

MIT Prof Declares Superman's Patriotism 'Ridiculously Outdated'

MIT creative writing professor Junot Díaz argues in a New York Times guest essay that Superman's iconic patriotism no longer resonates with modern audiences.

Díaz, a Dominican-born U.S. immigrant, contends that Superman's "overwhelming all-American power" reflects a dated nationalism out of step with the character's immigrant origins and today's multicultural America.

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He recalls resisting admiration for the Man of Steel, noting that phrases like "Truth, Justice, and the American Way" felt like propaganda. Díaz, who grew up hearing Spanish spoken at home, said the slogan didn't reflect the version of America he knew growing up—rough, divided and unrecognizable compared to the star-spangled symbolism he saw in Superman comics.

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Díaz also suggests Superman's alien status—a refugee from another world—ought to make him more relatable to viewers who recognize the perilous state of undocumented immigrants today. He argues that a new cinematic version of Superman could feel tone-deaf in an era when civil liberties are under pressure and immigration enforcement is aggressive.

His critique arrives alongside James Gunn's new "Superman"

movie, which reportedly aims to anchor its themes in kindness over nationalism.

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Critics of Díaz argue that the “American way” motto remains aspirational and unifying. They believe it represents enduring ideals—truth, courage and freedom—rather than narrow patriotism. A Fox News commentary framed Díaz’s argument as part of the left’s broader attempt to accuse traditional symbols of intolerance.

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