

1. National Comics Publications v. Fawcett Publications, 93 F. Supp. 349 (S.D.N.Y. 1950)

<https://www.courtlistener.com/opinion/1971798/national-comics-publications-v-fawcett-publications/>

Both "Captain Marvel" and "Superman" have the same athletic physique... "Superman" is represented as a normal human being, a meek newspaper reporter wearing eye glasses (Clark Kent), who, by throwing off his regular clothes, appears in his athletic costume and becomes a superhuman being and performs superhuman feats in the interests of justice and to overthrow evil...

What is a dual identity?

2. Peter Sanderson, *Comics in Context* #201

<http://asitecalledfred.com/2007/11/05/comics-in-context-201-secret-lives/>

I wonder if Clark represents another side of the "ultimate assimilationist fantasy" for a minority group: being able to blend into mainstream society so perfectly that one's true background—one's inner identity—is undetectable. Part of the fantasy is that all you have to do is put on the glasses, adopt the proper set of "mild manners," wear the same business suit as everyone else, and not draw attention to yourself, and *voilà!* The disguise—and the assimilation—are complete!

3. John Lawrence, *Thinking Comics with Danny Fingeroth*, Philosophy Now (2009)

https://philosophynow.org/issues/73/Thinking_Comics_with_Danny_Fingeroth

The hero of masked dual identity "doesn't want to get used to being thanked" (p.49). Fingeroth suggests that the convention of disappearing from the rescued community allows the purity of the deed to stand alone. This escape-from-gratitude appeals to an audience wanting heroes who emphatically do the right thing for its own sake.

4. Peter Sanderson, *Comics in Context* #200

<http://asitecalledfred.com/2007/10/29/comics-in-context-200-my-first-million/>

In "rebooting" Superman in the 1986 mini-series *The Man of Steel*, John Byrne... was also sharply revising certain aspects of the Superman legend. Byrne rejected the tradition whereby "Clark Kent" was Superman's disguise, in which he pretended to be not just "mild-mannered" but downright timid and clumsy, a "caricature" of humanity, in Jules Feiffer's description (in his pioneering study, *The Great Comic Book Heroes*). In issue 1 of *The Man of Steel*, Clark and his foster parents devise the Superman persona as a means of preventing the general public from recognizing who he truly is: Clark Kent.

Byrne appeared to be thinking not of the immigrant's problems with assimilation but of the contemporary concern for privacy in a culture that worships celebrity... Upon first publicly using his super-powers, Clark is mobbed by onlookers. Admitting to his "fear" of the mob, Clark tells his foster parents, "They were all over me! Like wild animals. Like maggots. Clawing. Pulling. Screaming at me" (Byrne, *The Man of Steel* #1, p. 28). That's when Pa Kent comes up with the idea of the Superman persona and costume: the public will pay attention to Superman and leave Clark alone. Clark isn't worried about assimilating into society; he is desperate to find privacy—a "fortress of solitude"—"where no one will ever think to look for me" (Byrne, *The Man of Steel* #1, p. 30).

Moshe's Two Origins

5. Shemot 2:1-4, 2:10-11, 6:10-13

וַיִּלֶךְ אִישׁ מִבֵּית לְוִי וַיִּקַּח אֶת בַּת לְוִי: וַתְּהֵרָה הָאִשָּׁה וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן וַתִּרְאֶה אֹתוֹ כִּי טוֹב הוּא וַתִּצְפְּנֶהוּ שְׁלֹשָׁה יָרְחִים: וְלֹא יָכְלָה עוֹד הַצִּפְּיָנוּ וַתִּקַּח לוֹ תֵּבַת גִּמָּא וַתַּחַמְרָהּ בַּחֲמֵר וּבְזָפֶת וַתִּשֶׂם בָּהּ אֶת הַיֶּלֶד וַתִּשֶׂם בְּסוּף עַל שְׂפֹת הַיָּאָר: וַתִּתְצַב אַחֲתוֹ מִרְחֵק לְדַעַה מֶה יַעֲשֶׂה לוֹ: ... וַיִּגְדֵּל הַיֶּלֶד וַתְּבֹאֵהוּ לְבַת פְּרֹעֶה וַיְהִי לָהּ לְבֵן וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ מֹשֶׁה וַתֹּאמֶר כִּי מִן הַמַּיִם מִשִּׁיתָהוּ: וַיְהִי בְּיָמֵים הָהֵם וַיִּגְדֵּל מֹשֶׁה וַיִּצְאָ אֶל אֶחָיו וַיִּרְאֶה בְּסִבְלָתָם וַיִּרְאֶה אִישׁ מִצְרִי מִכָּה אִישׁ עֹבְרֵי מֵאֶחָיו: ...

וַיִּדְבֹּר ד' אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: בֹּא דַבֵּר אֶל פְּרֹעֶה מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרְצוֹ: וַיִּדְבֹּר מֹשֶׁה לְפָנָיו ד' לֵאמֹר הֵן בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא שָׁמְעוּ אֵלַי וְאִיךָ יִשְׁמְעֵנִי פְרֹעֶה וְאֲנִי עֹרֵל שְׂפֵתַיִם: וַיִּדְבֹּר ד' אֶל מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל אֶהֱרֹן וַיִּצְוֶם אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶל פְּרֹעֶה מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם לְהוֹצִיא אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:

And a man from the house of Levi went and wedded a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived and birthed a son, and she saw that he was good, and she hid him for three months. And she could not hide him any longer, and she took a reed box for him, and she lined it with pitch and tar, and she put the child in it, and she put it in the reeds at the edge of the river. And his sister stood far away, to know what would happen to him...

And the child matured, and she brought him to the daughter of Pharaoh and he was a son to her, and she named him Moshe, and she said, "For I have drawn him from the water." And in those days, and Moshe matured and he went out to his brethren and he saw their suffering, and he saw an Egyptian man beating one of his Hebrew brethren...

And Gd told Moshe: Go, speak to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he will send the Children of Israel from his land. And Moshe said before Gd, "Behold, the Children of Israel did not listen to me, and how will Pharaoh listen to me? And I am of uncircumcised lips." And Gd spoke to Moshe and Aharon, and He commanded them to the Children of Israel and to Pharaoh, King of Egypt, to take the Children of Israel out of the Land of Egypt.

6. Shemot 6:14-16, 6:26-30

אלה ראשי בית אבותם בני ראובן בְּכֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל חֲנוּךְ וּפְלוּאֵי חֲצֹרֹן וְכַרְמֵי אֵלֶּה מְשֻׁפָּחַת רְאוּבֵן: וּבְנֵי שִׁמְעוֹן יְמוּאֵל וְנִמְיִן וְנָחֵד וְנִכְיִן וְצַחֵר וְשִׂאוּל בְּן הַכְּנַעֲנִית אֵלֶּה מְשֻׁפָּחַת שִׁמְעוֹן: וְאֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי לֵוִי לְתַלְדֹתָם גֵּרְשׁוֹן וְיַחֲיִן וְקַהַת וּמְרָרִי וְשִׁנִּי חֲמִי לֵוִי שִׁבְעָה וְשִׁלְשִׁים וּמֵאֵת שָׁנָה: ...
הוא אהרן ומשה אשר אמר ד' להם הוציאו את בני ישראל מארץ מצרים על צבאתם: הם המדברים אל פרעה מלך מצרים להוציא את בני ישראל ממצרים הוא משה ואהרן: ויהי ביום דבר ד' אל משה בארץ מצרים: וידבר ד' אל משה לאמר אני ד' דבר אל פרעה מלך מצרים את כל אשר אני דבר אליך: ויאמר משה לפני ד' הן אני ערל שפתים ואיך ישמע אלי פרעה:

These are the heads of their families. The sons of Reuven, firstborn of Israel: Chanoch and Palu, Chetzron and Carmi, these are the families of Reuven. And the sons of Shimon: Yemuel and Yamin and Ohad and Yachin and Tzochar and Shaul son of the Canaanitess; these are the families of Shimon. And these are the names of the sons of Levi, according to their offspring: Gershon, Kehat and Merari. And Levi lived 137 years...

These are Aharon and Moshe, to whom Gd said, "Take the Children of Israel out of the Land of Egypt in their multitudes." They are the ones who spoke to Pharaoh, King of Egypt, to take the Children of Israel out of Egypt. This is Moshe and Aharon. And it was, on the day Hashem spoke to Moshe in the Land of Egypt. And Hashem told Moshe: I am Gd. Speak to Pharaoh, King of Egypt, all that I tell you. And Moshe said before Gd, "Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips, and how will Pharaoh listen to me?"

Why do we have two accounts?

7. Rashi to Shemot 6:13

מתוך שהזכיר משה ואהרן, הפסיק הענין ב"אלה ראשי בית אבותם" ללמדנו היאך נולדו משה ואהרן ובמי נתיחסו:

Because it mentioned Moshe and Aharon, it interrupted with "These are the heads of their families" to teach us how Moshe and Aharon were born, and to whom they were related.

8. Don Isaac Abarbanel to Shemot 6:14

כמו שלכבוד אברהם זכר הכתוב בסדר נח הדורות הראשונים שקדמוהו, כן לכבוד משה ואהרן זכר הכתוב בכאן יחסו ויחוס אבותיהם. וז"ש "אלה ראשי בית אבותם" שאינו חוזר לעם ישראל כמו שחשב הרשב"ע, שאם כן היה לו לזכור כל השבטים, אלא שרצה הכתוב לזכור ראשי בית אבות משה ואהרן כדי להודיע שאבותיהם כולם היו קדושים יראי ד'...

Just as, in honour of Avraham, the text in Parshat Noach mentioned his antecedent generations, so in honour of Moshe and Aharon the text here mentioned their lineage and the lineages of their ancestors. Thus it says, "These are the heads of their families" – which refers not to the Nation of Israel as per Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra, for then it should have mentioned all of the tribes – but the text wished to mention the heads of the families of Moshe and Aharon, to inform [the reader] that all of their ancestors were holy, Gd-fearing...

9. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, Commentary to Shemot 6:14 (Feldheim edition, italics in the original)

Until now, the efforts of Moshe and Aharon have been completely frustrated. Were it not for later events, there would be no need for such an exact list of their lineage and family relations. *Now, however, begins their triumphal mission*, the likes of which no mortal had ever accomplished before them or will ever accomplish after them. *Now* it is of critical importance to present an exact list of their lineage and relations, *so as to attest thereby for all time to come that their origin was ordinary and human, and that the nature of their being was ordinary and human.*

10. Talmud, Bava Batra 110a

אמרו לו: לאו ממושה קא אתית דכתיב ביה "אל תקרב הלום"? לאו ממושה קא אתית דכתיב ביה "ואתה פה עמוד עמדי" - תעשה כהן לע"ז?!
אמר להן כך מקובלני מבית אבי אבא לעולם ישכיר אדם עצמו לע"ז ואל יצטרך לבריות והוא סבר לע"ז ממש ולא היא אלא ע"ז עבודה שזרה לו כדאמר ליה רב לרב כהנא נטוש נבילתא בשוקא ושקול אגרא ולא תימא גברא רבא אנא וזילא בי מילתא.

They said to him: Do you not come from Moshe, of whom it says, "Do not come near (*halom*)?" Do you not come from Moshe, of whom it says, "What is this (*zeh*) in your hand"? Do you not come from Moshe, of whom it says, "And you here (*poh*), stand with Me" – shall you become a priest for idolatry?!

He replied to them, "This is my tradition from my grandfather: One should hire himself out to avodah zarah and not need others." He thought this meant actual avodah zarah [idolatry], but it is not so – it meant avodah [work] which is zarah [foreign] to him, as Rav told Rav Kahana, "Throw carcasses in the market and accept payment, and don't say, 'I am a great man, and this is degrading for me.'"

Our Dual Identity

11. Talmud, Yevamot 63b

מנע רבים מתוך ביתך ולא הכל תביא ביתך, רבים יהיו דורשי שלומך גלה סוד לאחד מאלף.

Keep the multitudes from your home and do not bring everyone into your home. Many should be those who seek your welfare; reveal your secret to one in one thousand.

12. Talmud, Bava Metzia 23b-24a

בהני תלת מילי עבידי רבנן דמשנו במלייהו במסכת ובפוריא ובאושפיזא.

A Torah scholar may lie about three topics: (1) Whether he knows a tractate, (2) Intimate details of his marriage, and (3) His host's hospitality.

13. Anonymous (13th century Spain), Sefer haChinuch, Mitzvah 582

שנצטוינו שישמח החתן עם אשתו שנה אחת, כלומר, שלא יסע חוץ לעיר לצאת למלחמה ולא לענינים אחרים לשבת זולתה זמנים רבים, אלא ישב עמה שנה שלמה מיום הנישואין, ועל זה נאמר [דברים כ"ד, ה'], נקי יהיה לביתו שנה אחת ושמח את אשתו אשר לקח.

We are commanded that a groom should rejoice with his wife for one year, meaning that he should not leave the city for war or other pursuits, to live apart from her for many days. Rather, he should live with her for a full year from the wedding. Regarding this Devarim 24:5 says, "He shall be free to his house for one year, and he shall gladden the wife he has wed."

14. Talmud, Berachot 31a

אמר רב המנונא כמה הלכתא גברוותא איכא למשמע מהני קראי דחנה!... "וקולה לא ישמע" - מכאן שאסור להגביה קולו בתפלתו.
Rav Hemnuna said: How many mighty laws we can learn from the verses of Chanah!... "Her voice was not heard" – we see that one may not elevate his voice in prayer.

15. Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Deiot 2:3

הכעס מדה רעה היא עד למאד וראוי לאדם שיתרחק ממנה עד הקצה האחר, וילמד עצמו שלא יכעוס ואפילו על דבר שראוי לכעוס עליו, ואם רצה להטיל אימה על בניו ובני ביתו או על הציבור אם היה פרנס ורצה לכעוס עליהן כדי שיחזרו למוטב יראה עצמו בפניהם שהוא כועס כדי לייסרם ותהיה דעתו מיושבת בינו לבין עצמו

Anger is a very bad trait, and it would be appropriate for a person distance himself from it, to the opposite extreme. One should teach himself not to grow angry even at something which warrants anger. If he wishes to instill awe his children, household or community – if he is a leader – in order to restore good conduct, then he should act as though he is angry in order to rebuke them, but his mind should be internally calm.

Review Questions

What are two textual differences between the first and second accounts of Moshe's origin?

What are four explanations for why we have two different accounts?

Which aspects of Moshe's life are hidden or obscured in the second account?

What are two mitzvot which highlight our own private identities?