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## **Rhetorical U-Turn: the Attack of the Textoids**

CASDW annual meeting, 30 May 2011

### **Appendix: Some potential writing tasks that actually have real audiences and purposes**

- Inkshed (in-class and immediate or between meetings and read in class)
- Research report on a literature anthology (what are the important issues and questions we all should attend to during the course?)
- Weekly online public learning journal (public blog)
- Online “Occasions” discussions (post a non-trivial reflection, respond thoughtfully to at least two others)
- Participation in an online discussion about reading a play (as for Occasions)
- Participation in an online discussion on attending a production (as for Occasions)
- Report on individual investigation of a playwright, play, theatre or production for a group (on a group wiki; available to everyone)
- Collaboratively assembled wiki page (collaboratively assembled from individual wikis) on the background of a play
- Collaboratively redacted Web page reduced to a 1000-word text to be published and distributed at a theatre with the programs (Playgoer's Companion)
- Public (on line) response to a sequenced reading (e.g., *A Modest Proposal*)
- Report on and recommendation of a reading (why should the rest of us read this text?) used as a basis for a group discussion and decision on curriculum
- “Executive summary” of a reading for use by others who will have read

something else but need to know how the text fits a larger pattern

- A jointly assembled Web page or wiki on a work read by a group in the class but not by everyone (“what do we need to know about *The Conscious Lovers*?”)
- Report (perhaps summary, perhaps quotation, preferably both) on what an authority has had to say about a focal shared concern
- Report for a group on a shared research project
- Jointly written summary of an in-class group discussion, posted on line
- Jointly assembled “feasibility report” in which a group reports to the rest of the class on whether a proposed historical event will sustain a serious investigation and report to the rest of the class, used as a basis for discussion and decision
- Jointly written extensive report (“book”) on a historical incident (e.g., the Scopes trial, The fatwa on Salman Rushdie, the Tiananmen Square repression), read by the whole class and “launched” in a public presentation
- Anonymous course feedback (publicly distributed for discussion)

I offer these not as an exhaustive list, but to suggest that it's not difficult to come up with them once you abandon the conventional assumption that the teacher as examiner has to be the center of all classroom discourse, and that the exclusive function of classroom writing is in the service of diagnosis, assessment, grading and certification.