6. WORLD WAR I

The initial sense of unreality many felt about the war quickly gave way to a brooding awareness that grew ever more oppressive as the conflict continued beyond any period deemed possible. The front with all its horrors of trench warfare was occasionally as close as fifty-six miles from Paris, the known goal of the German army and the target of its artillery bombardments. In the large battles like Verdun and the Somme as well as in the steady attrition from the grappling of the deadlocked armies, the casualty lists were unparalleled and have remained so. More soldiers were killed in World War I—9,998,771—than in all the subsequent wars combined (Pitt 1963: 277). A further 6,295,512 received wounds sufficiently grave to suffer from them for the rest of their lives. Untold more were wounded less seriously or incurred psychological damage.[1] France suffered disproportionately—5,000,000 casualties of which 1,385,300 were dead or missing—a little less than Germany and Russia.[2] These losses were felt with special bitterness as the realization grew that they were caused in large part by the failures of the military and political leadership, a response familiar to those who experienced the war in Vietnam. Adding insult to injury was the 80 per cent rise in the cost of living by 1917, a result widely blamed on profiteering. The disillusionment, resentment, and anger felt by the populations of Europe would shape the rest of the twentieth century.

Consciousness of the war penetrates the pages of *La Gilde*, with its mention of the bombardment of Paris and the return for recuperation of one of the woman founders of La Gilde Notre-Dame who had been working at the front as a nurse.[3] In a report "Nos Conférences," M. de C. writes that a good lecture took the listeners' minds away from the tragedy of the trenches:

> Nous le remercions d'avoir un moment endormi nos tristesses…si nous avons quelques minutes, vécu sous le ciel bleu, dans la lumière et le soleil, voici que nos regards se portent vers ces tranchées où l'on souffre, où l'on se bat et où l'on meurt. (March 25, 1918: 2)
>
> 'We thank him for having put our sorrows to sleep for a moment…if for a few moments, we have lived under a blue sky, in the sunlight, now our eyes turn again towards those trenches in which one suffers, fights, and dies.'

Sitting in the Tuileries gardens in October 1914, Charlot wrote *éternelle ironie ô nature, en ce coin*, one of his better poems, in which he joins his own family sorrows to the suffering of the soldiers under the artillery barrages; the firestorm of combat destroys all vegetation and heaps and furrows the earth like the embossing of a funeral announcement. Shortly afterwards, in *Je ne suis pas de ceux qui combattront*, he contrasts unfavorably his noncombatant status to those who will earn the glory of victory, the immortality of sacrifice, or the comfort of a safe return. Charlot joined many of his themes into an apocalyptic vision in the long *Voici le temps de Gog et de Magog* of June or July 1916: the war is both the crime of humanity and the just punishment of God. For all their sincerity, the last two poems still reveal the idealizing and intellectualizing of someone without personal experience of war.[4]

Charlot was called up in February 1917. The notice must have been a surprise:

> I was called early; earlier than my class; I think my class was '18, but we were called before because of the war, of course. So I was quite young. I must have been eighteen or nineteen when I got into the army…[5]

So many French soldiers had been killed in the war that the army had to dip below its normal age limits to replace them. Charlot had just turned nineteen.

Charlot was called up in the year of greatest war weariness in France, which aroused much agitation against the continued participation in the war. On April 16, the French commander-in-chief, Robert-Georges Nivelle, began a major offensive that he promised would end the war in two days. When it failed, mutinies and group indiscipline broke out in two-thirds of the French army units, with occasional attacks on officers. These resistance actions reached their high point in May and June and continued as isolated incidents until November. The colonial troops were involved prominently; on May 3, the Second French Colonial Infantry Division refused to return to battle, but eventually did return to the line. In June, only two fully reliable divisions could be found before Paris. Philippe Pétain, who was greatly respected by the French soldiers, was called in to replace Nivelle and restored order with selective executions—fifty-five were officially recorded—and deportations. All news of the mutinies was censored, but reports and rumors spread. In any case, the indiscipline was only one symptom of the general demoralization of the whole population.

In the poem Charlot wrote in February 1917 in response to his draft notice, *La pâte est sur la pelle, blanche et malaxée de main de maître*, he searches for a reason for his service. He seems like a well-formed loaf of bread, made to be put in the oven and devoured; he seems like a sacrificial goat being pressed forward towards the altar along with his fellows. But Charlot impatiently rejects poetic comparisons in order to speak directly:

> Moi et ces quatre membres que vous m'aviez prêté, je vous les rends. Mon âme eut le temps d'y prendre moule. Elle les reconnaîtra pour l'éternité.
>
> 'Myself and these four limbs that you have loaned me—I return them to you. My soul had time to make a cast of them. She will recognize them for eternity.'

The artistic talent God has lent him—"ce quelque chose au bout de mes doigts" 'this something at the end of my fingers'—has not reached maturity, but perhaps it is for the best. He has just found his footing in the world and now must detach himself from everything that is not an eternal end in itself. He can only obey God's will, his true motivation:

> Et je ne mourrais point pour un drapeau, pour cette étoffe et ce bois. ni ces mots où ricoche le rêve, ces choses creuses, ni pour la France ce flambeau, cette grande nation, mais parce que c'est Votre Volonté que je souffre sur ce coin de terre, que je meurs pour une France charnelle et imparfaite.

> 'And I will die not at all for a flag, for that cloth and that wood. Nor for those words where the dream ricochets, those empty things, nor for France, that torch, that great nation, but because it is Your Will that I suffer on this corner of earth, that I die for a carnal and imperfect France.'

He is unworthy but God has been pleased to mark him with ashes and give Himself in Holy Communion. God wants Charlot and his companions to suffer so that God's Kingdom will come. May Christ give him the same submission He Himself achieved in the Garden of Olives.

Charlot's search for a religious motivation for his participation in the war is distant from jingoism or war fever. His attitude contrasts markedly with that of the prewar youth described by Agathon (1913); the right-wing Catholic authors, Henri Massis and Alfred de Tarde, were using their findings to support their own movement for a faith allied with patriotism against international humanitarianism, pacifism, and antimilitarism (21–34). To do this, they were whipping up war sentiment: "La guerre ! Le mot a pris un soudain prestige" 'War! The word took on a sudden prestige' (31). According to them, the young French élite "envisagea la guerre sans effroi" 'envisaged war without fear' (30) and more positively found it "un idéal esthétique d'énergie et de force" 'an esthetic ideal of energy and power' (31) and the occasion of the noblest virtues, "l'énergie, la maîtrise" 'energy, mastery,' inspired by a cause bigger than the individual (32). Psichari, one of the essayists in the volume, argued that war was needed as a revitalizing force (34) and called attention to the growing influence of Nietzsche (54 f.). J. Raymond Guasco, discussing the sports movements of the time, wrote:

> Nous fûmes obligés de nous avouer qu'on nous avait menti. Non, la guerre n'était pas une chose bête, cruelle et haïssable. C'était du "sport pour de vrai", tout simplement. Elle était nécessaire comme la maladie et la mort… pour donner du goût à la vie.[6]

> 'We were forced to recognize that we had been lied to. No, war was not something stupid, cruel, and hateable. It was simply "sport for real." It was necessary like sickness and death…to give flavor to life.'

By 1917, the full evil of such statements could be appreciated.

Nor did Charlot join in the racist anti-German attitudes of the time, attitudes that strongly influenced the art world as well as the larger society. Charlot was inevitably aware of anti-German feelings, which he felt were derived in part from the war of 1870:

> we were still people who—I wouldn't say *I* remembered, but people around me had remembered the War of 1870, so it was really another generation, even two generations removed, that relationship of the French and the Germans.[7]

But Charlot had too many contacts with Germans to demonize them. Charlot's father had been reared in Germany, spoke perfect German, and often received German business colleagues and their families in his home. Charlot had studied German at Condorcet and had read some German literature. In June 1914, Charlot and his father were staying in a German home in Freiburg-im-Bresgau, and Charlot saw the young

man of the family cleaning his rifle in preparation for war. Charlot took with him into the Occupation Nietzsche's *Also Sprach Zarathustra* and a book on Albrecht Dürer, which I understand as support for maintaining a human view of the former enemy.[8] Charlot would later use the opportunity of the Occupation to focus his study on German art culture, which was for him the characteristic means of understanding a foreign people:

> But my own, well, change of mind or change of heart, if you want, was not by being with the people, but with German art. German art was a tremendous impact. I had never studied it very much. I knew a few names, of course: Albrecht Dürer and so on. But I told you before how meeting some of the great masterpieces of German art taught me much more than meeting the Germans themselves. And when you admire the art of a people, of course, you admire the racial characteristics that made that art possible. (Interview November 18, 1970)

Many years later in Hawai'i, Charlot would learn that his friend and university colleague Gustav Ecke had d him in battle.

The process of induction began on March 30, 1917, at the 4e Bureau de Recrutement, where Charlot was photographed and given his *Livret Militaire*. The usual information was taken, including:

> Profession : Élève à l'École des Bx Arts
> Cheveux : châtains foncé [*sic*]
> Yeux marrons
> Front Hauteur : moyen
> Nez Hauteur : rectiligne
> Visage : moyen
> Taille : 1 mètre 65 cent. (*Livret Militaire*: 1)
>
> 'Profession: Student at the Ecole des Beaux Arts
> Hair: dark brown
> Eyes brown
> Forehead height: medium
> Nose height: rectilinear
> Face: medium
> Height: one meter sixty-five centimeters.'

In the section on degree of instruction—which requested "Indiquer les certificats d'études, brevets ou diplômes universitaires" 'Note educational certificates, university degrees or diplomas'—was written "sait lire et écrire" 'knows how to read and write.' Nothing was written under *Escrime* 'fencing' and *Gymnastique* 'gymnastics,' and Charlot was described as a "nageur ordinaire" 'ordinary swimmer.' Preparations to enter the army included the beginning of a series of vaccinations.[9] The *Livret Militaire* contains valuable information but, unfortunately, was not kept up-to-date after Orleans.

Charlot was mobilized on April 15 and sent to Orleans for basic training, which began on the 17th.[10] His identification photograph illustrates very well Charlot's poems on leaving. In *Et puisque vous l'avez voulu, Maître*, which Charlot annotated "Avant de partir au *service*" 'before leaving for the service,' he continues his themes of *La pâte est sur la pelle*: because the Master wills it, he must break his *aryballe*—his *aruballos* or water pail—anoint his body with oil, make up his face, and be sacrificed in the hippodrome. The theme of God's will and sacrifice is Christian, and the poem incorporates images from early martyrologies.[11] Water pails with the portrait of the saint were bought by visitors to his or her tomb. Wrestlers oiled themselves before a fight, and Christians conceived of martyrdom as an athletic contest. Corpses were oiled before entombment. Even the erotic imagery can be found in the Acts of young female martyrs. The female imagery of Charlot's poem is based also on Greek references. The young water-bearer was a Greek artistic theme to which Charlot referred several times. The young Theodora, later wife of Emperor Justinian, prepared herself as in the poem to attract men in the Hippodrome of Constantinople.[12] In a premonition of his assassination, Alcibiades dreamed of being dressed in his mistress's clothes while she made up his face (Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, XXXIX). Hector imagines himself as a young woman conversing with Achilles who is pursuing him and will kill him (Iliad XX lines 124129). Femininity was in fact a heroic image for the warrior's vulnerability.[13] His flesh, usually described as ruddy and so depicted in art, could in this context be described as a female white; Charlot will later write that his skin is as soft and white as a girl's.

A more personal poem is his important *La mort acceptée, L'agonie solitaire, Prière pour qu'elle soit fructueuse, Consolation: L'enfant va partir*.[14] Charlot looked and felt young; he was also the youngest child of the family. He appears before them in his uniform and has polished his buttons to look good. The family treats him cheerily like a new doll. His heart feels so heavy that he wants to cry, but where could he? This is a house that has already suffered sacrifices, the death of his father. He will be leaving his mother and sister whom he is obliged to care for. His sleeves have no stripes, and his collar chokes him. Those who live only for themselves think it's agreeable to die for others. All ties have been severed between those who sit on the side of the well while he plumbs its depths. They will live while he will join those faces without noses—*les gueules cassées* 'broken faces'—the most visible and horrifying wounds of the war, or those rotten eyes of the dead: "Ma vie s'ordonne autour de ma mort" 'My life orders itself around my death.' Charlot's strong imagination must have been raising vivid pictures in his mind. His body is close to those of his family members, but their spirits seem to be in separated, closed boxes.

> Ô cette envie affreuse de saisir et de manier cette chair familiale tant douce.
> et encore d'observer cette discipline d'amour tant connue.
> Voici dix-neuf ans passés que je vivais ainsi et la fin de cela est proche
> et avec frénésie je voudrais profiter encore.
> Mais pourquoi troubler l'ordre.
>
> 'O this terrible desire to seize and feel this familial flesh, so soft
> and still to observe this discipline of love, so familiar.

Nineteen years now have I lived this way, and the end of all that is near
and frenetically I would like to enjoy it still more.
But why trouble the order.'

With whom can he speak of this death that obsesses him? He will be alone in his agony. His heart feels poor, naked, and empty; its thin shell tingles at the shock. He asks God to regard his weakness and fill his emptiness, but it is already full of mud. May God give him the strength to die alone, knowing that life will go on without him. May God who taught him the truth ensure that his death be fruitful; may his offering it to God collect and baptize the deaths of so many who die in ignorance "que ces muets par ma bouche crient" 'so that these mute ones cry through my mouth.' But the process is slow and painful. God has said that Christ lives in the poor; Charlot is grateful that God attends to people like himself: "de pauvres hommes portant leur peine sur 2 épaules geignantes" 'poor men carrying their pain on two grumbling shoulders.' Charlot felt himself cut off from his family and mistook their efforts to keep up his spirits as indifference: "Ils semblent ignorer et me regardent sans hâte" 'They seem to be ignorant and look at me without hastiness.' But Anne and Odette would travel to Orleans within weeks to be with him. The length or continuity of their stay is not known, but on December 29, 1917, Charlot sent a postcard to his grandfather at an Orleans address: "Un bonjour de ton petit fils" 'A hello from your grandson.'

Charlot's first poem in Orleans, the long, unfinished *Seigneur, voici ma chair nue et mal odorante*, continues the above themes: his unworthy body and proud, ambitious, sinful self will be a sacrifice to God's will:

Et pour vous recevoir (j'en ai loisir) ô Maître
je n'ai rien que quatre ais cloués : la bière ancienne
où se décomposait la chair patricienne
de tant de jours, de tant de rêves, prose ou mètre.

'And to receive you, Master, (I have the leisure)
I have nothing but four nailed planks: the old bier
on which decomposes the patrician flesh
of so many days, so many dreams in prose or verse.'

6.1. ORLEANS

On April 17, Charlot began three weeks of general training at Orleans. Charlot then entered the artillery at the lowest rank, being instructed in the basics as a *2 C. C.*, a second *canonnier conducteur* 'driver gunner' with the "45e Rgt d'Artillerie 67e Batterie" '45th Regiment of Artillery, 67th Battery': "Élève caporal (ou brigadier) le 7 Mai 1917. terminée le 1er Sepbre 1917" 'Student corporal (or brigadier), May 7, 1917. Finished September 1, 1917.' [15] He was then promoted to *1 C. C.*, first *canonnier conducteur*: "Le 1er CrCr Charlot, Louis a rempli les fonctions de brigadier du 1er septembre 1917 au 30 novembre 1917" 'The first driver gunner Charlot, Louis has filled the functions of brigadier from September 1, 1917, to November 30, 1917.' The last date at Orleans noted in his *Livret Militaire* is

January 29, 1918.[16] Training had been abbreviated because of the manpower shortage, and discipline had been loosened:

> there was a, well, minimum training, actually, before going into war. People, I think, were pushed to the front rather quicker than in other days, so I haven't really known the army of before the First World War, the one that is represented, for example, by those generals and so on in beautiful uniforms that appear in the Dreyfus process. It was quite a different type of people, and we were all of us more or less in the same dirty colors. Already there was the idea of blending with the backgrounds. And there was discipline, but the discipline that happens in wartime is very different from the discipline of peace time. (Interview October 13, 1970)

Fortunately, the artillery was marginally less deadly than the trenches and was, therefore, resented by some, who accused those assigned to that branch of using outside influence. Charlot felt he had been assigned to the lowest rank of the horse artillery as a punishment, as seen below, and himself complained about officers who owed their positions to privilege. Nonetheless, his posting was fortunate. The French artillery was an esteemed, professional, and intellectual service with a long tradition that included Napoleon Bonaparte, the greatest artillery officer in history. It would grow and improve through the course of the war (Greenhalgh 2014: 305 f., 387, 390 ff.). Moreover, in the artillery, Charlot's general eye trouble and lack of binocular vision would be a less dangerous handicap. Charlot early suffered problems with his eyes, receiving permission on April 27 to visit an ophthalmologist at Orleans (*Livret Militaire*). In most later armies, a lack of binocular vision would be cause for exemption. Charlot, however, used his artillery training in his understanding of art:

> If we place a painting of any kind on the wall, there is a point from which we can look at it in a normal way. The measurement of a painting is not physical but optical. I can take a comparison from another of my professions. In artillery, the unit is not physical but optical: whatever happens to be measured as one inch when seen at one mile. For a greater distance, a physically larger object will be needed to fill that inch, but for the artilleryman, that inch will still be the unit of measurement. What we have here is not a constant measurement on the ground, but a constant angle in the eye. (Disney lectures May 17, 1938)

Anita Brenner thought Charlot's experience influenced his composition (Idols 309): "but the arrangement is more formal, the rhythms simpler and evident, and the more angular geometry implies the young man who taught mathematics to artillery officers in training."

World War I was basically a battle of artillery, which inflicted many more casualties even than the machine gun. Charlot would be assigned to the principal French artillery weapon, the excellent 75 millimeter cannon, which served both for long-range firing and for close support of the infantry. The cannon was pulled rapidly into position by two pairs of horses under the care of two *canonniers conducteurs* 'driver-gunners.' Once in place, the *canonniers conducteurs* would pull the horses back to as near and safe a shelter as possible, and the gun would be served by three *canonniers servants*, 'server-

gunners.' A good team could fire as many as twenty-five rounds per minute; some claimed as many as forty. When ordered to move, the *canonniers conducteurs* would hurry forward, attach the cannon to the horses, and pull it where ordered. In "An Artist Looks Back" (March 8, 1972), Charlot described humorously the ranks depicted in his lithograph *Saint Barbara*, forgetting that he had been promoted:

> *2cc* at the top is *canonnier conducteur*; that is the boys who were on the horses. The only way of carrying our guns were horses at the time. *2cs* at the underneath is *canonnier servant*, who were serving the guns, and the *2* means that it was the lowest possible rank in the army. If you were very, very good, you became *first canonnier conducteur* or *first canonnier servant*. I think I stayed in number 2.

Charlot was placed in the horse artillery because of an extraordinary act of indiscipline committed within his first three weeks at Orleans: he went AWOL, which was discovered in the most embarrassing circumstances:

> in Orléans, we knew a very old general who had been, I suppose, glorious in his youth, and he seemed very, very old to me at the time and rather soft in the head. But anyhow, my mother and sister had come to Orléans to be with me there—after visiting him, suggested that it would be a good thing if he went to the quarters where we were and asked for me. So the poor man, I suppose, put on all his uniform and medals and whatnot and went there, saw the commanding officer, and asked for me. Well, it is quite true that I wasn't there, and I would have been certainly punished very harshly, but given that he was a glorious general, I wasn't. However, there was as a result of that, I couldn't choose my own outfit going to the front. And my intention was to choose one of those automobile or mechanized units. I don't know why, because I knew very little about automobiles. So I was put in an outfit with horses. That is the only result. But I wasn't otherwise put in jail or tried militarily or any such thing. (Interview November 18, 1970)

Charlot's preference for a modern arm reveals that he was thinking of the service as a learning experience. But two aspects of this event are abnormal: the punishment would normally have been severe and conscripts were not allowed to choose their service (Greenhalgh 2014: 31).

The "very old general" seems to have been an influential as well as a patient friend of the family. Charlot drew a profile of a General Coquet in September in Orleans.[17] This may have been the family friend involved, and the drawing is perhaps a preparation for a more formal portrait to serve as a peace offering. If so, this is the first of several such politically useful portraits:

> I had something that was handy, which was I could make portraits of people, and I probably have made a number of portraits as I rose in rank from sergeants to captains, that came usefully in my military career. They were very polite portraits. I still, I think, have a few of them around. (Interview October 13, 1970)

A letter survives from the general and patron, and the barely legible signature may be that of Coquet:

Orléans 6 / 3 1918

Chère Madame & Amie,

J'ai été heureux de recevoir de vos nouvelles et d'apprendre que malgré vos nombreux impédimenta vous aviez pu rallier St. Mandé sans trop de difficultés. Vous aviez pris une large part dans notre existence si retirée et votre départ nous cause un grand vide. Nous espérons avoir au moins souvent de vos nouvelles et chaque mois, une visite, comme l'a promis la douce Odette.

Ne vous inquiétez pas pour Jean ; quand on l'aura vu à l'œuvre qu'on aura pu soupçonner sa haute valeur morale et apprécier ses talents, je ne doute pas que le Commandement se l'attache comme homme de confiance, observateur, agent de liaison etc et à mon avis ça vaudra autant et même mieux pour lui que de remplir les fonctions si ingrates de Brigadier pour qui n'a pas le tempérament sanguin assaisonné d'une bonne gueule.

Quand vous l'aurez vu, dites-moi de quel personnage à combien de galons son sort dépend et à qui on puisse utilement le signaler, je ne dis pas le recommander & je m'empresserai de le faire.

En tous cas consolez-le de sa petite déconvenue d'amour propre. Il y a des Professeurs au Collège de France et des Académiciens qui échoueraient sûrement & qui ont échoué à l'examen de Caporal.

'Orleans, March 6, 1928

Dear Madame & Friend,

I was happy to receive your news and to learn that despite your numerous impedimenta, you were able to regain Saint Mandé without too many difficulties. You had occupied a large part of our very retired existence here, and your departure creates a big emptiness. We hope at least to receive your news often—and a monthly visit, as the sweet Odette has promised.

Don't worry about Jean. When he will have been seen at work, when his high moral value will be surmised and his talents appreciated, I have no doubt that the Command will attach him to itself as a reliable man, observer, liaison agent, etc., and in my opinion, that would be as good and even better for him than to fulfill the very thankless functions of Brigadier—for someone who hasn't a bloody temperament seasoned with the mug to match.

When you will have seen him, tell me on what personage with how many stripes his fate depends, and to whom he can be usefully pointed out—I don't say recommended—and I will do it eagerly.

> In any case, console him for the little mortification of his pride. There are professors at the Collège de France and Academicians who would surely fail and who have failed the examination of corporal.

The letter provides a retrospective picture of Charlot's life at Orleans. His mother and sister had set up house while they were there and entered fully into the social life of the place. The general is impressed with Charlot's character and efficacy—and is happy to continue helping him—but recognizes that Charlot at least does not look the part. Charlot himself wrote of this in *La mort acceptée*, discussed above. Charlot did not fail an examination for *caporal*; he attained that rank in 1917. The exaggeration probably refers to his failure to be assigned to a mechanized or motorized unit.

The tone of the letter is racy, with a rude word, *gueule*, that can be excused only as a slip of war-time barracks habits. Army life did have its surrealistic sides, as seen in a short note Charlot wrote to himself in mid-1917:[18]

> 77985 fusil
> 764. Sabre
> 65 462 Revolv.
> *Coiffeur* !
>
> '77985 rifle
> 764. Sabre
> 65 462 Revolver
> *Haircut*!

Being at the lowest rank in the horse artillery meant that Charlot would be assigned the lowest army work:

> I was put in a horse artillery, and I had a very hard time with the horses. I had really not much training with horses before. I think those that I knew were mostly those of the Caplain family in Chaumontel. My godfather actually, Frédéric Caplain, was rather proud of his carriage horses, and when they had guests besides the family, they would have a great display of the carriage horses with the coachmen holding them. It was a rather magnificent sight. But as far as getting near horses, I had no training, and there suddenly I had not only to ride horses, to jump on horses, but also to take care of horses. And I made friends rather easily, I must say, with people who had a great knowledge of horses. Not that they were military people. One of my friends was a peasant who had been a coachman at the same time, and in fact he took some of my dirtiest chores of curetting the horse and so on after the horse had been running and was in a sweat until I understood how to do things. I remember, well, for example, being on night watch in the stables and lying into the box where the extra straw was with a good book. I took with me three or four books, actually, even in the worst moments of my early training. One of them was Rimbaud, *The Illuminations*,

> and I'm pretty sure I had Maritain, *Art et Scolastique*, and so on. But it was rather difficult to read because the horses at night are not all quiet, they are not all asleep. Some of them got very temperamental and kicking and making lots of noise, and then I was supposed to cool them off. But it was really nearly the only moment that I had to myself, when I was on sort of a lonely vigil in the stables. For a while I was helper to a horse doctor, which was even a more complicated affair and rather disgusting as far as I was concerned, but again there I learned a lot about, shall we say, the physiology of horses. However I was never a very good rider, but for some obscure reason, maybe because of my training as a boxer—I was going to say as an athlete, really strictly as a boxer—I could jump on the horse from behind. He was without a saddle, and I jumped from behind on the horse just putting my two hands on his *croupe*, on his behind, and jumping on his back. And that was something that those who couldn't do it were so astonished. It was the only thing that gave me good points in fact. I had left school before I had even my baccalaureate, so on paper I was not one of the intellectual guys, one of the cultured guys. I had once a view of my description in military terms, and there was nothing about education because though I had gone to Condorcet and so on, I hadn't finished my studies. So I was not a bachelor, even, but the only thing that was positive was that I could swim. And that was something, after all; so many people couldn't swim. So there was really dirty work for me. (Interview October 13, 1970)

Charlot is probably referring to the list of his qualifications in his *Livret Militaire* (6 f.). Jumping up on a horse from the rear was a regular part of cavalry training and was filmed in the mid-1890s by the Lumière Brothers; Charlot would have been given a normal occasion to discover and display his prowess. Charlot is being modest about his riding, which he had done for years, and in the photographs of the time, he has a good seat. His ability to ride was probably one reason he was made a *canonnier conducteur*. However, the laborious care of the horses had been left to servants in his youth, and he felt keenly the difficulty and dirtiness of the work, as he depicts it in his poem *Il s'est passé depuis ce temps-là bien des choses*, placed by Charlot at the "Cercle du soldat, Orléans" 'Circle of the Soldier, Orleans.' Much has happened, he writes. His palms have grown callouses and his soul has been covered with lines like an old face. He plays the joker: "le poème est joyeux, mais lugubre la glose" 'The poem is joyous, but the interpretation lugubrious.' Mess duty, stable cleaning, military packs, hard cots, black dung, and horse snot running down the rosy bald spots of their muzzles. The non-com shouts. The adjutant goes by, crop in fist, to pinch the nags as big as cows or dispute some remains of the mess from the guys. The only paradise is to sneak into the latrines for privacy and think about the gaitered, monocled sons of rich fathers who spend the war, far from the front, as martial stenographers:[19]

> Seul paradis : Se faufiler dans les latrines
> Songeant, mélancolique, aux fils de pèr'rupins
> guêtrés, monoclés, dactylos à la Marine !

'Only paradise: to steal into the latrine
Dreaming, melancholy, of the sons of the very rich
Gaitered, monocled, stenographers in martial style!

Charlot's dislike of the rich has been transferred to officers, and for the first time, he adopts in a poem the *argot* of the *poilu*, the unshaved front-line soldier.

Although the army had experienced considerable social leveling by 1917, the officers were still largely members of the middle and upper classes, and their distinction from the lower-class GIs was more explicit than in civilian life. Charlot's situation was therefore unusual, and he used it to reinforce his earlier sympathies. Peter Charlot reported: "He remembers being at a ceremony where a soldier was stripped of his rank and honors. Papa seemed very moved by this event. He said that it was among his worst experiences" (e-mail to John Charlot, May 9, 1999). Charlot's sympathies were always important in focusing his creativity. In a later poem, dated February 7, 1918, Charlot thanks God that he is a common soldier and not an officer:

Soyez béni, vous qui m'avez rendu semblable
aux autres hommes et sans dorure ou galons ;
béni vous qui m'avez broyé sous les talons
de ces hommes qui sont d'autres hommes comptables.

'Be blessed and thanked, you who have made me similar
to other men and without gold braiding or stripes;
blessed, you who have crushed me under the heels
of those men who are accountable for other men.'

In the confusing situation of the army, Charlot was happy at first not to be in a position of responsibility: "Il est dit : 'L'obéissance est irresponsable'" 'It is said: "Obedience has no responsibility"'; "vous m'avez établi dans l'humilité stable" 'you have established me in stable humbleness.' Charlot will elaborate this theme of obedience in his 1919 address to the Gilde on the lessons of the war. For Charlot, this freedom of obedience was connected to his lack of responsibility for a wife and children:

Nulle enfant ne me lie au rêve séducteur.
Seule, ma mère attend, humble, de mes nouvelles,
car je ne suis pas officier, mais conducteur.

'No child ties me to a seductive dream.
Alone, my mother awaits, humble, my news,
for I am not an officer, but a driver.'

Charlot's work with a veterinarian provided him with one of his war stories. Peter Charlot remembered:

Papa told me this story two weeks before he died. We were just sitting together in his bedroom, and without any prompting or relevance to any other subject we discussed,

> he started in on this unique tale. As an enlisted man, Papa was assigned as a medic for what I imagine is the equine equivalent of a MASH unit, a field hospital for horses. Being a raw recruit, the other soldiers were treating him roughly. Eventually, his superior directed Papa's attention to a horse with a giant erection. It was explained to him that the horse needed to be relieved and it was Papa's job to masturbate the horse accordingly. Being a good soldier, Papa complied with the orders until he saw that the rest of the soldiers were rolling on the ground, howling with glee. It seems the horse had some kind of medical problem and the directive was just a ruse. To tell the truth, I don't think Papa wanted to go to his grave without that one being told. It's a winner.[20]

One reason Charlot may have wanted to tell the story to Peter was that he had later turned the event into one of his few recorded tall tales, a raucous soldier's story told many years later to Ben Kerner, which I quote in full with minor editing:

> As I remember him—and I do—he was a man of sweet and earthy humor. I remember—it was shortly before Xmas and he was busy inking holiday greetings to friends—on pieces of art paper on which he sketched—brush & ink—cherubs, angels, fanciful creatures heralding his greetings and the holidays, talking as he always did, his voice light and good-humored. I was not one of the lucky ones to receive one of those lovely cards, envying his facility with the brush. Always the center of a small group of admiring artist-friends—I among them—listening to various stories. One of them I've mentioned to you at the New Rochelle art exhibition which included your father's work. But here it is again: It was a bitter winter night somewhere in France in World War I, he recounted. Jean, I believe, was an officer in an artillery unit. Then, horses were the basic means of moving the big guns from one position to the other. Roads were impassable—snow and ruts and the eternal gunfire and Jean and his men had the onerous job of moving one of the big guns into position a distance away. It would not have proven much of a difficulty—except that of the unusually hard work and the usual curses against war, guns, winter, the Huns, et al.—but for one thing. Their horse was not in a mood to move. The horse being a stallion, everything would have been fine—had there been a mare in the vicinity. But there was no mare. Only a stallion with an erection so big, so frozen hard, and so long it kept getting in the way of the horse being able to stand at all. There it lay, all stretched out, its erection a standard without a banner. Jean and his men and their gun HAD to be gotten into position, linked to a great offensive—all depending, said Jean, on getting the horse up on its feet. But that erection was in the way, fouling everything up. Had it been summer, well—but it was winter and everything was frozen: snow, trees, men, rifles, guns—*and the erection*. Jean and his men and France itself needed the cannon, the long gun, but without the horse, the offensive would be stalled, perhaps the war lost. But the horse! There were no other horses to be had! Jean said: "Only one

> thing to do!" And so they did it, Jean showing the way. They began *thawing* the erection—thawing it by hand, the men all at work on the job, thawing it until the icy-hand of winter had relinquished its grip on it. Whether it was the heat of the men's hands that did it, "melted" the horse's stallion-size penis back into its sheath—or whether the men's hands so combined and worked that the horse poured forth its seed in a great river. So great, there is a sign of the truth of this story that your father told. Somewhere in France, there is a primitive kind of statue conceived out of that river of horse-sperm, a fantastic looking equine whose underside of belly is marked with the imprints of hands, the hands comprising those that saved France, that brought victory out of possible defeat. Well, Jean told us that story. The fact that his eyes were smiling does not make it less truthful. Have I seen that statue? Not yet. But one day —who knows? If I don't find it, perhaps the statue will find me. (letter to John Charlot, June 19, 1997)

The valuable experience of intimacy with people of all classes was described by Charlot:

> Well, we were, of course, thrown together, and for me the discovery was of course of people I would not have contacted otherwise. I mentioned already that peasant-coachman. I had the greatest respect for people who knew things I didn't know, and it was mostly those people, because the few people who had similar education to mine had no mystery for me. And well, perhaps later on, for example, when I was in Mexico and felt more, I wouldn't say at ease, but felt more the mystery and the interest of the Mexican Indian than my cultured and cultivated Mexican cousins; probably the same thing was at hand. I was interested in things that I had not experienced. I enriched my life with the experience of people who had started life in very different ways, and I think that the thing is the common man or the masses or whatever you want to call it, is really the type of man that interests me, that I feel closer to. (Interview October 13, 1970)

In the same interview, I asked Charlot:

> There's a picture of you with some of your friends. I think one of them was a Second Prix of the Academy, a violin, and it says, "In memory of the nice days we made music together." Do you remember any of those people very well at all?
> **JC:** Well, I remember making a portrait of that guy, or a caricature, or whatever you want to call it, and he was a nice fellow, and if we made music, I am sure he was the fellow who made the music. I remember trying to play the mouth organ, but I couldn't even play that. I have other memories. There was a very tough guy who was, people would say, an *apache*, and we took to each other very much. I rather envied him because he was tattooed. There was something rather elegant in the tattooings on his arms, and we did a little bit of boxing together, and I wasn't terribly good, but he wasn't terribly good either, and the other people were in awe of us. And

> I remember at the time, we thought of getting together a little group and call it the *Club des Costauds*. The *costaud* is a strong man. And my reward, if I had been a member of the club, would have been to be tattooed also in the same way. There was a real friendship there. I must say I don't remember the friendship with the musician.

A photograph, probably taken at Orleans, shows Charlot clowning with two friends: Charlot, looking clever, plants a haymaker to the jaw that is knocking his opponent out, while the third friend, acting as referee, grins at the camera. Charlot told me that he had boxed in the army and been champion for his weight-class, winning several matches when no opponent appeared. I have found no document confirming this.

That Charlot was struck by his encounter with people of different backgrounds, despite his relationships since childhood with servants and their families, reveals how separated the classes were in prewar France; this was a world in which the parents of boys at the Ecole Hattemer were worried about sending them to mingle with the rougher sort at Condorcet! In his April 1919 address to the Gilde, "Des Leçons de la Guerre," Charlot will emphasize, "C'est un lieu commun que de s'appesantir sur la fusion de classes et de race occasionnée par le service militaire" 'It's a commonplace to insist much on the fusion of classes and races occasioned by the military service':

> Séparés comme nous le sommes dans la vie normale, par des parois étanches, de ce qui n'est pas notre milieu, notre *caste*, nous n'acquérons point ou peu la connaissance d'autres milieux si ce n'est du mode extérieur : habitudes de *langage*, relations d'affaire, paroles sur des lieux communs. Jamais il ne nous est donné de puiser au fond même de l'esprit populaire, de saisir leurs principes essentiels de vie et de mort. Ici, au contraire, dans l'effort d'une tâche semblable, au hasard des étapes, sous le nivellement du même danger couru par tous, la cohabitation apporte plus qu'une camaraderie, une *intimité* de l'un à l'autre, laquelle par de communes réactions fructifie en une fusion de nature et d'essence. De cette connaissance parfaite, on pourrait dire interne, résultent des points de vue neufs.
>
> 'Separated as we are in normal life by impermeable walls from what does not belong to our social circle, our *caste*, we acquire no or little knowledge of other circles unless in a very external way: speech habits, business relations, words exchanged about commonplaces. We are never given the opportunity to draw from the depths of the spirit of the people, to seize their essential principles of life and death. Here, on the contrary—in the effort of a similar task, in the danger of the march, under the leveling of the same danger run by all—living together brings, more than comradeship, an intimacy of one to the other, which by the same reactions bears fruit in a fusion of nature and essence. From this complete knowledge—one could say internal—result new points of view.'

As seen below in the discussion of Charlot's poem *D'un Art Pauvre*, his contact with the common soldiers intensified his communal dedication of his art and extended his ideas about the honesty of materials. The

experience of inter-class contact was valuable personally and artistically influential for others as well, notably Léger.[21]

Charlot seems to have entered into the social life of the base. He contributed a funny poster to advertise an evening's stage entertainment (Morse number 4), which he remembered vaguely in an interview (October 13, 1970):

> I may have done something when we had concerts. I remember when we were in a place where there was a building that was fit at all for a theater representation, and I may very well have done some sets of a sort.

The person signing the inscription on the poster was Henri Cheneau, who appears in one of Charlot's lists of names and to whom Charlot drafted an aggressive letter. Charlot joined a Catholic organization for soldiers. *La Gilde* (Oct. 25, 1917: 2) reported:

> M. Charlot est premier canonnier au dépôt d'Orléans. Il nous dit faire partie d'un Cercle Catholique militaire, "l'Accueil du Soldat", où il a fait une causerie sur l'Art, qui a été très bien accueillie.
>
> 'Mr. Charlot is first cannoneer at the base at Orleans. He reports that he is part of a military Catholic Circle, "The Reception of the Soldier," where he gave a talk on art, which was very well received.'

A month later, *La Gilde* ("Un mois de travail," December 25, 1917: 1) again reported: "il s'occupe en même temps d'un Cercle Militaire très vivant" 'he is occupied at the same time with a very active Military Circle.' A real-photo-postcard from another member of l'Accueil du Soldat to Charlot expresses the intense friendships that developed among those training for combat:

> Mon cher Petit Ami Jean,
> Avant de quitter Orléans je te laisse cette simple carte comme souvenir. J'espère qu'elle te fera plaisirs [*sic*]. Je regrette beaucoup de quitter le Cercle car j'y avais rencontré de nombreux amis. C'est encore là que nous trouvons de véritables amis. Je suis heureux de t'y avoir connu, j'emporte le meilleur souvenir de toi. Crois bien mon cher Ami que je penserai toujours aux bons moments que nous avons passés ensemble dans cette bonne maison de l'Accueil du Soldat. Nous y avons trouvé des amis dèvoués [*sic*], pour nous aider de leurs bons conseils à faire dissiper nos moments d'ennuis [*sic*] que nous avons quelquefois [*sic*] à la caserne. Cher Ami c'est le cœur serrè [*sic*] et les larmes ont coulé de mes paupières en quittant hier au soir le Cercle que j'aimais tant. Je te dis mon cher ami au revoir. J'espère que le Bon Dieu me donnera un jour le bonheur de te revoir peut-être sur le champs de bataille. Surtout n'oublie pas de me donner de tes nouvelles, car se [*sic*] sera avec empressement que je te ferai réponse. Je te quitte en te serrant une cordiale poignée de main. Bon courage et Bonne Chance. Que Dieu nous protège.
> Toujours ton ami,

André Lemaître
Orléans, le 15 Octobre 1917

'My dear little friend Jean,
Before moving out from Orleans, I leave you this simple card as a souvenir. I hope it pleases you. I regret very much leaving the Circle because I met there many friends. It's still there that we find true friends. I am happy to have known you there. I take with me the best memory of you. Do believe, my dear friend, that I will always think of the good times we had together in this good house of the Reception of the Soldier. We found there devoted friends to help us with their good advice to dissipate our moments of boredom that we sometimes have at the barracks. Dear friend, it's with a heavy heart and the tears flowed from my eyes on leaving last night the Circle that I loved so. I say farewell to you, my dear friend. I hope that the Good God will grant me one day the happiness to see you again, maybe on the field of battle. Above all, don't forget to send me your news, because it is with eagerness that I will answer you. I leave you with a cordial handshake. Much courage and Good Luck. May God protect us.
Always your friend,
André Lemaître
Orleans, October 15, 1917'

Whatever difficulties Charlot had in the army, he clearly enjoyed the comradery and even excitement of military life, just as later in Mexico he would enjoy the macho solidarity of the revolutionary artists. His choice of saints to portray, his references in poems, and his interest in portraying soldiers, suggests that he was characteristically studying the French military tradition and using it as a guide to his own experience.

Charlot was also taking advantage of the cultural opportunities in Orleans. He discovered a museum with a collection of the distinctive local folk prints. He studied them intensely and was inspired to create a series of prints of devotional images for his comrades in arms. Only one of the series was completed, *Saint Barbara* or *Sainte Barbe* in French (Morse number 8), but lists of subjects and preparatory drawings for other items survive. In *The Golden Legend*, the father and executioner of Saint Barbara, a fourth century martyr, is killed by lightning; as a result, she became the patron saint of artillery men and other professions endangered by explosion, victims who could die unexpectedly and without the sacraments. Charlot emphasizes her connection to the artillery by omitting almost all her traditional iconography—chalice and host, tower, palm, feather, scourge, sword, and martyr's crown—leaving only a lightning bolt and a cannon, for which he innovates a long swab in her hand. The *Sainte Barbe* is Charlot's first mature print, and he described its creation in detail in two interviews:

> the *Sainte Barbe* is actually an ink lithograph. I was certainly thinking in terms of woodcut. That was done in Orléans. I was in training, early training, in Orléans, and before that, even, I had made a collection of Images d'Epinal, of the penny sheets that are done in woodcut with strong stenciled colors. And then in Orléans there was a

little museum. I was in that little museum quite often, and there was a very interesting series of penny sheets that correspond to the Images d'Epinal, but that were printed and done in Orléans. It has been a pretty important influence on my own art, together with the Images d'Epinal. It was a very different sense of color that the folk engravers of Orléans had from the people of Epinal. The Epinal pictures are usually, so to speak, red or white and blue. They always have a flag-like quality. Those of Orléans were much more refined. There were some where the genius among the folk artists who offered some very curious relationships of greens and yellows and blue-grays and so on. That was a big influence on me, and at the time I prepared—I still have some drawings—I prepared a series of *Images* that would have been close enough to those things—though they were not copies, they were my own—about a few patron saints. The Sainte Barbe is, of course—or was, before she was demoted two or three years ago, I think—was the patron of the artillerymen. And so the first thing I did—I had planned a series of them—was the *Sainte Barbe*. It's actually a transfer in lithographic ink that was printed in Orléans. And I had made stencils and a series of color arrangements put on, on purpose, in a folksy way—that is, not corresponding to the outlines very much—that make it really very close to the penny sheets that were printed in Orléans in the early 1800s or so. There was also there, as long as we are talking of religion, there was a sort of use of my art for a pious purpose, and I wanted, I remember, to distribute those images or to sell them, perhaps, for a penny to the artillerymen so they could say their prayers to their patron saint, Sainte Barbe. There is a little poem, John, that you have there which is on the same topic, that was published in the *Petit Messager*, if I remember, in which I mention definitely the folk sheets, the penny sheets. (Interview October 13, 1970)

when I became a soldier and I was in Orléans, in Orléans the little museum, then I saw another type of popular sheets of the same type that were printed in Orléans, with a different set of colors—perhaps less flag-like, less crude than the primary colors of the Images d'Epinal—using more greens and yellows and, I think, salmon, a sort of off-pink. And there also I looked at those with great intensity, and in the very little time I had to myself, I decided to do a series of those single sheets, putting them uptodate; they would represent the patron saints. I still have, you have seen some of my drawings for that series of Images d'Epinal more or less as far as style is concerned. I did one of *Sainte Barbe*, which was the Saint Barbara, which was the patroness of the artilleryman. I had one of St. Mauritius, who is the patron of soldiers. I prepared one, I think, on Francis of Assisi, and so on and so forth. The one, the only one that I finished, that is, of which I made an edition as I had planned, was the *Sainte Barbe*, patron of artillerymen. I was at the time in the artillery as just one of the men on horseback that dragged the guns in the field, and I represented, I think, some scenes of the carrying of the gun, of the people on horseback, of the

> people manning the 75, which was the gun we were using in field artillery; and then the large figure of Sainte Barbe. The way I made the edition, it is a lithographic transfer; that is a printer that I found said he could do the multiplication of the image and gave me paper, a sort of a *couché* paper with the lithographic ink and told me that what I did would be transferred, I think transferred on stone at the time, which he did. So I had an edition, I think seventy-five or so sheets in black and white, and then on those I proceeded to put in flat coloring in the style of a stencil. I don't think I actually did stencils, but in the style of a stencil, trying different color combinations. I gave a few of those to my fellow artillerymen, but most of the edition remained with me.[22]

Charlot simplified his account of the sources—the print makes a typically classicist reference to Palma Vecchio's version in Santa Maria Formosa in Venice—but described explicitly the emotional background of the work in his lecture "An Artist Looks Back":

> this is while I was in the army, another of those influences came into play, and that is the influence of what Frenchmen sum up as *Images d'Epinal*, that is, the pennysheets, I think you say in English: those same penny sheets that have centuries of tradition behind them, that were sold at pilgrimages and fairs, and so on.
>
> This was done also with a very deep intent. That is Saint Barbe. I don't know if she's Barbara in English, but she was the patron of artillery men in the old days when every craft had a holy patron. Saint Barbe was the patron of artillery men, and so I represented her in a pious image which I hoped my friends—I was in the artillery at the time with the 75 guns—my friends could put in their, well let's say the trenches or wherever they were, and pray to. We needed a lot of prayer in those days, because death was very close by.[23]

The dating of the *Sainte Barbe* is important for establishing a sequence for Charlot's work in the army. Peter Morse followed Charlot's memory of 1971 in placing the *Sainte Barbe* after *Les Blessés au Travail* (numbers 6, 7), which is dated January 24, 1918, on the stone. However, as Morse noted, "in the *Catalogue* and elsewhere, [Charlot] places the *Saint Barbara* first" (Morse 1976: 6). The *Catalogue* (Morse 1976: 187) is clear: *Sainte Barbe* is placed before *Les Blessés au Travail* and is dated 1917. The *Catalogue* was done in 1936, when Charlot was much closer in time to the actual events. Further arguments can be made to support this original dating of 1917. First, on the print, Charlot gives his rank "2^{e} C. C." According to his *Livret Militaire*, quoted above, Charlot was a "1er C^{r}C^{r}" by September 1, 1917. Second, Charlot left Orleans at the end of January, 1918, so would not have had time at Orleans to do the *Sainte Barbe*, with its many preparatory drawings, after *Les Blessés au Travail*. Two subjects started after the *Sainte Barbe* are dated 1917: *Saint Christopher* and the *Sacred Heart*. Finally, "Un mois de travail" in *La Gilde* reports on December 25, 1917:

> Dans le même temps, nous recevions de bonnes nouvelles de M. Jean Charlot, brigadier d'artillerie à Orléans, où il consacre ses loisirs à dessiner après une Sainte Barbe (Sainte Barbe est la patronne des artilleurs), un Saint François d'Assise…
>
> 'At the same time, we received good news from Mr. Jean Charlot, brigadier of artillery at Orleans, where he devotes his free time to drawing after a Saint Barbara (Saint Barbara is the patroness of artillerymen), a Saint Francis of Assisi…'

I conclude, therefore, that the *Sainte Barbe* was finished before September 1917—perhaps on his seven days "détente" 'furlough' granted on July 1, 1917 (*Livret Militaire*)—and that Charlot was occupied with further items in the projected series until he left on his leave of January 6–13, 1918. While on leave, he made the woodcut *Bon-Papa* (Morse number 5) and, on his return to Orleans, *Les Blessés au Travail*. He then left for Sézanne, where he continued thinking about his planned series, wrote poems connected with it, and made at least the small sketch for *St Maurice et ses Compagnons* in the sketchbook *Guerre 1918*. Some of the other smaller sketches for the series may also have been done in 1918.

A large number of drawings were done for the *Sainte Barbe* and for the other items in the projected series, several of which are kept in the JCC. The *Earliest Design for Ste. Barbe*[24] already displays the general format of the series: a rich border, a vertical rectangle, encloses the image. The border is filled with symbolic items: owls for wisdom, foxes who hide in pits but have no place to lay their head, a bird that soars to the sun, and an elongated man along the vertical border, whose significance is not apparent. The image is a close-up of the 75 mm cannon, set at a dynamic angle. Saint Barbara kneels beside the breech, her eyes closed in prayer; but her position creates the unfortunate impression that she is actually serving the gun! The contrast of the final print can already be seen: the hard, steel, masculine cannon as opposed to the soft, feminine saint. The image is monumental with its appreciation of the geometry of the gun.

Charlot's second design is recorded in a finished drawing almost as big as the final print.[25] The important use of color in this drawing demonstrates that Charlot was thinking from the beginning of a black print that would be colored by hand. The border has been simplified to victory garlands wrapped cylindrically in ribbons of patriotic colors. A small sacred heart is placed in the middle of the bottom border; on its white background enclosed by a blue border, it also makes a patriotic impression. The cannon is now placed as it will be in the final version, and two realistic vignettes of *canonniers conducteurs* and *canonniers servants* have been put in their final positions. Both are of the second or lowest grade. Saint Barbara is dressed in the long, belted robe of the print, and carries the same longhandled swab to clean the gun. But she is also wearing a patriotic Phrygian cap, and her white robe and red belt placed in front of the metallic-blue cannon reproduce the colors of the French flag. She is a Marianne figure and looks directly at the viewers as if encouraging them in their tasks.

Charlot has used more writing on this design than on the final print. The *canonniers conducteurs* are accompanied by the inscription "En avant !" 'Forward!'; the *canonniers servants* by "Feu !" 'Fire!' A prayer is placed below the bottom border:

> TRÈS SAINTE BARBE nous, canonniers français, messagers de la mort physique,
> Vous supplions. Daignez arracher de nos cœurs la soûlerie de superbe et de stupre,
> afin qu'œuvrant dans un esprit de Justice et d'humilité, ayant servi Dieu sur cette terre
> [paper missing] et Ses vue secrètes, [paper missing] avec vous dans le Ciel.
>
> 'MOST HOLY BARBARA, we French cannoneers, messengers of physical death,
> entreat You. Deign to root from our hearts the intoxication of arrogance and
> debauchery, so that working in a spirit of Justice and humility, having served God on
> this earth...and his hidden views,…with you in Heaven.'

A small loose sheet of paper has drafts of the prayer:

> Très Sainte Barbe, nous les artilleurs de France ayant mission de réduire la Créature
> en une charpie saignante, nous vous supplions très humblement prosternés à vos pieds
> de faire que notre corps ne se soûle point de sang et de mort mais œuvre dans un
> esprit de Justice et de soumission, afin qu'ayant servi Dieu sur cette terre, suivant ses
> vues secrètes, nous le louangions avec vous dans le ciel.
> nous louangions Dieu avec vous dans le Ciel Amen.
> T. S. Barbe, nous les artill. de France : mission de la mort physique, nous vous en
> supplions : Daignez écarter de nos cœurs la soûlerie de superbe et de Sang afin
> qu'œuvrant ici-bas dans un esprit de justice et de soumission
>
> 'Most holy Barbara, we the cannoneers of France, having the mission to reduce God's
> creature to bloody shreds, we beg you most humbly, prostrate at your feet, that our
> body not inebriate itself with blood and death but work in a spirit of Justice and
> submission, so that having served God on this earth, according to his secret views, we
> praise him with you in heaven.
> we praise God with you in Heaven, Amen.
> Most Holy Barbara, we the artillerymen of France…mission of physical death, we
> entreat you:
> Deign to turn from our hearts the intoxication of arrogance and blood so that working
> here below in a spirit of justice and submission'

The inscription is a clear expression of Charlot's search for a religiously permissible attitude for making war. Again he relies on God's inscrutable will, which must be obeyed, and also on the conviction that Justice is on the allied side. He is worried about the sins of pride and impurity, which are particularly dangerous when one is constantly in the presence of death. He is also aware of the intoxication of combat and cruelty. Charlot was following folk practice in joining art with literature, and he composed poems for several of the items in the Ste. Barbe Series before he abandoned the project.

A smaller preparatory sketch exists of the next stage of the design, which is basically that of the final print.[26] Saint Barbara is in her final attitude—her body slightly turned and her head inclined down

to her left. She is wearing the flower crown of a martyr rather than the Phrygian cap, and the border represents that crown rather than martial decorations. The colors are, however, still red, white, and blue.

In the final full-scale drawing, the patriotic colors have been replaced by an elegant blue and yellow.[27] The Jean Charlot Collection contains two prints hand-colored by Charlot: brown with light green and orange with purple. Charlot was moving away from the "flag-like quality" of the Images d'Epinal towards the "more refined" colors developed in Orleans by "the genius among the folk artists who offered some very curious relationships of greens and yellows and blue-grays and so on." He was also moving from a patriotic expression to a more purely religious one. In this drawing, Charlot sketched in a second line for the inscription, "Patronne des Artilleurs," but did not use it in the final print. He has paid particular attention to his lettering.

Charlot entrusted the final production entirely to the printer at Orleans (Morse 1976: 7), keeping and marking the "1re épreuve." He had every reason to be proud of his achievement. The image is monumental and clear with graceful decorative details. Charlot is working in his liturgical style, but he has sacrificed some of its earlier grace in order to strengthen it; the print is closer to the wood bas-reliefs than to the textile designs. Although the print was produced as a lithograph in tusche, its strong lines and absolute contrasts reveal that Charlot "was certainly thinking in terms of woodcut." Unfortunately, he had no facilities for the production of woodcuts in Orleans; his next ones will be done in Paris while on leave.

The forcefulness of tonal contrast continues into the subject: the phallic cannon is extremely masculine, and the saint, with her soft body and broad hips, is extremely feminine. The two sides, rather than uniting, pull against each other, an impression that deepens as one contemplates the print. War is the work of men, and women offer refuge from it: the saint in prayer and the family at home. But women seem the more vulnerable, like the surviving flowers on the field before which the wheel tracks of the cannon have stopped just in time.

The absolute tension of the main subject finds explosive relief in the two vignettes: horses pulling the cannon forward and the cannon being fired. These were not generalized images: "Those are actually my guns, copied directly from them" (Morse 1976: 7). Five small sheets survive of Charlot's sketches of artillery students practicing at Orleans.[28] The sketches are lively and stylish. Charlot emphasizes the different patterns formed as the individual or grouped students move in their lightish work uniforms with their darker shoes, belts, chin-straps, and hair. Typical movements and postures are simplified and blocked. The barrel and the train of the cannon poke out dark from the light groups of men. The quick broken lines of the drawing create an energetic, even explosive effect. Charlot could have done more with this subject than he ultimately did.

The *Sainte Barbe* was planned as the first of a series of prints, a list of which was written on the same sheet as a preliminary sketch for the last of the series: ***St*** *Marthe, Ponne des Cuistots*:[29]

Ste Barbe	St Christophe	St Maurice
St F. d'Assise	T. S. Cœur	Ste Odile

Ste Lygdwinne.	Œuvres de charité	St B. J. Labre [*sic*: Labré]
Be J. d'Arc	St Laurent	Ste Marthe
faits		

The list agrees with the report of "Un Mois de Travail" in *La Gilde* of December 1917 (1) that a Francis of Assisi was done after the *Ste Barbe*, so the whole list may be in the order of the work done or planned to be done.

The Jean Charlot Collection contains a small preliminary design for a print of St. Francis of Assisi.[30] The print has already been worked out in detail. The border is particularly rich. At the top, the sun on the right and the moon and stars on the left frame a group of angels. The sides and bottom of the border enclose a rural landscape with a building, a bridge, a church, and birds, fish, and a wolf. St. Francis' love of nature is illustrated with this shining scene. The central image is not a narrative, but an emblem: St. Francis assumes the position of the crucified Christ as heavenly arrows descend to mark him with the stigmata. Charlot planned two other such emblems for the series, discussed below, and may have considered the form more open to the medieval iconography he was studying. Like the Jonah emblem of his textile designs, Charlot's emblems are less successful, in my opinion, than his narrative pictures.

I can identify no image that could be connected with St. Lydwine, but several have survived of the next saint on the list, Joan of Arc. Two preliminary drawings with wash exist, both of which show that the final design had almost been reached.[31] The heavy borders at top and bottom consist of a Gothic arcade; the side borders are plain. The composition of the image is a dynamic and irregular X: one diagonal is formed by Joan's lance; the other one, not strictly parallel, is represented by the curved and rearing horse. Joan is spearing the multi-headed dragon being trampled by her horse. A shield and a vignette fill the empty spaces. The color is patriotic red, white, and blue; indeed a banner like the French flag is attached to Joan's lance, with the Sacred Heart centered on the white section. The full-scale design, *Jeanne guerrière*,[32] has reduced the border and made the image more dynamic: the butt of Joan's lance now descends from the top left corner of the print, and the curve of the horse's tail forms the outer limit of the left border. The heavy Gothic border has been retained only at the bottom, and under it, the title in cursive lettering has been placed. An inscription runs around the other three borders: "La Ts Se Jeanne d'Arc, Patronne des Soldats Français" 'The Very Holy Joan of Arc, Patroness of French Soldiers.' The figures cover most of the surface of the print, so the vignette has been dropped; the shield however reinforces the strong patriotism of the print with two fleurs-de-lys and the crown supported by a sword. Like the *Sainte Barbe*, the print is monumental and clear, and the composition is more dynamic.

Three drawings exist of the *St Christophe*: two small ones on the recto and verso of the same sheet, and a large drawing at the planned size of the print, with the valuable date "1917."[33] Charlot started with the figures walking towards the viewer's right, moving towards a town and away from a threatening dragon on the left shore; the border was a simple, geometric design, much like Charlot's designs for frames in Hawai'i. Charlot then turned the small sheet over and traced the figures from the recto—a practice he had learned in childhood—so that they were now moving towards the left. The

dragon was abandoned, and the riverbank was raised to balance the town on the other bank. The border became a rich design of plants, animals, and birds. Charlot wrote the title *St Christophe* on this version and it became the basis of the larger drawing. The fragmentary border now seems to consist of seabirds, fish, and seals—more appropriate to the river crossing of the main image. The birds have also invaded the image itself. The dragon has become a sea monster whose body replaces the right riverbank and balances the town. The whole setting of the image is like an Italian Primitive, with the section view of the banks and the stream, the little town, and the monster. The figure of Saint Christopher has been elongated to extend across the whole length of the image, recalling Huré's woodcut, *Madonna and Child*, described above. Rather than her pyramidal form, Charlot has composed the figure as an X, with the two walking feet at the bottom and the diverging heads of Christopher and the Christ child at the top. The whole figure is tilted forward, the trunk and shoulders more than the loins and legs. The imbalance is "corrected" by the backward leaning of the Christ child—expressing the fact that in the story, he became increasingly heavy and hard to carry—and by Christopher's walking stick. The stick and the two legs describe with their angles the successive movements of walking, an early use by Charlot of this traditional visual device for suggesting movement. Charlot always liked the subject of Saint Christopher and would use it in Mexico as a symbol of the introduction of Christianity.

Two drawings are found of the next subject on the list, *T. S. Cœur*: a small one entitled *Sacré Cœur* and a large one, the intended size of the print, with the valuable date "1917."[34] Less attention has been given to the border; on the large drawing, it seems to consist of flames. The image is an emblem—rather than a narrative scene—with small vignettes, some of which are narrative. The large Sacred Heart is at the center of the image; three streams of fire extend to the borders from the top and the three sides of the heart, dividing the surface into three subsidiary areas, which contain vignettes. The streams and the small scale of the vignettes create the impression that the heart is floating three-dimensionally in front of the surface of the print.

The vignettes with their labels develop the theology of the Sacred Heart. At the top left, Isaiah prophecies the birth of Jesus. Just below him is a scene referring to the origin of the Sacred Heart. On the small drawing, Charlot used a label for the Visitation—"Visitation. Marie porte en elle le S. CŒUR de Jésus" 'Visitation. Mary carries in herself the SACRED HEART of Jesus'—but the drawing is of the Annunciation. On the large drawing, he applied the right label: "Marie conçoit le S. CŒUR de Jésus" 'Mary conceives the SACRED HEART of Jesus.' The composition on the small drawing resembles that of *The Women at the Tomb* in the series of Rondels of the Mysteries of the Rosary: the angel and Mary, holding a domestic distaff, face and balance each other in profile to the viewer. The Annunciation Rondel was much more dramatic: Mary made an imperious gesture over the angel abasing himself at her feet. Charlot spent some time developing his new depiction of the Annunciation. Three small drawings on the verso of a sheet with studies for the Twelve Apostles Series show him turning the figure of Mary toward the viewer, making the composition more complicated and interesting. A larger, more detailed design for the Annunciation can be found on the verso of *Les Aveugles*, a long horizontal sheet of sketches connected to *Les Œuvres de Charité* of the Ste. Barbe Series. Mary now has her back to the angel and looks over her shoulder at him; the twist of her body had been made yet more complicated. The

domesticity of the scene is accentuated, probably under the influence of Anne-Catherine Emmerich and others, with numerous details of the interior of the room. The angle of the distaff remains dramatically diagonal, designed to correspond to the angle of the lance in the vignette to the right. But in the first design, Mary is holding the distaff over her shoulder, in the second across her lap and torso, and in the third in front of her. This last drawing is larger in scale than the vignette, different in shape, and more detailed than required for the *Sacred Heart* print. Charlot was clearly intrigued by the subject and planned to do more with it.

At the top right of the Sacred Heart drawings is Zacharias prophesying the piercing of Jesus' heart from which the sacred blood will flow. Below him is placed a vignette of that event with the label: "Coup de Lance. Le sacré Cœur s'ouvre pour nous" 'Lance thrust. The Sacred Heart opens itself for us.' On the verso of *Les Aveugles*, a drawing of the crucified Jesus looking down to his right is probably a study for this vignette. Isaiah and Zachariah read from scrolls whose lines suggest a crowning arch for the print.

Below the large bleeding heart, Mary stands on the left and John the Evangelist on the right, as if at the Crucifixion. Centered below them is a scene of the consecration of the Host at Mass, labeled "Don du S. Cœur" 'Gift of the Sacred Heart.' Two worshippers assume postures resembling those Charlot gave to the angels in his planned wooden bas-relief altar piece. A narrow interior border is composed of hearts, alternatively rightside-up or upside-down. An inscription is found under the whole print: "Aimez vous bien l'un l'autre ô mes enfantelets. (S^{t} J.)" 'Love one another, O my little children (Saint John).'

Charlot may have been able to develop this design, but at the point it reached, it is unattractive. He has not decided on an interesting shape to give the heart, and the three demarcated areas are graceless. The vignettes are placed awkwardly, and the labels are needed to fill in the space. The area below the heart is insufficiently filled. The interior border of hearts is odd. Charlot's theologizing mind dominated his work on this print to the disadvantage of his sense of visual design. On the other hand, the theme of the heart was undeniably important for Charlot during this period. He used it for his projected personal ex libris in the sketchbook *Guerre 1918* and portrayed himself presenting his heart to the crucified Christ in the *Chemin de Croix*. The sacrificial heart may have been one subject in which Christianity and Aztec religion met for Charlot. In any case, he continued to be interested in the subject of the Sacred Heart, but needed to assimilate it into his predominantly narrative style, as he did in his mural *Black Christ and Worshipers*, 1962, in Fiji.

Charlot's next project on the list, *Œuvres de Charité*, was also problematical.[35] A rich flowered border would have enclosed five vignettes: *Pauvres* 'The Poor,' *Prisonniers* 'Prisoners,' *Affligés* 'The Afflicted,' *Malades* 'The Sick,' and *Morts* 'The Dead.' Angels accomplish or oversee the acts of charity performed. The design for *Malades* is based on the one done for textiles on the death of Mary, *L'ange apporte la palme à Marie agonisante*. In my view, the vignettes do not add up to a large print, but Charlot was apparently intrigued by the idea of using vignettes in this way and explored other possibilities. *Sketches for Œuvres de Charité* and Angels of the Arts.[36] contains a study for *Malades* and continues with vignettes for the arts—music, literature, painting, sculpture, and theatre—with angels

again directing, comforting, or overseeing the artists in the different fields. The images are histrionic, and Charlot has not been able to find a place for his angel between the gesticulating actors. He finally crosses out his image of the sculptor. Charlot could not attempt to glorify artists without his sense of humor getting in the way.

Charlot was on firmer ground with religious subjects. *Les Aveugles* is a slim horizontal sheet of four vignettes.[37] The first on the left is of a man helping an old blind woman, a vignette that would fit in perfectly with *Œuvres de Charité*. The next vignette is of a group of men who are just realizing that they have been blinded, the terror of a gas attack. The last two images are slightly differing versions of a subject that is not immediately definable. A young man and a woman embrace while behind them an angel kneels with head bowed in grief. The mortuary angel indicates, I believe, that the subject is of a man leaving for the war from which he will not return. These four vignettes are genuinely touching, but the problem remains of using them to make a larger design.

Of the subjects after *Œuvres de Charité* on the list quoted above, a preparatory drawing can be found only of *S^t^ Maurice*; since it is in the sketchbook *Guerre 1918*, it can be dated to around June 1918, probably after Charlot had experienced the Battle of the Matz. The drawing is small, but finished. The full-length figure of St. Maurice—the Christian Roman soldier martyred along with his companions after refusing to sacrifice to the emperor—is dressed in a French army uniform. He stands but inclines his head peacefully towards the sword raised above him. At his feet are three helmeted heads of his friends decapitated before him, recalling photographs of the French dead sprawled on the side of a road after the Battle of the Matz. The richness of the border is indicated by swirls and specified with the words "fruits et cœurs" 'fruit and hearts.' Charlot has erased a vignette he tested in an open space. The design is strong and the planned print communicates much emotion. Charlot had earlier mentioned St. Maurice, patron of soldiers, in his poem *D'un Art Pauvre*, discussed below. He drew a St. Maurice in Germany on May 26, 1919—listed in "Mes dessins en Allemagne"—but it was not among the drawings he kept, and I do not know whether it was a later version of this same composition.

No drawings can be found of *S^t^ Laurent*, *S^te^ Odile*, or *S^t^ B. J. Labre*. Charlot wrote a poem for the last two saints. "S. Odile" is written above the drawing for *Paroles de N. D. de Parkmann*, but was probably connected to another drawing or list that has been cut off. On the same sheet as the list is a preliminary sketch of a print for the last saint: *S^te^ Marthe, P^onne^ des Cuistots*.[38] The use of military *argot* for 'cooks' suggests that Charlot was doing the print for the army mess workers; interestingly, he kept a later photograph of a field kitchen on the back of which someone has written: "Oise. Les cuisines à L. à 300^m^ des 1^er^ lignes" 'Oise. The kitchens at L. three hundred meters from the front lines.' The border of the drawing seems to be composed of kitchen ware, and they figure prominently in the image of Martha at work in the kitchen, a perennial interest of Charlot's. Her elongated figure in profile is surrounded by geometric forms: a table, pans, a flue, and a stove that resembles remarkably those that Charlot will depict in Mexico. The sheet contains a second drawing whose subject I cannot identify.

Charlot continued to plan designs for subjects after he wrote the list. "S. Michel" is also written on the sheet for *Paroles de N. D. de Parkmann*.[39] Before a group of worshippers in a village, Mary

appears within an oval nimbus, itself lighted by eight lateral candles on protruding sockets. The words mentioned in the title would have been inscribed under it. The image of the Virgin, which fills the upper two thirds of the picture area, is iconic; the worshippers are rendered more realistically. This same arrangement was used in the design for *N. D. des Victoires*: the iconic image of Mother and Child looks down on a column of soldiers dejected in retreat.[40] The icon would have been colored in gold-like yellow-green; the soldiers in gray-blue. The project clearly addresses the problem of morale in the French army of 1917.[41]

On the verso of the design for the St. Francis of Assisi, discussed above, is a subject not immediately identifiable. An old man collapses and is held on his right by a woman and on his left by the Christ child. A vignette at the top right corner resembles those for *Œuvres de Charité*: an angel watches over a man who has collapsed onto his hands and knees. I believe the subject is the death of Joseph, a saint to whom Charlot had a lifelong devotion, perhaps an allusion to the elderly parents at home whose sons had been sent to war.

S^t^. Étienne, 1^er^ martyr[42] is an almost completed design: the first Christian martyr embraces a French soldier who has received a head wound and walks with the aid of a cane. The two bodies form a pyramidal composition crowned by the halo of the saint and the more complicated halo of the soldier. I believe Charlot was adapting a device found in Byzantine art: having a distinctive halo for people who were living. The border is richly flowered.

A very early sketch for the heads of the two figures is found on the verso of *The Blood of the Crucified Christ Flows into the Well of the Water of Life*.[43] The cross has been planted in the center of the well, and from the wounds in Christ's feet, the only visible part of his body, blood flows down into the well and out four openings in its wall. Worshippers gather around to drink the life-giving blood. This image is not traditional and may be an invention of Charlot's.

The Ste. Barbe Series is generally in Charlot's developed liturgical style with its elongated figures and gracefully curved lines. He was also applying this style to different types of subjects, like emblems, and exploring possible uses for vignettes. Stylistically, the greatest advance was achieved when he depicted realistic war scenes in his sketches, in his preparatory drawings, and in the realized print of *Sainte Barbe*. Such scenes were influencing other artists as well to call on new inner and outer resources for their art and explore new means of expression. Charlot would continue this new direction over the next months.

Charlot conceived of the Ste. Barbe Series as a folk combination of image and text and, as seen above, composed inscriptions and prayers to accompany the prints. As I will show below, when Charlot left Orleans for Sézanne, he could no longer continue his visual arts in large format; he generally restricted his drawing to his small sketchbooks and transferred his main creative activity to his poetry. He continued, however, to work on the Ste. Barbe Series. Some of the smaller sketches of the later designs may have been done in Sézanne, and he wrote a numbered series of five poems, *Images*, on saints from the series. These poems combine successfully his formal liturgical poetry with the intense personal emotions he was experiencing close to the combat zone; emotions that infuse with intensity the details of

army life that create the forceful realism and particularity of the poems, so different from the generalizing traditional symbolism of his earlier liturgical poetry.

The first poem is appropriately a prayer to *Sainte Barbe (Patronne des Artilleurs)* of February 12, 1918:

> qui pitoyablement veille sur nos dépôts,
> Cueillant les âmes qui jaillissent hors des peaux,
> Fossoyant toute chair que la mitraille ébarbe.
>
> 'who pitifully watches over our bases,
> Gathering up the souls that gush from out the skins,
> Trenching and draining all the flesh that the grapeshot trims.'

Saint Barbara is asked to present to God the Father—described as a folk image with white beard—"ce martial, pieux et pourrissant troupeau" 'this martial, pious, and rotting troop' that has been drawn from all France to wage the war. Characteristically, he asks her also to protect the families at home, especially those mothers and fiancées who have received notices of death. He asks for this as he rides his horse on fatigue-duty, dragging the supply wagons along the route of honor that none can flee.

The second poem, dated February 12 to 15, is for *Saint Tobie (Patron des Fossoyeurs)* 'Saint Tobias, Patron of Grave-Diggers' (the word can also refer to trench-diggers), who recalls for Charlot the multitudes of good and bad, of fiancés, sons, and husbands who have died through all the ages and whom Tobias, like a good gardener, cares for under the earth until the day comes to help them in the Resurrection. *Saint Nicolas Lorrain* (February 21, 1918) is appropriate as the saint of an embattled region—Alsace and Lorraine, lost to Germany after the war of 1870, were symbolic of the French struggle—and because of the story that he brought back to life three children who had been killed by an evil butcher for meat; may he help resurrect the rotting corpses of the children who fight to free his land. *Sainte Odile Alsacienne (Guérisseuse des maux d'yeux)* 'Alsatian and Healer of Illnesses of the Eyes' of February 22, 1918, is also regionally appropriate and personally interesting to Charlot, whose eyes were apparently suffering in the army. Charlot prays again for those who have died fighting for Alsace like good fiancés of France. If Saint Odile accorded him the time, he would engrave the sweet abbess listening and leaning over the rose bush of France with its flowers of purple and gold. Charlot's mind was full of visual projects that he feared he would never realize. The last poem *Saint Benoît Joseph Labré (Patron des Mendiants)* 'Patron of Beggars' of March 3, 1918, was written "au pansage par temps froid" 'grooming horses during a cold period.' The saint in his rags often suffered such deathly frost attacking any exposed skin; Charlot prays to him now as they drag their loose leggings on the road to Sézanne, preparing to leave for a new land of wounds: "O ! je suis las, horriblement de l'action" 'Oh! I am tired, horribly of this battle action.' He pulls this invocation painfully from his feverish brain.

The Ste. Barbe Series was the basis for Charlot's *D'un Art Pauvre*, in which he defined the purpose and style of his art. Charlot told me on October 6, 1971 that he was sleeping in the stables on straw at the time he wrote the poem: "It wasn't fun." Straw evoked Christian images of poverty and the

Nativity, but Charlot knew now that straw was not soft. Jesus had a hard landing in this world, an arrival prophetic of his life of struggle and death. Straw reconfirms on Charlot's skin the serious purpose of art: to address and help solve the problems of pain, fear, and death for an audience for whom those problems were most immediate. Charlot's poem of February 14, 1918, *De la pauvreté suivant la Nativité*, written on "Garde d'écurie" 'Stable guard,' prays: "Veillez-nous assoupis dans la paille de seigle" 'Watch over us collapsed on this straw of rye,' recalls Christ's being laid on straw in the manger, and draws the connection:

> Nous combattrons, toutes richesses éludées,
> Ne possédant pas même la chair de nos peaux.
>
> 'We will go into combat, all riches eluding us,
> Not owning even the flesh of our skins.'

Probably written shortly before *D'un Art Pauvre*, a verse poem announces some of its themes. Charlot has led the life of a rich cultured esthete:

> Et j'avais "enrichi" mon esprit, et mes paumes
> Palpitaient au contact esthètes des camées
>
> 'And I had "enriched" my spirit, and my palms
> Palpitated at the esthetic contact of cameos'

But now, "Me voici redevenu pauvre" 'Here am I become poor again.' Charlot's description of the poor man is negative: he possesses only his body, but he is exhausted and stupefied, finding no consolation in religion or response in love as his life slips away in its agony.

Dated simply 1918 and placed at the Camp de Retortat, *D'un Art Pauvre* was probably written shortly after the Ste. Barbe Series; the manuscript refers to a year of military service, which would have ended in mid-April 1918. This was the first of the few poems Charlot published, which indicates its importance for him. He also kept the draft in manuscript, now in the JCC; the draft contains passages that were excised to increase the concentration of the poem, but which I will use in my interpretation.

Now that he is poor, in contact with real matter, knowing cold and fatigue, lying exhausted in the straw, many hidden things have become clear. In the manuscript, he referred to his year of manual work and, echoing the earlier *Il s'est passé depuis ce temps-là bien des choses*, the effect this has had on his hands. The manuscript continues with a description of poor men, a description Charlot will echo in his 1919 address to the Gilde on his experience of the war. Poor men sleep where they are, eat what they find, and think little. Their language is rough, but their simplicity is close to God. They have seen many things, but all real; anything factitious astonishes them—any factitious art. The final poem continues: there is something clearer than gold: the mat lightness of the straw in which Jesus chose to be born. There is something softer than cloth: the living hide of the horse. Better than agile words is the silence of the person who helps. What do varnished canvases in heavy frames do for these poor? What connection do these have with sculptures of expensive marble? Artists have gone wrong: "Nous n'œuvrons point pour ceux-ci mais pour dix égoïstes…" 'We don't work for these but for ten egoists.' How can the artist

reconnect with the poor who are the essential human beings? What they like is everyday things: tools, clothes, pet dogs. Luxurious materials frighten them. But these good glue colors, this inked wood, they know what they are made of. Charlot had mentioned glue colors already in "Nous les Jeunes !." Spread on brown paper, such colors and ink are like cheese spread with a knife. The poor can stick big red and blue sheets on the wall, and put little ones in their pockets. Charlot is referring to folk-like penny-sheets and smaller prints like holy cards. The patron saint depicted will bless every task: St. Eligius blacksmiths, St. Vincent vine-keepers, St. Maurice soldiers, St. Christopher boatmen, and St. Tobias gravediggers. This Paradise of plenty will flower on paper as simply as the wild herbs and flowers of the field.

The poem expresses in concentrated, forceful terms Charlot's conclusions from his year of military life among the common soldiers. He rededicates his art to the people and extends his ideas about the honesty of materials to their poverty: cheap materials to which every poor person can relate. In his poems of the period, Charlot refers to other objects of popular devotion, like the Shroud of Turin, thought at the time to be a print of the crucified Christ's body on the shroud in which he was buried (*Regardons ce suaire, ô Maître, à ton estampe*, February 8, 1918) and gives a poem the title *Ex-Voto* (February 15, 1918). In *Combien sont morts, ayant ignoré ce loyer* of February 6, 1918, he mentions the medals soldiers carried around their necks:

> Ils sont tombés. À notre tour, portant de lourdes
> machines, et au cou Notre-Dame de Lourdes
>
> 'They have fallen. In our turn, carrying heavy
> machines, and at our neck Our Lady of Lourdes'

Charlot also formulates a goal of his artwork, to join sight, touch, and hearing: the image done in tactile manner and accompanied by inscriptions or poems (*Je vous suivrai jusques au bout, mais laissez-moi*, probably of February 16, 1918):

> Il me faut colliger vue, toucher, ouïe,
> Afin que la face de Dieu soit réjouie.
>
> 'I must join sight, touch, hearing,
> So that the face of God be gladdened.'

D'un Art Pauvre is deeply personal in its references: Charlot was studying intently the flowers he mentions, thinking he might never see them again. The expression is personal as well. Influences can be found, and Charlot particularly mentioned Claudel:

> But I recognize in it myself some reflections of a number of people that I knew or admired, and Claudel is certainly one of the influences in that sort of poetry, and strange to say, it is mixed up with the formal presentation as far as verse and rime is concerned instead of free verse. It's the form of sonnets, and those sonnets came to me through people like Leconte de Lisle, for example, that I had read when I was quite young. I was a little ashamed of those verses, and reading them now, I

> remember what Claudel said about sonnets. He said it was like a "*boîte à musique*," that you turn it around, it does its little musical stint, and then it ends, and you know that it lasts only through three minutes or maybe fourteen verses. (Interview September 21, 1970)

Perhaps under the influence of Rimbaud's prose poems, which Charlot was reading while taking refuge in the stables, he has abandoned in *D'un Art Pauvre* the classical forms he usually favored and adopted a simpler, more direct mode of communication: one poorer in poeticizing devices and thus more accessible to the people he wanted to reach with his visual art as well. He has retained the aural richness of Claudel and adopted the long discursive lines of Gregorian chant. With the exception of his sonnet in *argot*, his best poems of the war will be in this form. *D'un Art Pauvre* is one of Charlot's most important poems, the first, in my opinion, whose value is not primarily biographical.

The Saint Barbara Series was a major project involving images and words. The many subjects were coordinated around the concerns of wartime, and Charlot kept adding new subjects. He could not, however, work in a large format once he was transferred closer to the front. Even more important, a new project would begin to occupy him: a woodcut series on the Way of the Cross, a subject suited to Charlot's special talent as a narrative artist.

As Charlot's period of training neared its end, he was granted leave from January 6 to 13, 1918, and returned home to Paris to see his family. Charlot made an excellent drawing of his main model of those years, *Louis Goupil, profile*.[44] I believe that Charlot was again reaffirming his connection with his family. This finished drawing is unlike those that Charlot drew specifically to prepare for prints in that its fine shading cannot be transferred to woodcut. Moreover, the drawing is in horizontal format, the print in vertical. I conclude that the drawing was not preparatory but done for its own sake. Charlot probably liked it so much that he used it as a basis for his woodcut *Bon-Papa* (Morse number 5). The woodcut itself is very strong, with much use of the original grain of the wood. The face is both fine and forceful, with almost violent scoring coalescing into the image. On the evidence of this print alone, Charlot had a special compatibility with woodcut.

Besides seeing his family, he kept himself busy. He attended the lecture by Maurice Denis at the Gilde on January 7, and was described in *La Gilde*:

> Notre ami Charlot, fonctionnaire brigadier d'artillerie en permission assistait à la Conférence de M. Maurice Denis. Nous qui ne l'avions pas vu depuis son incorporation, nous lui avons trouvé une mine superbe, beaucoup d'entrain, et une allure toute militaire. ("La Conférence de M. Maurice Denis" January 25, 1918)

> 'Our friend Charlot, official brigadier of artillery on leave attended the Conference of Mr. Maurice Denis. We, who had not seen him since his induction, found him glowing with health, full of energy, and with a completely military bearing.'

In the same issue (page 2), the announcement was published of the contest sponsored by the Société Saint-Jean for a Way of the Cross. Charlot may have been told of this contest during his visit to Paris.

Charlot made the woodcut version of *Les Blessés au Travail* (Morse number 6) in Paris. Morse places it at Orleans, but Charlot did not have the facilities for making woodcuts in that city; for that reason, he had to do the second version (Morse number 7) in lithograph in tusche, just like the *Saint Barbara*. The print was done for a program of a charity event, that is, for a special audience. Only an unidentified state of the print has survived by accident, because Charlot abandoned it "since I could not do it to my liking…" (Morse 1976: 6). Charlot may mean that he failed with the print. Two large areas of the soldier's face are white—at the nose and the cheekbone—which might suggest that Charlot had removed so much wood from the block that he could no longer describe the face adequately. An alternative possibility is suggested by the straight lines descending from the bridge of the nose, which are then met and partially crossed by lines descending from above the ear. That is, the soldier may be wearing bandages or a mask; he may be one of the facially *mutilés de la guerre* 'mutilated by the war,' "ces faces sans nez" 'those faces without noses' that Charlot was afraid he would join in his poem *La mort acceptée*. If that is so, Charlot's remark may mean that the subject was too horrible for the audience.

Returning to Orleans, Charlot had to do the illustration in tusche, so he completely redid the image to accord with the medium. That is, having learned from the *Saint Barbara*, he did not want to do a lithograph that resembled a woodcut; he wanted to use the special capacities of lithography: calligraphy, shading, and so on. The almost final drawing,[45] which reveals evidence of tracing, is based on the first version with modifications. In the first version, the soldier is at a strong three-quarters angle to the viewer while the winged figure of Victory is turned only slightly. In the second version, the soldier is in pure profile and holds the Victory at a stronger three-quarters angle. The soldier's intact profile is accentuated, and his long throat stretches out vulnerably like a sacrificial lamb's. Minor changes have been made in the print. The background of the inscription has been flattened, replacing the calligraphic cross-hatching of the drawing. The little face on the Victory has been blanked out. The unidentifiable lettering on the helmet has been made into a clear "CC," *canonnier conducteur*. Charlot signed the print and dated it January 24, 1918.

The print was completed in the middle of the period from January 18 to 27, when Charlot was apparently working in the infirmary.[46] There he used his leisure also to write seven poems. The second to the last bears the note "Avant de quitter Orléans" 'Before leaving Orleans,' and the poems seem to be a survey of his thoughts before leaving basic training for combat duty and possible death: "Hier qu'en reste-t-il et demain qu'en sais-tu" 'What is left of yesterday and what do you know of tomorrow.' Charlot is anxious about his spiritual state, which he condemns for its pride and hypocrisy:

> Mon cœur fut vaniteux et astorge,
> mon humilité feinte et ma luxure prude.
>
> 'My heart was vain and unfeelingly severe,
> my humility, sham, and my luxuriousness, prudish.'

A new temptation is one Charlot earlier felt he had learned to control, sexuality: "J'ai préféré au sang de vos plaies l'or des tresses" 'I have preferred to the blood of Your wounds the gold of tresses.' The French

army supplied prostitutes to the soldiers, and Charlot had recognized immediately on entering the army that he was in a new and morally dangerous atmosphere. In his summary of his religious life, written in May 1927, he viewed that moment as the beginning of a new period of his life. Whatever sexual temptations he had felt earlier had been constrained by the society in which he was living, and his resistance to sexual temptation had been supported by his Christian family and friends. In the army, women were sexually available, and the soldier community encouraged their use. Charlot wrote:

> Quand la guerre m'a pris j ai dit : De l'innocence d'ignorance à l'innocence volontaire, Mourons. (Avril 1917.) Ça n'a pas été si facile. Ça a même été un four.
> 'When the war took me, I said: From the innocence of ignorance to voluntary innocence, Let us die. (April 1917.) That has not been so easy. That has even been a furnace.'

Charlot wrote several times that his prewar purity was a result more of ignorance than will. He felt that he would now have to resist temptation more consciously and actively.

Sexual temptation was, however, particularly acute for the soldiers. As seen in his poems, Charlot was feeling the heightened need for a woman's comfort experienced by many men during wartime. In his notes for his April 1918 address to the Gilde on the lessons he learned from the war, he writes (*Notebook C*): "la mort étalon des incidents charnels" 'death a spur to carnal incidents.' He could remember this feeling years later, perhaps with more sympathy (*II : C'était sûr. D'avoir marché*, March 15, 1925). In a poem written before leaving Orleans, Charlot conjures up the vamp of his Decadent poems, "cette courtisane amazone, aux beaux cils" 'this amazon courtesan with beautiful eyelashes,' and uses his terms for his strong sexual response, both visual and olfactory: "ta sueur, la fièvre de tes aisselles" 'your sweat, the fever of your armpits.' But the whore is his own soul attempting in her vanity to attract the Lord who is impervious to the superficial. Despite his unworthiness, he begs God to give him the protection and comfort he needs so desperately. He prays for the strength to accept God's will and maintain his trust in God's instruction and loving care: "Endormez à vos tétons ma peur" 'Lull my fear to sleep at your breasts.' Just as Charlot can depict himself as the female devotee, he can, less traditionally, visualize God as the loving mother:

> Voyant la mère qui vaque aux soins de l'office,
> L'enfant au bras, je souhaite, quiet en tes dessins,
> d'apaiser ma douleur au creux de tes deux seins,
> d'endormir ma mémoire entre tes bras, ô Fils !
>
> 'Seeing the mother busy at the duties of her office,
> The child in her arm, I wish, quiet in your plans,
> to pacify my pain in the hollow between your two breasts,
> to put my memory to sleep inside your arms, O Son!'

Charlot's worry was justified; "French infantry losses in the first six months of 1918 totaled 51 per cent of effectives"; indeed, four hundred and thirty students of the Beaux-Arts died in the war as well as important artists and writers.[47]

Charlot also began to make notes on religious subjects. After his notes on the lecture by Maurice Denis at the Gilde on January 7, Charlot wrote about the love of God: we should love God because he is good and others because of him. Charlot emphasized the role of will over emotion:

> Essentiel
> Aimer Dieu : ns. pensons à sensibilité
> Non. c'est la volonté : obéir à ses commandements.
> Sécheresse de S^te^ Therèse marque d'amour
> Aimer prochain : idem cet amour là ns. en sommes maîtres
> Donc bienveillance et faire du bien (*Notebook 1918*)
>
> 'Essential
> Love God: we think of sensibility
> no it's the will: obey his commandments.
> The dryness felt by Saint Thérèse was a mark of love
> Love one's neighbors: same we are the masters of that love
> So benevolence and doing good.'

He also agreed to a hierarchy of love, which seems to be influenced by the situation of the war: "Degrés d'amour : d'abord à famille, amis, indiff, ennemis, n'exclut point la justice" 'Degrees of love: first family, friends, those we are indifferent to, enemies, in no way excluding justice.' Leaving for combat duty, Charlot emphasized will and love, including love of enemy. At Orleans, Charlot also started to make dated lists of liturgical services, which he would expand in later years. Charlot was trying to keep up his liturgical observance during the war, and the listing seems to mark a new emphasis on them, another stage in his development of a personal religion of a parishioner.

Before leaving, Charlot was preparing for his future work and tying up loose ends. He began using two notebooks—*Notebook 1918* and *Guerre 1918*[48]—the former mostly for poetry and the latter mostly for sketching. *Notebook 1918* was begun in Paris, and the drawing at one end of *A Soldier and a Woman on Train* was probably done on his way back to Orleans. The first page of *Guerre 1918* contains a list of names dated January 29, some marked with Xs or question marks; perhaps people to write or see. Family is mentioned as a group, his old friend Pierre Marquet, people connected with the Gilde, army colleagues, General Coquet, and names not found in other documents. Other lists of names and items of clothing show that he was trying not to forget anyone or anything. On January 20, Charlot participated in an evening's entertainment, similar to the soirée (or even the same one) for which he printed a poster (Morse number 4). Charlot's act was to sing or recite *La Cocarde* and (or perhaps from) *Le barbier de Pékin* (*Notebook 1918*).

6.2. SÉZANNE

Charlot left Orleans at the end of January 1918. His *Livret Militaire* contains the note "Effets emportés par le 1r CCr Charlot" 'Effects taken by the first driver-gunner Charlot,' dated at Orleans January 29, 1918. The lovely cityscape of *Sens* in *Notebook 1918*, dated January 30, was done on the way to his new post. On February 2, he dates his first poem written at the C.O.A.L., the Centre d'Organisation d'Artillerie Lourde, at the Camp de Retortat, about two miles southeast of the town center of Sézanne, in Champagne; the region is one of the most beautiful in France and was still undamaged by the war. The camp was placed near enough to the front to provide quickly the necessary logistical support to the combatants. Charlot was assigned to the 109e A.L [*Artillerie Lourde*] '109th Heavy Artillery.' [49] Conditions were hard, and the work was long and tedious. Charlot notes the occasions of his poems: "Corvée de ravitaillement" 'Fatigue-duty of reprovisioning,' "Corvée de T.R. [Travaux Ruraux]" 'Fatigue-duty of Rural Works,' and "au pansage par temps froid" 'grooming horses during a period of cold.'

Charlot made two attempts to ameliorate his situation. First, starting in April, he took a course in operating a radio—*Notebook 1918* contains several pages of practice with radio codes—graduating on June 1 and being reassigned to another unit:

> T.S.F. [Téléphone sans Fil]
> Aux Armées 1er Juin 1918
> Le canonnier Charlot Louis classe 1918 du 107e Rgt d'artillerie 65e Bie a suivi avec succès les *Cours de Radiotélégraphie* du Centre d'organisation d'artillerie lourde de SEZANNE.
> Il a obtenu la note générale: très bien.
> Affecté au 6e gr du 105e A.L.[50]
>
> 'Wireless
> At the Armies June 1, 1918
> The cannoneer Charlot Louis, class of 1918, of the 107th Artillery Regiment, 65th Battery, has passed the Course of Radiotelegraphy at the Organizational Center of the heavy artillery of SEZANNE.
> He earned the general grade: very good.
> Assigned to the sixth group of the 105th Heavy Artillery.

Charlot would participate in the Battle of the Matz as a radio operator at the command post, rather than as a gunner, and several drawings and a poem, discussed below, are related to that work.

Charlot also started studying for the examinations needed to enter the school for artillery officers at Fontainebleau, L'Ecole d'Application d'Artillerie de Fontainebleau:

> At the same time, I knew things that the other fellows didn't know, and I got the idea, it was a strange idea, to study my textbooks and to apply for officers' school, which I did. Most of it was things that I wasn't too strong about: mathematics and so on.

> Because at the time we had no computers; all the artillery stuff was done by brain and hand, human brain and hand. Anyhow, I filled in the different papers, I passed a few written exams, and I had completely forgotten about it.[51]

One of the most important qualifications for entry was ability in mathematics, used to target the guns. Charlot had disliked mathematics in school and felt he had done poorly in class (Interview October 22, 1970); he also felt that he had been unsuited to working as an accountant, which he had tried out as a job to help support the family after his father's death (Interview October 18, 1970). Nonetheless, Charlot persevered. His poem *Pour aller à Bleau* of March 14, 1918, is a prayer for success characteristically anxious about the possible moral ill effects of succeeding. Going to Fontainebleau is a thin hope, "cet espoir maigre," a fragment of wood he grasps to save himself from drowning. But is the hope from God or from Satan, a temptation of pride to join the officers he detests?

> la tentation d'orgueil, démoniaque, m'attend
> avec son képi d'or meublé d'un rictus nègre.
>
> 'the temptation of pride, demoniacal, waits for me
> with his golden officer's cap furnished with a negro's grimace.'

Similarly, in his poem *Très doux petit Jésus voyez-moi ce pauvre homme* of March 11, 1918, Charlot describes the pride he feels in learning mathematics:

> Il se gonfle d'algèbre et suppute la somme
> et le quotient.
>
> 'He puffs himself up with algebra and computes the total
> and the quotient.'

Charlot continues in *Pour aller à Bleau* to ask whether God wants him to drown as a sacrifice? The bucket emerges from the bottom of the well filled with life-giving water. But perhaps God will spare him as the farmer will a dog whom he has failed to kill with the first shot. Charlot must have received discouraging news because his next poem is entitled *Pour Le remercier de n'être pas allé à Bleau*. God's cross is hard to bear. As soldiers, they all seem tough in their helmets and boots, but their souls are afraid. May Jesus pity them as they jolt and bump their way towards Nancy, the Lorraine front. For his half-rotted soul and body, he asks for the prayers of saints, just as he had depicted them in devotional images:

> Saint Jean dont j'ai le nom, Saint Denis de Paris,
> Saint Nicolas lorrain, et Vous Marie, Reine
> des Cieux, priez pour l'âme et le corps, mi-pourris.
>
> 'Saint John, whose name I have, Saint Denis of Paris
> Saint Nicolas of Lorraine, and You Mary, Queen
> of the Skies, pray for my soul and for my body, half-corrupted.'

At Orleans, Charlot had managed to continue his work in the visual arts. Facing support and combat duty, he anticipated a larger disruption: he would have less time, less space, and less mental peace

and freedom from preoccupation. He adjusted first by ceasing his visual creativity in cumbersome media and reducing the amount of work in large format. With the exception of some large drawings for the *Chemin de Croix*, most of his drawing was confined to the small sketchbooks he had used since his youth:

> And there was no way of drawing, at least very little way of drawing. I have, I think, two albums of very small sketches that I did when I could, but they are just like a journal of things. When there was something I wanted to remember, I put it down in a drawing or I put it down in writing, but I couldn't do any true painting because of course the conditions were not conducive. I had a little pocket sketchbook and I made sketches in there… (Interview September 21, 1970)

> And there is also the question of carrying with me just a box of watercolor, which is infinitely easier than oil, and using paper for ground instead of canvas, which is also much easier. As a soldier, of course, I couldn't have painted in oils. I didn't have any moment or place in which I could have done it. (Interview October 18, 1970)

Secondly, he transferred much of his creative energy to his poetry:

> [His life in the army] stopped what I was doing connected with the visual arts. I told you already that I took refuge in poetry because I could do it without accessories. (Interview October 13, 1970)

Charlot began listing his poems, dating back to 1914, from notebooks he had brought with him (*Notebook 1918*). Charlot's turning to poetry reveals much about his creative psychology. First, he was compelled to continue his creativity in some form, rather than simply suspend it:

> But just because it was what went on through my head, especially in those long nights when I had to keep awake under difficult or dangerous conditions, I've kept those verses. And I don't think they will add anything in themselves, but they are something I did because I couldn't paint. I think my natural way of expression is really visual—painting, drawing, and so on—and this was just a thing that nevertheless made me express myself a little bit, even if it wasn't in the mode of expression that would come to me naturally. (Interview September 21, 1970)

In fact, during this period, he became as prolific in his poetry as he had been in Orleans in his visual art:

> the only thing I could do was poetry. I have a great mass of poetry, which I don't think is terribly good, but I kept more through a sense of humility than a sense of pride, because it nevertheless is an image of the things that were going on in my head in those days. (Interview September 21, 1970)

However, for Charlot, visual and literary creativity were essentially different:

> I know that two different parts of my brain get to work when I write, when I write in words, so to speak, or when I paint. In fact, throughout my life, I managed to rest from one thing by doing the other one. It's pretty hard to pinpoint the difference

> because both, of course, are modes of expression, but I think there is more of a conscious and logical approach to words, at least for myself, even when I did poetry, than there is in painting. Every time that you start a painting, you have to start, really, as an adventure, not knowing where you are going, and the grammar, so to speak, which of course is part of the manipulation of words, should not be there; that is, should not be there so much into the consciousness of the painter as it is, perforce, in the consciousness of the writer…. I feel that there is more of an adventure into the unknown in painting than there is an adventure into the unknown in writing. (Interview September 21, 1970)

Throughout his life, Charlot would be unable to do certain kinds of visual art when his mind was too troubled or preoccupied with other matters. Turning to poetry could therefore be a "refuge" and a "rest." This was especially true because of the situation in which both sketches and poems were created:

> Some of those things were done, for example, at night watch, and well, it was night, and it was dark, and there was danger. It was the war, of course, and it would have been very hard, of course, not to have a very strong, a very intense sense of death. Death was all around us and perhaps all around us, and we were all of us young men, some of us very young men, in fact in our teens, so maybe death had a very different character from what example I would think of now that I have in my seventies, and it seems to be the end of the day, so to speak. It was a different thing then. So when I looked at the things around me, it was always with that superposition of looking at them maybe for the last time. Maybe it doesn't answer your question that I was looking back at some of my sketches made in the war—I had a little pocket sketchbook and I made sketches in there—and I was astonished how much of it is taken with studies of natural forms, especially some herbs or grass, leaves of grass, or small flowers that were around me, and even though the drawings are, well, well done, and one would say realistic, I remember that I packed in there a certain drama, that is, the drama that perhaps those were the last little flowers or last little blades of grass I was looking at. (Interview September 21, 1970)

The subject of visual art for Charlot always evoked for him the impermanence of the physical world:

> I think the intense drama of the painter is that he has to do with things that are passing. I was giving the example of the war because there it was such an obvious, intense thing, but even nowadays, let us say, that I do a flower piece, I know of course that the flowers will hardly last the time that I do my flower piece. And if I do a portrait, it's not a very different affair. That is, the passing of things is uppermost perhaps in that intensity of the artist who has a visual image and knows that the visual image, or more exactly, that the model that procures his visual image, is changing, so to speak, right under his eyes and disappearing. So maybe the role, the role of the artist, is to make those things somewhat permanent. I say somewhat permanent

> because painting and drawing, even sculpture, are not really permanent. There is a terrible disappearance of things, even in my lifetime, of the things that I have done, and the paper rots and the canvas rots and so on, so that the permanency of art is really a figure of speech, but that is the intention of the artist. It's to make permanent the impermanent. I find that very strongly in those war sketches. They are not perhaps great art, but they are intensely felt. (Interview September 21, 1970)

In contrast, literature and poetry transport the mind into the timeless and eternal:

> Now the poetry goes into the metaphysical, and that is things that are not visual, and there, of course, you can get into timelessness.
> Now in the poetry, so long as we are speaking of the poetry, there is a sense of eternity which is perhaps more viable, that is, more right, has more right to be there than in the visual images, because you can find in your head, let's say, for example, simple actions like prayer get you into a timelessness and a permanency that you don't have any right to see when you look at things that are passing, that are not permanent. So maybe, for me at least, there was more of a soothing quality in writing poems, because I could choose, so to speak, time or timelessness, than there is and there is still now in painting where the things that you try to hold sort of nearly vanish or disappear or change right under your eyes. (Interview September 21, 1970)

Charlot recognized that great poetry had the qualities he found in his visual work. Significantly, he gives the example of Rimbaud, the poet he was reading at the time:

> Now it is quite possible that some writers manage perfect freedom. I believe that Rimbaud, for example, when he was working out those great lyrical cries of anguish and so on was doing it in a way that would be close enough to a painter painting without knowing exactly where he would land, what would happen as he went on doing his work. (Interview September 21, 1970)

Charlot felt, correctly, I believe, that he had achieved this kind of artistic depth in some of his own war-time poems: "reading some of my old things, for example, I am astonished sometime that I hit at something that I had never known I was hitting or hinting at when I was writing, as far as I can remember" (Interview September 21, 1970). In my view, Charlot's enforced inactivity in the visual arts resulted in the eruption of his true creativity in some of his poems. Significantly, the subject of most of these poems will be the artworks; that is, the poems in which his literary gift connected with his visual in moments of great emotion.

A few poems written at Sézanne are formal devotional works, like those accompanying the Ste. Barbe Series and the poem *Présentation* of February 16, 1918, with its Emmerich-like description of the Holy Family as peasants:

> Joseph est lourd d'aspect, et Marie peu belle,
> ils sont vêtus d'habits très propres, cependant

'Joseph looks heavy, and Mary little beautiful,
they are dressed, however, in very clean clothes

Charlot explicitly rejects an unrealistic glorification of the scene: "je ne vois rien qu'un couple et son enfant, timides" 'I see nothing but a couple and their child, timid.'

The great majority of the poems are, however, personal, although the repetition of images and themes suggests that he was using them as a form of prayer, refuge, and emotional relief. They are also strongly questioning; the repetitive use of the phrase *c'est pourquoi* 'that is why' reveals him trying to make sense out of the events and experiences, which are depicted in violent and horrifying images:

Vous nous avez ravis, tel le rapace, si
prompt. Seize ans passés, nous riions aux tétines,
ô mon Aimé, pour vous que de jeunes piétinent
la boue et dormiront dans cette boue aussi.
(*L'amour humble de notre pauvre cœur transi*, February 4, 1918)

'You have carried us away, like a predator,
so quick. Sixteen years ago, we were smiling at our mother's breast.
O my Beloved, for you how many young men trample
the mud and will sleep in this mud as well.'

Vous m'avez donné le repos dessous les nids
Au moment que vous égorgiez mes amis,
ne m'ayant pas jugé mûri pour l'holocauste.
(*Après le long chemin voici la courte halte*, April 11, 1918)

'You have set me at ease under the nests
At the time you were slitting my friends' throats,
not judging me ripe for the holocaust.'

et la sueur, la boue, et le pus, et le sang
jaillirent jusque sur la robe de Vos Anges.

Ton petit dort dans un suaire en place de lange.
tu décapites le coupable et l'innocent
et tes enfantelets frêles, Père puissant,
l'obus les écartèle et le lupus les mange.
(*Vous nous avez pressés comme on presse une orange*, April 18, 1918)

'and the sweat, the mud, the pus, and the blood
spurted even to the robes of Your Angels.

Your little one sleeps in a shroud in place of swaddling clothes.
you decapitate the guilty and the innocent,

and your frail babes, powerful Father,
the artillery shell quarters and the lupus eats.'

These images call forth the accusing question to God: "mais qu'est-ce que nous t'avons donc fait, Dis-le moi" 'but what have we done to you, Tell me.' As before, the answer is that such deaths are a sacrifice to be used for God's purposes; God replies: "Fils, l'amour dans la mort, s'offre à ceux qui l'ont nié" 'Son, love in death offers itself to those who have denied it.' From these sacrifices, life will grow:

la tristesse de ces cadavres recouverts
de cadavres d'où dans la boue où nous bougeons
l'arbre du sacrifice éclate ses bourgeons ! (*C'est pourquoi voici tant de beaux jeunes espoirs*, February 4, 1918)

'the sadness of these corpses covered over
with corpses from where in the mud in which we move
the tree of sacrifice bursts forth its buds!'

Christ has sacrificed Himself, so they can do the same. Charlot develops an astonishing image:

même vos clous il vous a plu les prolonger
pour me crucifier à Votre verso, Maitre.[52]

'it pleased you even to lengthen the nails in Your hands and feet
to crucify me on Your verso, Master.'

Charlot applies a prophecy of Isaiah to their sacrifice (*Votre objurgation prophétique m'attache*, February 9, 1918), as he and others sought Biblical parallels for the war in their visual art.[53] The war is also a punishment for a proud century that has rejected God (*C'est pourquoi voici tant de beaux jeunes espoirs*, February 4, 1918).

As in Charlot's earlier poems, God has two sides. God can be a mother and even a *nourrice*, a wet-nurse (*Seigneur voici longtemps que je vous ai cherché*, probably April 1918). God can also be a brutal husband who exercises all authority over his wife, the devotee, wasting no tenderness or consolation on her but forcing her to do her duty without questioning (*I. Intérieur*, *II. Plus tard j'ai connu la richesse de Vos Bras*, and *III. Vous m'avez répondu: "Lave net ta vaisselle*, before June 1918). In the middle of the war, Charlot begs for the Consoler but experiences the Taskmaster.

Charlot has intense empathy for the suffering of women. Mothers "pleurent au fumet des cierges" 'weep at the scent of candles' (*Et c'est pourquoi voici tant de beaux jeunes vierges*, February 2, 1918). He expressed this often in emotional depictions of Mary at her son's crucifixion—for instance, in his murals *Calvary* (1958) and *Our Lady of Sorrows and Ascension of Our Lord* (1961) and, towards the end of his life, in oils of the Pietà. Charlot emphasizes the courage of women, who sent their sons off to war. Mary accepted her mission at the Annunciation even though she foresaw that her son would die on the cross (*L'Annonce*, February 5, 1918). At some point, Charlot memorized a famous Náhuatl poem in which a dying Aztec warrior asks his mother to bury him near her oven so that when her neighbors ask

her why she cries, she can say the smoke chokes her; he would recite it with great feeling. Next to the mothers are the young women, widows, fiancées, or those who simply will lose a husband they never knew (*Ex-Voto*, February 15, 1918):

> pour la femme et les fils que je n'ai pas connus,
> pour celle qui voulut vivre une vie heureuse,
> et pour maman qui pleure, aux cheveux jà chenus.
>
> 'for the woman and the children whom I have not known,
> for her who wanted to live a happy life,
> and for the mama who weeps, with hair already whitened.'

Just as the mother is compared to Christ's mother, so is the young woman, whose heart is pierced with daggers, like popular images of the Seven Sorrows of Mary:

> Elle est jeune mais déjà lasse de souffrir,
> (Ses espoirs poignardés ont-ils pas su s'offrir?)
> Son cœur sèche, et le bien comme étrange, l'étonne. (*Vœu*, March or April 12, 1918)
>
> 'She is young but already tired of suffering,
> (Haven't her stabbed hopes known how to offer themselves up?)
> Her heart dry, and the good, being strange, surprises her.'

A motivation for fighting is found in the prayer:

> et que la voix de France, en vain n'unisse pas
> Aux sanglots des mamans les pleurs des fiancées. (*Combien sont morts, ayant ignoré ce loyer*, February 6, 1918)
>
> 'and may the voice of France not unite in vain
> The weeping of fiancées with the groans of mamas.'

Charlot feels the heightened sexuality of wartime: "la beauté blonde de ces chairs nues" 'the blond beauty of this naked flesh' (*Ces galets mauves, doux et chauds comme des chairs*, probably February 22, 1918). But mostly, Charlot dreams of the good life of a traditional Christian marriage in the image of a peasant family, just as in the poems of Francis Jammes (*Or nous avions rêvé d'une existence honnête*, February 6, 1918):

> l'homme dur à la tâche et bon diseur d'Ave ;
> la femme qui saurait repasser et laver,
> deux sobres tâcherons à la conscience nette.
>
> de tout petits riraient dans leurs barcelonnettes ;
> votre Cœur, sur nos seuils et dans nos cœurs gravé
>
> 'the man hard at his work and good at praying the Ave Maria;
> the woman who knows how to iron and wash,

two sober plodders with clean consciences.

the little children would laugh in their swinging cradles;
your Heart, engraved on our thresholds and in our hearts'

The image is conservative with its marked gender differentiations:

afin que ses garçons soient forts, pieux et preux,
Ses filles bien bâties, accortes et lingères. (*Vœu*, March or April, 12, 1918)

'so that her boys be strong, pious, and valiant,
Her girls well made, gracious, and good at sewing.'

Charlot in fact distances himself from the longest articulation of this vision by putting it in the mouth of a country suitor (*Madrigal*, April 11, 1918), but although he himself was attracted to complicated women, the traditional ideal remained attractive for him; it also provided a further reason for fighting the war:

pour que d'autres enfants rient des dents aux nonnettes
pour que d'autres amours fleurissent leurs foyers. (*Combien sont morts, ayant ignoré ce loyer*, February 6, 1918)

'so that other children smile with their teeth on the cakes
so that other loves make their homes flower.'

Beyond reasons of religion and sympathy, Charlot's poems of this period express a basic love of his country, its history, and its culture. He refers affectionately to objects like "ce clocher de zinc qui surmonte Sézanne" 'this zinc bell-tower that rises above Sézanne' (*Ces galets mauves, doux et chauds comme des chairs*, probably February 22, 1918). Charlot remembers Poissy with its church and landscape in a passage inspired by Joachim du Bellay's patriotic poetry:

Et c'est pour ce clocher qui eut nom Notre-Dame
de Poissy, et l'Île-de-France douce au lit
de Seine susurrante et au doux friselis
des peupliers d'amour aux métalliques lames[54]

'And it's for this bell-tower that had the name Notre-Dame
of Poissy, and the Île-de-France soft in the bed
of the murmuring Seine, with the soft rustling
of the poplars of love with their metallic leaves'

This love of country is also a reason for fighting:

C'est pourquoi casque au front, droits sur nos haridelles
Nous suivons ce parti qui nous semble fort bon :
Aimant l'Île-de-France douce, mourir d'elle. (*Dialogue et Chœur*, February 7, 1918)

'That is why, helmet on the forehead, backs straight on our old horses
We follow this role that seems to us very good:
Loving the sweet Île-de-France, to die from it.'

The dominant mood of the poems is anxious, but in keeping with their patriotism, the soldiers do not want to be cowardly: "ce vouloir de mourir sans pleurs ni cris" 'this will to die without weeping or cries' (*Et c'est pourquoi voici tant de beaux jeunes vierges*, February 2, 1918). Indeed, they can even feel a little bravado: "Mieux vaut périr d'honneur que de vieillir barbon" 'Better to die with honor than age into a graybeard' (*Dialogue et Chœur*, February 7, 1918). A number of poems strike a hardy, martial note:

C'est pourquoi casque au crâne et revolver aux reins
opiniâtrement, de la Judée au Rhin,
Nous défendrons nos seuils, nos femmes et nos gosses. (*Or nous avions rêvé d'une existence honnête*, February 6, 1918)

'That is why, helmet on head and revolver on hip,
stubbornly, from Judea to the Rhine,
We will defend our thresholds, our women, and our kids.'

In colorful descriptions, among the best poems of the period, Charlot's enjoyment of and excitement with military life are manifest:

C'est pourquoi casque en tête et troussequin aux fesses
Tous diseurs de sermons et diseurs de chansons,
tonneliers, bourreliers, poètes et maçons,
(tandis que prient là-bas, laïques et professes).

Conducteurs de chevaux que la galle rapièce,
trente mois ont sillé l'ornière où nous passons,
éperonnés, criards et roidis sur l'arçon,
Cahotant la prolonge, et l'affût, et la pièce. (*C'est pourquoi casque en tête et troussequin aux fesses*, February 5, 1918)

'That is why, helmet on head and saddle under our seat,
All preachers and singers,
coopers, saddlers, poets, and masons,
(while laypeople and clerics are praying over there).

Horse drivers patched with blisters,
thirty months have dug the rut through which we pass,
wearing spurs, rowdy, and stiff on the saddle,
Jolting the gun-carriage, the mounting, and the gun.'

Even sacrifice can partake of this manly mood:

> Notre mort doit avoir son prix. Il fait bon vivre
> quand on est jeune, aimant, simple et de bon vouloir.
>
> 'Our death must have its price. It's good to live
> when one is young, in love, simple, and good-willed.'

The soldiers are, after all, Christian warriors: "le casque au front, l'Église au cœur, l'Hostie aux dents" 'helmet on the forehead, the Church in our heart, the Host between our teeth' (*Regardons ce suaire, ô Maître, à ton estampe*, February 8, 1918). Charlot here as elsewhere evokes the image of Christian knights.

In three poems, Charlot drew an explicit self-portrait. On his twentieth birthday, February 8, 1918, he forced himself to write two poems that summed up his life and state: *Pour mes vingt ans* and *Elégie*. The quality of the poems is the poorest of the period; Charlot was clearly not in a poetic mood. The former is curiously impersonal and liturgical with classical references reminiscent of his childhood poems. Charlot feels that a third of his life has passed—"Voici le tiers de ma long journée à son terme" 'Here is the third of my long journey at its end'—and he has lived a life devoted to art rather than to God. He worries about God's judgment and his own ambitious, anxious, and sensual character:

> subjugue ton désir multiple et maraudeur,
> ton imagination trop prompte à l'alarme;
> Éteins-toi, volupté, couleur, mémoire, odeur.
>
> 'subjugate your multiple and marauding desire,
> your imagination too easily alarmed;
> Extinguish yourself, voluptuousness, color, memory, odor.'

Perhaps feeling that his birthday poem was insufficiently personal, he wrote the more autobiographical *Élégie*, probably on the same day. Although a poor poem, it provides a valuable picture of his life as he saw it. Charlot asks his guardian angel what was his best hour. His early childhood had sweet and sour moments:

> Sanglotant lorsqu'il faut se coucher à sept heures
> et riant devant la tasse chaude et le beurre.
>
> 'Sobbing when I had to go to bed at seven o'clock
> and smiling before a warm cup and butter.'

His school years were ordered and regular, and he enjoyed Sundays and holidays:

> et au bout de chaque année étaient les vacances
> passées à Poissy où naquît Louis de France.
>
> 'and at the end of every year was vacation
> at Poissy, where Louis of France was born.'

Childhood was like a spring to a heavy summer that brought temptations, especially sexual: “Là l’imagination et la tempe s’enfièvrent” ‘There the imagination and the temples become fevered’:

> la pureté paraît inutile et trop chère,
> beaucoup devançant là les appels de la chair.
>
> la virginité nous devenant détestable
> nous gravons des dessins obscènes sur les tables
>
> ‘purity appears useless and too expensive,
> many even succumbing before the flesh calls.
>
> virginity becoming detestable for us,
> we scratch obscene drawings on the tables.’

Charlot emphasizes sexual temptations, probably as a reflection of those he was exposed to in the army:

> et à quinze ans lorsque le corps devient nubile
> l’esprit fornique quand la chair piaffe, inutile;
>
> en classe, et en famille, et aux pieds des autels
> on s’embourbe dans des images de bordels.
>
> ‘and at fifteen, when the body becomes nubile,
> the spirit fornicates while the flesh paws the ground, useless;
>
> in class, in the family, at the foot of altars,
> we bog down muddy in images of bordellos.’

He recalls in fact a close occasion of sin:

> et un jour au hasard qu’agença le Malin
> la rencontre d’un ami et de sa putain.
>
> Bien que je sois resté vierge de corps, sans doute,
> que de faux pas et que de chutes sur la route
>
> ‘and one day, by a chance arranged by the Cunning One
> meeting a friend and his whore.
>
> Even though I’ve remained a virgin in body, doubtless,
> how many false steps and falls along the way’

Real life appeared during his seventeenth year with suffering. He mentions more positively than usual his attempts to earn money, and his pride in being independent:

On gagne un peu d'argent pour soi, et on est fier
d'être son chef, où tout au moins d'en avoir l'air.

'One earns a little money for oneself, and is proud
to be one's own boss, or at least to give the impression.'

Then the war broke out, but his family was absorbed in his father's illness and death, which Charlot does not mention explicitly:

Il y avait alors ennuis de toutes sortes.
La mort et l'inconnu ricanaient par la porte,

et j'avais encor la peau blanche d'une fille
que déjà j'étais le seul homme en la famille.

'Then there were troubles of all sorts.
Death and the unknown cackled through the door,

and I still had the white skin of a girl
when I was already the only man of the family.'

He devoted himself to his poetry and art, only to have them interrupted by the war:

J'ai travaillé sur des textes et des dessins.
à coups de hache, j'ai entrouvert le chemin.

A peine la moustache opombre-elle ma bouche
que j'encasque ma tête et que la mort me touche.

'I worked on writing and drawing
with axe-blows, I opened up the path.

A moustache barely begins to shade my mouth
when I put a helmet on my head and death touches me.'

What, he asks his guardian angel, was the best hour of these? The hours of suffering and sacrifice, the angel replies.

The third autobiographical poem, *Madrigal* of April 11, 1918, is better and livelier. Although Charlot is speaking in the voice of a country suitor, he is clearly drawing a humorous self-portrait, aspects of which can be found in other sources:

J'ai de très grands lorgnons sur de très petits yeux
et mon âme n'est pas très agréable à Dieu.

……

Ma peau n'a pas le grain du marbre de Paros
Elle renferme peu de chair et beaucoup d'os.

Je suis mal mis et ma cravate est une corde
et mes lacets, pareils à des lombrics, se tordent

Or, n'ayant pas mes bachots j'ai peu de science.
Étant mauvais chrétien, j'ai peu de patience.

'I have very big eyeglasses on very little eyes,
and my soul is not very agreeable to God.

…….

My skin does not have the grain of Paros marble.
It encloses a little flesh and lots of bones.

I'm badly dressed and my tie is a cord,
and my shoelaces twist like worms.

And, not having my baccalauréat, I have little knowledge.
Being a bad Christian, I have little patience.'

More touching in view of Charlot's efforts to support his family are the suitor's assurances that he is capable:

et moi, je pense que mon labeur suffirait
à nourrir le foyer que ma femme tiendrait

for me, I think that my labor will suffice
to feed a household that my wife will manage'

Apart from *D'un Art Pauvre*, Charlot would write his best poems during the Battle of the Matz.

In his visual arts, Charlot started a series on the Twelve Apostles either shortly after the Ste. Barbe Series or slightly overlapping it; the earliest sketches for the Apostles are on the verso of a sheet with three studies for the Annunciation vignette of the *Sacred Heart* print from the earlier series. These Twelve Apostles were ultimately used on the cover of the *Chemin de Croix*, each framed by columns of an arcade similar to the one forming the top and bottom borders of a preliminary design for the Joan of Arc in the Ste. Barbe Series. In an interview (October 13, 1970), Charlot spoke of the Twelve Apostles solely in their relation to the cover. In my opinion, however, that was not the original purpose of the designs. Rather, I believe that Charlot's original intention was to produce a set of holy cards or book

marks. Charlot had done a bookmark earlier: a cutout of approximately the same size and shape as the Twelve Apostle designs. Moreover, on a fragment of a sheet with several sketches, Charlot has made designs of the same shape with "S^{t} Barbe" and "S^{t} Nicolas XVIII^{e}" represented by symbols.[55] That is, at this time, Charlot seems to have been planning a small-size set of prints to correspond to the large-format Ste. Barbe Series. Significantly, *D'un Art Pauvre* mentions both big sheets to be placed on the wall and small sheets that can be put in one's pocket.

The following arguments support my view. Firstly, Charlot usually designed to scale. The final drawings for Twelve Apostles are not on a single sheet; rather, an individual rectangle has been cut for each Apostle. Those rectangles very much appear to be holy cards or book marks. Moreover, on the earlier drawing as well, although eight Apostles are depicted, each one occupies his individual rectangle. No effort is made to relate them to each other, and they are not in the order in which they appear on the cover. Even more, one line of images is placed right above the other; this is a way of sketching individual images, not an overall design in which they will be used. Significantly, no overall design of the title page has survived, if one ever existed. If I am wrong, this would be the unique example of Charlot working so thoroughly on the details of a page before designing the page itself. Secondly, a series of the Twelve Apostles is not related with any special thematic or symbolic significance to the Way of the Cross, and Charlot was usually careful and creative in such matters.

This series is probably the result of Charlot's decision to concentrate on small-format images while going up for duty near the front. He wanted to continue his liturgical art but was unsure about whether he could produce large-format prints or even drawings in his new situation. Small-format prints did seem feasible, the next step in production from the small drawings he was making in his sketchbooks. In the end, he would produce some large-format drawings for the *Chemin de Croix*, but would never print a bookmark series of prints. I believe that when he came to the end of his work on the Stations of the Cross, he simply used these earlier images—begun perhaps even before the *Chemin de Croix*—for "the title page, which was the last to be done" (Morse 1976: 9). Indeed the *Joseph* vignette from the last Station of the Cross has been roughly printed on top of the sketchy, verso drawing of St. Stephen. This seems to indicate that Charlot picked up the Twelve Apostles Series after the printing of the last Station had begun in order to create the very last piece, the title page. This procedure explains why that page is so different from the rest of the series; it alone is not a large-scale design. The sinuous lines of the Twelve Apostles have not been stiffened as much as the lines of the Stations. Moreover, the Twelve Apostles are used on the title page for a display of mastery: the Apostles sections at top and bottom have been done in Charlot's regular *bois-de-fil* style, whereas the central section is done as if it were *bois-de-bout*. Charlot told me that the printer at Chaumontel who helped him produce the series much admired this piece of virtuosity: it demonstrated that Charlot knew the special characteristics of woodblock printing.

If I am correct in my reconstruction, the Twelve Apostles Series must be evaluated first as a set of individual images for holy cards or bookmarks and only secondarily as details in a larger design. In my opinion, they work better in the first context than in the second. Each small design is striking and

clear. The saint is presented with one or more traditional iconographic items, which was a principal point of the series:

> the cover has the Twelve Apostles, and I have quite a number of sketches. I was looking for liturgical art in the sense of what symbols went to what saint or what apostles, and there is some research in there. Of course, I knew pretty well the art of the Middle Ages. I knew pretty well the symbolical quality of the accessories that you find with the saints in the cathedrals, and I thought that it was nice to follow up directly that line, to follow up the medieval artisan. We come always to the same things. The artisan, instead of reinventing things that already had been used for what we could call the parishioners' prayers, was better. I mentioned Denis. Denis, in a way, seemed to me too modern in the sense that he was inventing, and I tried, myself, really to follow what I called the tradition, which seemed to me very important, and I was not conscious of creating, or more exactly my ideal was to follow, not to create. Of course, it doesn't work that way. But that was what I was trying to do. (October 13, 1970)

The graceful figures and lustrous black areas resemble to some extent the woodcuts of Félix Valloton, certainly the strongest work of that admirable artist. The resemblance is, however, nearer in the drawings than in the final cutting in which the lines have been stiffened by the material.

Charlot's small sketchbooks contain a number of ideas for liturgical works. In *Guerre 1918* are some notes that might have been for a symbolic composition on mathematics, perhaps inspired by Charlot's work in artillery. After Charlot's preliminary sketches for the *Chemin de Croix* are found fourteen designs for Rondels: *Le cavalier*, *enfant de chœur*, *2* [shorthand?: *Les*] *amants*, *Le guerrier*, *Le savant*, *La chaire*, *La famille*, *Portrait symbolique*, *La mort*, *Baptême*, *Flagellation*, *A. et E.* [*Anne et Elizabeth*], *Communion*, and *L'Hostie*. Charlot is continuing his 1917 ideas for series on professions, acts of charity, and so on. Although tiny, the designs are clear and attractive. Charlot did larger drawings in the same sketchbook of *La Famille* and *enfant de chœur*. A somewhat larger, square version of *L'Hostie* is found on a separate sheet.[56]

Charlot began early to work on the *Chemin de Croix*. Four pages into *Guerre 1918*—that is, probably in February—are three pages of sketched ideas for the series. On the next page is a list of the stations with their symbolic possibilities. In fact, the only drawings in large format surviving from this period are a set of eighteen drawings for the *Chemin de Croix*. On the double sheet serving as a portfolio cover—on which Charlot has done some sketching—Charlot has written "Dessiné à Sézanne vers 3—18." This title is early because Charlot had to correct his original *Cézanne*, a habitual mistake of which he eventually rid himself, although he could fall into it again as late as the 1970s! I will discuss these drawings below in the context of the whole project.

As with his poems, Charlot's drawings are especially interesting when describing his life in the army. Charlot responded to the beauty of Sézanne, a small town of winding streets, surrounded by fields, in the center of Champagne. The town is clustered around the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century church of

Saint-Denis, which Charlot featured in his drawings. A black pencil drawing in vertical format follows a narrow street past peaked roofs towards the great, rough tower of the church (*Guerre 1918*). A horizontal drawing in colored pencil, dated Ascension (April 13) 1918, looks down a small depression and then up the hill on which the town and its crowning church are situated. The air is soft and atmospheric, and the war seems far away (*Notebook 1918*). On both drawings, Charlot has made a habitual spelling mistake from the early period of his residence, *Cézanne*, and corrected it with a stroke of the pencil under the *C*. Charlot also drew other sites while on his duty travels. In the *Château de Mondement*, dated March 14, 1918, in colored pencil, the basic shape of the complex can be seen despite the ruination by war (*Guerre 1918*). The damage is much greater to a house in *Revigny* (Revigny-sur-Ornain), nearer to the front, between Sézanne and Verdun. The town had been pillaged by the Germans in early September 1914 (*Notebook 1918*). The ruins were infamous, and Charlot had sent a postcard of them to his grandfather on December 26, 1917. Charlot also took the opportunity and made the effort to visit Epinal, approximately 120 miles away as the crow flies, and the firm that produced the images that he had so long admired. Throughout his service, he would try to see as much art as he could.

Charlot became friendly with people in Sézanne. His drawing *Le fils de ma proprio, Franck* 'The son of my landlady, Franck,' dated May 30, is very like the Japanese-type compositions of Vuillard: the over-dressed child trails a long stick that creates the odd space and perspective of the picture. Apparently, Charlot was billeted in town for a time. Charlot's most important friendship was with a Mr. Gérardin, the local pharmacist with whom Charlot spent a number of evenings drinking good wines and talking literature; an appointment list has "Jeudi chez M^{r} Gérardin" (*Notebook 1918*). Charlot made for him a comical ex libris with the wizard-gowned doctors of Molière's *Le Malade Imaginaire* wielding their precious *clystères*, or clysters for enemas, an allusion to Gérardin's profession. The bookplate was in fact printed, but Charlot had no copy; the quantity of lines in the largest preparatory drawing suggest that it was an etching. Two pages of preparatory drawings are found in *Guerre 1918*: *"EX LIBRIS E GERARDIN SEZANNE"* and *pour l'ex libris de M^{r} Gérardin*. The figures are extremely elongated in accord with Charlot's liturgical style: the effect is elegant as well as comic. A final or near-final drawing, squared for transfer to the plate, *Preparatory Drawing for Ex libris of M^{r} Gérardin, Pharmacist of Sézanne*,[57] depicts two doctors with their outsized clysters at the ready, facing each other heraldically over a large mortar and pestle from which odorous vapors invite the doctors to draw from the inner potion. The setting is emphatically theatrical: at the top, opened curtain and decorative shell perched on scroll; at the bottom, garlands. Seventeenth-century circumstance is placed at the service of an incongruous subject. The inscription, destined for the central empty section, would have been appropriately Latinate.

When my parents, my wife Dominique, and I passed through Sézanne in 1968, my father was very closed-mouthed about having been there earlier. Only when he made the effort to locate Gérardin did I realize he had been stationed in the town during the war. We entered a pharmacy (I cannot remember whether it was at Gérardin's old location), and my father asked after him. Gérardin had died shortly before. When the pharmacist asked whether my father knew him, he said he had lived there during the war. My father had to brush tears from his eyes, the only time I remember him doing so, and

an indication of the continuing strength of his emotions about the war. I later tried to contact the Gérardin family without success.

Facing a page of drawings for Gérardin's ex libris, Charlot has made five small, careful drawings for one of his own: *Five Studies for ex libris: "Jean charlot/'Il est mien'."* Charlot worked with three ideas: an adoring angel; a saint praying before a crucifix with the inscription in quotation marks "Il est mien" 'He is mine'; and a saint offering up a heart. The personages are not identified so the point of the ex libris cannot be fully clarified. However, the themes of sacrifice and being in the hands of God are common for Charlot during this period.

In contrast to Sézanne, the barracks at the Camp de Retortat are grim in Charlot's February drawing of the interior, which seems to record a negative first impression (*Guerre 1918*). The drawing could be considered an illustration of Charlot's first poem there, *Au contact fort des cuirs, des crins et du métal*, dated February 2; God did not want their comfort but to purify them in the crucible of discomfort:

> Et c'est pourquoi nous pourrissons dans ces baraques
> où la pudeur, la piété, la pitié craquent
> comme la paille au feu.
>
> 'And that is why we are rotting in these barracks,
> where modesty, piety, and pity crack
> like straw in a fire.'

On February 21, Charlot drew the dreary line of barracks fronts, marking with an X "ma baraque" 'my barracks.'[58] The gray structures are angled between a blank sky and a nearly formless plain of snow, slush, or mud.

Charlot focused his positive feelings on his companions whom he portrayed along a spectrum from caricature to touched attentiveness. The caricature could be as extreme as Charlot's dream images (*Notebook 1918*: *Profile Caricature, overwritten*). Charlot could treat civilians the same way: an over-friendly merchant invites the soldiers to enter his shop (*Notebook 1918*, ca. April 1918). Several of the caricatures are very close to straight portraits. *Japavert, 2e prix conservatoire* (*Notebook 1918*, before June) appears to be an accurate profile with perhaps a little elongation in the neck. The satire is confined to the rays of glory emanating from the head and the caricature vignette of two long arms holding a violin. Charlot had some memory of doing the drawing (Interview October 13, 1970). Letellier—who appears on Charlot's January 20 list of people and was his most frequent model—was the subject of both two straight portraits and three staid caricatures in *Notebook 1918*. In *Guerre 1918*, Charlot made a profile and a detail, *Le menton de Letellier*.

Some of the portraits are straightforward to the point of being conventional (*Notebook 1918*: *Three Studies of an Officer's Profile*; *Profile Portrait, overwritten with radio code*; *Guerre 1918*: *Delettré [?]*; *Soldier with Pipe, profile*). These may be the "political" portraits Charlot mentioned in an interview. Nonetheless, they reveal Charlot's interest in a military "look"—crisp, energetic, straightforward—with an emphasis on a strong chin. *Forault* (*Guerre 1918*) is the most experimental portrait, with its strong,

unrealistic investigation of the division of the face into areas, an anticipation of Charlot's Cubist self-portrait of 1919. The most beautiful portrait is *Ribière [?] Radio*, dated June 1918 (*Guerre 1918*). The soldier looks into space; his face, turned slightly three-quarters to the artist, is drawn so delicately that it reveals all its youth and vulnerability. Charlot looks at it with the same tenderness he brought to the wildflowers of the battlefields. June was the month of the Battle of the Matz, and Charlot and Ribière were probably working together as radio operators. Another portrait done during the battle, *Carl le Radio* (*Guerre 1918*), depicts with formal preciseness a martial physiognomy, but the worried eyes and tremulous mouth reveal the effect of warfare even on the strong. The drawing could be used as an illustration of the lines from Charlot's poem *Pour Le remercier de n'être pas allé à Bleau*:

> Voyez-nous encasqués et bottés comme reîtres,
> mais notre âme est plus craintive que l'eau qui sourd
>
> 'You have given us helmets and boots like Reiters,
> but our souls are more fearful, jumpier than spurting water'

Charlot portrayed the soldiers' activities with the same stylistic variety. An amateur boxer in makeshift suit is caricatured extremely both with a head and in full-figure. The extreme elongation recalls the doctors of Gérardin's ex libris (*Notebook 1918*). On May 31, Charlot depicted realistically a group of helmeted soldiers resting on top of their heaped baggage; they are probably on a "Corvée de ravitaillement" 'Fatigue-duty of reprovisioning' for the camp (*Guerre 1918*: *Kiki* [?] *écrivant chez lui* and *Route de Retortat*). On the next page, Charlot caricatured himself bent double under the weight of an enormous and unwieldy bag: *Moi portant mon Sac !* 'Me carrying my Sack!.' On February 22, Charlot portrayed *Michel étudiant pour Bleau* 'Michel studying for Bleau' (*Guerre 1918*), seated on his bunk in the Retortat barracks, engrossed in the papers on the folding table before him. Several bars of musical notes at the top of the drawing may indicate that Michel was humming or whistling as he studied. Michel's application to the officer's school at Fontainebleau may have given Charlot the idea to do the same; or they may have been studying together. In any case, the drawing creates an impression of the tightness of the living quarters in the wooden, geometric barracks.

Charlot portrayed himself along the same spectrum, with an extreme marked by the drawing with the sack, mentioned above. On February 2, he caricatured himself along the lines of one of his friend's earlier *Sa Vie fut une Longue Lecture*: bespectacled, long-necked, sparsely bearded but shaggy, he justifies only too well the title: *Je dois* 0.25 *au coiffeur* 'I owe 25 centimes to the barber' (*Notebook 1918*). In *Guerre 1918*, between late February and the Feast of the Ascension, April 13, Charlot drew a full-face self-portrait. He is wearing a collarless military shirt and has grown a slight moustache. His face is very tired and appears older than it does in contemporary photographs. Charlot is watching the effects of the war on his own body. This portrait marks the mental half-way point between the smiling youth of early 1914 and the summarizing *Self-Portrait, Cubist Style* of January 21–24, 1919.

Three photographs of Charlot and his soldier friends are kept in the JCC: Charlot with two soldiers at a table (May 1918), Charlot with two soldiers on a park bench (Joureau and Oudin; the

photograph was taken by Allier), and Charlot standing over a table with three soldiers playing cards. On the back of the last is written:

> "Souvenir du temps où *nous* faisions de la bonne musique !
> A gauche : Le maëstro Labrosse.
> Au milieu : Allier, pianisisto. chef d'orchestre. Ns. couchons sous le même toit !
> A droite : Japavaire instrument du Conservatoire (à corde.)
> Au fond : X^{xxx}.
> Ont signé
> 'A souvenir of the time when we made good music together!
> Left: the maestro Labrosse.
> Middle: Allier, great pianist. orchestra conductor. We bunk under the same roof!
> Right: Japavaire, instrumentalist of the Conservatory (strings).
> Rear: X^{xxx}.
> Signed by'

Four Signatures

Sometime during May 1918, Charlot was granted leave and went home to Paris. On the sheet of a large watercolor and on three small sheets of drawings and notes, torn from the same notebook, Charlot recorded his plans and errands: buying clothes, toiletries, and art supplies, and attending the "vente Degas," an exhibition and auction of that artist's work after his death.[59] He notes Mademoiselle Marchais' name and address; this was probably his last visit to her before she died in November. The small drawings may have been done in Sézanne. *Profile of a Man* is similar to the most conventional of Charlot's "political" portraits of officers and is signed with an unusually large "artistic" signature.[60]

The other drawings are careful and appreciative depictions of three folk statuettes, two of them in straw. [61] French women created such figures to sell for patriotic purposes, and two postcards of such statuettes have survived in the Charlot family papers. Curiously, the printed inscription on one, *Nenette et Rintintin*, connects such statuettes to primary religions:

> Acceptez ce charmant fétiche
>
> Il est le seul assurément
>
> Avec lequel l'on peut se fiche
>
> Des bombes et du bombardement.
>
> 'Accept this charming fetish
>
> It is surely the only one
>
> With which one can defy
>
> Bombs and bombing.'

Just like the children in Charlot's earlier copies of Aztec codices, the straw figures reveal vivid personalities, full of verve and humor. The *Folk Statue of a Woman, face in profile, body straight on, arms extended* is dignified and hieratic, like an archaic statuette of a Mediterranean goddess. Charlot would be intrigued by such folk art in Mexico.

The large watercolor, *Park Scene*,[62] was most probably done in Paris on this leave; the note on the back mentions things he has brought and those he should take back. The unusually large landscape design depicted resembles the Bois de Vincennes next to Saint Mandé. Charlot seems to have seized the opportunity to work in watercolors and in a large format, which he could not do at Sézanne. The painting fully exploits the medium with its soft washes, recalling Charlot's watercolors of many years before. At the Degas auction, Charlot sketched two surviving copies in a small pad, of the type he would have used while sketching in the Louvre.[63] On the first, a woman's head, he noted at the time: "Tableau de P. M. N° 44 1ère vente. Mai 1918" 'Picture of P. M. Number 44, first sale. May 1918.' Probably in the early 1970s, he added: "after Degas." He wrote "Degas" on the second copy as well, a woman dancer with flexed legs. Both sketches are very vivid; the pencil strokes in the copy of the dancer describe movement as much as form. Three further copies survive from the same sketchpad. The "profile woman from Ghirlandajo"[64] emphasizes the geometric composition of the work. Charlot studied the graceful harmony of two upraised hands from a painting by Le Nain and analyzed the vertical-horizontal composition of two *putti*: "cherubs could be from top of an El Greco."[65] The work resembles the Cubistic studies Charlot would make of prints by Boucher and others on his first, exploratory trip to Mexico.

Charlot's leave in Paris would have provided a welcome respite and rediscovery of his normal life. Shortly after his return to Sézanne, Charlot would be sent into battle.

6.3. THE BATTLE OF THE MATZ

On March 21, 1918, after a comparative lull in the fighting, General Erich Ludendorff launched the last great German offensive of the war on a forty-mile front against the central section of the allied line from the River Oise northwards to the Sensée.[66] Opened with an artillery bombardment of unprecedented intensity, the German attack advanced rapidly against the British while the French Commander-in-Chief, General Henri Pétain, sent French troops up to support them and close the breaches in the line. The goal of such an attack in World War I was to pierce the defensive line of the enemy and then advance and spread in the open country behind it in order to take possession of valuable strategic points in the enemy's territory. Although the military leaders did not recognize the fact, such an extended, coordinated advance was beyond the technical capacity of the time in transportation and communication. Consequently, even successful piercings of the enemy lines soon bogged down in exhaustion and fell into disorder. The result of such an attack was inevitably a salient in enemy territory that was vulnerable to counterattack on its flanks. Moreover, the attacker extended his front, which thinned his troops, complicated his communications, and lengthened his supply lines. The defender, on the other hand, found his troops being concentrated in retreat and his communication and supply lines shortened. Finally, the resulting irregular line increased the difficulty of artillery support both in attack and defense, so the

attacker was obliged to straighten his lines in a series of bloody and often frustrating small actions. The German March offensive followed this pattern, stopping short of its goal, Amiens, on April 6.[67]

Stalled in the center, the Germans then attacked in the north, where the same bloody pattern prevailed through April. Finding the center still unbudgable, the Germans spent May preparing to attack the French in the south, in Champagne north of Sézanne, with the initial purpose of simply diverting Allied troops from the northern front. The German battle plans were excellent, and secrecy was unusually successful. Moreover, the German artillery was directed by "the outstanding artillerist of the war, Lieutenant-Colonel Bruchmüller,"[68] famous for his massive and accurate initial barrages and precise use of his long-range guns "to hit key targets deep in the enemy's rear: command centers, lines of communication…ammunition dumps, flank targets, and reserve assembly areas."[69] Bruchmüller emphasized counter-battery fire, forming around 20 percent of his forces into counter artillery groups. Bruchmüller's tactics established the pattern of the German attacks during this period. Security would be strict and successful for all preparations. He would open the battle with a long and precise bombardment of the enemy's rear installations, using explosive and gas shells, and then focus a barrage on the enemy front line with devastating force. Once the German infantry attacked, the artillery rounds would fall ahead of them, supporting their progress, while Bruchmüller's long-range guns turned to harass the retreating enemy and destroy his support facilities. Finally, artillery would be moved forward rapidly in accordance with the new front lines.

The German attack in Champagne would be so successful that it would be elevated to a major effort rather than a diversion, a typical World War I example of abandoning overall strategy for local success. Towards the end of May, the Allies in Champagne began to suspect an attack and prepare for it. Unfortunately, the conservative French commander, General Duchesne, insisted on crowding his troops onto the front line at Chemin-des-Dames rather than spacing them for a modern defense in depth. As a result, the British and the French troops suffered grievously when Bruchmüller launched his expert and overpowering shell and gas barrage at 1 AM on May 27. The subsequent German ground attack advanced an astonishing twelve miles on the first day, crossing rivers over bridges Duchesne had failed to destroy. Flush with victory, the German troops rushed forwards, capturing the city of Soissons on May 29. Sensing a breakthrough even to Paris, Ludendorff poured reinforcements towards the front that was pushed forwards as close as fifty-six miles to the French capital. But Allied resistance was hardening, and many of the starved and exhausted Germans around Soissons were gorging themselves on the French foods and inebriating themselves with the celebrated wines they were plundering as they advanced. Pétain used what time he had to form a north-to-south defensive line between the River Aisne, which flows by Soissons, and the Marne. The active German troops advanced on the south towards the Marne, and American troops moved up to fight at Château-Thierry and Belleau Wood, while the French continued fighting to the north and elsewhere along the front. The Germans continued beating strongly against the Allied line until June 6, but it was holding firm. Historians have called this the Third Battle of the Aisne.

The German offensives in March and May had created two outsized salients with a large indentation between them at Noyon and Compiègne on the River Oise. The Allies foresaw clearly that

the Germans' next push would be to straighten their line and that the size of the indentation would require a major attack. Bruchmüller would shape the attack but, very sick, with less than his usual efficiency. Preparations were hasty, and security failed. The French learned the place and date of the attack and were able to bring up units like Charlot's, which was placed in the center. The French then learned the very timing of the attack and were able to prepare accordingly. Their artillery sent preventive fire into the enemy rear for days before the attack. Ten minutes before midnight on June 8, the French started intense counter-battery fire in anticipation of the opening barrage of the German attack. The French artillery, outnumbered more than three to one, was, however, ineffective. Bruchmüller's guns kept to their schedule, starting their overwhelming and far-ranging barrage promptly at midnight and continuing for three hours and forty-five minutes; historians have decided to date the opening of the battle June 9.

One million four hundred thousand German rounds were fired on the first day; one third of these were gas and were targeted especially on the French batteries, as Charlot experienced. Once again the French had crowded their troops at the front line, and the German infantry, attacking on a twenty-two mile front, took eight thousand prisoners as they made a successful day's advance of over seven miles to the northern bank of the River Matz a few miles north of Compiègne. Charlot's unit along with the others at the center at Ressons was thrown back in retreat. Nonetheless, the French were holding firm around the edges of the attack and slowing it down even in the center. The Germans continued fighting through the night, but could make only a little progress. June 10 was a day of continual battle in which the Germans made some small progress, crossing the Matz towards Compiègne, but also met fierce resistance. Bruchmüller's guns continued their expert shelling of the French in the rear, as some were retreating and regrouping and others were moving forward. The French fell back through the night of June 10, but were able to counterattack locally and stabilize their lines. On the morning of June 11, while the rest of the French line held firm, General Charles Mangin, one of the most aggressive French commanders, launched a major counterattack along a seven-and-a-half mile front, with troops aided by planes and tanks.[70] The back-and-forth conflict continued vigorously through the night and June 12, with both sides attacking and defending in different places and the French gradually dominating. Despite major efforts to advance, the Germans were being slowed, held, and, in places, pushed back. The Germans gradually desisted, but local efforts continued for some time, so that historians date the end of the battle raggedly from June 13 to June 18. The Battle of the Matz was comparatively small, but Barrie Pitt notes:

> the action in itself did provide one fact of arresting strategical importance. For the first time since the opening of the German 1918 Spring Offensive eleven weeks before, a German advance had been halted by factors other than its own exhaustion, and in one place the advance had been beaten back. (1963: 163)

Mangin formulated the lesson of the battle even before his decisive counterattack:

> Tomorrow's operation should be the end of the defensive battle which we have been fighting for more than two months. It should mark the definite check of the Germans and the renewal of the offensive on our part.

Indeed, Mangin's action was a dress rehearsal for the much bigger counterattack he would order forward on July18 at the Second Battle of the Marne, a success credited as a major contribution to the Allied victory despite heavy losses.

The Battle of the Matz looked different to the participants on the ground than to later historians. Charlot told me he admired Stendhal's description of the Battle of Waterloo in *Le Rouge et le Noir* because it showed how a participant sees only a little violent and confusing part of an unseen and undecided whole.[71] Like many veterans, Charlot did not enjoy talking about the war and generally down-played his participation in his interviews with me. Contemporary documents reveal, however, that his unit faced the center of the German attack, and though he served in several theatres, he usually identified his service with the Oise, that is, with the Battle of the Matz.

The soldiers at Charlot's base at Retortat must have been increasingly anxious as the German offensive developed to their north through March and April. Having failed on the central and in the northern sections of the front, the Germans could be expected to try the southern, although the exact location was unknown. When the Germans attacked on May 27, French reserves were rushed towards the battle zone. On June 3 or 4,[72] Charlot was advancing northwards towards the line along the "Route de Ressons-sur-Matz," approximately seventy-three miles northwest as the crow flies. Stationed near the village of Ressons in the valley of the Matz river, they would soon be facing the center of the German attack. On the road, probably riding with the radio equipment, his head being jostled in the forward moving wagons, Charlot wrote the intense *Très bon petit Jésus quand nous montions en ligne*. The column is moving through the gorgeous Champagne landscape with its rich wildflowers, blue hills, sun like a golden apricot, and sunsets bleeding like a dying swan. But in the middle of all this beauty, they are being observed by death:

> plus secret que le bois aux frondaisons insignes,
> plus retors que le camouflage aux verts tapis,
> plus haut que la saucisse, un guetteur s'est tapi:
> La mort, en souriant, nous semble faire signe.
>
> 'more secret than the forest with its covering foliage,
> more devious than the camouflage with its green carpets,
> higher than the observation balloon, a lookout crouches down:
> Death, by smiling, seems to send us a signal.'

Let them advance and pray that the Master will let him live for his glory or die to go to heaven.[73]

The contrast between the visual beauty of nature and even of combat and the horror of death and destruction would persist through the June battle in Charlot's drawings and writings. Just like the wheels of the 75 mm cannon rolling towards the wildflowers in the *Sainte Barbe*, the juggernaut of war was bearing down on men and landscape alike. Charlot would use the same flowers in his first fresco, *The Massacre in the Main Temple* of 1922–1923. Charlot's drawings are characterized at this time by a sharpening of focus and an increased meticulousness of execution. Soldiers at the front and in combat

often experience a heightening of their senses. But Charlot remembered the anticipation of death as the main mood: "So when I looked at the things around me, it was always with that superposition of looking at them maybe for the last time" (Interview September 21, 1970).

When I asked him about the battles he fought in, Charlot was more than usually minimizing:

> Well, they were not battles like sort of a clash, body to body, with swords or shooting people when you see the white of their eyes. I was in the field artillery, and we were facing field artillery of the Germans, mostly in the Oise in a sort of inglorious moment of the war. I saw more what we could call combat condition rather than battles. And we shoot the guys, and they shoot us. And I remember at my arrival at the front, there was a lot of noise going on, and I asked one of my new soldier friends, I said, "Well, are they coming or going," speaking of the *obus* that were streaking the air. And he sort of laughed at me and said, "They are coming." But I couldn't gather much fear of anything because I didn't understand, so to speak, the rules of the game. There was some aerial reconnaissance over us. They were not planes; they were balloons, and those balloons as a rule were ours simply to raise the horizon so that we could correct the shooting of our field artillery by seeing further back. It was still something where you used, instead of computers, well, your brain, your hands, and your eyes. And sometimes there were some little, I think they were Messerschmidts, some little planes, German planes, that would come and pop their little bombs on those balloons, hoping to make them explode or some such thing, which at times happened, too.[74]

At Ressons, Charlot's unit was doubtless active in counter-battery fire and attempts to disrupt the enemy concentrations on the other side of the trenches. Bruchmüller's artillery was doing the same to the French. At some point between here and the end of the war, a German would get near enough to Charlot to shoot at him personally, a shattering experience Charlot depicted in his gouache *Bullet* of 1921.[75]

At the command post, Charlot set up his radio apparatus—called T.S.F. for *Téléphone Sans Fil* 'wireless'—and, on June 6, 1918, drew a very careful picture of a *Soldier at Radio*, staring ahead as he listens intently to his earphones. His left hand works the radio in front of him, from which the antennas branch out towards the window. On the table are two books, probably used for coding, and the soldier's cap. Charlot has noted on the facing page: "Voir carte. Nous étions aux environs de *Resson* [*sic*]-*sur-Matz*" 'See map. We were in the environs of Ressons-sur-Matz.' Charlot's interest in the fine details of the scene is revealed by his careful drawing of the headset on another sheet. He was perhaps planning a painting of the subject. A drawing of *Military Kits*, dated June 7, 1918, may have been for the same purpose. The caps, blankets, sacks, and a pot—all tossed against the wall with soldierly untidiness—seem to correspond to the heaped blanket disappearing off the lower right-hand corner of *Soldier at Radio*. A drawing, probably done around the same time, shows some flowers pushed roughly into a bottle instead of a vase, perhaps Charlot's own attempt at beautification; the little drawing simplifies the shapes of the bunched flowers so that a geometric form emerges. The next day, Charlot would describe the scene

in his poem *Radios*. Charlot also made two drawings of an insect, whose anatomy is rendered with intense exactitude, a clear example of Charlot trying to see an object as closely as possible and to grasp it by recording it. He was also returning to a subject that had fascinated him as a child.

On June 8, the last day before the German attack, Charlot wrote his mother a letter, which did not survive, and probably in the evening, started a prayer in verse: *Radios* 'Radio Operators.' He was not able to complete the last stanza that night. On the manuscript of the poem, he later noted: "8 juin (Resson-s-Matz) avant l'attaque allemande, inachevé" 'June 8 (Ressons-sur-Matz) before the German attack, unfinished.' Charlot prays, *Bon petit Jésus veillez sur la T.S.F.* Here is the receiver, the antennas, the earphones, the radio operators, and the little hut in which they work. May no misadventure befall them, "que nul obus ne s'y boute" 'may no shell drive into it.' They are poor, like peasants living in a cave. Like a monk copying a manuscript being read to him, the operator writes a hermetic language, attentive to his earphones, in his cell-like cage. He submits himself humbly, obediently, to his antenna-officer-abbot, like a goat tied to a sacrificial post. He obeys, unafraid, untroubled by doubts, his mask on his lap when the gray gasses bomb him. He translates the rhythmic song of the tapped code, attentive to the voice of the trees and the rising up of the martial action that is armed with steel and the rubber of the masks. The poem reveals the same contrast, even the contradiction, between the religious and the warlike, the tender and the hard; here the two sides are both absorbed into war: steel and rubber, shells and gas.

On June 8, probably sensing the coming battle, Charlot also started to write on a set of small sheets a journal that he kept until June 28. The letter he wrote to his mother on June 10 also survives as a source of information on the first day of the battle. The journal opens with the conventional words of a military report:

> Journée Calme
> le 8 Juin : A partir de Minuit bombardement violent, gaz et fusant. Nos batteries répondent. A 5h-1/2 Gauguin prend le sondage. Je dors un peu malgré le masque.
>
> 'Calm day
> June 8: Starting at midnight, violent bombardment, gas and time shells. Our batteries answer. At 5, Gauguin makes a probe. I sleep a little despite the gas mask.'

Charlot was thinking of the battle as beginning on the June 8 rather than the official 9th. His own batteries apparently did not participate in the initial fire. The reference to the gas mask is important. The Germans emphasized gas in their barrage, and the effect was horrifying. The memory of gas made Charlot talk seriously in our interviews:

> But there was the most dangerous thing, which hasn't been used or known in the Second World War, was gas. And you had to be pretty careful using gas because of the wind. The wind didn't make any difference, and quite a lot of people died of it. (Interview November 6, 1970)

When the tape ran out at the end of the interview, I continued taking notes:

> There was little to see—he didn't see the enemy. Some died from *obus* ['shells'] and gas. It was a bad death: swelled, difficult breathing. The masks were primitive. Remember that gas smelled good. If you were sleeping, you awakened feeling good. You had to remember to put on your mask or die.

Charlot told me on another occasion that the Germans had made their gas smell like fruit, so that if it filtered in while you were sleeping, you began to have pleasant dreams of the countryside until you suddenly realized what was happening and awoke in terror. He told my brother Martin that he had experienced a gas attack late at night and saw some of his companions die when they could not reach their masks in time (personal communication, May 18, 1999). He describes that death in his poem *Toussaint* of November 1–2, 1919, in which the bodies of their slain comrades speak:

> Ne nous méprisez pas, nous, mangeurs de ténèbres,
> que la pluie et l'orage ont lavés et blanchis ;
> nous, gonflés et bleuis de gaz, que le pus zèbre.
>
> 'Don't despise us, us eaters of shadows,
> whom the rain and the storm have washed and whitened;
> us, swollen and colored blue by the gas, whom pus stripes.'

Charlot downplayed the danger when he wrote his mother on June 10:

> Je t'ai envoyé le 8 après-midi une lettre—Le 8 au soir, à Minuit, a commencé une préparation d'artillerie française en même temps qu'une boche.
> De la première nous n'avons fait qu'entendre le bruit, mais la seconde s'est composée d'un envoi panaché de gaz et de fusants et a duré 6 heures à peu près. C'était suffisant. Nous avons gardé le masque tout le temps.
>
> 'I sent you a letter on the afternoon of the 8th—On the evening of the 8th, at midnight, began a French artillery preparation at the same time as a *boche*.
> Of the first, we only heard the noise, but the second was composed of a firing mixed with gas and time shells and lasted about 6 hours. It was enough. We kept our masks on the whole time.'

He added a sentence to reassure her after mentioning gas, which was well known to civilians: "Nous avions d'ailleurs une sape où nous mettre" 'We have, however, a trench to stay in.' He even included a magnificent soldier's joke at the end of his letter:

> Ce baptême du feu qui a été surtout un baptême du gaz s'est très bien passé. Si tu goûtes les "mots héroïques" en voici un: Imagine la sape, mal éclairée par une bougie, tous les hommes en masque et le brouillard des gaz, Dehors l'éclatement des chutes : "Pas étonnant que le gaz soit si cher ! Y-z-en foutent plein la rue."
> Prends-le pour ce qu'il faut. Je te l'envoie tel que je l'ai entendu.

> ‘This baptism of fire, which was mainly a baptism of gas, went very well. If you enjoy “heroic statements,” here’s one: Imagine the trench, badly lit by a candle, all the men in masks and the fog of gas, and outside the explosions of shells falling:
> “No wonder gas is so expensive. They’re just throwing it in the street.”
> Take it for what it’s worth. I send it to you just as I heard it.’

Under the weight of the main German attack, Charlot’s unit was ordered to retreat on June 9:

> A 7 heure : 1 avion : “Rien à signaler.”
> A 8 heure ordre de départ.
> Bousculade. On campe dans un champ. Fils de chariots, chevaux bricolés. Cidre, poules et lapins d’une ferme vide—
> Le bombardement a duré environ 6 heures ? (journal)
>
> ‘7 o’clock: a plane: “Nothing to report.”
> 8 o’clock: order to leave.
> Hustling and jostling. We camp in a field. Columns of tanks, harnessed horses.
> Cider, chickens and rabbits from a deserted farm—
> The bombardment lasted about 6 hours?

Charlot described the retreat in his letter to his mother, again in positive terms:

> Les batteries d’artillerie qui se trouvaient devant nous ont fait sauter leurs pièces, et maintenant nous rejoignons en arrière pour nous reformer.
> Tout hier nous avons voyagé à pied, en carriole—Naturellement je suis assez fatigué.
> Le retour était curieux : Toutes les voitures de la batterie formaient une file immense. Le lieutenant d’une des batteries, après être resté le dernier à ses pièces et les avoir fait sauter lui-même, s’était enfui dans un petit tonneau attelé d’un cheval blanc qu’il conduisait lui-même. L’effet était assez comique.
> Le départ à pied avait été moins drôle : Le P. C : Commandant, lieutenants, ordonnances, cuisiniers et radios, une trentaine d’hommes, tous à pied, au travers des champs et, devant et derrière l’artillerie en pleine action, tandis que les fantassins montaient en ligne. Le temps était magnifique et toutes ces fumées brillaient au soleil. Ça ressemblait à un Didier-Pouget sans bruyères.[76]
>
> ‘The artillery batteries that were in front of us exploded their guns, and now we are rejoining in the rear to regroup.
> All yesterday, we traveled on foot, in carts—Naturally, I’m pretty tired.
> The return was curious: All the wagons of the battery formed an immense line. The lieutenant of one of the batteries—after staying behind with the guns as the last man and exploding them himself—fled in a little tonneau-cart drawn by a white horse that he drove himself. The effect was pretty comical.
> The departure on foot was less amusing: the command post: Commanding officer,

> lieutenants, orderlies, cooks, and radio operators, about thirty men, all on foot, across the fields with, in front and back, the artillery in full action while the foot soldiers advanced towards the front lines. The weather was magnificent, and those smoke columns were brilliant in the sunshine. It resembled a Didier-Pouget without the heather.'

The description resembles Charlot's military poems, and its remarkably pictorial character is important for understanding his later plans to paint a major work on his war experiences; he would only complete the small gouache *Bullet*. Charlot was deeply impressed by the lieutenant who was the last to remain on the front line in order to destroy the guns and who was then forced to flee in a comic way. He spoke later of a general in the Mexican Revolution who was always the very last person in the rear guard to retreat; in order to distract from his heroism, he rode an old donkey that he would whack with a stick, incessantly complaining, "This donkey is so old that I can't get it to go fast!" Charlot saw the same sort of person described in *The Analects of Confucius* Book 6, Number 13. The great French example of such an officer was Marshall Michel Ney, who commanded the rear guard on Napoleon's retreat from Moscow. Not all the tone of the letter derives from Charlot's desire to reassure his mother. I sense also the exhilaration of a young soldier emerging unscathed from his first experience of combat: "Ce baptême du feu qui a été surtout un baptême du gaz s'est très bien passé" 'This baptism of fire, which was mainly a baptism of gas, went very well.'[77]

Charlot was apparently also impressed by the pillaging. In *Guerre 1918*, he drew a portrait of a rooster's head, with the notation: "Tête du coq emporté pour les officiers ds la retraite" 'Cock's head taken by the officers during the retreat.' The anti-officer tone is unmistakable (the common soldiers apparently got the rabbits) and repeats his Orleans poem about officers taking the men's food (*Il s'est passé depuis ce temps-là bien des choses*). Combat normally increases anti-officer feeling in wars in which the soldiers feel they are being badly led. Charlot had been close enough to the front to see the poor distribution of the troops, and the retreat was not perfectly organized. On the eleventh, he will write: "on ne sait plus où aller" 'we no longer know where to go.' Anti-officer feeling can be found in two curious stories that can probably be placed at this time:

> They were on retreat, and all the officers were very discouraged. So he and his friends invented a message saying that the German offensive had been stopped and that the French were advancing on other fronts. The officers were beaming with happiness for days. Then they were surprised when the Germans arrived. (Tabletalk July 14, 1971)

The second story has survived in Charlot's own words. I first took the story down in writing when the tape ran out at the end of our interview of November 6, 1970:

> People died of gas. It was heavy and clung to the ground. One day he made a bad joke. They were in sort of a camp, a ruined village. When the attack was strong, the officers ran to a wine cave, where they thought they would be in less danger than the

> men outside. JC didn't like it, and he shouted down the stairs at the gold braid of the officers, "Gas!" It made them all sick.

I then asked Charlot to repeat the story during our interview of November 18, 1970:

> Well, we were speaking of those attacks with gas, and I said that gas was heavier than air and had a tendency to make a cloud that would crawl on the ground. That was a sort of advantage if you were in a high place. It was very much a disadvantage if you were in a low place because the cloud would naturally go down. If there was a cellar, it would actually go down the stairs of the cellar and fill up, if possible, the whole cellar. And those officers on that particular time—I wasn't an officer yet—had been afraid—well, they had naturally been afraid of a bombing, which was pretty bad and was destroying things around, and had taken refuge from the bombing in a cellar. And it wasn't a bombing with gas. It was just a regular bombing. So their reasoning was right, but I don't know what got into me, and I went to the cellar door, and I shouted "Gas!" And of course, the poor guys thought they were dead and, as I said, turned green. I've actually seen people turn green with fear. And I realized it was a very silly joke.

The German artillerist Bruchmüller was expert at searching the rear areas with his guns for possible troop concentrations.

> The retreat continued through June 10 and 11 (journal):
>
> 10 Juin : Campons du coté d'Estrée. Un départ de tanks : La grande boite hermétique camouflée comme un marbre de charcuterie et derrière, les A. S. [Artillerie Spéciale] dans leur ciré noir où s'écartèle le baudrier de cuir jaune, et, au flanc, le couteau du nettoyeur de tranchée.
> 11 : Le convoi s'arrête, on ne sait plus où aller. Nous croisons des émigrés. A Houdencourt [*sic*: Houdancourt]
>
> 'June 10: We camp beside Estrée. A departure of tanks: The big hermetic box camouflaged like a butcher's marble block, and behind, the Special Artillery in their black oilcloth on which are crossed the shoulder belts of yellow leather, and, at the side, the knife for cleaning the trenches [of enemy soldiers].
> June 11: The convoy stops. We no longer know where to go. We cross some refugees. At Houdancourt.'

Charlot's unit first retreated some eleven miles as the crow flies to Estrées-St.-Denis to the west and slightly north of Compiègne. They then moved about five miles straight south to Houdancourt, which placed them southwest of Compiègne, now between them and the front.

Charlot's unit apparently stayed at Houdancourt until June 25. On the 11th, Charlot made a drawing of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century church with the town hall behind it. He added the note: "Notre antenne partait du clocheton de la Mairie, à gauche" 'Our antenna started from the clock tower of

the Town Hall, on the left.'[78] The drawing is a careful, almost architect's drawing of the buildings in pointed pencil. Charlot was bringing the same intensity of observation to buildings as he was to flowers and insects; indeed, during the war, they were just as vulnerable. Perhaps on the same day, Charlot drew with a similar feeling *Soldier with Hand over Eyes*; the soldier is well-dressed, but seems to have collapsed from exhaustion. Some time during this period, Charlot drew his careful and empathetic portraits of two radio operators: *Ribière [?] Radio* and *Carl le Radio*, discussed above.

The journal continues:

> Mousqueton 83187
>
> 12 : On nous réunit : Discours du colonel : "Cette nuit du 8 au 9 et cette *fameuse* journée du 9, vous avez été admirables, etc. …."
>
> 'Small cavalry carbine number 83181
>
> June 12: We're assembled: Speech of the colonel: "This night from the eighth to the ninth and this famous day of the ninth, you have been admirable, and so on…'

In his notebook *Guerre 1918*, on June 11, Charlot wrote down a brief report on the battle, probably a radio message in view of the faulty orthography and the code at the bottom of the page:

> didier sr loise la bataille s'est poursuivie sans grand changements. a gauche toutes les tentatives de réaction des ar t ands [Allemands] ont été brisées. les troupes françaises ont réalisé de nouveaux progrès a l'est de *méry*. et u [*sic*] bois genlis. genlis. par de violentes attaques des allemands ont tenté de rejetée les français sur l'*aronde*. sur le front *Saint maur ferme des loges antheuil* les troupes françaises ont soutenu le choc infligeant de lourdes pertes à l'ennemi et gardant leurs positions. sur la droite française les allemands n'ont pu déboucher sur la rive sud du *matz*. Les français tiennent le sud de *chevincourt et de marés-sur-matz*. daprès de nouveaux renseignements la contra attaque française d hier a devancé une puissante attaque allemande. les troupes françaises se sont heurtées à de grandes forces qu'elles ont bousculées. les prisonniers faits par une seule division française appartiennent à quatre divisions différentes de l'ennemi. au sud de laisne les allemands ont attaqué entre la rivière et la forêt de villers-cotterets. La bataille est en cours sur le front dommiers-cutry et sur damblény
> déclarations de m daniels de neu ***sténographie***.[79]
>
> 'Montdidier, the battle was pursued without great changes. On the left, all the German attempts to respond were broken. The French troops have realized new points of progess east of Méry and at the forest of Genlis. Genlis. By violent attacks, the Germans have attempted to throw the French back on Aronde. On the Saint Maur-Ferme des Loges-Antheuil front, the French troops have sustained the shock, inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy and maintaining their positions. On the French right, the Germans have been unable to debouche on the south bank of the Matz. The French hold the south of Chevincourt and Marest-sur-Matz. According to

> new information, yesterday's French counterattack anticipated a powerful German attack. The French troops ran into large forces, which they drove from their positions. The prisoners made by a single French division belong to four different divisions of the enemy. To the south of the Aisne, the Germans have attacked between the river and the forest of Villers-Cotterets. The battle is in progress on the front Dommiers-Cutry and Amblény.
> Declaration of Mr. Daniels ***shorthand***

The report compares favorably with later accounts of the battle and is clearly the result of good military intelligence.[80]

Charlot was writing the Gildeurs as well as his mother. A report was published in *La Gilde* of June 25, 1918:

> **EXCELLENTES NOUVELLES** de notre camarade Charlot qui est sorti indemne d'un[e] chaude affaire. Il est radio-télégraphiste dans un régiment d'artillerie. C'est un poste de confiance dont l'importance se devine aisément. Notre excellent ami demande si le Rosaire perpétuel existe toujours à la *Gilde* ? Est-ce que le front serait plus fidèle que l'arrière au grand devoir de la prière ? Quelle leçon !
>
> 'EXCELLENT NEWS of our comrade Charlot, who has come out of a hot action unhurt. He is a radio-telegrapher in a regiment of artillery. It is an office that demands confidence in its holder, and its importance can be easily imagined. Our excellent friend asks if the perpetual rosary is still being said at the *Gilde*. Will the front be more faithful than the rear to the great duty of prayer? What a lesson!'

The perpetual rosary was a typical devotion of the Gildeurs and recalls Charlot's statement that they recited the rosary during Mass. Charlot may have been practicing this devotion during his service.

On Sunday, June 16, Charlot went to communion and made an art tour of the neighboring towns —Chevrières, Longueil-Ste. Marie, Grandfresnoy, and Sacy-le-Petit—which form a rough circle within the two miles north of Houdancourt. He was impressed by the artworks in the churches; at SacylePetit; he even found a statue of Sainte Barbe! At the end of the day, he wrote his journal with short notes on the artworks.

> 16 : Dimanche. Eté communier à Chevrières. Beaux vitraux datés 1545.
> Eté à Longueil-Ste Marie.
> Eté à Grandfresnoy. Eglise : Beau portail François 1er. 2 statues bois peint : une Trinité—un évêque bénissant. A Sacy-le-Petit.
>
> 'June 16: Went to communion at Chevrières. Beautiful stained-glass windows dated 1545.
> Was at Longueil-Ste Marie.
> Was at Grandfresnoy. Church: Beautiful portal Francis 1st. 2 statues of painted wood: a Trinity—a bishop blessing. To Sacy-le-Petit.'

At that point, he wrote down, apparently in a rush with only one word crossed out, three poems on artworks (1918 Ecphrastiques). The first was *Bois Taillé et Peint. Eglise de Grand Fresnoy. Juin 1918*, on the statue of the bishop giving his blessing that he mentioned in his journal. The second poem was *Sainte Barbe*, on the statue he saw at Sacy-le-Petit. The third, *Le St. Sébastien de Sézanne*, was about a work he was remembering from before the battle. On June 17, as seen below, Charlot visited Sacy-le-Grand. After writing his journal at the end of the day, Charlot started making color notes on an artwork he had seen on the 16th at Chevrières:

> St Pierre délivré.
> Ange : ailes lilas. robe vert pâle—
> St : rouge bleu jaune. nuit bleu
> chapiteau or. écusson jaune et rouge.
>
> 'St. Peter delivered from prison.
> Angel: lilac wings. robe pale green—
> The saint: red, blue, yellow. blue night
> gold capital. yellow and red escutcheon.'

Charlot then wrote down—again in one stream with only one word crossed out and two added—another poetic description of an artwork: *"Comment l'ange délivra st. Pierre de prison" Vitrail de chevrières. 1545*.

These four poems are among Charlot's very best: concise, intensely focused descriptions of artworks in which the precise detailing of the physical object communicates the work's message. Charlot transports into words the visual communication of the physical art object, but those words are themselves descriptions of the physical object. The physical speaks, and the speaking refers the hearer to the physical. The poems are an example of Charlot's view that matter communicates and that communication is physical and takes place in a physical world. In Christian terms, matter and spirit, body and soul, are not identified with each other but are indeed inextricably entwined. Moreover, the dialogue has a tradition in which a lexicon of symbols and gestures has been developed that has been integrated into the perception of the viewer; understanding the artwork attaches us to our cultural history of communication. The poems provide an inner view of how Charlot himself looked at art; the reader can see the artwork through Charlot's own eyes. The focus is sharp, the sensation of color is vivid, the understanding of symbol and gesture is immediate, and Charlot is penetrated, indeed overwhelmed, by the message the work communicates. The vibration in perception between medium and message, between the sensation of the physical and the consciousness of the communication, makes the encounter with art an experience in which the whole human being is intensely involved; the feeling, thinking person is absorbed and unified in the perceptual act of the moment. After the experience of battle, during a Sunday lull in his military duties, encountering pieces of public, popular religious art in country churches, Charlot was touched at a level that connected the sources of both his visual and his verbal inspiration.

Poems on artworks have a long history—the technical term for them is ecphrastic—and Charlot had read prose descriptions of artworks, notably Huysmans' (e.g., *L'Oblat* 1917: 24, 106 ff., 326–331). Nonetheless, Charlot's poems are different from any other in the genre. When Charlot read my prose

poem on Poussin's 1650 *Self-Portrait* in the Louvre—"As the frames slide together, the eyes focus"—he made the strange but spontaneous remark: "But that's not poetry, that's true!" Just as in *D'un Art Pauvre*, Charlot purged himself of poetry in his four ecphrastic poems—abandoning the sonnet form, rime, and poetic words—to state directly and exactly his perception of a physical object that communicates a truth. Later, Charlot was apparently puzzled by these four uncharacteristic poems. When he made lists of his poems and had them typed in the 1930s, he omitted them. Only in Hawai'i, when Stefan Baciu revived his interest in poetry while editing the poetry magazine, *Mele*, did Charlot rediscover and publish the four poems in 1968, 1969, and 1970. Late in life, Charlot was able to recognize these as among his best poetic creations.

On June 17, Charlot went to Avrigny, a little less than four miles northwest of Houdancourt. He then went to Sacy-le-Grand, about three miles southwest, where an aviation base had been installed. Always interested in popular religion, Charlot noted an airplane depicted on an ex-voto in the nave of the church. He also took the opportunity to do some shopping for supplies. In his notebook, *Guerre 1918*, Charlot drew a map of the roads from Houdancourt through Bazicourt and Sacy-le-Petit to Avrigny, then down to Sacy-le-Grand and back to Houdancourt by way of St.-Martin-Longuean. This was probably his itinerary.

> 17. A Avrigny. Sacy-le-Grand près d'un parc d'aviation. Un aéro en ex-voto dans la nef.
> Savon 18 sous.
> Pâté 24 "
> fromage 35 s
>
> 'June 17. At Avrigny. Sacy-le-Grand near a military airport. An airplane as an ex-voto in the nave.
> Soap 18 cents.
> Pâté 24 "
> cheese 35 cents'

At the bottom of the sheet, Charlot wrote: "Ecole de T.S.F. au C.P.A. [Centre Pratique d'Artillerie] S.P. 111" 'Wireless School at the Practical Center of Artillery.' This is perhaps an indication that he spent his days pursuing his studies in radio-telephony.

On June 25, Charlot's unit marched about nine miles slightly northeast to Remy, which is west and a little north of Compiègne and nearer to the front. His journal describes the destruction they found.

> 25 Juin. A pied de Houdancourt, par Grandfresnoy et Arsy, arrivé à Rémy [*sic*].
> Pas mal d'effondrements etc. par bombes.
> Coucher dans 1 grange.
> La ville évacuée depuis 15 jours. fenêtres et portes forcées. A l'intérieur des maisons : Armoires, commodes tous battants ouverts, tiroirs tombés. A terre : émiettement de papiers, cuivres, faïences, chapeaux, chaussures, linge.

> June 25. On foot from Houdancourt, via Grandfresnoy and Arsy, arrived at Remy
> Lots of collapsed buildings etc. by bombs.
> Slept in a barn.
> The city was evacuated fifteen days ago. Windows and doors forced open. In the interior of the houses: cupboards, chests of drawers, thrown open, drawers fallen down. On the floor: torn up papers, copperware, pottery, hats, shoes, linens.'

Charlot's verbal description can be illustrated by his drawing *Maison pillée à Rémy* (*sic*: Remy) of June 26, 1918. The very geometric composition heightens the sense of disorder; the drawing could well be used in a monumental composition. On the same day, Charlot drew *tête de mouton mangé le 26 Juin*, product of the French army's own pillaging for supplies; the skinned head is like a horrifying figure of death, but the soft eyes and lolling tongue reveal this as a portrait of a victim. Charlot looks through the horror to the individual sufferer—animal, plant, or building.

The destruction continued while Charlot's unit was at Houdancourt. On June 26, Charlot made a careful drawing of one corner of a farm courtyard. On June 27, he added a light *X* on each roof and an arrow pointing up in the sky. On the facing page, next to a similar arrow, he explained:

> Un obus de marine éclate à 2 heures [?] derrière cette maison. Fumée. Un autre (éclats) a crevé les 2 toits.
> 'A naval shell explodes at 2 o'clock behind this house. Smoke. Another (explosions) burst through the two roofs.'

Charlot had an artilleryman's precision about the type of shells that were being fired at him. He apparently did not make a drawing of the church of Remy, built in the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries.

On the next day, Charlot's unit moved five miles northwest to Moyenneville:

> 28. De Rémy [*sic*] j. notre nouveau P. C. : 2 maisons de garde-barrière : Ds l'une les officiers et ordonnances. Ds l'autre téléphone et T. S. F. joli pays. fleurs et blés. Nous sommes à l'alignement des saucisses. derrière Moyenne Ville.
>
> 'June 28. From Remy all the way to our new Command Post: two houses of a railroad gatekeeper: in one, the officers and orderlies. In the other, the telephone and wireless. Pretty country. Flowers and fields of grain. We are on the line of the observation balloons. Behind Moyenneville.'

On June 29, Charlot made another detailed architectural drawing, *House of a Garde-Barrière*, with the note: "Le P.C. était installé ds 2 maisons garde-barrières. Les téléphonistes ds celle-ci" 'The command post was installed in two gatekeeper's houses. The telephone operators in this one.' But more than by the architecture of Moyenneville, he seems to have been entranced by the wildflowers, of which three pages of his drawings survive, one is called *Au P.C. de Moyenneville*. Charlot considered the drawings "realistic" (Interview September 21, 1970), and they have the intensity of his June portraits and architectural studies. But Charlot is particularly interested in the geometric forms of the flowers, abstracting their structure in interior lines and adding connecting lines outside the forms. He had earlier

used the same techniques to analyze the geometry of his hand, for instance, drawing a curved connecting line across the knuckles. That Charlot would do such studies as his possibly last view of an object shows how important geometric composition was for him: it was not added to an object; it was what one saw when one looked most intensely. At the same time, perceiving that geometry, he recalls a natural order that is missing in the chaos of war.

6.4. FONTAINEBLEAU AND THE DIVISION MAROCAINE

Unbeknownst to Charlot, an order was issued on June 28 that would change Charlot's life in the army:

> Diriger d'urgence le 1er Cr Charlot Jean Louis Henri de votre unité sur l'Ecole militaire de L'Artillerie à Fontainebleau, ou [*sic*] il devra être rendu pour le 1er Juillet 1918. Ce [*sic*] homme sera mis en route par vos soins.[81]
>
> 'Direct with urgency the First Driver Charlot Louis Henri of your unit to the Military Artillery School of Fontainebleau, where he must report on July 1, 1918. You will arrange this man's travel.'

Because he had not earned his baccalauréat, Charlot had been placed in the lowest ranks in the army. He was, however, sufficiently schooled to study for the entrance examinations for the officers school at Fontainebleau, as seen above. His admission came as a surprise:

> I had completely forgotten about it. I was in one of those muddy barracks somewhere. Actually, we were digging a privy, I think, when one of the young, rather dapper lieutenants rushed there and asked for me by name. Well, we were below level, we couldn't be seen, so I just raised up my head, said, "I'm Charlot," and so on, and he said, "Well, here's something saying that you should go to Officers School in Fontainebleau. I didn't know that you were an educated, learned guy. If I had known, we would have gotten together. I would have given you [inaudible] lessons," and so on. I said, "Well, I had forgotten myself." So I dropped my spade and got out as best I could from that potential privy, and then I was sent to Fontainebleau. (Interview October 13, 1970)

The transfer came at a fortunate time; in Fontainebleau, Charlot would miss the Second Battle of the Marne on July 15–August 7. From mid-July to September 15, the French army casualties included seven thousand officers and 272,000 of other ranks.[82] But even a week before that battle began, Charlot expressed his thanks in his poem of July 7, 1918, *d'après ce bain de fer et ce dur corroyage*, to which he attached the note "allant du front à Bleau" 'going from the front to Bleau.' After the bath of iron, the great effort, and the near danger, he can lie down and eat and attend to his health. They have left the pillaged cities and the beautiful fields where their brothers have been garnered and are moving into a new situation. They have passed the triage station. They carry in bulk feedbags for horses, gas masks, military sacks, yesterday's fear, disgust and fatigue all the way to the familial tent. He finds again, as if

exhumed, the days of his past and breathes in the innocence of the past like a gray lily blooming on this lake of asphalt.

Charlot was at Fontainebleau from July to October 1918:

> There was a very, very stiff training there. All the old-fashioned military ways were there with a vengeance, I would say. There was a wonderful tradition. It was the same school in which Napoleon had gone when he was a young man, doing the same thing that I was doing and preparing to be an artillery officer. And they were proud, of course, of their past, and it was about the stiffest military training one could get, with many of us, of course, falling, I would say, on the way, either for intellectual or for physical reasons. I managed. I went through, and so much of the things from then on were easier for me because I was *aspirant*. We don't have that in the American army, but *aspirant* is just a sort of in-between, between noncommissioned officer and officer, and it's a rather delicate thing. I forgot to tell that before I went to Fontainebleau, I had gone to the front as a just plain GI and had seen some combat there, of course.[83]

Charlot became an *aspirant*, "officer candidate" or "a junior probationary officer ranking under second lieutenant" on September 15.[84] This was the first step towards becoming an officer and even included an induction ceremony. Brenner (1970: 304) described him as "a gamin artillery lieutenant with the face of a novice and the cocked eyebrow of an engineering surveyor." Charlot was apparently happier as an officer, even if just a junior one. He sat for two formal photographs in his new *aspirant*'s uniform, portraits that were mounted or made into real photo postcards. He later drew a self-portrait in the same uniform and made the comments:

> self-portrait in fancy uniform when became an aspirant for officer. = sky-blue cravatte around neck. Thought very elegant to leave open like lapels.[85]

Charlot looks confident, strong, and younger than he did in the self-portrait he made at Sézanne. A little later, he had two more portraits done in his new uniform of the Moroccan Division with the crescent on the collar, photographs that were mounted as postcards. In one of them he is wearing a shy but—rare for him—self-satisfied smile. He kept until his death his dress uniform with the red-striped black pants of the artillery. However, he could still use his uniform as a symbol of vanity, as in his poem *Voyez ce stri d'or, Maître, au creux du parement* of November 1918: "Maintenant me voici seul (et ce beau costume)" 'Now here I am alone (and this beautiful uniform).'

Perhaps his success in rising through the ranks restored some of the self-confidence he had lost when he failed to manage his family's finances. For instance, Charlot had felt he had been particularly weak in mathematics, but some time before the end of the war, the army assigned him to teaching the subject:

> Perhaps, besides of course my military duties and dangers and adventures, there was an unusual thing in that one day I received a paper saying that I was to teach higher

> mathematics to the soldiers who were getting ready for Fontainebleau, who hoped that they would get ready for Fontainebleau. And of course I probably had gone through that, and it's on the strength of the papers that I'd left in my dossier that they asked me to do that. But I wasn't quite fit, but I managed all right for the few weeks that it lasted. But this is the army. They don't look exactly at what you can do best. They just give you an order, and you do it as best you can. (Interview October 13, 1970)

Charlot told Peter Charlot how he managed:

> Papa explained that he didn't know anything about ballistics, but it seems orders were orders. I specifically remember asking Papa how he taught the class if he didn't know anything about it. He said that he determined who were the brightest students and would ask them to answer any questions.[86]

Charlot seems to have been generally successful as an officer, managing well a problematic unit during the war and being given special responsibilities during the Occupation. His natural leadership qualities were revealed more openly than before. Those qualities would be important but subtle in Mexico. But during the war, Charlot was also somewhat erratic, once being brought before a board of inquiry; although the charge was dismissed, Charlot had clearly acted imprudently.[87] Charlot told mostly funny war stories on himself, like the one in Brenner (1970: 304): "he lagged behind his own battery, recovering crisply issuing orders to another several miles behind."

Charlot seems to have been happy at Fontainebleau except for the strong sexual temptations. As stated above, the government provided the French army with prostitutes, and visiting the bordellos was an accepted recreation for the soldiers. This type of sexual temptation explains the tawdry, lubricious aspect of Charlot's descriptions. In *Maître voici mon corps et toutes ses sueurs*, undated but written "à Bleau" 'at Bleau,' Charlot examines his own body fresh from the battle, using classical and medieval images. His feet are ready to jump, his hand is apt for the Roman boxer's wrapping, his hearing is accustomed to the thunder, and his eyes to the fleeing of the livestock. He is with a rough, multinational crowd—Scotsmen and betel-chewers—but hardened as he is by combat, he kneels before the altar. Like a knight, he sets his *bourguignotte* aside—the name of a late medieval helmet adopted by the *poilu* for their own helmets—he joins his hands, hot with demonic temptation, and prays for perspective: how can he party with and yield to this painted woman, who has not suffered as they have and whose laughter forgets their pains. Charlot's view of his body differs now essentially from the female image he used in his poem on entering the service, *Et puisque vous l'avez voulu, Maître*. In response to the temptations at Fontainebleau, Charlot again envisioned his ideal marriage in *Ce n'est pas un hochet que je veux, mais une aide* of July 20, 1918. The physical result of combat described in the previous poem explains why this one has less of the bucolic fantasy of his earlier expressions: he has been hardened in muscle and mind, and he wants a similar wife, not a luxurious toy but a strong woman who will be an aid as they advance together through life towards the Last Judgment. He wants her to be humble with beautiful babies, one who shelters the suffering, the sick, the wanderers, and the sinners. When the two join their

strong bodies in sex, it will be in God's spirit, and their loving wills and bodies will move together in the beautiful rhythm of God's harmony. Nevertheless, *Ces gros doigts éclamés à l'angle des lambourdes*, dated August, shows that the temptations continued. Although the attraction is again blatant, the temptation is nonetheless strong: "Ce plumeux cœur où le désir noir s'est blotti" 'This feathery heart where dark desire has hidden itself.' He remembers that sex joins souls as well as bodies. He should instead join his body to Christ's: "mes doigts de manœuvre à Vos Doigts ouvriers" 'my unskilled worker's fingers to your skilled worker's fingers.'

As an *aspirant*, Charlot was assigned to the 5/101e A.L. (Artillerie Lourde 'Heavy Artillery),[88] apparently in late October. In speaking, Charlot connected his assignment to his being made an *aspirant*, but he also wrote in "Jean Charlot's Date List" that he was in Fontainebleau in "Juillet–Octobre 18" 'July–October 1918.' Charlot kept the menu of a "graduation" dinner for the new "student-probationary-officers of artillery" that was held on October 20, 1918:

Dépôt des 23e & 43e Régiments d'Inf. Coloniale
Venus des Elèves-Aspirants d'Artillerie—cérémonie

'Depot of the 23rd and 43rd Regiments of Colonial Infantry
Arrival of the Artillery Student-Aspirants—ceremony'

Charlot was now a member of one of the most famous and decorated divisions in World War I —"the crack Moroccan Division"[89]—and he emphasized the point in his letter to the French Consul of November 30, 1964:

> J'ai fait partie de l'artillerie de la Division Marocaine. Mon séjour au front était dans l'Oise, et l'occupation de la région du Rhin commence Décembre 1918. Démobilisé 1921.
>
> 'I was part of the artillery of the Moroccan Division. My posting at the front was in the Oise region, and the occupation of the Rhine region starting December 1918. Demobilized 1921.'

In his preface to the 1977 reedition of *Chemin de Croix*, Charlot wrote (Charlot 1977; Morse 1983: 2):

> In the First World War, I saw fire with the Mangin Division, Colonials, Morrocans [*sic*], Senegalese, plus the Foreign Legion to which we were attached as field artillery.

The Moroccan Division included also Tunisians, Algerians, French Legionnaires, and other French personnel. It was part of the French Colonial forces— including 260,000 men from Algeria and Tunisia—which were often referred to colorfully but imprecisely as *Tirailleurs Sénégalais* 'Senegalese riflemen' (Greenhalgh 2014: 31 f., 377). Similarly, North Africans were often called Arabs although most were Berbers. These soldiers could be promoted as high as "native lieutenant," but all regularly commissioned officers were French (Greenhalgh 2014: 31). These soldiers were famous for their fighting qualities, amply appreciated and exploited by General Mangin, who had promoted the use of colonial troops before the war, often led them during it, and insisted at its conclusion that they be included in the

Army of Occupation. Mangin was not always in command of the Moroccan Division,[90] but Charlot and others continued to identify him with it. Indeed, Mangin's own controversial temerity matched that of the troops of the division; for instance, they had spearheaded the important counterattack by Mangin at the Second Battle of the Marne in July 1918. On that occasion: "The Americans on the division's left flank were also troubled in mind by the barbaric savagery with which their Moroccan and Senegalese neighbours fought" (Pitt 1963: 187). Charlot appreciated the colorful conduct of his troops. He told my brother Martin: "In the army, he was put in charge of wild men. They would put knives in their mouth and jump out of the trenches to charge. The enemy would run when they saw them" (July 25, 1998). The knives were used for close-quarters combat in the trenches with an effectiveness that terrified the Germans. He told me that, during the Occupation, he had his men put their knives in their mouths before marching through a German village in order to impress the populace.

The African troops were also famous for their independence of mind, which caused problems for their French officers, as seen during the mutinies of 1917. Charlot stated several times that he had been assigned his position because he was the lowest officer available:

> I just came out of my officers' school, and I was the youngest in the lesser grade as far as officers are concerned, and we had some very hard goings-on, in fact, some revolts and revolutions in the Foreign Legion, especially among the Arabs. They had been told when they left Africa that they would have every six months, I think, a possibility of returning home, and those fellows had been at the front for two and a half years already, something like that. So some of them were getting rather nasty, and they were rather violent men, and they had ambushed and tried to kill (I don't think that they had killed) the officer who was in command of that particular platoon. So they looked on the list—I suppose there was a paper with a list of names—and the fellow who was the youngest as an officer and as such the most expendable was myself. So I got that command. I think they were pretty sure I would never emerge. But I've always had a knack, I suppose, with dark-skinned people, and even though I didn't speak their language, they all spoke a *form* of French. But between themselves, and that was their strength, they spoke their Arabic, whatever the language was. They came to like me very much. I remember that the fellow who was the hottest head and the one in charge of the revolt—and he had a tremendous weight with the others—came to me one day, and I was alone, and there he was, and he was rather arrogant. He said, "*If* we do not get what we are asking for, *mon officier*"—so I thought my last moment had come—he said, "tomorrow I shall kill myself." He liked me enough so he didn't want to kill *me*, but he had to do something to express their dissatisfaction. So of course I got out of that, I suppose, with a certain glow as far as the other officers were concerned. That is, I came out of it alive. But what was more precious, I came out of it with really sort of a friendship with my men that the other officers hadn't been able to achieve. But it was, anyway, a nice experience and perhaps my first experience with dark-skinned people, which later on, of course, was multiplied with

> Mexican Indians, with Melanesians, and Polynesians and so on. (Interview November 18, 1970)

When talking about the event, Charlot usually said that a previous officer had been killed, for instance:

> As a newly commissioned officer he was placed in charge of a group of Senegalese soldiers. It seems that the previous commander had been murdered by them. They were rebelling because they were due to go home. It was not long before the leader of the Senegalese came and told Papa that they liked him very much, but unless they went home, he would meet the same fate. Papa arranged for their leave. (Peter Charlot, e-mail to John Charlot, May 9, 1999)

Charlot interpreted the event in both personal and cultural terms and noted particularly—as he would with other cultures—the role of politeness in communication.

Charlot was having an extended and intense relationship with people from another culture in a situation that was not being controlled entirely by him. Just as later in Mexico, he needed the goodwill of the non-Westerners with whom he was working. In station, Charlot was an officer and had the usual orderly, Bihain, of whom he made a gouache.[91] Moreover, a certain closeness and paternalism marked the relations of a number of French officers with their colonial troops.[92] Nonetheless, because of the history of his particular unit, Charlot was unusually vulnerable to and dependent on his men. That is, he could not rely entirely on the social structure to assure his position; he had to establish a personal relationship with his men. As he states, the skills he learned in this situation were important for his later relations with non-Western peoples. Charlot was able to build on his earlier study of non-Western cultures, that is, he could help himself by learning something about the culture of his men. When I said to him in the above interview, "You've never been terribly interested, though, in Arab culture"; he answered:

> Well, I certainly was interested at the time, and I learned a lot on the things that pleased them and displeased them, and in a way how to save my life by being interested in Arab culture. I had to; I had no choice.

Charlot had also retained his sympathy with the common soldiers and antipathy towards officers, as is clear from the following story:

> When a junior officer, he was razzed a lot at a mess by an older officer. Instead of complaining, he remembered he could ask to be allowed to eat with the non-coms. He did this, and it caused a furor. The officer never bothered him again. (Tabletalk April 4, 1978)

A most important factor, I believe, is that Charlot did not have the feeling of superiority that nonWesterners have learned to sense in Westerners. He made a genuine personal contact with his soldiers—just as he did with other non-Western peoples—because he considered them as human as he was himself, appreciated their cultural differences, and liked them as people. Charlot's basic and strong feeling of respect is expressed clearly in his portrait of his orderly Bihain.

Charlot's soldiers seem to have reciprocated with feelings of protectiveness towards him:

> He was very young but in charge of an artillery company. One day, he was very tired from pulling guns. All the people in the company were hardy country boys, but Pop was from the city and got weak. So he lay down to rest, "probably languorously," and asked a new soldier to do something. The soldier didn't know JC was an officer because he wasn't wearing his stripes, so told him to go to hell very rudely. Two of Pop's soldiers grabbed him and told him who Pop was. Pop said the guy's face literally turned green. Pop had to tell him in detail it was all right. "See, I have no insignia on my shoulders, none on my sleeves. So you couldn't have known I was an officer." The guy thought he was going to be shot. (Tabletalk April 4, 1970)

Charlot was taken under the wing of a typical professional noncommissioned officer, whom he caricatured twice, Adjudant Petit:

> Petit. Put at 1917 or early '18. Were quite a while together. Introduced me to many things in life. He liked to [get] drunk. Thus the red nose in the cartoon. Was useful because he was a real professional soldier. Took me under his wing.
> Petit = adjutant. Had half moon = Mohammedan crescent of colonial division. With Mangin division. Came from Morrocco [*sic*].[93]

Petit's eyes and ears are as red as his nose, and he holds a cigarette in his sensual mouth; he is a man who knows how to enjoy life in the most unlikely circumstances. In a tiny sketchpad that Charlot used probably from the time he joined the Moroccan Division until the end of 1919, he drew other members of the famously colorful division: an oddly naïve but droll "junior officer" and the head and torso of an officer, seen from the back: "= direct descendant of Admiral de Coligny. Commandant. Huge guy. Needed special horse. He bathed in eau-de-cologne." The bulk of the commander's body is conveyed despite the small format. Charlot also drew a larger profile of Coligny, in whose powerful shape and glare he seemed to see an embodiment of the French warrior tradition.[94]

Charlot always retained fond memories of the Division Marocaine. An indication, I believe, was his interest in the Civil War story of Colonel Robert Gould Shaw, white commander of the black 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry. Killed along with many of his men in a suicidal assault, he was buried by the Confederates as an insult in a common grave with his men. My father was astonished that anyone could think an officer would insulted by being buried with his men. He himself would have been honored to be buried with his Moroccan troops. In his proposal for the mural series *The Negro in U. S. History*, Charlot included the fatal charge of the *Attack on Fort Wagner* (February 1943; CL 696).

An indication of Charlot's interest, even pride, in his division was that in early 1919, during the Occupation, he began to write its history, using a military term for such a report: "Historique de la 15e Btt du V/101." Misspelling (Montaudon for Monthodon) and the soldier's-eye view indicate that the draft was based on interviews rather than on written sources, if indeed any existed at that time. The emphasis throughout is on the individual men, their deeds and casualties; for instance, "Un téléphoniste, entre

autre[s], est tué à son appareil" 'A telephone operator, among others, is killed at his apparatus.' In a telegraphic style, Charlot follows the unit's history from its institution on February 1, 1918, through the German March offensive, the third Battle of the Aisne in late May and early June, and, peripherally, the Battle of the Matz. The more recent Second Battle of the Marne, fought in July, is narrated in more detail, but steadily from the individual soldier's and unit's point of view, with little overall sense of the engagement, including Mangin's counterattack, which the battery supported. After that battle, the unit had to be relieved, withdrawn, and stationed at Neuenweiler.[95]

> Le 16 elle subit un bombardement par pypérite de 5 h 20 à 0h 20. 27 canonniers, 4 M.d.L. tous les officiers sont évacués. On abandonne la position.
> La B^{ie} est reconstituée en faisant appel aux autres B^{ies} du Groupe.
> Le 14 Octobre elle embarque pour Longueuil Ste Marie (Région de Compiègne) prend position dans la [région] forêt d'Andigny.
>
> 'On the 16th, the battery undergoes a bombardment with pyrite from 5:20 to twenty minutes after midnight. 27 artillerymen, 4 master sergeants, all the officers are evacuated. The position is abandoned.
> The battery is reconstituted by calling on other Batteries of the Group.
> On October 14, it embarks for Longueuil Ste Marie (Compiègne region) and takes up its position in the forest of Andigny.'

Charlot probably joined the battery at this time and in an area in which he had been stationed in June. The battery then moved north and joined the general allied forward movement, pushing back the fiercely resisting Germans, and participating in one of the last large operations of the war along the Canal de la Sambre—some nine miles west of the much disputed St. Quentin—which began on November 4 (Greenhalgh 2014: 353, 355):

> Les 4 et 5 Novembre elle participe à l'attaque française du Canal de la Sambre.
>
> 'On November 4 and 5, the battery participates in the French attack on the Sambre Canal.'

This is probably the period in which Charlot "saw fire with the Mangin Division" (Charlot 1977; Morse 1983: 2).

> Le 11 Novembre, en exécutant son mouvement de poursuite de l'ennemi en déroute elle apprend la signature de l'armistice.
>
> 'On November 11, while executing its movement pursuing the fleeing enemy, the battery learns of the signing of the armistice.'

Armistice talks had begun in Compiègne on November 8, the cease-fire was proclaimed at 11:00 AM on November 11, 1918, and the Allied troops were ordered to halt. Cautiously, the front-line Allied and German soldiers emerged from their cover and walked forward to meet their former enemies as

human beings. In his April 1919 talk to the Gilde, "Des Leçons de la Guerre," Charlot recalled the soldiers' feelings at the moment:

> Au lendemain de l'armistice, notre mentalité s'est trouvée vidée d'un coup. Il y eut virement brusque dans notre esprit : voici que le terme n'était plus pour nous la mort, mais la vie encore à vivre. En quoi ces concepts, fruits d'une période exceptionnelle, allaient-ils pouvoir servir à l'ordonnance du nouvel avenir : construction d'une existence normale, d'une tâche quotidienne, d'un but humble. Notre esprit d'alors fut avant tout un esprit de joie, un éblouissement comme d'un bandeau ôté.
> Et c'est d'abord la phrase de Ruskin qui resurgit au seuil : "Il n'y a de richesses que la vie." Nous la possédons, nous en jouissons—mais plus—mais mieux. Ce qui pour nous fait tant priser la vie, ce n'est point comme avant son accessoire : cérébralité—émotions d'art—culture raffinée des sens. "Le vêtement n'est pas plus que le corps," est-il dit. Ainsi nous dépouillons la vie de ses ornements vains : luxe. Nous possédons la matière même de la vie qui ne se mesure ni à l'intelligence, ni à l'art, ni à la beauté. Rejetons toute idéologie complexe, toute conception alambiquée, brassant la vie à plein corps, l'acceptant dans sa nudité. Alors, elle apparaît claire, nette, comparable à une route plane, sans l'attrait paresseux des fleurs et paysages, sans l'incitation aux repos superflus.
>
> 'The day after the Armistice, our mentality suddenly found itself emptied. There was a brusque turning in our mind: now the ending for us was no longer death, but life still to be lived. How could these ideas, fruits of an exceptional period [the war], help in the organization of a new future: the construction of a normal existence, of a daily task, of a humble purpose. Our mood was then above all one of joy, of bedazzlement as if a bandage had been taken from our eyes.
> And it was first Ruskin's saying that came home: "There are no riches other than life itself." We possess it, we enjoy it—but more, but better than before. What makes us so prize life so much is no longer as before its accessories: cerebrality, artistic emotions, refined culture of the senses. "Clothes are no more than the body," it is said. Thus we strip life of its vain ornaments: luxury. We possess the very matter of life, which cannot be measured by intelligence, or art, or beauty. Let us reject all complex ideology, all contorted ideas, hugging life with our whole body, accepting it in its nudity. Then it appears clear, distinct, comparable to a level road, without the lazy attraction of flowers and landscapes, without temptations to superfluous rest and ease.'[96]

The event provoked an emotional crisis that required a fundamental reevaluation. Brenner reported on January 13, 1926, that "Jean says at twenty he also wanted to commit suicide" (Glusker 2010: 41). No details were given and the circumstances were not specified, but the year would have been 1918. Kimball Worcester describes Charlot's *Self-Portrait, Cubist Style* (1919), discussed below:

> An immediate postwar self-portrait, in the Cubist style, reflects that questioning of identity and existence and survival suffered by so many veterans of the Great War—(2016)

Through the next months, Charlot's thinking would be divided between trying to assimilate the experience of the war, anticipating and then enjoying the excitement of the Occupation, and envisioning his future life.[97] These often clashing currents of thought and emotion are represented by a pair of poems written in December. In number I, *Merci, Maître, d'avoir permis que l'humble graine* of December 16, 1918, he thanks God touchingly for allowing him to survive and then describes the war and his survival with the strange, self-deprecating sarcasm he will use later in his *Grande complainte de la garde-barrière et de son amant* of June 1921:

> De ces rires de haine et des morts qui dansaient,
> il ne reste plus rien qu'une grande migraine.
>
> Vous n'avez point voulu de ce corps sec pour bouc ;
> Vous saviez bien qu'aucun Baedecker, que nul Cook
> ne saurait l'initier au martyr indigeste.
>
> 'Of that hateful laughter and the dancing dead,
> Nothing remains but a big migraine.
>
> You did not want at all this dry body for a sacrificial goat;
> You knew very well that no Baedecker, no Cook
> would know how to initiate it into being an indigestible martyr.'

Now that the war is over, he is turning back into the Gros-Jean 'useless beggar' he was before. Number II was written in anticipation of meeting the German women about whom the soldiers were hearing so much; the poem may have been written after the arrival in Germany. In any case, the tone is an entirely new one for Charlot, and one found only in his poems and writings of this time, for instance, in his poem of January 8, 1919:

> Vous la possèderez, des vertèbres aux dents
> Avec son corps vierge et son âme solitaire.
> Elle a grandi comme un beau plant gorgé de terre
> qu'émonda le scalpel, qu'effeuillera l'autan.
>
> C'est un beau don. Il vous faut la soigner autant
> qu'un cheval ou qu'une coupe antique.
>
> 'You will possess her, from her vertebrae to her teeth,
> With her virgin body and lonely soul.
> She grew up like a beautiful plant gorged with earth

that the scalpel pruned and the storm deleaved.

It's a beautiful gift. You have to care for her as much
as a horse or an antique cup.'

The male lover is the absolute sexual master, the conqueror; the female, a plant-like, pet-like beauty, completely under his domination—which he enjoys. To this description of sexual power Charlot tries to join his old theme of a rustic Christian marriage—"Elle est bonne lingère et vous serez bon maître" 'She is good at linens and you will be a good master'—but the moods clash, reflecting his conflicting emotions at the time and for more than a year to come.

In December 1918, Charlot also wrote the last of his exceptional war poems, *Sonnet du 2ième canonnier. Décembre 1918* (En argot du Poilu). He returns himself to his lowest rank and speaks throughout in the argot of the *poilu*, with which he had already sprinkled some of his earlier poems and which contrasts strangely with the classical sonnet form. As in a medieval poem, he calls God's grace down on a list of richly described soldiers who have suffered from the war: those who were sick of combat though they kept up their happy air, the mutilated who've lost their nose, the shell-shocked with shaking hands, those now so ugly that they have no one even to kick them, the gassed, the bled, the syphilitic, those who fired their batteries and waited for the reply, the brave as well as those who shat in their pants. Weighed down with leggings, horse whips, gas masks, and filth—driver-gunners, notaries, curates, peasant cannoneers and those wearing glasses—crybabies, carousers, and hard workers who have all been snuffed—God give them grace! Many soldiers at the end of wars reflect thus on their lost comrades.

On January 21–24, 1919, Charlot looked at himself in one of his most powerful images of the effects of the war, *Self-Portrait, Cubist Style*, which, on the surviving evidence, he was using for the first time.[98] The face and neck are done in thin ink-line in a straightforward, realistic version of Analytical Cubism, but the background is all modulated gray washes; as a result, the head seems to float in an undefined medium. Charlot has turned to the Cubist style in order to analyze his face as closely as possible; Charlot wants to know who he is now after the war. The head is lit from below, the eyes stare without pupils, and the unsmiling mouth is set; it is the face of someone who has experienced something horrible but has survived. Charlot also stated in discussing his later gouache *Bullet*, that he used Analytical Cubism as a visual pun for the explosive disintegration of organisms during the war. The taut thin lines that analyze the face also seem to mark lines of aging and suffering. The style conveys perfectly the message. The portrait accords with Charlot's later poem *Seigneur, voici le temps de ma délivrance* of February 2, 1920:

si j'ai gagné l'or terni dessus mes manches
j'ai senti la Mort qui me serrait aux hanches,
j'ai scruté ses yeux de vide dans l'orbite.

et c'est pourquoi sur ma face jeune, imberbe

le souvenir sculpteur de rides habite
et au noir de mes prunelles du sang gerbe.

'if I have won the faded gold on my sleeves,
I have felt death hugging my loins,
I have looked into his eyes of emptiness in the socket.

And that is why on my young, beardless face,
the sculptor of lines, memory, lives,
and in the black of my pupils, some blood radiates its fire.'

The portrait is an emblem of the contrast Charlot drew between himself and Maurice Denis:

> When he [Denis] calls himself a decorator I think perhaps it is a true appreciation of his art. As a decorator he was supreme. Maybe because my own experiences at the time were very strong and mixed up with the war and death and so on, I had to change my attitude towards art, and even though I was a muralist, even before painting murals, I never could think of myself as a decorator. (Interview September 14, 1970)

Shortly after the Armistice, Charlot wrote down the outline of a prayer, the first and clearest example of his meditating with a pencil in hand:

Merci Seigneur

De la Guerre :
a) Idée de la Mort. Sa vérité. Sa Douceur. Son fruit (désir d'étais).
b) le Peu essentielle : La Vie. Respect du Corps.
c) Connaissance de l'Action : (manuelle).
d) Rejet des idéologies
I la Vie fructueuse : Assurer "essentiel." terrain [*borné*] cerné. Action *encadrée*
II Nécessité d'*association*.
la Règle.
Moi—cellule.
III (Les maisons autour de l'Église. (que nos vies doivent faire grappe autour du Christ[99]

'On the War:
a) Idea of Death. Its truth. Its Sweetness. Its fruit (desire for supports).
b) the essential Little—Life. Respect of the Body.
c) Knowledge of Action. (manual)
d) Rejection of ideologies
I the fruitful Life: Assure "essential." field [*limited*] delineated. Action *enframed*.
II Necessity of *association*.
the Rule.

Me—cell.

III (The houses around the Church. (that our lives should form a cluster around Christ'

In April 1919, Charlot started writing a talk for the Gilde, "Des Leçons de la Guerre," that would summarize the lessons he had learned in the war. He went back to the prayer he had written and used it as the first outline for the talk. He wrote new notes for the talk over the next three pages. This was an opportunity for him to formulate a number of thoughts that he had been expressing fragmentarily in his poems since he entered the army in 1917.

In his talk, he begins by describing his joy at being together again with his comrades, whom he has greatly missed. His current activities hardly ever involve art, so he finds thinking about it difficult. He will, therefore, discuss ideas unusual for a Gilde talk. He finds that he has now two mentalities. Just emerged from the war, his mind is still clouded with the spirit of combat, which the occupying forces retain more than others. Charlot would always retain this martial spirit, which made him feel out of place in Paris, but drew him close to David Alfaro Siqueiros in Mexico. On the other hand, he now knows that he has survived and will have to create a civilian and professional life. He wants now to induce some principles from the experience of the war that can help him in his future life. These are the thoughts that are preoccupying him and that he has endeavored to put in order.

Charlot starts with the experience of living and working together with people of different classes, a passage quoted above. The intensity and intimacy of this encounter in wartime lead to new points of view. First, one becomes aware in a living way of an earlier, more theoretical opinion—that a person is important not because of the accidents of his education, tendencies, or intellectualism but because of his "*valeur d'être*" 'value of being,' his "essence individuelle" 'individual essence.' Charlot is using here the Thomist distinction between substance and accidents along with Maritain's particular emphasis on *being*. Charlot is not referring to peasant or worker *cultures* as an accident; he always admired them. The accidents are clearly what are called "disadvantages" in the context of the mainstream culture. Nonetheless, the passage provides an insight into Charlot's approach to people: he penetrated to the essentially human and then used that contact to understand the peculiarities of individual, class, and culture as human expressions.

Once Charlot set aside his prejudices, he felt a great pleasure in his conversation with the simple soldiers: unencumbered by philosophical problems, they were better able to construct a moral view of the world and to make good judgments. Intellectuals are too occupied with the past and too anxious to see into the future; as a result, they lose the present. The simple person just like the child focuses on the present and tries to draw from it all the benefit and joy he can. He has a holy confidence and does not let himself be bothered. He does his job and enjoys his rest, happy with physical pleasures. As a result, "Il est plus près de la matière, de l'essence de la vie" 'He is nearer to matter, to the essence of life'; "très proche des grandes vérités physiques—'manger, œuvrer, mourir'" 'very near to the great physical truths —"eat, work, die."' Charlot wrote similarly on the *poilu* in a line deleted in the final version of *D'un Art Pauvre*:

> Et d'abord qu'il est des hommes pauvres, ils dorment où ils sont, mangent ce qu'il rencontrent, pensent peu. Leur langue est rude mais leur simplicité est proche de Dieu. Ils ont vu bien des choses, mais toutes réelles—et l'objet factice les étonne. tout art factice.
>
> 'And first there are poor men. They sleep where they are, eat what they happen on, think little. Their language is crude but their simplicity is near to God. They have seen lots of things, but all real—factitious objects shock them. all factitious art.'

Charlot concluded that his art should be as real as the experience of the soldiers.

Charlot's description does not fit the peasant or working classes in normal life—it borrows from old tropes of the improvident "Other"[100]—but is plausible for men in wartime, enjoying each moment because it might be their last. Charlot connects this description to the Christian ideals of poverty, simplicity, humility, and childlikeness, ideals deriving from the view that all things are wholly dependent on God. The rich and powerful are proud and self-reliant; the poor know they are helpless without God's love. Charlot equates the "ne pas s'en faire" 'don't worry, don't let it bother you' of the *poilu* with the "sainte confiance" 'holy confidence' of the child. The dissimilarities between the two, in my opinion, show that Charlot is idealizing the common soldier, the common man. Charlot's other youthful religious writings reveal indeed that he was struggling with an internal conflict between pride in his accomplishments and consciousness of his dependence on God.

D'un Art Pauvre enables us to recognize the next section of "Des Leçons de la Guerre" as autobiographical. One learns to appreciate the body once one has experienced extreme physical effort and fatigue so real that one would be happy to sleep on straw. The body speaks directly to the consciousness and does not lie. On the contrary, the mind or soul is a confused reflection of the exterior chaos. Charlot's use of the word *hygiène*—"l'hygiène musculaire" 'muscular hygiene' and "ces conditions d'hygiène" 'these conditions of hygiene'—provides a context for his remarks. Since the late eighteenth century, town planners had been arguing for the replacement of medieval quarters with "hygienic" modern developments. Such arguments became an important part of the discussion of postwar reconstruction. Since town planning involves wide considerations, *hygiene* was extended to social planning as well. Finally, the term was extended to culture as a contrast with the Decadence that many felt had led to the war: postwar culture should be healthy—vital and robust. Such thinking reached Mexico. In 1992, when I met the Estridentist poet Germán List Arzubide, the key adjective he used for my father was *sano* 'healthy.'

In the war, physical effort becomes the whole of life, and the drowning soul wishes vainly for solitude and a quiet moment to recollect itself. In his 1917 poem, *Il s'est passé depuis ce temps-là bien des choses*, Charlot had described escaping into the latrines for a little privacy. One should feel humility and respect before those who live the physical life even outside of the war. Charlot applies this point directly to himself in *Notebook C*:

> LA CONNAISSANCE DU PAUVRE.
>
> Il n'y a de richesses que la vie (Ruskin)
> Vie ? ni cérébrale, ni quelle, mais d'adaptation à l'état—de mon infériorité comme charretier (humilité)—que la première proposition est spirituellement vraie.
>
> 'KNOWLEDGE OF THE POOR.
>
> There is no richness other than life (Ruskin)
> Life? neither cerebral, nor as it is, but of adaptation to one's state—of my inferiority as wagoner (humility)—that the first proposition is spiritually true.'

Indeed, one should not distinguish between thinkers and non-thinkers, but between cerebral and physical feelings, the latter being just as full a world as the former:

> Mais à côté du monde de sentiments cérébraux vécus par quelques-uns, s'élève un monde de sentiments physiques, aussi touffus, aussi complexes, aussi aigus, vécus par tout un peuple manuel. Cette vie pour douloureuse qu'elle soit, n'est point stérile.
>
> 'But next to this world of cerebral sentiments lived by some, raises itself up a world of physical sentiments, equally dense, complex, sharp, lived by a whole manual people. This life, painful as it is, is not at all sterile.'

Charlot's outline puts the point succinctly (*Notebook C*): "le Peu essentielle : La Vie. Respect du Corps" 'the essential Little: Life. Respect of the body.'

He who has once known the physical life no longer wants complicated philosophies but this rock-solid security of Christian dogma and a normal life, simplified and purified. The soldier realizes he has survived and wants to embrace life in all its intrinsic beauty, just as Charlot drew lovingly the flowers on the battlefields. He does not think of life as dark, as so many Christians and philosophers do, but appreciates life as it really is:

> Au lieu de n'accepter l'existence qu'ainsi qu'une trame terne où piquer et broder les plaisirs, il recrée aux incidents journaliers leur réelle valeur. Il se plaît et s'attarde aux sensations les plus simples, se réjouit d'un rai de soleil, se délecte au goût du pain, exulte dans le repos de la tâche achevée. La vie est pour lui semblable à une brassée de fleurs, où la sensation la plus humble, l'incident le plus frêle jettent leur note. C'est un remerciement continuel pour les sens, jusqu'alors non pleinement goûtés. C'est proprement la joie de vivre rapportée à Dieu dans l'usage des membres, le chatoiement visuel et l'harmonie auriculaire, la réalisation pleine du verbe apostolique : "Soit que vous mangiez, soit que vous buviez *et quelque chose que vous fassiez*, faites tout pour la gloire de Dieu."
>
> 'Instead of accepting existence as a dull cloth sheet on which to stitch and embroider pleasure, he recreates the real value of everyday incidents. He enjoys and lingers over the simplest sensations, rejoices in a ray of sunshine, takes delight in the taste of bread, exults in rest after an accomplished task. Life is for him similar to an armful of

> flowers, where the humblest sensation, the frailest incident add their note. It's a continual thanks for the senses, up till then not fully tasted. It's properly the joy of living brought to God in the use of one's limbs, the visual shimmer and aural harmony, the full realization of the apostolic saying: "Whatever you eat, whatever you drink, and *whatever you do*, do all for the glory of God."'

This is the true Christian attitude towards life.

Another value from the army is an appreciation of hierarchical order and discipline. Each soldier knows where he fits and what he should do, just like a monk. Charlot had used the image humorously in his poems, and Huysmans had earlier satirized the large monastery of Solesmes as a barracks with the abbot as the general (*L'Oblat* 1917: 4 f., 59), but Charlot is proposing the analogy seriously in his talk. Confidence in the task and obedience to one's superiors brings peace; but this obedience is not easy, not a cowardly inertia but "une école de vouloir humble" 'a school for a humble will.' Extending military order and discipline to other areas of life, now that it had proved victorious, was promoted by others, like Denis (1922: 31 f., 57, 196 f.). More personally, this passage reveals, I believe, how much Charlot had felt the burden of family responsibility with all its necessary decisions before entering the army.

Another lesson derives from the nomadic life and constant danger in the military, which creates a feeling of instability . Louis Mairet, a soldier killed in 1917, had written:

> What we hoped was only a passing state of affairs…has become stability, stable in its very instability. (Greenhalgh 2014: 401)

Charlot would consciously explore that extreme instability in his two first frescoes in Mexico: *The Massacre in the Main Temple* (1922–1923) and *Cargadores* (1923).

Normally, the physical world seems stable and the spiritual world inconstant. But in war, the opposite is true:

> Nulle attache possible au cadre extérieur, varié quotidiennement, *ou quand* stable, d'une pauvreté détachante. A travers ce kaléidoscope de logement, d'étapes, de pays et de cités, seule ma vie propre se présente en permanence. Elle seule m'accompagne, inchangée, alors que tout alentour varie et passe.
>
> 'No attachment possible to the exterior setting, varied daily, or *when stable*, of a distancing poverty. Across this kaleidoscope of lodging, stages, lands and cities, my own life alone presents itself with permanence. It alone accompanies me, unchanged, while all around me varies and passes.'

One feels helpless about the world and turns to one's own inner life as a place to deepen. But one's life seems no longer one's own, seems too vulnerable to external accidents. As a result, one deepens one's life by thinking of death, which is probable and near: "La vie héroïque s'ordonne autour de la mort" 'The heroic life orders itself around death.' For a Catholic, this thought is not saddening, but the rock on which

life can be constructed. The little things of life even themselves out when measured against the idea of death, and one reaches a deep peace that comes from the acceptance of God's will. In *Notebook C*, Charlot wrote:

> IDÉE DE LA MORT : du monde extérieur fuyant de l'intérieur stable ver la mort.
> (Ste Hildegarde)
> *Son Mode* [*d'idée*] : païen (cf. Neumann)
> chrétien : liturgique d'espoir. (cf. : fille LXV).
> *Son temps* : [quotidienne] habituelle.
>
> 'IDEA OF DEATH: of the exterior world fleeing from the stable interior towards death.
> (Saint Hildegarde)
> *Its Mode* [*idea*]: pagan (see Neumann)
> Christian: liturgy of hope. (see daughter of Louis XV).
> *Its time*: [daily] habitual.'

Charlot copied the quotation from the stigmatic Theresa Neumann and the daughter of Louis XV:

> "Ceux qui parlent de leurs parents morts avec une douce pitié, comme de pauvres vieillards tombés en enfance." Neumann
> "Être toujours prêt à communier et à mourir" fille de Louis XV
>
> '"Those who speak of their dead parents with a soft pity, as if they were poor old people in their second childhood." Neumann
> "Always be ready to receive communion and to die," daughter of Louis XV.'

Another aspect of military life appears to be harmful but can become a stimulus to good: the soldier's inability to create his own social world. In normal life, one chooses one's friends, influences, and circles. In the army,

> L'homme ne vit pas sa vie, mais leur vie. Il est mis en présence de milieux opposés à sa vitalité propre, respire une atmosphère à laquelle il n'est pas éduqué et se trouve contraint au côte à côte avec ce qui, cérébralement, lui répugne. Lui qui jouit de la lumière catholique entre en échanges constants avec l'aveugle et le vice. Cette cohabitation physique annonce et précède un échange intellectuel. L'ambiance respirée l'imprègne.
>
> 'The man does not live his own life, but theirs. He is put in the presence of social groups opposed to his own life principle, breathes an atmosphere to which he is not educated and finds himself constrained into living side by side with a person who, cerebrally, repulses him. He who enjoys the Catholic light enters into constant exchanges with blindness and vice. This physical cohabitation announces and precedes an intellectual exchange. The atmosphere he breathes permeates him.'

He is assailed by new ideas and desires:

> Jeté violemment au-dehors de cette tour blanche et crue inexpugnable, roulé et traîné au travers des bouleversements charnels, il se roidit, se débat dans cette cohabitation habituelle avec la Bête dont il reçoit l'haleine au visage.
>
> 'Ejected violently from this white tower thought invulnerable, rolled and dragged across carnal upheavals, he stiffens his will, struggles in this habitual cohabitation with the Beast, whose breath he feels in his face.'

The moral peace that one had constructed and proudly considered solid is thrown over by external and involuntary conditions:

> Il fut un temps où, m'entourant des mirages de mon orgueil, cloîtré comme j'étais en une ambiance factice, je me délectais en ce mensonge de l'amour-propre : "Tu es pur, tu es sage," disait-il.
>
> 'There was a time when, surrounding myself with the mirages of my pride, cloistered as I was in an artificial environment, I delighted in this egotistical lie: "You are pure. You are prudent," he said.'

The instincts he thought he had conquered reawoke and showed him that his earlier moral peace had resulted, not from his strong will, but from the habits of his life. As he said to himself as early as April 1917, he had to move "De l'innocence d'ignorance à l'innocence volontaire" 'From the innocence of ignorance to voluntary innocence.' He learned to distrust himself again. Charlot's notes for the talk reveal how important this section was for him (*Notebook C*):

> DU RÉVEIL DANS LA LUTTE.
> civile : le vice sollicité au minimum dans *ma* vie.
> ici : *leur* vie : sollicitations. raidissement.
> *Fruit* : Humilité (le vice était en moi qui dormait)
>
> 'ON REAWAKENING IN THE STRUGGLE.
> civilian: vice solicited minimally in *my* life.
> here: *their* life: solicitations. stiffening in resistance.
> *Fruit*: Humility (vice was in me and I was sleeping)'

New temptations were stimulated by the idea of the nearness of death: "*Son fruit* : la mort étalon des incidents charnels" '*Its fruit*: death a spur to carnal incidents.' Charlot's notes for the talk are generally more personal, with more of his negative feelings about his comrades and worries that his own poverty will prevent him from having a marriage that will help him solve his problems (*Notebook C*):

> pauvreté
> obstacles aux devoirs d'état
> mauvaise nourriture et vêtement
> manque de plaisirs (camarades)
> mauvaise éducation (n'être pas de leur monde).

isolement

[***sténographie***] déprimant par retenir dans une classe qui n'est pas la mienne.
isol. dans devoirs d'état : camarades m'ont taché.
isol. dans l'amitié : pas d'objet.
isol. dans l'amour : célibat forcé : cause : argent

'poverty
obstacles to the duties of the social state
bad food and clothing
lack of pleasures (comrades)
bad education (not being of their world).
isolation
[shorthand] depressing by retaining in a class that is not mine.
isolation in duties of social state: comrades have soiled me.
isolation in friendship: no object.
isolation in love: forced celibacy: cause: money'

In a passage quoted above, Charlot now speaks of the soldiers' feelings at the Armistice: they were not going to die, they were going to be able to construct their future. They embraced life as if realizing its value for the first time. That this feeling remained strong for Charlot is revealed in a sentence from his written meditation of January 11, 1919: "Vous me donnez cette grande et belle création —et moi, je l'embrasse tout entière comme un bouquet !" 'You give me this great and beautiful creation —and I, I embrace it whole like a bouquet!'

At the same time, the soldiers realized the importance of action: thinking should not be sterile, but in every activity, manual and intellectual, a just balance should be established:

> Nous avons désir d'être, d'esprit et de corps, sains, accolant au respect de l'intelligence le respect de la chair (vue à l'œuvre au front).
>
> 'We have a desire for being, in spirit and body, healthy, joining to the respect for intelligence the respect of the flesh (seen at work at the front).'

That action is not, however, an end in itself, but should be directed towards a purpose. In memory of the fallen, the survivors must devote themselves to good ends as heroically as they did in combat, undaunted by obstacles and opposition. But the soldiers have learned in the enormous effort of the war that they need support and teamwork to accomplish anything. The individual must be part of a larger movement, of a larger organization, in which he accomplishes his clear and limited task. Charlot later found this same idea operating in Mexico:

> When Captain Siqueiros, just back from the battlefronts, met in 1919 with other artists in uniform, they opened in Guadalajara a "Congress of artists-soldiers," already converted to social endeavors by military selflessness and collective discipline.[101]

Charlot's notes demonstrate how central this idea was for him and which sources he was using (*Notebook C*):

> *Des règles du soldat* : sans sa main (évangile avant centurion)
> des sanctions images sanctions de Dieu.
> Fruit : que la vie au retour doit être réglée comme dans un groupe (ou un couvent).
> Association
> moi cellule spécialisée
> (cf. D. Besse—Claudel).

> '*On the rules of the soldier*: without his hand (gospel before centurion)
> sanctions, images of God's sanctions.
> Fruit: that life on return must be regulated as in a group (or a convent).
> Association
> me: specialized cell
> (See D. Besse—Claudel).'

A page of quotations provides his exact sources:

> "le couvent est une association stable. Quand l'homme disparaît, l'emploi subsiste."
> D. Besse. Vie de S^{t} Waúdrille.
> Et que lui importe, du moment qu'il a un supérieur et la Règle. Claudel Grandes
> Odes.
> Il a réglé en moi l'amour. Cant. des cant.

> '"the convent is a stable association. When the person disappears, the employment subsists." D. Besse. Life of Saint Waudrille.
> And what does it matter to him, the moment he has a superior and the Rule. Claudel: *Cinq Grandes Odes*.
> He has regulated love in me. Canticle of Canticles.'

The only quotation he used was Saint Hildegarde's call to accomplish all that one sees and realizes one is capable of doing.

Charlot cannot find such an organism outside of the Church, which directs all things to the glory of God and provides the physical, moral, and spiritual precepts to accomplish one's task. That task, although accomplished in the general framework of the Church, is specialized and requires subsidiary organizations, like a guild. Finally, a third hierarchical organism, the family, provides a framework for his life:

> Eglise universelle, gilde technique, famille, tels sont les trois cadres où ma vie, cernée et réglée, trouve l'indication de la tâche et le support nécessaire à son achèvement.

> 'The universal church, technical guild, family, such are the three frameworks in which my life, delineated and regulated, finds the indication of the task and the support necessary for its achievement.'

All three are regulated by love. Charlot places his personal longing for a good wife, expressed often in his poems, into an overall plan for his life. Family was an emotional, religious, and philosophical value and center for Charlot. Similarly, Charlot wanted all his life to work in teams, but was able to do so only for a short time with La Gilde and later with the early Mexican muralists.

To realize this plan, a measure or standard is needed. The war convinced the soldiers of their fragility and instability; it destroyed their pride. As a result, they cannot take themselves as a standard; they cannot adhere to the old *culte du moi*, which Charlot had rejected even before the war. God is the only possible head of the hierarchy, the only possible standard both in the spiritual and the secular realm. Charlot is categoric, even violent, in his rejection of human hierarchies: "je ne vois qu'arbitraire orgueil, brutaux empiétements, dans l'édification d'une hiérarchie humaine" 'I see nothing but arbitrary pride, brutal abuses, in the edification of a human hierarchy.' Obedience to God and His recognized authorities will fill out harmoniously the details of the construction: "Nous aurons recouvré les forces de respect et d'obéissance dont le principe s'étiolait et pourrissait dans le concept du Moi centre du monde" 'We will have recovered the powers of respect and obedience, the principle of which wilted and rotted in the concept of the Me as center of the world.' Freed from exaggerated individualism, situated in a true framework that orients their energy, they can now turn themselves effectively to their tasks: "L'avantage de cet ordre de vie réside dans son mécanisme facile et pratiquement réalisable, le minimum théorique nécessaire au groupement et à l'achèvement des tâches proposées" 'The advantage of this order of life resides in its easy and practically realizable mechanism, the theoretical minimum necessary for the grouping and achievement of the proposed tasks.' Charlot is being practical and result-oriented; indeed, his individual and team productivity demonstrates his capacity for budgeting his time and managing a group. On the other hand, although Charlot is obviously speaking sincerely, he is exaggerating the obedience he and the ordinary soldier practiced in the army and overestimating his own desire and even capacity to submit his will to his superiors. In general, military life made soldiers antiauthoritarian, and in a written meditation of July 29, 1919, Charlot will vent his feelings on the stupidity of his superiors. As stated before, Charlot's ideals conflicted on this point with his own personality: he was not a natural joiner and tended to move into a leadership position in any group he did join. He was in fact much happier as an officer and proud of fulfilling his responsibilities.

The veterans go to work filled with thanks for life itself:

> Remerciements pour la vie conservée. Voir encore, sentir encore, faire usage de ces sens, dons de Dieu, il y a là une jouissance toute spéciale, semblable à l'émoi de celui qui vient d'échapper à un accident. Une sorte de gloutonnerie à posséder cette chose que nous faillîmes perdre et que—plus que toutes celles-ci que nous croyions plaisantes : art, beauté, joie—nous reconnaissons comme désirable.
> Avec cette connaissance joyeuse de la valeur de la vie s'accorde le vouloir de ne la

> pas gâcher, de ne la pas laisser dans l'ombre comme on fait de choses de peu de valeur, mais mieux la soigner, en exprimer tout le suc, attentif à la maintenir en ces conditions d'hygiène, à la rapprocher et à l'incorporer à Dieu, source de toute vitalité.
>
> 'Thanks for the life preserved. Still to see, still to feel, to make use of these senses, the gifts of God, there is in all that a most special enjoyment, similar to the emotion of someone who has just escaped an accident. A sort of gluttony to possess this thing that we almost lost and that—more than all those things we thought pleasant: art, beauty, joy—we recognize as desirable.
> With this joyous knowledge of the value of life accords the will not to spoil it, not to leave it in the shadows as one does with things of little value, but to cherish it more, to draw from it all its juice, attentive to maintain it in these healthy conditions, to bring it nearer and incorporate it to God, source of all vitality.'

They turn now towards death, not as near and violent, but as distant and normal, a peaceful goal, an open door towards a greater, more powerful vitality. Learning to live this life, they can better seize the next, in which the principles of order attempted here are fully realized in love and joy.

Charlot's talk explicitly coordinates reason and emotion to understand the experience of the war and to use that experience as a basis for planning one's life and work. At least in this talk, Charlot expresses a deepening and intensification of his previous views rather than a break with them. The war was his most personal experience of disorder and violence, but it was in fact an example among many of the perennial struggle between good and evil. Nonetheless, the military experience elicits and demands an emotional and intellectual response.

The most striking aspect of the war for Charlot, as seen in his writings and artwork, was its violence. Charlot felt he had experienced the worst. When I asked him once how a sensitive young Frenchman had managed among the rough revolutionary Mexicans, he looked at me in disgust and said, "Well, I *was* in the First World War." Charlot's personal knowledge of anger, hate, and killing is evident in the attacking Spaniards of his first mural, *The Massacre in the Main Temple* (1922–1923); they embody the *furia francesa* of the famous cavalry knights of France in the late Middle Ages. Charlot could use Orozco's depictions of the Mexican Revolution to see that conflict through his eyes (*MMR* 215 f.). The First World War was the opposite of the religious, social, and moral order that Charlot and others had advocated. The experience would also have an affect on his religion:

> To the young soldier just come back from the wars, the Mexican church was also an answer to questions raised by violent death and physical sufferings. Here perhaps a French outlook, in its serene insistency on the metaphysical, would have proved insufficient. A French faith was hard put to reconcile, otherwise than in a syllogism, spiritual goods and the sight of those men, bloated, retching, dying, after a gas attack, this experience of maneuverings and of calculations to send a shell to explode where it could wreck more living flesh. The good Mexican martyrs pictured in churches, beheaded, disemboweled, or crushed, were a comforting parallel to this still vivid

> experience. The physical descriptions of flames and worms in Purgatory and in Hell made by comparison seem casual the intermittent hardships one had just passed through. (Summer 1951)

That Charlot felt this as a personal problem for himself as a soldier is revealed by his copying of the statement of John the Baptist in Luke 3:14:

> S^{t} J Baptiste.
> "Des soldats lui posèrent la même question. "Et nous, que ferons-nous ?"
> "Abstenez-vous de toute violence et de toute fraude ; contentez-vous de votre solde."
>
> 'Saint John the Baptist.
> "Some soldiers asked him the same question. 'And us, what should we do?'
> 'Abstain from any violence and any fraud; be content with your pay.''

In response, he requires with new urgency an order that possesses the greatest possible security and stability. For this reason, he seeks *cadres* 'frameworks,' in which to situate himself and orient his action. No merely human framework can suffice; the only satisfactory framework is God's. Similarly, the *cadre* of his professional life will be an association of artists, a guild; and the framework of his personal life will be the family. Three main subject areas of Charlot's art can easily be connected to this plan: religious subjects, workers, and family scenes. The frameworks provide both a shelter and a spring-board for action. Charlot's life and work will be dedicated to helping construct an order that will resist the committing of more crimes like the war. He seems to be basing his view on the idea of Salvation History, God's providential direction: the Christian's mission is to help develop systems that are ever closer approximations of the perfection of the divine order. Charlot speaks, however, in the more modest and practical terms of one's simple tasks.

Charlot's view that the basis of all three frameworks is love reveals a dimension of a recognized characteristic of his art: its tenderness and depiction of examples of tenderness. Charlot is using his art to attract the viewer to love; without that basic attitude, no organization at any level will be effective. More personally, the frequency of Charlot's depictions of tenderness reveals that they served a special emotional need of his. I found a parallel to this while studying and interviewing Vietnamese filmmakers from Hanoi in the late 1980s: after twenty-five years of warfare, they derived a special satisfaction from watching scenes of people being nice to each other. Both they and Charlot did not focus on battle but on the sufferings of war and the need for reconstruction. Love is also Charlot's motivation for reaching out to people across the boundaries of class, race, and culture; a tendency strengthened by his cohabitation with the *poilus*. The widening of human contact and understanding also serves to promote peace.

Charlot's religious motivation was continuous before, during, and after the war. He rejected nationalist and racist reasons for fighting and sought religious ones, shaping his wartime devotion to fit his special needs. In his poetry and visual art, he called on appropriate saints and evoked the religious ideals of the knight, seeing them as a basis for the French military tradition. After the war, he drafted a letter protesting the fact that at a war memorial, the cross had not been given equal prominence with

patriotic symbols: “comme l’amour de Dieu et l’amour de la Patrie étaient unis dans le cœur de nos morts” ‘as the love of God and the love of country were united in the hearts of those who died for us.’[102] If the cross were placed on top of the monument, it would express the passage from the sacrificial cross to the reward in the Resurrection. Although he respects all who died for France whatever their opinions or faiths, the great majority of the mourning families who visit the monument would like to have a cross. Charlot crossed out the draft and, as far as I know, never sent another letter on the subject.

Charlot’s Christianity was still emphatically denominational, but his anticlericalism would grow as he recognized increasingly the human character of the Catholic hierarchy. But by the beginning of the Occupation, he had already rejected a kind of Christianity that depreciates the physical world and the human body. He reached a decision on the tension between his vocation as an artist who loves and celebrates the physical world and an ascetic who rises above it: he will affirm life in all its physicality.

Charlot’s early interpretation of the war reveals that he selected from among his many experiences those he would use as a basis for his thinking. For instance, he served both as a common soldier and an officer; but he focused only on the former experience. He personally experienced, and even practiced, both obedience and indiscipline, but again emphasized the former. Charlot then interpreted his selection of experiences according to his particular brand of Christianity: the common soldier was described in the Christian terms used for children and the poor; military obedience was described as the Christian virtue. In the same way, Charlot had Christianized his religious experiences, which were in fact nearer to primary religions.

Like all major experiences, the war could not be entirely understood, assimilated, or expressed; it remained with Charlot as a source of raw emotion, as witnessed by his tears on revisiting Sézanne fifty years after his military duty there. At a ceremony, probably the inauguration of the French war memorial, the Panteón Francés de la Piedad, in La Piedad Cemetery, Mexico City, on July 13, 1924, Charlot was photographed, along with other veterans, forming a guard of honor. In full dress uniform, he stands at attention and salutes. In his face can be read all he has gone through, all he has seen.

[1] When we were living in Colorado Springs in 1947–1949, an old woman of the neighborhood frightened us children with her crazy behavior. My father explained that she had been a nurse in World War I and had had very bad experiences. We did not understand, but he refused to elaborate further, simply repeating what he had said.

[2] See the numbers and details in Greenhalgh 2014: xi, 250 f. As seen in Chapter 2 above, half of the French colony’s working-age males in Mexico City were lost in World War I (Génin 1933: 436; Rolland 1990: 25, 38, 40).

[3] Bombardment: E. V. April 25, 1918: 2; Greenhalgh 2014: 277. Nurse: “Nouvelles de ‘La Gilde’” January 25, 1918.

[4] Poems in this chapter are found in n.d. Poèmes Choisis; 1917–1920 Vers; 1918 Ecphrastiques; 1920–1924 Civil. Charlot kept the *Bulletin des Armées de la République* for May 17, 1916. I have found no news in it that would seem to have been of personal interest to him, and it may have been one of the news sources he was using to follow the war.

[5] Interview October 13, 1970. Brenner 1970: 304, writes erroneously "Charlot's university class volunteered"; Charlot was not at the university, and he was drafted.

[6] In Agathon 1913: 143. See also 166, 187 ff.

[7] Interview November 18, 1970. When I was a child, I asked my father what *boche* meant; he answered that "some people" used the term against the Germans. He did not do so himself, although the term occurs occasionally in his writing during the war and Occupation. Charlot had learned about the German atrocities in Belgium, but they did not fix in him a racial or cultural stereotype or prejudice.

[8] Due to wartime negativity, Nietzsche was in temporary eclipse among French intellectuals, but had been and would be revived as an important center of discussion by thinkers along the full spectrum of left to right (Forth 2001). Charlot remembered Nietzsche being one of Paul Claudel's *bêtes noires*, while they were working on the illustrations of the Apocalypse in the 1930s.

[9] *Livret Militaire*: 14 March 1917, 22 May 1917, 5 April 1917, 11 April 1917.

[10] *Livret Militaire*: 7, Commencé le 17 avril 1917 'begun April 17, 1917.' Charlot to French Consul, November 30, 1964: "Mobilisé 15 Avril 1917 au 45e A.C." 'Mobilized April 15, 1917, at the 45th Campaign Artillery.'

[11] I thank Andrew Crislip for the following information on early Christians. On make-up, see also "celle-ci chaste avec sa nuque de panthère" (Civil).

[12] Charlot uses the imagery more conventionally for sinfulness in *Qui n'aperçoit la poutre en son œil, voit l'épeautre* of January 19, 1918. See Woodman and Martin 1996: 293 f., the gender-based view that men are connected to war, women with to peace, and women are afraid of war.

[13] E.g., Iliad XX 124 f. Janko: 83.

[14] This poem was written in 1917, just before Charlot went to war. Published in *Mele*, February 1978, with a translation by Ernest Jackson, Jr., and no variants.

[15] *Livret Militaire*: 7. "Jean Charlot's Date List."

[16] "Permissions obtenues, Période du 1er Octobre 1917 au 31e Janvr 1918" 'Leaves granted, Period from October 1, 1917 to January 31, 1918.'

[17] *Général Coquet*, pen and ink, 17-1/2 cm long X 17-1/2 cm wide, on a sheet with poem by Jean Cocteau, dated September 1917, located at Orléans.

[18] The note is on one of the sheets of *Artillery Students Practicing on the '75 mm. Cannon*, 1917, probably before September.

[19] Bernard Silve wrote to me on October 27, 1999: “Le poème de Louis CHARLOT faisant allusion aux ‘dactylos à la marine’ parle là des ‘typist,’ qui ‘tapaient à la machine et étaient des fils à papa planqués, ne partant pas au front” ‘The poem of Louis CHARLOT alluding to “stenographers in martial style,” is speaking of typists, who “did typing and were sons with influential fathers who got cushy jobs, not going to the front.”’

[20] Email to John Charlot, May 9, 1999. Peter Charlot published a slightly different version on his web site (accessed October 18, 2009):

> During the 1st World War he was first assigned to digging latrines for horses. It is not something one immediately thinks of when considering World War I, but horses were injured in battle and required their own First Aid stations. A week before he died, Papa called me to his bedside and said he wanted to tell me a story. Both of us were fully aware of the import of this moment, as he could die at any moment. Digging latrines for horses was not his first duty it seems. On his first day at the horses' MASH unit, Papa was told by a sergeant that Papa was to care for a horse with an erection. Papa dutifully masturbated the horse hoping to relieve the poor stallion as medicinally as possible. Then he heard the laughter. Looking up from his labors, he saw the entire company of his new comrades roaring happily at my Father's initiation.

[21] Silver 1989: 199 f. Cork 1994: 86 f.

[22] Interview October 22, 1970. Other artists in World War I based work on folk art (e.g., Adhémar 1971: 87).

[23] March 8, 1972. Charlot was early acquainted with the subject from the statue of Saint Barbara in the Collégiale of Poissy, but it exercised no visible influence on Charlot’s print. Antoine Bourdelle (1861–1929) created a *Sainte Barbe* in 1916 (Cork 1994: 247).

[24] Pencil on paper, 8-3/4” high X 6-3/4” wide.

[25] *Très Sainte Barbe*, rejected drawing**,** pencil, ink, crayon? on paper, 18-1/2” high X 12-3/8” wide.

[26] *Ste. Barbe*, pencil and blue and red wash on paper, 10-1/2” long X 6” wide, property of John Charlot.

[27] *T^{s}. S^{e}. Barbe, full-scale drawing*, pencil, ink, and wash on paper, 20-1/2” high X 14-1/2” wide, 1917.

[28] *Artillery Students Practicing on the '75 mm. Cannon*, pencil, four pages torn from sketchbook, with drawings on both sides, 5-1/2" X 3-1/4." "Jean Charlot's Notes on Early French Work": "sketches of artilleurs. = work uniforms at Fontainebleau. Working '75. Sketches directly for *Sainte Barbe*. Did lithograph of *Sainte Barbe* in a town." Charlot miswrote Fontainebleau for Orléans; at the former, he was in officers' school. The earliest sketch might be that on the side with the writing; a large figure is done entirely in light lines. A figure in the top left corner shows some darkening of the hat and belt. A figure to its right has a much darker belt. On this sheet, Charlot seems to be finding his style for this series of sketches. *Artillery Students Resting*, pencil on paper, 5-1/2" X 3-1/4." Compare the use of vignettes and flowery borders in J. Marchand's *La Gardienne de Foyer*, 1915, similarly influenced by folk prints; Silver 1989: 204.

[29] Pencil, 4-1/2" high X 7-1/2" wide, irregular shape.

[30] *St. Francis of Assisi*, pencil on paper, 9-1/2" high X 6-1/2" wide. I am not sure this is the drawing Morse referred to (1976: 7). Morse mentions also a related drawing of St. George, but I have not identified it in the JCC.

[31] *Jeanne d'Arc*, with pink highlighted horse, pencil and wash on paper, 9-1/2" high X 6-1/4" wide. *Joan of Arc*, with yellow horse, pencil and wash on paper, 9-1/2" high X 6-1/4" wide.

[32] Pencil and ink on paper, 20-1/2" high X 14-1/2" wide.

[33] *S^t Christophe*, pencil on paper, 7-3/4" high X 5-1/4" wide; verso: same subject. *Saint Christopher*, pencil, 20-1/2" high X 14-1/2" wide, dated 1917.

[34] *Sacré Cœur*, pencil and wash on paper, 9-1/4" high X 6-1/2" wide. *Sacred Heart*, pencil on paper, 20-1/2" high X 14-1/2" wide, dated 1917.

[35] *Œuvres de Charité*, pencil on paper, 10-1/2" high X 6-1/4" wide.

[36] *Sketches for Œuvres de Charité* and Angels of the Arts, pencil on paper, 10" high X 7-3/4" wide.

[37] *Les Aveugles*, pencil on paper, 2-1/2" high X 10-3/4" high.

[38] ***S^te** Marthe, P^onne des Cuistots*, pencil, 4-1/2" high X 7-1/2" wide, irregular shape.

[39] *Paroles de N. D. de Parkmann*, pencil on paper, 9-1/4" long X 6-1/2" wide, irregular shape. The name in the title is hard to read, so "Parkmann" is a tentative identification. I have not been able to identify the place, which I think may be significant.

[40] *N. D. des Victoires*, pencil and wash on paper, 9-1/4" high X 6-1/4" wide.

[41] The subjects of the vignettes in the top corners are unclear.

[42] *S^t. Étienne, 1^er martyr*, pencil on paper, 9-1/4" high X 6-3/8" wide.

[43] Purple ink on paper, 4-1/2" high X 3-1/4" wide.

[44] *Louis Goupil, profile*, pencil, 7-1/2" high X 8-1/4" wide, irregular shape.

[45] *Les Blessés au Travail*, ink on paper, 8-1/4" high X 10-1/2" wide. Morse 1976: 6.

[46] Charlot was not sick because he was involved in other activities at the same time. I remember Charlot telling me that in a French army hospital, he had agreed to paint patriotic emblems—waving French flags, etc.—on patients' charts, kept at the foot of the bed; he did it on the side facing the patient, because only the doctors were supposed to see the charts. He did not, however, remember this when I asked him about it in our interview of October 13, 1970. When I asked him about other possible artwork for the army, he replied: "The obvious thing, of course, would have been the sort of primitive camouflage that was being done already at the time, but I wasn't asked to do that."

[47] John H. Morrow, Jr., in Strachan 1998: 277. "Le Carnet d'un Curieux" 1921: 527. Apollinaire 1991: 857 f., a list of artists in the war.

[48] *Notebook 1918*, 6-1/2" X 4-1/4." In Hawai'i, Charlot rebound this book in red and assigned the title. Charlot used the book from both ends. At one end are his portrait of Maurice Denis and the notes on Denis' lecture of January 7, 1918. At the other end, the earliest recorded date is "20-1-18." I believe the drawing of Sézanne is the final picture of this direction of the use of the sketchbook. A picture of the ruins of Revigny placed before the Denis portrait and the slightly displaced cityscape of Sens are the only exceptions I can see to the way I have described Charlot using the book. This book contains the manuscript of *D'un Art Pauvre*.

Guerre 1918, 6" X 3-3/4," has retained its original cover with the "Guerre" written on it in pencil. In Hawai'i, Charlot had the whole book rebound in gray. This book was also used from both ends, with a few sheets not done in sequence. The first date at one end is "29-1-18." This use continues until the drawing of *St Maurice et ses Compagnons*. The next pages are upside down in relation to the previous; that is, Charlot was working from the other end of the book. The first date on that end, which is on the third drawing, is "14-3-18"; drawings further into the book are dated in February 1918.

[49] Charlot letter to Consul, November 30, 1964: "Transferé Janvier 1918 109e A.L." 'Transferred January 1918 109th Heavy Artillery.' Also "Jean Charlot's Date List": "Janvier 1918 109 AL." In *Notebook 1918* above the poem *C'est pourquoi casque en tête et troussequin aux fesses* of February 5, 1918, Charlot has written: "117 AL. 61 B. SP [Secteur Postal] 111." '117 Heavy Artillery 61st Battery Postal Section 111.' I have found no other reference to this unit.

[50] *Livret Militaire*. See also "Jean Charlot's Date List":

Cours de radio Avril–Juin 1918	
(1.1.19) Radio 4 Juin 1918	336e AL
'Course on radio April–June 1918	
(January 1, 1919) Radio June 4 1918	336nd Heavy Artillery'

[51] Interview October 13, 1970. Also called L'Ecole d'Application de l'Artillerie et du Génie de Fontainebleau and informally L'Ecole d'Artillerie de Fontainebleau. Greenhalgh 2014: 391.

[52] *J'aurai dépassé ce monde sans le connaître*, 23–2–18 [mistake for 3–18?]. Compare *Voici que vous avez vu ma faiblesse*, probably written in early 1917:

> Parce que je l'ai offensé dans ma chair et l'esprit, et que j'ai honte de ces stigmates ignominieux superposés aux Siens.
>
> 'Because I have offended Him in my flesh and my spirit and because I am ashamed if these ignominious stigmata superimposed on His.'

For the theme of sacrifice, see, e.g., *Nous accumulions blasphèmes et sévices*, n.d.

[53] E.g., Cork 1994: 20, 178 f.; 308, the folk Calvaires of Flanders inspired soldier-artists in this direction.

[54] *Ex-Voto*, February 15, 1918. For du Bellay's influence, see also *Telle au creux des épis la faisane blessée*, February 1918:

> Et il n'y a plus que quelques cris et crachats
> à recevoir avec un peu de patience
> puis m'endormir au Cœur où Saint Jean se cacha.
> 'And there is nothing left but cries and spitting
> to accept with a little patience
> then fall asleep on the Heart where Saint John hid himself.'

[55] *Fragment with several drawings, including S^t^ Barbe, S^t^ Nicolas XVIII^e^*, 13cm tall X 9 cm wide, irregular shape, property of John Charlot.

[56] *L'Hostie*, subject: angel giving host to four kneeling women, seen from the back, pencil, 4-7/8" high X 31/4" wide, date: between January and May 1918; based on placement of earlier drawing in sketchbook. The sheet has been pasted much later onto another with a rough sketch of a liturgical subject, perhaps Christ sucking on the sponge of vinegar (he is however not on the cross).

[57] *Preparatory Drawing for Ex libris of M^r^ Gérardin, Pharmacist of Sézanne*, ink on hand-squared paper, 16 cm high by 9-1/2 cm wide; verso: "EX BIBLIOTECA"; David Charlot Collection.

[58] *Cezanne* [*sic*: Sézanne], pencil, 3-3/4" high X 5-7/8" wide, dated: 21-2-18, February 21, 1918.

[59] *Park Scene*, information below.

[60] *Profile of a Man*, pencil on squared paper, 5-5/8" high X 3-3/4" wide, dated "Mai 1918."

[61] *Straw Male Figure and Straw Female Figure*, color pencil, 5-5/8" high X 3-3/4" wide. *Folk Statue of a Woman, face in profile, body straight on, arms extended*, pencil, same size.

[62] *Park Scene*, pencil and wash, 13-3/4" high X 19-3/4" wide.

[63] Both pencil, 5" X 3." "Jean Charlot's Notes on Early French Work": "woman head and standing woman = Degas estate. Auction of his works on his death."

[64] "Jean Charlot's Notes on Early French Work." Dominico Ghirlandaio, *Giovanna Tornabuoni*, 1488, Sammlung Thyssen-Bornemisza, Lugano.

[65] "Jean Charlot's Notes on Early French Work."

[66] The official account of the battle, along with documents, is found in *Les Armées Françaises dans la Grande Guerre* 1934a and b. A detailed and early description of the Battle of the Matz is given in *The Times History of the War*, Volume 18, 1919: 419–422; volume 20 contains some material on the advance on the Canal de la Sambre, discussed below. Two volumes have recently been published on the battle: Buffetaut and Jurkiewicz 2001a and b. I have used especially Zabecki 1994, Pitt 1963, and Terraine 1981. Greenhalgh 2014: 302 ff.

[67] The alternative tactic to the *percée* was called "bite and hold," an attack limited to gains that could be successfully consolidated. This tactic was perfected by General Herbert Plumer, but after brilliant successes, he was replaced with a less successful general by Field Marshal Douglas Haig, and the vision of a decisive breakthrough was pursued with costly results until the end of the war.

[68] Terraine 1981: 23. Georg Bruchmüller, 1863–1948; Zabecki 1994.

[69] Zabecki 1994: 41 f.

[70] Charlot may have encountered this group. On a sheet of paper from a small notebook, Charlot wrote:

> *Débarquement*
> Morin et équipe français au débarquement *matériel.*
>
> Les chevaux bricolés de suite—puis les descendre.—Arabes. On cultive au fur et à mesure pour former parc.
>
> '*Disembarking*
> 'Morin and French team at disembarking of *equipment.*
>
> The horses harnessed immediately—then brought down. Arabs. They clear, spreading out, to form an artillery park.'

On a connected sheet from the notebook, Charlot drew a skeleton with a plumed hat and spear riding a horse.

[71] Charlot also admired Jean Cocteau's *Thomas l'Imposteur* (1923) as a description of the soldier's experience of World War I. I imagine that Charlot responded to such points as the youth of the hero on induction, the use of the *argot* of the *poilu*, and the mentions of artillerymen and Images d'Epinal. Charlot was reading Cocteau by September 1917, the date of his portrait of General Coquet; on the sheet, Cocteau's poem *Jeunes filles de sur la terre* has been written in another hand. I do not know when Charlot read *Thomas l'Imposteur*.

When as a child with my father I saw John Huston's film of Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, I complained that I had to wait too long for the fighting and that when it came, I could hardly see through the smoke. Charlot said that war was just like that.

[72] The poem discussed below is dated June 4 on the typescript and "3 Juin?" 'June 3?' on the manuscript.

[73] The manuscript has *me* 'me' instead of the *nous* 'we' of the typescript.

[74] Interview November 6, 1970. When I was around ten, I asked my father what he did in the war. I did not know what artillery meant so he explained, "We would send a shell over to them, and they would reply by sending shells to us." I was thinking of seashells. He said that most of the time one did not see what one was firing at. One had to calculate the shot. This was clearly Charlot's distanced way of describing the war.

[75] When Charlot watched the film of the assassination attempt on Gerald Ford, he said Ford had the expression of someone looking death in the face. Raymond Chandler called that look *The Long Goodbye*.

[76] Charlot spelled the name correctly: William Didier-Pouget, 1864–1959, famous for his landscapes with mists and heather.

[77] Siqueiros 1977: 102, described the same reaction, "el fervor orgulloso del primer combate como soldados rasos" 'the proud fervor of the first combat as simple soldiers.'

[78] *Houdencourt* (*sic*: Houdancourt), dated "11 Juin" 'June 11.' The town is also called Houdan.

[79] Place names: Montdidier for Didier sur l'Oise, Antheuil, Aronde, Marest (not marés), Amblény.

[80] See *Times History of the War* 1919: 421 f.

[81] Document in the JCC:

> RGA [Réserve Générale d'Artillerie] (? Division)
> 336 RAL [Régiment d'Artillerie Lourde]
> no. 1289
> *Note de Service*
> Diriger d'urgence le 1er Cr Charlot Jean Louis Henri de votre unité sur l'Ecole militaire de L'Artillerie à Fontainebleau, ou [*sic*] il devra être rendu pour le 1er Juillet 1918. Ce [*sic*] homme sera mis en route par vos soins.
> Aux Armées le 28 Juin 1918
> Le chef d'Escadron Hauser—cdt pr le 336 RAL
> Destinataire 3/336
> stamp: Le Colonel 336e RÉGt D'ARTILLERIE LOURDE

Charlot's letter to the French Consul, November 30, 1964: "Juin 1918. Ordre d'aller à l'Ecole Militaire de l'artillerie à Fontainebleau" 'June 1918. Order to go to the Military School of Artillery at Fontainebleau.'

[82] Terraine 1981: 180. Greenhalgh 2014: 306–310, 312–321, 323. I have also used The General Service Schools 1923.

[83] "Jean Charlot's Date List." Interview October 13, 1970.

[84] *Harrap's New Standard French and English Dictionary*. "Jean Charlot's Date List." Charlot's letter to French Consul, November 30, 1964.

[85] "Jean Charlot's Notes on Early French Work." *Self-portrait as Aspirant*, pencil and wash, 4-1/4" high X 2-7/16" wide, irregular shape.

[86] E-mail to John Charlot, May 9, 1999. Peter's memory differs from the interview:

> He says that he was originally an enlisted soldier. One day while digging a ditch, he received orders that he was to be commissioned and teach ballistics at Versailles.

In his e-mail, Peter cautioned: "Here are the war stories Papa told me. Except for the story of the horse, I am remembering things from when I was a teenager. I assume they have transformed into apocryphal scraps, but here they are for your perusal. I look forward to finding out what the real stories are."

A document in the JCC, "Cour de Pointeurs" "Course of Gun Laying," is a list of names without Charlot's, most probably his class list.

[87] The story survives in two secondhand, unreconcilable versions, neither of which makes sense. I noted after a conversation (Tabletalk July 14, 1971):

> He had been given a semi-court martial. He had been taking messages and received one at two in the morning from a messenger plane saying it wanted to land. He took the message and then returned to bed. He was an under-officer, and no one had told him to wake his superior. Later there was an investigation, and he was brought before a panel of three officers. They accused him of sleeping when on duty. He produced the message, so he proved he hadn't been sleeping. They let him go.

The airplane could not have stayed aloft through the night! Peter Charlot wrote (e-mail to John Charlot, May 9, 1999):

> Papa told me he had been court martialed for not informing the company of imminent danger. It seems he did receive a radio message stating that they were surrounded by the enemy. Papa duly took the message and went back to sleep. At the court martial, he was asked why he did not wake up the commander with the news. Papa explained that he was given strict orders NOT to wake up the commander under any circumstances. The charges were dismissed.

[88] "Jean Charlot's Date List." This is confirmed by his inscription on the poem *Or me voici dedans cette bonne Lorraine*: "Avec le 101e A.L. 28–12–18 Lorraine" 'With the 101st Heavy Artillery. December 28, 1918, Lorraine.' In Charlot's letter to the French Consul of November 30, 1964, he wrote mistakenly: "15 Septembre. Aspirant. Au 112e A.L." "Jean Charlot's Date List" states, however, that he joined the 112e on January 29, 1919, or later.

[89] Terraine 1981: 77. Greenhalgh 2014: e.g., 464.

Brenner 1970: 304, states that Charlot "received insignia of honor"; I have found no evidence that he was decorated, but the units were in which he served.

[90] The Division had several commanders, including General Jean Marie Joseph Degoutte in the middle of the war and in the later Occupation when the French occupying forces were unified in the Armée du Rhin under his command. Earlier in the Occupation, Mangin had commanded in the northern zone while General Augustin Gérard had commanded in the southern.

[91] Bihain is identified in a group photograph of Charlot with the Moroccan Division: "Bihain (mon ordonnance) au dessus du capitaine" 'Bihain (my orderly) above the captain.' A gouache of a "Bihan" [*sic*] is listed in "Mes dessins en Allemagne" and dated February 13, 1920; the gouache is in the JCC.

[92] Eberlein 1921: 90, translates a French writer: "Den stärksten Eindruck machten die herzlichen, fast väterlichen Beziehungen zwischen Offizieren und Mannschaften" 'The heartfelt, almost fatherly relationships between officers and men made the strongest impression.'

[93] "Jean Charlot's Notes on Early French Work"; the following quotations are also from this source. Charlot's guess at the date is faulty; the drawing was made after he joined the Moroccan Division. Charlot's two statements were made about two different portraits. *Adjudant Petit*, pencil, 4-9/16" X 27/16", irregular shape. *Petit au travail*, pencil, 2-3/8" X 1-9/16", detached sheet from small sketchpad. On the back of another sheet from the same pad, Charlot has written: "France militaire pour Petit" 'Military France for Petit.' The French *adjudant* differs from the English *adjutant*; the former is a sergeant major or a warrant officer, that is, between commissioned and noncommissioned. At some point, Charlot had a falling-out with "Petit l'ivrogne" 'Petit, the drunk' (*Ludwigshafen Notebook*, "Son Etat Actuel," September 1922), but remembered him fondly in the 1970s.

[94] *Commandant de Coligny*, pencil on paper, 17-1/2 cm high X 10-1/2 cm wide, probably early 1919. This is a detached sheet from *Sketchpad 1919–1921*.

[95] I have been unable to identify this location. Charlot may have misspelled Neuwiller or Neuwiller Lès Saverne.

[96] Charlot loved the scene in René Clair's I Married a Witch (1942) when a great wind destroys the wedding party, blowing away all the rich people's accouterments of status and power and forcing them to struggle against the gale like the servants. This was Henri Charlot's fear of catastrophe—war and revolution.

[97] Compare Greenhalgh 2014: 371.

[98] *Self-Portrait, Cubist Style*, pen and wash on paper, monochrome, 12" high by 8-1/2" wide, dated: January 21–24, 1919.

[99] *Notebook C*. When he took up the prayer to write his address to the Gilde, discussed below, Charlot dated the prayer "vers 11-18" 'towards November 1918' in the blue pencil he was then using. I believe Charlot started using *Notebook C* at Fontainebleau or shortly afterwards; he continued to use it sporadically through his early years in Mexico.

[100] Compare Tocqueville's description of savages: "le propre des sauvages est de se décider par l'impression soudaine du moment, sans mémoire du passé et sans idée de l'avenir" 'the characteristic of savages is to make decisions on the sudden impression of the moment, without memory of the past or idea of the future' (1988: 388).

[101] *MMR* 241. Siqueiros 1977: 130, drew from his service in the Mexican Revolution lessons remarkably similar to Charlot's.

[102] Charlot "Lettre au Sujet d'une Croix pour le Monument des Morts," probably early 1923. I believe the letter was written about the design of the French war memorial, the *monument aux morts*, officially called the Panteón Francés de la Piedad, in La Piedad Cemetery of Mexico City. A cross is placed above a copy of Rude's *La Marseillaise* from the Paris Arch of Triumph. Construction was started on July 4, 1920, and the inauguration was held on July 13, 1924. For this information, I thank Mónica Vidal of the Liceo Franco Mexicano, Mexico City. The photograph of Charlot discussed below was probably made at the inauguration. On the memorial, see Génin 1933: 425 f. To this day, a memorial service continues to be held on November 11 at the monument by the Union des Français de l'Etranger.