

The vignette is very telling about the challenges we face when trying to define culture and identity. While all three artists seemed to agree more or less about the value that art has for helping us to understand and explore culture, or even to help us grasp the concept of culture, this discussion goes to show that it is really difficult to make concepts such as culture and identity tangible. Sylvia claimed that "you can't represent what you don't know", but went on to explain that still art serves a purpose because then we can explore what is represented, what can be represented, and what's isn't actually shown in the piece. This really justifies the value of art.

The most startling line I noticed from the discussion these educators had is the idea that "we need to complicate things to get people to the truth of the issue" and that art allows you to say something you don't necessarily believe. I think that is really interesting because does that mean that art provides a sense of security? Do we use art as a way to hide behind difficult issues because we cannot confront them head on? The puppets really allowed this to happen and it is an extremely interesting activity, although I think that the regular discussion was just as enlightening as the statements made by the puppets. Stacy Friedman did make the statement that she had edited the conversation in her video, so in a way we are only getting a representation of the representation that was given.

Voice, culture, identity and representation are such huge concepts that one could argue they are impossible to define. However, through the use of technology I think it is possible to "offer a different perspective from which to understand how meaning is produced" (Goldfarb, 2002, p. 73) and allow our students to at least explore these issues. As a result of discussion in this course I am making a conscious effort to use different techniques in my classroom that allow students to explore these complex ideas and form their own opinions on them. In class a few months ago we actually explored JR's TedTalk, "Use Art to Turn the World Inside Out" (2011) to start a discussion about how art can have an impact on a community and we discussed the different cultures involved and it became directly relevant as the project had been done in Colombia as well.

I think that we as educators have a responsibility to consider these issues when we use new technologies in the classroom, but at the same time we need to appreciate the opportunities that technology has created in terms of allowing students new forms to express themselves and explore who they are. It is a teacher's job to then guide them to an understanding of how their particular culture and identity affects what they produce, how they produce it, and how they will interpret someone else's work.

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