

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Maus: why banning a book stands for something far worse

Tara Wallace - February 7, 2022



The author of 'Maus', Art Spiegelman.

There is a fever pitch of book bans spreading across many school districts in our nation. The far right conservative movement who like to name-call those they oppose “crying liberals”, and accuse them of “cancel culture” are hypocritically on a national rampage to remove books from schools that they fear will make white children feel bad about themselves.

This, of course, is far from the objective of teaching these books, but rather they are taught to educate children about history in an effort to prevent historical atrocities from being repeated. *Maus*, a graphic novel by Art Spiegelman, the son of a Holocaust survivor, is one such book being targeted.

In this Pulitzer Prize-winning graphic novel Jewish people are represented by mice and Nazi's as cats. Readers follow the author's account of his father's traumatic story of his experiences in a concentration camp, his survival, and the legacy of trauma that left with him. It has been described as “A true piece of history”, “A ground breaking masterpiece”, and “the most affecting and successful narrative ever done about the Holocaust”.

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As the *New York Times* noted, teaching *Maus* to students “help them recognize the atrocities that human beings are capable of without succumbing to existential despair themselves.” Yet, these self described “anti cancel culture patriots” are demanding its ouster from schools due to their claims of inappropriate language, nudity, depictions of violence and suicide. *Maus* is taught to children 13 years and older who see the same type of content in PG-13 films, comic books, and on TV, proving these claims to be disingenuous and inconsistent with accepted American social norms. Not to mention any depictions of nudity are drawn as animals, not humans.

The unfortunate truth is much more Un-American and much more concerning to the American Democratic experiment. The far right movement is fighting to delegitimize core democratic institutions and norms, attack the press as “fake news”, and enable leaders with authoritarian leanings. All of these concerning tendencies that have become normalized by the Republican Party reflect the program of the German Führer Adolf Hitler.

Hitler’s deadly anti-Semitism with the goal of Aryan supremacy resulted in the kidnapping, torture, and murder of millions of Jewish people and their supporters at 44,000 concentration camps and other incarceration sites. This is NOT a movement to be celebrated nor reinvigorated, yet somehow in a country founded on it’s people’s right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness white nationalism is on the rise.



An excerpt from 'Maus', showing a cat-Nazi shooting a mouse in the mouth. Image credit- Wikipedia.

Banning books that teach the dangers of hate and extremism works to rewrite history so as to bend it to the will of this tyrannical movement. This manipulative book banning operation must be stopped. American children are the future of our nation and must not be corrupted by malevolent, extremist actors.