

Superman 2025 Is Neither “Radical” Nor “Punk”

[Superman 2025 poster graphic]

Okay, first things first, before everyone loses their goddamn minds, I *did* enjoy *Superman 2025*. I did. I actually even had some fun, and in terms of filmmaking craft and as a commercial product, this movie is undeniably a pretty good one. I even kinda enjoyed my critical rewatch of a cam copy in the comfort of my own living room, which is hands down the least flattering way a popular film can be presented to me.

Let me be clear, I have NEVER enjoyed rewatching a superhero movie at home after seeing it in theaters, so the fact that Vivian Strange was able to enjoy TWO viewings of *Superman 2025* should speak to its overall quality.

Honestly, when I rewatched it the first time, I was SEARCHING for any technical flaws, and I got a little frustrated because it really is just THAT well-made. But the cast is great, firing on all cylinders; the production design, cinematography, and sound design, were all on point enough that I don't really have too many valid complaints in terms of craft.

And even as someone who has always found **James Gunn** to be a pretty mediocre creator, this is his best film by a significant margin (*Super* is his second best film; the *GotG* movies aren't that special, and they aren't compelling enough to stand out from the rest of Marvel's corporate superhero theater fodder) and I'd be shocked if this wasn't Gunn's creative peak, cause as a filmmaker, there's nowhere for him to go from here but down.

And same with Gunn's new DC cinematic universe: I'm calling it now, *Superman* will be the creative peak of this new universe; it's all gonna be downhill from here.

All in all, I will conclude my compliments of *Superman 2025* with, I think this is the best live-action Superman film ever made (**yes, including the 1978 one**)...which also happens to be its greatest flaw.

My biggest problem with this movie.

Let me be clear: I was not expecting anything particularly radical from *Superman 2025*. I was expecting something entertaining and potentially competently made, and it was that (at least until I watched it twice; the diminishing returns on the entertainment factor made themselves painfully clear), but I wasn't expecting anything that could be considered transgressive or even challenging to the status quo. Cause like...superhero movies. I feel like that's something we should have figured out about superhero schlock by now.

But boy oh boy, I was sure wrong. The amount of glazing for this film online from so-called “leftist” critics has finally proven my longtime suspicion that the people on YouTube who like to mourn audiences' “lack of media literacy” are themselves astoundingly media illiterate.

[empty thumbnail frames w/ text: “I'd show you some of them, but a) I don't want to get crucified by other creators, and b) I don't want to point anyone in the direction of bad criticism”]

Now, don't worry, it's not a crime to have bad taste. But when you're getting up on platforms to tell millions of people that *Superman 2025* somehow has "progressive" or, god forbid, "leftist" politics, that's just fucking irresponsible. As is *Superman 2025* itself.

Oh, and anyone who's typing out a comment saying that I "don't get" Superman, shut the fuck up. I DO very much understand this character. I was always a Superman fan growing up; Batman couldn't hold a candle to my baby-blue-eyed corn-fed farmboy. *Smallville* was the first TV show I fell in love with, and in 2012, I legit worked at Target for a couple weeks solely to buy the **full 10-season boxed set** of *Smallville* using the employee discount. And I already owned **all ten seasons** on DVD!

I am an adult now though, and I'm able to take of my rosy nostalgia shades to actually look at the character honestly, and with an actual historical and political education under my belt, and the truth of the fact of the matter is that Superman is, and has ALWAYS been, since the character's inception, a symbol of the United States of America, and by extension, American hegemonic power.

[Supermans with American iconography throughout]

"**Truth, Justice, and the American Way.**" Of course, we try to ignore the third part of that these days, as many of us have come to realize that the "American Way" is mutually exclusive with Truth and Justice, but Superman being American is and has always been an integral part of his character.

Cultural historian Ian Gordon links the character of Superman to the ideology of "the American Way," an ideology defined by "individualism, consumerism, and democracy," arguing that nostalgia plays a key role in tying all the various iterations of Superman to this American ideologyⁱ; in a similar vein, comics scholar Roger Sabin claims that Superman's early portrayals reflected "the liberal idealism of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal."ⁱⁱ

And before anyone tries to pull the "Superman was created by Jewish artists who were inspired by Judaic mythology to create a Jewish superhero" as a "gotcha"...ummm...no. It's a nice thought, and I can see why many folks in the now times want to believe that this was the case, but this popular claim is entirely circumstantial. Yes, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster were Jewish, but they were not practicing Jews and they *never* acknowledged any Judaic influence on Superman.ⁱⁱⁱ

From Les Daniels' *Superman: The Complete History* -- "**There are parallel stories in many cultures, but what is significant is that Siegel, working in the generally patronized medium of the comics, had created a secular American messiah. Nothing of the kind was consciously on his mind, apparently: his explanation for dropping Superman down from the sky was that 'it just happened that way'. And Shuster echoed him: 'We just thought it was a good idea.'**"^{iv}

Yes, the idea of a messiah is one that is found in many cultures and religions, as it is one of humankind's most historically consistent copes, and it is this concept that Superman embodies, a concept that I argue is killing us here in the Empire, as it has been for over two centuries. He is empowerment fantasy and wish fulfillment; he's the make-believe savior that this thing we call "hope" so emptily promises.

So that's what I mean when I say that *Superman 2025* is the most Superman movie to ever Superman, which makes it not only good art BUT ALSO effective propaganda made by and for the unjust system that Superman pays so much lip service to opposing.

And look, I know how defensive people on here can get about their precious superheroes, and their fixations of that immaterial opiate called “hope” we get from our superhero movies. Well, I don’t care. The world is burning, entire populations are being massacred on our dime, and maniacal killers rule the world, and if we’re gonna waste everyone’s time on here chattering about a silly movie with strong men dressed like clowns going bam pow punchy-punch, then let’s get fucking real. Fuck your hope.

So here we are. Let’s examine the wreck of this brutal collision between the quaint fantasies of *Superman 2025* and our real world material reality, and why I scoff at the notion that this film is in any way politically radical or progressive.

[Title card:]

Part 2. The Utter Failure of *Superman 2025*’s Cowardly Political Allegory and How It Insidiously Obscures and Distorts Reality.

Okay so first of all, yes, this film is very political, and despite what James Gunn claims^v, it very much functions as political allegory. But James Gunn and the people making this movie are spineless liberals, and because liberalism is simply capitalist fascism wearing a human face, *Superman 2025*’s politics are a clusterfucking muddled mess.

See, the most way to neuter any political statements one tries to make through fiction is to make up whole ass fake countries that have no clear resemblance to the real world, and that’s the strategy Gunn and co. decided to go with.

There are people who have tried arguing that *Superman 2025*’s political allegory using the fictional DC countries of Boravia and Jarhanpur is supposed to comment on the Zionist entity’s colonial occupation of Palestine (I refuse to call it “the Israeli-Palestine conflict” — that implies that one side isn’t unequivocally in the wrong), in favor of the latter.

Those people are wrong. Sorry not sorry, but they are wrong. And honestly, I think the most offensive claim about *Superman 2025* is that it is “pro-Palestine.” It’s fucking disgusting honestly, and just proves 1) how illiterate online critics are regarding political allegory and 2) how ignorant they are about the reality of what has been happening in Palestine, and America’s instrumental role in it.

Well let’s tear this movie’s shit politics apart.

[Title card:]

2A) “Boravia,” or, do you people really think Boravia is supposed to be Israel??

Yes, I know those of us in the imperial core would love to believe that Boravia and its president/dictator are analogues to the Zionist entity calling itself Israel and Benny Netanyahu. I get it, the catharsis of (almost) seeing that cunt’s head splattered on concrete like a smashed watermelon. Trust me, I do kinda wish I was able to feel some of that. But folks, that interpretation is pure 100% cope.

Vasil Ghurkos is Putin, and Boravia is Russia. The political coding could not be clearer — a tyrant who poses as a democratically elected president, invading a neighboring country and justifying it as “for their own good.” The whole “being allies for the last thirty years” despite Putin clearly being a fascist dictator. Like, for fucks sake, they are literally speaking in Russian!!! They are all coded as Slavic, and Boravia is explicitly stated to be an eastern European country.

And look, here's the thing about any attempts at political commentary regarding the Holocaust (let's call it what it is): you CANNOT erase the truth of the fact of the matter about WHO is carrying out this genocide. Sure, we in the imperial core can perform sympathy for Palestinians – as has become the standard stance for public figures who like their brands to be tied to progressivism – but all of your fucking performative sympathy means absolutely fucking nothing if it doesn't acknowledge the Zionist fascist colonial occupation that calls itself “Israel” is the power carrying out this Holocaust.

People aren't losing their jobs over expressing “humanitarian concern for the plight of Palestinians,” but furious, well-deserved calls to kill the Nazis calling themselves the IDF? Psssh, you can't DO that! Don't you know that Israel and America are on the same side? You can't talk about our allies like that.

Fuck y'all. Your concern for Palestinians is as hollow as a Zionist's heart if it doesn't come with a direct condemnation of “Israel” and a call for the end of the “Israeli” Occupation. And the way *Superman 2025*, in its attempts to code the people of Jarhanpur as Palestinians (**kinda**...we'll get to that) while refusing to call out the actual fascist occupation that's been terrorizing and killing Palestinians for goddamn near eight decades – it obscures the political reality of who the bad guys really are. By obscuring this, *Superman 2025* is doing the Zionist propagandists' job for them.

I'll admit, I too was briefly taken in by *Superman 2025*'s propaganda as well. In previous streams, I gave James Gunn some grace and said that “I think he meant well,” but then I actually read more about this production, and I revoke that good faith as delusional wishful thinking on my part.

Gunn finished writing the script (under David Zaslav's supervision, by the fucking way^{vi}) before the WGA strike in early 2023, and well before the genocide began on October 7th of that year. Look, they did not change the script in response to the genocide, okay? They didn't...(checks phone)

oh...wait...no, my mistake. They *did* change the script. Bassem Youssef was apparently slated to play “Rumaan Harjadi, the leader of a fictional Middle Eastern country” but his role was cut from the script, after, according to him, he made comments critical of the Zionist entity's genocide back in October 2023.^{vii} Now, in all fairness, Gunn has denied this^{viii}...but I don't fucking buy it. And neither should anyone who remembers what it was actually like for those of us who spoke out against the Zionist entity's atrocities back when they started in fall 2023.

Okay, okay, okay. Dial it back, Vivian. No one listens to anything a tranny says when she gets angry. Keep yourself composed.

You may say that none of this matters because Jarhanpur, outside of it being a country and people whose well-being white people actually give a shit about, is CLEARLY supposed to be a Middle-Eastern country, which I guess in allegorical terms automatically translates to Palestine?

Now, if that sounds racist to you...you're 100% fucking right, it IS. Now, let's talk about “Jarhanpur.”

[Title card:]

2B) “Jarhanpur,” or, Oh my god, the Orientalism

...yeah, there's no two ways about it, this movie is racist as FUCK.

The term “Orientalism” has historically referred to the imitation or depiction of aspects of the Eastern world by writers, designers, and artists from the Western world. In his 1978 book *Orientalism*, Palestinian-American academic Edward Said recontextualized the concept for modern post-colonial analysis, and since then, Orientalism “[refers] to a general patronizing Western attitude towards Middle Eastern, Asian, and North African societies...[wherein] 'the West' essentializes these societies as static and undeveloped—thereby fabricating a view of Oriental culture that can be studied, depicted, and reproduced in the service of imperial power...implicit in this fabrication, writes Said, is the idea that Western society is developed, rational, flexible, and superior.”^{ix}

“Patronizing” is the most charitable word I can use to describe the way Arabs are portrayed in *Superman 2025*. I mean, not that the film even allows these people a distinct ethnic identity in favor of a vague sociocultural hodge-podge of orientalist stereotypes.

Like, literally ALL WE EVER SEE of Jarhanpur is this crowd of defenseless chumps – apparently the filmmakers don’t think we can empathize with these people unless they’re “perfect victims.”

[screenshot]

Seriously, I thought I had stepped through a portal back to the early aughts when I saw this little tableau, this shockingly stereotypical depiction of what Hollywood would like us to think “the Middle East” looks like – a nameless homogeneous mass of brown people in the desert who need Western imperialists to come save them.

My word choice of “tableau” is deliberate, as Said said it brilliantly in *Orientalism*: “The idea of representation is a theatrical one: the Orient is the stage on which the whole East is confined,” with the purpose of the Orientalist subject being “not so much the East itself as the East made known, and therefore less fearsome, to the Western reading public.”^x

Sorry not sorry, but when it comes to the images of oppressed Black and brown people in the Global South crying out for a goddamn white American to come and save them...NOTHING will ever make that acceptable. I don’t give a flying fuck if he’s an alien – Clark Kent is legally an American citizen, and he directly benefits from the privilege accorded by white supremacy. Which makes him a white American, with a capital WH.

**the term “Middle East” is itself actually an orientalist Western-centric designation – the preferred nomenclature for this region, at least as far as I’ve heard most recently, is Southwest Asia & North Africa, or SWANA for short. In this essay, I’m still using the phrase “Middle East” for the sake of clarity, as well as its effectiveness in breaking down the pomposity and egos of my ignorant ass Western audiences, but I do sincerely apologize for my continuous use of the phrase “Middle East” in this video.*

Oh, and I also did some research into DC lore and figured out that *Superman 2025* is NOT the first appearance of the fictional country of Jarhanpur. Turns out this place the DC wiki describes as “an ancient secluded land” was invented in (checks notes) March 2002, seven months after 9/11, and it looked like...this.

[image]

Yeah... “yikes” doesn’t quite seem to cover it.

Okay, somehow I forgot to write this part of the script before I filmed, because I just keep finding new things to hate about this godawful movie.

One last gripe about the anti-Arab racism in this: the character of Malik Ali, the falafel vendor who once gave Superman some free product and helped him out of this hole. **[screenshot/footage]** Lex uses extremely scary real-life technology to identify this guy through security cameras and state identification, kidnaps him, and shoots him dead right in front of an imprisoned Supes.

[screenshot/footage] It's a really emotional moment that one could easily mistake for an example of Superman's compassion for human beings and how sad he gets when one of them is murdered. Which...I guess in terms of the narrative, that's exactly what it is, which turns this character into a disposable solely used to "advance" our shitty white protagonist's "story."

This moment reads as particularly cruel not on the part of Lex Luthor but by the script itself; remember, this is the movie that prioritized the survival of a CGI dog **[screenshot/footage]**, an ugly ass CGI baby **[screenshot/footage]**, and a fucking CGI squirrel **[screenshot/footage]** over an Arab. Which, I mean...IS a pretty accurate representation of how America feels about Arabs, but yeah, that's pretty fucking racist no matter how you slice it.

But what really got me was the way Malik was like, "don't worry Superman, I am nothing; I have no family, and it'd be an honor to die to protect you." **[screenshot/footage]** Which...ew. Fucking gross. Also, I call total bullshit on him not having ANY family. Granted, this is predominantly based on my own observations and experiences with Arabs and Arab-Americans, and I don't wanna generalize, but Arabs are some of the most tightly-knit community- and family-oriented peoples I've ever had the pleasure of encountering. And I'm really really sorry if this makes me sound a little racist, but I do not for one goddamn second believe that this man has no family or loved ones who will be emotionally devastated by his loss. I don't buy it.

Also, if I may speak as a better screenwriter than James Gunn – I am 1000% dead ass serious; I am a better writer than James Gunn, and I have absolutely no reservations about claiming that – if you REALLY wanted to keep this character moment, if you're that insistent on killing a brown person solely to make Superman cry, give him a family, have him appeal to Superman to save him instead of practically begging to die for him; that way, there is actually some WEIGHT and STAKES to the character's death, and Superman's inability to save him (due to his own cowardice and allowing Luthor to imprison him in the first place; not to victim blame, but he's the most powerful being on the fucking planet, he CHOSE to put himself in Luthor's power) would actually MEAN SOMETHING.

Honestly, this whole "I don't have a family" line that pissed me off so much, this line wasn't for Superman; this line was for the audience, so WE wouldn't have to feel the weight and devastation of this character's unnecessary and totally preventable murder. This line gives us permission as an audience to not actually care about this person, and that's FUCKED UP.

Malik's death might have actually meant something if Superman had to confront Malik's family at the end and FEEL this family's grievous loss; Superman having to actually face consequences for his actions, can you imagine? **[screenshot/footage]** No, instead we gotta wrap up this stupid un compelling romantic shit.

Oh, but no, all that's okay, because the Daily Planet honored Malik Ali by calling him the "real hero" and putting him on the front fucking page. **[screenshot/footage]** Which...this single frame is so

contrary to the sociopolitical reality of institutional western journalism, especially pertaining to Arabs, that it almost made me laugh, cause it's so absurd. There is NO UNIVERSE where an American mainstream news outlet would put a dead Arab on their front goddamn page and call them a hero.

And this bullshit kinda reflects my bigger problem with the way "journalism" is framed in *Superman 2025*. it's a charming fantasy, this notion that institutional "journalism" is a good thing, an institution committed to the truth instead of just one more gear in a multi-bazillion dollar mass media propaganda machine.

But that's the reality folks. *The Daily Planet's* real-life analogues like *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, etc, they've already well proven where their allegiances and agendas lie, especially over the last two years through their "coverage" of the Zionist entity's genocide in Palestine. Lois, Jimmy, Perry, Clark **[screenshot/footage]** – these people aren't underdogs; they're the sympathetic human faces for an inhuman capitalist institution that is ultimately subservient to those in Power.

Like, did y'all know that Lex Luthor actually owned *The Daily Planet* at multiple points in other Superman media? That should tell us all we need to know about whose side American journalists are REALLY on.

Okay, we're getting into the really spicy political shit, the stuff that will probably make many Americans very very upset. I know, we're terribly fragile creatures, especially the white ones, and since we generally need to be eased into things that threaten our vanity, so let's take a little break from the political stuff, and talk about the character of Superman/Clark Kent, and how this movie completely misses the mark on one of Superman's most defining characteristics, his moral convictions.

[Title card:]

Part 3. Superman's Complete Lack of Moral Fiber and the Pointless Stupidity of His Character's "Development."

So basically, Superman's character "development" arc in this film is that at the beginning, he's devoted to his Kryptonian biological parents (probably the most shocking moment for me was the Bradley Cooper jumpscare) [screenshot/footage] and obsesses over the message they left for him, even claiming that "they are why he does what he does." [screenshot/footage]

Well, it turns out that the transmission was incomplete and that Jor-El and Lara are actually fascist colonizers who wanted their son to conquer and rule over humankind. When this comes to light, Supes gets canceled [screenshot/footage] (which was actually somewhat interesting for about five minutes before it just kinda fizzled out cause the story wasn't interested in saying anything of substance about the subject) and has an existential crisis over it. [screenshot/footage]

Now, James Gunn really thought he was doing something new and clever by making Jor-El and the Kryptonians bad guys, but this whole thing reads so hollow and false to anyone who watched *Smallville* or knows anything about Superman and why he actually does what he does.

When I watched *Superman 2025* with my wife, she commented on how his whole "emotional journey" was basically just the second and third seasons of *Smallville*, and she's right. I cannot begin to convey how frustrated I was with the way Superman kept referring to Jor-El and Lara as "his parents" or "my parents," [screenshot/footage] because – as anyone actually familiar with the character knows – THESE AREN'T HIS PARENTS!!!

I – like the writers of *Smallville* – do not subscribe to the Tarantino School of Superman Theory that "Superman/Kal-El is the guy's 'true' identity and 'Clark Kent' is the disguise." That's fucking stupid. Superman is Clark Kent first and foremost – his first, second, and third loyalty is to his humanity, and his ACTUAL parents are Jonathan and Martha Kent. And the way he treats his REAL parents in *Superman 2025* just...really rubbed me the wrong way. [screenshot/footage]

In *Smallville*, Clark continuously rejects Jor-El and the colonizer mentality that he wishes to instill in his scion, he rejects Jor-El as his father, he insists that people don't call him Kal-El but by his REAL name, Clark Fucking Kent.

I know our generation is trapped in a state of permanent arrested development, so it's par for the course, but it was so frustrating watching a 30yo Clark Kent existentially grappling with shit that the actual Clark Kent figured out when he was a fucking teenager.

Also, even disregarding all that, if we're really supposed to believe that Superman is a "moral paragon" with moral convictions that spur him to directly intervene in global politics to try and prevent a war, to try and save not only all the people he can, but also CGI dogs, ugly CGI children, CGI squirrels, and a goddamn kaiju [screenshot/footage] – we're supposed to believe that upon learning that his "parents" are colonizers who intended to use him as an instrument of conquest and tyranny, he didn't immediately put his foot down and loudly proudly reject them and their way of life in favor of fighting FOR humanity rather than against it...?

You expect me to believe that Clark Kent wouldn't tell Jor-El and Lara to fuck right the hell off and double down on his save-the-world shit? That he'd let #SuperShit [screenshot/footage] be the thing to

make him abandon his convictions and let Lex Luthor and the goddamn US government imprison and incapacitate him? Come the fuck on.

What does Superman do when he's depressed and feeling existential stress over his purpose on this planet? Well anyone who actually knows the character would know that the way Superman reacts to such feelings is by refusing to eat, sleep, or rest, just spending his every waking moment flying all over the world, saving people and averting any and every disaster he encounters; he overcompensates, he does what is necessary to prove to himself and the world that he is good and he aims to help humanity.

But *Superman 2025*? **[screenshot/footage]** Motherfucker is brooding and letting an interdimensional threat terrorize his city right outside the window. Upon rewatching, you know what this scene felt like to me? It echoed what Luthor says later in the film: ["..."]

THIS is your hero???

Okay, I wanna get back to tearing this movie's politics a new one, but before I piss off everybody else who may still be watching, I gotta get one or two more unrelated gripes off my chest.

[Title card:]

Intermission: Dull Comphet and Egregious Misogyny

I could not disagree more with everyone who says that this Lois and Clark are a “compelling” couple with romantic “chemistry.” **[screenshot/footage]** Frankly, I haven't seen such a stark example of cisheteronormative desperation for media representation in YEARS.

Sure, David Corenswet and Rachel Brosnahan DO have “chemistry” – but that is because they are good actors, and a big part of the craft of acting is being able to manufacture a quality through performance that can fool spectators into thinking they have a different kind of relationship than they actually do in real life.

But as they are writ? The way these characters are positioned in the narrative and characterized by a script that frankly was super fucking lucky to have competent enough performers to compensate for how lackluster it is – why is this couple a thing?

Besides the conditioned audience expectation that “Superman supposed to be with Lois Lane,” I cannot point to a single moment in *Superman 2025* that came even close to making me want to root for these two to be together romantically.

This interview scene alone **[screenshot/footage]** made me groan and be like, “why the hell are these assholes a couple?” And more importantly, “are we seriously wasting runtime on this goddamn relationship?” Even beyond this being yet another example of the weird and – for lack of a better word, chaste – sexlessness infecting contemporary American mainstream cinema (especially the superhero genre), or perhaps even in part because of it, these versions of Lois and Clark are probably the most un compelling iteration of their relationship ever put to screen.

Sorry babes, but y'all aren't Tom Welling and Erica Durance, and you're for goddamn sure not Christopher Reeve and Margot Kidder (although I'd be crazy not to give props to how uncannily they sculpted Rachel Brosnahan into Margot Kidder's Lois, like, goddamn). **[screenshot/footage]**

I don't wanna waste too much time shitting on the straights and their depressing ideas of what relationships are supposed to be like, but suffice to say that I could use *Superman 2025* as the basis for a whole video explaining what “comphet” (or compulsory heterosexuality) is. But I'll leave it at that.

Tbh, I think they missed a perfect opportunity to make an asexual, and perhaps even aromantic Superman. Being an alien, it would make perfect sense for him to not be sexually attracted to human beings, and it would've actually made the Kryptonians' whole “take as many human wives as possible and breed like a colonizer” thing somewhat interesting instead of a throwaway hashtag.

[screenshot/footage]

Hahaha, oh wait, that would mean that James Gunn would have to put a queer character in one of his movies. Silly me. (okay, legitimate question for y'all, since I don't wanna waste time combing through the guy's filmography, so can anyone tell me if there are any actual queer characters in anything he's

made? Cause there sure as fuck aren't any in *Superman 2025*, which feels like a very strange oversight for a film made in the 2020s, but what do I know?)

Oh, and speaking of weirdly anachronistic gender-based bigotry in *Superman 2025*, can we talk about Eve Teschmacher, and how horribly she's written? **[screenshot/footage]** Like, this is some OLD SCHOOL misogyny, what the fuck?

So she's introduced taking a selfie **[screenshot/footage]**, which of course means we're supposed to hate her immediately – even though it was painfully obvious to anyone who takes women seriously that she's collecting evidence of all Lex's villain shit via her selfies, which is treated later like some big reveal. **[screenshot/footage]**

And then we get to watch “lovable” Jimmy Olsen emotionally manipulate her and all around treat her like shit **[screenshot/footage]** while she does his job for him (motherfucker doesn't take one picture himself in this entire movie) and puts herself in harm's way to bring down the abusive billionaire she's trapped in a relationship with.

[screenshot/footage]

“Oh come on you silly shrill battered woman, why don't you just leave the guy?”

Oh, you mean the heartless killer who imprisons everyone who crosses him in a nether dimension and stalks her by hacking into goddamn traffic cameras? Yeah, Jimmy, can't imagine why that might be a difficult situation to get out of. Least you could do is not act like she's some insufferable shrieking eel. Jesus Christ.

In short, Eve deserves so much better, and Jimmy Olsen is a fucking DICK.

Intermission 2

Oh my god, I keep having to add more to this essay every time I think more about this movie and how much I HAAAATE it!

But yeah, I mentioned how...absent queer people are in Gunn's filmography, which I at least read as homophobic by omission, but that might be me reaching.

What is NOT reaching though is...this character. **[screenshot/footage]** Or...i dunno, can't tell if she's a character or a prop; I've watched this film more times than any human being should have to endure, and I still could not tell you her name.

And no shade or shame whatsoever to Mikaela Hoover or her appearance; she did fine, she looks great (as ludicrously attractive as everyone in this movie is, which honestly is beginning to feel very weird with Hollywood movies these days in general) and there's nothing fundamentally *wrong* about her character's portrayal...but I saw this on Reddit the other day, and I think they're totally right. And I cannot believe I'm having to talk about “the male gaze” in 20-goddamn-25, so thanks James Gunn!

On its own, I wouldn't call this character male-gazey; having a conventionally hot woman with big tits in your movie isn't inherently skeezy or male-gazey – and as a gay dykey homosexual lezzie myself, I do very much enjoy seeing such characters in the films I watch – but with James Gunn, in conjunction

with the air of misogyny and subtle homophobia infecting not only *Superman 2025* but all of his films that I've seen...it's hard to take this as NOT male gazey. Is that just me?

okay, back to the politics...

[Title card:]

2C) Lex Luthor and the US, or, why the movie doesn't understand who the actual villain is (hint: it's America)

Aaaand now we come to the element of *Superman 2025*'s politics that is somehow more divorced from reality than the made-up countries...where's the United States and what's America's role in all of this?

Okay, a little background, for anyone who may not be fully aware of real-world global politics, when it comes to who the bad guys really are – it's the United States of America. We're the villains; we REALLY like to believe that we're not, and to be fair, a lot of other countries do like to indulge us in this delusion, but it's just that – a delusion.

By any and every conceivable metric, for the entirety of this godforsaken country's almost 250 years of being and then some, the US has been a blight on not just this continent, but the entire world, every single corner of the globe that its money and power has infiltrated and infected.

To put it in the more accessible terms of children's entertainment, you know every evil destructive Empire in every single one of those YA books and sci-fi/fantasy series we mistook for a literary education – that is what the USA actually is. We're not on the side of liberation, we're N O T the good guys, and we never EVER were.

Okay, we would be here for literally 250 years if we went through every reason why America is a cancerous evil empire, so how about y'all just take my word for it for now. We're not here to put the US on trial – as if we'd ever allow anyone to actually do that – we're here to unpack why *Superman 2025* is, despite its gestures toward “progressivism” and “hope,” yet another piece of neoliberal fascist propaganda, just like all American superhero movies.

Cause see, as we've established, the character and mythology of Superman is INEXTRICABLE from American mythology. So then...why is the United States government so absent from *Superman 2025*?

“bUt ViViAn, that's not true! What about these chucklefucks? **[screenshot/footage]** Is this not the Pentagon, the military control center of the US? **[screenshot/footage]** Is this not the US Secretary of Defense, **[screenshot/footage]** and was it not the US government that was duped by the evil billionaire into giving him the unfettered authority to strip Superman of human rights, imprison and torture him indefinitely in a place that isn't even in the United States? **[screenshot/footage]**

Ahhhh, see now, billionaires pulling the strings, the deprivation of human rights, incarceration and brutal torture? THAT sounds more like the America we know and hate!

But see...this is missing something very important, the keystone of the US government, the highest military authority of the American Empire – where's the Commander-in-Chief?

Look, one of the parts of *Superman 2025* that I actually appreciated was its interpretation of Lex Luthor. Like, one thing I will fault *Smallville* for is how much it humanized the Luthors and made me wanna sympathize with billionaires – but THIS Lex? This guy is just straight-up 100% evil.

[screenshot/footage]

There is nothing human or redeeming about him, and I think we can all probably agree that Superman was being a total pussy by not tearing that bald bitch limb-from-limb after he captured and tortured his goddamn dog.

But...for all this portrayal has going for it...it still completely ignores what I consider to be the most interesting aspect of Lex Luthor's character in the comics: he's not just an evil tech billionaire; that motherfucker was the President of the United States!!

Yeah, THIS GUY **[screenshot/footage]** was ELECTED President. Hahahaha, isn't that wild? Oh, aren't comic books so silly? Where else could there be an American public stupid enough to democratically elect a maniacal billionaire supervillain to the highest position of power and authority in all the land? Fiction, huh? Ain't that shit crazy?

And THIS is the most damning aspect of *Superman 2025's* politics – it obscures our present political reality to the degree that we don't have to think about the mess we've made and the damage we've done – and continue to do.

Yeah, you can insist all you want that this Lex Luthor is an obvious analogue to Elon Musk – narcissistic man-child, gamer & crypto bro with all his external drives, **[screenshot/footage]** obsession with social media chatter who enlists bots to shittalk his enemies online; **[screenshot/footage]** yeah, I'm not stupid. Obviously he's intentionally coded as Elon Musk.

But here's the inconvenient and rather embarrassing truth: functionally speaking, in terms of the prevailing world order of neoliberal capitalism...there is no philosophical distinction between Elon Musk and Donald Trump. This Lex Luthor is just as functional a stand-in for Trump as he is for Musk.

Seriously, as individuals, what meaningful distinction is there? They're both billionaires, narcissistic psychopathic man-children, fucking idiots who think they're geniuses and have used their wealth and power to convince their acolytes that they're brilliant and not just exploitative thieves and charlatans. They both fully represent the interests of the ruling capitalist class, and are so wealthy and powerful that they're barely able to be considered human beings anymore.

Oh wait...no, my mistake. There is ONE meaningful distinction between Trump and Musk, one that's VERY embarrassing to the liberals and "leftists" that *Superman 2025* appeals to as a wish fulfillment fantasy.

We *chose* Trump. We elected him – say whatever the fuck you want about whether or not the 2016, 2020, and 2024 elections were stolen or illegitimate (which is somewhat true, no election in a fascist nation is a free and fair one; not how capitalism works babyyyy) – but we legitimized the system that put him in power twice. Right wing and left wing, conservatives and liberals, and even all of us pompous so-called "leftists" – we are ALL complicit.

Superman 2025 provides us a quaint little escapist fantasy where the evil billionaires like Lex Luthor and the “democratic” United States government are separate political and economic interests, when in reality, they are one and the same (as they have always been).

Sorry not sorry folks, but we can recoil at this Lex Luthor’s villainy, we can roll our eyes at his foolish hubris [screenshot/footage], we can laugh when he gets mauled by a CGI dog [screenshot/footage] and cries when social media turns on him [screenshot/footage], and we can cheer when Superman beats him [screenshot/footage] and order is restored and he’s brought to justice and shoved into a police vehicle like he’s a fucking bank robber[screenshot/footage]...but folks...in the real world, WE MADE THIS LEX LUTHOR PRESIDENT!!

But *Superman 2025* allows us to maintain the delusion that we didn’t let the guy who said he could kill a man in Times Square and get away with it – which by the fucking way, he was right about – ascend to power.

It’s a trite liberal fantasy to believe that Lex Luthor would be condemned as a villain and imprisoned at the end of the day [screenshot/footage]; it gives us the undeserved catharsis of seeing this scumbag villain get what’s his, of letting us root against him and cheer when our champion overthrows him with truth and justice. But the reality of our situation is that we just stood aside and let Trump rise to power, we sat on our asses for four goddamn years, waiting for someone else to save us, waiting for someone else to do what is actually needed to stop fascism, only to obediently march back to the polls and continue to legitimize the system that so many of us, like our precious panty-waisted fake messiah, pay so much lip service to opposing.

I know nobody wants to hear this, cause in all seriousness, now is the (albeit well overdue) time for us to band together in solidarity against fascism in the real world, but let’s be real – this, the internet, isn’t the real world, this is an fucking echo chamber that has long been conquered and controlled by those in power, so fuck that.

I’ll drop all of our quarrels and fight alongside y’all in the streets when you’re ready to do what actually needs to be done, but I’ll be goddamned if I let any liberals and leftists stay plugged into this digital colonized wasteland in your bubbles of smug self-satisfaction and cling to the delusion that y’all didn’t have an instrumental role in keeping us mired in this dire political situation.

Y’all think because you obediently cast a vote for the Black fascist last fall instead of the orange one, that you aren’t just as responsible for Trump as every last one of us who didn’t riddle that bastard with bullets the moment he instigated a goddamn fucking COUP four and a half years ago? I know the internet may have a memory span of like, three months, but I sure fucking don’t.

And I include myself in this too. I’m not just tryna shatter YOUR delusions of absolution and deny you the catharsis offered by *Superman 2025* – I’m also not allowing myself to indulge in that cowardly catharsis either, because I am no better.

Like, I consciously did not vote, and even if I could go back in time to November 5th, 2024, I still would have chosen not to...but that doesn’t change the fact that I too am a coward who should have taken up arms and started fighting the REAL battle a long ass time ago, well before last November.

I’m not saying all this just to make my fellow Americans feel bad; trust me, I’ve been hurting people’s feelings and pissing people off with reality for most of my life, and it’s never made me feel any better;

but I'm not trying to feel better, because I recognize that I do not deserve that. None of us in the imperial core deserve to "feel good" about ourselves while our hands are permanently and irrevocably drenched in the rest of the world's blood.

What's on the line here is a millionfold more important than our feelings and self-image as Americans – what's at stake is the lives and well-being of the entirety of humankind, and the United States of America is the ultimate enemy of human health and happiness, and the sooner we get our heads out of our asses and off our fucking pedestals, the sooner we can actually start to mitigate the slaughter and slavery we've inflicted on the rest of the planet.

Superman 2025 is an insult to our reality, an insult to the millions, nay, billions of this Empire's victims, by obscuring the truth about America's effects on the rest of the world. In the movie, it's revealed that Lex Luthor has basically given Boravia 80 billion dollars worth of weapons and war machines for free **[screenshot/footage]** to manufacture a military conflict that will pay off in him ruling his own country **[screenshot/footage]**...wait a second...oh my god, they seriously made Lex's evil villain plan a goddamn real estate land grab AGAIN?!?!?! Jesus goddamn Christ, HAVE A NEW IDEA ALREADY! FUCK!

Oh wait...it's even stupider than that. **[screenshot/footage]** Apparently ruling half of Jarhanpur is actually only a side effect of his **actual** goal, which is to kill Superma – no, excuse me, to get the US government to give him permission to kill Superman. **[screenshot/footage]** Hmmm, dunno who missed the memo that Lex Luthor is literally a criminal who doesn't give a flying fuck about "the law," but thinking of this film in terms of propaganda, it is quite effective when your villain and hero both unquestioningly accept the validity of the US government's authority.

The \$80bil in weapons that didn't actually cost \$80bil pisses me off in particular because here in the real world, the Zionist colonizers carrying out genocide against Palestinians in Gaza aren't being funded by a billionaire's charity, they're being funded DIRECTLY BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT. And to put that in terms that everyday Americans can understand, this genocide is being FUNDED BY OUR TAX DOLLARS. WE are the ones bankrolling these massacres.

Just since seizing power in January 2025 (i.e., in the past seven months), the Trump Regime has given the Zionist entity calling itself "Israel" \$12 billion in military support, and from October 2023 to October 2024, the Biden Regime loudly and proudly gave the entity a record-breaking \$17.9 billion in military support^{xi}. And all of this on top of the Obama Regime in 2016 pledging \$38 billion to the Zionist entity over 10 years. And all THAT tallies up to \$228 BILLION the US has given the occupation since 1946.^{xii xiii xiv}

Oh, and guess what? We aren't just sending the Zionist occupation money and weapons for their killing crusade against the people of Palestine.

Which brings me to the ONE single part of *Superman 2025* that pissed me off and offended me so egregiously that I nearly walked out of the theater on my first viewing and almost punched a hole in my TV screen on my second viewing.

Okay, so we have the Boravian terrorists and tanks rolling in and advancing on the Jarhanpurians, and we focus on this kid continuing to fly his Superman flag in hopes of summoning his white savior. **[screenshot/footage]** Which again, this whole image itself is pretty racist, and I couldn't resist scoffing at the notion that these colonizers wouldn't have spent a whole ass missile on obliterating this child for

their own amusement and probably filming it for their Instagrams **[screenshot/footage]** – seriously, DEATH TO THE IDF – but then...

After all the lip service Superman has paid to caring about Jarhanpur and the danger they're in...he didn't even fucking show up.

Instead...he sends his "friends," **[screenshot/footage]** the...(checks notes) government-sanctioned corporate-sponsored American mercenaries, including intergalactic cop Green Lantern **[screenshot/footage]** who's working for yet another billionaire (oh wait, but he's Maxwell Lord, so I guess he's a good billionaire? **[screenshot/footage]** Great to know those exist in the universe of *Superman 2025*, that sure correlates to reality well).

Seriously, I cannot overstate how furious this made me. Not only because it makes Superman even more of a fucking asshole, but because of the reality of what is happening in Gaza. Because guess what? There ARE American mercenaries in Palestine; shit, there are American soldiers over there! And you know what they're doing? They're the ones in the tanks. They're the ones setting up stations supposedly offering aid that are actually death traps meant to lure in the people they've been starving.

It's not just your abstract tax dollars that're bankrolling the Zionist entity's genocide , it's actually your fellow Americans that are now directly slaughtering Palestinians. And the way *Superman 2025* tidily ties up the Jarhanpur-Boravia thing takes the racist white savior narrative and somehow makes it TEN TIMES WORSE.

This movie is not only reactionary, not in any way radical or progressive, but an absolute INSULT to reality.

But whatever, I don't expect anything but my further disappointment and disgust in everyone who has prioritized their American vanity over their humanity, and I understand firsthand the amount of cognitive dissonance required of all of us to keep getting up and going to work and keep the imperial capitalist machine running, so you know what? Y'all can go ahead and keep up your pathetic copes regarding *Superman 2025*. Call it "radical," call it "punk," hell, call it "leftist" if you really want, whatever helps you people sleep at night.

But don't you fucking DARE try and call this piece of shit "pro-Palestine."

[Title card:]

Conclusion: Calling this movie "punk" is insulting. Quit it.

I've wasted so much time talking about this movie that really doesn't deserve my or anyone else's attention, so I'll conclude by sharing the moment in *Superman 2025* that made me laugh harder than any other.

["Im punk." "no, I'm punk."]**[screenshot/footage]**

The notion of this neoliberal fascist propaganda being "punk" in any way is a joke that's so terrible and out of touch with reality that it circles around from being funny to offensive and all the way back to absurdly hilarious.

[punk rock is kindness meme]

And ultimately, what this movie proves to me is that if THIS is what those in the imperial core are call “punk,” or “radical,” then we’re fucking cooked. If THIS is what you people consider anything resembling “resistance,” then there is no hope for us, and the world really would just be better off if an interdimensional rift swallowed up this entire fucking country into a black hole.

Your favorite leftist entertainers, on and off YouTube, have disarmed and neutered y’all by pushing optimism and hope and this bullshit notion that “punk wock is being kindness,” and even if it costs me my audience, I refuse to be one of those clowns.

Y’all can be kind to liberals and fascists all you want; but I know that punk isn’t kindness; punk is killing police and ICE agents; punk is bashing in fascist skulls with baseball bats and nightsticks; punk is burning down the homes and offices of politicians and billionaires; punk is storming the courthouses, destroying penitentiary walls and freeing prisoners; punk is tearing our concentration camps and detention centers apart; punk is occupying empty buildings to house the homeless and displaced and putting a bullet between the eyes of any pig who fucking dares to try and drag them back out into the streets; punk is putting our own bodies and lives on the line to stand between the US government forces and the immigrant families they aim to kidnap and imprison; punk is raiding corporate retail stores and freely redistributing the resources to our communities; punk is refusing to pay taxes to the government who is using them to buy 500-lb bombs they can drop on children in tents and starving people in need of food; punk is fighting tooth and nail, blood and bone, for the liberation of humankind; punk is doing whatever is necessary to save humankind, because there are no superheroes who are gonna come and save us, and there NEVER WILL BE.

But whatever. That’s just where I’m at, that’s what “by any means necessary” means to me. Y’all can keep insisting that entertainment and art will somehow create material change before we are all killed by climate disasters and genocidal armed forces, go ahead, I can’t stop you. Live out whatever delusions you need to keep going about your daily lives like our survival isn’t at stake. Anything for you to be able to hold onto your precious fucking “hope.”

No one is going to come save us. We either have to save ourselves or die. But hell, at least we’ll be able to enjoy some good, light-hearted, optimistic content while we all burn.

No gods, no masters, all cops are bastards. Go outside, touch grass, take up arms, and wear a mask. Free Palestine and all colonized peoples, death to the American Empire and all colonizers; all the power to all the people. Peace.

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