

Hollywood Cinema in the Studio-Era (TERM YR)
Information Sheet for Forum Posts #3

This assignment asks you to analyze a promotional artifact that speaks to your group's film as a product of Hollywood as an industrial system. The key markers of differentiation discussed in Unit 2—genres, stars, prestige, and artistry—should be the salient concepts on which your discussion focuses. In this writing assignment, you are being asked to explore how historical artifacts position your film industrially.

Post #3: Promoting the Product (about 500-750 words)

Due: [Wk.08 DATE] by midnight; comments by [DATE] and replies by [DATE]

Instructions for assignment:

Locate at least one piece of advertising material promoting your film in the trade press through the Media History Digital Library. You might select posters or newspaper advertisements for the film itself or for the studios season, a behind-the-scenes feature in a fan magazine, or a fan magazine profile of one of the film's stars (select a profile from during or after – not before – your film's release). You may choose to select more than one artifact if each individual object is not sufficiently rich or interesting to merit close consideration. Post the artifact(s) as an image (images) or provide a link(s), and cite the document(s). **Remember:** Keep the central questions of primary-source analysis (PAPER) in mind when discussing your artifact(s).

Option A: Advertising/Promotional Material: Make an argument about the underlying industrial assumptions that the promotional material presents. What aspects of the film are highlighted (or downplayed) in the marketing campaign? (Its directors and/or stars? Its genre? Its themes or social issues? Its use of technology?) What kinds of viewers does the marketing campaign appear to be targeting? How does the look of the ad campaign complement the film's visual design? Which implicit messages do the visual elements or copy present? Note that you are looking for historical and textual meaning that departs from the obvious. If you did Option A for Post #2 (the film reviews), do promotional materials emphasize the same issues stressed in the reviews?

Option B: Fan-magazine star profile: Make an argument about how the star profile you've found activates aspects of the star's persona (private and/or as established in previous roles) in relation to your film. How is the star's role in your film related to his/her persona? What aspects of his/her private life resonate with his/her character in the film? How is this role related to previous roles? What kinds of viewers does the star and profile appear to appeal to?

Whichever option you choose, be sure to address this question:

What do the promotional materials suggest about the film's market, appeal, and industrial status? In order to address the latter facet of this question, you should consult and, where appropriate, cite relevant background information on your studio in either the Bernstein or *Cinema Book* supplementary readings. This is how you will be able to assess whether and how genre identity, prestige level, star meaning, etc. “fit” into the strategy of your film's studio.