Chapter 1

Dignity

Key Concepts:
A Feminist Approach to Human Rights Education
Chapter 1
Key Concept:

Dignity

DEFINITION

From The New Oxford American Dictionary:

\textit{dignity} |ˈdɪgnət| noun

- the state or quality of being worthy of honor or respect: \textit{a man of dignity and unbending principle} | the \textit{dignity of labor}.
- a composed or serious manner or style: \textit{he bowed with great dignity}.
- a sense of pride in oneself; self-respect: \textit{it was beneath his dignity to shout}.

HUMAN RIGHTS DOCUMENT

From the Preamble to the \textit{Universal Declaration of Human Rights}

\ldots recognition of the inherent \textit{dignity} and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world \ldots

\ldots the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the \textit{dignity} and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women \ldots

\textit{Universal Declaration of Human Rights}, Article 1

All human beings are born free and equal in \textit{dignity} and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.
DIGNITY IN HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

Dignity—A Foundational Value

Belief in the inherent dignity of each human being is the cornerstone of all modern human rights movements. This belief appears in the first clause of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which asserts that “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.” An examination of this key term thus provides a useful starting point for human rights education.

The concept of inherent dignity is also fundamental to feminist movements worldwide. Although local feminisms vary in significant ways, they all advocate for recognition of the dignity of women as human beings.

In addition to being a foundational human rights concept and a feminist value, dignity is also a positive personal value that fosters both self-respect and respect for others. This key concept therefore provides HR educators with an antidote to the depression that often overwhelms students when they learn about human rights violations. Dignity endows us with moral strength—and we can use this strength to address injustice from a position of conviction and hope.

Pedagogical Approaches

The five activities in this unit are organized from basic experiential exercises to complex participatory analyses. Activities 1 and 2 use kinesthetic learning to establish the experience of dignity as a universal value. Activities 2, 4, and 5 engage students in exploring human rights through the arts: dance, poetry, and visual arts.

Activity 3: *Dignity in the Fabric of the UDHR* provides a tool for comprehending the structure and major themes of the UHDR. This structural analysis can be effectively combined with an overview of the International Bill of Human Rights (see Activity 15 in Chapter 4, Global Citizenship).
Activity 1. Perceiving Dignity

This activity establishes the ethos of human rights by providing students with experiential knowledge of their own dignity. Through this experience and discussion, students become aware of the importance of dignity as a foundational human rights concept. The activity uses an experiential and activity-centered pedagogy that addresses the learning style identified by Belenky et al. as “connected learning” in *Women’s Ways of Knowing*. It also addresses kinesthetic modes of learning. The two phases of the activity can be done together or at different times.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Establish the importance of dignity as a foundational human rights concept.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>5 minutes for Phase 1; 15 minutes for Phase 2.</td>
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</table>
| Process    | This activity consists of two sections, a reflection phase and a kinesthetic phase. Before beginning the kinesthetic phase, read Article 1 of the UDHR out loud in class and emphasize how the term *dignity* provides a foundation for all discussion of human rights. **Phase 1. Breathing Dignity** Have students focus attention on experiencing their innate dignity by following these guided meditation instructions:  
  • **Center your attention**: Sit in an upright posture with your feet on the floor and hands on your thighs. Close your eyes and turn your attention inward.  
  • **Anchor in your breath**: First, notice your breathing pattern. Your breath is with you at every moment of your life. Breathe deeply with a natural inhale and a slower exhale. Feel your feet as they rest on the floor connected to the earth. Feel your hands as they rest on your thighs. Open them and invite them to relax.  
  • **Direct your attention**: As you exhale, think this phrase silently: “I hold dignity.” Repeat the phrase with every breath and experience the feelings it arouses.  
  • **Make contact**: Open your eyes and look in the eyes of someone sitting near you. As you make eye contact, direct this thought silently towards your partner: “You hold dignity.” Make eye contact with another partner and silently acknowledge this person’s dignity. |
Phase 2. Silent Dignity Walk

NOTE: This activity works best outside where students will have plenty of space to walk.

Have students experience dignity kinesthetically by walking silently in random paths around the room in a manner that expresses self-respect. As they walk with dignity, you’ll notice that at first they do not make eye contact: each student is concentrating on upholding an inner feeling of dignity. After a minute or two, gently direct students to make eye contact and—most important—to communicate respect nonverbally to each other as they cross paths.

After the Silent Dignity Walk, lead a discussion of the value of experiencing self-respect and of communicating respect to others.
Activity 2. Moving Images

This activity highlights the values articulated in Article 1 of the UDHR by engaging students in a form of performance art, the *tableau vivant*, popular with audiences in France, England, Australia, and New Zealand in the Nineteenth Century. Through its *creative pedagogical approach*, students learn rudimentary choreography as they create five *tableaux vivants* in response to the language of Article 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Develop knowledge of the core values promoted in Article 1 of the UDHR.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
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<td>Process</td>
<td>List key terms from Article 1 on the board:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Free</td>
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<td>Equal</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dignity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reason</td>
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<td>Brotherhood</td>
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<td>Have each student individually create a pose that conveys the meaning of each term.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Next, as you read the article aloud, students hold each pose, and then quickly change to a new pose when they hear the next key term.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Finally, students work in groups of three to choreograph their individual poses into a unified <em>tableau vivant</em> for each term. As you read the article again, students stand as living statues in each tableau, holding their positions until they hear the next key term—then they quickly transform into a new tableau, ending with the tableau for spirit of brotherhood.</td>
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This activity emphasizes the importance of dignity as a foundational human rights concept. It accomplishes this by providing a tool for analyzing the structure of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Through a participatory approach to learning, students become familiar with various sections of the UDHR as they examine themes that link groups of articles. At the same time, they perceive the uniting thread of dignity woven throughout the entire document.

### Objectives
Examine the structure of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

### Materials
**Handouts**
- Handout 3A—*Structure of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*
- Handout 3B—*Categories of Rights in the UDHR* (4 pages)

### Time
30 minutes

### Process
First, discuss Handout 3A—*Structure of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* in class and briefly explain the five color-coded sections of the UDHR.

Give each the student a copy of Handout 3B—*Categories of Rights in the UDHR*. Divide the class into seven teams, and assign one of these sections to each team:

1. Personal Safety
2. Legal Rights
3. Personal Rights
4. Political Rights
5. Social Rights
6. Economic Rights
7. Cultural Rights

Ask the teams to examine the articles in their section to uncover how the group of rights in this section relies on the concept “dignity” as a fundamental assumption. Each team should also identify how each article contributes to the theme that serves as a title for their section of the UDHR.

Have each team report to the class on the relationship between the article and the concept “dignity.”
# Structure of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

## Preamble: Reasons for the Declaration

- Recognition of inherent human dignity is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace.
- Contempt for human rights results in barbarism, cruelty, tyranny, and rebellion.
- Nations pledge to promote friendly relations, social progress, and respect for human rights.

## Articles 1-3: General Principles

- Human beings are born free and equal with inherent dignity, reason, and conscience.
- Equality involves freedom from discrimination.
- Rights are universal across nations.
- Fundamental rights: life, liberty, and security.

## Articles 4-21: Personal, Legal, and Political Rights

### Articles 4-5
**Personal Safety**  
(freedom from slavery; freedom from torture)

### Articles 6-11
**Legal Rights**  
(equality before the law; right to justice, due process, and a fair trial)

### Articles 12-18
**Personal Rights**  
(rights to privacy, movement, asylum, nationality, family, property, and religion)

### Articles 19-21
**Political Rights**  
(freedom of opinion and expression; freedom of assembly; right to vote and participate in government)

## Articles 22-28: Social, Economic, and Cultural Rights

### Article 22, 28
**Social Rights**  
(right to social security; right to national and international efforts to uphold human dignity; right to social and international order that promotes human rights)

### Articles 23-25
**Economic Rights**  
(right to work, to receive fair pay, and to form a union; right to leisure; right to a decent standard of living including food, clothing, housing and medical care, and help when one cannot work)

### Articles 26-27
**Cultural Rights**  
(right to education; right to participate in cultural life and to benefit from scientific advances; protection of intellectual and creative products)

## Articles 29-30: Responsibilities

- Everyone has duties to contribute to the common good.
- Everyone is responsible for respecting and upholding other people’s rights.
- Individuals or governments may not destroy some rights in order to protect other rights.
# Categories of Rights in the UDHR

## General Principles

### Fundamental Rights

| Article 1 | All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood. |
| Article 2 | Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty. |
| Article 3 | Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person. |

## Personal, Legal, and Political Rights

### Personal Safety

| Article 4 | No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms. |
| Article 5 | No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. |

### Legal Rights

| Article 6 | Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law. |
| Article 7 | All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination. |
| Article 8 | Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law. |
| Article 9 | No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile. |
| Article 10 | Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him. |
| Article 11 | 1. Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defense. 2. No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed. |
### Personal Rights

**Article 12**
No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

**Article 13**
1. Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State.
2. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

**Article 14**
1. Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.
2. This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

**Article 15**
1. Everyone has the right to a nationality.
2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

**Article 16**
1. Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.
2. Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.
3. The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

**Article 17**
1. Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.
2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

**Article 18**
Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

### Political Rights

**Article 19**
Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

**Article 20**
1. Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
2. No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

**Article 21**
1. Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
2. Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country.
3. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.
# Social, Economic, and Cultural Rights

## Social Rights

### Article 22
Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

### Article 28
Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

## Economic Rights

### Article 23
1. Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
2. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
3. Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
4. Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

### Article 24
Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

### Article 25
1. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
2. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

## Cultural Rights

### Article 26
1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
3. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

### Article 27
1. Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
2. Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.
### Responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Article 29</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Article 30</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.</td>
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Activity 4. Threads of Dignity

Global Journey: Chile

Phase 1 of this activity uses participatory best practices to guide students in applying human rights principles to the protest work of arpilleristas during the Pinochet regime in Chile. Phase 2 engages students in creative approaches to learning as they work in teams to create a Human Rights Quilt.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Use the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to analyze a historical case of grass-roots human rights activism. Study the structure of the UDHR through a creative team project.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Two class periods.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| Materials  | **Film**

*Threads of Hope*

**Handouts**

- Handout 3B—Categories of Rights in the UDHR (4 pages)
- Handout 4A—*Threads of Hope: The Story of the Chilean Arpilleras*
- Handout 4B—The UDHR in *Threads of Hope* (4 pages)

**Quilt Materials**

- Nine 12-inch squares of card stock to serve as the background for the quilt
- Pieces of brightly colored felt, scraps of colorful cloth, and magazines or travel brochures with interesting photographs
- Double-sided masking tape for taping the squares together
- Thick yarn to place on top of the taped seams of the assembled quilt

**Process**

**Phase 1. Analyzing the Story of the Chilean Arpilleras**

Have students read Handout 4A as homework to prepare for watching the film *Threads of Hope* in class. (If time is an issue, stop the film at the end of the Sting concert.) After watching the film and discussing Agosín’s speech, give each student a copy of Handout 4B— The UDHR in *Threads of Hope*.
Divide the class into nine teams based on these sections of the UDHR:

1. Fundamental Rights
2. Personal Safety
3. Legal Rights
4. Personal Rights
5. Political Rights
6. Social Rights
7. Economic Rights
8. Cultural Rights
9. Responsibilities

Focusing on its section of the UDHR, each team will locate a right that was upheld or violated in the story told in Threads of Hope. Some examples:

- Women upheld their right to participate in cultural life (Article 27) by creating art, writing protest songs, and dancing the cueca sola.
- When the government arrested the protesters, it violated their right to assembly.
- When women gathered in the workshops to sew arpilleras and talk about their lives, they upheld their right to assemble.

**Phase 2. Constructing A Human Rights Quilt**

During this phase, students combine creativity with analysis through a team project based on a metaphor: Dignity is the underlying thread that unites the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Give each of the 9 teams a square of card stock. Each team will design a quilt square that visually represents its section of the UDHR (see Figure 4C).

Before the teams design their quilt squares, remind students of Marjorie Agosín’s words: “you create a story, a narrative, a work of art out of leftover things, remnants.” Each student should contribute one personal item to the team’s square: a button, a picture, a drawing, a scrap of cloth that has meaning for the student. Students then assemble these elements into a visual narrative that expresses their ideas about the rights in their section of the UDHR.

Finally, the entire class selects phrases from the Preamble for the outer frame of the quilt. Use double-sided masking tape to tape the squares together, and cover the tape with yarn representing the unifying thread of dignity.
I would like to speak now of the power of telling personal narratives, with the body, with threads, with words. One must not measure the power of transforming and saving lives through official discourses or fabricated or supposed truths.

I am a poet, and therefore I believe that human beings are formed by words as much as by bread. This is a century of violence that can only be measured in magnitudes. We must not fear to look at violence, human rights, with innocence. Perhaps we may surrender to a higher calling than ourselves. I believe this is the power of human rights, to transcend to something beyond ourselves, and that is the power of poetry, the power of truth which cannot be distorted in art.

The story of the arpilleras began in my country, Chile, in Santiago, in 1974. It was one of the most stable democracies of the West. You know what happened; U.S. involvement in the coup that overthrew freely elected president Salvador Allende, Colin Powell later apologizing... The country that was considered to be Latin America's strongest democracy became its greatest horror. One thing was not censored: the power of women's hands. When we speak of human rights, we must also speak of the body. When we tell stories about human rights, what we really search for is a body.

It began with a group of mothers, almost 14 mothers. They met in morgues, hospitals, former tribunals of justice, and realized that all the elements that were such an important part of Chilean society were closed. Completely vanished. And they sought help by contacting a newly developed organization that was a branch of the Catholic Church, called the Vicariate of Solidarity. The Chilean Catholic Church took a very courageous position towards the disappearances and abuses at the hands of the Pinochet government, very different than in Argentina or Guatemala. The more I think about this story, the more I believe that it's a story of belief—belief, magic, and storytelling. The women that suffered the most, as we know throughout the stories that we see in the media, as we know through Katrina, were the
The poor. Poverty is also a punishment for authoritarian governments. These women were trained in the most traditional art of femaleness in Latin America, which was to sew, to embroider. So after all the doors were closed, after they examined the bodies in the morgues and could not find their loved ones, they went to the Vicariate of Solidarity and one of the women at the Vicariate said, “Why don't you create stories, why don't you tell what happened through cloth?” At the beginning, the women resisted, because to tell the story about what happened, to tell about the abduction or to tell about the search, was extremely painful. But all of a sudden, the arpillera movement began when this group of women told through the cloth what words were not allowed to speak.

How do you construct an arpillera? Here I would like to share with you how to construct a human rights story. First of all, you create a narrative. All of the arpilleras have very similar narratives: disappearances, abductions, mothers sitting at a table waiting for an empty seat to be filled. The narrative then is transformed and transposed into the arpillera. The material of the arpillera, it's also a very important component in the telling of the story. It is made out of the remnants of the poor. So you create a story, a narrative, a work of art out of leftover things, remnants. In the very beginning of the years of the dictatorship, the women made arpilleras out of the clothing of their missing ones and told a story that was silence inside the country.

How do you measure the success of a human rights story, how do you document the workings of the arpilleras? Who knows about them? What do you do with them? The arpillera wants you to think about a personal memory that becomes public. The arpillera touches upon a universal human grief . . . the loss of life, and especially the loss of children. There is an intersection between history, memory, and individual lives, and I think all of these elements that come together are able to construct a powerful narrative.

The arpilleras were made in the basements of churches. They were also made in the very early morning in these women's houses—not so much out of fear of being abducted or detained, but because they were so poor that they did not have enough light to sew, and they were able to do this in the early mornings. They were made individually but then gathered collectively at the Vicariate of Solidarity, the branch of the Catholic Church, and they were sent abroad in small packages of four or five. Here comes the other element: these arpilleras were able to tell a story because the story had a witness. We must not only tell stories but become witnesses ourselves of the stories we hear. They were sent all over the world, almost at random. Amnesty International has always been a great supporter of this work; the World Council of Churches; the United Methodist Church. And all of a sudden the story became larger and more fundamental and more universal than a small arpillera made in the basement of a church in Chile.

I do not know if the arpillera helped the overthrow of the dictator. I believe it really didn't. But I also would like to believe that you measure change and power by small acts of courage, and this is an essential idea of human rights. I would like to say that the arpilleras were a state of mind of hope, and they were able to move beyond Chile's secrets, beyond Chile's frightening dictatorship, to the outside world. Everyone who received the arpilleras became engaged. It was innocent. It was unassuming. Then you begin to think, “Where did she sew it? What was she feeling? Did she use the clothes of her loved one, now dead? How many mothers made these?” All of these components completed a story that was not only an individual story, but a collective one. I would like to say theirs was a story of reciprocity, a mutual shared engagement. The difference between art forms and official newspaper reports is that art allows you to become engaged in a very emotional way, in a very human way. You cannot be distanced from the poem that speaks about a mother crying for her child. If we think about the power of art and the power of narrative and the power of poetry, it's a power that has to do with empathy, with engagement, and with compassion. We live in a world that is very much afraid of using these words and making them our own.

The arpilleras were sent abroad for almost 17 years. Sometimes, not often, the arpillera told another narrative within the arpillera. The back of the arpillera had a little pocket. And
sometimes the people used to turn it around and open this pocket, and the pocket told another story. So, first you had this story in images, and you imagine how each woman constructed these images, and then the arpillera told another story. Usually, the pocket contained a little description written in the back that said something like, “My son has been disappeared since 1974. I wonder where he is.” So, again, this very simple message engaged you in a story. The story was effective, in the sense that it brought awareness. People watched it. People became engaged. People went to art galleries. One of the most important art exhibits in London around the 1976 and 1977 was the work of the arpilleras. Amnesty International used them in their calendars. So, this art form traveled, revealed, and triumphed. The reasons why it triumphed, I've already shared with you.

The arpilleras continue to be made in Chile now. If some of you are students in this room, I urge you to really think about how grassroots movements evolve and how so much can still be done within democratic societies. The original makers of Arpilleras are gone, they are dead or very old. But a new group of women from Santiago shantytown continue to meet once a week at the Vicariate of Solidarity or in other neighborhood churches and continue to make arpilleras. These arpilleras do not have the same narratives of disappearances, abductions, and torture, but they tell another important story. They speak about economic injustice. They speak about unemployment. They speak about the very difficult condition of the women that are called in Spanish “temporaras,” temporary fruit pickers. The arpillera evolved, inspired, and it never became something that was static. I met with these women, in January 2005, and I have stayed in touch with this new group of women. Their passion and their belief of – to use a very ancient Jewish phrase – “tikkun olam,” to mend the world, and to mend the world through cloth, is very much alive to day in Chile.

I think that the problem with all of us is that we have the stories, and we have the information, and we have the belief. But how does one act from that belief? So, here are some questions for all of us to think about:

The arpillera is made out of the materials of every day life. How do we live with these materials? How do we stitch the arpillera into the fabric of our own lives? How do we begin to move from the outer landscape of the arpillera to the inner process of mending? This is, to me, one of the most important questions this conference will have to pose.

Another question to think about: Are the arpilleras part of public memory, or do they live in the company of the women who make them? How do we integrate this story as a daily reminder of a violent world, and how can we imagine and feel the thousands of hours that took to make these arpilleras? How do we imagine the solitude of these women's hands? If these arpilleras become the fabric of memory, how do we think of memory?
I would like to suggest that the arpillera is not only a public and personal story, but it takes memory to a very challenging dimension. It takes memory to a physical place. It is the hands that make it. It is made out of leftover materials of someone that lived. We must look at the physical activity of memory as a process of time, as an extension of fingers, women's hands, and at the same time, as the process of telling a story. We must ask ourselves why these stories matter. And we must also see the commonality of other similar stories. These stories are undoubtedly the products of war, the products of a controlled violence, and they must be told and understood in this context. But at the same time, the arpillera must not only be public art or public memory. We must reflect on the inward story that each woman makes. We must think about what happened to them, individually. We must challenge ourselves to know history through their hands, not necessarily – and all of you journalists must forgive me – through the lens of a photographer or the pen of a journalist. I think these clothes are part of a historical record that must be looked at and understood radically differently.

Finally, and this has to do with this conference, what is it to tell a story? What is the process of telling a story? And how does the telling of a story become our own? In the midst of globalization, each story has to stand on its own. And the stories we activate imperative acts of ethics. An arpillera, for me, is a letter to the wind, a message of the interior of the soul. Who will receive it? Will we step into the shadow and remains of one who is disappeared? Are the memories of the arpilleras part of our own? And ultimately, the fundamental question, are we going to become the witnesses that will tell their stories?

I will pass some of these arpilleras to you. This arpillera dates from 1977, and this is the only picture, a physical picture that Violeta Morales had of her brother, Nuto Morales, and she put it here. You will see that there is a very deep connection between the cloth, the objects that you incorporate into the cloth, and the physical, actual writing, which says, “truth and justice for the detained-disappeared.” The back is made out of burlap, and you can see, right here, there is the pocket that tells a story.

These are the contemporary arpilleras made in 2003, 2004, 2005. Actually, I've never read what's in this pocket, so we will share it together. “These arpilleras are the product of humble, poor women. Thank you for buying our products.” Let me show you what this arpillera reveals: it is women going to a health care center. The symbolism that arpilleras speak about has to do with what I addressed first: the power of hands. Hands that were not contaminated with murder or killing. Hands that were transparent. But, when we live in a globalized time, there's practically no place for handicraft. There's not a place for what is made with people's hands. I think that this message is telling us that we must also respect and understand the story, but we must not forget the hands that actually made it.
### Universal Declaration of Human Rights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Principles: Articles 1-3</th>
<th>Threads of Hope</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Human beings are born free and equal with inherent dignity, reason, and conscience</td>
<td>Example of rights upheld or violated:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Equality involves freedom from discrimination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rights are universal across nations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Fundamental rights: life, liberty, and security</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Safety: Articles 4-5</th>
<th>Threads of Hope</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Freedom from slavery</td>
<td>Example of rights upheld or violated:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Freedom from torture</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal Rights: Articles 6-11</th>
<th>Threads of Hope</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Equality before the law</td>
<td>Example of rights upheld or violated:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Right to justice, due process, and a fair trial</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Rights: Articles 12-18</th>
<th>Threads of Hope</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Right to privacy</td>
<td>Example of rights upheld or violated:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rights to movement, asylum, and nationality</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Right to form a family</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Right to own property</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Freedom of religion</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Rights: Articles 19-21</th>
<th>Threads of Hope</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Freedom of opinion and expression</td>
<td>Example of rights upheld or violated:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Freedom of assembly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Right to vote and participate in government</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Rights: Article 22, 28</th>
<th>Threads of Hope</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Right to social security</td>
<td>Example of rights upheld or violated:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Right to national and international efforts to uphold human dignity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Right to a social and international order that promotes human rights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Rights: Articles 23-25</th>
<th>Threads of Hope</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Right to work, to receive fair pay, and to form a union</td>
<td>Example of rights upheld or violated:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Right to leisure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Right to a decent standard of living including food, clothing, housing and medical care</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Right to economic assistance when one cannot work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Rights: Articles 26-27</th>
<th>Threads of Hope</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Right to education</td>
<td>Example of rights upheld or violated:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Right to participate in cultural life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Protection of intellectual and creative products</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibilities: Articles 29-30</th>
<th>Threads of Hope</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Everyone has duties to contribute to the common good</td>
<td>Example of rights upheld or violated:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Everyone is responsible for upholding other people’s rights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Individuals or governments may not destroy some rights in order to protect other rights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Figure 4C**

**Model Layout for the Human Rights Quilt**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dignity</th>
<th>Freedom of speech and belief, freedom from fear and want</th>
<th>Freedom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fundamental Rights</td>
<td>Personal Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly relations between nations * Rights protected by rule of law</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal Safety</td>
<td>Responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Legal Rights</td>
<td>Political Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice</td>
<td>Universal respect for rights * Common understanding of rights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity 5. Voices of Dignity
Global Journey: Scotland, USA, Bangladesh

This activity engages students in *analytical best practices* that use gender, race, class, and culture as lenses for examining human rights themes in four poems from different time periods and parts of the world.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Examine how poets from different cultural communities celebrate dignity as an inherent human value.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>50 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td><strong>Handout 5—Poems</strong> (4 pages)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Robert Burns, “Is There for Honest Poverty”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maya Angelou, “Still I Rise”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Genny Lim, “Wonder Woman”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nurunnessa Choudhury, “The Sun Witness”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videos</td>
<td>“Is There for Honest Poverty” performed as a song with text on the screen:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b2pGWkvwOBw&amp;list=RDanYHBwOF2cY">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b2pGWkvwOBw&amp;list=RDanYHBwOF2cY</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maya Angelou reciting “Still I Rise”:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r._muacudzsi">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r._muacudzsi</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Read Article 1 of the UDHR out loud and ask students to identify key words. List these on the board.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read “Is There for Honest Poverty” by Robert Burns and listen to it as a song.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ask students to identify words in the poem that relate to their list of words from Article 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Discussion questions:</strong> In this poem, what attributes define a person’s dignity? What attitude about class differences does the poem convey?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*MAIA / KEY CONCEPTS* 21 *CHAPTER 1 / DIGNITY*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Read “Still I Rise” by Maya Angelou and listen to her reciting this poem. Ask students to identify images in the poem that relate to race and class.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discussion question:</strong> How does this poem celebrate the dignity of African-American women in particular?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read “Wonder Woman” by Genny Lim. Have students identify images in the poem that relate to gender, race, and class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discussion question:</strong> Why does the poet address differences as well as similarities among the world’s women?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read “The Sun Witness” by Nurunnessa Choudhury. Ask students to identify words or images in the poem that relate to dignity, sympathy, and the failure of compassion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discussion questions:</strong> Where in the poem does the young girl seem to embody dignity? What does the personification of the sun suggest about her relationship with nature? What do her actions reveal about her relationships with other human beings?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finally, assign students to six teams: Burns/Angelou, Angelou/Lim, Lim/Choudhury, Choudhury/Burns, Burns/Lim, Angelou/Choudhury.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have each team compare and contrast its two poems by paying attention to their different historical and cultural contexts (Scotland, Bangladesh, the USA).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IS THERE FOR HONEST POVERTY

by

ROBERT BURNS

(Scotland, 1795)

Is there for honest Poverty
That hangs his head, an’ a’ that,
The coward-slave, we pass him by—
We dare be poor for a’ that!
   For a’ that, an’ a’ that,
   Our toils obscure an’ a’ that,
   The rank is but the guinea’s stamp,
   The Man’s the gowd for a’ that.

What though on homely fare we dine,
Wear hoddin grey, an’ a that;
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine—
A Man’s a Man for a’ that.
   For a’ that, and a’ that,
   Their tinsel show, an’ a’ that;
   The honest man, tho’ e’er sae poor,
   Is king o’ men for a’ that.

Ye see yon birkie, ca’d a lord,
Wha struts, an’ stares, an’ a’ that?
Tho’ hundreds worship at his word,
He’s but a coof for a’ that.
   For a’ that, an’ a’ that,
   His ribband, star, an’ a’ that:
   The man o’ independent mind
   He looks an’ laughs at a’ that.

A prince can mak a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, an’ a’ that;
But an honest man’s aboon his might,
Guid faith, he maunna fa’ that!
   For a’ that, an’ a’ that,
   Their dignities an’ a’ that;
   The pith o’ Sense, an’ pride o’ Worth,
   Are higher rank than a’ that.

Then let us pray that come it may,
As come it will for a’ that,
That Sense and Worth, o’er a’ the earth,
Shall bear the gree, an’ a’ that.
   For a’ that, an’ a’ that,
   It’s coming yet for a’ that,
   That Man to Man, the world o’er,
   Shall brothers be for a’ that.
You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops.
Weakened by my soulful cries.

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own back yard.

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.
Sometimes I see reflections on bits of glass on sidewalks
I catch the glimmer of empty bottles floating out to sea
Sometimes I stretch my arms way above my head and wonder if
There are women along the Mekong doing the same

Sometimes I stare longingly at women who I will never know
Generous, laughing women with wrinkled cheeks and white teeth
Dragging along chubby, rosy-cheeked babies on fat, wobbly legs
sometimes I state at Chinese grandmothers
Getting on the 30 Stockton with shipping bags
Japanese women tourists in European hats
Middle-aged mothers with laundry carts
Young wives holding hands with their husbands
lesbian women holding hands in coffee-houses
Smiling debutantes with bouquets of yellow daffodils
Silver-haired matrons with silver rhinestoned poodles
Painted prostitutes posing along MacArthur boulevard
Giddy teenage girls snapping gum in fast cars
Widows clutching bibles, crucifixes

I look at them and wonder if
They are a part of me
I look in their eyes and wonder if
They share my dreams

I wonder if the woman in mink is content
If the stockbroker’s wife is afraid of growing old
If the professor’s wife is an alcoholic
If the woman in prison is me

There are copper-tanned women in Hyannis port playing tennis
Women who eat with finger bowls
There are women in factories punching time clocks
Women tired every waking hour of the day

I wonder why there are women born with silver-spoons in their mouths
women who have never known a day of hunger
Women who have never changed their own bed linens
And I wonder why there are women who must work
Women who must clean other women’s houses
Women who must shell shrimps for pennies a day
Women who must sew other women’s clothes
Who must cook
Who must die
In childbirth
In dreams

Why must women stand divided?
Building the walls that tear them down?
Jill-of-all-trades
Lover, mother, housewife, friend, breadwinner
Heart and spade
A woman is a ritual
A house that must accommodate
A house that must endure
Generation after generation
Of wind and torment, of fire and rain
A house with echoing rooms
Closets with hidden cries
Walls with stretchmarks
Windows with eyes

Short, tall, skinny, fat
Pregnant, married, white, yellow, black, brown, red
Professional, working-class, aristocrat
Women cooking over coals in sampans
Women shining tiffany spoons in glass houses
Women stretching their arms way above the clouds
In Samarkand, in San Francisco
Along the Mekong

THE SUN WITNESS
by
NURUNNESSA CHOUDHURY
(Bangladesh, 1984)

Long ago a young girl
clothing a saffron-colored saree
danced gracefully
on her way—
She moved the square stone
from the white
near-dead grass.
By the lightning speed
of her black hand.
Silently, with her gaze,
she commanded the sun
to shed its light
down upon everything
even the grass.

The sun accepted
her easy command
and came down with humility.

Days after
she passed beggars in the street,
and tucked in her silk saree
to avoid their stains.

Seeing this,
the sun hid behind clouds,
and rain came,
unexpectedly, like tears.
Works Cited


