

ception and illusion" that surrounds adopted children. Useful background information, soberly written, but short on statistics that might have provided a clearer picture of adoption today.

*Arts & Letters*

**AMERICA AS ART**

By Joshua C. Taylor  
Smithsonian, 1976, 320 pp.  
\$25 cloth, \$9.60 paper  
L of C 76-4482  
ISBN 0-87474-900-X

No Copley? Homer? Eakins? No Sargent? This catalog, writes Taylor, director of the National Collection of Fine Arts, is not simply a survey of highlights of American art. Instead, it shows many robust, lesser-known works selected to support the thesis that certain "attitudes about America" became inseparable from its art, and some art "became an identifying mark of America." Eight studies or "moments" when art and the identity of America came close together—from the 17th-century Indian maiden transformed into the goddess "America" to contemporary artists' responses to uniformity and isolation—are featured among 336 black-and-white and 10 color illustrations. The combination of John G. Cawelti's text and a stunning series of George Catlin's Indian paintings makes the chapter on "The Frontier and the Native American" particularly effective.

**MYTHS**

By Alexander Eliot, et al.  
McGraw Hill, 1976, 320 pp.  
\$34.95 to May 31, 1977  
\$39.95 thereafter  
L of C 76-20186  
ISBN 0-07-019193-X

Visually and intellectually, this is a cosmic coffee-table book. In it, Eliot retells many of the world's major myths, from American Indian creation stories to the Tower of Babel legend in many cultures, without scanting detail. Authoritative contributors back him up: Mircea Eliade analyzes the historical development of myth interpretation; Joseph Campbell outlines the emergence of myths in different parts of the world, tying them to 16 pages of good maps; and Detlef-I. Lauf provides informative captions and ingenious graphics to accompany the more than 1,300 well-chosen illustrations (many in full color) of mythological motifs in art from the world's ancient and modern civilizations.