

# Tender and matured Caan in 'Horseman'

By DIANA YOUNKEN  
Daily Collegian Staff Writer

James Caan never looked so tender and Jason Robards never looked so mean as in Alan J. Pakula's "Comes A Horseman," a subtle film where some patterns are broken and traditional values are renewed.

Caan plays the horseman who intrudes on the life of a hardened and determined female rancher (Jane Fonda) and becomes her friend and lover, her comrade and protector, in what must be the most equitable film relationship ever between Caan and an actress.

Sensitivity and affection ooze out of him like blood and vengeance have in his earlier roles. The "Caan Machismo" image is either violently flawed (ignoring his recent personal history) or else he's grown up since then. If anything, Caan's acting, though always tight, has matured to a point where his apparent ease with gentleness as strength instead of weakness is completely convincing.

Robards, however, is no kindly old man in this story, no loving friend and mentor like Dashiell Hammett to Fonda's Lillian Hellman in last year's

"Julia." No, he's the Godfather of the West, a sadistic bastard who raped Ella (Fonda) as a girl and charges his two hit men, complete with black hats, with the task of financially ruining her so he can acquire her land.

If not for Ella's partner, a charming old codger (appropriately named Dodger), and the sharp, funny and touching interplay between Caan and Fonda, "Horseman" might be just another western. Though its characterizations are offbeat, its plot breaks no new ground.

It moves too slowly at first, and is curiously unsuspenseful coming from Pakula, whose earlier directorial works include such fast-paced and terrifying films as "Klute" with Fonda and "The Parallax View" starring Warren Beatty.

Pakula's obsession has been with the little people battling the powerful — the corporate executives (turned psychopathic killer in the case of "Klute") and political conspirators as in "The Parallax View." But he treats his subjects with such an intensely personal and creative approach that he can't help but succeed even if he fails some of the time.

# Heroin and Vietnam not enough for movie

By JOYCE GANNON  
Daily Collegian Staff Writer

Since it's 1978, filmmakers think sufficient time has passed for them to show a clear analysis of the Vietnam War without inciting protestors outside the theatre. With this year's "Coming Home," they succeeded brilliantly. But "Who'll Stop the Rain," a film based on the Robert Stone's novel "Dog Soldiers," cannot carry off the same task, although it has the potential.

Because the story involves smuggled drugs, it has obvious parallels to "Midnight Express," but again, it is not of the same quality and just turns into a disappointment. The acting by Nick Nolte, Tuesday Weld and Michael Moriarty — as directed by Karel Reisz — is far from dynamic. This seems to be the main problem — little interaction on the screen that causes us not to want to be involved with characters who don't really know why they are involved with each other.

Although Moriarty comes closest to a convincing performance, the character itself is not given enough emphasis or detail. Although we are told he is a photojournalist covering the Vietnam conflict, it is never made totally clear why or how he becomes involved in

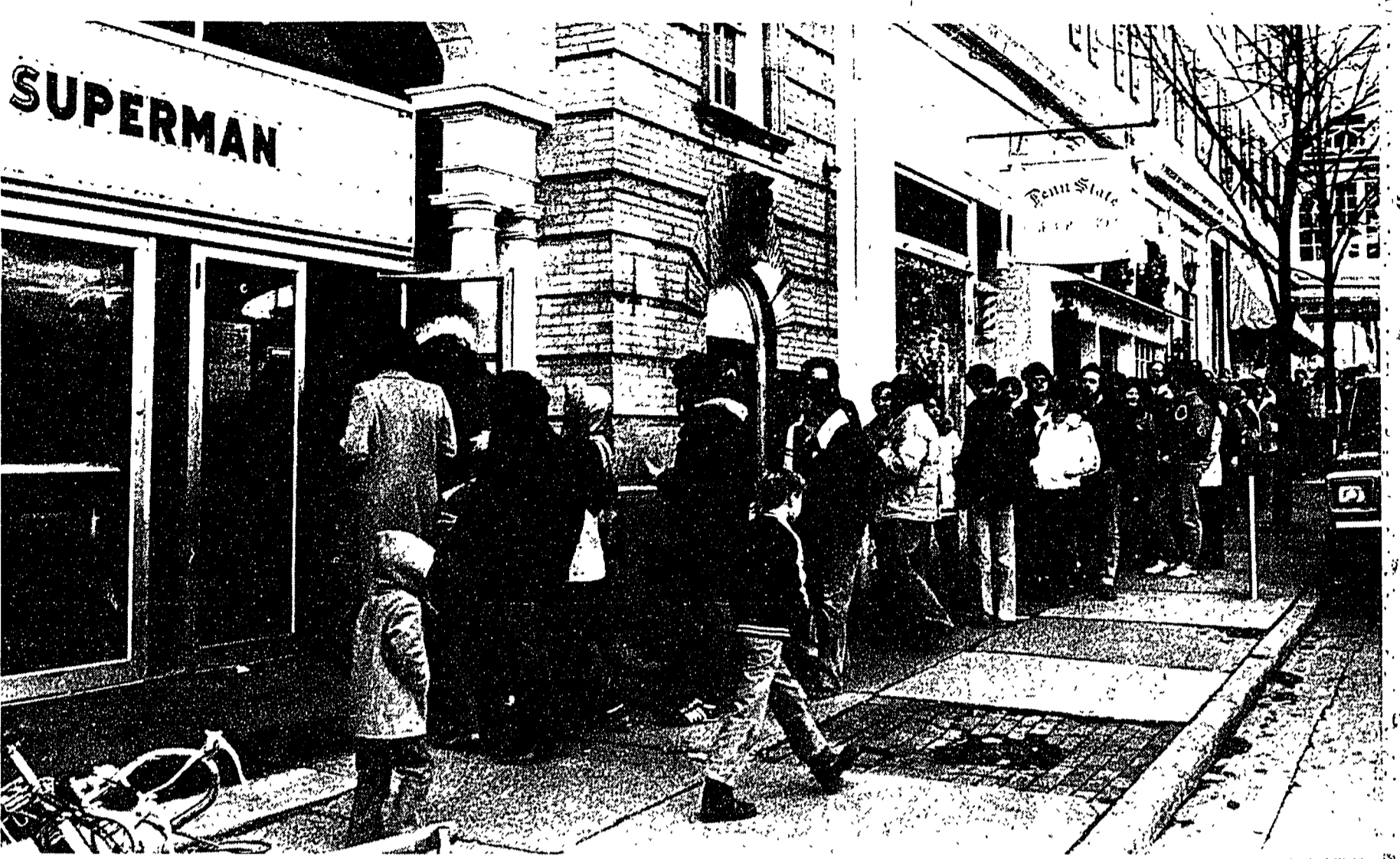
dealing with something as serious as heroin. The only thing that reveals why it's such a flip-out for him is his wife's (Weld's) remark when his friend (Nolte) arrives in the States with the "smak": "He doesn't even know how to roll a joint!"

Thus, it's difficult to build up any compassion when Moriarty returns to the States and finds that his wife and buddy are on the run with the heroin Nolte smuggled over for him. They are being pursued by some mean-type heavies, but it's another nebulous aspect as to how Nolte was found out and why Weld goes along with only slight resistance.

With this pair on the escape from California to New Mexico, "Who'll Stop the Rain" could approach its dramatic potential, but this never happens. The usual shootout scene ends violently, but violence doesn't ensure decent drama.

I wanted to be affected by this film because the possibility was there, but it seemed like a joke near the end when Nolte calls Weld "the love of my life" and she later drives away through the desert in a pickup truck with Moriarty in the final scene. The point was there, it just wasn't made with any impact.

# the daily Collegian arts



Yesterday's chilling winds were not enough to keep this line of people away from the Garden Theatre on South Allen Street where "Superman" is currently playing.

# 'Superman' flies skies of success

By JOHN WARD  
Daily Collegian Staff Writer

In going to the movies, one of the cardinal rules to remember is to beware the hype. When a film needs an extensive publicity campaign to promote it or to cover production costs, that's usually a sure sign that it's a bomb. In recent memory, examples are "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" and the remakes of "Lost Horizon" and "King Kong."

The new "Superman" film has been the source of a massive promotional deal for weeks. Radio, television, magazines, newspapers — you really can't get away from it. A bomb, right?

Wrong. If ever there was a film designed to beat the hype, it's "Superman." True enough, it was brought in at well over \$45 million dollars in cost, and you can't blame the producers for wanting to get their investment back. But "Superman" is no bomb. Put simply, it's fun.

"Superman" is no intellectual masterpiece, but that's no big deal, since it was never meant to be one. It's more like a giant ball of cotton candy: enjoyable, easy to swallow and a treat to savor on the way down. The film's success can be pinned down to two things:

an offbeat but interesting combination of acting styles, ranging from seriousness to high camp, and the spectacular amount of special effects.

The campy aspect of the movie delivers much of the humor. In fact, several scenes are distinctly reminiscent of the old "Batman" television show and the even older "Superman" show of the fifties.

The cast turned out to be well-chosen. While the fact that Marlon Brando got close to \$4 million for a 15 minute appearance still makes me cringe, it must be noted that he brings an air of class to the role of Jor-el, the father of little Kal-el of the planet Krypton.

The scenes on Krypton take up about the first quarter of the film, and include many of the best effects. As faithful readers of the comics know, Jor-el was a great scientist who foresaw the destruction of his planet, but was met with scorn by his peers. In a last-minute effort, Jor-el and his wife Lara send their infant son in a rocket to Earth. Baby Kal-el survives while his parents die.

Kal-el is discovered on Earth by Jonathan and Martha Kent, a middle-aged couple who adopt him. They raise him to manhood, to the point where Kal-el/Clark Kent must seek his own fortune. His destiny as Superman is about to be fulfilled.

The latter part of the film chronicles the arrival of Superman on an astonished world, his attraction to Lois Lane and his battle with arch-enemy Lex Luthor. The scenes with Luthor and his aides, sexy Eve Teschmacher and bumbling Otis, are the funniest of the film.

Of course, this is to the credit of the actors: Gene Hackman, Valerie Perrine and Ned Beatty, respectively. Hackman is especially good. After so many serious roles, he seems happy to have a good time for a change. Beatty does a fair job as Otis. Perrine oozes her lines in a breathy voice that turns her into little more than window dressing.

The rest of the cast includes Margot Kidder as Lois Lane, Jackie Cooper as editor Perry White and Susannah York as Superman's mother Lara. The title role is essayed with surprising success by Christopher Reeve.

There's more, a lot more. But everything's better left undescribed, to enjoy when you see it for the first time. If the merit of a film can be judged on whether it achieves its purpose, then "Superman" succeeds admirably. It'll definitely be around for a while. Who knows, it may turn out to be as indestructible as the Man of Steel himself.

### UNIVERSITY CALENDAR SPECIAL EVENTS

**Monday, December 18**

Pass Fail.  
East Halls, caroling, 7-8:30 p.m., throughout campus.  
USG Minority Affairs Coffeehouse, 8 p.m., Room 305 HUB.

Meetings:

- Alpha Phi Omega, 7 p.m., Room 117 Boucke.
- HOPS, 7 p.m., Room 316 Boucke.
- Pa. Legal Society, 7 p.m., Room 165 Willard.
- Color Slide Club, 7:30 p.m., Room 112 Kern.
- Folklore Society, 7:30 p.m., Room 117 Boucke.
- Science Fiction Society, 7:30 p.m., Room 308 Willard.

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The Last issue of the Collegian this year will be Tuesday, December 19. The business office will close at 4:00. Deadline for the first issues of 1979, Jan. 3 and 4 is Tuesday, December 19 at 4:00 p.m.

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