4. POETRY

Poetry was a lifelong interest and activity of Charlot's and needs to be assessed in itself and as a biographical source. Charlot changed his opinions about his poems throughout his life. When I was working on them in the early 1970s, he wrote me the following note:

> The poems you have are biographical material, so I did not destroy them, but not much poetry.
> Did you read the *sonnets* of Degas. Awful.

He never wavered on the biographical interest of his poems, an opinion that appears as early as 1914 in *Accouché d'un humble ouvrage*:

> Qu'adviendra-t-il de ces pages
> Où le page
> Jeunesse a posé son ris ?
> Puis-je nourrir dans mes transes
> L'espérance
> Qu'il n'est bon pour les souris?
> Mais non car c'est ma pensée
> Dépensée

> 'What will happen to these pages?
> Where the page
> Youth has placed his laughter?
> Can I nourish in my transports
> The hope
> That they are not just to be sneered at?
> But no, because it's my thinking
> squandered.'

Indeed the poems are a prime and at times unique source for his thinking and emotions; a source he himself used in his autobiographical article in *Born Catholics* (1954), in which he quotes *Je crois qu'il vaudrait mieux suivre la route droite* of February 7 and 8, 1924:

> J'espère que là-haut cette épreuve passée,
> l'uniforme des bienheureux sera la peau
> Et qu'enfin chaque chose à sa place placée
> nos chairs glorieuses mépriseront l'oripeau

> 'I hope that there above, this trial passed,
> the uniform of the blessed will be the skin
> and that at last, each thing placed in its place,
> our glorified flesh will despise our old clothes.'

Just as he kept other materials about his life and work, he preserved the poems and even tried to put them in order, starting in childhood to copy final versions into collections and having a large selection typed in New York City in the 1930s. Just like other materials, they could recall for him his past life. He could remember the occasions of many poems and could even recall the wording of the poems themselves, reconstructing them at times from memory and quoting them to me in conversation. Similarly he remembered a fifteen-stanza Breton poem he had memorized on his visit to Brittany in 1915.[1]

There is much evidence that Charlot worked hard at his poems and took that work seriously. He told me that at one point in his life, he had to choose between being a poet or a visual artist. He said that he wrote more during the war because it was so difficult to continue his visual work, mostly confined to small drawings in his notebooks.

But did he think the poems were worthy of publication in their own right? He was in fact a creative writer as well as a scholarly one and published his plays in English, Náhuatl, and Hawaiian. However, he made no attempt to publish the bulk of his poems. The few poems published in *Mele* in Hawai'i were certainly due to the urging of his friend the editor Stefan Baciu, and I suspect similar promptings are behind the appearance of a short sequence of poems in *Contemporáneos* in Mexico. The selection of poems and their reworking for publication are significant. Those for *Mele* are certainly among the best he wrote as well as among the biographically most important. For *Contemporáneos*, he subjected an earlier series of poems to considerable reworking. He dropped several poems, changed their order, and combined sections of two to make a new poem. He made the wording more compact, vivid, and hermetic; more dense with meaning and universal, omitting references that were too clear to the occasion of the poems. Similarly, he increased the focus on the poet-speaker, diminishing the importance of the lost loved one for whom the poems had originally been written. He intensified the tone of sarcasm and self-mockery by changes in the wording. The poems no longer record a particular event but describe a psycho-emotional attitude. Finally, he took unchanged the last short poem, a sort of envoi, from an earlier series.

The reworking of the *Contemporáneos* poems reveals, I would argue, Charlot's attitude toward his poems. They were expressions of his emotions at a particular time, but they would need considerable reworking before they could be published. That is, they were rough drafts, the equivalent of sketches that needed to be worked up into a finished painting.

When in the early 1970s, I asked my father about the quality of the poems, he told me that he had shown them to Paul Claudel, who was perhaps his chief idol as a poet. When he saw Claudel the next time, Claudel handed the poems back and said rather brusquely that they had "de beaux sentiments" 'nice sentiments.' Charlot knew and applied the famous story of Mallarmé: when a young poet said he was having trouble writing a poem because he could not get the idea right, Mallarmé replied, "On ne fait pas des vers avec des idées. On fait des vers avec des mots" 'Poems are not made with ideas. Poems are made with words.'[2] This rejection was clearly discouraging for Charlot.

Charlot in fact showed his poems to very few people and usually enjoyed a positive response. In 1992, the Mexican Estridentista poet Germán Lizt Arzubide told me that he had admired Charlot's poems

in Mexico, and *Contemporáneos* published one series. The poet Miguel Enguídanos inscribed his "Poesía como vida: Luis Palés Matos" (1959) to Charlot as an "admirador de su obra (incluida la poesía)." Charlot showed his poems to the publisher Frank Sheed, probably in the 1930s. When I was discussing Charlot's English prose with Sheed in the mid-1950s, he told me that Charlot wrote well in other languages as well, explicitly including his French poetry. This was the first time that I had heard of it. Finally, Baciu's great interest in Charlot's poetry was very encouraging later in his life, and when I was working on his writings in the 1970s, Charlot said he found some of his poems, especially the one in the argot of the *poilu*, very "interesting" and "unusual."[3]

As opposed to his attitude toward his visual art and even his theater, Charlot was clearly insecure about the quality of his poems and perhaps about their personal character as well. He also felt that with apparently few exceptions, the poems needed to be reworked for publication. Charlot, therefore, needed special encouragement to publish his poems. He did not show the energy and tenacity in publishing them that he did for his other writings. As a result, important, finished poems like *Psychoplastie*, his masterpiece in the medieval sense, were left unpublished.

Happily, at the end of his life, Charlot started to write poetry again in French. For the miniature edition of *Picture Book* (1974), published full-size in 1933, he decided to revert to his original plan of composing French couplets for each lithograph (the 1933 book had been published instead with the beautiful inscriptions of Paul Claudel). Charlot found the couplets he had composed in the 1930s and wrote new ones for the rest of the images. He even began to write couplets for *Picture Book II* (1973), possibly just for publication in *Mele*. To Charlot's great disappointment, the publisher decided to include in the miniature edition only the English versions.

Although the publication record of Charlot's poetry is meager, his work in that genre enriched his prose. This influence was facilitated by the emphasis in modern French literature on prose poems: texts with the rich density of poetry and the flexible rhythms of prose. For instance, Charlot's account of Orozco's experiences in the revolution could be classified as such a poem (*MMR* 215 f.). Moreover, that passage is based on Orozco's own "wash drawings of the Revolution." Charlot is in fact following the same creative process of his World War I art poems: an exact description of the visual artworks results in a prose poem.

4.1. THE IMPORTANCE OF POETRY IN CHARLOT'S WORK

Charlot obviously had a strong poetic sensibility. He reported twice that poems appeared in his dreams:

> *En rêve je lisais* ceci : avec l'impression forte d'un poème représentant un "sabbat" :
> Une nuit, à minuit, un "reloj" paru au coin du marché et de la place.
> On entendit l'angelus sonner au creux d'un âne.
> Une vermeille servante dormait.
> ———————————————————-
>
> En rêve (2–25) un objet ou spectacle était

rose, grec et gris

(prononcé avec une douceur traînante.)[4]

‘Dreaming I read this: with the strong impression of a poem representing a “witches’ Sabbath”:

One night, at midnight, a “clock [Spanish]” appeared at the corner of a marketplace and a town square.

The Angelus was heard ringing in the pit of a donkey’s stomach [?]

A rosy servant girl slept.

(February 1925) Dreaming an object or spectacle was

rose, Greek, and gray

(pronounced with a dragging softness.)’

Charlot was an enthusiastic reader of poems in French and other languages. He would recite in Náhuatl his favorite Aztec poem of a young warrior telling his mother to bury him in the kitchen so that when she was seen weeping, she could say that the smoke was in her eyes. This poem is very similar in feeling to his own poem on going to war, *L’enfant va partir*. He translated and wrote poetry in Hawaiian and discussed in his Hawaiian-language play *Nâ Lono Elua, Two Lonos* the importance of poetry in Hawaiian culture. Indeed, his poetic sensibility was a great help in his understanding of cultures in which poetry was so important. In his visual depictions of such cultures, he would choose as subjects the settings of performances of poetry: the Volador, the Malinche and Pastoras dances, and folk plays in Mexico; and the drummers and *hula ki’i* ‘puppet hulas’ in Hawai’i.

A characteristic of Charlot’s work is the combination of image and word, a combination that is first found in his childhood drawings and continues through the Medieval-type scrolls of his 1921 masterpiece *L’Amitié* to the inscriptions of his frescoes in Hawai’i. The poems or comments he provided for the images in the first and second *Picture Book*s are also part of this practice. In his writings on art, he often emphasizes the importance of “legibility.” Word and image serve the same purpose; they can, therefore, reinforce each other by serving together. Charlot’s interest in and talent for book illustration—which starts in his childhood and continues until the end of his life—came from deep within his person.

Charlot’s poetic sensibility can also be seen in the creation of his visual themes. Just as he found the appropriate image in poetry, so he would find the most meaningful image in art. In *Work and Rest*, the kneeling Indian mother grinds the corn on the *metate*; the child bound to her back sleeps. The work of the mother supplies the repose of the child. Charlot’s work in various fields must therefore be understood as proceeding from the same center of sensitivity, a sensitivity that was basically poetic. The intimate relation between word and image, poetry and visual arts, is an example of the cross-fertilization between Charlot’s different talents and areas of activity.

4.2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHARLOT'S POETRY: INFLUENCES AND PERIODS

Charlot was a voluminous reader, as can be seen in a list of books he was planning to take with him into the Occupation (editions of a number of these are found in the JCC; I will note only a few):

[Poésie] Littérature

Anglais— 4 pièces Shakesp.
Allemand: Also spracht [*sic*] et traduction

Villon.— Charles d'Orléans—
Anthologie XVIe Ronsard ?
St Amans, Théophile.
Cyrano, Trist. L'Ermite
Racine ?
Corneille ??
L Fontaine
V. Hugo, Oriental. 70 [Hugo 1829]
Hérédia—Baudelaire[5]
Laforgue . Mallarmé . Jammes.
Claudel, Bloy

As a result, one cannot ascribe a characteristic of his poetry simply to a single or even several influences, except in certain clear cases. In the early 1970s, I asked him about his reading and influences and was given information in writing and conversation. I will attempt to group that information into a sequence of development that corresponds to his poems. However, he continued to read the authors mentioned, and my periods mark only those of emphasis in reading and strength of influence.

Except for an unusually early start,[6] Charlot's reading was typical for the young person of his time: "*Earlier*: went through complete works of Victor Hugo (verse) and Leconte de Lisle (verse)"; "Lammenais: *seen* in some cartoons of Daumier"; he also read Rostand (he added an exclamation mark after the name). Charlot was drawn to the Parnassians and the Decadents: "Samain part of the poets I happened to contact, together with Coppée, de Heredia and such—Not too important."[7] Charlot was thus reading in the attenuated classicism of the time.

Characteristically, Charlot tried early to educate himself technically in the field, obtaining in 1912 the Parnassian Théodore de Banville's *Petit Traité de Poésie Française*.[8] There he found many compatible ideas: poetry is as necessary as bread (7); it is religious (10, 120), and the poet must have the integrity of a religious person (265 f.); poetry achieves its effect not through logical order but through images that should be able to be represented in painting (54, 63); poetry rises spontaneously from the poetic mind and therefore should be free from the mechanical following of rules (55 ff., 63, 77, 99–115, 301); yet the poet should know the technical name for each element of poetry; and a large vocabulary should be used (71–74, 77 f.). Charlot also found a technical manual that he followed carefully in a

number of poems that are more exercises than emotional statements: different rhythms and line lengths, masculine and feminine rimes, uses of the caesura, and so on. Banville also described the different genres from which Charlot characteristically took the rare and antique (117 ff.): such as the madrigal (160 f.), *terza rima* (176 ff.), ballad (192–198), *rondeau* (208-216), and acrostic (254–258). Charlot did, however, accept Banville's placement of the ode at the summit of the hierarchy of genres (121 f., 150, 154, 156, 162, 184–187).

Banville's emphasis on creative liberty and spontaneity is hard to reconcile with the quantity of rules that he describes and enjoins. In fact, Charlot seldom escaped in his poetry from this tension between being expressive and being correct. For example, he was influenced by Banville's view of rime as the most important element in the poem: thought is connected to rime, so when the poet establishes his rimes, he has the outline of his poem and need only fill it in (52–58, 65 ff., 86–90, 268 f.). Charlot uses this idea in his poem *La rime riche est implacable et mensongère* of July 1914. From several unfinished poems, it is clear that Charlot found his end-rimes before he composed his line; he told me that he was also using a riming dictionary at the time. The effect is often strained and mechanical, although several lighter personal poems were more pleasant: "je me suis laissé glisser au fil des rimes" 'I have let myself slide along the rimes' (*Le fleuve d'or rutile sur la berge* in "1912–1914"). Charlot himself recognized this exaggeration of the importance of technique; he once mocked to me his own following of Banville's rules on the use of the *consonne d'appui* 'the consonant of support,' the penultimate syllable of a line as part of the rime (61 f.): "Banville thought it was very important, very important." (Charlot was also intrigued by Banville's descriptions of antique types of riming (259–263) and tried at least the *rimes couronnées* [262 f.]).

Charlot did not follow Banville on several points. Banville was opposed to prose poems, arguing that a poem should be perfect and prose can always be changed (7 ff.). Prose poems were, however, an important part of the more modern poetry Charlot was soon admiring, and the best of his own poems are in prose or free verse. Also, Banville did not like the heroico-comic, the satire of epic (136), which Charlot greatly enjoyed and was happy to find in Hawaiian literature.

Charlot's reading in poetry was wide, as seen in his notes. In this earliest period of Charlot's reading, Parnassian classicism constituted the mainstream, and Decadence was the modern variant of it. Indeed most modern poets of whatever school had a Parnassian past. The remark in Charlot's note quoted above, "Not too important," does not apply to Albert Samain (1858–1900; Samain 1928), about whom Charlot was enthusiastic and who was the main influence on Charlot's early Decadent poems. The Catholic poet Francis Jammes describes Samain as "le type de l'auteur de la décadence" 'the very model of a decadent author' (in Samain 1928: 14), and it is clearly Samain's early, most Decadent poems, like the famous *Au Jardin de l'Infante* (Samain 1928: 29 ff.), that most impressed the young Charlot. Like most poets, including the Symbolists, Samain had been influenced by the Parnassians and retained their classical forms, filling them with his own opulent language and obsession with crepuscular mental states. Charlot shares with Samain many of the conventional rimes of the period—e.g., *fièvre*/*lèvre*—and a number of the themes. A personality of urban ennui, filled with morbid, overcomplicated, super-sophisticated, classico-decadent thoughts is contrasted to the rustic life of vigorous simplicity. Women

both act as dangerous Bacchantes (207–210) and take motherly pity on men (49). For Samain, once Christian faith has perished and one must face the brute world, one can take refuge in esthetics, the simple life, and the world of ideals. Samain sketched that simple life in much the same way that Jammes and Charlot did later, clearly the urban intellectual's idealization of bucolic, uncomplicated happiness (e.g., Samain 1928: 150). Similarly, Samain's desire to perceive the world as a child, to sense the eternal mystery behind the simplicity of perception (151 f., 209), finds echoes in Charlot. But by that period in his work, Samain had abandoned Decadence and was attempting to achieve his effects through a simplicity of style and a freshness of vision. Charlot could find Samain's new themes expressed more authoritatively elsewhere, for instance, in the New Testament, and was turning to a more vigorous style, more dense than mellifluous. Charlot's last Parnassian interest was *Le Miroir des Heures* by Henri de Régnier (1864–1936) which he illuminated probably between 1912 and 1915. He enjoyed the poems—at *Printemps* (page 15), he writes "comparer avec Heine" 'compare with Heine'—but he seems already to have outgrown them.

The reading that pushed Charlot in his new direction was naturally the Pléiade and French classical theater, the great gifts of French culture to the schoolchild. Of the dramatists, he much preferred Molière, especially the Molière of the early pieces, which still had the rough, antique, popular language that had not yet been smoothened by the developing classicism. Charlot said he could believe in theory that Corneille and Racine were great classics, but was not as convinced by them as by Molière. Of his reading, he noted for me: "Racine, not really. Poussin took his place," a striking expression of the relation in his mind of visual arts and the word.

Charlot read the main poets of the Pléiade, Ronsard,[9] Du Bellay, and Etienne Jodelle. His favorite was certainly Du Bellay, whose sonnet on "la doulceur Angevine" from *Les Regrets* he recited as the perfect expression of his own longing for France.[10] Unusually for the time, Charlot extended his reading to such writers as D'Aubigné (*Les Tragiques)*, Cyrano de Bergerac, and Théophile de Viau. He kept the books he read and noted in the 1970s: "I am having *de Bergerac* and Theophile rebound, so it can go to the next generation!" Théophile's dream poems, later rediscovered by the Surrealists, provide one of the clearest examples of influence, I believe, on Charlot's *La cité* (in "1911–1922 Uncollected"). Even more unusual, Charlot remembered, was his reading of medieval poetry, which he told me was the source for his dialogue poems, like that between the body and the soul.[11]

Charlot took from this reading in pre-Classical French poetry an interest in popular forms, which he used prominently in his devotional poems,[12] and especially in old forms of words. As Banville relates, an effort had been made since the work of Victor Hugo to increase the vocabulary used in poetry, but that vocabulary seemed very thin in the mainstream poetry of the turn of the century. Paul Claudel was at the forefront of enriching the vocabulary and multiplying the effects of poetry, but the movement was broad. Charlot himself used obsolete and rare words, like *astorge* 'severe.'[13] He noted that he picked up *ardre* from an example of Clément Marot in Banville.[14] He learned "long words" from the prose of Joris-Karl Huysmans[15] and the art critic Félix Fénéon. The two were important also for their exact descriptions of artworks, some of which resemble Charlot's art poems.[16] Series of phrases connected by *et* 'and' are under Biblical influence.

Charlot was also reading Catholic poets, of whom the most important influence was Paul Claudel, especially his *Corona Benignitatis* and *Cinq Grandes Odes;* "Théâtre Claudel came later." Charlot admired above all the style of Claudel with its energy, large vocabulary, and dense and complicated music; all qualities near to the pre-Classical poetry Charlot loved. Charlot's adolescent poetry is closer to Claudel in its tone than to any other poet, and numerous echoes of Claudel's work can be found in its phrasing and in practices like writing series of poems with the same or a similar first line. However, he is much less advanced than Claudel in his use of form, usually cleaving to the classical ones like Jammes. The interests and ideas Charlot shared with Claudel—in treating Biblical stories naturalistically, in emphasizing the physicality of the sacraments, and in creating genuine works of art intended for popular devotion—are found in other authors, like Huysmans, and came from earlier, common sources; indeed, Charlot's thinking was usually to the left of Claudel's.

Since Charlot chose his poets for their esthetic qualities rather than for their church affiliation, he was less interested in other Catholic poets.[17] Of Charles Péguy, he noted "no enthusiasm," although he later mentions him in a poem as a public figure.[18] Jammes was popular among some young French readers (Jammes 1947: 9 ff. [Léon Moulin]), but in an interview, Charlot related that he liked him but found him ultimately too simple, like François Coppée, whom Charlot did not like. He found Jammes' verses "run like water," whereas he preferred the denser lines of someone like Claudel. Jammes equated the simple with the spiritual, and Charlot preferred complexity, reaching simplicity through non-simple means. Nonetheless, many strong similarities can be found between them. Jammes had been a Parnassian and then came under the influence of the Symbolists. He was interested in popular art, like the Images d'Epinal (Jammes 1947: 15); was attracted to the colorful folk religion of the French country people and, unlike Charlot, to the devotion at Lourdes (33 f., 73, 76, 176 f., 223–226, 237–244); Jammes also wrote poems in the form of prayers (132–139, 207). Jammes developed an ideal of the simple country married life that would facilitate the Christian life and the participation in its mysteries (214 f.). He himself was troubled by problems of faith and sensuality, but felt his trust was rewarded with consolation; the Church was a true refuge for the poet (37, 175 f.). But all the above themes, as well as Jammes mystical view of the world and sympathy with the poor (233 ff.), can be found in other writers of the time.

That is, Jammes was part of a larger movement, the Catholic Renaissance, from which Charlot owed most to Claudel. Indeed, both Catholic poets and liturgical artists were trying to revalorize devotional forms, basing them on earlier ones, especially those of the folk religion, but providing them with an authentic, contemporary esthetic. Charlot's poetic style becomes similar to others in this movement, a transition starting gradually through 1915 and reaching completion by early 1916.

France was in fact experiencing an extraordinary surge of creativity in art and literature, and the best Catholic artists felt themselves a part of that general movement; thus Claudel's close relation to the Symbolists, an interest that Charlot shared avidly. Verlaine he read for the music, but Rimbaud was important for him both in his work and in his artistic personality: "the Rimbaud Illuminations I carried with me through the War."[19] This was a lifelong interest; I remember Charlot reading a book around 1951 on Rimbaud forgeries. In the early twentieth century, Rimbaud was depreciated by some in favor of Jules

Laforgue. Charlot remembered an uncle reading to him a poem of Rimbaud and then one by Laforgue, and asking, "Now isn't that much better?" Charlot loved Mallarmé, and even attributed mistakenly to his own childhood poetry a line from Mallarmé's *Brise Marine*: "j'ai lu tous les livres" 'I've read all the books' (Mallarmé 1945: 38). "I have since found a few," Charlot added. Before leaving for Mexico, Charlot seems to have started reading Apollinaire[20] and Max Jacob's *Le Cornet à dés*;[21] and at some moment, he became acquainted with Lautréamont. No specific influence on Charlot is traceable to these individual artists; rather, just as with the Catholic poets, he was interested in and influenced by the Symbolist movement in general with its powerful use of images for expression and with its religious idea of the artist.

Charlot took with him to Mexico a copy of Rimbaud's *Les Illuminations* and books by other French poets; he recalled introducing a group of young Mexicans to these works, but Maples Arce at least was already acquainted with them.[22] However, Charlot was able to discuss them with a native Frenchman's understanding. He became a member of their Estridentista movement, which began in December 1921 (Schneider 1970: 35), illustrating their books and acting as the organization secretary, but —curiously— never writing poetry in Spanish.

The final important influence on Charlot was Luis de Góngora y Argote. Charlot translated a poem of Góngora's in early 1922, and a number of his poems of that period show the clear influence of that poet.[23]

Charlot's last extended poems date from 1928. Around 1933, he started writing short couplets in a jingly, popular style as captions for *Picture Book: Thirty–two Original Lithographs*. As explained above, these were replaced by short inscriptions by Paul Claudel, and Charlot waited until the 1970s to complete the set and add others to it. In the 1960s and 1970s, stimulated by his association with the Rumanian poets Stefan and Mira Baciu, he published several of his older poems in Stefan's poetry journal *Mele*, and wrote some occasional verse. Charlot's last poem, a dirge for Mira, was published in March 1979, the month of his death.

4.3. AN EVALUATION OF CHARLOT'S POETRY

Charlot's poetry reflects the same concerns and interests found in his visual arts, such as religion, the poor, art, and the role of the artist. Moreover, just as in his visual art, he uses the same combination of elaborate technique and appeal to popular content. It is characteristic of Charlot to cast very personal statements in very formal terms. The poems can, therefore, be studied in relation to his work in the visual arts. They proceed from the same person.

Although Charlot seriously considered concentrating on his poems rather than on the visual arts, he finally opted for the latter. This was certainly the right decision, for although he could certainly have developed as a poet, his talent as a visual artist was superior from the beginning.

This is evident when one compares his use of influences in the two fields. Basically, in poetry, the influences are less assimilated than in his visual arts. Moreover, just as in the visual arts, Charlot was interested in technique and tried to achieve a professional level of mastery, as seen in his use of Banville's

treatise. But he was usually unable to absorb poetic techniques thoroughly, that is, to make them a spontaneous part of his art. In most poems, the technique limited his expression as much as it helped it. Although some of his poems in classical form are good, his best, most original poems are achieved when he leaves those traditional forms in free verse or art descriptions or in his use of the argot of the *poilu* in a classical sonnet. This failure to absorb influences fully contrasts strongly with his capabilities in the visual arts at every stage of his career: any influences instantly disappeared in the process of creating authentic and original works of art. There are no "transitional" works that are of merely biographical interest; even works in experimental styles or styles that he did not develop—like his Cubist works—are interesting in their own right. Charlot always had a strong personality as a visual artist, easily dominating any influences he may have been studying.

One must remember that most of Charlot's poems are juvenilia and that he did progress through his twenties. But his poetry almost always lagged behind his art. For instance, the works of visual art done during World War I—the *Chemin de Croix* and the drawings in the small notebooks—are more expressive and accomplished than the majority of poems done at the same period. That is, Charlot was a more original, creative, and *personal* artist than a poet. Moreover, his visual art was *consistently* good, while his poetry was uneven. Prime examples of that unevenness are the few poems written during the war that equal the intensity of his art.

Charlot was a major visual artist, but, at his best, a minor poet. This global judgment must, however, recognize that his best poems are real poems and well worth reading.

[1] Charlot transcribed the poem from his shorthand of ca. 1915, and a copy exists in the JCC. Charlot's poetry is published on the Web site of the Jean Charlot Foundation.

[2] "Jean Charlot's notes for a talk on Claudel," November 24, 1970. The French is Charlot's, and I am not sure his quotation from Mallarmé is exact.

[3] Compare Verlaine's poems in *argot,* 1962: 295 f., 299 ff. See also Apollinaire 1965: 408.

[4] *Ludwigshafen Notebook*, September 1924. Was Charlot remembering Verlaine 1962: *D'une lune rose et grise* (116), *le soir rose et gris* (193), *bleus,/Roses, gris et verts...* (286)?

[5] The JCC contains Charlot's annotated edition Baudelaire 1917.

[6] In a 1913 note, Louis Goupil, Charlot's grandfather, quotes a poem he wrote in 1858 and jokes: "Quant à mes vers je les trouve charmants et d'après cet échantillon, Jean ne m'arrive pas à la cheville. Attrape, mon vieux" (translation in Chapter 2). Poetry composition seems to have been a recreational activity in the Charlot home; examples survive from both Charlot's father Henri and his sister Odette.

[7] Charlot kept the cover of Coppée 1872.

[8] Banville 1891. This is the copy I used myself. Charlot's copy survives: Banville 1909. Charlot has written "1912" on his old ex libris.

[9] Charlot marked the poems that most interested him in Vaganay, n.d.

[10] A number of similarities with Du Bellay can be found, such as repeating sounds within lines, but these are not uncommon in early French poetry. Similarities of themes are also general.

[11] François Villon may have been an influence on these poems as well, although I do not know precisely when Charlot read that poet. Charlot later related him to José Guadalupe Posada and the popular ballads, the *corridos*, that he illustrated ("José Guadalupe Posada, Grabador Mexicano" 1928: "Este corrido canta como cantó la voz plebeya de Villon, del cual Posada, sin haberlo leído, es el mejor ilustrador" 'This corrido sings as did the plebeian voice of Villon, of whom Posada, without reading him, is the best illustrator.'

Charlot did not mention the *Chanson de Roland*, but was very happy when he found at a library book sale a copy of the Joseph Bédier's edition (1937); he said the book did not look like much, but was a wonderful edition.

[12] Compare curiously Apollinaire 1965: 324–328.

[13] While editing my father's poems, I finally found this word in Huguet 1925.

[14] Banville 1891: 174. Compare Fénelon 1997:

> Mais le vieux langage se fait regretter, quand nous le retrouvons dans Marot…Il avait je ne sais quoi de court, de naïf, de hardi, de vif et de passionné. On a retranché, si je ne me trompe, plus de mots qu'on n'en a introduit. ("Lettre à l'Académie": 1119)
>
> 'But the old language is regretted when we find it again in Marot…It was somehow short, naïve, hardy, lively, and passionate. More words were cut back, if I am not mistaken, than were introduced.'

[15] Charlot used also a number of shorter forms and words found in Huysmans, for instance, in *L'Oblat*: *aître* (45), *roidir* (115), *Homais* (232), and *Gros-Jean* (446); *À Rebours*: *retors* (5), *panteler* (14), *rêches* (17), *liesse* (52), *arpenter* (166), *outrecuidant* (207); *En Route*, *sourdre* (9), *ouvrer* (31), and *coi* (114). Huysmans was both criticized and praised for his vocabulary (Baldick 1955: 35, 51).

[16] Huysmans *L'Oblat*: 24, 106 ff.; his longer, more explanatory and psychological descriptions of artworks, e.g., 326–331, are much further from Charlot.

[17] Similarly, Charlot never expressed much interest in the novelists Georges Bernanos and François Mauriac, but advised me to read Cocteau and Gide!

[18] *7 ans déjà, Péguy, mort huis, voulut pour don*, January 4, 1920. John E. Kenny, in his unpublished "A Reminiscence of Korea, Hawaii & Jean Charlot," writes of his conversation with Charlot in 1955:

> I asked him about Charles Peguy who served in the trenches in France during World War I—I guess Jean did too but anyway I said it was too bad more of Peguy's writings weren't available in English. Perhaps it was due to the difficulty of Peguy's syntax, etc. that they had not been translated into English. He said "First they'd have to translate him into French."

[19] The book in Charlot's collection is Rimbaud 1919, which could have been the book Charlot took to Mexico, but not the one he had during the war, although he could have used it during the Occupation.

[20] Charlot recalled in the 1970s a French writer thinking that pineapples grew on trees, but he couldn't remember who it was. It was Apollinaire 1965: 655, 910.

[21] Charlot remembered reading Jacob in 1917. The edition in the JCC is, however, later: Jacob 1922.

[22] In Ortega 1981: 67, a reprint of a 1922 newspaper interview with Manuel Maples Arce, that poet mentions Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Lautréamont, Tristan Corbier, Mallarmé, and Laforgue. Corbier is the only one for whom I have not evidence of a connection to Charlot. See also Schneider 1970: 30, 59, 96. Baciu 1968: 144, states that Charlot brought a book of Apollinaire's poems to Mexico. Max Jacob had a stronger influence on the Estridentistas than on Charlot.

[23] Góngora's *Fábula de Polifemo y Galatea* was published by the Estridentista Manuel Maples Arce in 1925, Monahan 1981: 120; Schneider 1970: 196 f. Góngora was being revived very successfully in Europe at the same time. Charlot was also a great admirer of Juan de la Cruz and would recite sections from *Canciones del Alma*, especially the fifth stanza, which expressed perfectly for Charlot the mystical union with Christ.