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Critical Incident Journal #2

The Common Read Keynote Event:*An Evening with Julie Otsuka*

On October 19th, 2016, I had the opportunity to co-introduce Julie Otsuka, who is the author of this year’s common read book *When the Emperor was Divine,* at a free event in Mankato’s Centennial Student Union. The event was hosted by the University’s Common Read Program was open to the public. It consisted of several introductions, a speech by Ms. Otsuka, and a question and answer session. During her speech, Ms. Otsuka shared her reasons for writing her book, her personal connection to the story, and her writing process.

I greatly enjoyed attending and participating in this event. Hearing Ms. Otsuka speak about her mother’s time in the Japanese internment camps enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of racism in America and opened my eyes to the racism of the past. I also appreciated the opportunity to introduce Ms. Otsuka at the event. In the weeks leading up to the event, I worked on producing a speech with Monica Antonelli, a campus librarian, and Natalie Moses, a fellow Honors student. This was a great learning experience as it helped me grow my capability to work as a team and to share ideas.