



Discussion Questions for Sunil Yapa's *YOUR HEART IS A MUSCLE THE SIZE OF A FIST*

1. Before reading *YOUR HEART IS A MUSCLE THE SIZE OF A FIST*, what, if anything, did you know about the 1999 WTO protests in Seattle? Did Yapa's novel change your understanding of the protest?
2. Which of Yapa's characters did you relate to the most? Which did you relate to the least?
3. What do you think Yapa was saying about the role of the police during political protests? What should we expect of police during these types of protests? What did you make of Bishop's behavior? What about the behavior of Ju and Park? Did you view any of these characters—or any characters at all—as villains?
4. Discuss the role that violence plays throughout the novel. Can violence be a force for good? Can real political change occur without violence?

5. On the day of the protest, the lives of disparate characters collide, and these characters from all walks of life find themselves connected to one another—either physically or emotionally. But, at the same time, the protesters are fighting against globalization, against global connectivity. Discuss the role that human connectivity plays throughout the novel.
6. In an interview, Sunil Yapa said of the novel: “It’s about people listening, and not listening.” Discuss the ways various characters listened—or didn’t listen—throughout the novel.
7. Discuss the role that empathy plays in the novel. What does it mean to be empathetic, especially in this global age?