

**CAMPUS COMMUNITY BOOKPROJECT  
FACULTY ROUNDTABLE  
May 14, noon – 1:30 pm**

***TWILIGHT: LOS ANGELES, 1992***

Facilitators: Gary Sue Goodman, University Writing Program, Karen Roth, OCCR

Attendees: Peter Lichtenfels, Theater/Dance; Chris Rubio, ARC; Dick Welters, TRC; Chris Westgate, English; Jim Shackelford, Engineering/IS; Jim Cramer, Sociology; Fran Dolan, English; Barbara Sellers-Young, Theater/Dance; Carl Jorgensen, Sociology; Sheri Tatsch, Graduate Studies, Torey Bookstein, Student Housing; Gail Finney, Comparative Literature/German; Steven Baissa, Student Programs and Activities

**Ideas and Resources for using the book in classes or book discussion groups:**

- Foster discussion on the use of theater to create meaning about social issues. If we could get a transcript of one of the interviews in the book, it could be used to discuss the shaping process for determining what segments of the interview were selected for the book and the play.
- Incorporate the film: *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* into discussions. The Office of Campus Community Relations has the film for check out. Call 752-2071
- Begin discussion on race by developing an understanding of cultural differences before moving to topic of racism. Use of the film, *A Class Divided*, shows how the structure of an institution (such as education, police, media, etc.) affects performance and self-esteem of targeted groups. Other films such as *True Colors*, *The Fairer Sex*, and *The Ugly Truth* are helpful in showing the day-to-day inequities based on race, gender, or perceived attractiveness. (The Office of Campus Community Relations has all of these films available for check out.)
- Use people's stories and experiences to help make the issues in *Twilight* become more personally relevant. Encourage people to share their experiences of racism or social injustice with the police, in school, in the court system, etc.
- Interesting quote from *Twilight's* interview in the book, "I see darkness as myself. I see the light as knowledge and the wisdom of the world and understanding others, and in order for me to be a, to be a true human being, I can't forever dwell in darkness, I can't forever dwell in the idea, of just identifying with people like me and understanding me and mine." This quote conceptualizes the importance of learning about the experiences and perspectives of others different from ourselves.
- Explore the question: What are we doing culturally to separate ourselves? This could be from the perspective of ethnicity, gender, faculty/student, class, etc.

Parker Palmer talks about the culture of fear between faculty and students in his book, *The Courage to Teach*.

- Two resources that explore how the media and society portrayed differing perspectives of the LA rebellion/riot: *Whispers on the Color Line: Rumor and Race in American* by Gary Alan Fine and Patricia Turner ([http://www.nonfictionweb.com/Whispers\\_on\\_the\\_Color\\_Line\\_Rumor\\_and\\_Race\\_in\\_America\\_0520209885.html](http://www.nonfictionweb.com/Whispers_on_the_Color_Line_Rumor_and_Race_in_America_0520209885.html)), and *Latino Metropolis* by Victor M. Valle and Rodolfo D. Torres ([http://www.upress.umn.edu/Books/V/valle\\_latino.html](http://www.upress.umn.edu/Books/V/valle_latino.html)) Both of these books have chapters on the LA rebellion and could be used to compliment the study of *Twilight* in a course syllabus.
- Exercise: Given the difficulty students may have “relating to” past events, have students describe their perception of a commonly known or recent event, such as the Iraqi prison tortures, and use their varied perspectives to show how differing accounts of the same event spring from our personal backgrounds, knowledge, experiences, etc.
- Invite students to interview people in the community about an issue of importance in the community. As they retell the story of the interviewee, ask them to observe what choices they made in editing the story based on their own perception of what was most important to retell.
- Use the 60 Minutes interview of Anna Deavere Smith to illustrate how her dramatization of each person she interviewed compared to the interviewees’ perceptions of themselves. How did she determine which aspects of each person to focus on in her portrayal of them? Explore: art as illustration, not representation.
- ADS says she isn’t “miming” but doing impressions of the characters. Talk about techniques actors use to develop characters: discipline of working from the outside in.
- Ask students to “adopt a character” in the book (preferably across ethnic or racial lines) and research more information about who they are and their life story. This might help students become more engaged in the real life stories of the people who were interviewed.
- Discuss how ADS uses her body to do the interpositioning between the characters’ points of view. Why does it matter that she authored this book as a performance piece? Who has had access to the performance?
- Promote critique of the book, as well as the play, *The Laramie Project*. How accurate are the images that we are shown, and what is the intended perspective that is being portrayed? What other perspectives are not shown? How is this played out in the images the media chooses to show us?

- ADS values words and language; by acting out the interviews, notice where the words are located in the body. This would be a valuable program/workshop for students interested in doing a readers theater.
- Writing assignment: Ask students to look at news footage and other written descriptions of these events and to write a synthesis. Talk about how ADS' use of interview and other research compares with journalism.