**MINORITY GROUPS**

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| **What is a minority Group**  A subordinate group whose members have significantly less control or power over their lives than members of a dominant or majority group  Not limited to mathematical minority: example women, Blacks in South Africa, Blacks in Mississippi and South Carolina in the 1920's  Interchangeable with subordinate group. A minority or subordinate group is a sociological group that does not constitute a politically dominant voting majority of the total population of a given society. A sociological minority is not necessarily a numerical minority — it may include any group that is subnormal with respect to a dominant group in terms of social status, education, employment, wealth and political power  A group that experiences a narrowing of opportunities (success, education, wealth, etc) that is disproportionately low compared to their numbers in the society |  |
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**GRAPHIC NOVEL**

**MAUS**

As a story about the Holocaust in comic form, [Art Spiegelman](http://www.barclayagency.com/spiegelman.html)’s ***Maus*** accomplishes the seemingly impossible. *Maus* tells the story of Spiegelman’s father, Vladek, and his experience as a Polish Jew during the Holocaust. Running parallel to the story is the story of Spiegelman’s interactions with his father as he visits his father on numerous occasions to record his memories. All of the characters are represented as animals: the Jews are mice, the Germans are cats, the Americans are dogs, and so on. Within this seemingly simplistic framework, *Maus* confronts the terrifying reality of the Holocaust, the systematic genocide of millions and millions of Jews carried out by the Nazi regime during World War II.

Widely acclaimed, *Maus* received a special Pulitzer Prize in 1992 and was the subject of a retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. Part I, “My Father Bleeds History,” appeared in 1986, followed by Part II, “And Here My Troubles Began,” in 1991; both parts are now available in a single volume, *The Complete Maus: A Survivor’s Tale.*

*Maus* is considered a representative work in second-generation Holocaust literature, literature about the Holocaust written from the perspective of the survivors’ children. As the critic Arlene Fish Wilner explains, “In the Jewish tradition, the transmission of familial and communal history from parent to child is a sacred obligation” ([source](http://www.jstor.org/pss/30225464)). Inheriting and preserving their parents’ stories is a way for children to connect with their families’ pasts. This becomes especially important when you think about the fact that whole families were wiped out during the Holocaust.

Yet *Maus* also inherits the special problem that all Holocaust literature has to deal with when it tries to confront this historical catastrophe: How can any form of representation – literary, cinematic, visual – do justice to what happened in the Holocaust? Isn’t any representation going to fall short in the face of such horror?

*Maus* tackles this problem by using an unconventional medium: the comic. Spiegelman was a key figure in the underground comic scene, which emerged in the 1960s. Unlike mainstream comics with their superheroes, underground comics challenged all forms of authority and took a darkly ironic view of society.

Spiegelman exploits the comic form in *Maus* to unsettle the reader, playing with panel frames and arrangements and with his own animal motif to unsettle the reader’s expectations. Within the comic, Spiegelman reflects a lot on the making of *Maus,* inviting the reader to inhabit his creative process. In using a form of popular culture to talk about serious historical issues, and by reflecting on the form within the text itself, *Maus* is also considered a postmodern text.

Spiegelman once remarked, “In making *Maus,* I found myself drawing every panel, every figure, over and over – obsessively – so as to pare it down to an essence, as if each panel was an attempt to invent a new word, rough-hewn but stream-lined” ([source](http://books.google.com/books?id=JkE8SE-y3uwC&pg=PA16&lpg=PA16&dq=%E2%80%9CIn+making+Maus,+I+found+myself+drawing+every+panel,+every+figure,+over+and+over%22&source=bl&ots=sPvVPzFJuy&sig=qqCThaom2dkdhENtVCid40F7GZY&hl=en&ei=xS46TbOWBoKssAO9teH8Ag&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CBMQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=%E2%80%9CIn%20making%20Maus%2C%20I%20found%20myself%20drawing%20every%20panel%2C%20every%20figure%2C%20over%20and%20over%22&f=false)). Perhaps the greatest accomplishment of *Maus* is its excruciating honesty about the difficulties of capturing his father’s story, of capturing the Holocaust.

**VISUAL IMAGES**

This is a poster for a 2012 campaign by the non-government environmental organisation,

Greenpeace.

