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Bio

33 words

Roy Schwartz is the Diagram Prize-winning author of *Is Superman Circumcised? The Complete Jewish History of the World's Greatest Hero* and other books. He writes about pop culture for *The Forward* and *CNN.com*.

73 words

Roy Schwartz is the Diagram Prize-winning author of *Is Superman Circumcised? The Complete Jewish History of the World's Greatest Hero* and *The Darkness in Lee's Closet and the Others Waiting There*. He's written for a wide range of publications, including *New York Daily News*, *Jerusalem Post* and *Philosophy Now*. He writes about pop culture for *The Forward* and *CNN.com*. He can be found at royschwartz.com and on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [Facebook](#) as @RealRoySchwartz.

135 words

Roy Schwartz is the author of *Is Superman Circumcised? The Complete Jewish History of the World's Greatest Hero* and *The Darkness in Lee's Closet and the Others Waiting There*. *Is Superman Circumcised?* won the 2021 international Diagram Prize for Oddest Book Title of the Year.

Roy has written for a wide range of publications, including *New York Daily News*, *Jerusalem Post* and *Philosophy Now*. He currently writes about pop culture for *The Forward* and *CNN.com*.

He received his BA in English from the New School University and interdisciplinary MA in English and social thought from NYU. He has taught English and writing at the City University of New York and is a former writer-in-residence fellow at the New York Public Library.

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254 words

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His professional writing is similarly diverse, including educational organizations, law firms, tech companies, toy companies and production studios.

Roy has taught English and writing at the City University of New York and is a former writer-in-residence fellow at the New York Public Library.

He graduated magna cum laude from the New School University with a BA in English, majoring in creative writing with a minor in journalism, and cum laude from NYU with an interdisciplinary MA in English and social thought, focusing on 19th century British and 20th century American literature. He interned for Marvel Comics.

Originally from Tel Aviv, Israel, Roy grew up a voracious reader of everything from Israeli novels to British plays to American comic books. He taught himself English from comics and cartoons, which is why he's comfortable saying things like "swell."

Roy lives in Long Island, NY with his wife Kim, a bestselling author and editor, and their two children. He has a penchant for caffeine, candy and a quality-over-quantity wardrobe.

He can be found at royschwartz.com and on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [Facebook](#) as [@RealRoySchwartz](#).

Headshot



The picture can be copied & pasted or clicked and saved as an image. For a higher resolution JPEG and other headshots, please visit royschwartz.com/presskit.

Book Info

Cover blurb

SUPERMAN is the most famous character in the world. He's the first superhero, an American icon—and he's Jewish!

Introduced in June 1938, the Man of Steel was created by two Jewish teens, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, the sons of emigrants from Eastern Europe. They based their hero's origin story on Moses, his strength on Samson, his mission on the golem and his nebbish secret identity on themselves. They made him a refugee fleeing catastrophe on the eve of World War II and sent him to tear Nazi tanks apart nearly two years before the US joined the war.

In following decades Superman's mostly Jewish writers, artists and editors continued to borrow Jewish motifs for their stories, basing Krypton's past on Genesis and Exodus, its civilization on Jewish culture, the trial of Lex Luthor on Adolf Eichmann's and a holiday celebrating Superman on Passover.

Exploring these underlying themes of a beloved modern mythology, *Is Superman Circumcised? The Complete Jewish History of the World's Greatest Hero* is a fascinating and entertaining journey through comic book lore, American history and Jewish tradition, sure to give readers a newfound appreciation for the Mensch of Steel!

Details

Is Superman Circumcised? The Complete Jewish History of the World's Greatest Hero

Publisher: McFarland

Pub. date: May 5, 2021

Genre: nonfiction, history, cultural criticism, popular culture

Print: Paperback, 374 pages

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Publisher listing: mcfarlandbooks.com/product/is-superman-circumcised

Target audience

- Adults with interest in Jewish culture, pop culture, comic books and Superman
- Academics, educators, students, librarians

About the book

Is Superman Circumcised? explores the origins of the comic book industry and superhero genre with Jewish immigrants and their children during the Depression and WWII, following the development of the field through the decades from this perspective, with a focus on Superman as the archetype and the richest in Jewish signification. At the same time, it uses this staple of Americana as a lens to examine cultural, folkloric and theological themes in Judaism and Jewish-American life.

The book is written in plain English, meant to be read for pleasure by a general audience. However, it is also a scholarly work. It's published by a large academic press, includes 41 pages of endnotes and bibliography, is rigorous in its approach, and is reviewed in academic journals. It can serve as an original and engaging text in a wide range of courses, including: popular culture, contemporary culture, social sciences, literary criticism, comic book history, art history, Jewish-American history, Jewish studies, interdisciplinary studies, religious studies, comparative religion, and folklore.

Awards

Winner of the 2021 international Diagram Prize for the Oddest Book Title of the Year. Awarded by *The Bookseller*, UK's oldest publishing trade.

Select Reviews

“I am floored by this deep and beautiful examination of history, liturgy, and culture. If you believe in comics as the holders of miracle, myth, and mystery, this is the book for you.”

--Mayim Bialik, actress, author, neuroscientist

“A fascinating book.”

--Fox 2 Detroit Morning News

“A must-have for any fan of superheroes, comic books and Jewish history and literature.”

--The Jerusalem Post

“Fascinating, illuminating and highly accomplished...you will never look at Superman in quite the same way.”

“A lively and often funny book.”

-- Jewish Journal

“Over the years, there have been quite a few different books written about the history of Superman and Schwartz’s book certainly ranks at the top of the list.”

“Schwartz has crafted together a profound read... [a] beautifully written and comprehensive portrait of Superman’s ties to the history of the Jewish faith and culture.”

--Superman Super Site

“This work contains some of the best analysis, history, and sociology pertaining to comics I have ever read.”

“Especially impressive is Schwartz’s incredible textual depth...[it] not only offers a wide view of Superman and his impact within our culture but provides a blueprint for scholars to examine such longstanding characters.”

“As a work of academic research and popular engagement, this book succeeds on multiple levels. With nearly forty pages of notes and a wealth of sources, this book achieves monumental status as a scholarly endeavor. Yet this work is not stuffy, pedantic, or banal. Its prose is exciting and engaging, which makes it hard to put down...this monograph animates Superman as a character that jumps off its pages and comes to life in every discussion about him.”

--The Popular Culture Studies Journal

“Schwartz approaches the subject with an academic lens and a fan’s passion, with text-parsing that would have impressed the rabbis of the Talmud.”

--The Forward

“I’ve read quite a few books on the history of Superman...Schwartz’s book is right up there with some of the better ones...all Superman fans should add [it] to their collection.”

“Really digs deep into those early days of the comic book industry and brings [them] to life.”

--Superman Homepage

“A deep dive into the history, mythology and cultural folklore of America’s super-heroes...scholarly yet broadly entertaining.”

--Michael Uslan, executive producer of the Batman movie franchise, comic book historian

“An impressive work that is meant for hard-core, real-deal fans as well as the general public.”

“The whole book is well-written and engaging. What a delight.”

--Pop Culture Squad

“Schwartz demonstrates extraordinary insight in his overview of the intersection of comics, the history of heroes and heroines, theological knowledge, and pop culture...[and] imparts the information with humor, focus...and an uncanny ability to join the concepts in an accessible, entertaining, and enlightening way.”

--Times Beacon Record

“One of the best volumes that devote serious thought to [comics].”

“While this is entirely readable and entertaining, this is...a substantial work of literary criticism.”

“A remarkable book...thorough and meaningful.”

--The Times of Israel

“Many have argued whether Superman embodies a Moses or Jesus figure. In *Is Superman Circumcised?* Roy Schwartz deftly gives a comprehensive tour through the Man of Steel’s life and times...and allows us to come to our own conclusions. No rock is left unsmitten as Schwartz skillfully presents the arguments for all sides of the great debate.”

--Danny Fingeroth, former group editor of Spider-Man publications at Marvel Comics, author of A Marvelous Life: The Amazing Story of Stan Lee

“Schwartz’s book is the latest in a myriad of books dissecting the ethnic nature of superheroes and comic books, and yet, throughout, Schwartz manages to find new insights into the Jewish nature of comic books.”

“Schwartz also offers a rich discussion of the nature of whiteness in the Superman story...tying this to Jewish experiences with whiteness and the tendency of Jews to white-pass in American society. This may be Schwartz’s most unique contribution to scholarship on Superman as comic books, as it has been glossed over by previous authors on the subject.”

“Despite the impressive academic rigor of *Is Superman Circumcised?*, the book’s greatest value is in its accessibility. The book’s target audience is not the academic but the lay reader. The discussions of literary theory and methodology...have been replaced with vibrant illustrations and full-page inclusions of comic book panels that offer the reader the ability to see the evidence of his central thesis first-hand. It is this accessibility that has, rightfully, garnered Schwartz acclaim from Jewish celebrities and torchbearers of nerd culture.”

“Overall, this book offers a great deal to modern scholarship on popular culture, as a whole, and comics and graphic novels, in particular. His analysis broadens scholarly conceptions of the

importance of comic books to American culture and offers other scholars a blueprint on how to successfully apply scholarly analysis to a medium too often misconceived as antithetical to such review. Beyond this, Schwartz's book is a great contribution to the fields of ethnic and Jewish studies. Through the lens of Superman, Schwartz offers a glimpse into the immigrant and ethnic experience of American Jews that many readers will not have found elsewhere, making it an unmissable contribution to the field."

--The Journal of Popular Culture

"One of the best scholarly works on comic book history and Superman's status as a cultural icon ever written."

"Goes into far greater detail than many books about the Golden Age of Comics. I consider myself well read on the subject, yet I found myself learning things I never knew while reading this book."

"Miraculously, Schwartz makes all of this easily accessible, despite some fairly heavy concepts."

"A must-read for any fan of Superman and anyone who considers themselves a scholar of comic book history. I highly recommend it for all academics and their libraries."

"5/5."

--Kabooooom!

"Schwartz artfully explains the philosophical value of Superman as a product of the Jewish experience in America."

"This book far exceeded my expectations...It is a great book for anyone interested in the intersection of history and folklore and wants to revisit Superman with new eyes and a fresh appreciation."

"10/10."

--Geek'd Out

“A must read for every Superman fan as well as every superhero fan out there.”

--Son of Jeddah, first website & podcast about comics in Saudi Arabia

For more reviews, please visit issupermancircumcised.com or royschwartz.com>Books>Is Superman Circumcised?

For other writings, please visit royschwartz.com/writing.

For select interviews, please visit royschwartz.com/interviews.

