Cartoons/Commercials and the Construction of Gender

Review the instructions on p.233 of your textbook. Note that I am expanding this to include not only Saturday morning commercials, but also cartoons geared towards young children. If you choose to analyze cartoons, you should choose one pitched towards girls and one pitched towards boys (it’s usually pretty easy to tell which is which, unless you choose a nature show or something aimed towards very young kids. Include how you knew the target audience in your discussion).

Take notes on what you see. You may want to create two columns – Boys/Girls. Consider the following:

What toys are advertised/used in the cartoons?

What colors are emphasized?

What do the kids do?

What do the adults do?

Where does the action take place?

What does the narrator/voice-over sound like?

Other insights?

Submit your notes along with your narrative response to the following question:

Judging by the messages of these commercials/cartoons, what does it mean to be a girl or boy in American culture?

Making the State Real

Review the instructions on p. 518 in your textbook. Keep a diary of the ways you encounter the power of the state -- federal, state, and local -- on any given day. Use the categories provided in your textbook to get started. Can you identify at least 25 daily encounters with the state?

When you write your results in a 1.5 page double-spaced submission, you may organize your paper into paragraphs based on the categories provided and your responses to the questions posed in each category. It is not necessary to write a single narrative essay.