David Leverenz. *Honor Bound: Race and Shame in America*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2012. 279pp.

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To the average American, the concepts of "honour" and "shame" may well seem relegated to the dustbin of history, relics of an antebellum culture in which men dueled each other over real or imagined slights to reputation and rank. Today's media-saturated world, with its casual slander and culture of exhibitionism, seems as far from a culture of honour as can be imagined, but this perception, David Leverenz argues in *Honor Bound*, can only prove patently false when one examines how honour continues to serve as the foundation of collective whiteness. In honour-driven cultures, "[s]haming outsiders who seek to be insiders reaffirms hierarchies and boundaries," and this shame, from early in American history, has been directed at non-whites to reaffirm the fiction of white supremacy—and the fiction of whiteness itself (9).

In order to back up his thesis that honour and shame have long been driving American race consciousness, Leverenz, in the best tradition of American studies, pulls from a wide array of case studies, from literature and popular culture to military history and political science. These include: a deep analysis of a *Hardball* episode covering remarks by black Attorney General Eric Holder, the writings of presidential candidates Barack Obama and John McCain, several historical instances of racial violence, the lives of the Founding Fathers, four novels which entail challenges to white honour, American wars in the Middle Eastern region, and the rise of the Tea

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Party. After explicating the characteristics of honour-driven societies, with examples from Thucydides to the American colonies, the author builds upon Alex de Tocqueville's insight regarding how democracy joins "individual character" to national honour, writing, "When whiteness joins with honor, as it did after the Civil War, shaming becomes more generic than personal," that is, becomes removed from its clannish, localised origins, with the concomitant, defensive shaming reaction directed not against suspect individuals but against entire populations of non-whites (77). Leverenz goes on toargue that black challenges to white honour have driven America's foreign policy, with Americans seeking to "reconstitute the purity of a white national imaginary through wars against more distant peoples of allegedly inferior cultures"—no accident, then, that the the Abu Ghraib photographs seem so reminiscent of old lynching images, dishing out shame upon the "black beast" body (113). However, the author finds hope in the apparent decoupling of honour and whiteness since the civil rights movement, given that the obvious defensive shaming that appeals directly to race has, itself, become increasingly defined as shameful in the eyes of the majority, though the Tea Party may well represent a last gasp for white honour as it has classically been understood.

Leverenz's book casts a wide net, which proves both a strength and a weakness of the text. On the one hand, he is able to track the evolution of white honour through a variety of media and historical events. On the other hand, it allows for the unfortunate conflating of different phenomena. For example, he dubs as an instance of "ethnic cleansing" the 1873 Coalfax Massacre in Louisiana, which was, in fact, more a political war against black Republicans (33–34); Coalfax today remains predominately black, which rather belies any past ethnic cleansing of the sort well documented by James Loewen, Elliot Jaspin, and others.[†]

[†] See James Loewen's *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* (New York: The New Press, 2005) and Elliot Jaspin's *Buried in the Bitter Waters: The Hidden History of Racial Cleansing in America* (New

Likewise does Leverenz relate the case of the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921 as exemplifying the spectre of interracial sex and concomitant white vigilantism, foregoing the broader context of the post–World War I black struggle for equality (45). In fact, the author emphasises white fears of miscegenation at the expense of other factors driving racial violence. Arkansas's Elaine Massacre of 1919, which had its spark in a labour struggle, rivals Tulsa's for worst race riot in America, but Leverenz rarely touches upon the link between labour and honour, how white supremacy desperately tried to square the circle of African Americans as useful for labour while being simultaneously lazy and shiftless. Properly differentiating between varied (but overlapping) forms of racial violence (lynching, racial cleansing, nightriding/whitecapping, etc.) could have allowed a wider application of the honour/shame framework.

That said, Leverenz has produced a most compelling meditation upon how the concept of honour has shaped America's racially inscribed caste system. He may occasionally paint with an overly broad brush, but few scholars have sought to pull such a large array of source materials together into one coherent analysis illuminating this major theme of American history and culture—and one which gives the reader hope that the evils and inequities white supremacy has wrought may, in fact, be dismantled in the near future.

York: Basic Books, 2007), as well as Jean Pfaelzer's *Driven Out: The Forgotten War against Chinese Americans* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), which examines racial cleansing campaigns against Chinese immigrants on the west coast. These are probably the most significant texts at present, though there is a growing body of literature on the subject of racial cleansing in the United States, including articles in state and local historical journals and encyclopedias.