

CHAPTER 6

MADNESS OF HUNGER

By Mariana Leal Ferreira

When lives are dominated by hunger, what becomes of love? This is a question I never dared to ask and failed to understand when Josefina, an old family friend in Southern Brazil, told me how in her teens she managed to survive the severe drought in the impoverished Northeast and made it to São Paulo. There she worked as a nanny and a cook until her late 70s. What I didn't quite understand was that, unlike two of her younger sisters, Josefina survived because her mother "allowed her to live" (*me deixou viver*). Little did I know what Josefina really meant until I read *Death Without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil* by Nancy Scheper-Hughes.¹

Adapted from this book, the play *Madness of Hunger* brings Josefina's drama to light in the sense that Madalena's mother love is not a luxury she can afford for all her children. The main characters (Madalena, her son Antonio, and her sister Maria) are part of the so-called emergent Indigenous Peoples or "new ethnicities" in Brazil. Such Peoples, who are said to lack a traditional land-base, culture, and language, nonetheless have tried for centuries to live their lives with dignity, fighting daily for their most basic human rights.

Dedication:

This piece is dedicated to residents of Northeastern Brazil, who struggle each day to survive as severe droughts scorch crops, dry up lakes, kill livestock, and take the lives of very young children and elders alike.

Human rights issues conveyed in the play:

- "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."
Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)², Article 25.1
- "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." Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Article 25.2
- Governments "shall render appropriate assistance to parents ... in the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities and shall ensure the development of institutions, facilities and services for the care of children."

¹ Adapted with permission from *Death Without Weeping: Everyday Violence in Brazil*. Nancy Scheper-Hughes, University of California Press, 1992.

² Words in **bold-faced type** are defined in the Glossary.

Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Article 18.2

- “The right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health” including the government’s obligation to “diminish infant and child mortality” and “combat disease and malnutrition.”

Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Article 24

- “The right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.”

Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Article 27

Synopsis of *Madness of Hunger*:³

Antonio, a smart little *nordestino*, offers his body in sacrifice to forestall once and for all the madness of hunger in Alto do Cruzeiro, northeastern Brazil. Although Antonio considers himself a lucky boy despite his bare-bones existence, he fears for his young twin sisters, who are on the brink of starvation. Ultimately his mother, Madalena, has to make the decision no parent can envision: Which one of her kids should live and which one should die? What ensues is a battle between life and death, between love and desire, and between justice and fate.

Cast of characters:

- **Antonio da Silva**, seven years old
- **Madalena**, his mother
- **Maria**, Antonio’s aunt, Madalena’s sister

Time and Place:

Alto do Cruzeiro, a small town in the state of Pernambuco, northeastern Brazil, in the 1980s.

Illustrations:

All photos by Nancy Scheper-Hughes, copyrighted and reproduced with permission from *Death Without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil*.

³ Stage-read by SFSU students, directed by Debby Kajiyama (Kajiyama X Navarrete Dance Theater), at the 105th AAA Annual Meeting in San Jose, CA, in November 2006, on the panel “On the Margins of the Everyday. Papers in Honor of Nancy Scheper-Hughes.” Stage-read again, and Theatre of the Oppressed Learning Activities tested at the 10th Anthropology Expo, Cosumnes River College, Sacramento, Oct. 23, 2011.

MADNESS OF HUNGER

ACT ONE



Alto do Cruzeiro, Northeastern Brazil.

This scene is set inside a small thatched-roof mud hut in Alto do Cruzeiro, Northeastern Brazil. In one corner, a plaid hammock is slung across wooden beams; in the other, a few pieces of clothing hang from a stretch of barbed wire. A blackened aluminum pan sits right in the middle of the dirt floor next to some burnt sticks and cracked coconut shells. Antonio is swaying the hammock where his twin sisters (who can't be seen) lie crying.

ANTONIO

(scratching his head full of lice) Hush, hush, Mama will soon be back with some milk. Hush, hush, stop crying and go to sleep!

Maria walks in carrying a bucket full of water on her head.

MARIA

Madalena! Madalena!

ANTONIO

(scratching his head) Mama went to the drugstore to get some medicine for her nerves. There's nothing to eat ... *(to the girls)* Sshhhhhhhhh... close your eyes and go to sleep!

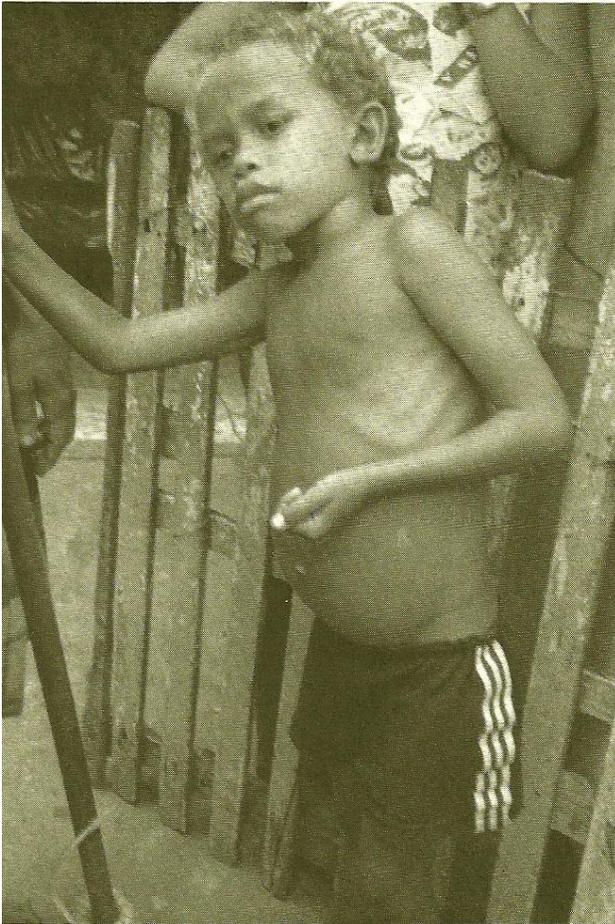
The boy turns back towards Maria, reaches into his pocket and hands her some folded bills. Maria lowers the bucket onto the ground.

ANTONIO

This is the money we collected to send your daughter to São Paulo.

MARIA

(counting) ... three, four, five, six, seven! Oh my beloved Jesus, bless the people of the Alto for their generosity! Once Fátima starts as a nanny, we'll all do better around here. Her first paycheck, we're going to have a feast, a real barbecue! *(retrieving a small package from her bra)* Here, take this for your sisters, and have some yourself. You're just a bag of bones! You need to be strong to help your mama split firewood. Now, what's that thing on your neck?



ANTONIO

(touching the side of his neck)
I don't know.

MARIA

(examining the lump) Does it hurt?

ANTONIO

(scratching his head) Only when I swallow.

MARIA

You're skinnier and skinnier because you don't like food! Next time you won't fool us, pretending you're dead. You'll go straight to the cemetery in a cardboard coffin all right!

Madalena walks in the door, looking dismayed. Antonio hands her the small brown package and takes off running.

"It hurts only when I swallow."

MADALENA

(opening the bundle) What is this, *comadre*?

MARIA

A piece of bread for the girls... Shhhh, they're asleep. Did you get the medicine?

MADALENA

(*taking a bite*) Huuum, I am starving...Seu Tito gave me a pill for fifty cents... nothing left over for the milk, what to do? But then, coming up the hill I heard Nailza screaming. I looked in the window and saw her shaking all over, losing her head! She was ready to hit her boy with this huge log! She's worse off than us here. Her little angel left last month and now the boy refuses to eat. She says he's already hallucinating, getting ready to go! Poor woman. So I gave her the Valium.

MARIA

Now what have you got? No medicine, no food! Finish up that bread, *comadre*, before the girls wake up, otherwise it's *you* going mad again! Here, take some of this money and buy yourself some meat. Fátima will have to wait another month.



MADALENA

No! She's our only hope!

MARIA

Let's go down to Seu Tito again and ask for more medicine.

MADALENA

And pay him how?

MARIA

I have my way with him.

MADALENA

You mean...

"I have my way with him."

MARIA

Listen, Madalena, like you, I am hungry, too. Almost everyday my house is without food. My compensation is screwing. Do I take pleasure in it? Of course I do. How else am I going to know I'm alive if I don't screw?

MADALENA

I may be a *pobre* and hungry but I do have my pride.

MARIA

Pride? You're wasting away, giving up sex. Sex is your right, and it's free! I may be a bag of bones, but I'm still crazy about screwing.

MADALENA

No wonder you're always pregnant.

MARIA

I get up at four in the morning; I hardly sleep at all. There is no time to take care of myself. I carry water on my head, I prepare the meals, I feed the kids, but I always find time for sex. I'm all bones, all right, but I still know how to screw real good.

MADALENA

It was sex that first brought trouble into your life. So many mouths to feed!

MARIA

Yeah, but it is sex that now brings medicine and food to my family. What other solution is there for a poor black like me?

MADALENA

Long ago I had my fill. Now I am completely nauseated by screwing. I'd only do it to save Antonio's life, only for my sweet little boy! See, I'm rotting with this terrible disease. God is angry at me. It's punishment for my life as a street woman. What a game without any fun!

ANTONIO

(Antonio enters abruptly, screaming) Mãe! Mãe! They're taking Nailza to jail!



Hardworking woman of the Alto do Cruzeiro

MADALENA

What? Nailza?

ANTONIO

She killed her children, *Mãe*. João and Antonio are dead! It's true! I saw blood all over them!

MADALENA

Oh my God, what are you saying? That can't be, I just gave her some Valium!

MARIA

Sometimes one pill just won't do. Takes me at least two to settle down... Nailza looks pretty hardy.

MADALENA

The poor woman is going to rot in jail. The sheriff just doesn't understand *nervos*. The man's rich, doesn't even have to eat! Antonio, go find Manuel and tell him to go straight to the jailhouse to see what's going on.

ACT TWO

Antonio walks into the hut with a bundle of firewood on his shoulder.

ANTONIO

Mãe, you abuse me!

MADALENA

It's only because you annoy me so much!

ANTONIO

But *Mãe*, I'm so hungry!

MADALENA

There is nothing, nothing left to eat.

ANTONIO

I want milk.

MADALENA

Can't help you kill your hunger, my son. *(mixing a spoonful of sugar in a glass of water)* Here, take some sugar water and go to sleep.



"Take some sugar water and go to sleep."

ANTONIO

(drinking) Ah, my stomach feels so dry! I had a dream I was eating a steak.

MADALENA

Go to sleep, just go to sleep! We'll have a party soon, beans, cornmeal, and some pop. *(Antonio exits)*

MARIA

(entering) Comadre, bad news: I got only fifty cents begging at the market... Here are some black beans for the kids.

MADALENA

What are we going to do? We can't be like this forever. The kids want more than just beans, they want milk and meat. Here's the real struggle.



Children crying in the background. Madalena covers her ears with her hands.

MADALENA

Who can stand by and listen to a child crying that its stomach is aching from hunger? I am going crazy!

MARIA

Come on, *comadre*, these little critters don't suffer.

MADALENA

Antonio is so sickly, always hungry.

"I'm dreaming of a steak."

MARIA

He doesn't even pay attention to food! And now that lump won't even let him swallow, do what?

MADALENA

He just told me he's hungry, dreaming of a steak.

MARIA

Must be the worms, I've got lots myself -- tum tum tum, they drum inside my body. *That* can make you crazy, too.

MADALENA

(covering her face, shaking her head) No, no, it's not worms. I don't think... He's never gotten the strength from eating meat. He'd whine and cry for whole milk when he was smaller, always rejected *papa d'agua*.

MARIA

Papa d'agua? Babies fed on sugar water soon have blood that turns to water. It's a miracle he's still alive. But weren't all of your kids fed on *papa d'agua*?

MADALENA

All seven raised on that, now there are only three left.

MARIA

You've let four go, and Antonio's managed to escape you. Wasn't he meant to be an angel?

MADALENA

They all loved *papa d'água*, except Antonio. That's why we got so close.

MARIA

Whatever you fed him, you should have never picked him up, carried him around, kissed him. Never! Getting attached from the start... Now you're in trouble!

MADALENA

Not Antonio, *Não!* He never had any desire to eat and I felt pity for him. Poor critter! So we cuddled. I tried and tried to feed him *polenta* but he just wouldn't eat.

MARIA

Shame on you. Now look where you're at: in love with the boy. I don't think there's any hope, he's so sickly! Let him go!

MADALENA

Stop it. I'll pick one of the girls. Your small children are all long gone, what do you know?

MARIA

They're all good angels, God bless, left this world without suffering. I was smarter than you: never picked them up, never cuddled, no *carinho*. But you!

MADALENA

Só Deus sabe! I gave him sugar water every night to go to sleep without crying, the little angel! (*hands in prayer*) Please God, don't take Antonio, he's just learned the alphabet. I'll send you one of the girls!

MARIA

Maria Antonia? Carolina? You gotta decide fast. Next thing you know you're getting attached to them, too. It'll never get better.

MADALENA

Antonio is my arms and legs, but there's just not enough food! (*crying*) I can't go on like this!

Sound of babies crying gets louder and louder.

MARIA

I'll get up real early tomorrow morning, light a candle to the Sacred Heart, and pray we get some meat at the *Matadouro*.

MADALENA

(screaming) I can't stand this! I can't stand this!

Maria takes a small paper package from inside her bra, unfolds it and hands Madalena two small pills.

MARIA

Here, take 'em for your nerves, it's your turn.

MADALENA

Valium? Where did you get it?

MARIA

Seu Tito gave me a couple at Christmas. We should use them now. It'll make the decision easier.



Cardboard coffin maker.

MADALENA

Obrigada, this stuff makes me feel so strong!

MARIA

Now you go lay down, pray to God you get some sense in your head, and decide by early morning who's gonna leave this world next. *(Maria exits)*

ACT THREE

Madalena is stirring some sugar into a glass of water. She looks up at the sound of her girls crying, places her hand over her ears, and calls out the window:

MADALENA

Maria! Maria! Come up here fast!

MARIA

(entering in haste) Comadre!

MADALENA

I've made my decision. I'm gonna let *both* the girls go. They'll be happy together in heaven, the little baby angels.

MARIA

Both the girls? You can't give up the girls, they're your future!

MADALENA

Better the girls should go than Antonio or me.

MARIA

What are you saying? The girls don't want to die, Antonio does. Why fight...

MADALENA

I fought for him to stay alive and he *is* alive! Now I'm not giving him up, forget it.

MARIA

Your two beautiful girls...

MADALENA

They'll be much better off in heaven, the two of them together. I can't split the two apart. They were born together and now they'll leave this world together...

MARIA

(in anger) Is this what the medicine did for you? Listen, it is very wrong to fight with death. Antonio is doomed. When a child wants to die, it will. You let the girls go, you'll be alone! God wants Antonio, not the girls!

MADALENA

(closing her eyes) I can still feel his mouth on my nipples, his little hands in my tangled hair. Now when I look into his eyes, I feel for him! I just can't let him go!

MARIA

He has no more taste for life. He's always lived in the shadows looking for death. But the girls, they want to live!



MADALENA

They will be the prettiest little angels... Oh my Lady of Sorrows... *Comadre*, will you help me? *Por favor!*

MARIA

It is your choice.

MADALENA

They have to die so he can live. I have made the decision.

The girls start crying. Antonio runs in the door and hands his mother a small package.

"The prettiest little angels."

ANTONIO

Mãe! This bread is for the girls! Dona Maria gave it to me down at the market.

MADALENA

Here, I'll take care of it. Have a piece yourself (*breaking the bun in half and biting into it*)

ANTONIO

(*scratching his head*) No, *mãe*, I'm not hungry.

MADALENA

Please eat the bread, you need it. *Por favor!*

ANTONIO

(*pushing the bread away*) *Mãe*, listen, I had a dream!

MADALENA

Son, there is *no* meat. None!

ANTONIO

Mãe! Listen! I was an angel and I was flying for real! Way, way up there, way above the clouds, everything so blue and beautiful. *Mãe!* It is beautiful up there!

MADALENA

Here, eat the bread and stop the nonsense.

ANTONIO

Mãe! I saw the gate to heaven, just like you said, gold and bright. And guess what? Papa was there, waiting for me with José, Marcelo, Eliza, and Paulinho!

The girls are crying louder and louder. Antonio moves toward them with the bread in hands.

MADALENA

Get away from them! Here, if you don't want the bread, give it to me. (*grabbing the bread from him and biting into it*)

ANTONIO

Mãe! I wanna go there, please!

MADALENA

In your dreams!

ANTONIO

Mãe! I am ready to go there!

MADALENA

Now you shut up and go fetch some water. You were never supposed to be an angel, and now you're too old to turn into one. You're staying here with Mama and we're going to have a good life together, just the two of us.

Madalena grabs Antonio and hugs him. The boy tries to free himself from the mother's arms, at no avail.



Angel in a cardboard coffin.

ANTONIO

Let me go!

MADALENA

(releasing the boy) Listen, Maria gave me some money and we'll go buy a steak right now. I'll cook it just for you!

ANTONIO

I don't want a steak, it hurts too much to swallow. I want to go to Papa! It's so beautiful up there! I saw hotdogs, candy, ice cream...

MADALENA

(softly) Listen, my son, I can't let you go. You're my arms and legs ... and ...you're my ... heart, too! Since you were little...

ANTONIO

There will be more food for Carolina and Maria Antonia. Please, *mãe*, let me go!



Cure by crucifixion.

Madalena starts to shake uncontrollably. She tries to grab Antonio again, who moves away from her.

MADALENA

Come here, my beloved son!

ANTONIO

Hush, *mãe*, hush. I'm ready to go there.

MADALENA

You are *not* going there. there is no such thing as heaven! Come here to *mamãe*!

The two embrace. Madalena is still shaking uncontrollably. Antonio tries to calm her down. The girls crying in the background gets louder and louder. Madalena places her hands over her ears and starts walking around, but her legs start failing her.

ANTONIO

Mãe! Mãe!

MADALENA

(kneeling down, hands to the sky) Meu Senhor Jesus Cristo, help me! Spare Antonio, take the girls instead, the little angels! You are a hungry God! I've given you four little angels already and now you want my beloved Antonio, too! You can't take him, you just cannot. *(shouting)* Leave him alone! I give you two little angels instead, Maria Antonia and Carolina, two beautiful babies. That ought to appease *your* hunger. Let Antonio live!

Madalena falls to the ground, unconscious. Antonio kneels down beside her and starts his own prayer.

ANTONIO

Querido Jesus, please help me! I want to be an angel, I really do! I really am ready to go there and I promise you, I'll be good, very good! *Querido Jesus*, I am sorry I've been so bad, fighting against death, but I couldn't leave Mama alone! *Querido Jesus*, please, please make Mama understand that I can be a good angel, that I can take up wings and fly! Please, I beg you, let Mama have the girls, they are so pretty! She will forget me, I am good for nothing no more! I can't chop wood very well and to carry water I need to ask for help! What good am I down here, good for nothing! *Querido Jesus*, please take me with you. Take me with you and I will not disappoint you ever, ever again. Amen.

THE END

LEARNING ACTIVITIES FOR *MADNESS OF HUNGER*

WARM UP ACTIVITIES (to be used before reading the play)

ACTIVITY 6.1: FOLLOWING THE MASTER

Overview: Following a leader, participants express the emotions of hunger.

Time: 30 minutes.

Materials: None.

1. **Getting started:** Have two small groups of uneven numbers (3 or 5 participants) face each other. The remaining participants will serve as observers. Explain that the two in the middle facing each other are the “masters” of the others in their line. Ask them to start a communication between the two lines expressing the emotional experience of hunger using words, sounds, gestures, movements, and facial expressions. The words do not need to make sense. Everyone in the line repeats the actions and sounds of their master. Explain that when an extreme state is reached, the master should instantly return to calm and clarity.
2. **Expressing hunger:** Ask the participant to start the action. Let them process through at least two peaks of emotion before calling stop.

To the facilitator: You might change the master halfway through the activity. If there are enough participants and time, ask another group to perform as well.

3. **Debriefing the experience of acting:** Ask the actors to respond to questions like these:
 - *What was it like to try to express hunger?*
 - *Was it easy to follow a master in this expression? To be a master?*
 - *Did you learn anything from trying to express hunger?*
4. **Debriefing the experience of acting:** Ask the actors to respond to questions like these:
 - *What was it like to observe the actors? What did you feel as you watched?*
 - *Did you learn anything from their efforts to express hunger?*

To the facilitator: After participants have experienced the play *The Madness of Hunger*, remind them of this activity and ask whether it helped them to better understand the feelings of the characters.

Adapted from Boal, *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, 223.

ACTIVITY 6.2: BELOW THE POVERTY LINE

Overview: “Families” adapt to worsening economic conditions.
Time: 30 minutes.
Materials: Chart showing costs of necessities.

To the facilitator: Using an imaginary currency, make a chart listing prices for necessities such as rent, utilities, bus fare, shoes and other items of clothing, milk, bread, and other food staples.

1. **Getting started:** Divide participants into “families” of different sizes, ranging from a single couple to families with many children. Ask each family to decide who are the children and their ages and who are the parent or parents.

Post the chart of economic statistics and ask participants to sit in a semi-circle so all can see. Explain that each family has 100 units of currency each month, which is enough to meet basic necessities of life. However, they must make a decision about how to manage their income in changing economic situations.

2. **Falling below the line:** Ask each family to decide how they will respond to increasingly difficult circumstances such as these below, asking “What will you cut from your budget now?” Some possible economic crises:
 - There’s a devaluation, and your money loses 30% of its value.
 - The landlord raises the rent 10 units a month.
 - The local government doubles the cost of bus fare.
 - The cost of food rises 10% (i.e., costs 10 units more each month).
 - The breadwinner loses his/her job, and the family loses two month’s income until a new one is found.
 - Someone in the family is sick requiring medical fees of 25 units per month
 - There’s a depression, one parent is out of work, and your monthly income drops to 50% (if there are two parents). If there is only one parent, you have no income.

After each change, ask each family what they will do to cope. Soon families will have to begin eating less and doing without necessities.

To the facilitator: Give the families only a minute to make their decisions, simulating the pressure of sudden economic shifts.

3. **Debriefing the activity:** Ask questions like these about the process of impoverishment:
 - Which economic changes had the greatest impact on your family?
 - How did your family make decisions? Was it a good method?
 - What were the hardest decisions to make?
 - Which families felt the greatest impact? Which members of the family?
 - What does this exercise tell you about the experience of falling below the poverty line?

- What does “poverty line” mean? How is the definition of “poverty” determined?

Adapted from David Shiman, Economic and Social Justice. A Human Rights Perspective, 1999, Human Rights Resource Center, University of Minnesota, Topic Book Number 1.

EXPLORATORY ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 6.3: THINGS THAT GO BUMP IN THE NIGHT

Overview: Participants act out their childhood fear.
Time: 45 minutes.
Materials: Slips of paper and pens or pencils.

1. **Getting started:** Divide the group in half. One group will be the first audience. Give the other half slips of paper and ask them to write down their name and the character or thing that frightened them as a child. Explain that they will move around the room demonstrating in gesture, facial expression, movement and body language how they felt in a state of fear of these characters.

To the facilitator: The fearful character needs to be concrete (i.e., a person, an animal, or a “tangible” ghost) rather than an abstraction like “fear of water” or “fear of the dark.”

2. **Acting out the childhood fear:** Ask the actors to begin acting while the other half watches. After a few minutes tell the actors to find a partner and begin a dialogue in which each tries to frighten the other the way they themselves were frightened.

After another few minutes, ask everyone to sit down. Read the name of each participant in turn and ask the audience to describe the characteristics they saw in that person’s enacted fears. After the first half has been discussed, the second group does the same.

3. **Debriefing the activity:** Observe that this activity may reveal fear that may still live on inside participants. Comment that participants may reveal their fears only if they wish. Ask questions like these:
 - *What was it like to pretend to be your childhood fear?*
 - *Were you surprised what characteristics the audience saw in your performance?*
 - *To what extent do you retain this fear? Why or why not?*
 - *What does our interpretation of a character affect how others see him or her?*
 - *What can we learn from this activity about the importance of an actor’s understanding of himself or herself?*

- *How can you apply these insights fears to the characters in The Madness of Hunger?*

Adapted from Boal, *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, 167.

ACTIVITY 6.4: THE MODEL CHILD

Overview: Participants act out the kind of child their parents wanted them to be.
Time: 30 minutes.
Materials: Slips of paper and pens or pencils.

To the facilitator: This activity is structured like “Things That Go Bump in the Night,” using parental expectations for the child’s own dreams.

1. **Getting started:** Divide the group in half. One group will be the first audience. Explain that they will move around the room demonstrating in gesture, facial expression, movement, and body language the kind of child their parents wanted them to be.
2. **Acting out parental expectations:** Ask the actors to begin acting while the other half watches. After a few minutes tell the actors to find a partner and begin a dialogue in which they speak about their “ideal child” as being healthy, smart, creative, loving, gentle, curious, adventurous, and so on.

After another few minutes, ask everyone to sit down. Name each participant in turn and ask the audience to describe the characteristics they saw as that parent’s idealized child. After the first half has been discussed, the second group does the same.

3. **Debriefing the activity:** Observe that this activity may reveal expectations that still live on inside participants. Ask questions like these:
 - *What was it like to pretend to be your parents’ ideal child?*
 - *Were you surprised at what characteristics the audience saw in your performance?*
 - *To what extent do you retain or react to these expectations? Why or why not?*
 - *What does our interpretation of a character affect how others see him or her?*
 - *What can we learn from this activity about the importance of an actor’s understanding of himself or herself?*
 - *How can you apply these insights fears to the characters in The Madness of Hunger? What is a “model child” in this play?*

Adapted from Boal, *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, 168.

ACTIVITY 6.5: MY SOMEDAY

Overview: One at a time participants act out the future they imagine.
Time: 30 minutes.
Materials: None.

1. **Getting started:** Observe that before we make voluntary changes in our lives, we identify what we are going to do. Explain that in this activity participants who wish will take a turn doing actions and saying lines that express attitudes and ideas they will have in the future: *Someday I will say this and I will do that.*
2. **Imagining the future:** Call for the first volunteer to act. After a few minutes thank the participant and call for another volunteer and continue until most of those who wish to act have had an opportunity.
3. **Debriefing the activity:** Ask questions like these:
 - *What was it like to project yourself into the future? Did some of your own projections surprise you?*
 - *What was it like to observe the projections of others? Did some of these surprise you?*
 - *Was there a common theme or tone to these performances?*
 - *Did you find you shared expectations of the future with some of the actors?*

Adapted from Boal, *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, 234.

ACTIVITY 6.6: THEIR SOMEDAY

Overview: Participants act out the imagined future of characters in *The Madness of Hunger*.
Time: 30 minutes.
Materials: A copy of the **UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)**.
A copy of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)** (optional).⁴

To the facilitator: Ideally, this activity is preceded by “My Someday.” However, it can stand alone

1. **Getting started:** Ask participants to imagine attitudes and ideas the characters from *The Madness of Hunger* will have in the future (e.g., Antonio, Madalena, Maria, one of the twin girls). Explain that as you name one of the characters, anyone who wishes may step one at a time into the playing space and begin to speak and act as that character would when speaking about the future: *Someday I will say this and I will do that.*
2. **Imagining the future:** Begin by calling out a character’s name. When one participant has acted this part for a few minutes, tap him or her and call out

⁴ The text of UNDRIP is in Appendix 1. The text of the UDHR can be downloaded at <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/b1udhr.htm>.

the character's name again, permitting someone else to play the role. After a few turns, call out another name. End with the twins, whose future is already in doubt.

3. **The world as it could be:** Imagine if the UNDRIP were implemented and enforced in the United States and the rights of Indigenous Peoples all over the world were protected according to the declaration. What could the world be like for Antonio, Maria, and Madalena? You may start the activity by reading aloud some of the UNDRIP articles that apply closely to *Madness of Hunger*, such as:

- “Article 1. Indigenous Peoples have the right to the full enjoyment, as a collective or as individuals, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms as recognized in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights Law.” Here, you may choose to bring up a copy of the UDHR, and either read a few of its articles, or else ask participants to choose the articles that they believe are directly related to the situation of Antonio, Maria, and Madalena. For example, Article 1 of the UDHR states:

“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.”

How does this apply to the situation of our characters in *Madness of Hunger*?

- “Article 7.1. Indigenous individuals have the rights to life, physical and mental integrity, liberty and security of person.”
- “Article 7.2. Indigenous Peoples have the collective right to live in freedom, peace and security as distinct peoples and shall not be subjected to any act of genocide or any other act of violence, including forcibly removing children of the group to another group.”

4. **Debriefing the activity:** Ask questions like these:

- *What was it like to imagine the future ideas and attitudes of these characters?*
- *Which were the most difficult? Why?*
- *Were there common features in these character's projection of the future?*
- *How do you think it affects people not to be able to imagine a future?*
- *How would such people affect their families? Their community? Their society?*
- *What could their world be like if the UNDRIP and UDHR were respected?*

Adapted from Boal, *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, 234.

ACTIVITY 6.7: ANOTHER VISION OF THE WORLD

Overview: While some participants act out a scene from *The Madness of Hunger*, others may intervene to create a different vision of the world and a better outcome.

Time: 30 minutes.

Materials: Copies of *The Madness of Hunger*

To the facilitator: This activity presumes that participants have already seen the play performed.

1. **Getting started:** Observe that in real life, it is often necessary to change our vision of the world before we can change the world. Explain that in this activity, the actors will repeat an act from *The Madness of Hunger* exactly as written with the particular vision of the world presented in the play. However, this time participants, as “**spect-actors**,” can intervene, take up a role, and change that vision of the world. Anyone in the audience who sees an opportunity to take an actor’s place in order to bring about a better solution should shout, “Stop.” The actors will freeze in position while “spect-actor” explains from what point he or she wants the scene to begin again. The “spect-actor” then takes the role of one of the characters and the action begins again.

However, the other actors do not respond to this new solution but maintain their same vision of the world, illustrating how difficult it is to bring about change.

To the facilitator: Make sure everyone understands this rather complicated process. As the Joker, the facilitator will need to keep the process orderly, encourage actors to stop playing, and to change the scene or rules when appropriate.

2. **Changing the outcome:** Ask the actors to begin the scene. When a “spect-actor” has intervened and met with resistance, ask him to retire and be replaced by the original actor of that part. Let the action continue until another “spect-actor” intervenes.

Alternative: Act another scene in the same way.

Alternative: Without warning, give the “spect-actor” permission to replace any of the resisting actors with others from the audience who can take up the changed worldview.

3. **Debriefing the activity:** Ask questions like these:
 - *What was it like to try to change the outcome? To meet resistance? To refuse to change?*
 - *What does this activity suggest about the difficulties of changing people’s vision of the world? About the dynamics of social change?*
 - *What strategies does it suggest about creating social change?*
 - *How can these ideas be directed to creating social change for Indigenous Peoples?*

Adapted from Boal, *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, 243.

