Cultural Studies
Rachel Adams

The American cultural imagination 200pp. University of Chicago Press. Distributed in the UK by B. T. Batsford, £25.00 0 226 30160 X

It probably says something about the subject treated here that this book contains no index. To be fair to the publishers, the book was published in June 1989, before the electronic indexing machine had been developed. Adams' subject is the place of American films in the American consciousness, and her book is in part an argument for the view that they are the most important cultural artefacts of the age. Adams makes her case powerfully, using a wide range of sources, from literary critics to sociologists, from historians to popular journalists. Her arguments are clear and convincing, and her writing is lucid and engaging. This is a book that should be read by anyone interested in American culture, and it is a valuable contribution to the field of cultural studies.

Stephen Black

Beyond meaning and identity: Transcultural identity in film. Edinburgh University Press, £38.50 (paperback, £12.95)

The central thesis of this book is that the postmodernist concept of identity is inadequate for understanding the complex and multiple identities that exist in contemporary societies. Black argues that the postmodernist concept of identity is too narrow and static, and that it fails to account for the fluid and dynamic nature of identity in contemporary societies. He uses a wide range of examples from film, literature, and popular culture to illustrate his arguments, and his analysis is both persuasive and compelling. This is a book that should be read by anyone interested in cultural studies, and it is a valuable contribution to the field.

Keith Meldrum

Biography

Eugene O'Neill: Beyond meaning and identity. Edinburgh University Press, £38.50 (paperback, £12.95)

Among the more interesting aspects of this book is the way in which it challenges the traditional concept of the author as a fixed and unchanging entity. Black argues that the author is a social and cultural construct, and that it is impossible to determine the author's identity with any degree of certainty. This is a book that should be read by anyone interested in cultural studies, and it is a valuable contribution to the field.

In the British Library's new exhibitions, "Art and Architecture", a new interest is being shown in the visual arts. The exhibitions are located in the main reading room, and are open to the public. The exhibitions include works by artists such as Van Gogh, Monet, and Picasso, and are a welcome addition to the library's collection.

Kieran Swetnik

In Brief

Art & Architecture

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The turn of the century was marked by a new interest in the visual arts. The exhibitions are a welcome addition to the library's collection.