

Representation at Risk: Selected Case Studies of Book Banning and AAPI Literature in the United States

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This paper examines book banning in American institutions, with a particular focus on the censorship of literature written by or about East-Asian Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities, specifically South Korea, China, and Japan. Three case studies are examined: *Front Desk* by Kelly Yang, *A Step From Heaven* by An Na, and *When the Emperor Was Divine* by Julia Otsuka, all of which have been formally challenged or banned in the USA. Drawing on Judith Butler's theories of power and censorship, this study investigates how such bans contribute to the systemic marginalization of AAPI voices in literature and society as a whole. Through analysis of case studies and educational policy shifts, the research showcases that such censorship can perpetuate cultural erasure and contribute to systemic exclusion of AAPI communities. The paper concludes by highlighting the urgent need to preserve diverse representation in literature to foster inclusivity, critical thinking, and cultural understanding in society.

Introduction

Book banning is a longstanding practice used to restrict access to ideas, voices, and histories deemed controversial or inappropriate by those in power. In the United States today, a sharp rise in book challenges has targeted works that represent marginalized communities, especially those addressing race, identity, and history. Among the most impacted are books that explore Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI)¹. These bans do not just remove books from shelves; they erase crucial perspectives and limit the cultural understanding of AAPI lives. This paper will explore how the banning of AAPI literature may silence Asian American representation and restrict societal understanding of their diverse experiences. First, the process of book banning will be explained, with historical and modern examples. Then, specific AAPI works that have been challenged will be analyzed to highlight the narrative that such bans attempt to preserve. In particular, this research asks: In what ways does banning AAPI literature silence the Asian American representation and reinforce racial stereotypes in U.S. society? To answer this question in full, first, I will establish generally the historical roots of literary censorship and its long-standing use for suppression. Then, the modern surge of book bans in the U.S. will be discussed, alongside the modern book banning process and the ideologies that drive these efforts. Next, I will analyze AAPI banned literature that brings visibility to the Asian American identity, history, and cultural nuance. Furthermore, I will stress how removing these works from classrooms and libraries suppresses those narratives in favor of a white, mainstream perspective. Finally, I will emphasize the need for proper support and policies to

combat book banning for years to come.

Book Banning and Censorship: A Theoretical Overview

Book banning at its surface appears as isolated acts against individual books within school districts or public libraries. However, when looking at the overall patterns and underlying motives, book banning inherently becomes an expression of political and cultural power. This paper, in particular, limits itself to the Butlerian theories of power. In *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Judith Butler writes, "The subjects regulated by such structures are, by virtue of being subjected to them, formed, defined, and reproduced in accordance with the requirements of those structures."² In the context of book banning, the structures that Butler describes are educational institutions that shape which identities and narratives are seen as valid or deviant. Thus, banning AAPI literature becomes a mechanism of subject formation through exclusion. Moreover, other theories such as the concept of media imperialism, which evaluates how Western media dominates over other regions and cultures, underscore how controlling narratives through the media can shape public perception by reinforcing hegemonic values and marginalizing alternative voices³. Through these methods of controlling the norms, certain narratives are created that are reinforced as truth, causing the formulation of stereotypes and misguided biases towards certain ideas or groups. Either silence these marginalized voices through highlighting the perspectives that support the Eurocentric, western narratives, or through targeting "inappropriate" topics within its contents.

Banning literature in the United States proves to do both at once. In *Excitable Speech*, Butler claims “the mechanism of censorship is not only actively engaged in the production of subjects but also in circumscribing the social parameters of speakable discourse, of what will and will not be admissible in public discourse.”⁴ In other words, censorship is a form of influential power; challenging and banning books is a way of producing what speech becomes the norm or accepted reality, and what speech becomes marginalized and erased⁴. Hence, the mainstream media of books remains untouched and placed in the forefront, while the marginalized books are continually tried for erasure. That being said, these marginalized books are the ones that add complexity and depth to the mainstream narrative⁵, ultimately complicating and destabilizing its interpretations and influence. For example, AAPI books, in the Eurocentric perspective, should fit within the stereotypes designated to the AAPI community, and if the content instead goes against said stereotypes, the literature appears wrong and worthy of being removed. This honest storytelling threatens these reinforced norms, imposing fear upon institutions because these constructed realities get disrupted. As a result of these constructed norms, different communities receive unequal visibility. In this case, banning AAPI books expresses control over which stories and identities are allowed in the public discourse.

The Process and Politics of Book Banning in the USA

While not generally defined, book banning is inferred as removing or restricting books from libraries, schools, or public spaces. It has been practiced from as early as the fifth century BCE in Ancient Greece to the present day and involves physically removing books from public access, thereby preventing people from reading them⁶.

Book banning is rarely just about the content; it is about political or cultural control. Historically, book banning was used as a political and cultural tool. A notable example would be the Japanese occupation of Korea from 1910 to 1945, where the Japanese government censored and destroyed Korean literary works, particularly works that reflected national pride or cultural heritage⁷. For example, *The Heartless* (무정) by Yi Kwang-su advocated for Korean progress and national pride, which threatened the goals of assimilation by the Japanese government. This book was subject to criticism and limitations because it inspired readers to be hopeful for a future where Korea shaped its own destiny. The Japanese government not only removed Korean books but also actively rewrote and censored educational materials to erase Korean identity⁸. Through the education system, young Koreans were raised to adopt a Japanese identity over a Korean one, and older Koreans were forced to speak and write Japanese, adopt Japanese names, and assimilate into

Japanese culture. These restrictions illustrate how censorship of literature and education can be a powerful tool of cultural assimilation and domination.

Furthermore, in modern times, book banning continues as part of a broader movement, commonly in public schools and libraries. It regulates what younger generations learn about race, gender, history, and identity, though often framed as concern for age-appropriateness, to maintain political and cultural control. The topics within challenged books are framed as “inappropriate,” effectively erasing diverse voices and limiting representation and understanding within schools and society⁵.

Modern-day book banning in the USA has introduced a new process of removing books from shelves, but it still pertains to the desire to control knowledge. Book banning has seeped into the political architecture of the United States, with right-wing political groups, such as Moms for Liberty and activists like Christopher Rufo, compelling parents and school boards to challenge books that they claim are divisive or inappropriate. Rufo has openly advocated for and influenced policies like Florida’s “Stop WOKE Act,” which restricts discussions of systemic racism in schools⁹. While such policies claim to protect children, they often result in the suppression of authors of color or those who have LGBTQ+ identities.

Progression of Educational Conservatism in the USA

Understanding the ideological background of educational conservatism helps explain why AAPI literature is disproportionately targeted. Educational conservatism refers to the belief that traditional social and moral values should be promoted in public education¹⁰. This perspective tends to resist reforms to curriculum that challenge dominant historical narratives of introduces progressive ideas about race, gender, sexuality, or power.

In the USA, this ideology is pushed using a “parents’ rights” rhetoric as justification for asserting and acting upon these values¹⁰. Educational conservatism has historically surged in response to perceived liberal shifts in schooling. In the mid-20th century, conservatives opposed sex education, desegregation, and the introduction of a diverse curriculum. The movement gained traction in the late 1980s and 1990s alongside the rise of the Religious Right, focusing on issues like prayer in schools and the teaching of evolution¹¹. These efforts were largely institutional, pursued through school board elections, political lobbying, and textbook revisions¹².

However, the landscape changed significantly after Trump was elected in 2016⁹. Educational conservatism has evolved into a more right-wing extremist offshoot of its original form. This new iteration is less about long-term policy shifts and more about immediate control, often targeting individual teachers, school curricula, or books¹³.

A prime example of this modern iteration is Moms for Liberty. Founded in 2021, the group has since expanded to also oppose

diversity initiatives, gender-inclusive education, and books that address topics like racism and LGBTQ+¹⁴. Moms for Liberty frames these issues as threats to parental control and children's innocence, but their organized tactics, such as mass book challenges or coordinated school board campaigns, position them as a conservative pressure group rather than a conventional educational advocacy group¹².

These patterns of censorship reveal the ideological stakes of education, where power is not only asserted but adopted through curricular control.

In the modern USA, books featuring LGBTQ+ or BIPOC content are frequently targeted¹⁴ through requests for reconsideration that focus on specific themes¹⁵. These topics challenge the status quo, which favors Western, mainstream literature. Because of the added depth and contradiction to the status quo, these diverse books are perceived as dangerous and in need of restriction¹⁵. AAPI is a part of this diverse community in book banning, and it is especially vulnerable because the mainstream perspective is very stereotypical. Censorship often targets content that defies stereotypes, reinforcing a narrow and misleading view of AAPI identity. These books are challenged because they address themes of history, culture, or race that conservative groups who favor the white, mainstream narrative find controversial.

This process of officially banning these books varies, but it has evolved immensely and taken up another life because of these systematic efforts, which gained momentum following Trump's presidency in 2016⁹. Their organized efforts begin with a "request for reconsideration," where individuals, typically parents¹⁶, conservative political groups, or members of school boards¹³, submit formal challenges to a book, citing concerns over content. A formal request for reconsideration must list a stated reason for the challenge. The majority of challengers, typically white parents, cite "protection of children" to deem a book's content inappropriate and worthy of banning. Moreover, many of these "inappropriate" books either present topics children should learn about, such as historical events, or aren't even intended for young audiences⁵. For example, many books that involve slavery, like *Beloved* by Toni Morrison, have been targeted by parents as being inappropriate for children. In a specific request for reconsideration, there is an argument against "human depravity or disturbing events that have occurred throughout history"⁵ within the novel. However, slavery is universally recognized as a horrible crime against humanity and consists of such horrific actions that Morrison includes for accurate representation. This vital part of American history, which must continue to be addressed and taught so future generations understand the gravity of its cruel impacts and its eventual abolition¹⁷, was targeted. Yet, other themes such as the "murder of an infant baby" and "deviant sexual behavior" are excluded from this challenger's reasoning⁵, emphasizing how only topics that showcase a diverse narrative are the ones that

are silenced. Ultimately, reasons like "protection of children" or concerns over "inappropriate content" are excuses for their true motive: to maintain the status quo and stereotypes surrounding diverse communities.

Submitting a request for reconsideration does not immediately remove a book, but starts the review process⁶. Book bans typically follow a pattern of public debate, committee reviews, and a decision by those in authority, such as school boards or library administrators. Schools and libraries usually have established policies for handling such challenges, which may involve a committee review where the book is examined for its educational value and appropriateness¹⁸. If a book is deemed problematic by the review committee, it may then be banned from public access, though this process varies by institution. For instance, some schools or libraries may have a more thorough review process that includes input from educators, parents, and community members, while others might lean more heavily on the opinions of specific groups, such as conservative parent organizations or local political figures. These organized groups often exert pressure on school and library boards to take action, and if the request for reconsideration gains enough support, it may escalate into a formal ban¹³.

Methodology

This paper adopts a case study literary analysis approach to examine the banning of AAPI literature solely in the United States to focus on its broader involvement in representing and understanding the Asian American experience. Based on several criteria, three novels were selected: *Front Desk* by Kelly Yang, *A Step From Heaven* by An Na, and *When the Emperor Was Divine* by Julie Otsuka. First, each work was written by an Asian American author of East Asian descent, reflecting the three countries most frequently associated with the "Asian" part of AAPI in the United States: China, South Korea, and Japan. Second, each book has been formally challenged or banned within school systems, offering insight into patterns of censorship and discomfort surrounding AAPI narratives. Finally, all three texts are widely recognized within academic and literary communities for their exploration of themes such as immigration, racism, intergenerational conflict, assimilation, and identity formation.

The analysis in this paper focuses on both the content of these books and why they have been challenged or banned. Each novel is closely read to understand how it portrays the Asian American experience, and the paper looks at the social and historical context behind the books' bans, using real-world examples and media references to show how certain narratives make people uncomfortable or get labeled as controversial. By combining what is happening in the books with what is happening around them, this paper aims to show how banning these stories does not just affect individual authors or readers but instead erases

important voices and experiences from the conversation.

Understanding AAPI and AAPI Literature

What is AAPI?

AAPI, an acronym meaning Asian American and Pacific Islander, is the term applied to Americans with roots in the continent of Asia and the Pacific Islands. Before analyzing Asian American literature, it must be recognized that the single term AAPI fails to acknowledge and give a voice to all Asian countries. Based on where AAPI is used, typically, specific Asian countries will be assumed¹⁹. In the United States, the term AAPI implicitly refers to East Asian countries. This term, which was politically designated for Asian American peoples, is rather general and neglects the wide variety in cultures, traditions, and histories. However, this singular term is not a singular cultural designation, but rather a political label that reduces complex identities to a broad, surface-level category. Therefore, accepting “AAPI” is less about who one is and more about who one becomes through its symbolic showcase of these many cultures¹⁹.

Nonetheless, in the United States, the “Asian” part of AAPI is assumed to refer to East Asian countries, particularly South Korea, China, and Japan. This paper will focus on literature from these three countries in particular, which are often grouped under the AAPI label.

What is AAPI literature?

In this paper, AAPI literature is defined as both works written by authors who identify as AAPI and reflect the experiences, identities, and cultural narratives of AAPI communities in the USA. These works can span across many genres, from nonfiction to fantasy to poetry. While many AAPI books have been banned throughout the years, this paper will not cover all of them. Only a select few books will be researched and analyzed for their content, reasons for being banned, and the impacts of being banned.

Banned AAPI Books and Their Impacts

Front Desk by Kelly Yang

Kelly Yang’s *Front Desk* follows ten-year-old Mia Tang, who immigrates to America with her parents. They work at the Calivista motel for Mr. Yao, a greedy and heartless man. Mia runs the front desk, hence the title, and she and her family experience overt racism and mistreatment as poor Chinese immigrants. The book was challenged and temporarily banned from school districts in New York, Pennsylvania, and Las Vegas²⁰. In the Plainedge school district in New York, a parent claimed the book

was “extremely divisive and controversial,” and believed that the book “portray[s] cops as racist, foster[s] the notion of white supremacy or white privilege, teach[es] that America is a racist country where all people are not equal, etc.”²¹ Whether someone chooses to address racism or not, it is present in modern-day society amongst people of all professions, alongside the long-lived bias towards Western, conservative ideals, typically aligning with the white population²². These stereotypical beliefs impact people’s perceptions of marginalized groups, in this case, AAPI, from a young age. In the novel, one day in class, Mia recalls, A boy behind me raised his hand. ‘Yes Stuart?’ ‘Is China in Japan?’ Stuart asked. . . . Mrs. Douglas told Jason and Stuart both to hush, and she started talking about the imperial era and Qin Shi Huang, the first emperor of China. . . . I don’t know where Mrs. Douglas got her picture from, but in the picture, Qin Shi Huang’s eyes were ridiculously slanted. . . . The kids in the front row couldn’t stop cracking up. Every time Mrs. Douglas wrote something on the board, they would turn around and make slanted eyes at me and Jason²³.

The young child’s assumptive question, “Is China in Japan?” showcases how these East Asian countries are grouped into such a monolith that they seem interchangeable. *Front Desk*, including stereotypical instances like these and having complex characters who make difficult decisions and have a variety of thought processes, provides a dynamic perception of the AAPI community, adding complexity to AAPI representation.

Like Mia’s experience, countless Asian Americans face microaggressions and racism that take root in the many stereotypes surrounding East Asians in the United States. One of the most persistent is the “model minority” stereotype, expected to be dutiful attendants to white authorities and consistently efficient in their inferior positions²⁴. They are always expected to be the smart assistants or doctors, or scientists, not the CEOs or the politicians. An example of this contrast would be Cristina Yang in *Grey’s Anatomy*. She is a brilliant, hyper-efficient surgeon, but lacks emotional depth and primarily exists to excel in medicine, rarely leading or challenging systemic authority. With this expectation for almost robotic function, East Asians are perceived as one-dimensional and grouped with no nuances or distinctions being drawn.

By banning books like *Front Desk*, the “model minority” stereotype remains, and the perception that East Asians are the same persists. On the other hand, if Asian Americans are not perceived as submissive and uniform, then they are seen as a threat, either as the leader of a martial arts gang or the intelligent narcissist. Take Dr. Chen in *The Dark Knight*, for instance. He is a brilliant accountant who outsmarts everyone and aligns with criminals. Furthermore, there is the fetishization of East Asian women in the media, with these women being framed as “exotic” and objectified²⁵, particularly in industries like Korean entertainment, where the portrayal of women as delicate, submissive, and hyper-feminine has become a normalized trope²⁴.

Additionally, the Korean beauty standards these women must adhere to further reinforce the objectification of their identities and bodies. When delving into Asian American literature, specifically Korean, Chinese, and Japanese literature, there are many representations of the Asian American experience. The Asian American experience includes the unique lives of individuals with Asian heritage in the United States. While each individual has unique experiences, there are overarching patterns regarding their cultural backgrounds, immigration stories, and encounters with societal structures.

A Step From Heaven by An Na

Consider the novel *A Step From Heaven* by An Na, which follows Korean-American Young Ju, who immigrates to the USA with her family. This coming-of-age novel traces her journey in the USA amidst domestic violence, language barriers, and identity confusion. The novel was challenged in Texas and Florida school districts for its portrayal of domestic violence, religious themes, cultural identity, and assimilation²⁶. As a young immigrant herself, Young Ju says, “In America, everything is different, and yet the same. But I am different. I am a step from heaven, not in it, not out of it, just standing there, waiting for something.”²⁷ The metaphor of being “a step from heaven” emphasizes the confusion immigrants experience when trying to assimilate into American society while being rooted in another country.

This book brings to light the two different identities Asian Americans possess and how those identities, with such backgrounds, impact Asian Americans’ experience in America. Korea and America have distinct histories and cultures, and celebrate holidays like the Fourth of July and Chuseok. With these two identities, Young Ju and many Asian Americans often face conflict about which identity to embrace or prioritize. First generation immigrants may have an accent and not speak fluent English, identifying more with their “Asian” heritage than with “American” culture. In contrast, their grandchildren may not speak their native language at all and feel the most comfortable speaking English, identifying more with their “American” identity than their “Asian” one. These different experiences based on age and exposure create a gap between generations²⁸. As a result, the Asian American experience is diverse, shaping the unique, 25 million Asian Americans in the United States today. A book like *A Step From Heaven* being challenged only silences this unique experience that Asian Americans identify with and removes representation of their perspectives.

When the Emperor Was Divine by Julia Otsuka

When the Emperor Was Divine by Julia Otsuka demonstrates how book banning silences the AAPI voice regarding historical events and mistreatment. This historical fiction novel portrays

the painful experiences of a Japanese American family during World War II, focusing on their forced relocation and incarceration in internment camps. Japanese Americans are harshly mistreated and dehumanized throughout the novel, despite being legal U.S. citizens. In this novel, a father is arrested and taken away from his family, leaving his wife to care for their children alone. In Wisconsin, the novel was rejected from a 10th-grade school curriculum for its perspective on Japanese American incarceration, with critics claiming it lacked a “balanced perspective” by not providing all viewpoints of the event, specifically, the American government’s²⁹. During the family’s internment in the desert camp, the main character recalls, “In early autumn farm recruiters arrived to sign up new workers, and the War Relocation Authority allowed many of the young men and women to go out and help harvest the crops. . . . They said they’d been shot at. Spat on. Refused entrance to the local diner. The movie theater. The dry goods store. They said the signs in the windows were the same wherever they went: NO JAPS ALLOWED. Life was easier, they said, on this side of the fence.”³⁰ The novel, based on a real event in history, underscores the cruel irony that these legal Japanese American citizens were vilified. Restricting this story means whitewashing such a shameful chapter of American history. The Japanese American incarceration during WW2 is not widely or deeply understood by the general public, especially outside academic or Asian American communities. This event forcibly removed and incarcerated over 120,000 Japanese Americans, with most of them being U.S. citizens, leaving lasting psychological and physical trauma that spanned generations. Apologies and reparations weren’t given until decades later³¹. A horrific event such as this one should be known, and literature like *When the Emperor Was Divine* is crucial to humanizing and recognizing this piece of history, often treated like a footnote.

Each of these three books uses distinct literary techniques to resist stereotypes and offer honest representations of AAPI experiences. In *Front Desk*, Kelly Yang employs a young narrator with a candid, humorous tone to reveal the harsh realities of racism, immigration, and class inequality, manifested through stereotypical thinking by people of all ages. By filtering serious issues through the perspective of a child, the story disarms readers while still delivering emotional and political weight, challenging the idea that such topics must be sanitized for younger audiences.

In contrast, *A Step From Heaven* by An Na utilizes a poetic tone and fragmented emotions to mirror the protagonist’s journey as she adapts to life in America. The lyrical, often disjointed style reflects her internal struggles of assimilation and trauma, pushing back against the “model minority” stereotype by focusing on pain, confusion, and cultural displacement, alongside complicating the “American Dream” narrative that only focuses on hope and opportunities, and not the struggles and isolation. Meanwhile, Otsuka’s *When the Emperor Was Divine* uses min-

imalism and quiet restraint to convey the erasure of Japanese Americans' experiences during WW2, highlighting how systemic injustice works not only through violence but through silence.

Implications of Book Banning Towards AAPI Representation

The banning of books like *When the Emperor Was Divine* highlights the systematic bias of what is deemed acceptable and what is deemed inappropriate. From these three books, the conclusion that the system of book banning is inherently unfair and discriminatory towards AAPI and other minority groups can be made. In banning these AAPI books, the AAPI lives, work, and cultures may be excluded from being shared and reflected in the media, and millions of AAPI people may find themselves systematically unwelcome⁵.

Furthermore, as discussed earlier, these books can be banned to perpetuate the stereotypes surrounding East Asian American communities. The "model minority" stereotype, which assumes a high-achieving, quiet, hardworking individual, does not appear rather harmful at face value. However, there is more to life than a job or project that doesn't need to fit into this robot-like way of functioning. When someone is expected to maintain this standard of living in all aspects of life, the standard only becomes increasingly impossible to meet, especially because all Asian Americans are unique and in some way deviate from this main depiction. Furthermore, the "enemy" stereotype is typically depicted through ruthless ninjas or sly hackers, and their reasons for being such effective evil forces must be because they are smart, not because of their psychopathic desires or their uncontrollable temper. Even as the enemy, Asian Americans cannot be the most outspoken or assertive individuals. Additionally, the "exotic object" assumes a fragile, helpless woman who cannot understand English, but is willing to be at someone's beck and call as they so please. These stereotypes can influence Asian Americans' relationships, mental health, and reduce who they are to one-dimensional people. By maintaining the narrative that views Asian Americans as the "model minority," the enemy, or as an exotic object, the public's perception of East Asian Americans can remain rooted in believing and feeding into these harmful stereotypes²⁴.

Due to the reduction of Asian Americans to being purely hardworking, intelligent, or exotic, internalized separations from Asian Americans and white Americans may emerge. White Americans in society are not perceived as homogeneous; they have depth and complexity, as everyone naturally does. This internalized separation, possibly birthed from stereotypical thinking towards Asian Americans, results in a hierarchy. The stereotypes can enforce the thought process: Asian Americans are different than the mainstream, complex individuals, and therefore are considered lower than. Thus, discrimination can be

displayed. Sometimes, blatant discrimination, like calling an Asian American a slur, may not be the case for expressing this internal belief. Such internalized separation can manifest in everyday interactions through microaggressions³². According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, microaggression is "a comment or action that subtly and often unconsciously or unintentionally expresses a prejudiced attitude toward a member of a marginalized group." Notice how the definition involves the words "unconsciously or unintentionally." These stereotypes have been perpetuated for so long to complement the mainstream narrative that these harmful actions can occur naturally, from microaggressive comments on the subway to lawsuits regarding the impact of affirmative action on Asian applicants in the college acceptance process. By banning these books that give a voice, a source of power for these Asian Americans to step up and defy these stereotypes and discriminatory biases, that can be a message that silencing the truth is preferable to confronting change and discomfort¹⁷.

Conclusion

This paper has explored the complexities of book banning, particularly as it pertains to AAPI literature, and how it serves to silence crucial narratives regarding the Asian American experience. Through an examination of works like *A Step From Heaven*, we've seen how these texts provide valuable perspectives on historical events such as Japanese American incarceration and the struggles of identity and race during times of conflict.

The research demonstrates that these books are often banned not only because of their challenge to mainstream historical narratives but also due to the discomfort they create by challenging deeply rooted stereotypes about Asian Americans. From the "model minority" myth to the fetishization of East Asian women, the narratives in these books threaten the status quo by giving voice to a historically marginalized group.

In order to address these issues, a shift toward greater representation and accuracy in the portrayal of Asian Americans in literature must be made. To combat the harmful effects of book banning, policies need to be put in place to protect AAPI books from being restricted in school curricula and libraries⁵. This includes advocating for greater diversity in narratives, ensuring that multiple stories from across the AAPI spectrum are allowed to flourish. Only by creating space for these diverse stories can a more inclusive, informed, and compassionate society be built.

It is crucial that literature that amplifies AAPI voices, challenges restrictive policies, and pushes for a more accurate representation of all communities in educational systems receives support. The fight against book banning is not just about preserving access to specific books; it's about protecting the fundamental right to varying, authentic narratives that reflect the true complexity of society.

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