

# Literature and ethnicity

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It takes on greater significance when we consider that brutal murders in the course of robbery were a rather new phenomenon and were seen by contemporaries as a major characteristic of the post-Civil War era.

Such crimes were seen as the direct consequence of emancipation. No longer under the tight control of the whites, many blacks refused to submit any longer to the plantation discipline. As blacks could rarely find alternative work for making a living, petty thefts, grand larceny and robbery often became part of their day-to-day life. (3) Meanwhile, whites who struggled to adjust to the new social and economic conditions, felt increasingly insecure before what they perceived as the inability of the civil authorities to cope with the wave of property crimes. As a consequence, hundreds of whites periodically joined lynching parties as they saw mob violence as their only resort to correct an intolerable situation.

(2) In focusing on North and South America during the crucial years of the post-Civil War period, the goal of “Not without laughter.” was threefold: first, to analyze the various patterns of property offenses, to examine the social context in which those crimes were committed, and determine whether or not blacks were disproportionately responsible; secondly, to investigate the various networks of robbers and to determine the significance of the appearance and disappearance of outlaw and robber gangs; and finally, to determine whether the emergence of vigilance committees was rooted largely in the failure of the judicial authorities to deal with property crimes, or if it represented a desperate attempt by whites to regain the rights they had once enjoyed over the land and the black population. (1) In the process, Langston and Gold were able to demonstrate how the various patterns of

different ethical issues were exacerbated by the larger issue of racial antagonism. Moreover, the statistics was drawn from the present data set allows us to go beyond isolated cases, to establish various patterns and to examine property crimes in their broader social context. In these books, property offenses emerged as a social phenomenon that could be studied and interpreted in the particular mental and emotional context of post-Civil War Southern society, with all its fears and uncertainty. The idea of “ Jews without money” and “ Not without laughter” were that increasing the social support system would strengthen families and provide community support for families’ parenting initiatives.

The social workers were aware that the wider community and its elders supported the parenting styles that the social workers had targeted for change. They, considered this evidence that, as a community, African Americans did not have proper parenting skills, rather than as evidence that the preferences of the community were different but equally appropriate. Despite the emphasis on de-authorizing negative categorizations of ethnics, the “ Jews without money” and “ Not without laughter” shown as acts of power do confirm the process of categorization integral to a positive ethnic identity. The message being relayed by the ethnic joketeller is that “ I/My group am/is different from you/your group, although the differences may be laughed at, and we may laugh together despite the differences.” Once the ethnic assumes the position of speaker, s/he can delineate the Otherness of her/his ethnicity; subsequently, ethnic identity, though still defined contrastively, may no longer be defined negatively.

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