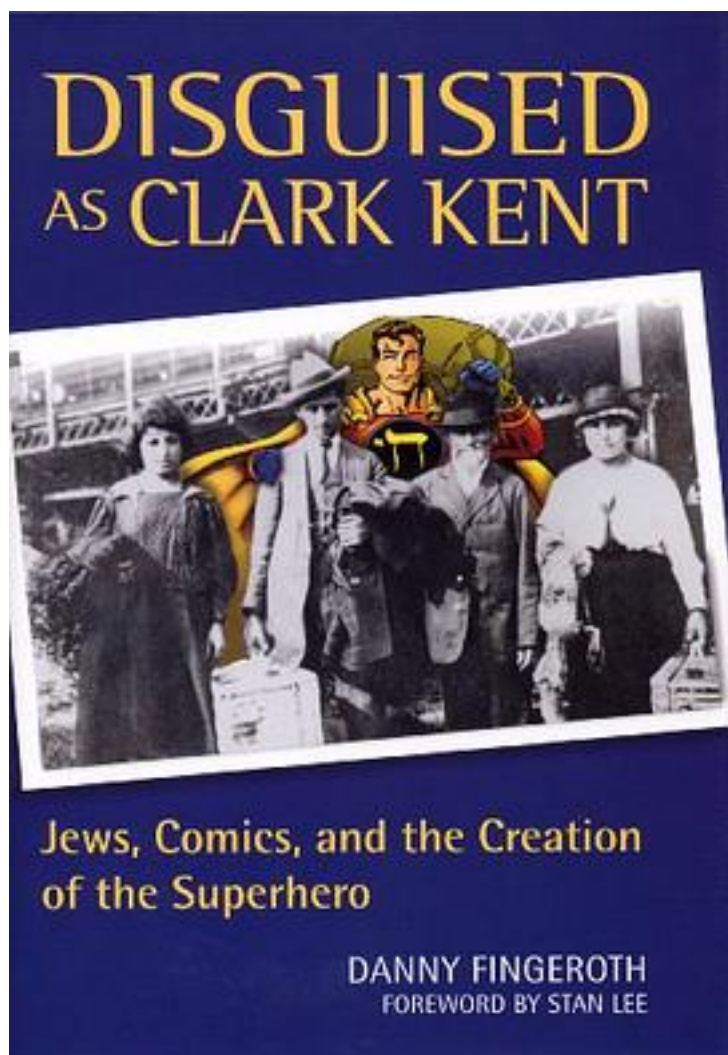


Disguised as Clark Kent



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A large number of the creators of the most famous superheroes were of Jewish background, secular, religious, or both. In "Disguised as Clark Kent", Danny Fingeroth explores how the Jewish consciousness of these individuals impacted the content of the comics and contributed to making characters such as Superman, Batman, Spider-Man, and Wonder Woman into the most familiar popular-culture icons of all time - on television and in movies, as well as in the four-colour pages in which they originated. The book is well researched, including personal interviews as well as historical data. It centers on questions of Jewish identity, which is historically about the push and pull toward and away from that very identity. One sees this immediately and most famously in "Superman" by Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, the superhero "disguised as Clark Kent, mild-mannered reporter for a great metropolitan newspaper." It is also a large part of Bill Finger and Bob Kane's "Batman", Will Eisner's "Spirit", Joe Simon and Jack Kirby's "Captain America". As emigrants with a history of persecution, Jews came to America with their heads down but their eyes open. Finding in America a civilization freer of officially sanctioned anti-Semitism and replete with a philosophy that allowed the individual to succeed to the extent of his or her abilities, Jews were faced with unprecedented freedom and opportunity. Yet there were limits, spoken and unspoken, that they dared not push. Many were relegated to trades and fields with a taint of shabbiness to them. The garment business was one. Another was entertainment, of which the outer edges of the formerly old-line publishing industry was another: the pulps and the comics. It was here the above-named made their mark, later to be re-imagined by Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, and others from the 1960s down to our own time. "Disguised as Clark Kent" brings valuable insight into the fantasies that fuel our imaginations and entertainment industry, as well as many significant and often hidden aspects of our society.

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