



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS ON RESISTANCE (ACT 1)

In the examples of peacebuilding performance seen in Act I, non-violent resistance can be conceptualized as people resisting violent assaults, occupation, cultural impositions, and other infringements on individual and collective agency -- without the people who are resisting becoming violent themselves. Care is taken not to fuel more violence through one's reactions, nor to become passive or self-destructive in the face of seeming powerlessness.

Performance practices can promote self-expression as a form of nonviolent resistance to injustice, encouraging the emotional intelligence necessary for healing and for flexible thinking, and nourishing capacities for cooperation. In contexts of direct violence and state repression, performances have been crafted to speak otherwise unspeakable truths and draw attention to abuses of governmental and military power. In the face of repression and oppression, they have provided channels for creative and life-enhancing forms of resistance, proactive alternatives both to passivity and to participating in cycles of violence and revenge.

1. What comes to mind when you hear the word resistance? speaking openly in contexts of violence and suppression?
2. What did the artists in Act 1 of the documentary mean when they used the term resistance?
3. In which performances did you see resistance demonstrated?
4. What is effective about performative modes of resistance?
5. What are the risks of engaging with resistance as an end in itself?
6. In contexts of brutal and extreme government oppression, what can performances contribute to peacebuilding?
7. When does resistance contribute to peacebuilding and when does it contribute to ongoing cycles of violence?
8. Roberto Varea says that 'the forces that are intent on imposing their power sever lines of connectivity, especially the connections between the present moment and the past.' In contrast, what kinds of connectivity does performance facilitate?
9. What are the resources of theatre and ritual that communities can use to minimize the risk of
10. What kinds of power are manifested in peacebuilding performances? What are the effects of that power in different kinds of performance and in the context of different kinds of violence? How can this power be enhanced? What are the limitations of the power of performance?
11. In Chapter 4 of the first volume of the *Acting Together* anthology, Abeer Musleh quotes Abdelfatteh Abusrour defining "beautiful non-violent resistance" as the means to express both resistance to occupation, as well as love and hope. Under what conditions is creating beauty an act of resistance?
12. At what point would you consider violence to be justified? Compare the resistance Roberto describes in *Fuenteovejuna* with principled nonviolence.
13. In what ways might resistance be propositional (suggesting and embodying proposed changes) rather than oppositional (taking a stand against what already exists)? How do the stories in this act illustrate these concepts?
14. What aspects of your own identity contribute to your understanding of and responses to these performances?

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