

I first fell in love with the writing and messages of Theodor Geisel, a.k.a. Dr. Seuss when I was a kid. My parents read his stories to me, and I thought I understood Dr. Seuss as a kid but I wouldn't really get the deeper meaning behind his writing until I was older. In every one of his stories there was a message: of hope, about racism, how to reach your dreams, how to believe in yourself and so on.

So when the articles about Dr. Seuss being a racist broke in the Huffington Post, [The Real African](#) and many others, I couldn't believe what I was reading. It wasn't possible that the man who'd spent his career empowering kids, teaching them to love one another and to accept our differences hated Jews, Blacks, the Japanese and Muslims.

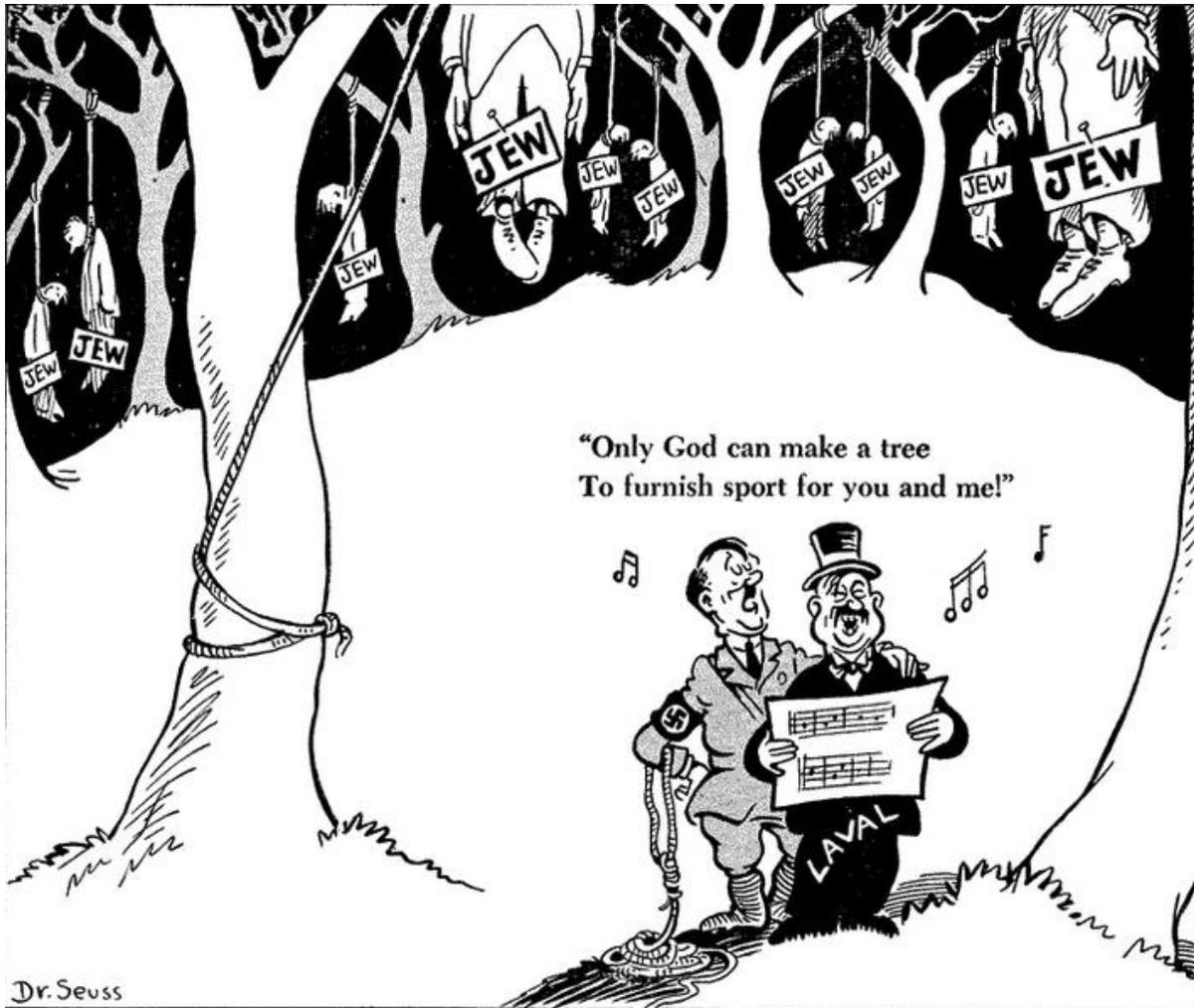
But there the cartoons were. Cartoons my beloved Theodor Geisel illustrated when he was the chief editorial cartoonist for the New York newspaper, PM from 1941-1943 (information I got from the article in the Real African, not information I'd known before this week).

I won't sugarcoat anything. If you haven't seen the cartoons, I warn you, they're hideous, disgusting, damning and should turn your stomach—unless you don a white hood and cap, burn crosses on the lawns of Blacks and anyone else who isn't white and Christian, proudly fly the Confederate Flag or voted for Donald Trump.

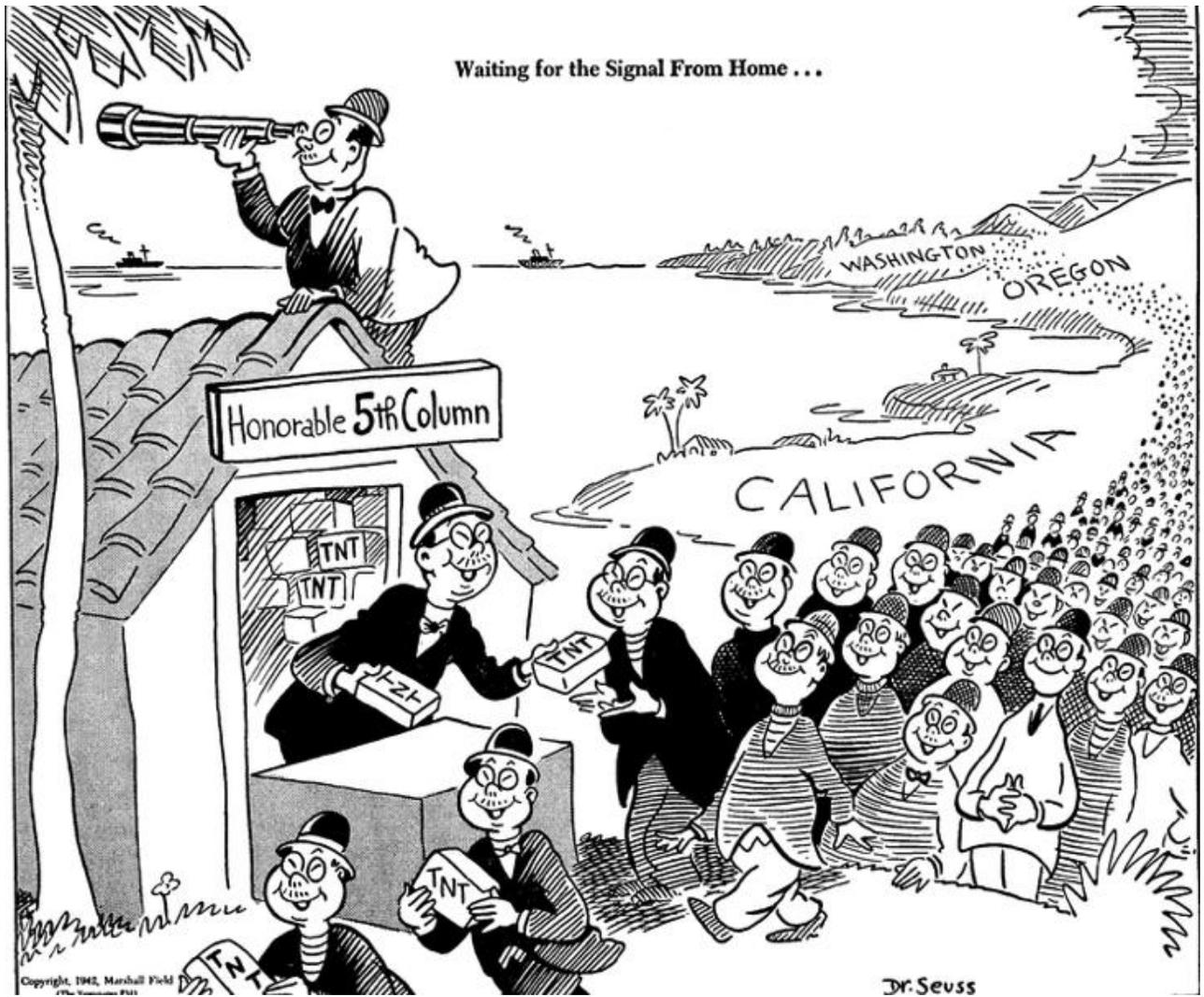


With Adolf in Egypt





Waiting for the Signal From Home ...

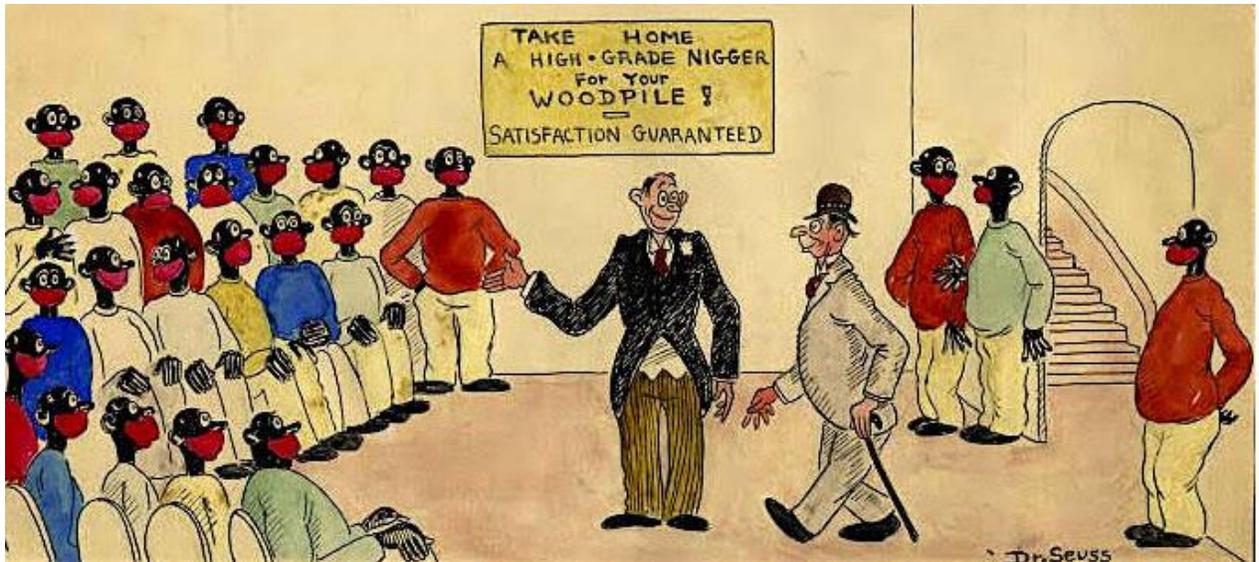


Copyright, 1942, Marshall Field

Dr. Seuss



"Wife on vacation, King?"
"Vacation nothing. Nice girl, but I simply had to swap her in
for this Flit Gun." —ADVT.



Dr. Seuss, Creator of Sneetches on Beaches is a Racist? As Marcellus said to Horatio, “Something is Rotten in the State of Denmark.”

I nearly threw up when I saw these cartoons. As someone who’s a life-long Dr. Seuss fan and who as an adult continues to refer to his writing to help uplift and inspire those who are down and don’t believe in themselves and as examples of what happens to a society when we allow the “us” vs. “them” and “I am better because I’m” x, y or z race, religion, sex perspectives to take hold.

I had to believe, however that there was a good explanation. I wasn’t ready to give up on him and to jump on the bandwagon and vilify him.

And I found it ... thankfully!

Meet Dr. Seuss: A Man in Transition

On March 23, 2012 Jim Edwards published an article in [Business Insider](#) titled, “Before Dr. Seuss Was Famous He Drew These Sad, Racist Ads.” In it, Edwards wrote, “Later in his career, Seuss mended his ways and drew anti-racist cartoons, a couple of which we’ve also included in this gallery. He also expressed regret for his anti-Japanese views.” It hyperlinked to [an interview with filmmaker Ron Lamothe](#) who made documentary *The Political Dr. Seuss* in 2004.

Hayley Wood asked Ron Lamothe a bunch of questions about Theodor Geisel’s career and his seemingly abrupt about face on his political leanings. The interview was published in the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities in August 2004.

Hayley Wood: “On the World War II political cartoons for PM and propaganda films for Frank Capra’s Signal Corps: did Geisel come to regret some of the racism displayed in those pieces, especially since race was a theme of American culture and politics (in *The Sneetches* and even somewhat in *Horton Hears a Who*) that he took an interest in?”

Ron Lamothe: “The only evidence I have comes from his biographers, who told me that years later—although still recognizing its necessity due to the war—he was regretful about some of his cartoons for PM and some of the propaganda work he did for the Army Signal Corps. I do think the fact he dedicated *Horton Hears a Who*—a parable about the American postwar occupation of Japan—to “My Great Friend, Mitsugi Nakamura of Kyoto, Japan,” says something of his changing attitudes toward the Japanese (this following a trip he made there in 1953). Though, as

Richard Minear has pointed out, *Horton Hears a Who* still smacks of American chauvinism, and it makes no reference to Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

So, Where's The Formal and Public Apology, Dr. Seuss?

This would be a valid question. My friend Kikibo said while she loves the books Dr. Seuss wrote, she doesn't like that he didn't publicly address the fact that he was a racist in a former life. And she would be right ... kind of.

How often has someone in the public eye said or done something racist and given a half-assed apology that left you rolling your eyes? And worse, how often have they gone back to being who they are: a racist?



A tiny portion of the collection of Dr. Seuss's books.

Call me naïve, but I think Theodor Geisel apologized profusely in the 60 children's books he authored and illustrated. Most of those books had a very strong message and they spoke out against racism, imperialism, fascism, coporateism, while praising or advocating for the environment, embracing and celebrating other races and cultures, being a strong role model for kids and telling kids they can achieve anything they want to achieve—not white kids, but all kids.

My personal opinion is that people have the capacity to redeem themselves. We all do. Had Theodor Geisel offered some empty apology that we've all heard a million times, we'd be lumping him in with countless sorry asses. Instead he spent 30 plus years writing a wrong.

This was originally published on [Multiracial Media](#).