Although he does not employ the term, it becomes fairly clear that Lewis considers Du Bois a "public intellectual" who functioned in pretty much the same way as the contemporary crop of black pundits who believe their primary role is to explain the distinctive attitudes, beliefs, and practices of black people to white people. Lewis takes Du Bois at his word when in *Dusk of Dawn* (1940) he declared that his "was a leadership solely of ideas. . . . My stinging hammer blows made Negroes aware of themselves, confident in their possibilities and determined in self-assertion." Lewis affirms this assessment in the final pages: "For he [Du Bois] was an intellectual in the purest sense of the word—a thinker whose obligation was to be dissatisfied continually with his thoughts and those of others."

During Du Bois's lifetime and afterward, however, many African Americans considered him the exemplar of the "scholar-activist tradition." Although it was apparent that he was a scholar of undeniable genius, Du Bois also challenged the political hegemony of Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee machine by organizing the Niagara movement, gathered African and American leaders and intellectuals at European capitals following World War I and held several Pan African congresses, aided and abetted black student activism (which resulted in significant changes in the policies and practices on black college campuses), participated actively in partisan political campaigns and ran for political office, and traveled around the world giving speeches and moral support to those committed to world peace. While there are those who would prefer to confine Du Bois and his legacy to the "ebony tower," present and future generations of African American scholars must look to the example of Du Bois to understand the relationship between their research and writings and the improvement in the status of Africans in the world.

V. P. Franklin
Columbia University
New York, New York

American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century. By Gary Gerstle. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001. xvi, 454 pp. $29.95, ISBN 0-691-04984-X.)

Two "powerful and contradictory ideals"—civic nationalism and racial nationalism—have shaped the history of the American nation in the twentieth century, Gary Gerstle argues in his ambitious and provocative synthetic study. The first, a political perspective that others have called the "American Creed," was embraced by the century's most important liberal thinkers and politicians. Civic nationalism encompassed a belief in "democratic universalism" and in "political and social equality for all, irrespective of race, ethnicity, or nationality, and a regulated economy that would place economic opportunity and security within the reach of everyone." Competing with that tradition, racial nationalism conceived of America in "ethnoracial terms," and its definition of precisely who was, or could become, an American was racially charged. Appreciating the "power of civil ideals," Gerstle takes civic nationalism seriously, refusing to see "race at the root of every expression of American nationalism." But race is never far from the surface, and Gerstle repeatedly and often perceptively explores the manifold ways in which civic nationalist ideals were themselves influenced by or reflective of racial nationalism.

Gerstle's narrative and analytical strategies are structured around the figure of Theodore Roosevelt, who exhibited in unambiguous terms both civic and racial nationalist creeds. Race and the conflict between races were of paramount importance to TR. Yet, unlike many of his contemporaries, he advocated a racialized nation that offered membership, not exclusion, to Catholics and Jews and to new immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. Gerstle does not explore how and why TR came to differ so radically from so many other patricians in their belief in the inferiority of new immigrants. Accepting prevailing white notions of black inferiority, TR nonetheless expounded a belief in "controlled hybridity" in which new immigrants could be Americanized through voluntary efforts or through

coercive Americanization campaigns. If he advocated "discipline" and Americanization, TR himself engaged in little by way of actual coercion, talking tough but taking no action.

World War I and the 1920s witnessed the intensification of the racial nationalist tradition. Gerstle sees a "disciplinary project" (an overly broad and jargony expression) involving the rounding up of immigrants and suspected radicals, an assault on ethnic pluralism, and 100 percent Americanization programs culminating in the discriminatory Immigration Restriction Act of 1924. Receding somewhat during the New Deal, racial nationalism was reinvigorated in the late 1930s by Republican congressman Martin Dies in his attacks on the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt. But by World War II, Gerstle argues, that tradition proved less hostile to southern and eastern Europeans than it had been earlier, while retaining its hostility toward African Americans; during the Cold War, racial nationalism diminished even further in intensity. Yet the power of racial nationalism was such that even its opponents were sometimes affected by it. Gerstle finds support for this proposition in, for instance, the iconography of the American Communist party in the 1930s, whose ideal worker appeared Nordic looking and whose immigrant members Americanized their names.

If Gerstle's broader arguments about civic and racial nationalism have their compelling elements, his cultural analysis often does not. An example of this is his indiscriminate use of the undefined, catchall ideal of the "Nordic." With no evidence, Gerstle insists on the "racial dimension" of popular affection for FDR, who "became a kind of Nordic father whom everyone, Jews and Catholics included, wanted to claim as his or her own as a way of avowing a vicarious Nordic ancestry." Adulation for George Washington suggests a "yearning not only for the principles of freedom and equality but also for 'Nordic' ancestors." The appeal of Dorothea Lange's 1936 documentary photograph of the haggard *Migrant Mother* was "its choice of a 'Nordic' woman" whose suffering "could be thought to represent the nation in ways that the distress of a black, Hispanic, Italian, or Jewish woman never could." In none of these cases does Gerstle actually define the Nordic ideal, a concept that is not commonly associated with Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and FDR, much less Lange's migrant mother. Even Superman becomes grist for the cultural analysis mill: When his spacecraft from Krypton crashed on Earth, the young Superman was offered a "Nordic (Yankee) upbringing" by the Kent family in rural Kansas. Building on cultural studies scholarship, Gerstle sees Superman's as an immigrant story, a "triumphant saga of a Nordic Americanization" that also "carries a harsh warning about the consequences of having one's real alien identity uncovered." Never mind that Superman's alien origins are hardly hidden or that his assumption of a secret identity as Clark Kent offered practical advantages and enhanced his effectiveness on behalf of his fight for the American way. Like much of the whiteness literature from which he takes inspiration, Gerstle's exploration of racial categories is creative but suffers from presentist concerns and conceptual imprecision.

Gerstle's "Rooseveltian nation" also proves too broad a concept to sustain an analysis of twentieth-century American politics. Gerstle concentrates on TR's political views after he left the presidency in 1909 and embraced the "New Nationalism" of Herbert Crowley, which involved both discipline (in the form of enforced Americanization) and a "revived Hamiltonianism"—a "strong state that would regulate the overly powerful economic institutions and assist the poor masses in their efforts to improve their conditions." The state would help "working-class immigrants realize the 'glorious possibilities' of American life" and also offer them "political and economic power." In Gerstle's eyes, the wartime Wilson administration constructed the New Nationalist State (TR's dislike of Woodrow Wilson prevented him from recognizing that achievement), but postwar conservatives hastily dismantled it. It was left to FDR to reconstruct the Rooseveltian nation, which, Gerstle argues, remained in place until its collapse under the assault of the black power movement and disillusionment over the Vietnam War. In an analysis simpler than the one offered in his earlier, co-edited collection, *The Rise and Fall*

of the New Deal Order, 1930–1980 (1989), Gerstle seems to take at face value the rhetoric of the new nationalists but refrains from inquiring whether TR's or FDR's programs resulted in a regulated economy that genuinely placed "economic opportunity and security within the reach of everyone." The "Rooseveltian nation," one of the book's core concepts, flattens a richer political history. Still, Gerstle's larger argument that race has been central to the definition of the American nation in the twentieth century is, ultimately, persuasive and should provoke considerable discussion on the historical character and boundaries of citizenship in the United States.

Eric Arnesen
University of Illinois at Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

Mirror Writing: (Re-)Constructions of Native American Identity. Ed. by Thomas Claviez and Maria Moss. (Berlin: Galda, 2000. x, 290 pp. $55.00, ISBN 3-931397-25-9.)

Mirror Writing is a collection of essays selected from those presented by scholars from the United States, Canada, Germany, and England during a conference at the John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies in Berlin November 26–27, 1999, and in the "Native Americans" series of lectures at the Kennedy Institute during the fall semester 1999, both held in conjunction with the opening at the Berlin Museum of Ethnology of their new collection of Native American art and artifacts on November 25, 1999.

In order to present a comprehensive critique of stereotypical representations of the "Indian," the essays combine perspectives from ethnography, cultural history, and literary studies and examine historical misconceptions about Native Americans from the "cruel" to the "noble" savage, from the political perspective of a "nation within a nation" to the transfigurations of a life with and in nature, and from the Western literary preference for a written rather than an oral tradition.

The authors aimed to bridge the gaps between exploitation and romanticism, between projection and experience, between an isolated nationalism and postmodernism, and between Native Americans as "objects" of study and as subjects. In order to accomplish their goal, the editors have divided the essays into three sections: "Approaching the Other: Ethnology and Cultural Contact"; "Listening to the Other: Native American Myth and Storytelling"; and "Reading/Seeing the Other: Literature, Photography, and Cultural Identity."

The essays in the opening section focus on the cultural exchange between Native Americans and those who study them, and the authors insist on respect for Native Americans as the central concern of cultural contact, among other things by avoiding intrusion into their sacred realms. The essays in the second section examine the importance of mythic elements in Native American storytelling and show how those myths are often at odds with Western scientific discourse and the requirements of "factual" truth. The third section contains essays that deal with the procedures of discourse and representation and how they "influence the creation of identity both within Native American communities and outside observers." Dealing with questions of self-identity, the impurities of any "living culture" that deconstructs attempts to arrest meaning, and the need to revise the notion of "disinterestedness" that often masks an agenda rife with political and economic interests, these final essays demand that when examining Native American culture we confess the historical embeddedness of our own categories and admit that the identification of "otherness" relies on questions not only of knowledge but also of ethical acknowledgment.

The essays in *Mirror Writing* offer a much-needed contribution to Native American studies. Carefully selected and edited, they provide an examination of the various ways that Western scholars have studied Native Americans in the past and suggest ways in the future that scholars might better approach native cultures by acknowledging the inherent biases and ethnocentric blind spots any such study contains.

Charles L. P. Silet
Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa