

POTTS, Charles - The Golden Calf, Litmus Inc., 574 3rd Avenue,
Salt Lake City, Utah, 84103.

Pott's defies classification. Remember Charlie? He was described in our last edition of Ilha do Desterro as "one of those sacred monsters in contemporary poetry who defy categories (spelling experimenter, master of the split line, half - said innuendo". For Potts we have to use adjectives such as clastic, catelectic, catacoustical.

Pott's poetry is difficult, multipartite but not inextricable. Potts works from the psychological, subconscious level of the poetry reader. Hugh Fox, critic and interviewer of Potts puts it this way: "Potts draws on the threshold level of a social, semiotic Gestalt contextualization - those associations and mental connections established by a process of learning and cultural synthesis - that shared, cultural historicity of the reader. Potts, wild guru frontiersman from Idaho, is part of oral cultural environment. Pott's says he learned to write poetry during oral poetry readings at Berkeley in 1968 where he and a bunch of other poets bounced their lines off each other, and this is where the mind-theater, recognition, signal-time lag, audience-ricochet aspect of Pott's poetry seems to have originated. He uses clipped, abbreviated language; fragmentation to bounce lines off the reader and it's the reader who fills in the context from his own historic-cultural associations. It's this splicing and fragmenting of that shared social cultural knowledge and the contextual associations of the reader which come together as a kind of semiotic-hybridization which forces the reader to rethink; a kind of reconditioning of the gestalt. It is the very ambiguity and shades of meaning in Pott's poetry that allows the new gestalt."

Potts, a kind of cultural historian, cultural visionary, is concerned with the influences of cultural interchanges, migratory influences and a kind of cultural contamination. These influences and interchanges are exemplified in the poem "From Blue Up To Nile" - tracing influences from Africa - Asia to the New

World, through a multitude of races and finally right up to Pott's himself.

There's a kind of plasticity to Pott's language. In his poem "A Valediction:Frobbing Mormon", Potts' plays with the word "Mormon" and "Mourning" from Donne's "A Valediction:Forbidding Mourning". Pott's sees the "Mormon" as "Mournful" and satirizes Joseph Smith and organized religion. "Little Lord Shiva", another poem in The Golden Calf is like being projected into a Hindu training school of thought, and "The Red Poem" is another example of reconditioning the gestalt.

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