The Museum of Dilemmas

Note: Class will meet in the Tang on Tuesday, Oct. 29, with Dario Robleto.

Your final project will contribute to a Museum of Dilemmas, which we will create in real time and space as well as in a metaphorical space made of words. Like the artwork of Dario Robleto, your projects will be alloys, combining elements in representations that convey your own experience of one or more of the dilemmas we are grappling with in this course.

The assignment has two parts:

1. An object or installation that will represent the dilemma you choose;
2. A commentary on your representation that will draw on the readings for the course to explain the dilemma and your representation.

Part 1: the object.
Your object or installation may be simple or complex, but it must somehow embody the dilemma. It must be an “alloy” — that is, it must combine more than one material or idea, and you must be able to tell us in words what that alloy is. See if you can process some of your materials, like a chemist or an alchemist or weaver, before building them into your object, and think about what those processes represent. What do our brains do with perceptions as we transform them into concepts, memories, forgettings, desires, dreams, identities?

Your object must lend itself somehow to exhibition, so that we can install our museum. In the museum world, “object” is an increasingly broad term. It can include sounds, time-based images (=film), words (on paper or in/on other media), even events in time (like Robleto’s matches, which ostensibly have been burned in the bars where he placed them). You just need to find a way to exhibit it, and it counts as an object.

If you want ideas, look at Robleto’s objects, and consider how he thought them up. Or ask him yourself. How do you represent a dilemma in an object?

Part 2: the commentary.
In 1400-1600 words, introduce your object and your dilemma, drawing substantially on three or more of the readings for the course. At least two of them must be from the assignments since the midterm (you are welcome to include more from before the midterm), and one must be John Locke. Include a Works Cited page.