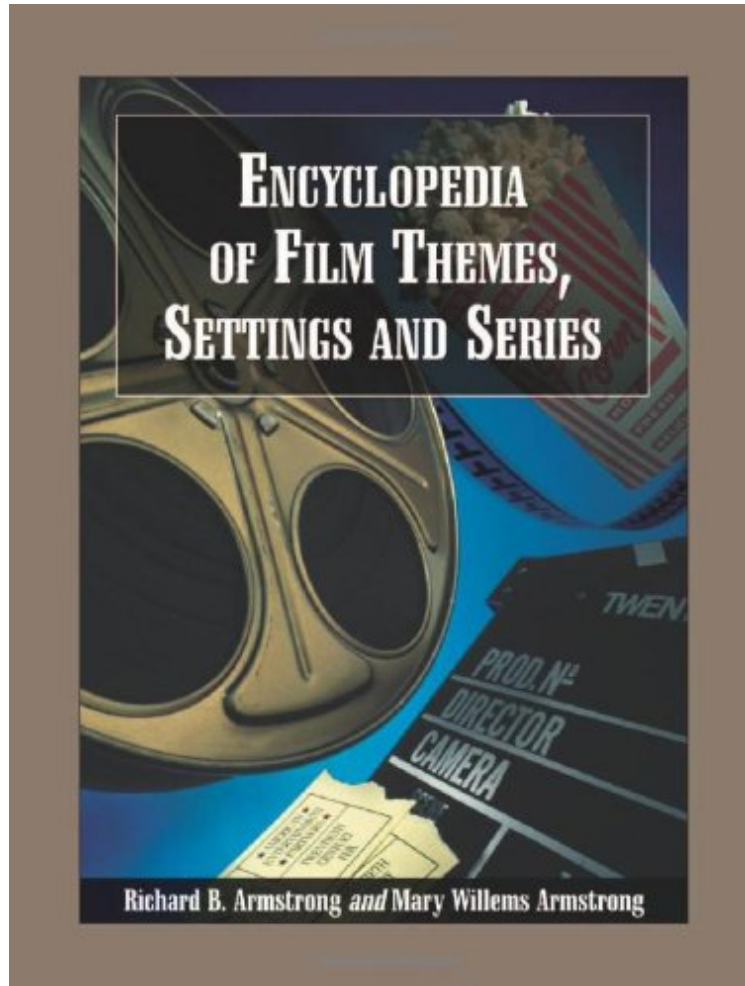


## Encyclopedia of Film Themes, Settings and Series

*Richard B. Armstrong, Mary Willems Armstrong*  
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**Richard B. Armstrong, Mary Willems Armstrong : Encyclopedia of Film Themes, Settings and Series** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Encyclopedia of Film Themes, Settings and Series:

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Every Library Needs This Book In Its CollectionBy A CustomerI am a Library Media Specialist in an elementary/middle school. I bought this book for my Library. The students love it! It has an easy to read table of contents, and the students say they love to look up their favorite movies. Any book that can motivate a child to read is well worth having in the Library. I also have two other books written by the same authors: The Movie List Book and its second edition. These authors really know the movies.

The first editon was called "the most valuable film reference in several years" by Library Journal. The new edition

published in hardcover in 2001 includes more than 670 entries. The current work is a paperback reprint of that edition. Each entry contains a mini-essay that defines the topic, followed by a chronological list of representative films. From the Abominable Snowman to Zorro, this encyclopedia provides film scholars and fans with an easy-to-use reference for researching film themes or tracking down obscure movies on subjects such as suspended animation, viral epidemics, robots, submarines, reincarnation, ventriloquists and the Olympics ("Excellent" said Cult Movies). The volume also contains an extensive list of film characters and series, including B-movie detectives, Western heroes, made-for-television film series, and foreign film heroes and villains.

From Booklist This is the third edition of the inconsistently titled subject film index by the Armstrongs. The first edition, published by McFarland, appeared in 1990 as *The Movie List Book: A Reference Guide to Film Themes, Settings and Series* and had 450 entries. The book was lauded as a much-needed resource offering subject access to primarily English-language, sound-era films. In 1994, a second edition offering approximately 100 new entries was published by Betterway Books as *The Movie List Book: Hundreds of Fun and Fascinating Lists of Films by Their Settings and Major Themes*. McFarland now offers the latest version, featuring more than 670 entries and covering films through August 2000. Both films made for television and for theatrical release are included, as are a few well-known foreign film series. As in the previous two editions, arrangement is alphabetical by movie topics (mostly themes, settings, and series, as the title suggests). Each entry offers background information on the topic, ranging anywhere from two sentences to several paragraphs. The narrative is chatty, informative, and opinionated; in the absence of a bibliography, one assumes all of the commentary reflects authorial viewpoints. Following each narrative is a chronological list of representative films in each category, ranging anywhere from 3 to 80 titles. Aside from the many new film titles added since the last edition, more than 100 new topics have been added. Examples of new series include *Aladdin* series, *Beverly Hills Cop* series, and *Watchers* series; other new categories include *Bond* villains, *Bowling*, and *Zorro*. The authors admit in their introduction that they inevitably leave out some films; indeed, one can easily justify adding the 1985 *Better Off Dead* to the *Suicide* entry, for example, or the 1999 *Girl, Interrupted* to *Asylums*. In addition, one can lament that recent films have narrowly missed the cutoff publication date and must await the next edition to be added (for example, the 2000 film *Nurse Betty* would make a nice addition to *Soap operas*). Most categories from the previous editions appear to be preserved. The *Encyclopedia of Film Themes, Settings and Series* remains a unique resource among film indexes. At its inception in 1990, genre-specific guides with selected filmographies were already available, but none covered topics as specific as this or indexed series. This remains true today: the closest competition is in books like *Films by Genre* (McFarland, 1993), which only covers broader categories. The keyword index of the mammoth Internet Movie Database [<http://www.imdb.com>] will retrieve some themes and settings (e.g., *Girl, Interrupted* pops up under *asylum*). The *Encyclopedia of Film Themes, Settings and Series* is recommended for all libraries with patrons interested in film. Both the casual movie viewer and the film enthusiast will find this book fun and informative. Although the price is a tad on the heavy side, the book is handsomely bound and has enough new material to make it a worthwhile purchase. The authors obviously cannot cover all topics, and therefore might seem to select them arbitrarily, but their attempts at compiling an "exhaustive list of English-language film series" come close to being achieved. REVWR Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "Comprehensive...useful and unique" --Choice "Film scholars and fans will find this an easy-to-use reference volume for tracking down obscure movies on various subjects as well as for researching movie themes" --Arba Richard B. Armstrong, in addition to his reference book work, has written for such periodicals as *Film Quarterly* and *Filmfax*. Mary Willems Armstrong has shown films, reviewed films, and written about film reference books in magazines such as *Film Quarterly* and *Filmfax*. --Booklist/RBB "Comprehensive...useful and unique" --Choice "Film scholars and fans will find this an easy-to-use reference volume for tracking down obscure movies on various subjects as well as for researching movie themes" --Arba About the Author Richard B. Armstrong, in addition to his reference book work, has written for such periodicals as *Film Quarterly* and *Filmfax*. Mary Willems Armstrong has shown films, reviewed films, and written about film reference books in magazines such as *Film Quarterly* and *Filmfax*.