# The Vilification of Enemy Aliens: An Artist, the State, and Japanese Internment

by

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A THESIS

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and the Robert D. Clark Honors College
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# An Abstract of the Thesis of

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Title: The Vilification of Enemy Aliens: An Artist, the State, and Japanese Internment

Approved: _____
Priscilla Yamin

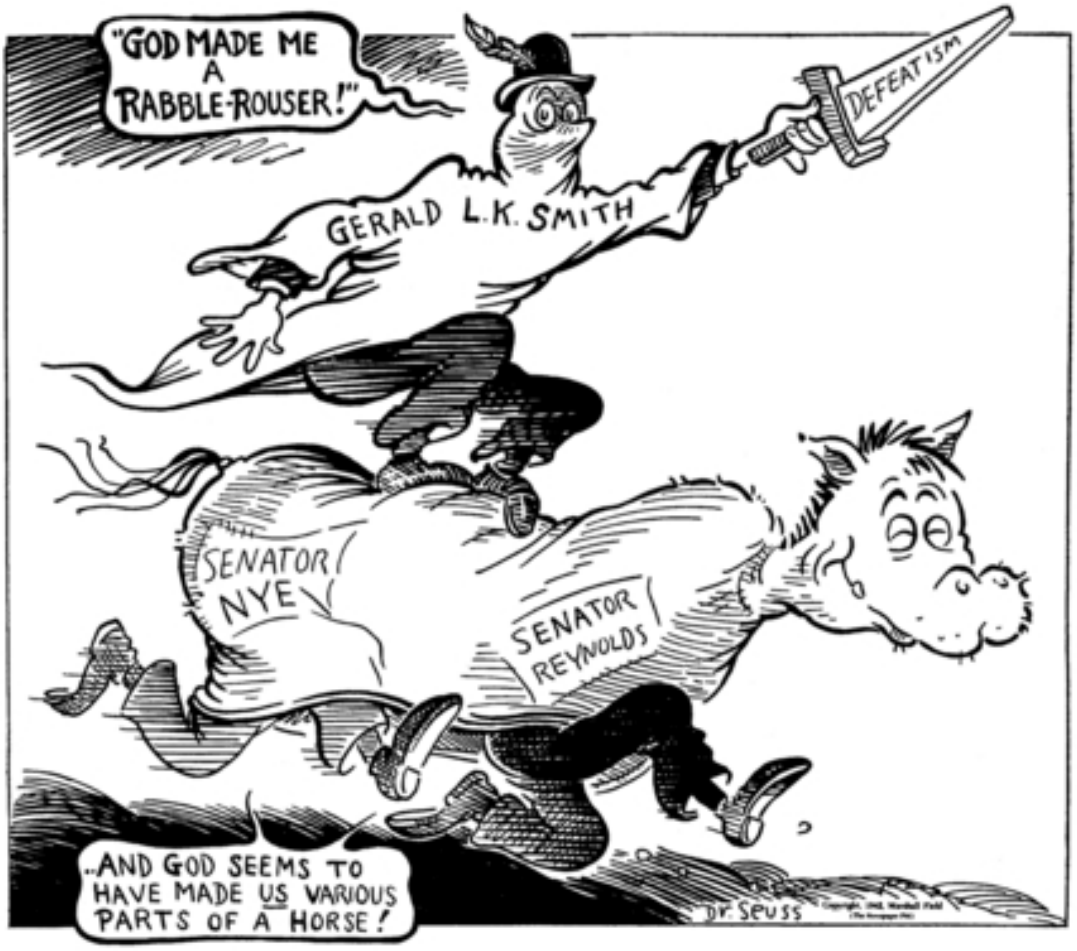
My thesis is about the balancing of civil liberties, human rights, and national security in times perceived by government officials and the public as perilous. My thesis is a play and accompanying research paper that uses the celebrated Dr. Seuss and Japanese internment as a prism to the oppressive anti-Islamic and anti-immigrant rhetoric and actions stoked by the Trump administration. Two key purposes animate my research and writing. The first is to highlight the capacity of theater to provide formidable political critiques and to spur reform activism. The second is to carefully elucidate linkages between the wartime hysteria and repression of the Second World War and our contemporary setting.

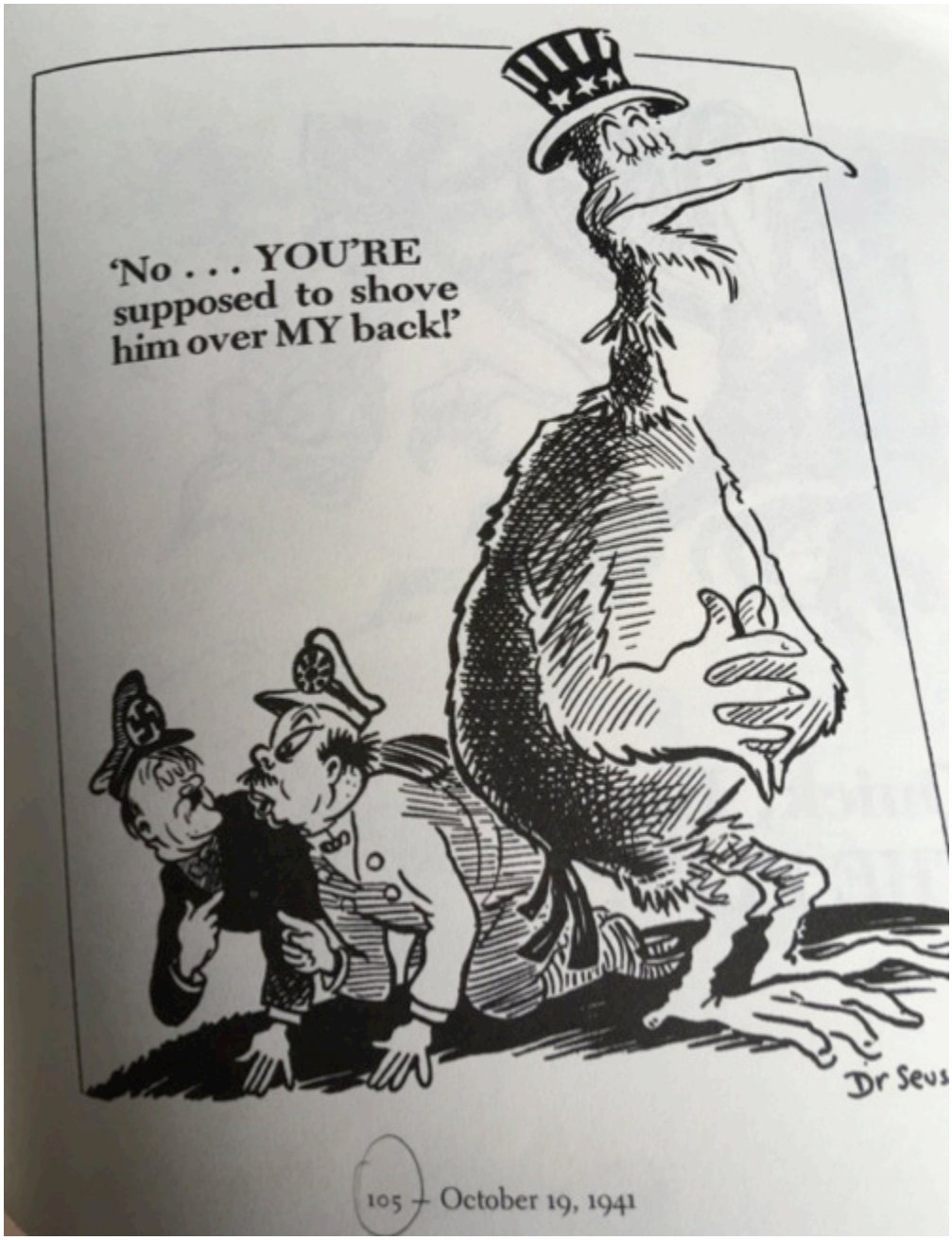
## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professor Priscilla Yamin and Professor Alison Gash for their unending support, confidence, and inspiration. Thanks to Professor Mai-Lin Cheng who also served on my Thesis Committee. I am so grateful to have had the privilege of having such excellent professors encourage my creativity and guide me through this strenuous, but rewarding process.

# Table of Contents

# Figures List:

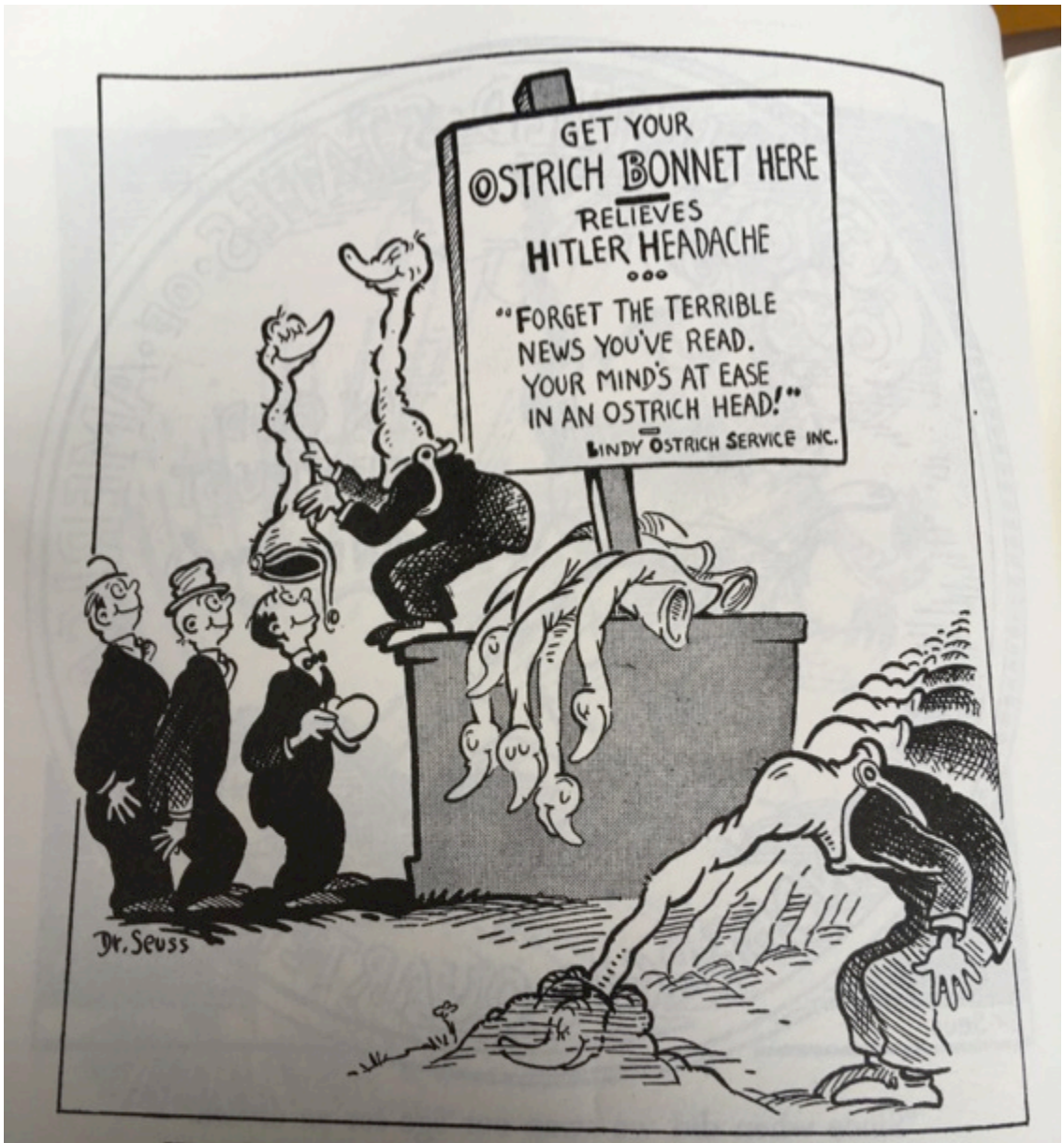





105 – October 19, 1941

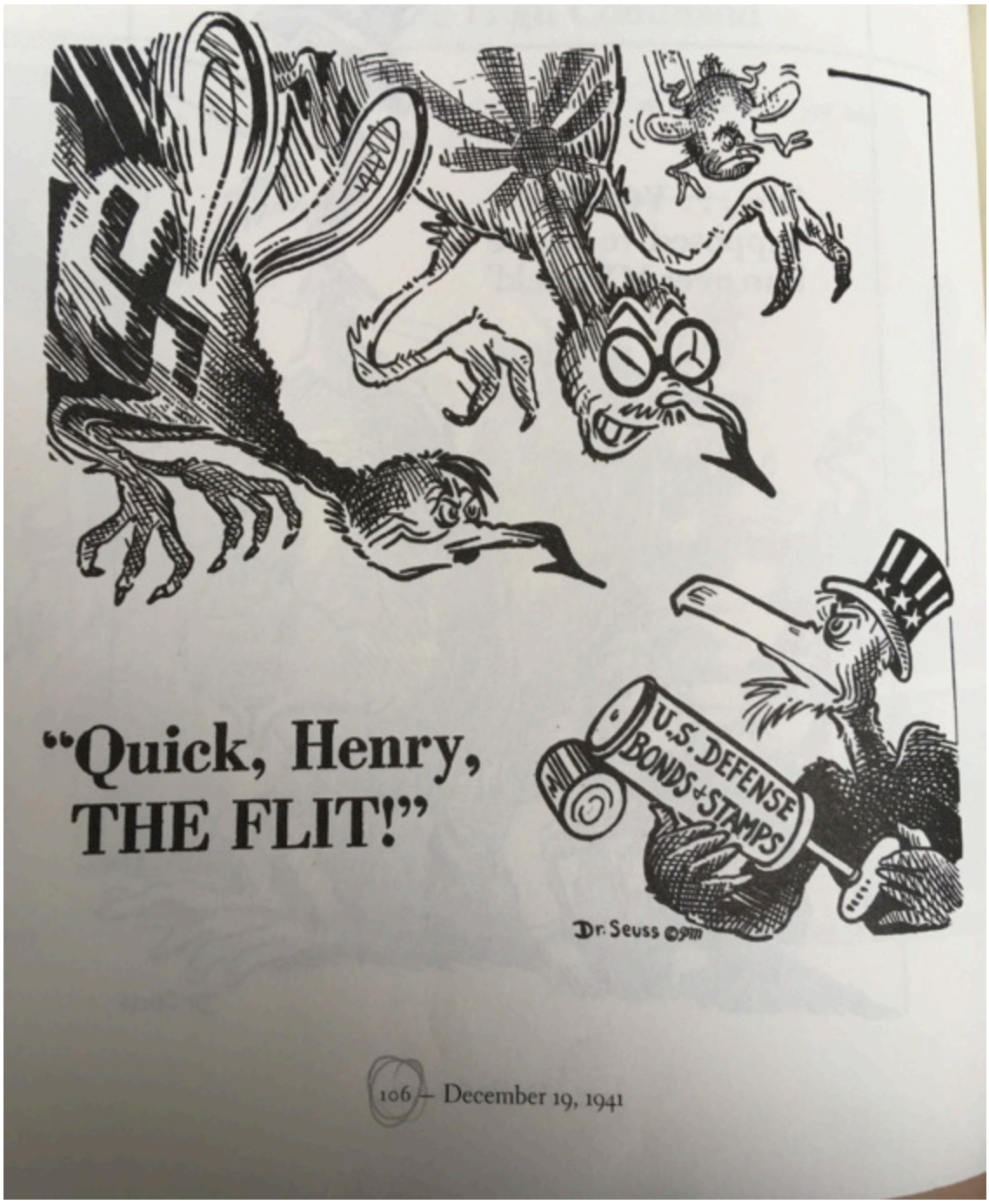

"Since when did we swap our ego for an ostrich?"

29 – April 28, 1941

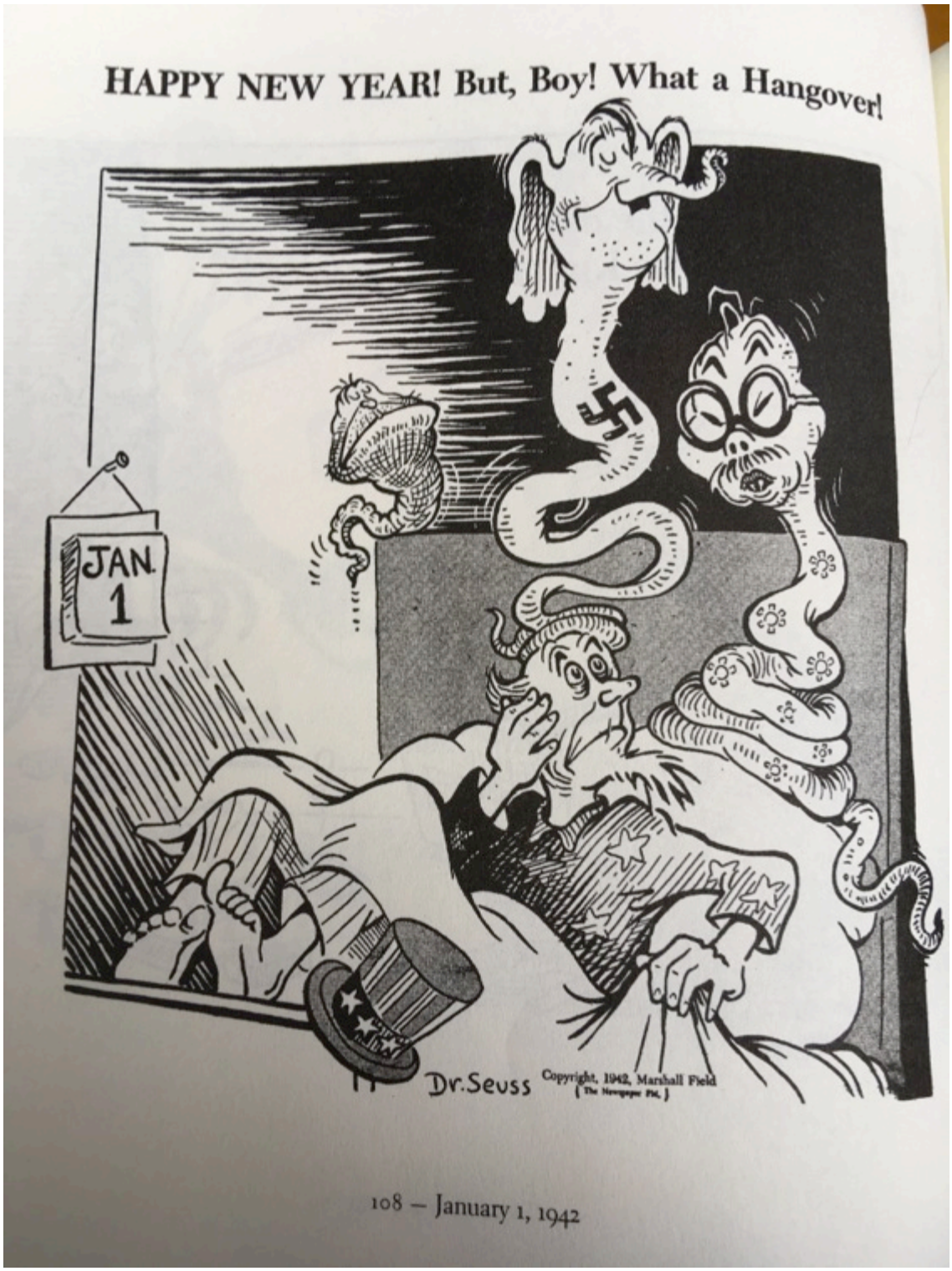



**We Always Were Suckers for Ridiculous Hats . . .**

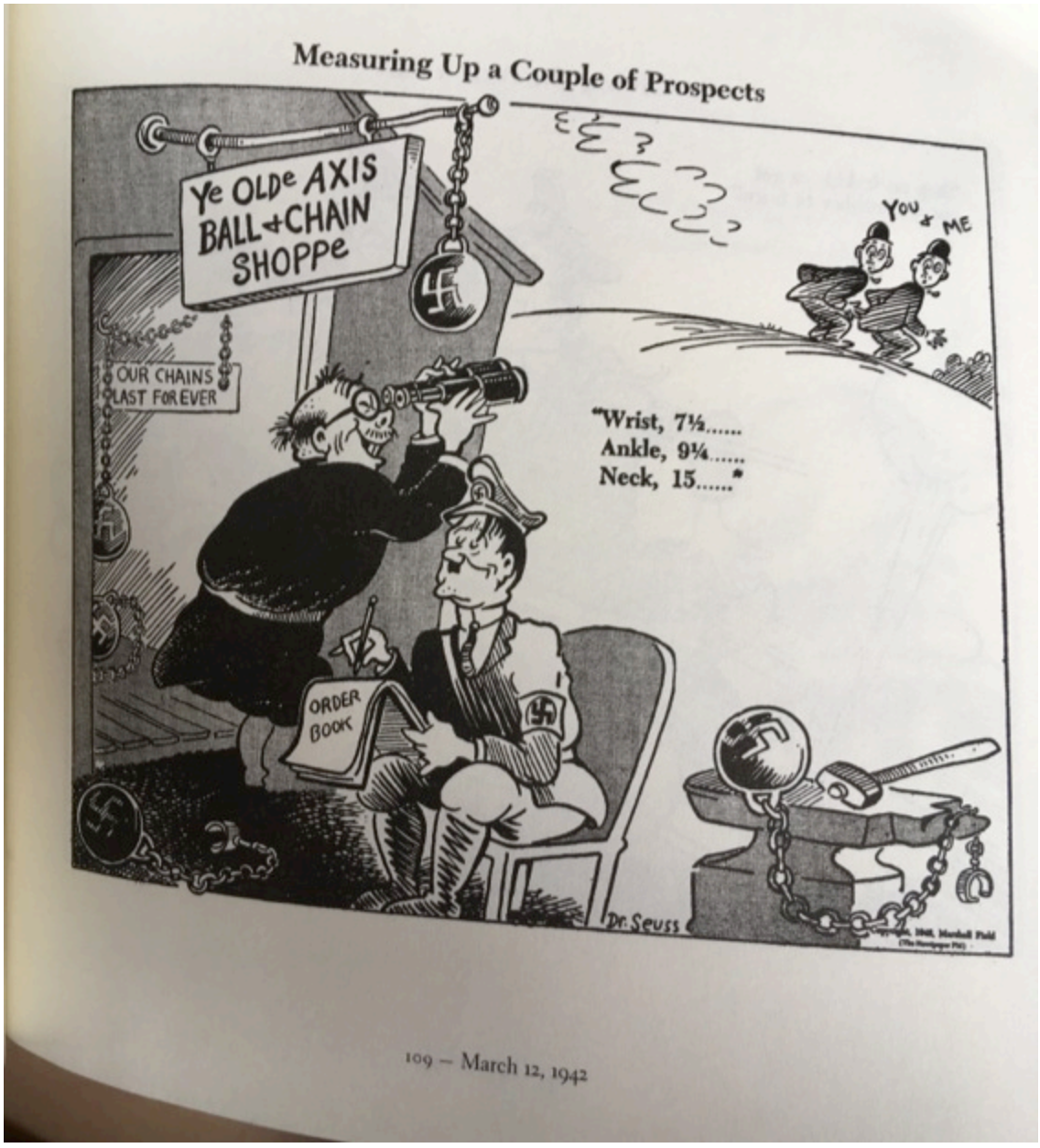
30 — April 29, 1941



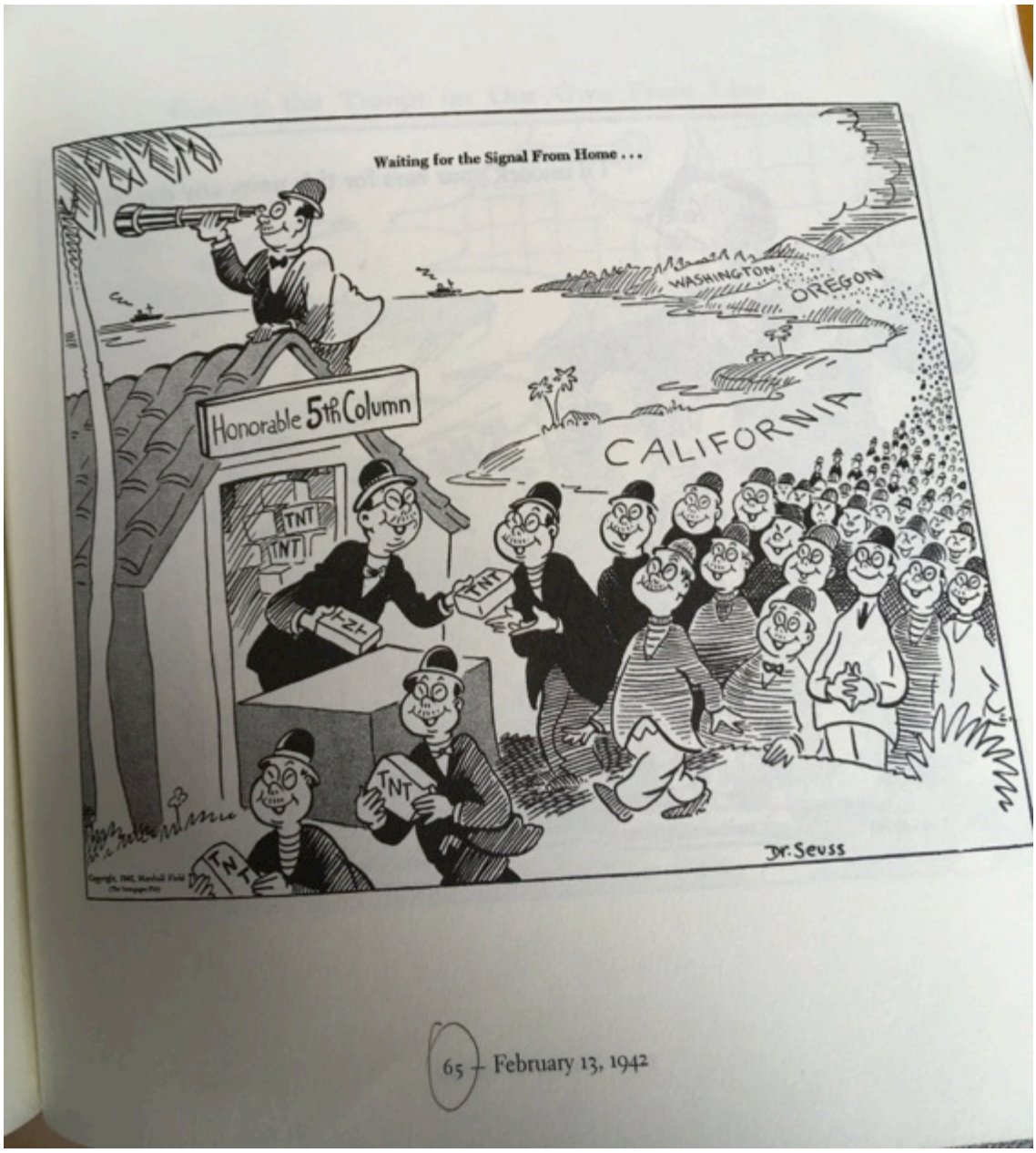

106 — December 19, 1941



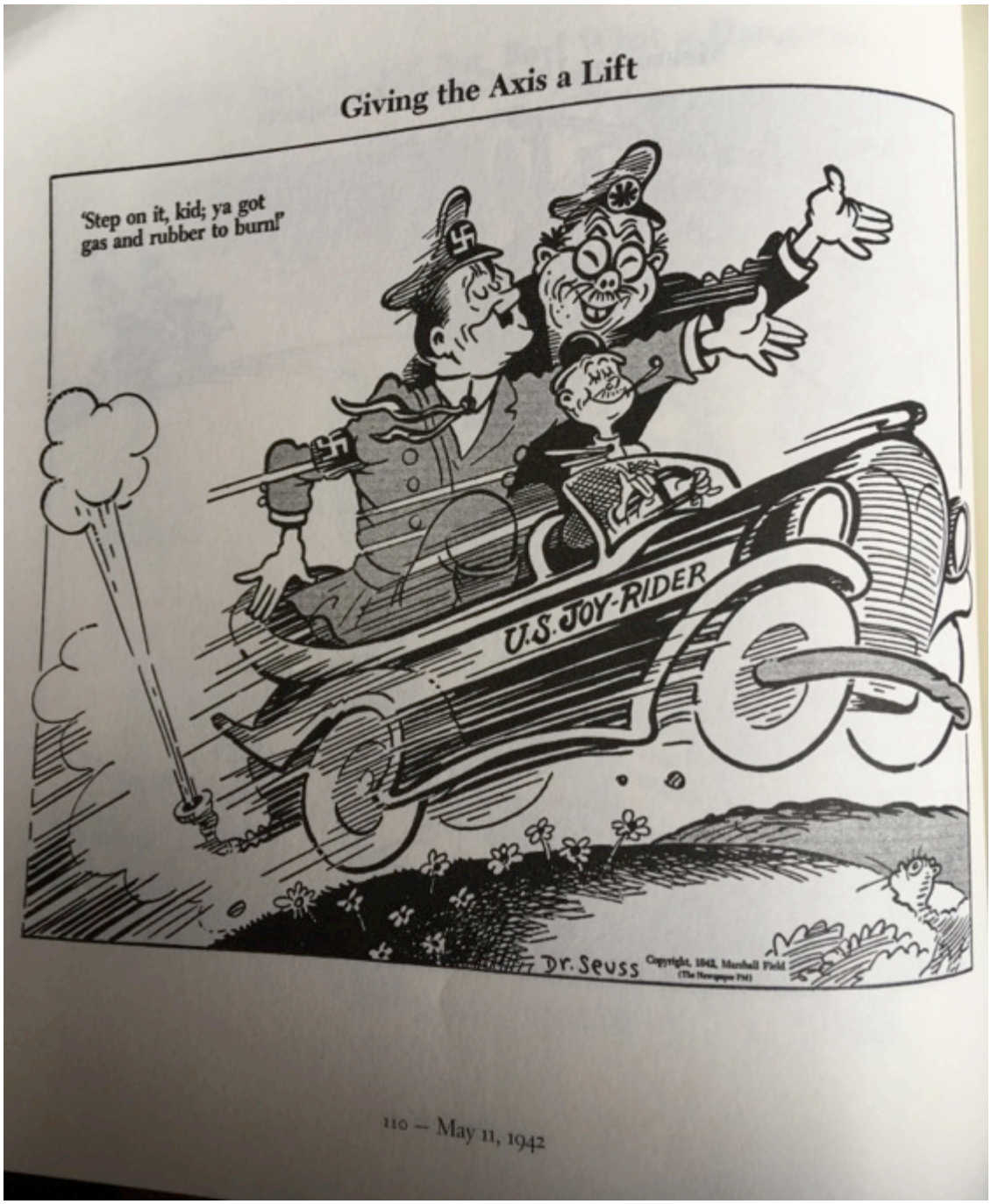

108 — January 1, 1942




109 — March 12, 1942



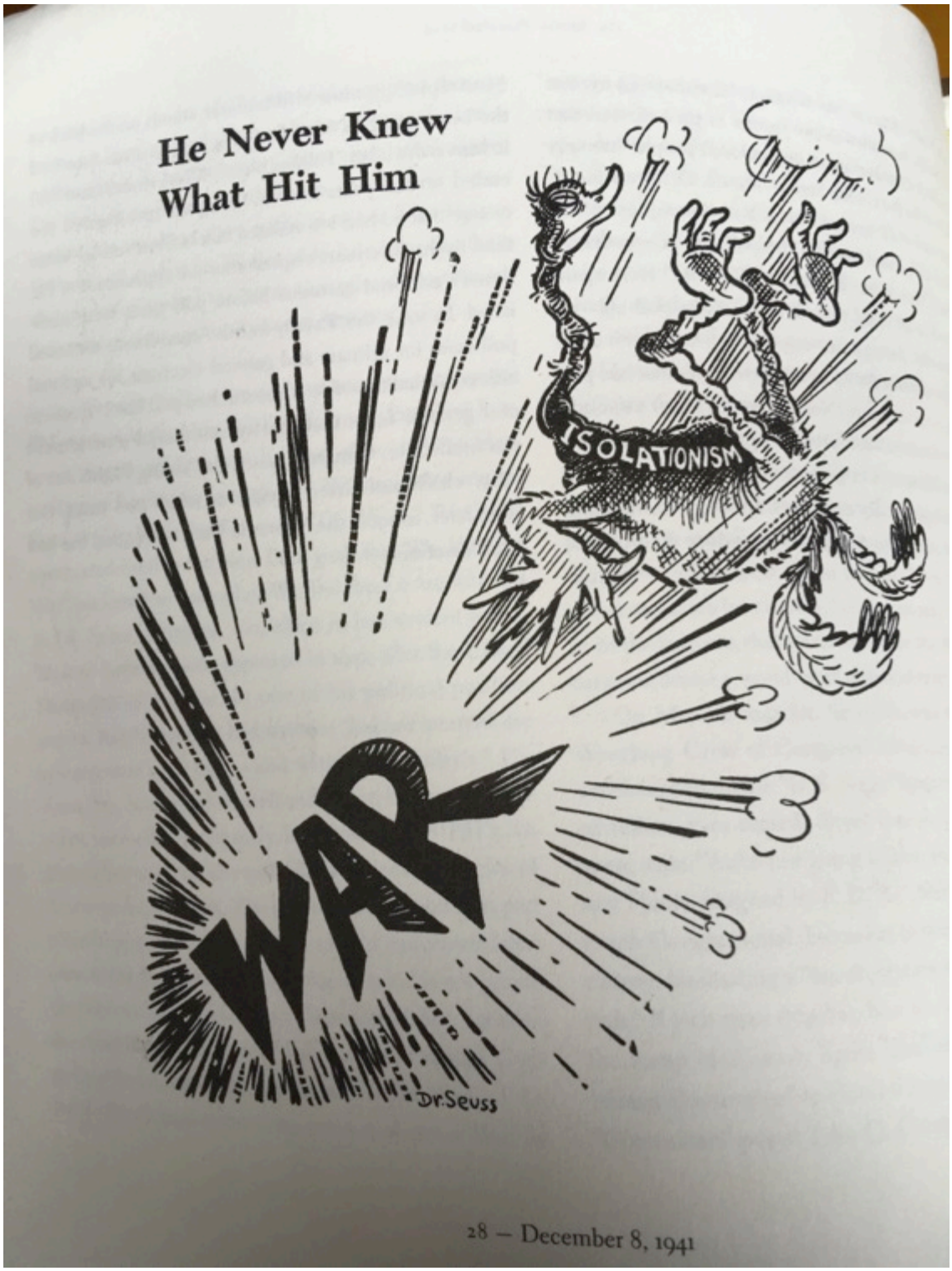

65 — February 13, 1942




110 — May 11, 1942

We'll Have to Clean a Lot of Stuff Out Before We Put Peace Thoughts In!

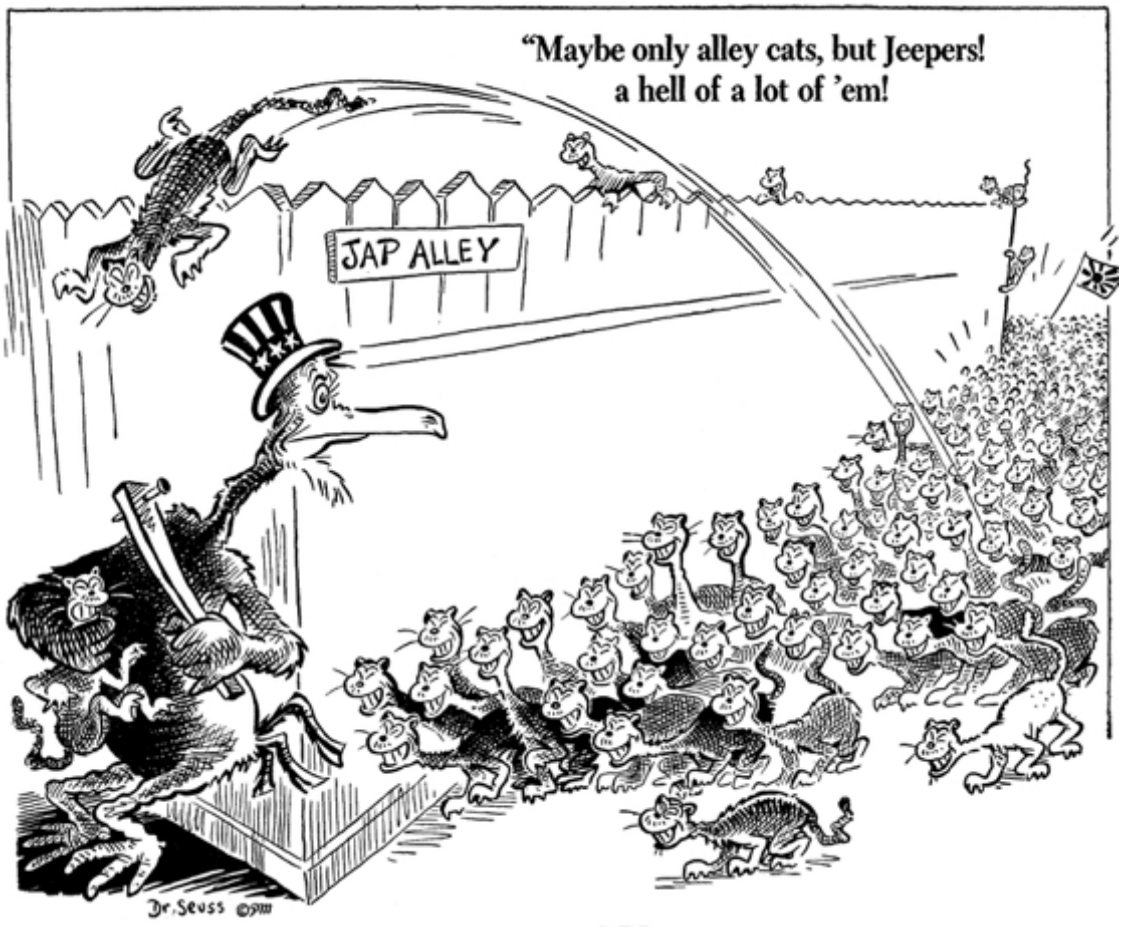

64 — December 30, 1942




28 — December 8, 1941


**Ho Hum! No chance of contagion.**

31 – May 15, 1941


"Maybe only alley cats, but Jeepers!
a hell of a lot of 'em!
JAP ALLEY
Dr. Seuss

# Familiar Wars

**A New Play by Natalie Tichenor**

**Character Descriptions:**

**Theodore Geisel/Dr. Seuss** - the enigmatic writer turn political cartoonist. (Should not be obvious that this character is Dr. Seuss until he writes *HORTON Hears a Who*.)
**HELEN Palmer** - His wife.
**PEGGY** - His niece. Age 9-12.
**HORTON Conrad** - A college friend.
**BENNETT Cerf** - A college friend and Seuss's editor.

**MITSUKO Nagata** - Twenty year old Japanese woman.
**TAKEHARU Nagata** - Her husband.
**Akira Nagata** - Her daughter. First appears as an infant then as a four year old.
**Mother** – MITSUKO's mother.

All double as voices of guards, crowds, voices of politicians, interviewees, and interviewers as needed/indicated.

**Set Notes**

On one side of the stage should be TED's office. He has an upper-middle class home in La Jolla, California. Downstage on this section can be partially occupied by the office set, but some space should be left open.
On the other side of the stage is the inside of a Japanese internment camp room, with a high fence in the background. The downstage should be mostly kept open, as scenes will happen outside. When characters are outside, lighting will be used to create the walls of the room. Similarly, lighting can be used to illustrate when characters are not near the room.
Ideally the internment camp appears as though it is in the Geisel House's backyard.
At the start of the play when Mitsuko and her family are in their home they are downstage, with the back wall able to be moved, maybe on a fly system. The downstage home will have to be moved off stage and out of the way quickly and smoothly, and will only be on stage in that beginning section.
When in Japan and modern-day interviews it is fine for the set is still seen in the background, but it should not draw focus.
Projections on back wall/screen are certainly preferred, but if space does not allow for this, then the projections don't need to be used. However, the audience does need a way of seeing all the cartoons, whether they be printed in the program, or presented in some other way. The cartoons will be referenced by page number, as they are all gathered, with one exception, from Richard Minear's book, Dr. Seuss goes to War.

**Scene List**

Scene 1 – Meet the Geisels

Scene 2 – Pearl Harbor

Scene 3 – Relocation

Scene 4 – Seuss at War

Scene 5 - Celebration

Scene 6 – Rumors

Scene 7 – Condolences

Scene 8 – Breakdown

Scene 9 – Horton and Ted

Scene 10 – Art

\- Intermission -

Scene 11 – Peggy and Ted

Scene 12 – Dear Baby

Scene 13 - Birthday One

Scene 14 - Birthday Two

Scene 15 – After Funeral

Scene 16 – Japan

Scene 17 –Leaving the Camps

Scene 18 – Interviews

**The End.**

**Scene 1 - Meet the Geisels**

(A radio plays ”Franklin Delano Roosevelt is again elected President of the United State of America over his Republican opponent Wendell Wilke” A video of FDR giving a speech is projected.
FDR: “This is preeminently the time to speak the truth, the whole truth, frankly and boldly. Nor need we shrink from honestly facing conditions in our country today. This great Nation will endure as it has endured, will revive and will prosper. So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself — nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror, which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance. In every dark hour of our national life a leadership of frankness and vigor has met with that understanding and support of the people themselves which is essential to victory.”
The projection fades and it is just the radio playing faintly by the end.)

(A study within a medium sized home in La Jolla, California. The room is full of books and drawings, a messy desk, couch, armchair, and small bar are the furniture. Theodore Geisel sits at his desk, writing and drawing. He is unsatisfied with his writing.)

(Peggy is heard running and calling for her Uncle, Theodore Geisel. She is carrying a backpack.)

PEGGY
(Offstage) Uncle Ted! Uncle Ted!

HELEN
Don’t run, Peggy!

TED
In my office, Peggy!

(Peggy enters)

PEGGY
(Calling out the door)
Sorry Aunt Helen!
TED
Just the girl I was hoping to see, how was school?

PEGGY
(Putting her Knapsack on the floor next to the armchair before going to Ted's desk.)
It was fine. What are you drawing?

TED
Fine?

PEGGY
It was boring.

TED
Mm, school is often boring.

PEGGY
You didn't like school, Uncle Ted?

TED
Not at all, every teacher wants you to do things a certain way, they have no imagination. It's as though they see the world with their eyes shut. The world is full of people who are different from each other, no two people are alike. But teachers want their students to behave like robots, exactly the same. Why should anyone fit in when we are all born to stand out?

PEGGY
And you stand out, right? Because your artwork stands out?

TED
That would be one reason I stand out.

PEGGY
What are you drawing today?

TED
Come see.

PEGGY
I don't understand what that is –

TED
It's an alligator.
PEGGY
With a lady on top?

TED
That’s Aunt Annie - the alligator belongs to her.

PEGGY
Well, does the alligator have a name?

TED
I haven’t quite found one yet; he may not have a name at all.

PEGGY
But everyone has a name. Can I give him a name?

TED
It may not make it to print, but I’ll be sure to note.

PEGGY
Argus!

TED
Argus?

PEGGY
Yes, that or Angus.

TED
I pretty fond of Argus - Aunt Annie’s Alligator Argus - And B?

PEGGY
Betty?

TED
Betty the?

PEGGY
I don’t know - bumble bee? A bear? Ooh! A blue bear!

TED
Betty the blue bear?

PEGGY
Yes!
TED

Maybe, Betty needs to be doing something. What should Betty be doing?

PEGGY
Bowling?

TED
No, no, that doesn’t have the right ring to it.

PEGGY
Oh, maybe blowing bubbles?

TED
Betty’s blue bear blowing bubbles, that’s very good. You ought to be receiving royalties for your work.

PEGGY
I agree.

TED
Kid, you’ll move mountains before long.

HELEN
(Standing in the door)
Peggy, it’s almost time for you to be home. You wouldn’t want to upset your mom.

PEGGY
(Nervous)
Am I late?

HELEN
No, no. But soon, remember I can’t drive you today...
(Exits.)

TED
How about I give you fifty cents, in exchange for your help, before you head home?

PEGGY
(Brightens) Deal!

(TED gives her fifty cents.)
(PEGGY begins to run for the door.)

TED

Oh! PEGGY!

PEGGY
Yes Uncle TED?

TED
Your aunt is right outside.

PEGGY
Oh, got it. No running.
(Winks)

(PEGGY exits.)
(Ted attempts to draw for awhile, he struggles for a moment before giving up.)

TED
Helen? Helen where are you?

HELEN
I'm right here TED, I'm coming, what is it?

TED
How do you like this?

HELEN
Oh, I think Peggy did a marvelous job writing your alphabet book for you.

TED
Yes, she is a gem, but I'm meaning the drawings -

HELEN
Well… (Looks at the picture for a moment. Thoughtful) No, this isn't it. The alligator is looking too angry.

TED
Well he is an alligator!

HELEN
Alligators can be friendly, especially an alligator belonging to Aunt Annie.

TED
Perhaps you're right.
HELEN

Have you abandoned your other story? I thought you were almost done writing that one?

TED
The manuscript is there.
(Pointing to a pile of pages on the floor.)

HELEN
You threw it?

TED
I spent the entire morning working on the thing, but I don't know how to get the characters out of their mess. Everything I write sounds like the words of a second-rate preacher or some biblical truism.

HELEN
It's rather childish to throw things, Ted.

TED
In fact, I think the entire work isn't worth a penny. As I read it, it stutters. It clanks.

HELEN
(While getting his pages from the floor and putting them in order.) Ted. Dear. We go through this every time you come near a finished project. You always convince yourself the story is terrible. You have to believe in your work, or you'll never publish anything.

TED
I've hit a wall Helen, that's just the truth of it.

HELEN
You say this every time, and every time your book goes to print and is celebrated nationwide. Ted, you should have another go at it. You shouldn't simply give up.

TED
All right.
(Sighs)
Maybe I can find an ending for this damned book.

HELEN
You'll find it dear, you always do.

TED
Yes, yes, I guess I do. (beat)
Helen, could you please bring me some coffee?
(Pulls a cigarette from his desk drawer and lights it.)

HELEN
Ted it is nearly dinnertime, you'll lose your appetite and not be able to sleep.

TED
I just need it to relax a moment. I find it soothing.

HELEN
It makes me worry about your health Ted. I've got enough health issues for the both of us.

TED
Perhaps you need to join me then, a freshly brewed hot coffee to calm your nerves.

HELEN
I'd be up all night. You may not need as much sleep as everyone else, but I love, and need, my rest.

TED
Some tea then, for yourself? And coffee for me?

HELEN
Yes, as long as you put that thing out.

TED
Of course.

(Helen leaves, and Ted smokes for a moment before putting out the cigarette. He then goes to the radio and turns it on.)
(Radio: On today, June 14, 1940 German troops have rolled into the streets of Paris from the northwest today and swung triumphantly down the famous Champs Eylsees in the heart of the French capital, it was stated in authorized German sources...)

TED: Helen! Helen come listen to the radio - Helen?

(Radio continues beneath conversation: "...German tanks -- their blunt-nosed guns ominously dominating the streets - led the advance into the city that last felt the tread of Prussian boots almost 70 years ago after Bismarck's triumph in the war of 1870. The advance into Paris began early in the morning -- just five weeks to the day after the German invasion of the Low Countries and the beginning of "real" warfare against the British and French. As the sun rose high, still more units joined the parade of victory through the hostile capital from which French armies had fallen back during the night.")

HELEN
TED? Are you alright? What do you -

TED
Helen listen to the radio.

(Helen sits to listen by the radio.)

TED
German tanks have clanked into Paris, the city is now occupied by Nazis.

HELEN
Dear God, that's awful.

TED
We have to do something Helen.

HELEN
Yes we do, I'll organize a fundraiser with the La Jolla Art Center, we could have -

TED
We need to go to war, the United States has to go to war.

HELEN
Congress is opposed to war, Colonel Lindberg believes it is important to put the American people first.

TED
(Mumbles) America First…

HELEN
I know Ted…

TED
America First is the doctrine of Nazis, fascists, and communists, and our government is right there with them, along for the ride.

HELEN
That may be an exaggeration Ted -

TED
But Helen, we are not their ally, we are their enemy. If we just wait, then it’s only a matter of time before the United States will be left to fight alone with all our would be allies defeated.

HELEN
I agree with you Ted, I just -

TED
It’s only a matter of time before the United States is subjected to the same fate as England or as France -

HELEN
TED, I think -

TED
What is it, HELEN, that you think stops the enemy from coming for us next? When we're called do we chose to have no spine?

HELEN
(Turns off the radio at this point) Ted, we will do all that we can, but our influence is limited.

TED
I won’t write more children’s stories. I’m done with children’s stories.

HELEN
You can’t stop writing your children’s stories - you write marvelous children’s stories. No one writes with the creativity and spontaneity that you do.

TED
I can’t simply stand idly by and write silly stories - you don’t realize, everyone we love is now at risk.

HELEN
Do you really think tanks could roll down our streets?

TED
Maybe not tanks on our roads, but they could come by ship or by air, they’ve been dropping bombs all over Europe, why not fly a little further?

HELEN
They’d have to cross an ocean, Ted. And if we join the war so will we, it would be better to send supplies, we are not in immediate danger, so why put ourselves in that position. We can still take action without sacrificing lives.

TED
Look at who our neighbors our, there are Japs all over California, we have enemies all around us, just waiting for a signal from home.

HELEN
Ted, is this because of what happened when you were a boy? You’re afraid it might happen again?

TED
Helen, because I was a German American during the war my family was ostracized, villainized. We were hated by everyone. My sister and I were called terrible names, Hun! Drunken Kaiser! They’d chase Marnie and I down the street throwing rocks and brickbats shouting ‘Kill the Kaiser’s Kids!’ Do you want the chance for PEGGY to be subjected to that? She already has a hard enough time with how her mother was affected by the bullying, it’s why she’s so reclusive - And when we have our own children - HELEN, something big has to be done or we could lose everything.

HELEN
Ted, dear, that’s awful, what happened to you and your sister, but that doesn’t mean the world is ending.

TED
Awful things can happen Helen. Countries only isolate themselves just before they fall. It happened at the time of the Greeks and the Romans, just like it's happening now.

HELEN
Yes, I know that, Ted. And we should take action, it is important to take action. But does that mean changing careers?

TED
I'm going to write for politics, I want to motivate other Americans to take action. In another time, when things are different, I might go back to writing for children. But this is a far more pressing matter.

HELEN
I suppose it is your choice. The world needs to be safe for Peggy, and for our own children, well - for anyone's child. We all just want to feel safe.

TED
We do, we do want to be safe. The problem is Americans just think it's safe to sit at home, they don't realize the most dangerous thing they could do is appease and ignore the threat. And yet that's exactly what they do, right as the threat stares down their nose.

HELEN
You're really done with your books now, Ted?

TED
Yes. As I said I may come back to it.

HELEN
When things are better.

TED
Yes.

(There is a pause, Ted goes to his work for a moment, then looks at his wife. They share a pained look).

HELEN
I have an appointment today.

TED
With the doctor?
HELEN
Yes, our friend, Dr. Francis Smith.

TED
Should I come with you?

HELEN
I'd like that, TED.

TED
Are you afraid?

HELEN
I'm sure everything will be alright.

TED
It's alright if you are afraid, Helen. It is completely understandable.

HELEN
I'm not afraid, there's no need to worry about things I have no control over. Besides, I really do think all will be fine.

TED
Yes, I'm sure you're right. I'm sure everything is fine...

HELEN
Is there anymore news? (gesturing to the radio)

(TED turns on the radio)

(Radio: "those 'responsible for the propaganda pictures are born abroad,' attempting to 'drug the reason of the American people,' and 'rouse war fever.' 'Getting into this war is not inevitable for America. It is fair to say that our staying out of the war is inevitable....')

TED
Who is this? Who is speaking right now?

(Radio continues beneath conversation: 'Getting into this return engagement of war to Europe is only as inevitable as we, the people of America, will permit it to be.

Staying out of this war is inevitable if only the people will continue and multiply their forceful demands upon the Government at Washington to keep its promise to the people to keep our country out of this mess which seems destined to wreck every civilization that lends its hand to it.')

HELEN
I believe that's Gerald Nye - He's the Senator of North Dakota -

TED
That horse's ass!

HELEN
TED, There's no need to use that language!

TED
But he is a horse's ass! I'll draw a picture of him as a horse's ass and put it in the PM!
(Goes over to his drawing board)

HELEN
You can't, it's a vulgar idea. TED, you can't do that.

TED
Here's a first sketch -

HELEN
(Amused, but trying not to show it.) You're going to get in an awful lot of trouble.

TED
It will get a lot of laughs, and nothing will happen. (beat) When is your appointment?

HELEN
In about half an hour, are you still coming?

TED
Isn't that what you want?

HELEN
It is.

TED
Well, then I'll have to get started on this in the meantime. I have to have it finished by morning so I can send it in to be printed.
(Lights fade out.)

**Scene 2 - BUMP**

(Modest, but cared for, living room/kitchen – dining room table downstage right, with kitchen stove and counter against back wall. Front door upstage of table, a couch, armchair, and coffee table with a small radio on it are upstage left of room. Door stage left of counters, leads to bedroom, where MITSUKO's baby daughter is napping. There are paintings on the walls, all of flowers – these are all paintings made by MITSUKO.)

(The radio is playing the news that Japan has bombed Pearl Harbor. "On this day, December seventh 1941, the U.S. naval base, Pearl Harbor has been bombed by Japanese Forces." Mother changes stations. General DeWitt speaks: "I don't want any of them here. They are a dangerous element. There is no way to determine their loyalty... It makes no difference whether he is an American citizen, he is still a Japanese. American citizenship does not necessarily determine loyalty... But we must worry about the Japanese all the time until he is wiped off the map.")

(Mother listens to radio, then a rustling at the door causes her to quickly turn it off)
(Mitzi enters through front door – flustered/anxious but trying to hide it – she has groceries)

MOTHER
You startled me MITSUKO, are you alright?

MITSUKO
I have groceries for dinner – where's Akira?

MOTHER
(Rising to her) MITSUKO, you're out of breath.

MITSUKO
And TAKEHARU, I thought he'd be home by now – have you seen him?

MOTHER
Your husband will be home by the time dinner is ready, but the Laundromat doesn't close for another half hour.

MITSUKO
(Moves toward bedroom) Right. And –

MOTHER
Akira is sleeping in the bedroom.

MITSUKO
She's already asleep? She won't sleep through the night if she sleeps too long this close to her bedtime –

MOTHER
Yes, yes. I am a mother too. Her nap will be over in fifteen minutes, it has only been thirty minutes. A short nap. Here, sit. Breathe.

MITSUKO
(sitting) Mama –

MOTHER
MITSUKO, stop. Tell me what is wrong. I'm your mother, I can tell when you're upset. (Leads to sit at table) (sitting across from her) Don't fight me – talk to me.

MITSUKO
Mama… I… (beat)

MOTHER
(guessing) Have you heard the news?

MITSUKO
How could anyone not? It's everywhere.

MOTHER
Are people angry, people in town?

MITSUKO
They're angry.

MOTHER
What happened? Please tell me MITSUKO. (Holds her hand)

MITSUKO

(Holding back tears) There was a man today, at the grocery store, he's there often – and Then – then when I, everyone was staring at me while I shopped. I could feel their eyes on me. Then this man, he looked so angry today, and I kept my head low, but he followed me the whole time. I could hear the news over the radio in the store and he spit on me – and, the man called me a dirty Jap.

MOTHER

Oh, Mitzi… Darling.

MITSUKO

So, so I bought the things I had, and came home. I thought he would follow me – I thought he would hurt me, maybe even kill me. He looked like he wanted to. (Mother moves to her)
He hated me mama.

MOTHER

Darling, don't cry. He is only one man. He is only one man who knows nothing. Nothing at all, nothing at all about who you are, my love. You and I are as American as much as he is. We are loyal, good people. MITSUKO, that man doesn't know a thing.

MITSUKO

It's not just that man mama, everyone was angry – you didn't see their faces – and their stares – their stares drilled into me…. And the man on the radio… (beat) So, its more than one man mama– things are going to change. I don't know what to do, I just –

MOTHER

Mitsuko…
There is a Japanese saying, Deru kui wa utareru (出る杭は打)- the stake that sticks up gets hammered down. That man was scared – I hate that, I hate that this terrible man would treat you like a criminal, when you have never hurt anyone. He was angry and scared, and too stupid to recognize the difference between you and those who drop bombs, because in his mind the only thing you are different from is him.

MITSUKO
Mama, I was thinking the whole way home – I was, I was thinking, wishing, we lived in Japan, we would live with people like us… this wouldn't happen.

MOTHER
What does Japan look like MITSUKO?

MITSUKO
I don't know, I've never been there. You know that –

MOTHER
And the people. What do you know about the people in Japan, that you say are like us?

MITSUKO
Mama –

MOTHER
I only know what your grandparents have told me in stories. Japan is not our home, we are connected to Japan, but our home is right here. When my parents came to America, they left behind all their friends and family, their jobs, everything familiar to them, all because had such high hopes for their daughter. My mama told me, 'you're here in the United States of America, you need to do well in school, you need to prepare yourself to get a good job when you get out into larger society - don't be a dumb farmer like us.' So I worked as hard as I could to make her proud, and to make all my parent's sacrifices worth it. But I couldn't go far. America does not have opportunities for all people, especially for a Japanese woman in that time, first my parents were robbed of their potential and then so was I, so when I had a child, I told myself that I would make sure she could achieve her dreams, because I wanted to see someone in my family's potential realized. And my daughter, you MITSUKO, I have always been so proud of you, my artist: strong-willed, kind, powerful. Now I own and operate my Laundromat, with the help of my beautiful daughter and her husband, and lovely baby granddaughter. And my daughter can, and will, open her own art studio one day. I think a day very soon.

MITSUKO

I barely even have the time to paint anymore mama –and besides-

MOTHER
(pointing to a beautiful painting of a flower) Look at your paintings, you have a gift.

MITSUKO
I only paint flowers mama.

MOTHER
Well I believe in you.

MITSUKO
Mama this isn't what we should be talking about - Mama do you really believe things are going to be fine? You don't think that

MOTHER
Things will be difficult, people are afraid – and they're angry. They don't realize how different we are from the enemy. They see something they don't know, and what people don't know scares them. But time goes by and they see we become familiar to them, and they understand we are their neighbors, not their enemies.

MITSUKO
But what if they act before we are familiar to them? I have a feeling that our entire lives are going to change. We shouldn't be naïve.

MOTHER
MITSUKO, we are not guilty. We have done no wrong. We have been loyal. That is a fact. These emotions white Americans have are just that, emotions. Over time emotions float away, but facts are always there.

MITSUKO
You believe that?

MOTHER
Yes. I do.

MITSUKO
You really do?

MOTHER
I do. Now do you?

MITSUKO
I guess I do. (beat) I'll make dinner for us mama.

MOTHER
No, no I can do it.

MITSUKO
I didn't get the onions or the bread.

MOTHER
I can make dinner without it.
(Unpacks groceries and begins to cook)

MITSUKO
Okay Mama. I love you.

MOTHER
And I love you. Can you wake Akira up from her nap?

(MITSUKO goes into other room, and closes door behind her. Mother goes to the radio and turns it on).

Radio voice: "...it's true, they are not Americans. They are Japanese and enemies…."(Mother switches the radio to music station, then makes dinner).

(Mitsuko enters trying to soothe her crying baby, sits with her on the couch. Takeharu walks in, hugs mother, then kisses Mitsuko and the baby. Mitsuko turns off the radio as everyone goes to the table for dinner. Uncomfortable silence as no one eats).
(The scene fades to black and the radio continues, lights up on the family again as the montage sequence begins, by this time the table should be cleared.)

**Scene 3 - Montage**

(Bennett Cerf can double as the guard in this scene.)
(Montage sequence in which the characters interact with one another, caring for each other, working, cooking, cleaning, and listening to the radio which plays snippets of various anti-Japanese editorials, speeches, and news statements – either the original recording to prerecorded. The family is worried, reacting but trying to live as normally as possible. Then, as the radio plays the announcement of executive order 9066 on the radio, with all family members sitting around the radio, Takeharu will enter with the letters that have been posted with the same news. Throughout all of this Ted's office is dimly lit and he can be seen writing and drawing, hard at work with Political Cartoons. His political cartoons should appear occasionally along with the editorials, projected onto the back wall. The cartoons are on pages 28, 29, 30, 31, 64, 65, 105, 106, 108, 109 110. The projections should stop when the family steps outside, but Ted should remain dimly lit and hard at work the entire time. The family then packs some of their belongings – all that they can carry – and stands facing the audience and outside of their home. The noise of a train rushing past can be heard along with chaos of people being crammed into the train, indicating that the family is about to board. A train seat is brought out and the family takes their seats, holding each other. Only the sound of the train can be heard at this point. As the family is waiting for and on the train the living room is switched for the inside of an animal stall during this. It is dirty, barren, and ugly. In the background is desert and a mountain range behind a high barbed wire fence. The family steps off the train, are given numbers, and step inside. A bright spotlight from the guard tower passes over them every 30 seconds. It is silent at first as they enter and put their things down, then, someone crying in the room/stall next to them can be heard. The scene fades to black. This montage sequence should take ten to twelve minutes at most.)
(Radio broadcasts/snippets are listed below.)

Radio: The Japanese race is an enemy race and while many second and third generation Japanese born on American soil, possess of American citizenship, have become 'Americanized,' the racial strains are undiluted.

The very fact that no sabotage has taken place to date is a disturbing and confirming indication that such action will be taken.

They are a dangerous element. There is no way to determine their loyalty... It makes no difference whether he is an American citizen, he is still a Japanese. American citizenship does not necessarily determine loyalty... But we must worry about the Japanese all the time until he is wiped off the map.

If all the Japs were removed tomorrow, we'd never miss them in two weeks, because the white farmers can take over and produce everything the Jap grows.

I am determined that if they have one drop of Japanese blood in them, they must go to camp.

I am for the immediate removal of every Japanese on the West Coast to a point deep in the interior. I don't mean a nice part of the interior either. Herd 'em up, pack 'em off and give 'em the inside room in the badlands... Personally, I hate the Japanese. And that goes for all of them.

Radio: By executive order 9066 today President Roosevelt gave the Army authority to establish military zones anywhere in the United States from which any person, citizen or alien, may be evacuated and excluded. Those chiefly affected are American citizens of Japanese parentage. Approximately 60,000 of those reside in California and an additional 14,000 are scattered through Oregon and Washington. Lt. Gen. John I. DeWitt, commanding general for the Western Defense Command will have full discretion both as to the areas to be designated and the persons to be evacuated.

Radio: ...the successful prosecution of the war requires every possible protection against espionage and against sabotage to national-defense...

**Scene 4 - Seuss at War**

(Ted is hard at work, his office is messier than before, and he is working with less care than before, his work is sloppy because he is excited. TED is in a very good mood.)

PEGGY
Uncle Ted!

TED
In my office!

PEGGY
Coming!

HELEN
Peggy! Don't run! Margaret, if I have to tell you -

PEGGY
(opening door) Sorry Aunt Helen, I'll remember next time!
(To Ted) I bought today's print of the PM!

TED
Oh, that's wonderful! Any good cartoons in there?

PEGGY
(amused) Mhm.

TED
That's even more wonderful, anyone we may know?

PEGGY
Mhm.

TED
Well, whoever might that be?

PEGGY
You!

TED
Me?

PEGGY
Yes.

TED
Really?

PEGGY
Yes!

TED
You've double-checked?

PEGGY
Yes! Well no, but I know it's your cartoon Uncle Ted!

TED
Well let's see this cartoon you think I made!

PEGGY
Here! Look!

TED
Aw, this is my cartoon, I'm surprised you couldn't tell.

PEGGY
(Mock annoyance.) Uncle Ted!
TED
Do you understand the cartoon Peggy?

PEGGY
(Shrugs)

TED
Would you like the author to explain it to you?

PEGGY
(Nods)

TED
Okay, well -

PEGGY
Uncle Ted?

TED
Yes Peggy?

PEGGY
Aunt Helen seemed angry… when I came in…

TED
Oh- Peggy, your Aunt Helen is just a little out of sorts today, you shouldn't worry about it, okay?

PEGGY
Okay.

TED
Let's look at that cartoon now?

PEGGY
Okay!

(The cartoon is projected from page 109.)

TED
Now, this creature represents an average American, someone who supports isolationism.

PEGGY
Is it a bird?

TED
I suppose, but that isn't quite what matters.

PEGGY
Oh, okay.

TED
Do you know what isolation is Peggy?

PEGGY
It's what the United States was doing… staying out of the war.

TED
Yes, do you know why?

PEGGY
So we stay safe, right?

TED
That's very close, Americans were staying out of the war because they thought it was safe - but it is one of the most dangerous things we can do. They wanted to close

their eyes and cover their ears, but that doesn't stop anything. Unfortunately it took a bomb to see that.

PEGGY
Oh.

TED
Now is not the time to get Palsy-walsy, Hitler, the Nazis, Hirohito of Japan, Mussolini, they're out to take over the world, and that threat is not going to go away simply because we are far enough away to not hear the bombs falling. They were fantasizing when they thought the United States could avoid war and maintain security.

PEGGY
I heard about the bomb in school - in Hawaii.

TED
It is tragic so many Americans had to allow ourselves to be bombed before the cheerful idiots could get it through their thick skulls that war was coming. There was no way to avoid war, our enemies were getting stronger, and our allies were getting weaker and we chose to stand on the sidelines.

PEGGY
Do you think we'll win?

TED
I hope so, Peggy, but not enough sacrifices are being made. The American people need to take the time to think on what -

HELEN
Ted, you have mail, dear.

TED
Oh, I'll have a look at it in a moment Helen, thank you.

HELEN
No, Ted, you ought to look at this now.

TED
(rising) Is everything alright, Helen? Who -

HELEN
It’s Gerald Nye. The Gerald Nye - the Senator.

TED
(Taking envelope.) I drew that cartoon months ago… why send this to us now?

HELEN
It was probably only just brought to his attention. I knew, I told you it was a vulgar idea. You’re probably in so much trouble -

PEGGY
(Blurting.) Who is it?

TED
It’s Gerald P. Nye.

PEGGY
Who is that?

TED
He’s a -
HELEN
Theodore!

TED
Evil politician, Helen I wouldn’t say that.

PEGGY
Say what?

HELEN
Nothing, Peggy.

TED
It doesn’t matter.

PEGGY
Well, why did he write you a letter?

TED
Well I drew a picture of the man as a horse’s ass.
(Peggy giggles.)

HELEN
(Amused, but irritated.) Ted!

TED
Sorry Helen, I'm sure she's heard the word before.

PEGGY
I have!

HELEN
That's very different from her hearing the word from you. You should never say that word, Peggy. There are so many words, your uncle creates new words all the time, there is no reason to use those words.

TED
Why limit yourself, dear?

PEGGY
Is he very mad? The senator?

TED
I suppose I should find out, shouldn't I? (Ted opens the letter and reads, then slowly sits in his chair, looks up, and smiles at Peggy and Helen.)

HELEN
Is it good then?

PEGGY
What did he have to say, Uncle Ted?

TED
Well, Gerald P. Nye saw my drawing in the PM.

PEGGY: And? HELEN: What does he say?

TED
He wants a framed copy.
(Begins laughing hysterically.)

HELEN
You're serious?

TED
Oh yes!

HELEN
Give me that.
(Reads letter, then begins to laugh as well.) I thought your career was over.

PEGGY
Why would he want a picture of … that?

TED
Oh, who knows, I've never felt his head was screwed on quite right.
(The two calm down a bit.)

PEGGY
Are you going to send him the picture?

TED
I might…

HELEN
No, you shouldn't Ted.

TED
No? Well, why not?

HELEN
Well, because he's a horse's ass, Ted.
(Peggy is surprised, while Ted and Helen begin laughing again. The two take a moment to calm down.)

TED
I love to hear you laugh. (They kiss.)

HELEN
Peggy, dear, you're going to be late getting home, would you like me to drive you?

PEGGY
Yes please!
(Peggy gathers her things, and the two leave.)

**Scene 5 – Celebration**

(Ted sits back at his desk and begins to draw for a moment. Before long there is a knock at the front door.) (Ted leaves to open the door, they are overheard as they move toward the room.)

TED
Bennett! Come on in! (Entering office.)

TED
What brings you here?

BENNETT
I felt we ought to celebrate, I have champagne.

TED
BENNETT, I -

BENNETT
I invited HORTON as well, he should be here too before long.

TED
I told you we shouldn't celebrate my book. I don't write books anymore.

BENNETT
I know it isn't what you're wanting to work on for the moment - and I hope it is only for the moment - but your last book was such a success. You've unleashed your imagination, your characters have human frailties and yearnings but are placed in implausible and outrageous jeopardy, and the result is absolutely wonderful. It's an original TED, no one else writes like you do.

TED
Where is this going BENNETT?

BENNETT
Okay, I am trying to persuade you. Return to writing books TED.

TED
No, Bennett.

BENNETT
There was another offer from Vanguard Publishing Press. They've increased their offer. TED, you take this offer and you'll hold the record for receiving the most money per word than any other writer in history.

TED
I'd rather hold the record for refusing the most money per word than any writer in history. I am not returning to writing for juveniles.

BENNETT
Ted, you could at least consider it.

TED
This is not a time where the world can afford for people to do things that are meaningless. Vanguard is meaningless. Your efforts to convince me to work for Vanguard are meaningless. Perhaps I should convince you to take greater action yourself.

BENNETT
You can write stories with morals. If anyone can it's you.

TED
What's wrong with kids having fun reading without being preached at?

BENNETT
Nothing! Okay, Ted, alright, I don't deny your political cartoons are certainly a hidden talent of yours, but your books are too good to abandon. And, as your editor, I have to tell you the drawings are sloppy. I know you recognize that too.

TED
Yes, I don't have the time I would like to normally spend on my work - but if that is the cost I have to pay for the security of the nation, then so be it.

BENNETT
But just think about how much you have created. What would you do if you were invited to a dinner party with your characters, TED?

TED
Those loons? I wouldn't show up.

BENNETT
Alright, that isn’t what I meant...TED, you seem unhappy. I know writing your silly books gives you joy.

TED
I like nonsense, it wakes up the brain cells. Fantasy is a necessary ingredient in living, It's a way of looking at life through the wrong end of a telescope. Which is what I do, and that enables you to laugh at life's realities.

BENNETT
So you agree then?

TED
No. Bennett, there are other - did you read the book’s dedication?

BENNETT
Of course. I always think this one may be the one where you finally thank the man who has been your editor since college, but -

TED
You read it then?

BENNETT
Yes. Chrysanthemum Pearl. It’s quite the name. I hope it isn’t going to be - oh - is Helen? (TED tries to interject throughout.) Oh, TED! This is wonderful! Not the name, good God, have some mercy on your poor child, you can’t name her that. I can’t believe HELEN would ever let you name her that. TED, I am so happy for you both, I know it wasn’t easy -

TED
(yells) Bennett! Stop speaking for one damn moment! Helen can’t have children. We found out recently. Chrysanthemum Pearl is imaginary. I would like you to shut up now. I’m getting myself a glass of gin. You can take your champagne home with you.

BENNETT
Oh, God. God, Ted. I-

TED
Please stop.

(The two sit in uncomfortable silence for awhile, then the doorbell rings.)

BENNETT
I'll get the door. (Exits.)

(Ted sits and drinks. There is mumbling in the hallway, before HORTON enters with BENNETT behind him.)

HORTON
TED, is there anything we could do for -

TED
No, no. I'm fine. It is private though.

HORTON
Ted, we care for you. Anything you need - have you gotten out of the house at all?

BENNETT
We can go anywhere, TED. It would be my treat.
(There is a noise at the door, and Helen soon after enters the office.)

HELEN
I didn't know we were expecting company, or I would have cleaned.

HORTON
Oh, Helen no, there's no need. You should have seen his dorm room at Dartmouth.

BENNETT
You should see my house, my boys cause so much destruction, they're um - Helen, I'm so sorry…

HELEN
Oh God, you told them, Ted? (Trying not to cry.)

TED
Helen, I didn't intend to - BENNETT asked about our Pearl, and there was confusion. I'm very sorry.

HELEN
(Goes to pour herself a glass of water, then sits on the couch. She is still fighting tears) I wanted that information to be private, at least for awhile longer.

HORTON
Of course, Helen. And neither of us will tell a soul.

HORTON
Not a soul, Helen, we swear.

HELEN
(Nods.) I really appreciate that. I know how silly it is - people will know sooner or later. It's inevitable. But - well - (Begins to cry. TED moves to hold her.) I just feel so empty right now, and it's because I am. I had a future all planned out, and this future I took for granted has been ripped from me, it feels like ripping, it really does.

TED
Maybe it'd be best if you both left now, we could use some privacy -

HELEN
I apologize. There are so many things to celebrate -

HORTON
(Handing her a tissue.) Don't apologize, Helen. We may not truly understand, but we care for you and TED. You always have our love and support.

HELEN
Thank you, HORTON. You are always so unfailingly kind.

Ted
Thank you, Horton.

(Horton kisses her cheek, then rubs Ted's shoulder before exiting.)

HORTON
Anything either of you need.

HELEN
Thank you Bennett.

TED
(distracted.) Yes thank you.

(Bennett leaves, he is more awkward about showing affection to Ted and Helen.)

(beat)

TED
Helen, love -

HELEN
I’m alright, Ted. You’re so worried, there’s no need to be so worried. We both just need time.

TED
Did I tell you about what our Chrysanthemum Pearl did today?

HELEN
No. No, but I would love to hear it.

TED
She whipped up the most delicious oyster stew with chocolate frosting and flaming Roman candles.

HELEN
My goodness, what a combination… and the candles didn’t start a fire?

TED
I didn’t hear any sirens...she’s quite talented, isn’t she?

HELEN
Ever clever and precious.

TED
I know you haven’t eaten HELEN. I heard a place opened near us that serves a wonderful oyster stew, I think we should go. Neither of us have really left the house, not beyond driving PEGGY home or chores.

HELEN
I’ll need to change. And wash up a little.

TED
But you'll go?

HELEN
I will. You're right, it would be nice to get out.

TED
I'll write while you get ready.

(They kiss, and both leave. Lights fade out.)

**Scene 6 - Rumors**

(It is night, Takeharu sits outside the stable, he is deep in thought/worried)
(MITSUKO steps outside and slowly takes a seat beside him)
(The search light from the guard tower cycles, crossing the windows of the barracks every 45 seconds.)

MITSUKO
Takeharu?

TAKEHARU
Hmm?

MITSUKO
Are you coming back to bed?

TAKEHARU
I couldn't sleep – I needed a chance to think.
(beat)

MITSUKO:
What are you thinking about?

TAKEHARU
I'd rather not talk about that. Sit with me though.
(beat)
You could paint this.

MITSUKO
You want me to paint this?

TAKEHARU
I do.

MITSUKO
I don’t want to paint my view from within a cage. I don’t want to remember what this looks like… if I ever leave this behind.

TAKEHARU
It looks beautiful, when you look past the bars.
(beat)

MITSUKO
You never told me what you were thinking about.

TAKEHARU
Mitsuko, you should go back to sleep.

MITSUKO
Is it the rumor? From breakfast? The survey?

TAKEHARU
It could be just that, just a rumor.

MITSUKO
Those two questions: Would you fight for the country? And will you swear allegiance to the United States and denounce any allegiance to Japan?
(beat)
I can’t stop thinking about them either.

TAKEHARU
I’ve been thinking about how to answer –

MITSUKO
They are impossible questions.

TAKEHARU
Mitsuko, we have to answer yes.

MITSUKO
You want to say yes?

TAKEHARU
Yes, I do.

TAKEHARU
Do you see that mountain? (pointing) Way out there.

MITSUKO
Yes.

TAKEHARU
It reminds me of a picture my mother had, of Japan. When I first saw it, that first morning. I cried.

MITSUKO
You cried?

TAKEHARU
That mountain is what I recognize of Japan, the only thing I recognize. I have never been to Japan, there is no reason for me to go there now. I am American. We are American.

MITSUKO
Is this how Americans are treated? Herded into cages like cattle?

TAKEHARU
This treatment could end. If we cooperate, answer yes to the
questions, we might be sent home. This could all be over.

MITSUKO
What reason do you have to expect fairness? We, especially with what has happened, should not expect fairness.

TAKEHARU
We don’t know what they might do, yes or no.

MITSUKO
Takeharu, if you answer yes you may be sent to war.

TAKEHARU
It would be worth it – and Akira and you and your Mother could go back to our home and our business, you’d have your lives back.

MITSUKO
Not without you, you’re part of our family, we need you. Takeharu, you’re not a soldier –

TAKEHARU
Another man told me this afternoon, his family has lost everything, their farm, their home, all their savings, they have nothing left – We could lose everything too, no one is taking care of our Laundromat or our home –

MITSUKO
Why should you go to war if your family is in a concentration camp? Why die for a country that locks you away when you are innocent?

TAKEHARU
Don’t say that, don’t say that I will die.

MITSUKO
You are not a fighter, Takeharu, you do laundry, you keep books.

TAKEHARU
Then they will train me. I am young, I can learn.

MITSUKO
If our government shamelessly imprisons us, why would they not put you on the front lines? Why should we believe they’ll send us home? Who is to say they don’t take you in the morning and come for us at night. Look around us we are not American.

TAKEHARU
We cannot abandon our allegiance to America. We are American, America is our home.

MITSUKO
We are not leaving home, home is chasing us.

TAKEHARU
Mitsuko. The walls are thin. (beat). We are loyal Americans. And we can prove it if we answer yes.

MITSUKO
We shouldn’t have to prove our loyalty – not like this – I’ve always been loyal, and so have you. Same as every person down this line of shacks. We will never be American to them. They see us as strangers, and what is a stranger? A stranger is someone who comes and violates you.

Strangers come for your blood and your joy. Strangers come and cut your heart out –

TAKEHARU
Mitsuko, I know. I am furious. And I am afraid. I am not complacent as you seem to believe. I don’t want to leave, and not know if I’ll come back. I want to be with my baby daughter and I want to watch her grow up. I want to go home with my daughter, and my wife, and your mother.

MITSUKO
Then don’t go. What about our ancestry? What about our ancestors? They're a part of me, of us, of who we are. I cannot to leave them behind, they are a part of me.

TAKEHARU
It’s a part of me too. My parents were so proud when their son was born in the United States, and so he was American, and had opportunities. He had many more opportunities than they had. He would vote, and he could own land, and he knew he would live a good life. But they were also so proud when their son brought home top marks from Japanese school. They taught him Japanese, but were proud their son knew English, and constantly pestered him to help them learn English as well. We celebrated Japanese traditions and joined the community to learn of American traditions. My father and I spent every summer playing baseball, we rooted for Pete Gray and the Browns and listened to every game, even though we were in Dodgers territory.
(beat)
We have to live through this.

MITSUKO
I know. But I feel empty. It is clear I am not truly American, and yet, they want me to leave my roots behind. What will be left for us after this?
(beat)
We have no home.

TAKEHARU
But if I say no, if we say we are not in allegiance, we could never leave this camp. Those gun towers face in, I have nightmares about it every night, we could be shot. Our bodies could be left in the desert and forgotten. Answering no is not worth dying. But if I have to prove with my blood, my limbs, and my body that I, and my

family, are truly American, then I will. If I die I'd like to die with honor, fighting to protect my family and my country.
(beat)

MITSUKO
You're making sense. You're maybe right. But Takeharu, there is no good answer…

TAKEHARU
I know there is no good answer, but there is a better answer. For us, in our situation.

MITSUKO
I know, Takeharu.

TAKEHARU
So you'll answer yes?

MITSUKO
I still don't think we should give in. I still don't want to.
TAKEHARU
Mitsuko –

MITSUKO
I'll answer yes.

TAKEHARU
Thank you.
(long pause.)
It is not easy for me either. I am afraid too.

MITSUKO
I know. I know it… Will you come to bed now?

TAKEHARU
In a moment. Let's enjoy our privacy, privacy is a scarce resource here.

(Mitsuko and Takeharu sit outside as the scene closes)

## Scene 7 Condolences

(Bennett knocks on Ted's office door, then enters. Horton follows behind him.)

BENNETT
Ted?

TED
(Not looking up from work) Hmm?

BENNETT
We wanted to give you our condolences again. – We let ourselves in, is Helen–?

TED
She's doing alright, Bennett…just resting more these days.

HORTON
We do offer our condolences Ted, sincerely.

TED
Helen wanted children very badly – but there is still more to pursue in our lives.

HORTON
Well I'm glad you're staying positive – I remember how –

TED
Let me get you both a drink. Would you like a drink?

BENNETT
I don't think we've had a drink since our college days -

TED
I don't think I remember a single time when this one drank with us. (Gesturing to Horton.)

HORTON
I joined in on many occasions Ted. However I did not partake when it would have put my career in jeopardy.

BENNETT
I suppose that may have been to your advantage Horton - you remember all the trouble we got into? (Laughs)

HORTON
If you're meaning when the two of you were caught sharing a pint of bootleg gin the night before Easter Sunday and were put on probation, then that was exactly what I was referring to.

TED
You're forgetting - we were both forced to resign from our positions on the paper and cease publishing entirely.

HORTON
You both published anyway... (With a sort of disgust)

BENNETT
Regardless the punishment was entirely too severe, especially given what college students get away with these days.

TED
(Laughs) Absolutely, damn prohibition – I have a Kentucky Tavern bourbon and a bottle of Gordon's gin.

BENNETT
(Laughing) Kentucky Tavern? TED, that is a shit whiskey, your family of brewers must be rolling in their graves.

TED
My father has been temporarily retired for years.

HORTON
Temporarily retired, he never got another job?

TED
He worked in parks services for years – but I believe it was never the same sort of work level as before…

BENNETT
That's too bad - I guess I'll have the gin.

TED
Horton?

HORTON
The same, please.

TED
It was nothing the family couldn't handle, besides, I've turned the whole calamity into a two volume novel.

BENNETT
How have I, your editor, never seen this masterpiece? I didn't know you were capable of writing anything resembling literature.

TED
It was hardly a masterpiece, I wrote it as I traipsed across Europe with Helen, after leaving Oxford. I failed to persuade a single publisher to recognize its merit.

HORTON
So you have it still?

TED:
(Laughs). No, no. When it wouldn't sell, I condensed it into a long short story. Next I cut it to a short, short story. Finally, I sold it as a two-line gag.

BENNETT
Which two-line gag was that?

TED
I have no idea.
(All laugh)

BENNETT
You haven't changed since Dartmouth, you know that?

TED
(mid-sip) Mmm, you know what I will never forget?
Granny Squeers has a hound-sort of a beast called a Blinx
You don't call him by whistling; you merely take drinks
And when he appears we just get up astride
And he takes you us right out for a heavenly ride.
We cling to his back just as long as we're able,
Then he gently deposits us under the table.

BENNETT
A masterpiece, you used the name Burbank on that one?

TED
Mhm, that man visited all the way from Sing Sing Prison just to write publish a little poetry for our paper.

HORTON
I had forgotten about all your pen names. I never understood how Dean Laycock didn't see right through that piece, especially after all the trouble.

TED
Likely trying to save face. Because he certainly knows now, he must.

BENNETT
Is he still alive? I remember him as such a crotchety old bastard.

TED
Truly ancient. Dean Craven Laycock was certainly a craven individual, we single-handedly turned the Jack-O-Lantern into a cutting edge publication.

BENNETT
(Slight mocking) Well we defied the law prohibition on one of the holiest days of the Christian calendar.

TED
I was voted "least likely to succeed," how could I not celebrate such an accomplishment.

BENNETT
How true. (Both laugh)
(Beat)
And look at your success now, you're doing so well now. You and Helen, even with all you're going through. I know you and Helen wanted – Well I suppose you never know what life will throw your way –

TED
We'll be okay Bennett, I appreciate you both coming to check on us, make sure we're doing well.

BENNETT
And you're really doing well?

TED
Yes, as well as can be expected, but still well.

HORTON
And you won't hesitate to let us know what you need? You can always ask, we've been friends most of our lives now. We're here for you, and for Helen, she's a great woman.

TED
It's true, she is brilliant. A wonderful collaborator.

BENNETT
She truly is - and a damn good editor too. I'll admit it even if it threatens my career.

TED
Thank you. In time we'll both be just fine. Like I said before -

BENNETT
Yes, of course, it's true, there are so many other opportunities you're free to pursue now. And, well, there are my four children, God knows I need a break from them sometimes, you can borrow them - treat them as your own whenever you'd like. You're family TED, you and HELEN. Though I'm sure you don't want that – you've met my children, my boys are just disgusting, only the little one's okay, and she's only six, so who really knows how she'll turn out. So really, if you're on the subject of the value of my sperm, I'm one for four.

HORTON
(Laughing) Your sons are disgusting? I believe you two once had the goal to urinate off the roof of every building on Dartmouth campus.

BENNETT
I believe we were triumphant… but I suppose that's the real problem with children, they end up like their parents.

HORTON
God forbid.

BENNETT
Oh yes, God forbid.

(Beat)
I’m being insensitive.

TED
Yes… But you were never sensitive Bennett, it’s what makes you a good editor. Besides the whole world has been sensitive on the issue, nice of them but – well that was refreshing to hear. (Beat.) I don’t know how many kids I want now that I think of it, but Helen is heartbroken. She wanted a gaggle of them, ducklings, to follow her around. – I’ve been telling anyone who asks: you make ‘em, I’ll amuse ‘em.

BENNETT
Yes, your writing for juveniles is the only writing for juveniles I regard highly.

TED
Do you know what I believe? I believe there are only two worthwhile things to leave behind when you depart from this world: children and art. I cannot leave behind a child, but I can leave behind art. And better yet I can leave behind art for children.

HORTON
You do also have Peggy, you know that little girl relies on you and Helen, and more than she relies on Marnie. Your sister is wonderful TED, but it’s hard for her, it’s hard for her to be mother I think – I’m not trying to insinuate that she is a bad mother but –

TED
– I know BENNETT. She’s reclusive. You’re right, we’ll always have our PEGGY, she’s a great kid.

HORTON
Very precocious.

TED
Mhmm, eight going on thirty-five I think.

(There is a loud thump in the other room and the noise of a plate breaking as it hits the floor.)

TED
Helen?!

(TED runs out of the room.)

TED
Bennett, phone the Dr. Smith! Could one of you get the heating pad, it should be beside the bed.

HORTON
I can get it. (They put her down on the couch, and HORTON exits.)

TED
I've got you Helen. Helen, I've got you - why were you downstairs? Why weren't you resting?

HELEN
(Helen is in excruciating pain) Ted?

TED
Helen, oh Helen. What happened to you?

HELEN
I couldn't feel my feet and ankles, just for a moment - I'm alright Ted. You shouldn't be so worried.

TED
Why did you get out of bed? You should have been resting.

HELEN
I just was getting lunch ready.

TED
You should have stayed in bed.

HORTON
(Enters.) Here's your heating pad. Is there anything else I can get you?

HELEN
I'm fine Horton, really. I'm so sorry, you're all so worried.

TED
Water maybe?

HORTON
Of course.

(HORTON Leaves again.)

HELEN
I will not be an invalid, TED.

TED
I think we should go to the hospital. Please, Helen, let me drive you to the hospital.

HELEN
A good night’s sleep and a meal will cure me, Ted. I just haven’t slept well, or had much to eat. That’s all.

TED
Will you at least let Dr. Smith have a look at you? He’s already receiving a call.

HELEN
Alright.

TED
Alright?

HELEN
Yes, can you distract me for a moment, TED? Please?

TED
Of course. Do you remember the day we met?

HELEN
Of course I do, it was in class, when we were at Oxford.

TED
Do remember what you said to me? The first thing you said?

HELEN
No, do you?

TED
I do. You were sitting behind me in class, and you looked over my shoulder at my doodles and said, “You’re crazy to be a professor, what you really want to do is draw. And that is a very fine flying cow!” I would be a miserable english professor if it weren’t for you.

HELEN
Mmm, what was the name of the professor who gave the dreary two hour lecture on punctuation in King Lear?

HORTON
(Horton brings in a glass of water with a straw and ice.) Here Helen, can you drink this?

TED
Oh Horton, have you heard this story?

HORTON
What story is this?

HELEN
The Oxford professor that sent TED packing.

TED
This don, Sir Oliver Onions, had dug up all the old Shakespearean folios and lamented that some had more semicolons than commas. And some had more commas than periods, and so on. I listened for awhile, then went to my room and packed.

Horton
No I hadn't heard that story bef-

BENNETT
(Enters quickly.) Ted, Dr. Smith thinks you should go to the hospital immediately.

HELEN
I don't want to go to the hospital, I'm alright, Dr. Smith is overreacting.

TED
Helen, we have to go.

HELEN
There is glass and mess all over my kitchen -

HORTON
Please Helen, I can clean up the kitchen. That's no reason to put yourself at risk.

BENNETT
Helen, please. Dr. Smith sounded very serious about your needing to come and see a doctor.

HELEN
Okay, but I'm having trouble walking right this moment - I'll need some help.

TED
Of course darling. (Helping Helen walk.) Bennett, can you get the door?

BENNETT
Of course, Ted.

HELEN
Thank you Bennett, thank you Horton. I really am fine.

HORTON
Call me, Ted, let me know what the doctors say, and if you'd like some company.

TED
Thank you Horton.

(All leave, Ted first Bennett opening the door then following, and then HORTON following into the kitchen and the sound of glass being swept up is heard faintly.)

**Scene 8 - Breakdown**

(MITSUKO sits at the table in the barrack, she has pen and paper, and is upset. She does not write anything, but simply stares at the page in front of her.)
(Mother enters carrying Akira.)

MOTHER
Are you writing another letter?

MITSUKO
This is the first.

MOTHER
Still only the first?

MITSUKO
Yes.

MOTHER
MITSUKO, darling, he must be worried something happened. You told him you would write when he was sent to war.

MITSUKO
(Sharp.) I know, mama.

MOTHER
You're thinking too hard, he just wants to hear from you.

MITSUKO
But what am I supposed to say - nothing happens here. We wake up each morning and recite the pledge of allegiance then we wait in line for canned American breakfast eaten in a mess hall. Life is loud, and crowded, and the main activity is waiting. I work for no pay, and stand in another line for dinner. We are counted. Our rooms are searched. Everyone is dusty and unhappy, at night I hear someone crying through our walls -

MOTHER
You can just write to tell him you are alive, and so is your mother and daughter

MITSUKO
My husband is at war, I need to say more. I need to write something that won't remind him of this...bleakness. Mama, I don't feel alive, but I cannot tell him that. I cannot tell him I always feel alone and vacant-

MOTHER
Maybe you ask questions, ask for news from him.

MITSUKO
I don't even know if he will receive any of my letters, would someone bother to send my letter, knowing who I am? And he could already be dead. They could have killed him.

MOTHER
They did not kill him, they want him to fight for them, he is an asset to them. Ask for news, he'll give you news, you'd feel more at ease if you knew something.

MITSUKO

But what do I make of what news I receive, if the United States is winning it means that the war is going badly for the Japanese, but if the Japanese are winning then maybe my husband is dead, and my daughter will grow up without her father - any news is a loss.

MOTHER
We are American Mitsuko. We have to support our country.

MITSUKO
Nonsense. Americans are not locked away and hidden from the world without trial or without even committing any crime -

MOTHER
Shakata ga ni, Mitsuko, you are dwelling too much on what cannot be helped.

MITSUKO
It can be helped - Why is it only us that are locked away? Outside of these fences and towers Americans are able to live their lives. They have a purpose for their existence. But we are herded onto trains and into cages like cattle. And now we stay inside, and we wake up each morning to eat food we are not able to prepare, and we sleep in cots each night, surrounded by those I do not recognize. And in between I wait, and I grow older. I feel my life frittering away. And I watch my baby grow older, and she's beginning to speak and I see her eyes beginning to take in the world around her, and I worry this will be all Akira will ever know. She'll learn the world does not welcome her, that it does not value her, and will offer her nothing. I would not have brought a child into *this* world.

MOTHER
Do not say that. I cannot imagine a world without that baby girl.

MITSUKO
I was never saying I wished otherwise - but what place is this for growing? How do I teach her to be strong when we are all under the thumb of our own country? Mama I've never felt ashamed of who I am, but I do now. I am ashamed to be only a number, to be locked away, to have no home.

MOTHER
We have a home Mitsuko.

MITSUKO
Where is it, our home? Is it here in the camps? Or the Laundromat our family built that someone else is now running? Or is it Japan, where no one knows we exist?

MOTHER
Home is with your family.

MITSUKO
I think your parents were wrong to leave Japan. I dream every day now, of what my life might have been if they had never left, what I think should have been my life - but I try not to think, I don't want to think -

MOTHER
Mitsuko! Do you not realize that we are all doing the best we can? Every single person inside this place is doing the best they can and they are all nearly crazy. I am nearly crazy.

MITSUKO
Mama –

MOTHER
Do you think I am not angry? Do you think I don't feel lost? Mothers have to be strong for their daughters, life has been unfair to me. You know this. I thought the worst had happened in my life, but then I am sent here. And I am afraid and angry and hurting just as you are. But I find what is left that is important. Daughters will always have more opportunities than their mothers, so as a mother I push you to achieve what was not available to me, and in turn you make sure your daughter is able to have a better life than your own. My heart is heavy for my own losses, but it makes my heart soar to recognize the potential in generations to come.

MITSUKO
But what in my life is important? What do I have to make me strong? How can you speak of potential when there is nothing for us here.

MOTHER
Keizoku wa chikara nari.

MITSUKO
Mama, I speak so little Japanese…

MOTHER
It means “to continue is power.” Mitsuko, I don’t believe we will spend our lives here. I don’t believe this will be where we die.

MITSUKO
We know nothing of what will come.

Mother
Of course we don’t know what is to come. It is always dark 5 inches in front of us. We can never see the future.

MITSUKO
How can you have so much faith?

(Chaos is suddenly heard outside, Mother rises, hands Akira to Mitsuko, then leaves the barrack.)

MOTHER
Stay inside.

MITSUKO
Mama? (Goes to the door)

(The commotion comes from a man who is walking close to the fence, a gun is trained on him. None of this is seen by the audience, it is only heard. The guard can be heard: “Move away from the fence, I will shoot! (Begins to count down from 10) Chaos can be heard “He cannot hear, he is deaf!” “Don’t shoot!” “You can’t shoot him!” “Please don’t shoot!”)

MOTHER
Mitsuko go back inside.

MITSUKO
Why is -

MOTHER
Mitsuko, Akira shouldn’t see this. Go inside!

MITSUKO
That’s Hatsuaki Wakasa. He’s deaf! They’re going to shoot him - he can’t hear the guards! Mama!

MOTHER
Go inside! Go!

MITSUKO
Mama -

(A gunshot is heard. Hatsuaki is dead.)
(Mitsuko screams and Akira begins to cry, Mother leads them into the house.)

(It is quiet for a while as Mitsuko rocks Akira and Mother sits and begins to weep into her hands. Akira’s crying begins to die down and Mitsuko puts her into her crib.)

MITSUKO
Do you still have faith?

MOTHER
Mitsuko –

MITSUKO
I have no faith in my future, in any of our futures.

MOTHER
I still have faith Mitsuko.

MITSUKO
Mama, they killed him. An eighty-year-old man who they knew was deaf and almost blind. They shot him in front of us all.

MOTHER
I know MITSUKO. I saw too. We know now to stay far away from the fence, and we’ll stay alive until the war ends -

MITSUKO
They did not shoot him because he was near the fence, they shot him because we are – in their eyes - the enemy. They are at war with us. They were shooting the Japanese enemy.

MOTHER
Do not speak so loudly, Mitsuko!

MITSUKO
How can you be so calm? There is so much inside me, Mama! Charging anger and pain - I'm exhausted, I can't sleep at night, I just watch that searchlight from the guard tower reminding me I am a prisoner - and it makes me feel tight inside, when I imagine a life here forever, or even just for another day, my blood runs cold - am I truly supposed to get used to this? After awhile? I don't think I ever should. And if we leave, how will I ever live amongst these people again? I look into their faces and - and I think of how my entire world was destroyed and I was turned from a competent young women to a caged and wounded animal. I think of how my daughter's youth is being stolen from her. I think of how I fear for my life and fear for the loss of the ones I love and I hate these people. I want to punish these people. I want justice. I want revenge.

MOTHER
How can you hate those who are so repulsive?

MITSUKO
Mama, what does that mean?

MOTHER
Hatred is exhausting, and it is their hatred of you that leads them to build camps and shoot their guns. Over time you will no longer thirst for revenge, and you will forgive. I know my daughter, you are not like them.

MITSUKO
So you believe they should not be held accountable for all they have done to us? You don't think that guard should be held responsible? And should be punished? Should we not demand justice?

MOTHER
Boundless vindictive rage is not the only alternative to forgiveness.

MITSUKO
But I am not vindictive – a man was murdered -

MOTHER
But you are holding onto so much rage. You will destroy yourself by holding onto it. You will destroy yourself before you are able to leave.

MITSUKO
But mama - how can I let this go?

MOTHER
No response of violence will ever be adequate in response to all we have lost.

(Mitsuko begins to cry).

MOTHER
You cannot build your life around something that cannot be healed. There are no words for what has happened to us here.

MITSUKO
Mama...

(Mitsuko and Mother sob and embrace as the lights fade.)

**Scene 9 - HORTON and TED**

(Ted is pacing around his room that is the messiest it's ever been. There is a knock at the front door)

TED
Come in!

HORTON
Ted? I wanted to check on you and Helen.

TED
I don't have any updates.

HORTON
None?

TED
None, no one knows anything Horton.

HORTON
I don't understand… what's happened?

TED
There’s a question mark on her diagnosis. She’s in the isolation ward, and there’s talk of placing her in an iron lung.

HORTON
What have the doctors told you?

TED
More nothing. They say the situation is touch and go. Touch and go, that’s all the “information” they can give me.

HORTON
And Helen, is she in a lot of pain?

TED
She’s on so many medications, it’s hard for her to say anything - I don’t know what she would tell me, if she could speak to me.

HORTON
Well we both know Helen, she’d tell you to take better care of yourself.

TED
She would, wouldn’t she?

HORTON
Yes, she would.

(beat)

HORTON
Ted, I know this will appear insensitive given all that’s happened, but your cartoons are beginning to do exactly what you set out not to do.

TED
Now what is that supposed to mean?

HORTON
Ted, I have to ask you, why are you writing for the PM? What attracted you to them?

TED
It’s a political magazine. We are against people who push other people around, just for the fun of pushing. Their publications advocate for what’s important.

HORTON
And what about your cartoons, Ted? Your depictions of the Japanese?

TED
What of them?

HORTON
They are American citizens, just as you and I. These people from Japan, that America has rounded up and sent far away are our brothers.

TED:
Now seems like a hell of a time for us to smile and warble: 'Brothers!' While bombs are dropped and our people murdered it is a rather flabby battle cry.

HORTON
Your battle cries are only on paper, it is easy to send your country into battle when it does not mean your friends and family will be sent to fight. It is not your friends and family that will die, and it is even more certainly not you.

TED
I thought you had outgrown your childish notions of pacifism since college.

HORTON
You think it’s childish to believe that meeting violence with violence will not lead to peace?

TED
How do you think Hitler or Mussolini or Hirohito would deal with a pacifist like you? Perhaps you ought to go change their minds -

HORTON
I will not sacrifice my ideals for -

TED
Bombs are dropping as we speak. Are we to watch them fall on our towns because we would like to be peaceful? That plan went poorly in Hawaii, HORTON. The war was inevitable.

HORTON
The people you draw are not those who dropped the bomb. And yet your propaganda leads the nation to believe they are devils, out to kill.

TED
It’s not propaganda, it’s the truth!

HORTON
A man’s devotion to his country is not tested by the birthplace of his grandfather.

TED
They are the fifth column! The racial strains are undiluted! Their presence is a live threat to everything America believes in, our Constitution, our freedom, our Democracy -

HORTON
You must know, Ted. How could you not realize the inconsistency? You say you fight against fraud and deceit and greed and cruelty, and yet you continue to condemn the innocent solely on the basis of your prejudice. You send thousands away, without trial or evidence of any kind. Why do people of Italian descent with Italian parents and grandparents walk free? And those who are German, like yourself? We both know why! You’re so concerned with preserving our American Constitution and our Democracy, if we imprison American citizens without evidence or trial, what’s to say six months from now, we wouldn’t follow them into that same prison without evidence or trial? If our Constitution and our freedom and our Democracy is not for all Americans then it is not for any American!

TED
You should leave. My wife is in the hospital, I have been so worried for her, thank you for this distraction. I have work to do.

HORTON
I am trying to reason with you, Ted, as a friend. I am trying to engage in conversation.

TED
Conversation? You are seeking not to understand, only to be understood!

HORTON
I don't believe you recognize the impact of your work. You have the ability to influence -

TED
Leave, Horton. And let's agree to not talk about politics again. Evidently you cannot respect our differences.

HORTON
I am disappointed in you -

TED
And I am irritated.

HORTON
I do care for you and Helen, though I'm sure you're too angry with me to believe me when I say so. I hope you at least think about what I have said to you today.
(Exits.)

(Ted goes back to his desk. He slams his fist against the desk, then leaves the room. Lights Fade.)

**Scene 10 - Art**

(In the camp, bunk bed, cradle, and small table to the side. It is swelteringly hot.)

(MITSUKO enters with her baby daughter, Akira. She is fussy.)

MOTHER
(sitting on bed, kitting) MITSUKO, come sit with me?

MITSUKO
I must put the baby to sleep, she needs a nap.

MOTHER
After then.
(Mitsuko begins to hum a lullaby to the fussy baby, she slowly settles and falls asleep)
How is our baby girl?

MITSUKO
Fussy, all day.

MOTHER
(laughs) Like someone else perhaps?

MITSUKO
(smiling, going to sit with her mother) I have no recollection.

MOTHER
And what a blessing that must be –

MITSUKO
Mama! (laughing quietly)

MOTHER
My ears are still ringing. Oh you didn't like your father and me. Our friends would hold you and you would just bask in their praise, a perfect angel, they thought you were a doll, then the moment you were back in our arms you, wailing.

MITSUKO
You're exaggerating mama.

MOTHER
No, no, you were most certainly the fussiest baby in California. I've told you the story – I must have. On the day you were born you cried hysterically day and night nonstop. I tried over and over to feed you but you refused and just kept wailing, you wouldn't drink a drop. Suddenly a nurse comes in and snatches you from me – she says that it was unusual for a baby to cry like you were and that she was concerned that you may have been injured upon delivery – because that happens sometimes she says – So she takes my baby girl to be examined and the whole time my heart hammered against my chest I was so worried for you. Then the nurse enters and you're fast asleep, and perfectly healthy. So what was the problem? You were

hungry, but you didn't like the formula bottle. You were so picky you had everyone believing you were broken.

MITSUKO
(laughs) Mama, I was only a baby then.

MOTHER
Yes, but you've always been a picky eater. To this day –

MITSUKO
Not here.

MOTHER
No. Not here. Maybe that's something that will come from this.

MITSUKO
If we leave I'll never eat anything out of a can again. I want to be picky. Here it is my pick to eat the canned spinach and canned wieners or to starve.

MOTHER
I'd like a good shower – enough soap to get clean, even if I know I couldn't stay clean, with all the mud and dust and heat. No, no, on second thought I'd like an escape from the heat. It's like a blanket, I feel as though I'm suffocating sometimes.

MITSUKO
It's better outside of the barrack, mama – a bit more of a breeze.

MOTHER
I was going to soak some of the sheets and hang them overhead. It should bring some relief. I suspect that's the reason Akira's been so upset.

MITSUKO
Let me mama. It's so hot in those lines, so many bodies –

MOTHER
No, I've been in this same spot all day. It's time I get up for a moment.

MITSUKO
Well, can I join you, and help?

MOTHER
No, there’s no reason we both should stand in line, especially when I’m perfectly capable. Why don’t you paint?

MITSUKO
I don’t paint anymore.

MOTHER
I know my daughter. Mitsuko, your head has been full of artwork since you were a little girl.

MITSUKO
Who am I to paint for?

MOTHER
You could send them to your husband, or you could paint for your mother, or Akira, or for yourself.

MITSUKO
I can only paint what I see.

MOTHER
Mhm.

MITSUKO
All I see is mud, ugliness, and dust, barbed wire and guns. Guns aimed at me, and my little girl, and my mother.

MOTHER
I saw a flower just outside. It was beautiful.

MITSUKO
Mama -

MOTHER
It was gorgeous. Bright red and gold and purple and blooming
inside barbed wire.

MITSUKO
I haven’t painted in so long.

MOTHER
Then you better not wait a second longer because I’d like a painting of that flower for my birthday.

MITSUKO
Mama –

MOTHER
That gives you four whole months.

(MITSUKO gets out paints and paper and begins to paint. As she begins she has a slight smile)

## Intermission

### Scene 11 - PEGGY and TED

(TED is at his desk, hard at work and stressed out. The room, and the desk especially, is messier than usual.)

PEGGY
(knocks on door, then opens the door slightly, peaking in.) Uncle Ted?

TED
(Looking up from his work quickly) Oh – hello PEGGY, I didn't hear you come in.

PEGGY
I used my key.

TED
Oh, right, of course, I had forgotten your mother gave you a key – she told me she would.

PEGGY
(Hesitantly, asking) My mom told me Aunt HELEN couldn't answer the door –

TED
Your Aunt Helen, well Aunt Helen is just needing some time to rest, but she'll be all better before long.

PEGGY
Is – my mom told me Aunt Helen was very sick…

TED
Your mother is right, she was very sick, but she has the very best doctors in California there for her – so there's no need to worry Peggy. No need at all, I promise you. She's on the mend as we speak.

PEGGY
Oh –

TED
Well, how, how was your day at school today?

PEGGY
It was fine – Uncle Ted?

TED
Yes Peggy?

PEGGY
I have today's print of the PM.

TED
Oh, that's fantastic Peggy, thank you. I was going to ask you to grab me a copy – here's this (hands her some coins.)

PEGGY
Uncle Ted?

TED
Mmm?

PEGGY
Well the cartoon –

TED
What did you think of this one?

PEGGY
Um, I don't know –

TED
Oh, do you want it explained to you?

PEGGY
Kind of….

(This gets Ted's full attention.)

TED
Kind of?

PEGGY
Well – sure.

TED
Is something wrong Peggy?

PEGGY
Well I think I understand the cartoon – what it means – but I don't understand why – I mean I don't –

TED
What are you trying to tell me, Peggy? You can say it.

PEGGY
I don't like your cartoon Uncle TED.

TED
Oh – well maybe –

PEGGY
I think the cartoon is wrong.

TED: Okay.

PEGGY
And mean.

TED
Okay –
(beat)
Okay, Peggy. Do you want to talk about it then?

PEGGY
(nods) Mhm.

TED
Let's look at the cartoon together?

(Peggy stands beside Ted behind his desk. She pulls the cartoon from her pocket and puts it on the desk in front of the two of them. An image of the cartoon is projected for the audience to see. The image is not found in Minear's book, it is of alley cats with stereotypical Japanese features in an alleyway.)

TED
Well, the cartoon shows Uncle Sam, he's a sort of personification of the U.S. government, or a human symbol for the government - does that make sense. (Peggy nods.) Well, and the alley cats are all representing Japanese-Americans. There are a lot of them, and even though they don't have a lot of power, there are a lot of them, which

is threatening. It’s why they had to be sent away, for our safety.

PEGGY
I don’t think that’s fair, Uncle Ted.

TED
You think it’s unfair that people who are a threat are locked away?

PEGGY
But what did they do wrong?

TED
The Japanese bombed the United States, we cannot trust those people while we are at war with their country, who knows where their loyalties lie.

PEGGY
Are we going to be locked up too?

TED
Why would that happen?

PEGGY
Because we’re German, and we’re at war with Germany too.

TED
That won’t happen, PEGGY. I promise. Did you do anything wrong?

PEGGY
No, but -

TED
Germans have been here longer Peggy. We are Americans. They don’t act like Americans, their traditions are foreign, they speak another language, their food, clothes, looks, are all different.

PEGGY
You always tell me it’s good to be different, and the world is boring if no one stands out. Why would they have to fit in with us -

TED
You aren’t understanding, Peggy -

PEGGY
I had a friend in school, and her family all are gone now, and they didn’t do anything wrong. I know they didn’t!

TED
The thing is Peggy, you can’t know this. Not for certain. And is America to take the time to closely investigate each individual, one by one?
PEGGY
I think they should instead of-

TED
Let me finish - there isn’t time to distinguish the good from the bad, even if there are good people mixed in amongst the traitors.

PEGGY
But that’s just not fair to the good people! That’s not how I want to be treated... I think it’s important that only bad people are punished, not people who didn’t do anything! What if we are suspected next, we could be sent away even though we didn’t do anything.

TED
Peggy, I already explained to you, we are nothing like the Japs -

PEGGY
My friend and I liked to play all the same games together and we both are Americans. We were both born here in La Jolla -

TED
A viper is nonetheless a viper wherever the egg is hatched. So, a Japanese American born of Japanese parents, nurtured upon Japanese traditions, living in a transplanted Japanese atmosphere, with the rarest exceptions grows up to be a Japanese, and not an American.

PEGGY
But she is American, and so are her parents!

TED
Only by some nominal brand of accidental citizenship –

PEGGY
No, there’s -

TED
(angry) Do you want to hear what I have to say? (Deep breath) Peggy, you are being naive. While it might cause injustice to a few to treat all Japs as potential enemies, I cannot escape the conclusion that such treatment should be accorded to each and all of them while we are at war with their race.

PEGGY
But you just admitted it was unjust! How can something unjust be allowed? Shouldn’t there be a way to protect people without hurting other people?

TED
Sometimes questions are complicated and answers are simple.

PEGGY
And the answer is to be unfair? And mean?

TED
No. The answer is to do what is needed to ensure the safety of you, and me, and every American.

PEGGY
It doesn’t sound like it’s safe for my friend! It isn’t safe for the people who were sent away!

TED
It actually is in their interest. People are angry, PEGGY. We, America, was bombed. If the government does not remove these people other Americans would come for them, seeking justice.

PEGGY
Well maybe those people should be sent away instead if they’re going to attack Americans.

TED
Peggy that’s not -

PEGGY
Also, in your cartoon Uncle Sam is killing them, with that nail! Just like -

TED
Peggy, if your friend truly has done nothing wrong I'm sure they can return.

PEGGY
But someone else bought her house, and sold all the stuff in it. They sold all of her favorite things on the lawn! I saw it!

TED
Peggy, I've told you what is going on in the world, if you refuse to listen to what I'm saying there's nothing more for me to say to you.

PEGGY
But you're the one not listening to me!

TED
Don't yell at me. I am the adult.

PEGGY
You aren't acting like an adult, you're acting like a bully.

TED
I'm a bully? Peggy, had the Japs not been sent away they would have put a hatchet through your skull, then I'd like to know who is really a bully!

PEGGY
But -

TED
Peggy, I think it's time you go home.

PEGGY
Uncle Ted -

TED
Go home, I have work I need to get done. (Turning away from her.)

PEGGY
Fine! (Grabs backpack and leaves, slamming the door behind her.)

(Ted goes back to his desk, scribbling furiously as lights fade out.)

**Scene 12 - Dear Baby**

(Mitsuko is sitting on the ground downstage beside a circle of stones and Mitsuko's painting of a rose and barbed wire. She is lit in a spotlight to give the appearance that she is on an outer area of the camp. She is crying softly as she rocks her baby)

MITSUKO
Dear Akira, if you grow up and have lots of questions about who your grandmamma was, I will tell you all about how strong she was, and how not a single soul felt unwelcome or unloved in her company. I'll tell you she had so much faith in those she loved. I dreamed since I was little of opening an art studio, and even here your grandmother brings along paints and papers. Even behind barbed wire she believed I could pursue my dreams. I will tell you of how forgiving she was, because she saw the best in others, even those who hurt her could be good, because everyone was capable of kindness in her eyes. I will tell you all about how wonderful she was, I'll tell as many happy stories as I can remember my baby girl, but I will not tell you about how she died. I will not tell you how she died – of heat stroke while waiting in a long line beneath the desert sun for a drink of warm water. I will not tell you of how the doctors were indifferent to the loss of "another Jap." I will not tell you that she was hardly given a proper burial – instead only this circle of stones marks her place on this Earth. I will not tell you that I don't think it was truly the heat the killed her, but instead it was the pain she felt when the country she worked her entire life to succeed in locked her away like a criminal, forcing her to abandon all she was so proud to accomplish. And as these countless injustices were carried out she still strove to remain hopeful, to not give into anger, and to forgive. I'll never understand how –

(begins to cry harder, and baby cries too. Mitsuko then tries to gather herself, and comforts the baby for moment.)

My baby girl – (takes a deep breath, barely crying anymore.)

My baby girl, have I ever told you why I choose to paint flowers? It comes from back when I was in school, a few years older than you. We all read Mark Twain, and the teacher told us about a quote of his: "Forgiveness is the fragrance that the rose sheds on the heel that has crushed it." I thought that was beautiful – it takes something everyone sees as fragile, just something pretty, and showed how that beauty was strong. It shows that even when gravely mistreated it is possible to produce beauty, rather than hold onto what is unjust. And so I started to paint flowers, because they were strong, standing tall, open to the sunshine, and spreads a sweet scent even after being wounded. And those paintings have been a lung to me, with them I can breathe again. My baby girl we have been trampled. Not just under a boot, but beneath a stampede. You were stolen from your home, lost all your belongings, I don't know where your father is or if he is even still alive, and now your grandma has been taken from us, but I want you to be able to forgive. I don't hope you forget, but I hope you move past this. I hope you are like the rose, and you can leave this behind one day. If we can keep going, I believe we can produce something peaceful and beautiful. I'm scared and I'm angry, because the world has been so unfair to you, and I, and all of us here, but I have you, Akira. We can be roses together, like your grandmamma.

(lights fade out.)

**Scene 13 - Birthday**

(Three years have passed.)

(Ted is sitting hard at work at a very messy desk. He is disheveled and in a bad mood. There is an abandoned meal sitting on the bar.)

(Helen enters, she is has mostly recuperated, but there is still some pain when she walks.)

HELEN

Ted, the guests will be here in just a little while. I asked you to clean up hours ago. (no response) Ted?

TED
I’m in the middle of a project Helen.

HELEN
May I see this one?

TED
No, no. I haven’t finished.
HELEN
We could create together, like we always used to.

TED
Helen, I shouldn’t give you so much work - you do so much for me already.
(Ted moves away from what he’s been drawing, staring at it intently.)

HELEN
TED?
(no response)
What is it you see Ted? I swear sometimes you don’t blink...

TED
(not listening to her)
I’m almost finished here.

HELEN
(Defeated) Our guests will be here in only half an hour. Can you clean up? Please?

TED
There’s no time to clean this whole mess in half an hour.
(Goes back to drawing).

HELEN
I was meaning you clean up yourself, at this point we have no choice but to lock this door and keep our guests away from this room.

TED
Mhm - I will.

HELEN
It is your birthday Ted.

TED
I’ll celebrate. Just in a moment.

HELEN
You’re turning forty, Ted.

TED
I haven’t forgotten.
HELEN
Ted, you haven’t been speaking to me.

TED
Helen, we are speaking right now.

HELEN
No we are not. You hear half the words I say. You hear that your food is ready and you hear me nag you to clean.

TED
Helen...

HELEN
I feel something is wrong, something is wrong and I want to talk about it. Ever since I was sick you have treated me differently…

TED
How differently?

HELEN
You never leave this room.

TED
I’m just working HELEN, that’s all.

HELEN
You are always working. I used to be a part of your work, but now you disappear into your study, recluse yourself from the rest of the world.

TED
(Mumbling) I can’t work without space, and privacy.

HELEN
You’re always working - and when you aren’t working you’re distant at best. I spend so much time reminiscing,

thinking maybe today I will be able to have a glimpse of what we used to be, happy, carefree, a team, a - What has happened to us, Ted?

TED
Nothing has happened, I am just trying to write. You know I am only truly alive when I am writing.

HELEN
Something must've happened… we aren't the same, Ted. Ted…I am unhappy -

TED
I am not to blame if you are unhappy, you are unhappy

HELEN
I'm lonely - Ted, you have you, Ted has Ted, and I need someone.

TED
You sound insane.

HELEN
I should not feel so alone living with the person I love. Ted, I feel as though there is a hole Inside of me - a fresh wound, every slight breeze or gentle movement widening the cut, opening me against my will. I'm afraid the hole will grow so large it will swallow me. I'm not sure how long I can feel like this - feel like I'm disappearing - like I only exist as what I'm not -

TED
I'm sorry you feel alone and that you are not satisfied by the attention I give you, but you cannot lean on me so heavily-

HELEN
Maybe if we had had a child, if it weren't just the two of us, I wouldn't feel so empty. But the house is quiet, PEGGY doesn't come running in anymore, I feel empty because I've always been empty.

TED
Why are you bringing that up? What relevance does that have now?

HELEN
Is it that you do not love me? Maybe that was the reason I could never have a child, my body knew none of it was true! My body knew we were not in love - that it was all a lie -

TED
I love you, and I would have loved any child we brought into this world, but that isn’t our life. And it is not my fault it we never had a child -

HELEN
No, it is mine.

TED
I think we both know that is not what I meant -

HELEN
But it is mine, it is my body that could not have a child. You could have had a child with another woman, do you resent me for it? Is that why you never speak to me, is that why you hide in your office and say you are working every day and night?

TED
I should not have to shower you with reassurances and devotion for you to realize that I love you – and how is it, do you think, that I feel when you say these things to me? Do you think I am not hurt that you think so poorly of me, when you work so hard to make me feel guilty?

HELEN
It wasn’t meant to make you feel guilt - TED, I - I feel myself in a spiral, going down down down, into a black hole from which there is no escape, no brightness. And loud in my ears from every side I hear, 'failure, failure, failure.

TED
HELEN, you are being dramatic, you are hysterical. I don’t resent you, I love you. But I have to work. You shouldn’t lean on me so much, it isn’t fair.

HELEN
You used to lean on me… I miss that. I am too old and enmeshed in everything you do and are, that I cannot conceive of life without you - I love you so much, Ted.

TED
Helen, I will put my drawings away for the moment, I will clean myself up, and you should too. Then we can greet our guests. (Pause) Maybe you should see a doctor.

HELEN
Maybe.

TED
(Muttering as he leaves.) Happy Birthday.

(Helen sits on the couch and begins to weep quietly as the lights fade.)

**Scene 14 - Birthday 2**

(Mitsuko stands by the door of the barrack with Akira, it is her fourth Birthday - at this point Akira should be portrayed by an actress not a doll.)

MITSUKO
Close your eyes Akira, can you see anything?

(Akira shakes her head no).

MITSUKO
Okay, let’s go inside.
(Leads Akira inside and lifts her onto the foot of the bed facing the audience.)
Eyes still closed?

AKIRA
Yes!

MITSUKO
Good. (Mitsuko pulls a doll, a candle, and a candy bar from a cabinet. Mitsuko sets the doll beside Akira and goes to light the candle.) Okay Akira, open! (Begins to sing happy birthday holding the candle and the candy bar.)

AKIRA
Ooh, candy!

MITSUKO
Blow out the candle and make a wish, Akira! (Akira blows out the candle.) Do you know how old you are now?

AKIRA
(Holding up three fingers.) Three?

MITSUKO
No, you're four now, baby. (Shows her four fingers.)

AKIRA
Four? (Holding up four fingers)

MITSUKO
That's right, four.

AKIRA
Can I eat now?

MITSUKO
Do you want your presents first or your birthday candy?

AKIRA
Um… presents!

MITSUKO
Okay, here you go!

AKIRA
Ooh, she's so pretty! I love her!

MITSUKO
I'm glad, baby. What do you say?

AKIRA
Thank you mama.

(There is a pause while Akira plays with her doll. Mitsuko watches her and gets emotional).

AKIRA
Are you sad, Mama?

MITSUKO
No Akira, I just can't believe how old you are. You're four years old, already. That's so much growing up - do you want your candy now?

AKIRA
Yes, yes!

MITSUKO
(Gives her two pieces, then puts the rest in the fridge.)
AKIRA
Do you want candy too, mama?

MITSUKO
No, Akira. That's very sweet, but it's all yours.

AKIRA
Thank you, Mama.

MITSUKO
You're welcome, Akira.

(Lights fade out.)

**Scene 15 - Funeral**

(Ted and Horton in all black funeral attire, TED turns on the radio then slumps into his chair, putting his hat on his desk. Horton stands.)
(Radio plays end of Frank Sinatra's "The House I Live In,")

PEGGY
(Enters, going to Ted) I have to go now, Uncle Ted. I'm really sorry –

TED
Me too sweetheart. (They embrace and Ted kisses her forehead. She leaves.)

(The announcer: "Thank you for tuning in on this fine October afternoon, that was Frank Sinatra with 'The House I Live In,' next we will be playing –" Ted turns off the radio.)

HORTON
(moving toward the liquor.) Gin?

TED
Absolutely.

(Horton brings him a generous glass of gin, then sits with his own smaller glass)
(beat)

HORTON
Ted… Is there anything – can I do something for you?

TED
I don’t know – no – I don’t think so.

HORTON
Have you eaten? At all?

TED
I’m not hungry. Just thirsty.

HORTON
And later?

TED
Maybe I’ll be hungry, but I just, Horton just let me drink.

HORTON
For today, but Ted –

TED
Eventually I’ll be hungry, or eventually I’ll die. Horton, just let me drink.
(beat)
I don’t mean to snap – but I should have more than just one day to grieve, after all that has – I just, Horton I’m sorry. I’m glad to have you, and that you care.

HORTON
How could I not care, you’ve been my friend for two decades – and HELEN for just about as long –

TED
Horton, I – What can I do now? Is there something I'm supposed to do?

HORTON
I can stay awhile, if you'd like.

TED
I can't let you do that, you have your family and your work to take care of, and –

HORTON
They understand. I wouldn't want to be alone if, well, you shouldn't have to be alone.

TED
No Horton, I – I shouldn't. And I'll need to be alone.

HORTON
Not while you're like this. You need someone to care for you right now.

TED
Horton, I just don't want anyone

HORTON
Just let me be nearby, to cook and keep things clean for you - I know Helen - I know you never had to do those things for yourself, Ted.

TED
You're right, she did everything for me. She worked so hard all so that I could play.

HORTON
Helen was truly remarkable, she so admired you Ted, your creativity. She was so sick, in so much pain. She confided in me - it felt as though she was always walking in shoes that were too sizes too small - she told me she felt like a burden, and that she couldn't assist you in your work the way you once had -

TED
Horton, please.

HORTON
I apologize, Ted. It’s hard to find anything to say. I know there isn’t really anything to say. Her life was wonderful, and full of love. It’s so unfair she was stolen from you so early.

TED
She was unhappy.

HORTON
She was very ill.

TED
No - she was unhappy, and I hardly realized. I just did my work. I thought my work was so important…

HORTON
Ted, you shouldn’t dwell on -

TED
(Crying) There’s more, Horton, I want no one to know. She wouldn’t have wanted anyone to know either, but I have to tell someone. She was so sick, but the disease isn’t what killed her.

HORTON
Ted, you’re hysterical.

TED
(Rising) No, Horton - she took her life. Helen, she committed suicide. She was lying on the ground when I found her, I was in just the other room - if I had given her more attention, I could have saved her - but she’s gone. And I didn’t have any idea anything was happening. I’m an idiot. I’m selfish. Helen is dead and - (Sinks into couch, sobbing heavily.)

HORTON
(Sitting beside him) Ted, breathe.

TED
I don’t know whether to kill myself, burn the house down, or go away and get lost. Perhaps I should just do all three. How could I not have known?

HORTON
Ted...

TED
Horton, I - she told me, she told me, you have you, Ted has Ted, and I need someone. I never understood that, or cared enough to make sense of it, I thought it sounded dramatic, and crazy… I told her that. I told her she sounded dramatic, and crazy. I didn't listen. And now I need her.

HORTON
You didn't know. It is easy to tell yourself you could have known now that it's happened. What reason would you have had to look for clues?

TED
How can I face the world now? How do I ever not feel branded - Oh God - I am so selfish to think this way - it is not about me.

HORTON
It is not selfish to grieve. Helen's death is tragic, and is no one person or event is to blame. She was in a terrible place, emotionally, I know you loved her. It is not your fault.

TED
And when the world finds out, and the story is in print, and -

HORTON
The world will make whatever they want of the situation, it's hard to prevent. You have friends that will always love you, and you have those who are never satisfied, and you can't give them any of your attention. Especially now.

TED
Horton, I am in a nightmare. I am insignificant and alone and lost -

HORTON
You should leave. Staying here is painful for you right now. I can tell.

TED
How? Where? Horton, how can I -

HORTON
Come with me.

TED
Go with you where?

HORTON
Japan, I've been assigned a piece with Life Magazine. A piece about the effect of American occupation on the school children there, and the effect the bombs dropped have had - it's different form any of your other work, but you could help me write. And help me research. I could use someone to travel with, I hate flying.

TED
You want me to go to Japan? After all that's -

HORTON
Ted, I know. I know how you feel about Japan, but the war is over.

TED
I'm not sure. It just doesn't seem like a good idea.

HORTON
It would be good for you to get out, if I were going somewhere else I'd invite you still, this isn't a scheme -

TED
I didn't think it was, I just -

HORTON
Ted, I insist. You come with me, you learn to cook, and clean, and make coffee, and balance your checkbook, and you write and draw, it's what you do best. Maybe you'll even find inspiration for another book.

TED
Alright, alright, alright, alright. I'll go.

HORTON
I leave in three days. I'll buy your ticket, just pack your things.

TED
I will. I'll pack.

HORTON
You should know it isn't a vacation there, I don't know if you've seen the news, but the bombs did a lot of damage.

TED
I assumed as much. Horton, I appreciate this. I do.

HORTON
I'm a phone call away, Ted. Anything you need. Please let me know.

TED
I will. Thank you, Horton.

HORTON
Eat something.

TED
I will.

HORTON
And drink something - something not alcohol.

TED
I will.

HORTON
Okay. Good-bye TED, I'll see you soon. You have three days to pack.

TED
Horton, I am not an invalid. Life is just grim. I will eat and drink water, because you will continue to badger me until I do, and I'll grieve the loss of my wonderful wife.

HORTON
We all will, Helen was one of the most remarkable people I have ever encountered, it is a privilege to call have known her. (beat) Goodbye, Ted.

TED
Goodbye Horton.

**Scene 16 - Japan**

(Images of Hiroshima and Nagasaki projected against back wall. Takeharu stands to one corner of the stage in a spotlight. He is wearing a United States military uniform)

TAKEHARU
On September 2, 1945, after a year of basic training, then fighting in Italy, then in France, I was sent to Japan. The United States created military government teams to help with the occupation of Japan, and they sent me, and other Japanese-American soldiers, assuming we spoke the language. I had never seen Japan, and when I got there I learned that I never would.
Everything was burned. I could not see the water in the river when I arrived, there were so many dead bodies floating in it. Survivors struggled to attain adequate medical attention, and searched for family members, though most bodies were so burned there was no way to identify them. I wondered if any of these people were family, how many of these people might have been friends. I wonder why was there a need for this destruction? Why obliterate families, and children, schools, and hospitals? I had spent my life imagining something beautiful – I found char, ash, and tree stumps. Even the sky appeared burned, perpetually coated in a cloud of smoke. Instead of finally experiencing the place that was spoken of like a second home, I found a place I would spend the rest of my life trying to forget.

(Spotlight out on Takeharu, spotlight on Ted as he enters, coming to the opposite front corner of the stage.)

TED
I wish I could see this place, as it once was – I wonder, was this a home? This ash? With a family, a home carefully selected and well loved. Did a child, maybe a young girl, stare out her window sometimes, seeing a clear sky as she daydreamed of what her life might be when she grew up? Were they afraid? –Did they think they were in danger – or did they believe they were safe, safe because they were in their home, and amongst loved ones.

My art led to this – this destruction – turning entire lives, thousands of families, and their history into piles of ash.

How did I not see these people? I looked into human eyes and didn't realize they were alive – lungs full and heart beating the same as mine. I saw something alien in their families, even as I held tight to my own. I was just as blind as everyone else.

HORTON was right all along, a voice of justice and kindness and in a void of hate. My distrust and my fear have soured the milk of human kindness. Little Peggy knew too, children see the truth as no one else can. I tried to teach her everything I knew to be right, only to realize that little girl knew more than anyone did. Children are immune to propaganda. You can't pour didacticisms down little throats.

I have so much faith in children. Why did I write to convince adults, their minds are sewn shut, a child's mind is wide open, they see the world as something to take in, differences included. I hope the world sees what I see now – how easily I shut out humanity when I was afraid. I left my morals behind – we all did. New generations must grow up to be more intelligent than ours.

No matter how small someone seems to us, even if their voice is not as big or if they don't have a lot of power, and even if we do not see them ourselves, they are there, and all people matter. Every single person here matters. A person's a person no matter how small. I hope I never forget it.

(Lights fade out. Two plane seats emerge, HOrton is sitting in one of them, asleep. The other has a notebook and pen on it, which HORTON begins to write in. A flight attendant is overheard before fading out: "Ladies and gentlemen, my name is Patricia and I will be your chief flight attendant for…" Ted begins to write, reading out loud as he writes. A projection of his drawing of HOrton the elephant fades in as he writes).

TED

On the 15th of May, in the Jungle of Nool, In the heat of the day, in the cool of the pool, He was splashing...enjoying the jungle's great joys... When the elephant, HOrton the elephant, heard a small noise…

(Fade to black).

**Scene 17 - Leaving Camp**

(Radio plays in background: "Beginning January 2, 1945, executive order 9066 will be reversed, permitting Japanese men and women to return to their homes. There has been significant backlash to this decision, as many fear that United States National security is again at risk. As the civilian group: Remember Pearl Harbor said recently –")
(While radio plays Mitsuko, dimly lit, is packing her and her daughter's bag while Akira sits on one of the beds. They cannot hear the radio, the radio only serves to set the scene. Lights up, cutting off radio. )

AKIRA
Are we leaving Mama?

MITSUKO
Yes, Akira.

AKIRA
Mama - Where will we go?

MITSUKO
I'm not sure baby, we're just going to go.

AKIRA
You don't know at all?

MITSUKO
I know a little.

AKIRA
Is it a surprise, Mama?

MITSUKO
Well Akira, we're going to buy a car with a lot of other people and drive until we're in a better place.

AKIRA
What will it be like, Mama?

MITSUKO
Oh. (pausing) Well, Akira, it's been a very long time - I don't know if things are the same as I remember.

AKIRA
What do you remember?

MITSUKO
Well - lots of things. Our house always smelled like clean sheets because we lived above our Laundromat, and we could go for long walks, as far as we wanted to go, and your grandma
would make the most amazing dinners, and we'd all eat together your grandma and your father and you and I...

AKIRA
Are you sad, Mama?
MITSUKO
Yes baby.

AKIRA
Why?

MITSUKO
I miss your papa, it's been a very long time since I've seen him. There are just a lot of things that will be different now. But your papa is going to be with us, and we won't be here ever again.

AKIRA
Mama…

MITSUKO
Yes Akira?

(Akira begins to cry.)

MITSUKO
Oh, baby don't cry. Akira, you don't need to cry. Why are you crying?

AKIRA
I'm scared.

MITSUKO
You're scared?

(Akira nods)

MITSUKO
Of leaving?

AKIRA
Mhm.

MITSUKO
It is scary, it's a new place for both of us, but life will be better once we've left. I promise.

AKIRA
Tell me about papa?

MITSUKO
Oh, your papa is a very kind man, and you were his favorite person to spend time with, when you were very little he used to keep you awake playing with you, even when I told him you needed to go to sleep or that it was time to feed you...

(Lights fade out.)

**Scene 18 - Interviews**

(The stage is dark. Three tables set up in triangle, with chairs on either side. At each table sits an interviewer and interviewee in modern clothing – it is now roughly 2005. Actors should have changed clothing, HORTON Conrad, BENNETT Cerf, and HELEN Palmer are now dressed as interviewers, Mother is the first interviewee, then TAKEHARU, then MITSUKO, who portrays her daughter who is now almost 60 years old.)

Overlapping voices play – prerecorded.

Voice 1 – This is part 3 of the interview with Edward Miyakawa; the date is May 22, 2007.
Voice 2 – This is part 1 of our interview today with Kenge Kobayashi…
Voice 3 – …with Yoko McClain today is November 5, 2009.
Voice 4 – The day is January 25, 2012, and this is the second part of our interview with Natsume Soseki. Thank you so much for being here –
Voice 5 – The day is June 14, 2008. We're glad you could come speak with us

**(lights up on right table)**

Interviewer 1 (HELEN)
Let's talk about when your family left Tule Lake, when did you leave camp?

Interviewee 1 (Mother)
Yes, right. Well we were sent to camps in the beginning of 1942, and Tule Lake was one of the last camps to close – since most of Tule Lake answered no-no. So we got out in 1945, so three years in a concentration camp.

Interviewer 1 (HELEN)
Where did you go then?

Interviewee 1 (Mother)
Well I didn't know everything that was going on, I was 8, maybe almost 9 at the time we left. A lot of us weren't sure how we would even leave, the government had trains to take us all to the camps, but there was no transportation to take us home. And most of us had no money anymore, and we could only take with us what we could carry, so none of us had a car, but a bunch of us put together our money and bought one, I think. I was so young though, not included in adult conversations. But I remember clearly, it was a very important moment for me when we left the camp. I left Tule Lake, and there I go, I go out through this barbed wire fencing, and leave it behind.
That was three years –I stayed behind barbed wire everyday for three years, and then I just left it behind. We didn't know if that would happen, and we're happy, but then we're on the road and as we travel none of us know where we can get gas, and where we can stop and get food. And we're driving across the highway, then all of a sudden some young guys come by driving in a car and they see "yellow Japs" sitting in the car, and they start calling us names and swearing and threatening us. So we just keep going on and on, because some places are antagonistic, but we have no idea, we haven't seen the world for years – we don't know what we're facing. It was a difficult thing to realize – that even after we left there were a lot of places we couldn't go.

**(lights switch to left table)**

Interviewer 1 (BENNETT)
So, I've noticed you call the camps concentration camps, not internment camps or relocation centers – can you speak a bit about why that is?

Interviewee 1 (TAKEHARU)
Well that's what they were. The government never wants to use the term "concentration camp" because that looks horrible, people hear concentration camp and they think of Germany and all the people who died there. So, well, if somebody said to me, "I'm going to give you a choice of going to a concentration camp in Germany or a concentration camp in America," I would jump up on my feet and say, "American Concentration camp! American concentration camp!"
(Beat)
We were American citizens. We were incarcerated by our American government in *American* internment camps here in the United States. The term 'Japanese internment camp' is both grammatically and factually incorrect.
But nevertheless, it was horrible living conditions, terrible living conditions, they had barbed wire fencing and they had machine gun manned towers. And the machine guns didn't face out, they faced in. And then they brought tanks – can you imagine tanks to guard 18,000 people? And they faced in too.

**(lights switch to right table)**

Interviewer 2 (HELEN)
Can you speak at all to the loyalty questionnaire that circulated in the camps?

Interviewee 2 (Mother)
Sure. The key of the questionnaire were questions 27 and 28. Then question 27 and 28 divided the Japanese American community, if you answered no-no you carried that burden with you the rest of your life. You wouldn't think that there would be a rift after all this time, but there is still animosity.

Interviewer 2 (HELEN)
What were those questions? Questions 27 and 28?

Interviewee 2 (Mother)
The first question was asking "are you willing to serve in

the armed forces?" Because the United States needed more people to fight in the army then, and they knew 10,000 or so fighting age men were in the camps. And the second one, question 28, that one asked, "Are you loyal to America and want no association to the Emperor of Japan."

Interviewer 2 (HELEN)
What do you think made someone answer yes versus no?

Interviewee 2 (Mother)
Well there are about a hundred reasons someone might have answered no-no versus yes-yes. Maybe they're upset about how they've been treated, but more often I think there were other reasons. So say someone lives in the camps with their parents and children and they've lost everything – so they answer no because they can't go fight so they can support their family, they feel responsible. Or maybe the person answering the survey is someone like my father, who was well beyond fighting age and has never been an American citizen.

Interviewer 2 (HELEN)
Does it surprise you so many Japanese Americans answered yes – after how everyone was treated?

Interviewee 2 (Mother)
I think a lot of us thought we would answer, and cooperate,
and then we could go home. But more than that we were American. We lived here, played here, worked here, our lives were in America, and we wanted that to be made clear.

**(Lights switch to left table)**

Interviewer 1 (BENNETT)
And then you ended up in Boulder, Colorado? And that was with your whole family?

Interviewee 1 (TAKEHARU)
A family let us come stay with them at first, while we found jobs again, and got back on our feet. So, yes, all of us lived in Boulder after that. Me, my mother and father and older sister.

Interviewer 1 (BENNETT)
Can you tell me a bit more about that? Did you experience more discrimination there?

Interviewee 1 (TAKEHARU)
It was mixed. Mostly good memories looking back on it. What we do as little boys, whether they're Japanese or Caucasian – little boys play war games. So we're fighting against the enemies so they're Krauts and Japs and Americans, and some days when we played I was on a Jap, but just as often I was a Kraut or an American. It was all a game, that's all.
(Beat)
So I guess at first, when I was really young still, and maybe I didn't understand, I thought it didn't affect me much –

Interviewer 1 (BENNETT)
Is there a time when you realized how much you were affected,
any moment in particular you remember?

Interviewee 1 (TAKEHARU)
Well, my friends and I enjoyed seeing matinees at the movie house on Sundays, and there was one Sunday where we go and movie we see is The Purple Heart, I don't know if you've ever seen The Purple Heart?

Interviewer 1 (BENNETT)
No, I don't think I have.

Interviewee 1 (TAKEHARU)
Well here I am with my 3 or 4 Caucasian friends, and the movie, it opens up inside a prison cell with Dana Andrews or some other famous actor – then the bad guy comes in, and he has a slanted eyes and buck teeth and he wears these glasses, and so the story is that the Dana Andrews', or someone's, B-25 was shot down over Tokyo, so now he's in a Japanese Prison. And he's being questioned and then they, the Japanese men, torture him, and we hear American soldiers screaming in agony, and the whole time, this whole movie, I'm feeling sick to my stomach. So then we get out of the movie and my friends say, "Wow those Japs sure were horrible weren't they?" And that was the first time I was really angry about what we went through. Because then I started adding everything up, and I was so

angry – then my friends and I had a huge fight. I still know their names, they were lifelong friends, but after that I knew – and I couldn't play war games anymore. Because I knew the world I lived in, and some people would open their homes to us and still other people would make these sorts of terrible movies with unfair depictions and call me a name just as I walked down the street. Even after all this time had passed people didn't think we were innocent. But we were, we were all innocent.

**(Lights switch to middle table)**

Interviewer 3 (HORTON)
This is part one of our interview today with Akira Nagata. The date is July 20, 2006. How are you today, Akira?

Akira (MITSUKO)
I'm well, thank you.

Interviewer 3 (HORTON)
So before we dive in, I wanted to talk about your family. You are a second generation American?

Akira (MITSUKO)
Yes. My father was TAKEHARU Nagata, and my mother was MITSUKO
Nagata, but she later changed her name to Mitzi while in the camps. Her parents, my grandparents, moved to the United States when they were young adults, in 1904 and 1911, so when Pearl Harbor came they had lived in this country for over thirty years. My grandparents, they came here intending to stay here for the rest of their lives, raise their families, have their life here, and they were aliens because the naturalized laws discriminated against Japanese, Chinese, and Filipinos. They wanted to be American citizens from the beginning but never could.

Interviewer 3 (HORTON)
Do you know your grandparents well?

Akira (MITSUKO)
Only my mother's mother. She was a very strong woman, a rock.

Interviewer 3 (HORTON)
I’m sure. Your mother too probably.

Akira (MITSUKO)
Mhm.

Interviewer 3 (HORTON)
Now, what do you remember of the camps?

Akira (MITSUKO)
Well, not a lot. I was a baby when my mother and grandmother
were brought to the camps, and I was four when I left, but my first memories are from those camps. Three years is a long time, so much is missed in three years. For me, even though I don’t remember lots of details, I know I spent my earliest memories behind barbed wire.

Interviewer 3 (HORTON)
Is there anything your mother has told you? About her experience?

Akira (MITSUKO)
She felt it was important I know her story. She told me everything when I turned ten. It was strange, strange because when she told me I had this feeling that, well, that I already knew, even though I was so young when everything happened.

Interviewer 3 (HORTON)
Would you be willing to tell your mother’s story today? Well, both of your story, really?

Akira (MITSUKO)
Of course.
(beat)
Well, I guess it begins with the bombing of Pearl Harbor, my mother was out grocery shopping, and my grandmother was taking care of me. My father was away fighting in the war. My mother was called a “dirty jap” and spit on, and by a man she had known for a long time. It was the first message to her that things were going to be happening to us…

(fade to black)
**The end.**

# Theater and Politics: Situating "Familiar Wars"
## Thesis Essay Prepared to Supplement an Original Play Submitted As a Senior Honors Thesis Project

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## Introduction

Theatre is a distinctive art form, one that intimately engages audiences and has the potential to offer powerful political critiques and to provoke social change. When audience members take their seats in a theater, they are sharing an exclusive event in which a community is forged during that show. No other audience will experience that performance. There is something magical about live theatre; there is a strange, elusive energy between the audience and performer. Live theater is a momentary collaboration.

Moreover, this creative medium may elicit quite visceral reactions from its viewers. While television and film frequently portray similar events, and certainly elicit emotional responses, the theater carries a greater capacity for personal connection. With actors performing in front of you, it is more difficult for the audience to disassociate from the action of the play. When watching films, it may be easy to become desensitized; however, in a play the audience can easily forget that what they are seeing on stage is not real. "Theater is live, and you are yards away from a human being who seems to be feeling real pain and real emotion," Olivia Wilde, a Broadway star, explains. "There's something about live theater that makes it feel more real, even though intellectually you know it can't be, because we're doing it eight times a week" (Grady).

In Inventing Human Rights, Lynn Hunt writes provocatively about the emergence of human rights in relation to art. Her argument is that human rights became linked with self-evidence and political power through popular consumption of eighteenth-century novels emphasizing individual autonomy. While Hunt emphasizes literature as a catalyst for empathy, individuality, and human rights, theater also provides a potent form of creative expression that allows people to experience the point of view of someone different (Hunt). Theater and literature are reflections of life, and therefore expose their audiences to a diversity of lifestyles, as well as cultures, ethnicities, races, genders, sexualities, economic classes, and other identities.

American playwrights at times have been inspired to write historical dramas informed by the political authoritarianism and hysteria of their own time. During the McCarthy era, for instance, Arthur Miller, himself blacklisted, went to the Bay State to research the Salem Witch Trials of 1692, culminating in his play, *The Crucible*, which served as sobering critique of Senator Joseph McCarthy's dangerous, yet popular, tactics in the name of national security (Miller). In the midst of the Red Scare, a time when Americans dissenting from the government faced official and private forms of repression including the loss of reputations and jobs, as well as prison in some cases, the American public was overcome by fear. In an era preoccupied with national security, McCarthy employed hearsay and intimidation to establish himself as a powerful political figure. A reign of terror followed as McCarthy and his followers began a crusade against communists. One of the most dramatic and popular cases was against suspected adversaries Julius

and Ethel Rosenberg, who were convicted of espionage and executed two years later (Miller). Arthur Miller, critical of McCarthy's actions but wary of the power and influence the political demagogue wielded, wrote a play set within another climate of fear and repression: the Salem Witch Trials. Similar motivations and passions inspired me to write the play, *Familiar Wars*, a creative senior honors project that looks back to an earlier time in U.S. political history to underscore foreboding elements of the present.

Two key purposes animate this essay. The first is to highlight the capacity of theater to provide formidable political critiques and to spur reform activism. The second is to carefully elucidate the research that was undertaken to write my original play; to explain the meaning of the characters, symbols, and plot in this drama; and to reflect on the linkages between the wartime hysteria and repression of the Second World War and our contemporary setting. These aims are tackled in five sections. In the first section, I provide a brief primer on the political potential of theater by focusing on several compelling examples stretching from Greek theater to today's Great White Way. The second section discusses my methods for playwriting, highlighting how my research transformed into a creative piece. The third section focuses on my motivations and goals in writing the play, *Familiar Wars*. The fourth section delves into the wartime hysteria and repression as themes that lay at the heart of my creative effort. Finally, I explore the role of race throughout American history and more closely this topic in relation to the many parallels between the current Trump era and the 1940s under President

Roosevelt, both populist Presidents whose expansions of the executive powers posed or pose a threat to already marginalized communities.

**I. Dramatizing Politics, Politicizing Theater: A Primer**

Although his work serves as a special inspiration for my own creative effort, Arthur Miller is certainly not the first to employ theater as a tool to critique political leaders and movements. In fact, there is a long tradition of political theatre, going back as far as Greek theatre in 400BC. *Antigone*, written by Sophocles, is a prominent example of early political theatre. Arguably the play is the first piece of truly feminist writing, and continues to be upheld by key feminists today. *Antigone* tells the story of a young woman who, when her brothers kill each other in civil war and only one is allowed a proper burial, she defies the king and her Uncle, Creon, and buries her brother as she believes he deserves. In the end, King Creon must stand his ground, and sentence his niece, Antigone, to death, though following the action he is overcome by remorse. In this work, Sophocles is critiquing political leaders, like King Creon, whose prideful denial of a burial for opposing forces' casualties is infringing on divine principles (Sophocles).

Moliere's French comedy, *Tartuffe,* is another example of theatre engaging in politics. The play intended to critique those in positions of power at a time when dissent and free speech were not permitted, a deliberate risk on Moliere's part, leading to years of controversy. First staged as a three-act piece in front of Louis XIV in 1664, with the title *Tartuffe,* (when translated 'Tartuffe' means 'Hypocrite'), the comedy's satire of religious devotion created a scandal that forced the king to

prohibit further performances. It was only after a second five-act version, renamed *The Impostor,* was banned in 1667 that the final five-act version, *Tartuffe or the Impostor*, was performed in 1669 and subsequently published. No trace of the first two versions remains, but their content has long been the subject of much speculation (Hammond). As Georges Forestier, a scholar of Moliere's works, assumes, the original character 'Tartuffe' was "evidently portrayed as a spiritual director, and therefore an insider in the Church," leading to outrage from the religious faction of the French court. Molière's later decision to make Tartuffe a fraud who comes from the outside to infiltrate Orgon's family "shows the dramatist's attempt to circumvent the anger of the religious authorities" (Hammond). However, even the published version of the play offers criticisms of religious figures, something that was highly controversial and dangerous to disparage in any way. In a time when dissenting from political leaders was strictly prohibited, Moliere's brave theatrical dissent offered a form of expressing condemnations.

Today plays continue to present political themes. Arguably one of the most popular and influential pieces of theatre created, Lin Manuel Miranda's critically acclaimed hip-hop musical, *Hamilton,* follows the story of founding father Alexander Hamilton, and yet each of the characters is a played by a racial minority. The musical challenges perceptions of who is responsible for building America, acknowledging the work of racial minorities and women, both groups who have been denied adequate recognition for their contributions to the United States. The

hip-hop musical is about equality and inclusion, and is a testament against the racism and cultural wars that threaten the spirit of the Constitution.

Further, Hamilton's success has provided a platform for initiating conversation, and confronting the violent reemergence of white supremacists under the Trump administration. Early in the Trump Presidency, Vice President Mike Pence attended a performance of *Hamilton* and the cast took their opportunity to speak directly to their Vice President, advocating that he, and President Trump, need to work on the behalf of all Americans. Brandon Victor Dixon, who played Aaron Burr stated:

> "We, sir - we - are the diverse America who are alarmed and anxious that your new administration will not protect us, our planet, our children, our parents, or defend us and uphold our inalienable rights," he said. "We truly hope that this show has inspired you to uphold our American values and to work on behalf of all of us" (Dixon).

For many on the cast of *Hamilton*, like many other U.S. residents, the election of President Trump was crushing precisely because his campaign was fueled by Islamophobic, nativist, racist, misogynist, and homophobic appeals. Even as Candidate and President Trump has frequently insisted that he is the "least racist person," numerous instances capture his biases (Scott). For instance, in December 2015, Trump called for "a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States," including refusing to readmit Muslim-American citizens who were outside of the country at the time. Then, in June 2017, Trump said 15,000 recent immigrants from Haiti "all have AIDS" and that 40,000 Nigerians, once seeing the United States, would never "go back to their huts" in Africa (Leonhardt). In another troubling story from the President's days as a real

estate mogul, a former hotel executive said Trump criticized a black accountant stating: "Black guys counting my money! I hate it. … I think that the guy is lazy. And it's probably not his fault, because laziness is a trait in blacks" (Leonhardt).

*Hamilton* cast members gave expression to fears and critiques shared by many minority groups and vulnerable communities in the United States. Their direct and controversial outreach to Vice President Pence when he sat in the audience was in fact consistent with key features of the musical. Indeed, many agree that Hamilton is a show that offers "light in the dark" to many Americans who, in stark contrast to Trump, wish to celebrate diversity and the critical role immigrants played in the American Revolution and the early republic. Against the backdrop of contemporary xenophobia, audiences routinely cheer boisterously when Hamilton delivers this pointed line: "Hey yo, I'm just like my country/I'm young, scrappy and hungry….Immigrants: We get the job *done*!" It is rare that a cast so directly addresses its audience, but the Hamilton cast used their platform to spark a dialogue on top of the dialogue already created by the show itself.

While many historians and political scientists reject *Hamilton* citing that the musical neglects many aspects of the real Alexander Hamilton, David Waldstreicher, a historian at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York states that amid Miranda's enthusiastic interpretation, Hamilton the man "has gotten a free pass" (Schuessler). Another critic, Annette Gordon-Reed, a professor of history and law at Harvard, more bluntly states that "he show's multiethnic casting obscures the almost complete lack of identifiable African-American characters, making the country's founding seem like an all-white affair"

(Schuessler). I would argue that these critics misunderstand the point of Miranda's work as well as the role of theatre. *Hamilton* highlights, through multiethnic casting, the prominent roles played by people of diverse racial backgrounds in the founding and development of America. Miranda's casting decisions write non-white people into the well-known story of the nation's founding, and by showcasing multiethnic characters in these elite roles the audience gains a sense of the large part played by marginalized communities. Also, even if historians can not come to terms with inaccuracies in Hamilton's character, the fact that the play has inspired countless young immigrants and diverse communities to imagine themselves in similarly elite leadership role proves that Miranda succeeded in creating a work of art about the hard work and influence of non-white Americans in the founding of the United States. Therefore, the critiques of *Hamilton* stem from a misunderstanding of the role of theatre: is theatre meant to tell the truth or is it meant to be a interpretation of history emphasizing a truthful theme meant to empower?

Similar to critiques of *Hamilton*, many would counter my assertions saying that theatre, or any form of media, for social change does not promote justice, but instead trivialize sensitive issues. I would argue that though there is truth that dramatizing traumatic eras in history there needs to be greater attention to sensitivity and respectfulness, I believe the power of storytelling and art, when utilized, can draw attention to important issues in ways that no other form of communication can. In fact, when art is well done it has a capacity to communicate with empathy and open the hearts of viewers, whereas news and other forms of

communicating tragedies allows for viewers to disconnect. In art, and theatre in particular, audiences are confronted with the impact of tragedy on humans, eliciting greater connection and therefore inspiring response.

As this brief discussion of stage and politics highlights, theatre possesses a unique capacity to critique the political order and even to provoke social change. It is a powerful instrument to communicate foreign concepts as relatable, as it is a uniquely intimate experience, forcing audiences to connect with characters and reflect on the plot and actions of characters especially when these elements resonate with contemporary political conditions and problems.

## II. How I Wrote *Familiar Wars*: Methods of Political Playwriting

*Familiar Wars* began as any other thesis question, but was answered in an interdisciplinary process. The key questions posed by this thesis project revolve around the balancing of civil liberties, human rights, and national security in times perceived by government officials and the public as perilous. Why has national security so often overshadowed constitutional democracy and individual rights in the United States over the last century? Further, my thesis asks on a domestic level: what leads to a change of heart? My approach was rooted in research and fact, yet the project sought to be humanistic. Though my thesis questions ultimately has answers, there is not a single answer to my thesis questions. As Israeli playwright Motti Lerner once told my theatre class: "Some people feel that because I write political theatre I write propaganda. Here is how I make sure I do

not write propaganda: I believe in my characters, stay true to real people, and I do not write with an agenda – I write to seek the many complicated truths" (Lerner).

In order to write, *Familiar Wars* I had to become familiar with several things: the intimate life of Theodore Geisel, the intimate life of a family living in an internment camp, and I had to understand the parallels as well as the defining characteristics of two startlingly similar periods in politics. Throughout the process of writing the play I had the challenge of balancing the ultimate goal of writing a compelling play and staying true to the characters and history of the era and real people represented in the play. While to write an effective play I had to dramatize events, overall I knew I had to stay true to the history of the events so that I was not insensitive to a traumatic era of history and did not provide reason for someone to discredit my work and the message of my play. Therefore my play is deeply rooted in research and incorporates the narratives and quotes of real people.

To understand the enigma of a children's writer, Dr. Seuss, I read several biographies of Seuss, including: Judith Morgan's Dr. Seuss and Mr. Geisel, Donald Pease's Theodore Geisel: A Portrait of the Man Who Became Dr. Seuss, and Richard Minear's Dr. Seuss Goes to War. Morgan, as a close friend of Seuss for almost thirty years, draws on her firsthand insights as well as his voluminous papers; resulting in an intimate portrait of a dreamer who saw the world "through the wrong end of a telescope." In his biography, Donald Pease reveals the evolution of Dr. Seuss's creative persona while offering an honest appraisal of his life. The book also features many of Dr. Seuss's lesser-known illustrations, including college drawings,

insecticide ads, and wartime political cartoons, which provide fascinating insight into Dr. Seuss's style of cartoons. As Pease traces the full arc of Dr. Seuss's prolific career, he combines close textual readings of many of Dr. Seuss's works with a unique look at their origin in order to shed new light on the enduring legacy of America's favorite children's book author. Minear's work is a collection of all of Geisel's political cartoons, accompanied by historical context as well as quotes and anecdotes from and about Mr. Geisel. These sources gave me the majority of my content for writing the characters of Seuss and his family. I tried to quote Seuss and his family at many points, staying as true to the real people my characters represented. The majority of the play is the dramatization of real events, people, and their relationships.

There were, however, some creative liberties taken in the construction of characters. For instance, there is little information about Horton Conrad beyond that he went to college with Seuss and is the namesake of the beloved "Horton the Elephant." However, in *Familiar Wars* Horton transformed into a voice of reason and an advocate of justice, much like the elephant he represents. Horton Hears a Who was written by Dr. Seuss as an apology to the Japanese people following Geisel seeing firsthand the destruction after the dropping of the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki while writing a piece for Life Magazine (Pease, 286). Though I could have chosen any character to be a counter to Geisel's and most of the country's support of Japanese internment, this choice allowed Geisel to apologize and show his recognition of his wrongs by naming his noble character

after a noble friend who recognized the value of all people when he did not: “A person’s a person, no matter how small” (Dr. Seuss).

Further, while Bennett Cerf was Seuss’s partner in crime throughout college, served as Seuss’s editor for many years, and was a close friend throughout Seuss’s life, he is also one of many editors that Seuss worked closely with (Pease). However, when writing the characters in *Familiar Wars* it quickly became clear that there could be only one editor character, and of possible editors, Cerf, friend and editor since college, provided the most opportunities for connection with Geisel and therefore compelling conversations.

Additionally, it is unknown if Peggy, Geisel’s niece, was or was not such a firebrand advocate of human rights as the character is, I wanted to highlight how a child, through innocence, could uniquely recognize the rights and wrongs of what many people see as a complicated situation. I believe Peggy might have challenged her uncle, as Seuss frequently promotes the agency and intelligence of children as a reason to solely write books for children.

Likely the largest distance from truth comes toward the end of the play when Helen commits suicide. Though Helen, Geisel’s wife, did tragically commit suicide, the event was many years following her husband’s trip to Japan with Life Magazine. However, for the purpose of the play, Helen’s suicide in the play provides a catalyst for Geisel to leave home and visit Japan. However, this was the creative choice I debated most, but I believe the plot point ultimately provides closure on Helen’s storyline as well as motivates Geisel.

To attempt to understand the experience of Japanese Americans interned during World War II I first read the accounts of several historians including: Infamy by Richard Reeves and Prisoners Without Trial by Roger Daniel. Then, I went on to read several personal narratives including Only What We Could Carry by Lawson Fusao, the "Japanese Oral History Project" interviews carried out by Oregon State University, among many other interviews from those who experienced Japanese Internment, such as George Takai and many others. Additionally, Impounded by historians, Linda Gordon and Gary Okihiro, includes a full collection of Dorothea Lange's photographic record of the Japanese American internment saga. Everyone has seen the famous pictures of Dorothea Lange of suffering families from the Great Depression in the 1930s that raised sympathy and awareness of the countrywide poverty. Interestingly, Lange's photos remained unseen because the American government originally censored the pictures. Additionally, the CLASC Project includes a comprehensive Chronology of World War II Incarceration that incorporates the details of many incidents from within the camps. Each of the characters in the Japanese family is based on real people who were interviewed, even unseen characters such as Hatsuaki Wakasa in scene eight.

Furthermore, the play's radio broadcasts are all real quotes from politicians and newspapers during 1940. These sources were found in the respective Truman and FDR Libraries' records. Though originally I intended to incorporate some modern quotes from contemporary political leaders to draw the parallel between this dark era in American history and our current political upheaval, I quickly

realized that the connections would be more genuine and just as clear without me fabricating the connections. The words of leaders today are a haunting echo of the words of leaders in the 1940s, because it is increasingly evident that history is again repeating itself.

### III. Why I Wrote *Familiar Wars*

I believe plays have an unparalleled capacity, through the dramatization of any particular moment, to communicate a complicated and seemingly extraneous period as something relatable, therefore making it a tool for understanding a time period. In the same vein, theatre presenting a historical period has a profound capacity to illustrate the repetition of historical events, therefore allowing for the errors of the past to highlight current troubling errors. This is the reason I, when troubled by the current political climate, wrote a play.

Demagogic claims about the alleged national security threats of immigrants and refugees hits close to home for my family. During the late 1930s and 1940s, one side of my family struggled in vain to obtain refugee visas for Hungarian Jewish relatives. They led protest rallies and lobbied the State Department, but were rebuffed because officials insisted that these East European Jews were prone to radical political ideologies and thereby too threatening to receive asylum. Nearly all of these family members perished in the Holocaust. In the same period, on the other side of my family, my German immigrant great-grandparents, their brothers and sisters, and their children faced discrimination at the workplace, in schools, and in everyday social relations because their loyalty to the U.S. was

questioned due to being alleged "enemy aliens." In this prevailing political climate, now, more than ever, ordinary citizens need to mobilize with advocacy groups on behalf of refugees – the most vetted migrants and also the group that political philosopher Michael Walzer calls "the most necessitous strangers" (Walter). I hope it is soon understood that these populations which we, as a nation, villianize, are among those most in need of sympathy and action taken on their behalf. In the context of my work, I hope it is understood that in times of war, those who are the already marginalized racial other are almost always entirely innocent and are also among the most vulnerable to vigilante persecution as well as unjust legislation being enacted against them, as evident in the stories of Japanese Americans during World War II.

From Brexit to the Trump administration's constitutionally contested travel bans on migrants from six Muslim-majority countries, immigrants and refugees serve as convenient political scapegoats in even the most established democratic nations. Even when historical and social scientific evidence shows that these newcomers strengthen national economies and are less apt to engage in violent or criminal activity than basic native-born populations, they are blamed for taking jobs, consuming public benefits, and posing significant criminal and terrorist threats. As German Vice Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel aptly warned, President Trump is "the pioneer of a new authoritarian and chauvinist international movement."

Today's threats to constitutional principles and basic civil, social, and political rights are frighteningly reminiscent of another haunting period in history. During the Second World War all those living in America with Japanese descent,

regardless of citizenship, were forcibly, and without warning, placed into concentration camps. With an executive order from President Franklin D. Roosevelt, innocent American men, women, and children were imprisoned without respect for their constitutional rights. Executive Order 9066, signed by Franklin D. Roosevelt on February 19, 1942, authorized military commanders to designate "military areas" at their discretion, "from which any or all persons may be excluded" (FDR library). The order set in motion the mass transportation and relocation of more than 120,000 Japanese people to sites the government called detention camps that were set up and occupied in about 14 weeks (FDR Library). The camps did not close until 1945 and 1946, releasing those who had declared their loyalty to the United States and willingness to fight in the war on a government issued survey long before those who did not (CLASC).

The camps themselves were located in remote, uninhabitable areas of the West Coast. In desert camps, daytime temperatures often reached one hundred degrees or more, meanwhile, sub-zero winters were common in northern camps. Detainees were housed in livestock stalls or windowless shacks that were crowded and lacked sufficient ventilation, electricity, sanitation facilities, food, and medicine. Barbed wire surrounded the camp, and towers with manned machine-guns pointed inward. Detainees lost their homes and businesses, their educations and careers were interrupted, and their possessions lost. Many lost sons who fought for the country that imprisoned their parents. They suffered the loss of faith in the government and the humiliation of being confined as traitors in their own country (OSU).

Though repartitions were made under President Reagan, they occurred forty-four years following Japanese internment, were underwhelming in comparison to what was lost, and many who suffered through Japanese internment were no longer alive. This shameful chapter in American history was the result of racial prejudice and war hysteria, ideologies that are alarmingly present today (CLASC).

The characters of my drama were centered originally around a flawed protagonist who would parallel the modern Trump supporter, or at least a Trump supporter capable of a change of heart. Early in the process this character transformed into the beloved children's author, Theodore Geisel, better known by his pseudonym, Dr. Seuss. There is a chilling history of Seuss's work that few people realize: throughout the 1940s Dr. Seuss abandoned children's writing and instead opted to create hundreds of propagandist war cartoons, many depicting Japanese Americans as evil and traitorous.

Dr. Seuss, who is celebrated for advocating progressive stances in his children's books, was swept up in racial tensions and wartime hysteria along with the majority of Americans at the time. Seuss later traveled to Japan on an assignment for Life Magazine following the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and, distraught by the destruction he witnesses, wrote the book, *Horton Hears a Who* as both an apology and as a plea asking future generations to stand up for the rights of others.

The other reason Seuss, a household name, was chosen as the protagonist was so audiences would be more invested in the character. My strategic intention

is that audiences do not realize "Ted" is the author they know and love until he writes *Horton Hears a Who* toward the end of the play. This is because I believe that were this character any 1940s American who supported Japanese Internment the audience would more easily disconnect and think they are nothing like this person. With Seuss, instead the audience might realize that anyone, even someone intelligent and morally strong can become too caught up in their anxieties and stereotypes and advocate for something evil. Even the most seemingly progressive can fall victim to popular culture and thereby exhibit racist behavior.

The drama then expanded its focus to equally include the narrative of a Japanese family. While I knew early that a story of Japanese internment could not be adequate dramatized with only Seuss's narrative, I at first was unsure of how to approach this representation. Ultimately I found inspiration in reading several novels, memoirs, and interviews of those who experienced Japanese Internment. I strive for their narrative to communicate the lasting effects executive order 9066 had on the people who experienced it, as well as future generations. Though Seuss may arguably redeem himself when he writes *Horton Hears A Who*, Mitsuko leaves the camp without her mother who died prematurely due to harsh conditions in the camp, without any resources but the expectation of building a new life, and she will never regain the time she was forced to waste essentially in a prison. The psychological damage is significant, and apologizing or attempting to make amends following these types of violations of human rights is not enough. My hope is that audiences recognize that the repercussions of identity based detention and subjugation in the name of national security is massively detrimental, and that

Americans cannot continue to see themselves as endlessly redeemable for their acts of bigoted violence. Instead Americans must treat fellow humans as equals and learn from the past.

**IV. Wartime Hysteria and Repression**

The key questions posed by this thesis project revolves around the balancing of civil liberties, human rights, and national security in times perceived by government officials and the public as perilous. Why has national security so often overshadowed constitutional democracy and individual rights in the United States over the last century? Troubled by the suspension of basic constitutional rights and liberal political processes in the United States during the Second World War, the political scientist Clinton Rossiter asked a question that vexed him: "Can a democracy fight a successful total war and still be a democracy when it is over?"(Rossiter) However, my thesis project asks what happens individual rights and constitutional principles *in wartime* – including our current perpetual war against international terrorism. Moreover, it focuses directly on why the quest for "enemy aliens" or the production of disloyal racial "others" has been a key element of the American home front in the name of keeping us safe.

Following the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor in December of 1941, the United States was gripped with war hysteria, as the American people feared a similar attack on their cities, homes, and businesses. Similarly, the bombing of the World Trade Center on September eleventh, 2001 has led to similar mass panic, resulting in the distrust of Middle Eastern and Muslim Americans. For instance, as a child living in New Jersey, I remember distinctly debates and protests occurring

over the construction of a mosque on the same street as the 9/11 memorial – my family believed that there should be no problem building a mosque, seeing as Islam was not to blame for the destruction and trauma, but instead a violent terror group. Others did not recognize the distinction; just as many 1940s Americans did not recognize a distinction between the Japanese military that bombed Pearl Harbor and the Japanese Americans who were loyal to their country. In both cases the enemy's appearance resembled the appearance of everyday citizens and a climate of fear arose, leading to unfair legislation against and treatment of those who were perceived as a threat.

The play's opening lines are from Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1933 inaugural address in which he uttered what became one of his most well-known quotes one of his most well known quotes, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself" (FDR). Though this speech occurs seven years before the action occurring in scene one, the speech's topic relates closely to the themes of *Familiar Wars*, particularly the dangers of war hysteria - though that was not the fearful topic FDR was addressing at the time. Hopefully history buffs are not offended by this creative liberty, as it is true that the American people, in times of war, should be far more afraid of "fear itself," as it is their unwarranted, hysteric fear that poses an existential threat to democracy. As W.E.B. Du Bois once stated, "The cost of liberty is less than the price of repression" (Du Bois).

FDR was hostile to refugees, choosing to bar the gates to Jews escaping from Nazi Germany and cutting refugee immigration by 75 percent. The reasoning for this was, in the words of FDR, "among the refugees there are spies," a notion

supported by various characters, particularly Theodore Geisel, in *Familiar Wars.* Similarly, upon Donald Trump's presidency, a similar series of capricious executive orders were implemented, most notably among them: a travel ban targeting six majority Muslim countries by suspending the right for all in those countries, including those with visas and U.S. citizenship, to enter the United States except for on case by case basis (Washington Post Editorial Board). While this philosophy is dehumanizing and racist, it stems from a real fear held by many Americans despite there being no precedent for this fear in reality. As Ted passionately tells those he is close to: "Their fascist presence is a live threat to everything America believes in, our Constitution, our freedom, our Democracy –"(Familiar Wars 43). This thinking is highly illogical, but fear-driven emotions inherently defy logic.

In the play, following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Mitsuko is called a "dirty Jap" by another man while they both grocery shop. In this instance a man who Mitsuko has seen many times before, though he does not know her well, is so overcome by anger that he no longer recognizes the person he had seen for years, and is instead overcome by fear.

Clearly, there is a sense that what Americans fear is related to what is perceived as the unknown or what is different and separate. It is further evident that this separation is racially charged. When balancing of civil liberties, human rights, and national security in times perceived by government officials and the public as perilous, why has national security so often overshadowed constitutional democracy and individual rights in the United States over the last century? More specifically, why are the groups that are forced to sacrifice their democratic rights

consistently also members of racial minorities? As Peggy questions her Uncle Ted in scene eleven of *Familiar Wars* saying, "Are we going to be locked up too? …Because we're German, and we're at war with Germany too?" (Familiar Wars 48-49). While the United States was at war with Germany, Italy, and Japan in the 1940s, only Japanese Americans were imprisoned in the name of national security. As Mother tells her daughter, Mitsuko, in the second scene of *Familiar Wars*: "People are afraid – and they're angry. They don't realize how different we are from the enemy. They see something they don't know, and what people don't know scares them" (Familiar Wars, 17). An FBI report from the period states: "it is said, and no doubt with considerable truth, that every Japanese in the United States who can read and write is a member of the Japanese intelligence system" (Chambers). In times of war or national security threats, the racial other is villianized and consequently denied their basic democratic rights. Obviously, race and war hysteria are two separate, but intrinsically intersecting forces.

In December of 2015 a televised debate argued whether or not Donald Trump was a fascist. During this debate Megan McArdle from Bloomberg View stated the answer was no, because a fascist President could never take power in America, because "America had neither the weak institutions nor the revolutionary organizations necessary for a Trump Reich to fester" (Washington Post Editorial Board). That claim is false, and ignores history that is not even a century old. While FDR was no Hitler, the distinction is in degree, not in kind, and today, Trump follows in his footsteps. However, recognizing when these democratic rights are being infringed is not necessarily simple. Much as Trump's executive order does

not actually contain the word “Muslim,” Roosevelt’s executive order did not include the word “Japanese.”

It is important to acknowledge the expansion of executive power in times of national hysteria. It is far more important to recognize that the actions taken in these moments of increased executive power result in a minority group losing civil liberties. This is a dangerous and inherently un-American pattern, as we are a country founded on the principle that each person is born with freedom from arbitrary or unjustified restraint.

In the minds of America’s founding fathers, our system of checks and balances prevents this sort of arbitrary and unjustified break in democracy, as the judicial branch has the ability to veto legislation when it is proven to be blatantly unconstitutional. In theory, while the executive and legislative branches are more apt to become influenced by hysteria and citizens’ fears, the judicial branch is able to remain logical and just in the face of perceived national security threats, therefore upholding constitutional principles and democratic practices. However, throughout history the court has on occasion proven to be no less susceptible to the influences of their time period than the other branches of government or even average American citizens.

The vulnerability of Americas system of checks and balances is particularly evident in the infamous Korematsu v. the United States decision. Fred Korematsu, age twenty-three, was a Japanese American citizen who chose not to comply with the executive order to leave his home and job. He then chose to alter his appearance with plastic surgery on his eyes, changed his name to Clyde Sarah, and

claimed that he was of Spanish and Hawaiian descent. Korematsu was arrested by the FBI on May 30, 1942, and it was then that the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) decided to represent Korematsu's case in court. On December 18, 1944, a divided Supreme Court ruled, in a 6-3 decision, stated that the detention was a "military necessity" not based on race (Oyez).

In 1983 the case was reopened and a district court ruling cleared Korematsu's name. However, the Supreme Court decision still stands. Writing for the majority, Justice Hugo Black controversially held that "all legal restrictions which curtail the civil rights of a single racial group are immediately suspect" and subject to tests of "the most rigid scrutiny," not all such restrictions are inherently unconstitutional (Black). Others, such as Justice Robert Jackson, vehemently disagree with Justice Black, stating in a strongly worded dissenting opinion that the exclusion order was "the legitimization of racism" and compared the order to the "abhorrent and despicable treatment of minority groups by the dictatorial tyrannies which this nation is now pledged to destroy" (Jackson). The precedent set by the Korematsu versus U.S. decision promises the potential for history to repeat, and for future populations to be lawfully persecuted in times of war.

Today, as the definition of "wartime" shifts into a seemingly permanent state of being for the United States in the face of the war on terror, I question whether the United States is entering into a perpetual state of hysteria, endangering an entire class of citizens under a system that has proven incapable of providing for their protection.

**V. Race, the State, and American Nationhood**

When evaluating the role of the state throughout American history, it is essential to recognize a significant gap between idealized notions of an egalitarian U.S. government that frees and empowers all of its subjects and the often-violent realities of racial oppression. Even from the earliest formulations of the United States as a "city upon a hill," American democracy has been romanticized as a revered form of government in which all people are ensured an equal voice and an active role in political decisions (Winthrop, 16). However, these idyllic conceptions of U.S. political life are belied by an American political reality that long has marginalized key portions of the nation's populace. The earliest founders of the United States expressed anxiety that the state that would deaden democracy and repress individualism, and they therefore outlined a government in which the state could be seen as an establishment directing democratic energies toward the enactment of the will of the American people. However, the American people, according to the founding fathers, were a definitively exclusive group of white identifying males (*The Federalist Papers*), and as such the language of many important historical documents and political thinkers reflects the state as an unprejudiced, "liberating force." This is the domineering racial attitude that led to Japanese Internment in the 1940s as well as prejudice against Muslim Americans, Latino Americans, and immigrants today.

Of course, this idyllic view of the state by white men of privilege has been far from a universal American experience, especially when we consider historic forms of official repression on the basis of gender, sexuality, religion, ethnicity,

race, and other categories. The disadvantages endured by key minority groups have become engrained in modern institutions, perpetuating discriminatory injustices. For this reason, distinct demographic groups experience dramatically differing realities within their relationship with the government. While the white population benefits from a state that is definitely for them a liberating force, minority populations experience a reality in which the government enforces white supremacy and furthers inequality. The divide between idealized views of the American state and more oppressive realities is particularly evident when we focus on Native Americans, African Americans in U.S. political thought and experience. In *Familiar Wars,* this oppressive reality is especially evident as the alleged protection of some citizens, like Ted and Helen, results in the imprisonment other citizens, like Mitsuko and her family, clearly prioritizing the rights of one group of people over another on the basis of race.

This reality is introduced early on as the United States maintained a contentious relationship with the Native American population, as illustrated by populist president Andrew Jackson. Though in his first inaugural address he controversially asserts "no one man has any more intrinsic right to official station than another," he also contradictorily advocates that "The States which had so long been retarded in their improvement by the Indian tribes residing in the midst of them are at length relieved from the evil," demonstrating fervently racist double-standards (Kramnick 420,431). As president, Jackson's language here represents a government that upholds ideals of equal opportunity and achievable prosperity for some, while those who Jackson refers to as an "unhappy race" are a hindrance to

the American people, and the United States has "been greatly promoted by their removal" (Kramnick 431). Instead of maintaining the ideals of political thinkers before him, and allowing Native Americans the "unalienable rights" Jefferson had once declared were to be held by all men, Jackson oppresses the minority with the same iniquitousness of having the colonists exist under the crown of England as "subordinate dominions," yet many citizens find no issue with this "subordination" (Jefferson, 151; Otis, 107). This is an early example of the historical theme of racially charged contention in United States' culture demonstrated in the play *Familiar Wars*.

Additionally, Chief Joseph, a representative for the Nez Perce tribe, asserts in his address to white policy makers and the United States army, "the white man has no right to come and take our country," then further pleads with United States political leaders that "if the white man wants to live in peace with the Indian he can live in peace," all the "white man" must do is "treat all men alike" (Kramnick 931,939). Ironically, the earliest colonists, the Puritans, endorsed analogous principles, idealizing "a certain company of people, to cohabit together, under one government for their mutual safety and welfare," similar to the peaceful cohabitation the Native American chief is advocating (Winthrop, 17). Moreover, the United States Declaration of Independence pronounces that "all men are created equal," a statement strikingly comparable to Chief Joseph's statement, "The earth is the mother to all people, and all people should have equal rights upon it" (153, 939). Many political thinkers contend the claims of those like Chief Joseph, explaining that their policies protect a less advanced people; however, the chief

passionately argues that “you might as well expect the rivers to run backward as that any man who was born a free man should be contented when penned up and denied liberty to go where he pleases (Kramnick 939). Therefore, although Chief Joseph’s request clearly reflects principles integral to the ideology of the United States government, he endures significant tragedy at the hands of the government due to his race.

In the same vein, though nearly a decade following Jackson’s tumultuous, populist presidency, President Theodore Roosevelt goes against his reputation as a progressive reformer in his speech, “The Winning of the West.” In this speech, Roosevelt proudly demonstrates his belief that the recent conquest of Native American territories was “for the benefit of civilization and in the interest of mankind” (Kramnick 908). Roosevelt trumpets this condescending claim, referring to the Native American people as “savages,” “most terrible,” and “inhuman,” blatantly disregarding the will of those who were the rightful owners of the land (Kramnick 909). Roosevelt even goes as far as to allege “no other conquering and colonizing nation has ever treated the original savage owners of the soil with such generosity” (Kramick 909). Not only do Roosevelt’s words stand in stark contrast to the brave words of Chief Joseph who asks solely to be left in peace even following the loss of his people’s once thriving culture, his words also are deliberately disregarding once again the many parallels between American treatment of their native people, and the injustice endured by the colonists prior to their success in the Revolutionary War and subsequent independence from England, who acted in many ways as a conqueror toward the colonists. This

further supports the idea of a state that fervently protects the inherent rights of one demographic, while standing aside when the need arises for the similar protection of a minority demographic.

Likewise, John Calhoun, a congressman, secretary of war, and two term Vice President, unapologetically defends slavery, claiming it is a "positive good" because, according to Calhoun, "never before has the black race of Central Africa… attained a condition so civilized and so improved (Kramnick, 602). Included in language supporting "equality of rights and advantages among its [the United State's] members" while simultaneously and in contradiction, Calhoun asserts that "negros must be raised to a social and political equity with the whites" and advocates for the "supremacy of the white European race" (Kramnick, 604). Calhoun's unprecedented arguments prove to further emphasize the extent to which racism has been rooted in American ideology, and as a result, has been rooted in the government through political representation, voting laws, education, housing and a multitude of other institutions integral to success. With such prominent political figures so boldly endorsing the continuation of a fundamentally racist institution the government continues to uphold various institutions that perpetuate injustice and inequality, even when the original institution is removed.

Evidently, despite the reality that slavery is an institution that is undeniably evil and in clear opposition of the national American ethos in which it is most "essential to secure the liberty of the people as any one of the pre-existent rights of nature," various major political thinkers upheld slavery, as well as later

institutions meant to perpetuate similar racism (Kramnick 280). For example Malcolm X fervently argues in contradiction of segregation, declaring that "a segregationist is a criminal," describing the inequality of his experience as a man identifying as African American in the United States. He then avers in his controversial speech, "The Ballot or the Bullet," that the government "is in a conspiracy to deprive you of your voting rights, deprive you of your economic opportunities, deprive you of housing, and deprive you of decent education," all things that government has previously vowed to protect, but instead will not as politicians conspire against minority citizens (Kramnick 1323). Malcolm X goes on to bravely declare, "let the world know how bloody [Uncle Sam's] hands are. Let the world know the hypocrisy that's practiced over here," vocalizing the unfortunate reality of a government that operates as a enforcer of white supremacy, instead of protecting all its citizens as outlined in the country's founding documents (Kramnick 1324).

More recently, Richard B. Spencer, a strong proponent of the Trump coalition, began a speech addressing fellow Trump supporters and with a salute "Hail Trump," hauntingly reminiscent of Nazi Germany. In Spencer's speech he discusses how he has popularized the term "alt-right" as a part of his dream of "a new society, an ethno-state that would be a gathering point for all Europeans," and goes further as he calls for "peaceful ethnic cleansing" (Atlantic). These ideas are exceptionally reminiscent of early political thinkers such as Jackson or Roosevelt when they called for "the conquest of the red tribes" because "the states would be greatly promoted by their removal" (Kramnick 909,431). Moreover, Spencer

continues his tirade shamelessly stating, “America was until this past generation a white country designed for ourselves and our posterity,” then, having adequately claimed the United States as his domain, he confidently goes on to say, “it is not us that need them, it is them that need us,” referring to minority races in the United States (Atlantic). Again, Spencer’s words can be traced back to men like John Calhoun, who equally advocated for slavery as a form of “sustaining political fabric” because slaves are “distinguished by color, physical differences, and intellectual” differences (Kramick 602). By saying this Calhoun is making an argument for slavery as a definitive betterment for the African American population, while Spencer similarly advocates that minority races are lacking in value in comparison to the white population. This is said with understanding of the vast distinctions between two very different time periods. Calhoun addresses a crowd with language that was likely far more acceptable and common during that period, but this goes to assert a theme of racism in the United States without focus on historically distinctions between languages of various periods.

Today, Trump exhibits further discriminatory rhetoric. Barely more than a month ago the President referred to Haiti and other African nations as “shithole countries” during a bipartisan meeting at the White House. This shocking and shameful assertion is not only inherently incorrect, but ignores a long history of colonialism and blatantly disregards the personhood of many African people who are in need. “There is no other word one can use but ‘racist,’” the spokesman for the U.N. High Commissioner on Human Rights, Rupert Colville, said at a briefing in Geneva (Wright).

In conclusion, race has caused significant division throughout United States history and those divisions persist despite recurring efforts redress historic wrongs. While the white population benefits from a state that is definitely for them a liberating force, conversely, minority populations experience a reality in which the government enforces white supremacy and furthers inequality. Though the state was created by the founding fathers with the intention to direct democratic energies toward enacting the will of the all of the American people, and as such generates an even playing field amongst the people, the state does not reflect this reality for all its citizens. The earliest founders of the United States outlined a government in which the state could be seen as an establishment directing democratic energies toward the enactment of the will of the American people. However, the American people, according to the founding fathers, were a definitively exclusive group of white males, and as such the language of many important historical documents and political thinkers reflects the state as a liberating force, although that is not the universal American experience. And regrettably, though Americans are growingly more progressive and accepting, these patterns of inequality stubbornly persist today.

Beyond the inherent racial prejudice imbedded into American politics and policies, there are eras in which the United States' government has acted against particular racial groups. The setting of *Familiar Wars,* 1940s Japanese Internment, is another era of American history that particularly exemplifies the legacy of the oppressive and bigoted reality of the United States' government. Americans began to foster racial prejudice against Asian immigrants around the mid nineteenth

century; setting the tone for the resistance Japanese would face in the decades to come.

The early discrimination faced by Asian immigrants in the United States is discussed in the play when Mother tells Mitsuko about her experience moving to the United States. Mother tells her daughter,

> "I worked as hard as I could to make her proud, and to make all my parents' sacrifices worth it. But I couldn't go far. America does not have opportunities for all people, especially for a Japanese woman in that time, first my parents were robbed of their potential and then so was I, so when I had a child, I told myself that I would make sure she could achieve her dreams, because I wanted to see someone in my family's potential realized" (Familiar Wars 17).

This moment illustrates the lack of opportunity in America for Asian immigrants and alludes to discriminatory practices in education, employment, and citizenship. The mother relates to her daughter, "America does not have opportunities for all people," emphasizing that the famous notion that America is a land of opportunity is a heavily romanticized. Instead, even hard work, intelligence, talent, and making sacrifices are not enough to achieve success.

In fact, citizenship was not at all available to Asian Americans long before World War II. As stated in an interview with Mitzi Loftus, who served as the inspiration for *Familiar Wars'* 'Mitsuko:'

> "My mother and father came in 1904 and 1911, and when Pearl Harbor came they had lived in this country for over thirty years. They came here intending to stay here for the rest of their lives, raise their families, have their life here, and they were aliens because the naturalized laws discriminated against Japanese, Chinese, and Filipinos. They wanted to be American citizens from the beginning but never could" (OSU).

This is in many ways reminiscent of the extensive vetting process for immigrants and refugees in the United States. Every refugee goes through an intensive vetting process, but the precautions are increased for Syrians. Multiple law enforcement, intelligence and security agencies perform "the most rigorous screening of any traveler to the U.S.," says a senior administration official (Altman). However, these many steps are accompanied by frequent obstacles, such as a lack of workers available to hear each individual case or language barriers between immigration aids and potential immigrants. The average refugees spend seventeen years in camps awaiting asylum or another form of intervention, and the average wait time for immigrating legally into the United States is up to twenty years (Krastina). On top of this, if a refugee is granted asylum, they are not granted any input on the eventual location, even if they already have family members in a region. Similarly, U.S. immigration law is very complex, and there is much confusion as to how it works. The process of becoming a United States citizen can take years, but before any immigrant can apply to become a citizen, and the application process alone takes on average six months, an immigrant must be a legal resident in the country. That minimum standard is three years if an immigrant holds a green card or is married to a citizen, but it's a five-year minimum if legal resident status is obtained by other means, such as a work visa or came to the country by a sponsored parent (West). As stated in an opinion piece by Darrell West, "just in filing fees for a Green Card, an immigrant can spend more than $1,000 to try to become a permanent legal resident" (West). Prominently featured in the news, DACA recipients, or those who were brought to the United States when they were eighteen or younger, are

allowed deferral of deportation and work visas if they follow strict criteria, but there is no path to citizenship (Bradner). Now, with the Trump administration frequently threatening to dismantle the DACA program, these recipients are in danger of being deported to a place they have no affiliation with. Additionally, even prior to Trump's election, various states were pushing for various forms of "show me your papers" laws, laws that would allow any police officer to pull over someone if they suspected they were in the United States illegally. Then, if the citizen could not prove their citizenship, or legal right to be in the US, they would be deported. This means that police would be actively encouraged to racially profile who they pull over, as well as meant that anyone with dark skin would have the constant anxiety of having to remember to bring their papers everywhere they go (Bradner). Even if an immigrant were here legally, they could be deported for simply misplacing a piece of paper, forcing an entire racial group to live in fear of the police, a faction which is meant to protect. Therefore, the path to citizenship in the United States is complicated and obstacles to citizenship related to race persist.

Moreover, although Asian immigrants were heavily recruited in the mining and railroad industries initially, whites in Western states and territories came to view the immigrants as a source of economic competition and therefore a threat as their population increased. As Austin E. Anson, a white American farmer, told the Saturday Evening Post in 1942, a quote which is included in *Familiar Wars*:

> "We're charged with wanting to get rid of the Japs for selfish reasons. We do. It's a question of whether the white man lives on the Pacific Coast or the brown man. They came into this valley to work, and they stayed to take over... If all the Japs were removed tomorrow, we'd never miss them in two weeks, because the white farmers can take over and produce everything the

> Jap grows. And we do not want them back when the war ends, either" (Truman Library).

Interestingly, this led to a shortage of workers and the subsequent solution of Braceros program, a program in which grew out of a series of bilateral agreements between Mexico and the United States that allowed millions of Mexican men to come to the United States to work on, short-term, primarily agricultural, labor contracts. According to the ACLU Labor Center, "from 1942 to 1964, 4.6 million contracts were signed, with many individuals returning several times on different contracts, making it the largest U.S. contract labor program." The irony is that the success of the Braceros Program acknowledges how America can greatly benefit from the labor of Mexican migrant workers, much the opposite of current inflammatory language used by the GOP to describe the immigration dilemma. As Trump in September of 2016, "If we can save American lives, American jobs, and American futures, together we can save America itself," casting undocumented immigrants as the primary reason Americans have had trouble finding work (Bradner). The President's speech also included statements such as: "there will be no amnesty," "anyone who is in the United States illegally is subject to deportation," and "It's our right as a sovereign nation to choose immigrants that we think are the likeliest to thrive and flourish and love us," making his case for a United States that is less hospitable to, and accessible for, undocumented immigrants (Bradner).

However, the notion that opening borders will lead to an influx of undesirables is not new nor is President Trump the first president to advocate

such a claim. President Roosevelt's attitude toward Japanese immigrants was similarly destructive. Likewise, FDR dismissed pleas from Jewish refugees as "Jewish wailing," a blatantly anti-Semitic statement (Reeves). Though it is not necessarily discriminatory to favor immigration restrictions, FDR defended his actions on the ground that the United States "ought to be blood of the right sort," a statement which is clearly prejudicial (Reeves). In the same vein, President Trump has made various declarations about his ambition to end DACA as well as instituted, by means of executive order, a travel ban against six majority Muslim countries in the name of national security, including not allowing American citizens to reenter the country if they were visiting those locations (Leonhardt). This was overturned, but later versions of the executive order remain in place, and equally disturbing. The order has been decried by many as "reckless, deeply punitive, and unconstitutional" (WA Post Editorial Board).

In the play, there are many instances where Mr. Geisel insinuates similar partiality in regard to race. For instance, in the same way that Trump says, "when Mexico sends its people, they're not sending the best. They're sending people that have lots of problems and they're bringing those problems. They're rapists and some, I assume, are good people, but I speak to border guards and they're telling us what we're getting," Ted, in *Familiar Wars,* says of Japanese Americans, "there isn't time to distinguish the good from the bad, even if there are a few good people mixed in amongst the traitors" (Leonhardt)(Familiar Wars 49). FDR, Trump, and Ted are each blatantly and unfairly assuming characteristics of immigrants on the basis of race.

I hope audiences seeing Ted in my play will note the parallels between his racism and that of FDR, and President Trump's. In an ideal world, their outrage at Ted will spur similar outrage toward any administration whose aims are racist, fear-based, and blatantly unjust. As the Ninth Circuit wrote of the Muslim ban's effect on American Muslims: "it cannot be in the public interest that a portion of this country be made to live in fear" (WA Post Editorial Board). The play highlights the reality of Japanese internet camps, the abuses of power, and the enduring realities of American racism.

In *Familiar Wars* I sets out to highlight the reality of the Japanese Internment Camps, a history that is frequently watered down or forgotten; however, the camps were concentration camps, where many people were murdered or died due to the harsh conditions. One individual describes his initial visceral reaction to seeing the camp saying,

> "When we got to Manzanar, it was getting dark and we were given numbers first. We went down to the mess hall, and I remember the first meal we were given in those tin plates and tin cups. It was canned wieners and canned spinach. It was all the food we had, and then after finishing that we were taken to our barracks.
> It was dark and trenches were here and there. You'd fall in and get up. Finally we got to the barracks. The floors were boarded, but the were about a quarter to half inch apart, and the next morning you could see the ground below.
> The next morning, the first morning in Manzanar, when I woke up and saw what Manzanar looked like, I just cried. And then I saw the mountain, the high Sierra Mountain, just like my native country's mountain, and I just cried, that's all. I couldn't think about anything" (Chambers).

This account is alluded to in the third scene of *Familiar Wars* when Takeharu confides in Mitsuko that, "[That mountain] reminds me of a picture my mother had, of Japan. When I first saw it, that first morning. I cried" (Familiar Wars

29). Upon realizing the vast injustice and desolation of their current imprisonment, Japanese Americans were overcome by sorrow. Japanese Internment was four years long, but the loss of those four years destroyed many people's livelihoods, finances, cost families their homes and possessions, and caused a vast array of psychological repercussions. Having this illuminated is intended to spark a realization of where the United States could be headed, and the danger that accompanies this path. *Familiar Wars* responds to an interviewer asking why he chooses to refer to Japanese Internment camps as Concentration camps, "We were American citizens. We were incarcerated by our American government in *American* internment camps here in the United States. The term 'Japanese internment camp' is both grammatically and factually incorrect." (Porter)(Familiar Wars 64).

Furthermore, the man who is shot in scene eight is based on a real homicide from inside the camps. In the play, when Mitsuko shouts, "That's Hatsuaki Wakasa. He's deaf! They're going to shoot him - he can't hear the guards! Mama!" it is referring to a real account of James Hatsuki Wakasa, a sixty-three year-old chef, who was shot to death by a sentry at Heart Mountain while allegedly trying to escape through a fence. It was later determined that Wakasa had been inside the fence and facing the sentry when shot. The sentry would stand a general court marshal on April 28 at Fort Douglas, Utah and be found "not guilty" (Familiar Wars 40)(CLASC).

There are also many other similar accounts. Ichiro Shimoda, a mentally ill man in his mid-forties, was shot while trying to escape in 1942. Shimoda had

attempted suicide twice since entering the camp, and was shot despite guards' knowledge of his mental illness. That same year, two Californians were killed during an alleged escape attempt from the Lourdsburg, New Mexico camp. It was later revealed that Hirota Isomura and Toshiro Kobata were both extremely weak upon arrival—too weak to walk, much less escape (CLASC). Furthermore, in an interview, Ben Takeshita recounts his older brother's ordeal at Tule Lake Relocation Center, where he was segregated for causing trouble:

> "They got to a point where they said, 'Okay, we're going to take you out.' And it was obvious that he was going before a firing squad with MPs ready with rifles. He was asked if he wanted a cigarette; he said no…. You want a blindfold?… No. They said, 'Stand up here,' and they went as far as saying, 'Ready, aim, fire,' and pulling the trigger, but the rifles had no bullets. They just went click" (Tateishi 247).

This is clearly an example of officers abusing their power over internees and invoking fear within the camps, definitely not protecting those who had been interned. Additionally, the lack of a threat posed by those who were murdered inside the camps is unambiguous.

Likewise, in *Familiar Wars* Mother's death is based more loosely on many interviewees' accounts of harsh heat and a distinctive lack of medical resources. As Hatsumi Nishimoto said in an interview about her experience at Pinedale Assembly Center: "It was a terribly hot place to live. It was so hot that when we put our hands on the bedstead, the paint would come off! To relieve the pressure of the heat, some people soaked sheets in water and hung them overhead." (Chambers). This quote inspired Mother's statements in scene ten of the play, the scene foreshadowing her death as a result of heat stroke. Mother tells Mitsuko, "I'd like

an escape from the heat. It's like a blanket, I feel as though I'm suffocating sometimes" and "I was going to soak some of the sheets and hang them overhead. It should bring some relief" (Familiar Wars 45).

These many accounts further indicate the apathy of the American government in the face of blatant violations of civil rights and human rights. Ultimately, the play strives to shed some light on a dark piece of American history that many leaders strive to hide; America had concentration camps, and though they were not truly death camps, many people were murdered, or allowed to die from lack of resources. At no point did the internment camps fulfill their supposed intention of protecting the American people, both Americans who were denied their rights and placed in camps and Americans living their lives as normal.

Additionally, Edmund Russell writes that, whereas Europe Americans perceived themselves to be struggling against "great individual monsters", such as Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, and Joseph Goebbels, Americans often saw themselves fighting against a "nameless mass of vermin", in regards to Japan (Russell). This lack of recognition of pluralism is apparent in the use of the word "Japs" versus the use of the word "Nazi" during the Second World War. While the term, "Nazis" describes an ideological group instead of a racial group, allowing for people to recognize the existence of good Germans, the term "Japs," in contrast refers to a racial group, which implied that all Japanese people were united, and therefore the enemy. The term "Jap" also denies identity and individuality amongst the group, allowing Americans to more easily disassociate from the evils they perpetrate against their fellow human.

Many characters, most prominently Ted, employ this language throughout the play, *Familiar Wars*. For instance, when Ted argues with his niece, Peggy, in scene eleven, "we are nothing like the Japs," he distances himself and his family from an entire group of unique personalities (Familiar Wars 49). Ted is creating a sense of an enemy 'other,' or a stranger, and, as Mitsuko tells her husband, "They see us as strangers, and what is a stranger? A stranger is someone who comes and violates you. Strangers come for your blood and your joy." (Familiar Wars 30). When Ted says this he is also insinuating the existence of a 'we,' presumably white Americans, that is similarly lacking any individuality, therefore his language here is creating, and then dividing, two groups of conformists.

It is in this way that Dr. Seuss's role in 1940s political drama, and the drama of *Familiar Wars*, is relevant. Cartoons are a form of art that allows no room for the complex nature of humanity; a cartoon is a stereotype, and stereotypes are proven to be a dangerous tool for sparking a divide between groups. Throughout Geisel's political cartoons are racist portrayals of Japanese people with slant-eyes, pig-noses, and coke-bottle glasses. From 1941 to 1943 the beloved Dr. Seuss drew over four hundred of these depictions (Minear). Similarly, when young Peggy questions the imprisonment of Japanese Americans and not German Americans like herself, Ted rationalizes, ": Germans have been here longer Peggy. We are Americans. They don't act like Americans, their traditions are foreign, they speak another language, their food, clothes, looks, are all different" (Familiar Wars 49). This serves to further distance Ted's identity and experience from that of the Japanese, despite Ted having actually lived through a traumatizing experience of being viewed as

disloyal or traitor during the first World War (Familiar Wars 12),(Morgan),(Pease). Ted's stereotypes allow him to ignore his own obvious hypocrisy, as well as ignore the many comparable traits between the Ted's family and Mitsuko's family. Takeharu discusses his experience as an immigrant, and how he personally has adopted certain American traditions saying:

> "We celebrated Japanese traditions and joined the community to learn of American traditions. My father and I spent every summer playing baseball, we rooted for Pete Gray and the Browns and listened to every game, even though we were in Dodgers territory" (Familiar Wars 30).

Moreover, Ted and Helen's many discussions of creating a world safe for their potential child as well as for their niece Peggy directly parallels discussions Mitsuko has with both her mother and Takeharu about the safety of Akira (Familiar Wars). This serves to demonstrate the universality of certain desires; both families are, in the midst of war, striving to survive and protect the people they love. Clearly, the two groups, though divided by oppression, are remarkably similar in their needs and desires.

Additionally, media portrayal plays a significant role in how an audience views a group of people. Without exposure to real people, stereotypes and assumptions are given the opportunity to fester, and manifest as solidified understandings of a culture, though they are entirely false. Ted portrays the Japanese American citizen as an enemy, allied with all other Japanese American citizens, poised to attack (Minear). As Ted says to his niece, as well as Theodore Geisel said in real life, "But right now, when the Japs are planting their hatchets in our skulls, it seems like a hell of a time for us to smile and warble: 'Brothers!' It is a

rather flabby battle cry. If we want to win, we've got to kill Japs...We can get palsy-walsy afterward with those that are left" (Pease),(Familiar Wars 21, 43). As Horton tells Ted following their argument, "I don't believe you recognize the impact of your work" (Familiar Wars 44).

It is the influence of Peggy's Japanese American classmate that most influences her arguments when she discusses politics with Ted (Familiar Wars 48). This creates a powerful contrast between someone who has dehumanized and villianized the Japanese to the point where they are entirely apathetic to their struggle, despite having once endured a similar struggle, and someone whose entire understanding of current political issues stems from witnessing a close friend experiencing grave injustice. While Ted stubbornly denies personhood, Peggy cannot fathom his lack of empathy.

This lack of recognition of personhood also leads into Ted's eventual evolution. It is evident to me that Ted's transformation directly correlates with his disconnect from the personhood the Japanese prior to his trip to Japan. When confronted with the humanity of others Geisel is no longer able to so easily dismiss an entire population. However, though this transformation is important, and a change of heart is a desired effect for audiences of *Familiar Wars,* Geisel's change of heart is too little too late. His grand gesture in the form of Horton Hears a Who ultimately is in no way equivalent to the losses of victims of Japanese Internment and of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The dismissal of entire populations is dangerous, and the impact of hateful speech and actions is long lasting. Though we many will continue to remember Dr. Seuss as a innovator

and a frontrunner in the advocacy for human rights, this chapter in his life should serve as a warning that even the most seemingly moral can succumb to the pressures of a time period. Conceptions of racial differences that are intensified through war leads to division in the United States, and no American is immune to allowing this shameful chapter in American history to repeat.

## VI. Conclusion

In conclusion, the United States' long history of racial prejudice persists, and while the population is certainly moving forward, it is increasingly evident under the Trump presidency, that many subsets of the American population remain stuck in our bigoted history. Frequently, I ask if there is a possibility for these people to change? I believe change must be possible, at least to an extent. Theatre, when utilized, can be a form of action, through providing audiences with new perspectives and inspiring informed dialogue. Theatre, and culture in general, is a space in which my generation evolves and grows in a mutual understanding of human rights. Theatre uniquely captures the human aspects of struggle; history is a story, yet it is too often told as dates and facts rather than allowing for understanding the complicated and layered human experience. If we recognize the human side of historical events, then people are better able to comprehensively remember the past, including the realities of those subjected to shameful chapters of history, therefore ensuring that future and current generations learn from the mistakes from the past. When stories are not told and are forgotten is when history begins to repeat. As Motti Lerner, an Israeli political playwright, frequently tells audiences and interviewers: "theatre is not meant to change minds, at least not right away, but it is meant to open hearts" (Lerner). Ideally, *Familiar Wars* will have this desired impact.

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