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The Return of the Sob Sister in "Superman Returns": Lois Lane and the Fight for Truth and Justice
Mary-Lou Galician

In "Sob Sisters: The Image of the Female Journalist in Popular Culture," Joe Saltzman—Director of USC's "Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture"—says: "For the last 70 years, the best-known female reporter sob sister has been Lois Lane of the "Daily Planet" who, with Clark Kent, fights for truth and justice in the best newspaper tradition." As an enduring icon and archetype in comic books and cartoons, on television, and in movies, Lois Lane—a cartoon character even when portrayed by flesh-and-blood actresses—has influenced generations of devotees' perceptions of women in journalism. And her relationship with her longtime dualistic and distant lover has influenced fans' real-life romances.

"Superman Returns"—the latest Superman franchise offering—presents a 21st Century Lois Lane fans have never before seen: a Pulitzer Prize-winner ("Why the World Doesn't Need Superman") and single mom to a child whose biological father might be the Man of Steel, who has been away from Earth for five years while Lois has remained at the conglomeratized "Planet." After tracing the evolution of the Lois Lane character (ending with the woefully mis-cast Kate Bosworth in the 2006 role), this analysis will use media critic Galician's Seven-Step "Dis-illusioning Directions" to identify and critique myths and stereotypes in "Superman Returns," including what Saltzman describes as "the perfect battleground of the sexes," a scenario in which the underrated girl reporter could prove she was as capable as the male, and the boy reporter could gloat that no girl could possibly keep pace with him."

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