite happy about that. Because when I arrive at home I assume another identity now – I forget about academic life, academic maybe identity I've been pursuing, then I follow another identity.

And the third student, Mzwi, said at the end of his four years at Wits:

It's (identity) not confused, it's just a sad thing... Assimilation – I know it's a bad word, but it's just ... that's the reality.

These students obviously see themselves as dealing with the dilemmas of a postcolonial situation. Postcolonial writing is expected to be concerned with such dilemmas and is often seen as challenging and attempting to re-fashion established discourses. While the students whose work I look at here seem eager to use academic discourse and are not explicitly opposing or re-shaping the discourse, we can see them attempting to use it for their own purposes and implicitly contesting or challenging meanings. And so I suggest it is useful for us to see them as postcolonial writers who are likely to incorporate postcolonial concerns and identities into their writing and that it is therefore helpful to use certain aspects of postcolonial theory as a lens to read the students' writing.

But before discussing this I'd like to spend a couple of minutes giving the background to the research I'm reporting on.

### **Research context**

The students whose work I discuss here were all students in the (FCEL) at Wits. This was a year-long, pre-first year, credit-bearing course run by the English and African Literature departments. As a discipline-specific foundation course the aim was to help students to develop the skills necessary to read and interpret literary texts and to write about them. And because we believe the reading, interpreting and writing are inextricable, there is an equal emphasis on all the skills. In the FCEL students studied a range of texts from different contexts and genres and during the year wrote eight formal essays using the process approach practiced in a weekly writing workshop. They also completed a number of informal writing exercises, group presentations and research projects. We tried to integrate skills and activities so that all exercises were designed to lead towards or contribute in some way to the formal essays.

What I'm reporting on today is a small part of a larger exploration of voice in student writing. In that study data were obtained from 3 sources

\*from biographical questionnaires that all 68 students completed in the year of research,  
\* from the analysis of all 8 essays from 25 of these students,  
\* and from interviews in which a selected number of these students responded to my analysis of their essays and in which, in each interview, we both had the opportunity to ask further questions and pursue issues arising from the questionnaires or essay analysis.

In the FCEL the students are acquiring literacy in the discipline which means, as has often been said, learning to think like a member of the discipline, and, within an interpretive discipline like literature, learning to use what are considered to be the relevant and appropriate theoretical frames and analytical approaches for interpretation – making what Pratt calls ‘legitimate moves’. In literature essays the content of the essay is interpretation and argument is made through interpretation. Literature teachers maintain that varying interpretations of texts are acceptable, but these are less likely to be accepted when the interpretive frames of the student-writers remain inaccessible or unrecognized. It is possible that the very nature of academic literacy in literature, with its apparent acceptance of varying interpretations is understood by the students as allowing them greater freedom and so encourages, even provokes, some of the surprising interpretive frames that some students employ but I hope to show that that what they choose to do can perhaps be better understood by seeing their writing as postcolonial writing.

At this point I want to briefly outline a few selected aspects of postcolonial theory that I think illuminate the writing of these students.

### **Aspects of postcolonial theory**

Sanga asserts that Postcolonial writing:

‘...generally espouses an implicit political agenda (in the sense that it)...questions, often opposes and attempts to re-shape established discourses’  
(2001: 3)

While the students whose work I look at here do not explicitly oppose or re-shape the discourse they do so implicitly in places. And while they seem eager to use academic discourse they are attempting to use it for their own purposes including a re-fashioning of identity.

The re-fashioning of identity is an important notion in postcolonial theory. In recent years there has been much focus on identity in post-structuralist and postcolonial theory and the notion of identity as contingent, flexible and changing espoused by both schools is a useful starting point in looking at the writer identities of the FCEL students. But here, in particular, it is Stuart Hall’s notion of cultural identity that I want to outline. Hall sees identity as the production resulting from a range of factors, including political strategies and choices. He describes identity as:

‘always a production always in process and always constituted within and not outside representation ...there is always a politics of identity a politics of positioning’. (1994:395)

This way of conceptualising identity lets us see the way students represent themselves in their writing as political acts, in the sense of a deliberate positioning of themselves in response to context, as strategic choices in the creation of a particular identity in relation to forces and discourses they perceive as present within the writing situation. This highlights the importance of context and this links directly to the next concept I want to use, that of “relationality”.

This is a development of Bahktin’s notion of dialogism by Shohat and Stam. They quote Bahktin’s claim that ‘all utterances are aware of and mutually reflect one another’ and apply this to groups and communities and societies which they see as existing in a ‘densely-woven web of relationality’ so that ‘all utterances take place against the background of the possible responses of other social and ethnic points of view’(1994:48). In our diverse context this provides a way of understanding some of the choices and positionings (of themselves and their readers) within the students’ writing as being in relation to, in dialogue with, utterances and discourses, within the wider and their immediate writing context.

And also influencing these choices and positionings is another concept arising from context and that is ‘Double-consciousness’, W.E.B DuBois’s influential notion that places the subject as both within and produced by a double gaze. This double-consciousness is a result of living continually in relation to two and sometimes more communities, groups or cultures, of needing to position oneself in relation to the value systems of each, and more than this, to see oneself as judged from the perspective of each; to see with a double vision.

These then are the concepts I wish to bring together to look at student writing in the FCEL:

- that our postcolonial writers, like the colonized, are actively doing something with academic literacy, (with some) emphasis on the form challenge and contestation takes
- that the writer identity they establish is a deliberate production, a positioning
- in relation to their perceived or actual context
- in which double-consciousness is a factor

### **Extracts from the writing of three students**

What is noticeable about these three students, as remarked on by other researchers, like Bangeni and Kapp (2006), is that all of them are strategic students in the sense that they are keen to learn how to use academic literacy effectively. The first student whose writing I look at is Thuso. He is from a rural area where, after matriculation he obtained a teacher’s diploma and taught English for a couple of years before coming to Wits. An extract from an informal piece Thuso wrote on the influence of Shakespeare is a useful way into his writing and writer identity:

Shakespeare’s work has been used as a device to establish eloquence in English that has brought about a vicious class division amongst us South Africans. It

astonishingly draws a line between the employable and the non-employable, the educated and the uneducated. From my personal experience I feel I am sometimes disadvantaged to pursue my studies in English and I may in some circles be labeled stupid.

Thuso is aware that straddling the borders of more than one culture and language he is being judged by the criteria of the dominant culture and language and that his academic identity is constructed by the university's assessment of his use of English. The resulting resentment he obviously feels influences the writer identity he strives to construct. His attitude towards the learning of academic literacy is explicitly instrumental and quickly drives him to identify and use the conventions of academic literacy. When I commented in the interview that he was adept at using academic literacy conventions and the applicable theoretical frame he replied:

Yes, whatever I find convenient for me I will definitely use.

Thus the first move in his strategy to counter what he sees as the negative identity constructed by Wits assessment of his English – to show his competence as a user of academic literacy. But at the same time he develops an authoritative writer identity that emerges early in his essays and one way he does this is by introducing a discourse with which he is familiar.

Here is an extract from Thuso's 2<sup>nd</sup> assignment for the year on Ngugi's *Weep Not Child* :

Again during the strike Ngotho impulsively attacked the sell-out. His action jeopardized the strike. Ngotho did not fathom the strategic importance behind the strike. He only wanted to get rid of a betrayer. I think to Boro and his peers the strike was a socio-economic tool to get rid of the settlers. So they would not at that stage concern themselves with a symptom of colonialism embodied by amongst others Jacobo, rather they would touch their (settlers) most sensitive spot. They would withdraw labour, stall production and force them into concessions. From the time of the strike Boro's accusing finger never shifted from Ngotho. This modernism-conservatism discord rang throughout Gikuyu. It disrupted the understanding that was hitherto prevalent amongst the Gikuyu.

Earlier in this essay Thuso interweaves analysis and evaluative comment and explicates the workings of literature – asserting himself as a competent student on those terms. But in this extract he goes beyond the essay topic requirements with his discussion of the use of strike action as a socio-economic or political strategy. Luckily this integrates into his interpretation but, more importantly, it places him as knowledgeable about subjects such as political strategy, that go beyond the knowledge of literature. It allows him to present himself as a writer described by Goffman as one who "...exerts a moral demand upon the others, obliging them to value and treat him in the manner that persons of his kind have a right to expect". (quoted in Ivanic:101). It is a deliberate strategy; by displaying his competence in literary academic literacy as well as knowledge in other areas Thuso constructs his identity as a student-writer with the right to be heard.

And this is a strategy Thuso uses in a number of essays. His particular skill is in being able to integrate these other knowledges so that they are seen to be relevant. But he also uses aspects of academic literacy to do other things such as to challenge or to position his marker. This is what he does in the last paragraph of this essay on *Weep Not Child*:

In conclusion I would like to state that I do not think it proper to prioritise the above pressures: all of them contributed to the situation and they all supplemented one another. My reason is that from my discussion in this essay I hope one will realize that the novel is about the collapse of a system. Normally it takes a host of contributory factors to do that.

What is interesting about this concluding paragraph is the way it functions in relation to the marker. In a sense the writer seems to be stepping outside his role as a student essay writer to make a direct comment to the reader. He pre-empts any possible criticism of his approach by establishing his right, almost challengingly, to write his essay as he feels it should be written from his assessment of the novel. But, as he made clear in his interview, he is using aspects of academic literacy to manage his marker's response to him:

If I just present my arguments from nowhere, then I think I am creating a new way for whoever will be marking my work. But when I tell him, say, that concerning this issue, there are a number of perspectives, but that I'll be specifically focusing on this one, I think the lecturer is forced to look at things from that point of view. He cannot punish me for the other issues that I won't be bringing into my discussion. I think that helps a great deal.

This is a standard aspect of academic literacy – to make one's thesis clear and to elucidate one's approach. But Thuso is aware that he can use the thesis not only to claim a space to say what he wants to say but also to position the reader to his advantage; that he can exploit the conventions of academic literacy to exert some control over his marker and define the parameters within which he can be assessed. This shows that he does not consider himself completely powerless in the student-marker relationship.

In later essays Thuso progresses to directly criticising the essay topics. For example, in the last sentence of the introductory paragraph of his 8th essay on *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* he states:

I have reservations concerning the essay topic as it limits one's approach to the subject of machismo to man-woman relationships only whereas machismo can also be experienced amongst men.

In this introduction Thuso again shows his acceptance of and competence in academic literacy but at the same time seizes the opportunity to disrupt the asymmetrical power relations between himself and the tutor. The setting of essay topics is one of the ways in

which tutors demonstrate their control and so criticizing the topics is one of the ways to challenge this control even if only to a limited extent.

Thuso is a student who I think illustrates a writer identity that is a production, a positioning in relation to judgements on him that he resists, and that he uses aspects of academic literacy to counter. He refuses an identity that positions him as inadequate by always representing himself in his writing as competent, authoritative, as never unsure, hesitant or deferential – this is what he does with Academic Literacy.

The implications for teaching here are, I think, all about how we as teachers can learn from Thuso and how we can build positively on his strategic use of academic literacy and his ability to identify the advantages to himself. Students are instrumentally inclined but Thuso's strategic approach might be used to change the perception of academic literacy from being merely a conventional way of doing things, as something students have to conform to, to a useful set of strategies that can be creatively used to give the writer more options for presenting essay content and for positioning oneself and the reader.

Next I want to look at an essay from a second student, Veli. Veli comes from a rural town and spent a year after matric doing a commercial and IT course before coming to Wits. where, as his earlier comments show, he felt he acquired a completely different 'academic identity'

The extract we look at is from an essay on Shakespeare's sonnet number 23 which I've put up on OHP just to refresh your memories. This essay from Veli, displays how working within a double consciousness can become evident in student writing.

In his analysis of Shakespeare's sonnet 23 Veli shows he understands that as a writer of literature essays he must display his understanding of how meanings are made through his knowledge of literary devices and how they work. Earlier in the essay, at a basic level, he discusses the meaning of the poem, the tone, structure, rhyme and rhythm and provides supporting evidence. But then he switches into this reading:

Now the conceit or central metaphor of this poem is very important. It tells us about a certain populations denial of the freedom of speech. At first the rights of the Africans were undermined. They had no freedom to talk freely about matters concerning them. They feared to have their voices heard (sic) across the oceans. Therefore they decided to apply a whole variety of methods in order to be heard. The effective method they (Africans) put into practice was the one of writing poems. They knew that by writing poems their voices would be heard from all the corners of the globe. In other words the poems became presages or ambassadors to the people they used to fear. It became the only way of expressing their feelings, that is, through writing.

Here we have an interpretation grounded in the political history of SA inserted into a fairly formalist discussion of an Elizabethan sonnet. It shows Veli's essay as positioned between two unrelated discourses just as he seems to see himself positioned culturally.

This move suggests that both interpretive frames are simultaneously present for him; that he reads the sonnet through the lens of disciplinary skills but also views it through the history and political experiences of his country.

In his interview he made it clear that he considered it important to introduce the perspective of the colonized in this interpretation. His comment was:

...It's not long after colonialism has taken place that's why I always feature these things ...I normally do that

In moving out of the conventional reading position he is asserting the right to adopt another reading position and, indirectly, protesting against its exclusion. It is as if he is producing this reading in response to, in relation to, a reading that seems to ignore an experience that is still important to him. It is possible to see this as an implicitly contestatory interpretation that refuses the marginality Veli sees as being imposed.

Colleagues in the dept often complain about the tendency of students to find political meanings in so many of the literary texts that they study (although this occurs mainly in the SA lit course). Comments like this of Veli's provide some insight into what the students see themselves as doing.

Interestingly, this student also had a double sense of the audience for his writing. One of the questions asked in the interview was just who the students saw themselves as writing for. Veli's answer was:

...I write for the people. I try to see if I can write about, if I can maybe influence the people, can change the people or something like that. ...I think of the marker in relation to the marks I'm going to get but then I think of the people in context of whether they understand, is partly to what I'm seeing.

It is interesting that Veli has this imagined reader in mind; that he is aiming at readers beyond the marker; that for him the essay is a vehicle for communication and not just to display what he has learnt. This raises the interesting possibility that for all the power s/he wields the marker may not be the most important reader for the student-writer; that the student's writing and writer-identity may be being shaped for some imagined community.

What would be the implications for teaching – especially for a teacher of literature? Here I find the approach that Robert Scholes advocates in *Textual Power* useful. Interestingly, Giroux called Scholes's approach in *Textual Power* an example of a Border-crossing pedagogy by Giroux.

Scholes asserts that what is essential is to accept the text on its own terms. To do this means to identify the codes and therefore the values that structure a writer's work. This also helps the reader or student to identify how codes and values structure his or her own interpretation of the literary work. For the teacher and reader this



entails careful historicising (the sonnet, for example, was written some decades before first European settlement in South Africa and this has to be acknowledged and taken into account).

But we also need to recognise that students need to have their concerns and priorities acknowledged. For example, with Veli's sonnet interpretation we cannot just discard his need to include comment on South Africa's political context. But in his essay unfortunately these two discourses, unlike in Thuso's essay, remain unintegrated. An important outcome to aim for is the greater integration of discourses. To do this one needs to look for points of contact between them. It is often possible to find them. In this case, both the student and the poem are talking about the function of poetry and this is a meeting point that it should be possible to build on.

The third student, Mzwi, grew up in Johannesburg and came to Wits straight after matric but has similarities to both Thuso and Veli. Like Thuso he is concerned by the negative student identities and self-perceptions he believes are constructed at Wits, where he says "you feel you don't meet this standard" and where some students are placed in foundation courses. Yet he saw the foundation courses as having a positive role as it can: "Teach the students to love themselves...Teach them pride, the university cannot be transformed if the stereotype of being inferior hangs over the students."

Mzwi feels strongly that students should challenge these negative stereotypes by asserting themselves and their equality. He has a strong belief in individual ability and agency. In response to a question about the role of African literature he said: "I am the living modern African which creates the literature."

His response to his uncertain and changing cultural context was: "I can say I am Mzwi, I will create my own culture."

He is similar to Veli in that he sees the essay as a place in which to influence the reader and put his views across as is seen in his reply when asked who he writes for:

... I'm, writing to educate other people, or it might be the marker himself, but I'm writing to educate the people I'm writing to. It's about educating. Then the other...I'm writing to show how much I know, I'm writing my knowledge. And also impressing the marker.

Until I drew together all his essays and his comments from different sources I was not able to see how he was using his essays to argue for the need to assert individual worth – and, no doubt, to educate his reader. These beliefs are present in a discourse that runs through much of Mzwi's work – the discourse of individuality, of the importance of personal responsibility and individual endeavour.

In this paragraph from his essay on *Weep Not Child*, Mzwi's choice of interpretive frame helps him to foreground his argument about the need for a sense of self worth.

...Ngotho does not see the need to fight because he has accepted the way things are. "Father say he would rather work for a white man." This quotation from Kamau, tells us that Ngotho has no views of his own. The white man has colonized him to the bone. He has this idea in his mind that the white man is better than himself. A person cannot fight a better fight, when you already think your opponent better than you. Therefore Ngotho is defeated even though in the beginning of the novel we see him in a position of strength, despite this he is doomed.

In the novel the reasons for Ngotho's disintegration are many and complex which this interpretation of Mzwi's ignores, but what we can see here is Mzwi using the same lens to interpret and assess the events and characters in the novel as he does in life. This discourse of resistance and assertion is present in many of his essays but whereas it integrates fairly well into his *Weep Not Child* essay, it causes problems in other essays such as his essay on Mda's play *We Shall Sing for the Fatherland*. Mzwi begins the essay by attempting to use the socialist perspective from which the play was written and taught:

...Mda concentrates more on class discrimination in this play. Race discrimination is not much on the spotlight...Mda uses Mr Mafutha to prove that race discrimination is not the issue. The issue is whether you have money or not, it's all about class.

But later he runs into trouble when the socialist discourse cannot be integrated with the discourse of individuality he is invested in. In later paragraphs in this essay he writes:

For Mda to write such a play for South African situation at that time, was being very optimistic. How can you expect people who have been told what to think and when to think, to be economically competitive...

Mda was trying to tell these people in the postcolonial African state, that nobody will do something for anybody, people must learn to do things for themselves. Mda shows openness of mind, that race discrimination in a free country cannot make a person poor, it will cause race discrimination but not class discrimination of whether you are poor or not.

So by the end of this essay Mzwi's desire to include and argue for his particular beliefs has resulted in confusion and in him attributing to Mda a position directly opposite to that the play is endorsing.

The concept of relationality is useful here as it seems to be Mzwi's contact with the attitudes he perceives within the university context that provokes the recurrence of this discourse in his essays. He seems to be engaged in an ongoing argument and to be making attempts at persuasion and 'education' of his readers. Despite his somewhat grand claims (mentioned earlier) I believe that individual endeavour and success are not for him to be sought for personal glory. It is in his intense concern that students should overcome any imposed sense of inferiority that he places individual achievement as a

political strategy, as part of the process of re-fashioning identity. The positioning of himself, and all his interpretations, within this discourse of individuality can be seen in Hall's terms as a politics of identity.

When considering teaching implications, there is another principle of Scholes's that can be used. Once again the text needs to be understood and responded to on its own terms – as Mzwi attempted to do. But Scholes suggests that to move from interpretation to criticism the student can use his/her own system of values to critique those of the text. Of course these student values need to be identified but Mzwi was well aware of his own values and of the disruptive clash of values in this essay. He just needs to be helped to use his system of values to critique the values of the text. He also attempts to do this but he needs to do it without trying to attribute his values to the text. Students must be moved away from merely seeing every text as a mirror of their own views and concerns and to find ways of bringing the views and values important to them into relation with those of the text. Here, Mzwi would need to add some discussion in which he challenges the basic premise of the play without trying to make Mda say what he wants him to say.

In conclusion I'd like to make three points.

The first point is that I was surprised, as a teacher, by how much I learned simply from asking the students what they saw themselves as doing in their essays. And through this, also, to discover just how much was going on in student essays. I was impressed with the way students, apart from displaying competence in academic literacy, were attempting genuine communication in their essays – using them to argue, persuade or educate their readers about concerns important to them as well as to assert authoritative identities; in other words - to take control of their situations as much as possible.

But drawing on data from interviews and questionnaires and using some aspects of postcolonial theory to look at the data and the student essays also allowed me to better understand how the students were responding to their context and how this affected their response to the lit texts. Students straddle borders uneasily – not so much that they have difficulty crossing the borders between discourses as that they have difficulty managing the ways in which different discourses and interpretive frames can be brought into conversation within their essays

Most important for us as teachers of literature is to give respect to our students' serious attempts at communication and to find ways of engaging with them around their concerns by finding academically effective ways of bringing these concerns and discourses into relation where possible.

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## Possible intro **MARK 1**

To start with I'll just outline what I'll be doing in this paper

**\* most of us, as readers and markers of student essays, have at times been puzzled by the odd directions these essays can take and by the seemingly inexplicable moves students (can) make in their essays/writing. In the main part of this paper I'll be examining extracts from the essays of 3 students on the FC in Eng lit to highlight the choices and strategies they use in their writing to construct writer-identities and position their readers – to try to understand what they do with AL and discuss possible ways of responding/to respond to them appropriately/usefully???**

\* Before getting to examples of the students' writing I'll give a very brief overview of the context of the research being reported on – i.e. the lit FC at Wits (now sadly no longer in existence)

\* and I'll briefly discuss aspects of PC theory that I have used as a lens for a reading of the writing of these 3 students.  
(not necessarily in that order)

I want to begin this paper with a comment made by a Wits colleague, James Ogude, because I think it highlights my specific interest and the approach taken/used.(in this paper). He drew on other postcolonial theorists when he commented that what is most interesting to consider in PC contexts is not what colonialism did to the colonized but what the colonized did with colonialism. The research described/**analysis of student writing** in this paper was done in this spirit – that what is most interesting about student writing during their first year, (and what is likely to be useful for teachers in helping students with their writing,) and useful to get some understanding of, is just what our students do with academic literacy – its discourse and demands ( rather than/as well as (the usual approach of) what AL is doing/does to them).

Of course the demands on and the writing of first year students have been examined and analysed for many years. And a number of writers on academic literacy have compared the teaching of Academic literacy to colonization with some using Mary Louise Pratt's famous term the 'contact zone' to describe the AL classroom. **And the notion of colonization is useful/relevant in 2 ways for this discussion. Firstly, It can be useful to think of the AL classroom as involving colonization to the extent that it involves the imposition of a 'foreign' literacy system and to see what it is that students do with this system. But, secondly, of course, the situation is not metaphorical for our students – they are living many of the dilemmas of a postcolonial society, especially those of one in transition within a rapidly globalising world. And our students are very aware of this/the pressures within this context as the comment of one/Thuso's comment from his questionnaire /shows:**

**OHP I see myself as a black African in Africa. My Africaness is however going through a transformation (more rapidly than normal). I want to be an African intellectual without losing my roots (which) I am struggling to find.**

**+++ or bring in Thuso's comment later???)+++**

**(Bring in FC context now? Or continue as below here or at ###??)**

**OHP – for both quotes??? Or leave out Flower quote??**

*Of course, we are all aware that our students' learning and writing contexts are affected by the wider context and that this may account for the apparently strange emphases that can occur in their writing.*

**The sometimes disruptive impact of this wider context within the ed. context is highlighted by Flower /Some work by Flower provides a way of understanding/approaching these puzzling parts/sections/ourbreaks in student writing.** in a (fairly) recent article. Flower writes of the 'contradictory voices' that are present in a situation where "shaping forces (social, historical, cultural as well as material reality) give rise to diverse assumptions, goals and practices'(42). Mary Louise Pratt provides a reason for why these 'diverse assumptions, goals and practices' are so often unacknowledged **in the ed sit** when she describes how

...usually only legitimate moves are actually named as part of the system, where legitimacy is defined from the point of view of the party in authority – regardless of what other parties might see themselves as doing. (1991:38)

This is the focus/emphasis that I am most interested in – what the students do with, or see themselves as doing with academic literacy, and how what they do is affected by /what diverse assumptions, goals and practices might arise in response to/ the shaping forces in the students' **PC** writing context.