The volume includes several finding aids: a detailed and useful index, an alphabetical list of entries, and a less useful "Reader's Guide," which would have served as a topical index if page numbers had been included. The editors state that the design of their book "reflects the unpredictability and daring" (xii) of their subject, but their design for the most part is tame, with black-and-white photographs appearing throughout. The use of mirrored page numbers on odd numbered pages comes off as more unsettling than extreme.

Like a telecast of an extreme sporting event, the encyclopedia opens with a disclaimer warning that without proper training the activities described within can be dangerous. The disclaimer is warranted, as the Berkshire Encyclopedia of Extreme Sports is likely to appeal as much to prospective extreme sport athletes as it will to students and scholars. Characterizing the complex, multivariate experience of extreme sports, this work is a welcome addition to the reference literature, bringing together comprehensive information about a new and developing genre of sports and speaking to the needs and interests of a wide range of readers. This title is recommended for high school, public, and academic libraries, especially for those with significant sports collections. —Kenneth Burhanna, Head, Instructional Services, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio


It is well-known that the term film noir originated with French critics who used it to describe certain Hollywood films of the 1940s and early 1950s—films that are characterized stylistically by dark tones and night scenes and thematically by ambivalent protagonists and a sense of fatalism. The so-called film noir bible, Alain Silver's and Elizabeth Ward's Film Noir: An Encyclopedic Reference to the American Style (Overlook, 1979) claims that film noir is "an indigenous American form" and that it is a "unique example of a wholly American film style" (1). Since that book's publication in 1979, other critics have argued for a more expansive noir canon that includes many European influences (in particular, gothic horror and German Expressionism) that are important precursors to the "classic" film noir style. Michael Keaney, author of Film Noir Guide: 745 Films of the Classic Era, 1940–1959 (McFarland, 2003), agrees that film noir is not exclusively a product of the U.S. film industry and his work adds to the growing literature in support of this claim. Audiences familiar with the quintessential noir films such as Out of the Past or The Maltese Falcon might be surprised at Keaney's inclusion of such a film as the lush Technicolor production of Black Narcissus (which was given a rating of 4½ stars out of 5), but if two of the primary characteristics of the film noir genre are the cynical, pessimistic hero and the femme fatale, then the entry is certainly justified.

Included in this work are 369 British films produced between 1937 and 1964. The guide is arranged in alphabetical order by the original British title, and each entry includes the...