**Essay In Miniature: A Probative Instrument**

In its original form, the essay was meant as a means of exploration—a thinking through of one’s thoughts via the process of writing. It is with that traditional concept in mind that you should approach this essay.

Do the following in an order that makes sense to you:

1. Looking over the texts you’ve read (along with the writing you’ve been doing about these texts) and the projects you and your classmates have created, note passages you find of particular interest.
2. Choose four or five passages or sections of projects and consider the following:

Why is this important to this author?

How does it relate to the various other texts we’ve read or ideas we’ve explored?

Why do I (you, the reader) care about this?

Why should others care about this?

1. Frame a question (ideally: a surprising, intriguing, even playful—seriously playful—question) with which you’ll title and begin your essay.
2. a) Identify portions of the texts that help you think about your question.

b) Note other potential sources (to be consulted later or referenced in your draft from memory) that might contribute to your thinking.

Compose a draft of an essay (a form of considering, questioning, musing, puzzling, conjecturing, arguing by means of the act of writing), drawing from our work on texts—writing, discussion, projects—in class to-date. Elements and Constraints:

Draft an essay in two or, at most, three pages.

Begin with your question.

Lead us through your thinking process about the question (it might be that you don’t have a precise THESIS that you’re proving, but you should still give the various HOWs and WHYs of your thinking).

Use material from texts we’ve been reading, projects, or discussions.

Include direct quotations with citations.

Use material from your notes on class discussions.

End with a new question or cluster of questions.