



**DCS**

# **Rwanda Sri Lanka Collaboration**

Written by  
Ruwanthie de Chickera

(devised with the casts from Rwanda and Sri Lanka)  
Based on interviews conducted through  
the DCS theatre research project

# ***DCS Rwanda Sri Lanka Collaboration***

**Part of the “Dear Children, Sincerely...” project**

Written by  
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(devised with the casts from Rwanda and Sri Lanka)

Based on interviews conducted through  
the DCS theatre research project

A Stages Theatre production  
In collaboration with  
Mashirika Performing Arts and Media Company, Rwanda

First performed in  
The Genocide Memorial Center Amphitheatre  
Ubumuntu Festival of Humanity  
Kigali  
Rwanda, July 2015

## **An Introduction to The *DCS Project***

**‘Dear Children, Sincerely...’  
a conversation across generations**

### **What is the *DCS Project*?**

**“Dear Children, Sincerely... a conversation across generations”** (or the *DCS project*) is a research theatre project begun in Sri Lanka in 2015 by Stages Theatre Group. *DCS* collects the stories and experiences of the generation born in the 1930s and takes them to present-day audiences in the form of storytelling and live performance.

Under the *DCS Project*, short performance pieces are created from extensive conversations conducted with senior citizens, with each performance piece not more than 15 minutes long. These stories can stand alone as individual performance pieces and can also be linked together to create longer theatrical productions.

Between 2015 and 2020, through the *DCS project*, over 70 senior citizens of Sri Lanka were interviewed, and performance pieces were created from these conversations.

The *DCS Project*, begun in Sri Lanka was subsequently adopted by the ARIADNE group of artists and spread to 08 countries, including Ireland, the UK, Serbia and Pakistan.

## **An Introduction to *DCS Rwanda-Sri Lanka Collaboration***

***DCS Rwanda-Sri Lanka Collaboration*** is a theatre production that offers a parallel reading of the colonial and post-colonial histories of Rwanda and Sri Lanka in the seven decades between 1930 and 1990. This collaboration was the first production to emerge from the *DCS Project*.

It is a collaboration between Stages Theatre Group of Sri Lanka and Mashirika Performing Arts and Media Company of Rwanda. Five Rwandan artists and eight Sri Lankan artists worked together on this production.

This Stages Theatre Group production is a devised ensemble performance directed and written by Ruwanthie de Chickera. The play was researched independently in the two countries and then devised remotely through Skype. The combined cast finally met for 6 days of rehearsal in Kigali before the show opened at the very first Ubumuntu Festival of Humanity in 2015.

The show was subsequently performed in Colombo, Sri Lanka in January 2016 and toured to India as part of the 18<sup>th</sup> Bharat Rang Mahotsav and the Metta Festival also in 2016. The show has been performed in New Delhi, Jammu Kashmir, Kerala and Mumbai.

This show comprises three Acts. Act 01 - Seven Decades Deep symbolically represents a parallel historical journey in Rwanda and Sri Lanka over 07 decades from 1930 to 1990 through 7 historic junctures. Act 02 - Marriage, Sex and Love is a humorous, non-verbal representation of how the generation that was born in Rwanda and Sri Lanka in the 1930s experienced love, sex and marriage. Act 03 – Upside Down Land, represents the darkest times from the histories of the two countries.

The play is largely non-verbal and has been performed as a mix of English, Sinhala and Kinyarwanda.

***DCS  
Rwanda-Sri Lanka  
Collaboration***

## **Characters**

This is an ensemble performance with the actors taking on many different roles as the play progresses. Below is a list of the range of characters played by the ensemble. This is not an exhaustive list. The nature of the production is such that roles are open to further interpretation and expansion.

### **ACT I - SEVEN DECADES DEEP CHARACTERS**

#### **Rwanda in the 30s**

Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda before Belgian occupation.  
White Imperialist

#### **Sri Lanka in the 40s**

Sri Lankans awaiting Independence  
Actor 1  
The Duke of Gloucester  
First Prime Minister of Sri Lanka

#### **Sri Lanka in the 50s**

Sinhala passengers in a bus  
Tamil passengers in a bus  
Tamil protesters  
First woman Prime Minister

#### **Rwanda in the 60s**

Hutu Angry Man  
Hutu Man-servant  
Hutu Labourer  
Hutu Young Man  
Hutu Young Girls  
Tutsi Master  
Tutsi Master's Son  
Tutsi Son's Dog

#### **Sri Lanka in the 70s and 80s**

Youth Revolutionaries in Sri Lanka in the 70s  
Youth Revolutionaries in Sri Lanka in the 80s  
Leader of youth revolution

**Rwanda in the 90s**

Rwandans after the genocide  
Old man clearing bodies  
Young man clearing bodies  
Young Rwandan

**ACT II - MARRIAGE SEX AND LOVE  
CHARACTERS**

Bride's mother  
Groom's Father

Bride's Cousin  
Groom's Eldest Brother

Bride's Aunt  
Bride's Uncle  
Groom's second brother  
Groom's third brother  
Groom's fourth brother  
Grooms younger brother

Bride  
Groom

Groom's Cow  
Bride's Cat

**ACT III - UPSIDE DOWN LAND  
CHARACTERS**

Little girl  
Dead mother  
Man with body bag  
Man eating sandwich  
Lamppost lighter  
Man in tire  
First Rapist  
Second Rapist  
Last Rapist  
Digger 1  
Digger 2  
Digger 3

Supervisor  
People in queue  
Man measuring noses  
Man planting heads  
Mother  
Son  
Night-time visitor  
Man 1 playing game  
Man 2 playing game  
Man 3 playing game

## **Scene Breakdown**

### **ACT I      SEVEN DECADES DEEP**

Rwanda in the 30s and the story of the ID card

Sri Lanka in the 40s and the story of Independence

Sri Lanka in the 50s and the story of Sinhala Only

Rwanda in the 60s and the story of the Exile

Sri Lanka in the 70 & 80s and the story of the JVP Insurrection

Rwanda in the 90s and the story of the Genocide

### **ACT II      MARRIAGE SEX AND LOVE**

### **ACT III      UPSIDE DOWN LAND**

**ACT I**  
**Seven Decades Deep**

## **INTRODUCTION TO ACT I:**

*This production is a collaboration between Sri Lankan and Rwandan Artists.*

*It is based on transcribed interviews we conducted with a cross section of elders of both these countries.*

*Thirty persons from both countries born in the 1930's were interviewed. We created three stories from these interviews.*

*In the first of our three stories - **Seven Decades Deep** - we were curious to find out how our two countries, Rwanda and Sri Lanka, had changed from decade to decade. During the life-time of our elders, what incidents did they witness, what changed the spirit of their country and their people? And what was it like to live through these changes?*

*Taking us back though time in both Rwanda and Sri Lanka, here is what our elders remembered of the journey of their countries from the 30's to the 90's.*

## **Rwanda in the 30s**

### **The Story of the ID Card**

This scene depicts how the Belgian colonizers turned the fluid class-identity of *Tutsi* and *Hutu* into a permanent ethnic identity through the introduction of an ID card system to Rwanda in the 1930s; and how they further fueled the division by spreading false ‘research’ on different ethnic origins of Hutus and Tutsis.

*Note: This scene was created out of a popular theatre game ‘Rats and Rabbits’. All the members of the Ensemble participate in this scene and maintain one character throughout.*

#### **Characters**

Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda before Belgian occupation.  
White Imperialist

## VOICE OVER

***“Dear Children,  
Then there were no ethnic differences. At that time to be a Tutsi meant to be a wealthy man and Hutus were just ordinary people. Someone could be a Hutu, but if he became rich, he became a Tutsi, and a Tutsi who became poor was called a Hutu.***

***Then, in my childhood, the white man came and created ID cards...”***

## Excerpt of Rwandan Elder from DCS interview

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*LIGHTS. The ensemble stands facing each other in two lines. They represent two opposing teams – Team Rat and Team Rabbit. They are in fighting poses.*

Voice Over: Rrrrr....Rats!

*Team Rat rushes off stage laughing chased by Team Rabbit. Some Rats get caught and are taken over to Team Rabbit. They are now Team Rabbit. Everyone is laughing and shouting.*

*Team Rat and Team Rabbit settle down and back to their lines facing each other. They chant in rhythm...*

Team Rat: Rats! Rats! Rats! Rats!

Team Rabbit: Rabbit! Rabbit! Rabbit! Rabbit!

Voice Over: Rrrrr...Rabbits...!

*Team Rabbit rushes off stage screaming chased by Team Rat. Some Rabbits get caught. Some get away. The Rats and Rabbits re-shuffle and prepare for the next round. They enjoy playing the game.*

Voice Over: Rats!

*Team Rat tries to escape. Team Rabbit manages to catch a few more Rats. One of the Rats tries to cheat. He was not caught but he wants to be a Rabbit. The others protest.*

Ensemble: Cheater! Cheater!

*Everyone argues loudly. The Rats don't want the traitor. The Rabbits don't want him either.*

Rat: Let him go! Let him go!!

Traitor Rat: (to a friend Rabbit) I'll be back...

*Everyone settles down again, facing each other.*

Voice Over: Rrrrabbits!

*The Rabbits chase the Rats again. Some caught. New teams. Reshuffle and reset.*

Voice: Rrrrats!

*The Rats chase the Rabbits. Reshuffle and reset.*

*The game is picking up momentum.*

*Suddenly there is a slow, loud clapping from the audience. The Rats and the Rabbits all pause, peer into the darkness, puzzled, curious.*

*From the shadows emerges a man with a white face, wearing a white costume and a blond wig. He carries red and green scarfs on his shoulders. He has an air of mesmerizing confidence. He approaches the Rats and Rabbits applauding slowly.*

White Imperialist: What a wonderful little game! You people seem like you're having so much fun! Are you having fun?

Ensemble: (cheerfully) Yes, Yes, yeah!

White Imperialist: Do you mind if I join you?

Ensemble: No, no! Come, come on!

*One person from the ensemble helps him to come on the stage*

White Imperialist: Thank you very much...

*The White Imperialist saunters up onto the stage. The Rats and the Rabbits welcome him enthusiastically.*

White Imperialist: Now, I just had, a little idea, about how we make this game a little bit more fun. Would you like to try?

Ensemble: (cheerfully) Yes! Yes! Yeah! Sure!

White Imperialist: (drawing closer to the first person on Team Rat). Ok. I'll start with you. Now are you a rat or a rabbit?

Rat 1: (looks a little confused) ... Er.. A rat..

White Imperialist: Rat? Ok here's a little scarf for you.

*He hands a red scarf to Rat 1. Rat 1 is bemused but pleased. The White Imperialist moves on to the next Rat.*

White Imperialist: What about you?

Rat 2: Proudly a rat!

White Imperialist: (repeats) Proudly a rat! (He gives him a red scarf) There you go...

*Rat 2 is happy to drape the red scarf on himself. The White Imperialist now turns to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Rat.*

White Imperialist: And you?

Rat 3: A rat!

White Imperialist: Ok, alright! *(Hands him another red scarf)* There you are! *(to the next member)* And you... I don't think I need to ask you are looking like a little rat. *(produces a Red scarf and moves to the next)* And... Miss?

Rat 4: *(joyfully)* A rat

White Imperialist: *(Red scarf)* There you go *(moves to next member)* And you? What about you?

Rat 5: A Rabbit

*The White Imperialist Man pauses, taken aback.*

White Imperialist: Oh! I thought the rabbits were on *that* side and the rats were on *this* side

Rat 5: *(laughing)* No no! Before rabbit! Just now rat!

*Everyone laughs. The White Imperialist hands him a red scarf and moves to the last member of the team.*

White Imperialist: And what about you?

Rat 6: A tiny little rat!

White Imperialist: Aha! And here's a tiny little scarf for you *(hands out the last Red scarf)*

Rat 6: Thank you!

*The White Imperialist now looks at the other side – at the line of Rabbits. He pauses in open appreciation.*

White Imperialist: Oh my... Well... I don't even have to ask. I'm clearly looking at the Rabbits!

*He hands over a Green scarf, respectfully, to the first member of Team Rabbit. He then moves on to the 2nd member.*

White Imperialist: *(In open admiration)* And you, a rabbit as well... *(Hands him a Green scarf and moves to the next member and gives him a green scarf. Then moves to the third, tall Rabbit)* and you sir?

Rabbit 3: Rat! A Big rat!

*The White Imperialist looks concerned.*

White Imperialist: Oh again. I thought this was the rabbit side. You *can* go back and be a rat if you really want to...

*Team Rabbit and Team Rat both coax the tall Rabbit to their team.*

Rabbit 3: *(after some consideration)* I'll stay a rabbit

White Imperialist: Staying a rabbit. *(moving in close to whisper)* Smart choice my friend *(he gives him another Green scarf and moves to the final member of the team)*  
And you sir?

Rabbit 4: What do you think?

White Imperialist: *(appreciatively)* I think I'm looking at a strong rabbit

Rabbit 4: Yeah!

White Imperialist: *(giving out the final Green scarf)* Ok there you go! *(He then turns to look at everyone).* Ok now guys, are we ready?

All: Yeah!!!

White Imperialist: Ok, so the rules are... rabbits on this side and rats on this side. Right?

*Everyone cheers and gets ready to the new game. The Rabbits in the green scarfs and the Rats in the red scarfs. They square off. The White Imperialist places himself on the side of Team Rabbit.*

White Imperialist: *(Commands)* Rrrrrrr....Rabbits!

*The members of Team Rat run screaming towards Team Rabbit as Team Rabbit runs away.*

*The White Imperialist stands his ground and stops the rats from catching the rabbits.*

White Imperialist: Whoa!! Whoa! *(laughing)* Ok, so... maybe, I didn't explain myself well enough the first time! Well, let me try again. *(he walks right up to one member of the Team Rat)* Now... what did I give you? Are you a rat or a rabbit?

Rat 1: Umm Rat!

White Imperialist: Precisely. *(He points down the line to each member of the team)*  
Rat...Rat... Rat...Rat... Rat...Rat...Rat... *(as he repeats the word his voice develops a nasty edge. He pushes all the rats back and speaks with authority)* So! Rats on this side, rabbits over there. Small thing. We'll try again. No harm. You ready?

*Everyone gets ready and takes their positions. The White Imperialist once again joins the Team Rabbit.*

White Imperialist: *(commands)* Rrrr.....rabbits!

*The Rats run towards Rabbits. The White Imperialist stops them again. This time with more force.*

White Imperialist: Ok!! Whoa! *(He notices that there is a Rat that has caught a Rabbit)* Hey! Hey!! You!! What did I say?

*The rat looks confused.*

Rat 2: To play!

The White Imperialist draws close to him, menacingly.

White Imperialist: What are you?

Rat 2: A rat...

White Imperialist: And what does he look like?

Rat 2: He's a rabbit...?

White Imperialist: He's a rabbit. And what did I say? Rats on this side. Rabbits on this side!  
(*in a threatening voice*) Now. Let. Him. Go.

Rat 2: But I caught him Sir.

White Imperialist: I'd like you to let him go!

Rat 2: I caught him!

White Imperialist: (*Aggressively*) LET him go! (*The rat is shocked confused. He lets the Rabbit go*) Thank you!

*Rat 2 moves back to his side. The other rats look very confused, some unhappy. The Rabbits also look confused.*

White Imperialist: (*to the Rabbit who had been caught*) I'm so, so sorry about that... Just let me sort this out.

*The Rabbits are pleased with this kind of treatment. The White Imperialist closes in on the rats, who are all looking very confused and unhappy.*

White Imperialist: Now. I don't know how many times we have to go over this. But maybe it's a little difficult for your tiny little rat brains to comprehend. So let me try again. (*he is now almost snarling with contempt*) If you *look* like a rat, if you *feel* like a rat, if you *think* like a rat, then you must be a *rat*. And you stay on the rat side.

Rat 3: That's not fun Sir. That's not fun...

*Team Rat agrees.*

White Imperialist: It's not fun?? (*He turns towards the Rabbits*) Are you having fun?

Rabbits: (*after a slight pause*) Yeah!

White Imperialist: See?? (*turns to the Rats*) The rabbits are having fun, because the rabbits understand. So it would be really, *really* good if you tried to understand. So we'll try again.

*White Man again joins to the Team Rabbits.*

White Imperialist: Rrrrrrrr.....Rats!

*Team Rat is delighted. They all run away anticipating the rabbits will chase them. However the rabbits do not. Instead they stand, silently together with the White Imperialist. The rats return silently onto stage.*

*Ominous music.*

*The Rats are confused. The Rabbits snigger at the Rats, stand taller.*

White Imperialist:     *(in a sneering tone)* Come on little ratties, let's play again. Don't be scared. Scurry back. That's a good little ratty.

*Team Rat slowly take their positions. They are a mix of confusion and anger.*

White Imperialist:     And again... Rrrrrrabit!

*Team Rabbit does not move. Team Rat does not move either. The White Imperialist then steps forward into the space occupied by the Rats. The Rabbits follow him. They looks stronger, taller. The Rats back off.*

White Imperialist:     *(menacingly)* Very good. Now let's just try one more time.

*(Commands)* Rrrrrrrr.....RABBIT!!

*No reaction at all from the Team Rats. The White Imperialist and the Rabbits move another step forward towards the Rats. The Rats look scared and speechless. The Rabbits and the White Imperialist take one more step and they have now pushed the Rats into a tiny corner of the stage. They intimidate them until, suddenly, one rat sits down, then another cowers, and little by little the Rats are all either bent, bowed or kneeling.*

*The Rabbits and the White Imperialist stand tall and powerful and stare down at the cowering Rats.*

*Lights and music fade down.*

## **Sri Lanka in the 40s**

### **The Story of Independence**

This scene reveals how there really was no consolidated peoples' movement to end colonization in Sri Lanka. Instead there was a keenly felt admiration for the independence struggle of India.

*Note: This scene was created using lines directly quoted from the DCS transcripts. Only six members of the Ensemble act in this scene. And they assume several different characters throughout. However, Actor 1 stands apart from the rest as someone who consistently poses questions to the rest.*

#### **Characters**

Sri Lankans awaiting Independence

Actor 1

The Duke of Gloucester

First Prime Minister of Sri Lanka

## **VOICE OVER**

***“Dear Children,***

***Our Independence just came. We didn’t really ask for it.  
We were not really prepared for that next step.  
And I don’t remember a flag...”***

**Excerpt of Sri Lankan Elder from DCS interview**

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*Stage lights. The Ensemble mold themselves into an image representing victory over Independence.*

Actor 1: (proudly) 4<sup>th</sup> of February, 1948, Sri Lanka.

*Beat.*

Actor 1: (aside) Ok... the truth is, no one was actually, all that very anxiously waiting for Independence.

*The image created by the Ensemble crumbles to the ground. The other actors pick themselves up slowly.*

Ensemble Member: Did Independence even mean much?

All except Actor 1: Yes! Yes! Of course!

Actor 1: No!

*Beat.*

All except Actor 1: (agreeing with him) No! No!

Ensemble Member: Was it important to you?

All except Actor 1: Yes. Yes! Of course!

*Beat.*

Actor 1: No...

All except Actor 1: (agreeing with him) No! No!

Ensemble Member: So what then do you actually remember?

*Pause as the Ensemble struggles to recall.*

Ensemble Member: (joyfully) We were at home!

All: Yeah! Yeah!

*Ensemble creates an image of a little house.*

Ensemble Member: We heard it over the radio!

*Sounds of an old radio being tuned, passing over familiar old Sri Lankan songs and bygone jingles of commercial advertisements. And then, suddenly, the news...*

Ensemble Member: (in an old news reading pattern) The Duke of Gloucester has arrived in Ceylon, I repeat, the Duke of Gloucester has arrived in Ceylon, representing the Crown.

*The Duke of Gloucester appears in a stiff, royal gait. He is watched by a raptured and enchanted crowd. All except Actor 1 who stands slightly apart.*

Ensemble Member: (swooning) Oh! The Duke of Gloucester! We were thrilled!

*All except Actor 1 is besides themselves.*

Actor 1: We were not *that* thrilled

*The crowd pauses, uncertain...*

Ensemble Member: There was an artist painting Independence.

*Ensemble agrees.*

Actor 1: There was a WHITE artist painting Independence.

*Beat. Everyone agrees again.*

*The Ensemble becomes a painting. Smiles are painted on their faces.*

Actor 1: The headlines of the newspapers that day were, "The Duke of Gloucester has visited the Peradeniya<sup>1</sup> Botanical Gardens"

*The Ensemble becomes the botanical garden. The Duke of Gloucester prances about briefly, until the excessive heat and foliage overwhelm him.*

*Suddenly the mood changes and the Ensemble become pensive, reminiscent.*

Ensemble Member: I remember...

Ensemble Member: I remember...

Ensemble Member: I remember...

Ensemble Member: I remember...

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<sup>1</sup> Suburb of the city of Kandy, Sri Lanka.

Ensemble Member: I remember...

Ensemble Member: I remember...

*The Ensemble has molded itself into a central image on stage.*

Actor 1: I remember... Hands!! Yes. Hundreds of hands. Yes. It was all hands, and we were all waving. That's right, we were all waving. And then he... HE ... was waving back. *(Pause)* Our very own Prime Minister...

*The Prime Minister appears.*

Ensemble: *(delighted)* He wore a suit!!

*The Prime Minister flanked by the Ensemble create an image of national pride and allegiance.*

Ensemble Member: *(proudly)* We were taught to sing... "God Save the King"

Ensemble Member: *(ardently)* God save the King!!

Ensemble Member: *(emotionally)* The King, God...

Ensemble Member: *(concerned)* Save him! Save him!

Ensemble Member: *(very concerned)* Save the king God!!

Ensemble Member: *(now worried)* The King!! The KING!!

Ensemble Member: *(panicked)* Save him, O God!

Ensemble Member: *(hysterical)* Save him! Save him!

Ensemble Member: *(very hysterical)* Save the King God!

Ensemble Member: *(horrified)* The King!! Oh my God!

Ensemble Member: *(aghast)* Oh my God!

Ensemble Member: *(broken)* The King!

*Beat. Actor 1 has moved slightly away from the others.*

Actor 1: *(in distaste)* "Nodakin!"<sup>2</sup>

*Pause. The Ensemble disentangle themselves from each other, suddenly self-conscious.*

Ensemble Member: Anti-colonialism?

*The Ensemble are ruffled and insulted by the mention of the word.*

Ensemble Member: Well, there was some... there was *some* kind of "anti" ... just a dash of "anti", not much... this much... not really "anti" anti... You know, but maybe some, some "antipathy"?!

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<sup>2</sup> This is Sri Lankan slang for 'What an ungodly sight!' This could be replaced by any local language expression which denotes disgust.

*The Ensemble could not care less.*

Actor 1: Aha!! But India's independence!

*The Ensemble is immediately riveted into action, admiration, animation.*

Actor 1: That was just so grand!! *(pause)* Symbolically...

Ensemble Member: Oh Nehru!

*Ensemble swoons.*

Ensemble Member: And....

Ensemble Member: Gandhi!

*Ensemble swoons, cheers, is besides itself.*

Actor 1: They were iconic figures in the fight against British Imperialism!!

*Ensemble is transfixed by a sense of revolution.*

Actor 1: But ... civil disobedience...

Ensemble's revolutionary blood cools instantly. Everyone looks embarrassed, then mortified, then self-righteous.

Ensemble: *(piously)* No no no no no no!

Ensemble Member: That

Ensemble Member: Was

Ensemble Member: Just

Ensemble Member: Not

Ensemble Member: For

Ensemble Member: Us

*The Ensemble regards each other primly. Proud of its good behavior.*

Actor 1: Crown colony, you see....

Ensemble: *(filled with pride)* Aaaaaah!

Actor 1: Drilled in to the crown, you see...

Ensemble *(bursting with pride)* Aaaaaah!!

Ensemble Member: Our Independence was a gift!

*Ensemble is delighted. Cheers.*

Ensemble Member: *(self-righteously)* Mmmmmhmmm... for being good and not doing what India and Burma and all those 'other countries' were doing...

*Ensemble agrees, primly.*

*The sound of Independence, a dawn of a new day. The Ensemble is moved to stand up, search around, then gather together, transfixed by expectation and wonder.*

Ensemble Member: *(absently)* Hmmm? A flag?

Ensemble Member: *(thoughtfully)* I don't remember a flag

Ensemble Member: *(decisively)* There was no flag

Ensemble Member: *(uncertain)* Maybe there was a flag

Ensemble Member: *(indecisive)* Unless there was a picture of a flag in the newspaper

Ensemble Member: *(convinced but inaudible)*

Ensemble Member: *(trying to be helpful)* Give me a minute. *(thinks)* Yes. Don't remember a flag.

Ensemble Member: *(confidently)* Definitely no flag

Ensemble Member: *(rather peeved)* There should have been a flag no?

Ensemble Member: Annnh! *(trying hard to remember. Then helplessly)* I don't remember

Ensemble Member: *(adamant)* I'm saying, no flag.

Ensemble Member: *(convinced but inaudible)*

Ensemble Member: *(disinterested)* I cannot remember a flag

Ensemble Member: *(irritated)* As I said, no flag

Ensemble Member: *(eager to agree)* Yes. Definitely no flag

Ensemble Member: *(convinced but inaudible)*

Actor 1: What flag are we talking about here?

*The Ensemble is drawn towards a light that grows brighter and brighter as they approach it. They move towards it slowly, transfixed by its beauty and brilliance. But it grows brighter and brighter still. Until it becomes blinding and difficult to look at and painful on the eyes. One by one the Ensemble cowers before the light, shielding their eyes, faces, unable to bear the harshness of the beam. Some fall to their knees, some look away, some try to keep standing in spite of the pain.*

*The final image of Independence is a broken, scattered, blinded group of people.*

**BLACKOUT.**

## **Sri Lanka in the 50s**

### **The Story of ‘Sinhala Only’**

This scene tells the story of how, eight years after Independence, Sri Lanka split along language lines. The ‘Sinhala Only’ Bill made Sinhala the only official language in the country and reduced the Tamil population to a second-class status.

*Note: This scene has minimal language. Only two words are used in this entire scene to denote all action and emotion. These are the words – ‘Sinhala’<sup>3</sup> and ‘Demala’<sup>4</sup>. The metaphor for this scene is a group of people driving a bus together.*

*There are two communities represented on stage. The Sinhala and the Tamil people in Sri Lanka. They are represented through cloth strips of two colours- green and red. Initially the only two words spoken in the scene – ‘Sinhala’ and ‘Demala’ are used interchangeably by all the characters. But as the scene progresses the Sinhala people in the bus use Sinhala only.*

### **Characters**

Sinhala passengers in a bus  
Tamil passengers in a bus  
Tamil protesters  
First woman Prime Minister

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<sup>3</sup> Sinhala – is the language spoken by the 80% majority Sinhalese people of Sri Lanka.

<sup>4</sup> Demala – is the language spoken by the 14% largest minority Tamil people of Sri Lanka.

**VOICE OVER**

*“Dear Children,*

*There were two peoples – Sinhala and Tamil. The British brought them together. But when they left, the Sri Lanka government broke that covenant.*

*The Tamil people tried to negotiate, tried to negotiate, couldn't.*

*The fundamental way the extreme Sinhala community is thinking is flawed. Such ancient feudal ideas... Why don't they understand this? Who is going to tell them?*

*When we switched to our language... if only, if only we switched to the National Language of the Tamils. Every time I look at the Tamil community I think - my god, lost to Sri Lanka. Inside me that's what comes out”*

**Excerpt of Sri Lankan Elder from DCS interview**

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*LIGHTS.*

*The Ensemble is packed into a tight space, facing the audience. It is as if they are crammed into a vehicle.*

*They look forward, as one, with great anticipation. They are awaiting a cue.*

*One member has his eyes on the time. He announces with great glee that the auspicious time has arrived.*

*The Ensemble are immediately charged with energy. One of them – in the coveted driver's seat – turns the ignition of the vehicle they are all crammed into.*

*It does not start.*

*Dismay. Anxiousness. Murmurs amongst the passengers.*

*The driver, wearing a green scarf, is frazzled. But he immediately attempts to start the vehicle again.*

*This time – success!!*

*Relief. Joy. Excitement. The sound of the vehicle's strong engine charges the entire crowd. They are besides themselves with nervous delight.*

*After much revving the vehicle moves forward, first slowly, and then with more confidence. The passengers cheer and congratulate each other and themselves and marvel at being given the chance to drive their own vehicle.*

*The driver is gaining confidence, but there are others who want to share the steering wheel. A younger man, also in a green scarf, pushes him way through the press of passengers to the front of the vehicle. He takes over the driving with great gusto and suddenly everyone is moving forward in an exhilarating speed. The crowd is thrilled at the reckless confidence of the new young driver. He speeds up, and speeds up, and speeds up and then... whoooo!!! ... takes a sharp bend at breakneck speed. The entire crowd is first terrified but then electrified when they all come out of the near-death experience in one piece. The mad young driver is an instant hero.*

*Someone else wants to take the wheel and he creeps up and slides in. He wears a red scarf. He holds tight on to the wheel in delight.*

*The two previous drivers – both in green scarfs – and a few surrounding passengers (also in green scarfs) – at not too happy with the man in a red scarf driving the vehicle. They nimbly but firmly edge him out of the seat and restore the wheel to a green scarf driver.*

*The red scarf driver is swallowed up by the crowd. He tries to make his way back to the front but is pushed back. Other passengers wearing red scarfs are also firmly pushed back and into the crowd. Soon it is just the passengers in green scarves who hold the steering wheel and who occupy the front seats of the bus. Those in red scarves are nowhere to be seen.*

*The atmosphere in the vehicle has changed. There is a slight edge to the emotions of those in the green scarfs – a feeling of possessiveness, of territorial right. It is clear that they do not want the red scarf wearers in control of the vehicle.*

*The vehicle continues to move forward with the green scarf passengers waving out the windows and enjoying the monopoly of the drive.*

*Suddenly, out of nowhere, in the middle of the road in front of the vehicle sit a line of red-scarf wearing people. The speeding vehicle is brought to a screeching, heart stopping halt.*

*A long moment, where those in the green scarf, and in the vehicle stare at those in the red scarfs seated cross legged on the road, in protest.*

*Then... with exaggerated grace and steely smiles, two of three of the green scarfs, step out of the vehicle and extend their hands to the red scarfs seated on the ground. The red scarfs, a little uncertain, but then with more confidence, accept the gesture of goodwill and allow themselves to be led back into the vehicle. One of the red scarfs, (who clearly misread the gesture of goodwill) attempts to get back in the drivers seat, but is quickly dispelled to the back.*

*A green scarf driver takes the wheel. This time it is a woman. She starts the engine with a sure sense of confidence and the vehicle moves forward smoothly. She is surrounded by green scarf wearers. They wave with authority through the vehicle windows. And behind them swallowed up on the rabble of green scarf wearers, the red scarfs are beaten to a pulp and thrown out of the vehicle. They fall to the wayside and disappear into the darkness as the vehicle full of triumphant, bloated green scarf wearers charges on ahead.*

*The passengers have hardness in their eyes and arrogance in their smiles.*

*BLACK OUT.*

## **Rwanda in the 60s**

### **The Story of the Exile**

This scene tells how the Belgian colonizers withdrew from Rwanda in the 60s and how riots broke out against the Tutsis. The 80% Hutu population turned against the ruling Tutsi class, hitherto protected by the Belgians, and chased them out of the country.

*Note: The entire Ensemble act in this scene and maintain consistent characters throughout. There are two communities represented on stage. The Hutus and the Tutsis in Rwanda. They are represented through cloth strips of two colours- red and green respectively.*

#### **Characters**

Hutu Angry Man  
Hutu Man-servant  
Hutu Labourer  
Hutu Young Man  
Hutu Young Girls  
Tutsi Master  
Tutsi Master's Son  
Tutsi Son's Dog

## **VOICE OVER**

***“Dear Children,***

***Everyone was busy leaving the country.***

***People started burning Tutsi houses. We and many others fled.  
It was hard to leave.***

***We wanted to come back to our country because we loved Rwanda; there is  
no better country than your motherland.”***

**Excerpt of Rwandan Elder from DCS interview**

**\*\*\***

*Ominous and eerie music.*

*Lights up slowly.*

*An angry Hutu man with a red scarf around his waist and a long pole in his hand, stands looking off stage. All around him, others – also with red scarfs tied round their heads, wrists, legs – move around the stage – in and out of the shadows. There is a bleak sense of breakdown, of anarchy and lawlessness. The people in red scarves are of in an exuberant and boisterous mood. They are rampaging the stage, tense with anticipation of an awaited arrival. The angry Hutu man strides across the stage, brandishing his stick and barking orders. A Hutu Laborer who has been intently watching into the distance suddenly jumps up and down.*

Hutu Labourer:       *(beside himself with excitement)* They’re coming!!! They are coming!!!!  
And they’re bringing the dog! They’re bringing the dog!!!

*He runs around the stage in hysterical excitement. All the others focus their gaze to where he is pointing. From the darkness appears a tall, regal Tutsi Master and his young son. They are both dressed in green scarves. The Tutsi Master has a briefcase around his shoulder and a distinguished walking stick in his hand. The Tutsi Master’s Son holds on to a nervous and barking dog, who strains against a leash, agitated by the atmosphere of tension in the air. The young boy carries a basket with him. He stands close to his father. They both look very scared.*

*As soon as the Tutsi Master appears with his son, there is a hush from the surrounding Hutus. The Tutsi Master stands his ground and surveys the crowd around him.*

*Suddenly from within the crowd, someone throws a stone at the dog. This creates immediate chaos. The dog starts barking, the Hutus start laughing, the Master raises his stick in self defense.*

*A Hutu Young Man – a tall, strapping youth – walks slowly up to the Master.*

Hutu Young Man: Master!

Tutsi Landowner: (looking into his eyes, frightened, but hopeful) Andy...

*Hutu Young Man opens his arms to his Master, inviting an embrace. The Master is unsure, but with no option left, moves into the embrace. Hutu Young Man violently stamps on the Master's foot. The Master doubles over in pain and the crowd hoot and cheer in glee.*

*The Hutu man-servant moves up to the Master. He is transfixed by the walking stick that his Master carries.*

Hutu Man-servant: Hey! Remember me? Remember me??

*The Master is distracted for a moment and the Hutu Girls drag his son and dog away from him. He cannot go after them.*

Tutsi Master's Son: Papa! Papaa!!

*The Tutsi Master is trapped by Hutu Young Man standing in his path. The Hutu Young Man grabs the Master's walking stick from him and hands it to the Hutu Man-Servant. It seems like the first time that the Hutu man-servant has ever held this stick in his hand.*

*In the mean time the Hutu Girls and the Hutu Labourer are manhandling the Tutsi Son, pulling at his green scarf, touching his face and going through the things in his basket. The Master is distressed. He commands the Hutu man-servant to hand him back his walking stick, hand him back his son.*

*The Hutu Man-servant advances on his Master, beating the stick into the floor, threatening him, screaming at him. The Master backs off, still trying to retain his authority, ordering his son to be brought back to him, warning his man-servant to step back.*

*The Master backs into the Hutu Angry Man.*

*The Hutu Angry Man commands the attention of the crowd.*

Hutu Angry Man: (mockingly) Listen! Listen! He wants his son!

*The people hoot and laugh. The Hutu Angry Man points to the Master.*

Hutu Angry Man: So... Give me something.

*The crowd start calling out.*

Crowd: Give him something! Give him something!

*The Master takes off his briefcase and hands it to the Hutu Angry Man. The Hutu Angry Man accepts it ceremoniously.*

Hutu Angry Man: Oh! Thank you SIR!!

*He then kicks it off stage viciously. The crowd screech and laugh. The Hutu Angry Man advances on the Master.*

Hutu Angry Man: Now, give me SOMETHING!

*The crowd chant.*

Crowd: Give him something! Give him something!

*The Master takes off his green scarf and hands it to the Hutu Angry Man. The man sniffs it, balks in disgust and then flings it off stage. The crowd scream with delight. The Hutu Angry Man holds his pole to the Master's neck.*

Hutu Angry Man: Give me SOMETHING!

*He then points at the Master's trousers. The crowd chant and cheer and jeer.*

*The Master looks around, looks at his sobbing son and then slowly removes his trousers. The crowd around him go hysterical. The Hutu Angry Man holds up the trousers in triumph, before flinging them off stage as well. He prances around the stage in victory, cheered by the crowd.*

*The naked Master calls out for his son. The crowd release the son who runs to his father, sobbing.*

Tutsi Son: Papa!!

Tutsi Master: Son!

*They try to leave. But the dog pulls back, confused and frightened. The son pulls on the leash but the dog pulls away. The Master struggles to pull his son away.*

Tutsi Master: Come my son! Come.

Crowd: Get out! Get out!!

*They advance on the Master and Son.*

*The Master disengages his Son from the leash. The son screams in protest.*

Tutsi Son: No papa!! No please papa!!

Tutsi Master: (picking up his son) Let's go. We have to go...

*The Son struggles hard against his father, screaming for his dog, but his father carries him away. The crowd follow them, jeering, braying, hooting. The dog remains on stage, alone and barking furiously.*

*A moment.*

*The crowd turn back to the dog, who whimpers in fright but holds his ground.*

*The crowd advance slowly on the barking dog.*

*Suddenly the Hutu laborer picks up a stone and stones the dog. The dog yelps and backs off. The Hutu laborer throws another stone and then another. The dog runs away. And the crowd follows.*

*The dog is cornered. It howls in dismay and fright. The crowd stand around it, stones in their hands.*

*SLOW BLACKOUT.*

## **Sri Lanka in the 70s and 80s**

### **The Story of the Youth Insurrection**

This scene tells the story of the two Marxist youth insurrections which took place 19 years apart. The first in 1971 was crushed when a plan to attack all police stations in the country was foiled. The second is remembered as the ‘time of terror’ and was brutally suppressed by the Government.

*Note: This scene has no language it is entirely movement. The Ensemble represent the youth revolutionaries in Sri Lanka across two generations – those belonging to the more idealistic revolution in 1970 and those belonging to the more brutal revolution, 15 years later in 1989.*

#### **Characters**

Youth Revolutionaries in Sri Lanka in the 70s  
Youth Revolutionaries in Sri Lanka in the 80s  
Leader of youth revolution

## VOICE OVER

*“Dear Children,*

*The young people of the country on one side and old people of the country on the other side. How heart-breaking.*

*We gave young people this grand education and made them feel they can achieve anything... and then .... we could not support them... Oh! the tragedy of it.*

*It was a disaster. The state came down so hard on the boys. It was a disaster.”*

### Excerpt of Sri Lankan Elder from DCS interview

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#### *The Revolution in the 70s*

*Music and lights together. The stirring beat of a revolution.*

*The stage is filled with youth – standing haphazardly and alone. They struggle by themselves, isolated from each other, feeling trapped and cloistered in an education system which gives them promises but no way forward.*

*Suddenly there is a small breakthrough. Suddenly they are empowered by new ideas, a new way of thinking, a future of new possibilities, a future led by young people. The Ensemble breaks out of their isolation and quickly discover their own potential, quickly discover each other.*

*The idea of a youth revolution spreads like wild fire. Young people discover other young people who believe what they believe. The energy of their ideas, the power of their young educated minds, the strength in their bodies brings them together. Inspired by the Leftist revolutions around the world, empowered by ideas of a socialist state, convinced of the power of the pen and the written word, the young people of the 70s band together and dream big plans. The Ensemble pounds the floor with their feet, facing the audience and the future fearlessly, exuberantly.*

*They are preparing for the revolution. They are ready to take over.*

*And then ... suddenly... a terrible mistake. A mistimed attack. An Ensemble member falls out of line. The entire movement freezes, collapses. The single revolutionary is captured, tortured.*

*The movement is crushed. The young revolutionaries cower together, terrified. They shrink back. But the conviction in their hearts is not quenched. They are just learning patience.*

*Music and Light fade.*

*The Ensemble fade into darkness and stillness.*

### ***The Revolution in the 80s***

*The beat of a drum.*

*Lights.*

*The young revolutionaries stand in straight lines, their bodies harder, their stances more defined and confident. A magnetic leader emerges from within them. He takes his place at their helm. They fall in line, this time prepared for what they know is coming. This time prepared for battle.*

*The philosophy of their movement is taught to them with defined gestures, defined symbols, defined goals. The symbol of the raised fist unites them with each other and with the socialist movements around the world.*

*They start their movement – this time synchronized, pounding the floor with steady, fierce and regular rhythm. Building up the energy of a revolution that is sweeping the country.*

*Suddenly a gun shot. Youth from among the movement fall dead, then appear distorted, broken and burned amongst them.*

*The revolutionaries are rattled. But their symbols unite them. Their objective defines them. They resume the fight.*

*More shots. More bodies. Tortured, burnt and deformed.*

*Now there is fear. But now there is also desperation. The movement must go on. They push forward, they push each other forward through the power of their symbols, their promises and their threats. Their leader pulls them together with the sheer strength of his dream.*

*More shots. More dead and tortured bodies. They are everywhere.*

*And now there are traitors from within the movement.*

*Identification parades, where youth a lined up, identified and shot dead.*

*Many young men and women die to protect their leadership at all costs. To protect the movement.*

*A final burst of energy and desperate hope. A frenzied call to arms. And the madness of the killing and the madness of the fear pushes more young people towards the brink as they drop like flies, over and over and over again, endlessly dying, endlessly standing up in order to be shot and killed.*

*And then suddenly, their leader is shot dead.*

*Shock.*

*The young insurgents watch in horror and disbelief as their iconic leader falls and their revolution crumbles to dust.*

*In the deafening silence that follows, the remaining youth fall to the floor and the stage is filled with lifeless dead bodies.*

*Silence.*

*Lights fade into a blackout.*

## **Rwanda in the 90s**

### **The Story of the Genocide**

This scene tells how 30 years after the Exile of the Tutsis the 100-day genocide occurred, where almost a million people were killed while the world watched.

*Note: The predominant atmosphere is one of stillness. The bodies of the Ensemble in the previous scene remain where they lie for this scene.*

#### **Characters**

Rwandans after the genocide  
Old man clearing bodies  
Young man clearing bodies  
Young Rwandan

## VOICE OVER

*“Dear Children,*

*Yes, genocide was the worst thing that my people did, and I do hope it never happens again.*

*Rwandans’ hearts are broken now, it is hard work to fix them.”*

## Excerpt of Rwandan Elder from DCS interview

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Slow fade up of lights.

*The stage is filled with lifeless dead bodies.*

*Silence.*

*An old man and a young man enter the stage. They look exhausted, overwhelmed, beyond despair.*

*Without even looking at the bodies, they begin their work. They slowly, gently, pick them up and move them aside, in order to create a path, through the corpses. They work diligently, hopelessly, their hearts aching, their bodies empty of life.*

*Suddenly, a girl starts coughing!*

*The two men rush towards her, pick her up from amongst the dead bodies, hold her up and support her as she struggles for breath.*

Old man clearing bodies: (patting the face of the girl) Hello!! Hello!!

*He looks around desperately.*

Old man clearing bodies:                      Hurry!! Hurry!! Bring some water

*The Young Man runs around panicking. Where is he to find water from? The girl is now really struggling for life.*

Old man clearing bodies:                      (screaming in desperation) Bring her some water you asshole!

*But the young man can find no water. The girl collapses in the arms of the Old Man. She goes still. He cradles her body.*

*The Young Man starts crying, overcome with despair.*

*But then, there is more work to be done.*

*The Old Man picks up the young girl and they stack her away neatly with the others, on the side of the road, so as to make a path through.*

*They finish stacking the bodies and they look onwards at the countless bodies ahead of them.*

*Lifelessly, they move on and exit off stage.*

*Silence.*

*The bodies are now stacked neatly on either side.*

*From within the audience, a young Rwandan boy appears. He walks forward through the path created for him, passing the bodies of his countrymen.*

*He weeps as he walks.*

*Lights fade and scene ends*

**ACT II**  
**Marriage, Sex and Love**

## **INTRODUCTION TO ACT II:**

*We were curious to ask our elders about the big question of 'love'.*

*What was their experience of love, of sex and of marriage? How was this situation in the 30s and 40s? The elders of Rwanda and Sri Lanka had a lot to say about love, sex and marriage. And we created **Marriage, Sex and Love** from their insights.*

*Note: Act II is entirely different to ACT I. It is a comedy. It progresses with minimal dialogue. Some of the Ensemble maintain consistent characters – E.g. the Bride and the Groom. Some of the Ensemble play multiple characters.*

### **Characters**

Bride's mother  
Groom's Father

Bride's Cousin  
Groom's Eldest Brother

Bride's Aunt  
Bride's Uncle  
Groom's second brother  
Groom's third brother  
Groom's fourth brother  
Grooms younger brother

Bride  
Groom

Groom's Cow  
Bride's Cat

**VOICE OVER**

***“Dear Children,***

***I don’t think you can do things now based on how we did things then.***

***Times have changed and you have different ways of living and marrying.”***

**Excerpt of Rwandan Elder from DCS interview**

\*\*\*

*Drumming and Lights.*

*Enter a well-built man and a tall and stately woman. They are the Bride’s Mother and Groom’s Father. They approach each other, slowly, from opposite sides of the stage and meet in the middle. They walk haughtily, appraising each other from afar. They like what they see but are both careful not to divulge this.*

*The Bride’s Mother calls to her family for a display of their status.*

*The Bride’s Cousin enters with a big and heavy box, which he places on stage and leaves.*

*The Bride’s Mother looks pointedly at the Groom’s father.*

Bride’s Mother:        This is the finest timber you can find!

*The Groom’s father inspects the box carefully.*

Groom’s Father:        Oh! Jak wood! *(he laughs dismissively)* ... Arun!! Arun!! Bring out our Ebony!

*The Groom’s Eldest brother walks on to stage proudly with a box. He places it next to the Bride’s box.*

*The Groom’s father taps the Ebony his family produced and then, for effect, taps the inferior Jak wood produced by the Bride’s side.*

*The Bride’s Mother is terribly embarrassed. She turns and screams at her family.*

Bride's Mother: Ugh! You imbecile!! Are you trying to destroy our family? They have brought their best!! Look at how they are looking at me now.

*Bride's Cousin enters quickly to replace the box.*

Bride's Mother: *(hisses)* Why didn't you listen to me?! Idiot! I told you they would check. Get out of my sight!!

*The Groom's Father looks on smugly at their loss of face. He is as impressed with the Bride Mother's temper as he is with the replacement box that her family produces. He runs his hands over it.*

Groom's Father: Very Nice

*The Bride's Mother moves to more carefully compare both boxes. The Groom's Father, suddenly nervous, calls for reinforcements.*

Groom's Father: Arun!! Bring a few more!! Quick!!

*Young men from both families produce more boxes.*

Bride's Mother: *(hissing)* Arrange our ones properly you useless fool!

*The young men create a bench. The Groom's Father and the Bride's Mother both inspect the bench between them. Is it solid? Firm? Will it last?*

*They are both satisfied.*

*The Groom's Younger Brother sneaks in and sits on the bench, bumping up and down on it to test its strength and resilience. The Groom's Father is embarrassed by his youngest son's vulgarity. He shoos him off stage. He smiles sheepishly at the Bride's Mother. She smiles back thinly.*

*All the members of the Bride's family and all the brothers of the Groom's family enter. The sons on the Groom's side sit down and await the Bride.*

*The Bride is escorted in.*

Bride's Mother: Here is the daughter I hope to give away in marriage. My best one!

*The brother's murmur their approval and disapproval.*

Groom's Mother: *(appreciatively)* A beauty.

*The Eldest Brother, then stands up and ceremoniously places a challenge before the Bride.*

*Everyone watches on anxiously as the young Bride nervously attempts the challenge. There is a sign of relief when she is successful. She has passed the test.*

*The Groom's Father steps up and commands his sons into a straight line. They stand according to seniority. The youngest one has a colourful bag slung over his shoulder.*

Groom's Father: *(proudly)* My sons...

*The Groom's Father notices something odd and starts counting his sons.*

Groom's Father: ... 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 ... Hey! This matter is for the 11<sup>th</sup> one! What is the 12<sup>th</sup> one doing with that?! Give that here!

*The Groom's Father grabs the colourful bag away from the Groom's Younger Brother and places it on the shoulders of the next brother.*

Groom: (startled) What me??

Groom's Father: (pulling at the startled young man) Yes, yes! Now just get on with it. (he pushes him towards the Bride.)

*The stunned Groom with his colourful bag stands helplessly next to the terrified looking Bride. The two families admire them.*

Groom's Father: Wow! Look at that! What a match!!

*Everyone claps and congratulates each other.*

*Festive drumming. People start dancing, interacting and making jolly. The festivities continue around the Bride and Groom who sit on the furthest two corners of the bench in the middle, both staring forward.*

*Exit everyone except the Bride and Groom.*

*Silence.*

*The Bride and Groom struggle to make eye contact, painfully aware of themselves, each other and what is expected of them by everyone.*

*Silence.*

*Enter Bride's Mother who whispers instructions to her daughter. Taps her for encouragement and then leaves.*

*Silence. The young couple remain transfixed with terror.*

*Enter Groom's Younger Brother. He sneaks in and sits by the Groom's side, cuddling him. He is feeling emotional. The Groom stroke his head and reassures him as the Bride looks away, embarrassed.*

Voice Over: Little one!! Little one!! Where...

*Enter the Groom's Father, looking cross. He stops when he notices his youngest son with the Groom. He gently disentangles the two brothers and takes the younger one off stage.*

Groom's Younger Brother: (to the groom) Bye brother! Be a man!

*The Groom is embarrassed. So is the Bride.*

*Silence.*

*Enter the Bride's Cousin with something intoxicating for the Groom to drink, some encouragement. He hands it to him shyly, pointedly and leaves quickly.*

*The Groom sniffs the brew. It is unfamiliar.*

*Enter the Groom's Eldest Brother.*

*He sniffs the cup, confiscates the drink. Leaves in a huff.*

*Silence. The Bride and Groom stare ahead, unblinking.*

*Enter the Bride's Mother. This time she removes one of the boxes that make up the bench, thereby making it smaller and pushing her daughter closer to the Groom. She whispers at her daughter, it could be a threat, and then leaves.*

*Long silence. The couple, now sitting closer together (but still on opposite sides of the bench) remain shell shocked.*

*Suddenly, the Groom starts to nervously undo his pants. The Bride looks away, mortified.*

*Enter The Cow.*

*The Cow       MMMMMMBAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!*

*The Groom is startled out of his skin. He pulls his pants back on.*

*Voice Over:       Hey! Hey!! Come here!! This way...!!*

*The Cow slowly ambles off stage, towards the voices from the Groom's family side.*

*Silence.*

*The embarrassed Groom looks around to see if the coast is clear. He then fumbles with his pants again. This time he manages to get them down below his knees.*

*Enter the Groom's family and the Bride's family outraged.*

*Groom's Father:       We have given you everything we promised. Everything! Here look...*

*The Groom's Father picks up the colourful bag on the Groom's lap, revealing the half-naked young Groom. But nobody takes the slightest notice. The families meet in the middle. They are engaged in a hot dispute.*

*The Groom sits transfixed, with his pants around his ankles, staring ahead. The Bride looks sick with embarrassment.*

*The families brandish agreements and promises and argue loudly, each side trying to maintain the upper hand.*

*Groom's Father:       What's all this fuss? We've stuck to the deal.*

*Bride's Uncle:       But look here!*

*Groom's Father:       I see nothing.*

*Bride's Uncle:       Look here!*

*Groom's Father:       I said nothing.*

*Bride's Uncle:       Look here!*

Groom's Father: I say... (scoffs). Honestly! You people. (he turns to his sons) Boys!  
Bring her out!

*One of the Groom's brothers leads The Cow back onto stage. The Bride's family are delighted, pacified.*

Groom's Father: See? We are people who stick to our word.

*The Cow stands patiently as the Bride's Family examines and approves it. The hand over is done. Both families are happy, they part ways. The Groom's Brothers' tease the half-naked Groom on the way out. The Bride's family offer her some encouragement.*

*Silence.*

*The couple sit alone again.*

*The Groom is now determined to go ahead with what needs to be done. He swiftly and purposefully removes his pants completely.*

Voice Over: MMMMMBAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!

*The Cow charges onto stage followed by a struggling Bride's Cousin who is being dragged helplessly along.*

*The Groom yelps in shock and covers himself up with the colourful bag.*

*The Bride's Cousin wrestles with The Cow who is determined to return to her previous masters. The Cow is hauled back on to the Bride's family side, mooing in protest.*

The Cow: MMMMMBAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!! MMMMMBAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!

*The groom is now exhausted and fed up. He is on the verge of giving up.*

*Enter The Cat.*

*A large cat slinks its way onto stage from the Bride's side. It mews loudly and continuously.*

*The Bride is delighted. The Groom is disgusted.*

*The Cat rubs up against the Bride and she cuddles it with delight. The Groom watches on in distaste.*

*The purring, mewing Cat now slinks towards the Groom and rubs itself against him. He is repulsed. The Cat continues to persist, demanding affection.*

*The Groom suddenly loses his temper. He leaps to his feet and chases The Cat off the stage, throwing everything he has at it – his bag, his trousers, everything.*

*Furious and only wearing his underwear, he storms back and sits down on his end of the bench. The Bride is furious at him for his treatment of The Cat.*

*The couple glare at each other from either side of the bench.*

*Silence.*

*But not for long.*

Voice Over:           Hey Bro! Catch!!

*From the Groom's side, his trousers and bag are thrown back in. They hit him in the face.*

*It is over. As the Bride continues to glare at him, the Groom angrily puts his pants back on, stuffing his trousers by mistake as he picks up his strewn belongings.*

*He is just in time because the two families charge on to stage again, this time for a group photo.*

*There is much shuffling and re-positioning.*

*They all stand behind the young couple who stare angrily ahead.*

*The Bride tries to get up and leave. Her family holds her down.*

*The Groom tries to get up and leave. His family pulls him back.*

*The Bride's Mother then moves to sit next to her daughter, sliding her closer to the Groom.*

*The Groom's Father moves to sit next to his son, sliding him closer to the Bride.*

*The Cow saunters in and joins the group.*

*All the family members except for The Groom, The Bride and The Cow smile for the photo.*

*Sound fades.*

*Lights fade.*

**BLACKOUT.**

**ACT III**  
**UPDSIDE DOWN LAND**

### INTRODUCTION TO ACT III:

Tragically, both Sri Lanka and Rwanda are countries that experienced times of sustained terror and horror - where the very fundamentals of humanity that binds society and people together, were cast aside. Rwanda experienced the horror of Genocide. Sri Lanka experienced two bloody insurrections and sustained riots.

During these times of terror, everything we knew and believed in and held on to as a human beings, seemed to disappear. Suddenly, human beings were not acting like human beings anymore.

We talked to our elders about this. About what they saw and about what they experienced. And from their memories, we created **Upside Down Land**.

*Note: This scene is largely atmospheric, with slices of brutality appearing and disappearing on stage. The atmosphere is one of total breakdown, lack of conscience, humanity and enduring madness. While performance of this scene and creation of this world can expand on the interpretations of this kind of dystopian world, what is described in the script are the references to incidents, images and experiences mentioned in the DCS interviews of Sri Lanka and Rwanda – when the elders referred to their memories of extended periods of killing, torture, disappearance and genocide. These references are encapsulated in a poem that could or could not be shared with the audience.*

#### **Characters<sup>5</sup>**

Little girl  
Dead mother  
Man with body bag  
Man eating sandwich  
Lamppost lighter  
Man in tire  
First Rapist  
Second Rapist  
Last Rapist  
Digger 1  
Digger 2  
Digger 3  
Supervisor  
People in queue  
Man measuring noses  
Man planting heads

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<sup>5</sup> This is a list of the characters created for the maiden production. Several more can be created.

Mother

Son

Night time visitor

Man 1 playing game

Man 2 playing game

Man 3 playing game

*There were rather horrible things going on*

*The water was mixed with too much blood  
The bodies were packed like sardines in a pit  
Young men strung up on lampposts, burnt in tires  
And men stood in line to rape*

*There were rather horrible things going on*

*They had boys, they called them chickens  
They kept them in a cage  
And when they felt like cutting off a head  
They took one out and cut off its head*

*There were rather horrible things going on*

*Young men were picked up like meat  
They knocked on doors in the middle of the night  
And took children away from mothers  
They dug their own graves and then were shot*

*They measured people's hands and then killed them  
They measured people's noses to kill them  
They said it was not a sin to kill  
The radio said it was like killing a snake*

*There were rather horrible things going on*

*One morning there were 18 heads around the pond in the middle of the campus  
Remember that pregnant woman whose stomach was cut open and the baby taken out and flung  
to the ground?*

*There were rather horrible things going on.*

This is a collection of phrases taken from the DCS interviews  
which formed the base of the world of Upside Down Land

**VOICE OVER**

***“Dear Children,***

***I think we have entered into the end times of this world...”***

**Excerpt of Rwandan Elder from DCS interview**

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*Lights.*

*Music – light, eerie lullaby and merry-go-round music.*

***The water was mixed with too much blood***

*A Little Girl sits on the floor next to a dead woman. She is cradling a dead infant in her hands.*

Little Girl:   My Country.  
                  My country is probably the most amazing country in the world.  
                  Its rivers are bright red with the blood of its people.  
                  It has tall, tall mountains made of thousands of human bones.  
                  My favourite time in the day is the evening –  
                  When the lampposts along our streets are lit up.

*A man carrying a large black body bag suffocates the Little Girl, puts her body into his bag and leaves.*

*The dead woman is pregnant. The infant is still connected to her body.*

*Another man eats a sandwich and watches.*

***Young men strung up on lampposts***

*One man leads in another man who is bound and has a vehicle tire round his neck. The bound man with the tire around his neck is tied to the lamppost. He hangs from it, the life draining out of him. He is then set on fire.*

*Another man enters and switches on the lamppost.*

***Men stood in line to rape***

*A man abuses a woman in the open.*

*The man eating a sandwich, watches.*

*Several men form a line leading to the wings. They wait patiently for Rapist 1 to end raping a woman. They talk to each other while in the line.*

Last Rapist:                Hey, What's your number?

Rapist 2:                    Twenty

Last Rapist:                Well, I'm 19...

Rapist 2:                    I came here first

*Rapist 1 is done.*

Rapist 1:                    She's almost dead.

*Rapist 2 peers at the woman. He leaves.*

Last Rapist:                Is she at least warm?

*He falls on top of the woman's body.*

***They dug their own graves***

*Three young Diggers dig pits. They are watched by a disinterested Supervisor.*

Digger 1:                    I am done Sir.

*Supervisor lazily shoots Digger 1 in the leg.*

*Digger 1 keeps on working. The Supervisor then shoots Digger 1 in the head and watches him fall into the pit he dug.*

***They measured people's noses to kill them***

*Several people stand patiently in a line for their noses to be measured.*

*One of them is killed.*

***Young men were picked up like meat***

*Two men fight over a dead body – pulling it apart.*

***18 heads around the pond***

*A man carefully plants heads on the stage.*

*The man with a body bag, steals the heads.*

***They knocked on doors in the middle of the night***

*A mother holds her son close.*

*A knock on the door. The mother faints.*

*A man enters and kills the son in front of the mother.*

*He leaves.*

***The radio said it was like killing a snake***

*Some men sit playing a game.*

*Radio broadcast. All enter the stage.*

Radio Announcement:

This is a section emergency broadcast. All loyal citizens be informed that anyone with a palm longer than 38.92 cm has been declared a parasite and must be exterminate immediately. All those palms longer than 38.92 cm must be exterminate immediately.

*The men playing a game measure each other's palms carefully, then kill one man. The rest continue the game.*

*Radio broadcast. All enter the stage.*

Radio Announcement:

This is another special broadcast. All loyal citizens be informed that anyone who cannot say ‘*Baaldiya*’ with a correct pronunciation has been declared a parasite and must be exterminate immediately. All who can’t say ‘*Baaldiya*’ need to be exterminate immediately.

Man 1 playing game:           What did he say?  
Man 2 playing game:           Those who can’t say ‘*Vaaldiya*’ are parasites.  
Man 1 playing game:           Come again?  
Man 2 playing game:           Those who can’t say ‘*Vaaldiya*’ must be killed.  
Man 1 playing game:           It’s not *Vaaldiay* its ‘*Baaldiya*’  
Man 2 playing game:           *Vaaldiya*  
Man 1 playing game:           Wrong again! *Baaldiya*  
Man 2 playing game:           ... *Vaal....diya* ...

*Man 2 playing game is killed.*

*A man runs in and smashes the lamppost light.*

*BLACKOUT.*

**VOICE OVER**

***“Dear Children,***

***Our generation made some terrible mistakes. But we must learn to let go.***

***Other generations may not be doing what we would have done. Or may not be doing it in the way we would have done it. We have to face our difference. I really feel we have to have that confidence, in our people.***

***Yes, we made some terrible mistakes. We can only hope they will learn from those.***

***Sincerely...”***

**Excerpt of Sri Lankan Elder from DCS interview**

**END**

## **PRODUCTION CREDITS**

### **CAST**

#### ***2015 Ensemble***

##### **Rwandan Artists**

Andy Fred  
Innocent Munyeshuri  
Abdoul Mujyambere  
Alexia Mupende  
Claudia Shimwa

##### **Sri Lankan Artists**

Nilmini Buwaneka  
Pradeep Gunarathna  
Akalanka Prabhashwara  
Pramila Samarakoon  
Sanjeewa Upendra

##### **Guest Performance**

Jerry King

#### ***2016 Ensemble***

##### **Rwandan Artists**

Andy Fred  
Innocent Munyeshuri  
Abdoul Mujyambere  
Alexia Mupende  
Claudia Shimwa

##### **Sri Lankan Artists**

Ruvini de Silva  
Pradeep Gunarathna  
Akalanka Prabhashwara  
Pramila Samarakoon  
Nipuni Sharada  
Sanjeewa Upendra  
Arun Welandawe-Prematilleke /Gehan Blok

### **PRODUCTION TEAM**

**Director**

Ruwanthie de Chickera

**Writer**

Ruwanthie de Chickera

**Producer**

Stages Theatre Group

**Composer**

Ranil Goonawardene

**Choreographer**

Pradeep Gunarathna  
Abdoul Mujiyambere

**Designer**

Jayampathi Guruge

**Percussion**

Kubwimana Djuma

**Lights Operator**

Jayampathi Guruge

**Sounds/Subtitles Operator**

Pemanthi Fernando

**Make up**

Sanjeewa Upendra  
Nipuni Sharada

**Front of House Manager**

Sanda Wijeratne

**Front of House Crew**

Anila Sadasivan Krishnamma  
Malshani Delgahapitiya

**Backstage Crew**

Bimsara Hatharasinghe

**Assistant Stage Manager**

Akalanka Prabhashwara

**Stage Manager**

Pramila Samarakoon

**Research Team**

Halik Azeez  
Angelica Chandrasekeran  
Gihan de Chickera  
Ruwanthie de Chickera  
Gehan Gunatilleke  
Chamalie Gunawardena  
Jayampathi Guruge  
Farzana Haniffa  
Radhika Hettiarachchi  
Azra Jafferjee  
Nadie Kammallaweera  
Dilkie Liyanage  
Innocent Munyeshuri  
Nagulan Nesiah  
Dylan Perera  
Duminda Prasad

Amri Safari  
Pramila Samarakoon  
Sanjeewa Upendra  
Deanne Uyangoda

**Research Assistants**

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Sanjaya Ekneligoda  
Shalini Perera  
Kiruthika Shanmugapreya  
Madhavi Shilpadipathi

**Devising Actors**

Prasanna Mahagamage  
Lahiru Edirisinghe

**Assistant Producer**

Sanda Wijeratne  
Miranga Ariyaratne  
Radhika Hettiarachchi

**Set Construction**

Chathura Dasanayaka

**Publicity Graphic Design**

Venura Navod Balasooriya

**Media and Publicity**

**Head**

Gihan de Chickera

**Social Media**

Ransaka Uththunga Galmangoda

**Print Media**

Jayampathi Guruge

**Electronic Media**

Malshani Delgahapitiya

**Website**

Ransaka Uththunga Galmangoda

**Souvenir**

**Content**

Ruwanthie de Chickera

Pemanthi Fernando

**Layout**

Venura Navod Balasooriya

**Photographers**

**Rehearsals**

Pramila Samarakoon

**Cast Photography**

Prauda Buwaneka

**Campaign Photography**

Prauda Buwaneka

Pasan Ranaweera

**Production Photography**

Prauda Buwaneka

Chanuka Thiyambarawatta

**Videographer**

Sameera Weerasekara

**Video edit**

Venura Navod Balasooriya

**Tour Manager**

Pemanthi Fernando

**Production Coordinators**

Deeandra Bulner

Tehani Chitty

Hiranyada Dewasiri

Waruni Karunarathne

Antje Muller

Rebecca Owen

Nuwan Rezel

Anila Sadasivan Krishnamma

**Production Manager**

Pemanthi Fernando



| stages  
| theatre  
| group