

Novel on pop-Zen metaphysics holds promise

By Michael Zangari

If Matt Dillon had taken two hits of LSD and reached satori on a paisely thunderbolt, the myths of the Old West may have taken on a different hue. Several of them, as a matter of fact. Picture Festivals in mirror shades and a chinchilla Stetson, or John Wayne in full lotus. According to Gino Sky, the myths of the Old West would still be good tales—even written in long hair.

under the watchful third eye of the Cowboy Buddha. The first half of the book follows each of their adventures in microscopic detail, and climaxes with Jonquil's match-up with Jimmi Maroon, the sexiest pick-up truck on God's green earth.

Appaloose Rising is incredibly funny in the places where it works. Sky's throw-away lines are often funnier than most hard-won jokes. (One throw away that comes to mind is a character casting an I Ching with french fries.)

The style and quality of writing takes a nosedive in the second half. The writing style that Sky has tackled is incredibly difficult to sustain. Where Sky goes wrong is with his nagging impulse to teach. As a crazy Zen monk, he does very well, but as a Zen master he leaves a bit to the wind.

With the entrance of Don Coyote (a Don Juan character) and his son, and a mission to cast out a demon from a man who kills eagles, the sky-high prose plummets earthward and gets stuck in the honey glaze of Aquarian metaphysics. He manages to repeat dogma in the worst of saccharin cliches.

Although these passages are readable, and sometimes enjoyable, the overall effect is to slow the book to a halt. It picks up again, but before it can gain momentum, it ends.

All problems aside, Sky has done a fine job. By all indications this is his first novel. The over-all quality of writing is very en-

couraging. He has an off-hand clarity that is hard to beat in other novels of this kind. The exuberance alone is uplifting.

book review

His new novel, *Appaloose Rising: The Legend of the Cowboy Buddha* is an exuberant rush of pop-Zen metaphysics told on the smoky trails of the new west. Written in a joyful gush of spontaneous prosaics, the books contains some of the most exquisite and free form description written in the last few years. Also some of the worst.

It is a loosely structured tale featuring Jonquil Rose (Jus' One More Cowboy), his wife, Infinity Cactus, Buddy Sunday, Cody St. Kid, Golden St. Augustine and a whole slew of equally outrageously-named and -behaved individuals and their adventures

Video/film ...

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As performer and editor, Greenfield has a good deal of control over her final products. Her films show much variety and imagination, and she is clearly as well-versed in modern dance as she is in the school of avant garde filmmaking.

Chase's images of dancers reduced to flat shapes give the feel of cartoon figures. While they are ultimately less interesting than Greenfield's interpretive movements, Chase's films are bright and entertaining.

These are just a few of the pieces that comprise this weekend's video/film showcases. Doris Chase's work will be at Sheldon Friday and Saturday; Amy Greenfield's work will be shown Sunday and Monday. Friday and Sunday will be devoted to the artists' films. Saturday and Monday their video works will be shown. Both film/video artists will be at the evening screenings of their works.

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