

"Man of Steel" shows its rust

Description



[Source](#)

This weekend, I saw what is expected to be one of the big "blockbuster" hits of the summer, Man of Steel.

Keep in mind that I will be discussing key plot points and specific moments from the film, so there will be spoilers ahead.

The story of Superman is very well known, and the movie doesn't break any huge new ground in originality " Superman is an exile on Earth and must (literally and figuratively) rise to the occasion when his adopted home is in trouble. But his origin story does get a bit of a buff, as is the director's (Zack Snyder) and producer's (Christopher Nolan) right.

What is new to the franchise is in the first 30-ish minutes of the film when you really get a sense of the Kryptonian civilization. And boy is there a lot of talking " and a giant dragonfly/lizard hybrid.

Jor-El, played by Russel Crowe, grabs the MacGuffin (the Kryptonian Codex) and sends young Kal-El to Earth with it imbued within his cells. We are later told that the codex contains the information for the entire Kryptonian civilization within it.

Here is my first gripe " and this is taking for granted that everything you see in the movie is possible, such as interstellar travel, flight, etc.

But if Clark has every Kryptonian within his cells, he'd have their DNA. And how can billions of people's DNA exist within every single cell of an individual? Wouldn't the cells simply die from too much "stuff" in their cells, even if the DNA were inactive? Or wouldn't the cellular machinery just destroy the foreign matter?

This is, of course, taking for granted that Kryptonian cells and their DNA behave similarly to that of humans.

And this leads to my biggest issue with the movie " the Kryptonian powers on Earth.

In the movie, we are told that Kryptonian powers on Earth are caused by our sun being younger than the one on Krypton, and that their Kryptonian cells will absorb the radiation from our yellow sun, granting them “Godlike” powers. We are also told that the gravity is weaker on Earth than it is on Krypton, which implies that flight (or super-bounding, as the case may be) and super-strength will be possible.

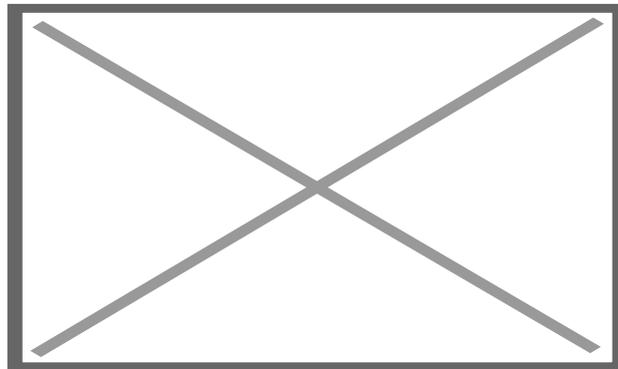
Now in the comics, Clark is super-strong pretty much from the outset, even as a baby.

But in the movie, Clark grows up on Earth, and we see his powers (X-ray vision, super-hearing and heat vision) develop when he is in elementary school, I guess around grade 5 or so. We *are* told that the other students think he is weird because “his mom won’t let him play with anyone.” But it is never made clear because he is super-strong, or because he is an alien, and the Kents don’t want anyone to get to close lest they discover his secret.

He learns, from his parents, how to control them and focus only on one thing at a time. Therefore, based on that information, the solar radiation seems to take around 10 years or so to affect Kryptonian biology and grant super-powers.

Remember that, it becomes important later.

When Zod and his cronies arrive on Earth, they are equipped with airtight battle suits. We know this because they explicitly say that Earth’s atmosphere is dangerous to them. And due to the change in gravity from their home planet of Krypton, each soldier is super-strong. We see them flip trucks into houses and throw Ma Kent like a rag doll.



Zod, in all his glory. [Source](#)

So, this would seem to hint that their prison ship had Krypton-like gravity. Ok, fine. Moving on.

But why didn’t the increased gravity affect Clark and Lois when they were brought upon the ship? We do know that Lois needed a breathing apparatus to survive the Kryptonian “atmosphere” and that Clark became weak because of that “so if the ship did have stronger gravity, wouldn’t Clark and Lois have to struggle to adapt to it?

And, if this is how they are so strong, how is Clark super-strong?

He wasn’t on Krypton long enough to get used to the gravity. He was there for what appears less than a day. And even if the ship that carried him did have artificial gravity, you would think that after 33 years on Earth, his body would have acclimated to the decreased gravity of Earth (like he did with the

atmosphere).

So, if the lesser gravity isn't the cause of the super-strength and flight of Superman, it must be the solar radiation from our yellow sun.

During a battle with Zod, Clark damages Zod's helmet, causing the Earth air to "infect" Zod, granting him super hearing and x-ray vision.

But how did the solar radiation affect Zod so quickly? It happened practically instantaneously " his helmet was damaged, he tore it off and voila, sensory overload caused by the sudden onset of super-powers.

His laser vision, however, only appeared at the final battle after much longer exposure to Earth's yellow sun. But only his head was exposed to the sun, except for the last few minutes of the battle, when he tore his battle suit off. How much solar radiation could he possibly absorb through his head in one day?

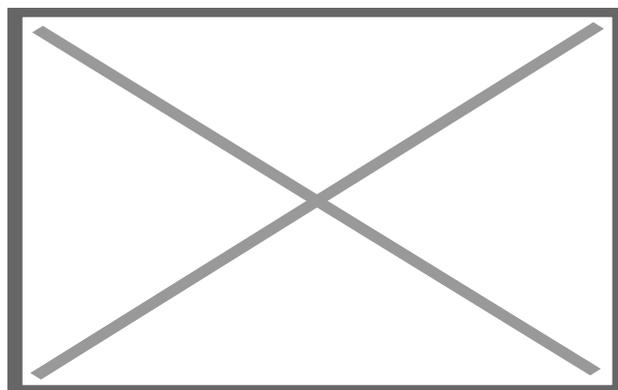
And how did the sun affect Zod so quickly, but it took Clark about 10 years or so to gain X-ray vision, super-hearing and heat vision? The same thing happened with Faora (the female henchman), so it obviously was not strictly a Zod thing.

And if Zod was super-strong, super-fast, able to withstand super-punches that would make a normal person's head explode like a watermelon being hit with a hammer, how was Superman able to snap Zod's solar radiation enhanced bones in his neck?

Wouldn't the enhancements bestowed upon the Earth's yellow sun create super-bones? You can't have Zod have all the super-powers that Superman does, except for that without a reason.

Granted, in the comics, Clark does get bones broken by other super-powered beings, such as Doomsday. But that only happens when he is dramatically out-powered and out-classed, not when someone has the exact same power set.

I am not saying that I disliked the movie in any sense of the word, but when you establish a certain mythology (the same or different than in the comics), there is only a certain amount that can fall under "suspension of disbelief." Things still need to be explained, and the rules of the universe spelled out.



[Source](#)

There are other science-light areas of the movie that bothered me â€” like Clark defeating the gravity beam by sheer force of will, the gravity weapon itself, the gateway to the phantom zone being conveniently close enough to the planet to be damaged by the explosion, etc.

But, during the visually stunning final battle, one thing struck me more than anything else â€” isnâ€™t Superman supposed to PROTECT people?

Think about the countless battles that occurred in Metropolis. Did Superman save more than a handful of people? Did he seem to care at all about the safety and security of the citizens in the office buildings, the crowds in the street â€” anything?

The amount of wanton destruction during the final battle was insane. Countless buildings were torn apart by nigh-invincible beings with super powers battling it out with blatant disregard for human life.

How many buildings fell during the battle? How many office floors and infrastructure was damaged?

Superman is supposed to be one of the bravest and selfless superheroes in the galaxy â€” willing to sacrifice himself for anyone else, to lay down his life if necessary. Sure people die all the time, and he cannot possibly protect everyone.

Wouldnâ€™t Superman try to save at least some people? We do see him save some people on the oil rig, the school bus as a child, and a few others â€” but after that, Superman does not appear to care about anyone else.

He does care about those four people in the final scene with Zod and Lois Lane, but do those few lives counter-balance the hundreds of thousands that died and the millions that were most likely injured in the battles of Smallville and Metropolis?

And couldnâ€™t Superman have moved the battles to a less densely populated area, like the middle of the ocean or the Arctic? Or destroyed the gravity machine in Metropolis, thereby preventing the damage it causes, instead of the one in the middle of Indian Ocean (which is totally isolated), since they are linked?

No, because it wouldnâ€™t have been as pleasing to the moviegoer.

And that is the whole argument in a nutshell: It is a movie, and is strictly popcorn entertainment. But just because it is, doesnâ€™t mean it cannot make sense and abide by the rules of the universe that has been created â€” or is that asking too much?

Category

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