

7.

1921–1922

7.1.

NARRATIVE

Tatiana Flores writes correctly that “reading muralism forward from its inception instead of backward, through the filter of hindsight, yields a completely different narrative” (2013: 50). Similarly, Octavio Paz complained:

The ideological and political misconception has also affected criticism and distorted certain central incidents in the history of Muralism. An attempt has been made to cover up the meaning of the initial phase, and the participation of certain artists, such as Jean Charlot, or of certain personalities, such as José Vasconcelos, has been disparaged and efforts made to conjure it away. (1993: 132)

In Mexican historiography, a conventional view was developed both of the Revolution and of the Mural Renaissance, with its emphasis on Los Tres Grandes: Rivera, Orozco, and Siqueiros. Both these views have been and continue to be fiercely defended by older scholars. However, both are now being challenged by a new generation free of the ideological investments of their elders (e.g., Rashkin 2009: 90 f.). The basis of this reevaluation in art history is an emphasis on chronology that reveals the contributions of a number of marginalized artists. I will, therefore, sketch Charlot’s life and work year by year to provide the trajectory of his development and achievement. The main points mentioned in this narrative are discussed at length and with references elsewhere. Some repetitions from those sections are inevitable.

In Volume 1, Chapter 8, Sections 2 and 3.2, I have discussed in detail the exploratory trip to Mexico made by Charlot and his mother, their decision to immigrate, and their first days in their new Mexican home. On their first trip, they arrived in Puerto Mexico on January 20, 1921, and were in Mexico City probably by January 24. During this first stay, they lived with their relative Louis Labadie and explored the possibility of immigration. Charlot made street sketches and visited museums and the San Carlos academy. There in the library, he studied rare books and student work and was received graciously by Don Lino Picaseño y Cuevas. In thanks, Charlot left a copy of his *Chemin de Croix*, which was discovered by young Mexican artists in his absence. Charlot and his mother decided to settle their affairs in Paris and return for good to Mexico, leaving on May 6, 1921. Back in Paris, Charlot was extremely productive, completing his major painting *L’Amitié*, which was included in a major exhibition and favorably reviewed. His *Chemin de Croix* was also exhibited and critically praised. Back in Mexico City, Diego Rivera had returned from Europe in July and begun visiting art institutions and preparing his first mural. Charlot and his mother arrived in Veracruz on November 24, 1921, but did not move in with the Labadies as they had on their first visit because Luis Labadie’s third wife, Luz Priani, objected to their staying a second time. Doly Labadie wrote to me on December 6, 1980:

En dehors de ces souvenirs d’enfance, la venue de Jean avec tante Anita à Mexico après la Première Guerre Mondiale, ne m’a pas laissé beaucoup de souvenirs. Tous deux sont restés peu de temps à la maison. Papa avait une grande affection pour tante Anita, mai

ma belle mère ne les a pas accueillies comme papa aurait voulu, puis Jean est entré dans le cercle des futurs grands peintres, archéologues, intellectuels [*sic*], etc.

‘Beyond these childhood memories, the arrival of Jean and Aunt Anita in Mexico after World War I did not leave me many memories. Both of them stayed just a little while at the house. Papa had a great affection for Aunt Anita, but my stepmother did not receive them in the way papa would have wished. After, Jean entered into the circle of the future great painters, archeologists, intellectuals, and so on.’

My mother noted from a 1943 conversation with Doly:

In the Twenties Jean and his mother left their house and got a little apartment. She [Doly] and Raquel used to go and see them” (JCC, DZC Diary collection, Autobiographical Notes: “1943”).

At one point, Charlot stayed with his uncle Aristide Martel and studied his important collection of Precolumbian art. I have found no information on where Anne Charlot was living at that time. Later, Charlot and his mother often lived together. Pablo O’Higgins reported: “when I first met Jean, he was living with his mother in a little house near the... in center of the city” (March 21, 1974). Flores learned from the Alva family that the Cuetos’ “home on Mixcalco no. 12... housed Charlot and his mother in rented quarters and was located next door to both Diego Rivera and Ramón Alva de la Canal, was a locus for artists and intellectuals of the post-revolutionary period” (2013: 195). Charlot gives this address in a letter to Pach from the mid-1920s, probably before 1925.¹

The move to Mexico was impractical. Charlot had found employment in Paris as a commercial artist and was experiencing an initial success. In Mexico, neither he nor his mother had job prospects. Charlot’s father Henri had been a successful businessman, and his death marked the beginning of the family’s decline. Brenner wrote on October 12, 1929:

he told me that his father went insane, just before the war, at the period when suddenly the business went to pot and the family business went to pot and the family began to crumble. In many ways Jean stopped at that moment; and it has been very painful growing away from it. (Glusker 2010: 745)

In contrast, both Charlot and his mother recognized their incapacity in business. Charlot wrote Brenner on May 17, 1925: “Well, you know better than I do about those business questions.” Anne complained to her son that they both had helped a North American buyer for free when a Mexican had made good money off him:

nous, idiots comme toujours, nous n’avons pour toute cette peine, ces courses et ce travail que 0 centimes. Nous sommes trop bêtes, vraiment.

‘we, idiots as always, we have nothing more for all this effort, these errands and this work than 0 cents. We are too stupid, really.’ (February 1, 1928)

Perhaps remembering their relatives’ nineteenth-century success with the Arco-Iris, their first idea was to import French fashions, starting with the remains of the family stores of cloths and feathers. In a testimony, probably for his divorce from Odette, Jacques Bouvier stated:

En arrivant au Mexique, mon beau frère a monté un commerce de mode. Il faisait venir de France des modèles que je payais et il me remboursait par un chèque international. Cela a marché au début, puis les chèques se sont espacés et lors de la liquidation de notre communauté, il me devait encore : 25.000 Frs.—sur lesquels je n’ai jamais touché un sou d’intérêt. (1941)

‘On arriving in Mexico, my brother-in-law set up a fashion business. He had brought from France some models, which I paid for, and he repaid me by international check. That worked at first. Then the checks became fewer and farther between, and at the time our joint estate was liquidated, he still owed me 25,000 francs—on which I have never received a penny of interest.’

Charlot needed to scrounge odd jobs during all his time in Mexico. Even when he was hired as a muralist, his pay was that of manual worker and had to be supplemented by additional appointments:

I taught drawing. I had, well, one of my jobs, which I never used really as a job, was one of those things that Vasconcelos found so he could give a little money to the muralists with some sort of a political reason. I think I was Inspector of Drawing in the schools of Mexico City, the Distrito Federal, Federal District, Mexico City, but I never actually did anything about it. I just received something like six pesos a day or something, which was one way of living. So that was a sort of a pretext. But on the side I did get a few jobs teaching some small children drawing, I remember, and in the French colony I gave some lessons of painting at least to one person. That’s about it. (Interview June 12, 1971)

The JCC holds a receipt of July 20, 1922, for pay as Inspector de Dibujo ‘Inspector of Drawing.’ Charlot did not remember that he had taught French, but another document has survived appointing him “profesor de francés, un grupo, en la Escuela N. Preparatoria” ‘professor of French, one group/class, at the Escuela Nacional Preparatoria.’

Charlot felt a strong inhibition about using his art for money. He wrote to Brenner:

You know that my work no tiene much elasticidad, because, to satisfecer [*sic*] me it has to be submitted to the famous X which is rather a terrible master. Now there is an other way of working for the book and this would be to do commercial drawing as I did in Paris with casas de moda and here with Mexam. *Pero no me gustaria.*²

‘You know that my work does not have much flexibility because, to satisfy me, it has to be submitted to the famous X, which is rather a terrible master. Now there is another way of working for the book and this would be to do commercial drawing as I did in Paris with fashion houses and here with Mexam. *But it wouldn’t be to my taste.*’

Indeed, for Charlot, poverty was a mark of an authentic artist:

Maintenant pour le prix que te dire? L’artiste est pauvre et a besoin. C’est de son âme qu’il te vend et cette opération ressemble un peu à l’argent des messes où pour 2 piastres le croyant mobilise Dieu.³

‘Now what to tell you about the price. The artist is poor and has needs. It is some of his soul that he sells you, and this operation resembles a little the money for Masses where for two piastres the believer mobilizes God.’

Un menuisier qui fournit de bons meubles, il a femme et enfants, et vit, et le peintre qui peint bien, célibataire, et meurt. (October-December 1922 *De la Critique*)

‘A carpenter who produces good furniture, he has a wife and children and lives, and the painter who paints well, celibate, and dies.’

Charlot had no sympathy for “las pretensiones de quienes lamentan no poder hacer arte por tener la necesidad de ganarse el pan” “the pretensions of those who lament that they cannot make art because of the need to earn their bread.”⁴

Apparently, Anne Charlot was the steadier wage earner. Although rich, her husband Henri had his generation’s forebodings of catastrophe and ordered Anne and Odette to learn a manual trade by which they could survive hard times (Volume 1, Chapter 2, Section 4). Both became expert seamstresses, and Anne plied that trade in Mexico. Mérida told me that his wife had ordered a dress from her (January 29, 1971). Charlot was grateful:

She is 56 and accepted to work hard work to let me free time to paint (Charlot to Brenner: “Anita, what happens”).

Our situación de dinero was so bad that mother se puso a trabajar : institutriz. A su edad es resolution fuerte, but I know she does it to let me work my own work, and I have to accept it for the sake of that same work. I hope poco tiempo sera eso necesidad. (“Don’t accuse me”)

‘Our money situation was so bad that mother set herself to work: teacher. At her age, that’s a strong resolution, but I know she does it to let me work my own work, and I have to accept it for the sake of that same work. I hope this need will be only for a little time.’

I believe that Anne’s motivation was partly that Charlot had abandoned his French prospects because of her desire to start a new life in Mexico (Volume 1, Chapter 8, section 1.4). She was also a strong, practical woman without airs.

Anne will always dress neatly, but photographs of Charlot from 1921 show the gradual deterioration of his wardrobe until he is wearing the last remnants of his Paris closet. In late 1923 and early 1924, Tina Modotti photographed him once in a worn suit and formal shoes—patent leather and spats—and once in battered work clogs.⁵ While he was away in Chich’en Itza, his mother was happy to find him a \$5.00 pair of shoes at a sale and was mortified when they pinched (AGC to JC March 13, 1928; April 21, 1928). As his girlfriend, Anita Brenner was embarrassed: “he dresses so badly as to be conspicuous on the street, and I just hate that. If he were normal appearing, at least, I would feel less strained” (Glusker 2010: 458). His colleague Zalce was oblivious when I asked him whether Charlot seemed poor in 1931:

I don't know. I only saw him a few times. Even Rivera and Orozco weren't rich, though they were very famous. Jean didn't look poor. He had a scholarship to go to Yucatán, but I don't know how much it paid him. (July 27–28, 1971)

Lupe Rivera de Iturbe remembered that his *traje de pana*—brown corduroy suit—gave her a taste for that material (personal communication to Bronwen Solyom February 9, 1986).

Charlot wrote to Brenner:

Estoy desesperando de ir a N.Y. por lo del dinero. Mama se enfermo porque tuvo que hacer todo el trabajo en casa porque se fué la criada.⁶

'I despair about going to New York because of the money problem. Mama made herself sick because she had to do all the housework because the servant girl left.'

On December 2, 1925, Weston wrote of Charlot's "actual financial need. I think Jean is quite in distress, his demeanor indicates worry" (1961: 139). As son and man of the house, Charlot felt acutely that he was failing in his duty towards his mother.

Poverty was an emotional burden through most of Charlot's life. He discussed it particularly in two meditations on his spiritual state: "Essai sur Mon Etat Actuel" (September 25, 1922) and "Son Etat Actuel, 1914-1922" (September 1922). In the former, he contrasts his rich spiritual life with his ruined material one, which he feels has been imposed by God: "du jour où je lui ai remis entièrement le soin de mon argent j'ai été ruiné" 'from the day I placed in Him entirely the care of my money, I was ruined.' He cannot dress, eat, or live the way he would naturally wish or the way he was accustomed to by his upbringing: "choqué dans tous mes goûts je me restreins au strict nécessaire" 'shocked in all my tastes, I limit myself to the strictly necessary.' His life of debts suffers from an "*instabilité fondamentale*" 'fundamental instability.' Without money, the only social power, "inférieur socialement je m'isole" 'socially inferior, I isolate myself'; he feels resentment against people and God.

In the latter essay, feeling somewhat better, he writes: "pour rétablir il faudrait sortir de l'isolement sentimental et social" 'to reestablish myself it would be necessary to move out of this emotional and social isolation.' Marriage would be the best means, but he does not have the necessary money for that: "je ne peux pas en avoir humainement. il faut donc croire que Dieu m'en donnera surnaturellement. il le DOIT" 'I cannot have money by human means. So it is necessary to believe that God will give it to me supernaturally. He OWES it.' He has given over this whole situation to God since his last days in their home at St. Mandé.

Charlot's private thoughts do not reflect his outward life or the impression he made on friends. I suspect that like many intellectuals he often had the impression of looking at life as a distant spectator. On January 29, 1925, he wrote the poem *J'ai été l'indolent témoin de mon enfance* 'I was the indolent witness of my childhood' (1925 1925). In Charlot's early years in Mexico, he wrote several poems that expressed his feelings about the surprising turn in his life. In *Qu'est ce que je vais devenir* of February 2, 1922, he mocks his situation and ideas:

Qu'est-ce que je vais devenir,
Sans métier connu sans argent,

avec ce pauvre cœur rageant
et cette farce d'avenir.

'What will I become,
without a known occupation, without money
with this poor heart raging
and this farce of a future.' (1920–1924 Civil)

He should learn how to die; "j'aurais bien dû rester sergent" 'I should have stayed a sergeant.' To be a painter is a high calling: "c'est comme moine ou prêtre" 'it is like a monk or priest.' But tired of the heights, he wants God to leave him to a bourgeois life:

épouser ma bonne, sucrer
et laper, heureux, ses tisanes.

'marry my maid, sugar
and lap up, happy, her herbal teas.

Charlot is making fun of his earlier poems of a simple life with a rustic wife, but he is perhaps thinking also of Eugène Delacroix, who did not marry but ended by having his life managed by his servant, Jeanne-Marie le Guillou. Charlot held this as a cautionary tale for himself if he put off marriage too long.

A more comprehensive summation is *Troisième Mystère : Le couronnement d'épines (la mortification spirituelle)* of September 1922:

J'ai appris la peinture et la mathématique,
Je connais le sans-fil, le commerce et la faim
Je parle l'allemand, l'espagnol et l'anglais
Je monte à cheval, je fais des vers et je boxe.

J'ai su danser, je sais prier et je suis mort
artilleur, en 1918, et la vie
en plus que je vis elle marche droit vers Dieu.
des femmes ont été amoureuses de moi....

Ainsi, semble-t-il, j'ai vécu une vie riche
d'avoir été, en chair, tant d'êtres successifs ;
mais vous m'enfonchez si dur ce chapeau d'épines

que mon hier s'écoule avec le sang du crâne
et je ne suis que ce douloureux présent, soit
l'enfant pauvre, résigné, que son père cogne. (1920–1924 Civil)

'I have learned painting and mathematics,
I know wireless, business, and hunger

I speak German, Spanish, and English
I ride horses, write verse, and box.

I knew how to dance, I know how to pray, and I died
in the artillery in 1918, and the remaining life
I live marches straight towards God.
some women were in love with me...

So it seems I've lived a rich life
to have been in the flesh so many successive beings;
but you press so hard on me this crown of thorns

that my yesterday drains out with the blood of my skull,
and I am nothing more than this woeful present, be it
the poor, resigned child whom the father beats.'

Between May 14 and August, 1923, Charlot wrote:

J'y pense : Mes camarades qu'est-ce qu'ils firent ?
depuis Condorcet j'ai suivi seul ce chemin. (1920–1924 Civil)

'I think of it: my comrades, what have they been doing?
since Condorcet, I have been following this path alone.'

But they have been climbing the well-accepted career ladder that brings material comfort and companionship.

Car je n'ai pas été raisonnable : J'ai peint
Eux travaillent.

'For I have not been reasonable: I painted
They work.'

He should not complain, but his life is so heavy, and their lives are comforted and supported by an equally conventional Christianity.

In fact, lack of means did not curtail the Charlots' social life among their family, colleagues, and friends, most of whom were themselves poor. Weston recalled:

For those dinners at Charlot's I have very fond memories! They were French no matter if the food, the dishes, the recipes were Mexican: the expression, the "air," was entirely French! The violet laden table was presided over by his mother, a woman I consider a privilege to have known,—culture, distinguished in bearing, with fine critical judgement, she undoubtedly held a significant place in Jean's growth as an artist. She has gone, I salute her memory.⁷

"When we first came here," said Charlot, "we attempted to have open house as you are

doing, but we gave it up. Some of the guests were sure to end the party by shooting out our light bulbs.”

Already I sense an end to these gatherings under the present plan. It is too much of a mixture; it may be an amusing contrast, the refined Madame Charlot along with Mexican generals comparing bullet holes in their respective anatomies, but it is sure to end disastrously. (Weston 1961: 43)

Madame Charlot served Jean and me one of her delectable suppers—’Mexican,’ she called the meal, but methinks it had a marked French accent!⁸

Charlot had similar memories:

JPC:

Was it at this time, that is, early at the beginning of your second trip to Mexico that you started having those soirées with your mother at your apartment?

JC:

Well, I don’t know what you are talking about, but I’m game. I don’t think we had any soirées because the apartment was nearly one-room apartment, I think, and there wasn’t place for much in there. I think what has been written about it is just simply that French was spoken, and that seemed to people very elegant and cultural. But some people did like to come. I told you that Rivera loved to come and speak French. It was a pleasure for him because he felt closer to all the things that he had left in Paris. And my mother was a very nice hostess and put people at ease, however strange or even horrible they may have been. And she was, of course, part Mexican, and it was easy for her to know what it was all about. I have some letters of hers about the Revolution, for example, which show how, I wouldn’t say pleasant, but how easy it was for her to get into the Mexican milieu, of which after all she was a part. But it wasn’t the Mexican in her that people saw, of course, because that was taken for natural, but it was that—what for some people was an extraordinary refinement of French Parisian manners and so on. And I think our poor revolutionary friends who were all the time in the rough because the members of the Communist party, for example, were not terribly refined, sort of enjoyed the little atmosphere that without any accessories we managed to give in the place we lived in.

JPC:

Edward Weston speaks about there being wonderful parties there with some generals showing their wounds and others shooting out light bulbs.

JC:

No, that wasn’t in our place. That was in other people’s places. It wasn’t big enough in our place to shoot light bulbs. And it would have been too expensive for us.

JPC:

Did your mother do French cooking and things for people?

JC:

Well, a little bit, sure. I mean, we brought in what we knew, and what we knew was Paris, and Paris for some people was a very, shall we say, exquisite experience. Of course, that was a non-Parisian's point of view.

Charlot and his mother regularly dined together and went to movies. They struggled as partners through the difficulties of the 1920s in Mexico. When Anne died in 1929, Weston wrote: "a blow to him,—they were inseparable. Such a triste note" (1966: 116).

A number of photographs of parties and costume balls survive. Besides the parties, Charlot records many meetings with single women who interested him, including Nahui Olin. He was tempted enough by one to be warned off by his confessor (Diary April 21, 1922) and by another to be advised to declare himself (September 30, 1922).

In 1922, freedom of worship prevailed, and Charlot was confessing regularly and attending Mass and going to communion almost every day at the French church. He joined a discussion group to which he gave several talks. The parish had a liturgical emphasis that continued Charlot's own in France and was unusually advanced in having the layman Charlot distribute communion (July 15). Only later would Charlot enter into the parish life of Mexican Indians, an experience that would change his views and art. Significantly, on his first visit to Milpa Alta on May 28, 1922, he writes in his diary: "Messe à village indien" 'Mass at Indian village.'

From the first trip, Charlot was exploring Mexico, visiting museums, wandering the streets of Mexico, and making sketches, as described below. Charlot recorded the importance of this in "Mexico" (Charlot October 1922; M49), his first article written in his new home. Unbeknownst to the others, he left the house at 6:00 am when all the rich people were still asleep and the city belonged to the working poor. Walking the streets of Mexico, Charlot was experiencing what he later called "shock knowledge," as discussed in Chapter 3, Section 2.4. Charlot's mind was grasping at the art parallels he knew to understand the new sights. The brown Indian faces were like Japanese masks. Most important, the graceful carriage and Classically simple robes of the women at their daily tasks reminded him of the figures of Greek art: "la beauté antique ressuscite" 'antique beauty is resuscitated.' Indian women are sisters to the virgins of the Parthenon; "Les vases grecs défilent devant moi" 'Greek vases process before me.' Charlot was not alone in this. Vicente Blasco Ibañez wrote of Spanish peasant women: "grupos de muchachas con el cántaro inmóvil y derecho sobre la cabeza, recordando con su rítmico paso y su figura esbelta á las canéforas griegas" 'groups of young women with their vase immobile and straight on their head, recalling Greek vase-bearers with their rhythmic step and svelte figure' (1918: 191).

Under the impact of these sights, Charlot was radically changing his ideas:

When I was preparing to leave France for Mexico, I had the idea the [*sic*: that] it was a tropical country : many blue, green and red feathers and plumes, and monkeys chattering and grimacing in the tops of the tall palms. I went to Lefranc's and bought a palette of colors picked from the most brilliant. I also had many ideas concerning modern art; the Cubists and the Planists and all the existing schools made of my brain a battlefield in which incompatible esthetics struggled, and I also admired many false teachers.

When I arrived I realized my error. (March 1926 Art Interpretations: 16)

I had staged in my head a sham Mexico, fanned with feathers of blue, green and red, its trees feverish with tropical mimics. (*AA* II: 99)

He felt like a naïve child and would soon feel the need to be reborn.

On his first trip to Mexico, Charlot had met Carlos Orozco Romero (1896/8–1984) on the boat and learned something from him about the Mexican art scene.⁹ Other than that, “as far as meeting painters, there was no such contact” (Interview May 14, 1971). Charlot had, however, visited San Carlos and its library and left with Don Lino Picaseño y Cuevas the donation of his *Chemin de Croix*. There the portfolio was discovered by young Mexican artists, who became anxious to meet Charlot on his return, meetings that led immediately to strong and enduring friendships. Zalce recalled:

[Charlot] was a good friend of all, but on different levels. With Siqueiros, he was very friendly; they were good comrades. Orozco was older. He always said nice things about Jean. Rivera made more trouble for people. (July 27–28, 1971)

Amero records:

Por aquellos años (1921), estudiaba yo en la vieja Escuela de San Carlos y en cierta ocasión en una de las veces en que yo fuera a la Biblioteca de la Escuela, el bibliotecario, el Sr. Picaseño me presentó con Charlot. (La biblioteca estaba por adquirir una publicación de Charlot, que consistía en un Via-crucis realizado en grabado en madera). El carácter de Charlot, amable y generoso, me hizo apreciarle y tomarle rápidamente cariño. Muchas fueron las veces que el me invitó a su casa, recuerdo perfectamente las varias veces que dibujamos del mismo modelo... (Amero 1947)

‘In those years (1921), I was studying in the old School of San Carlos, and on a certain occasion on one of those times when I was at the Library of the School, the librarian, Don Lino Picaseño y Cuevas introduced me to Charlot. (The library was ready to acquire a publication of Charlot's, which consisted in a Via Crucis realized in woodcut.) The amiable and generous character of Charlot made me appreciate him and rapidly take a liking to him. Many were the times when he invited me to his house. I remember perfectly the various times that we drew from the same model...’

Fast friends for life, Amero and Charlot would work together on the revival of lithography.¹⁰ Charlot considered Amero a master of printmaking, and Amero would accept Charlot as an artistic adviser possibly alone among their colleagues (Zuñiga 2008: 26 f., 38 f.).

The earliest and one of the most important new friends was Fernando Leal, who wrote that when Picaseño introduced them, “una gran amistad nos ligó inmediatamente” ‘a great friendship bound us together immediately’; “Nuestra amistad tuvo como base un deseo igualmente intenso de expresión artística, intransigente y sin concesiones a la vulgaridad reinante” ‘Our friendship took as a foundation an equally intense desire for artistic expression, intransigent and without concessions to the reigning vulgarity.’¹¹ They spoke together in French and read many books, which countered the idea that artists should not be learned (Leal 1990: 174). Leal introduced Charlot to the most famous Mexican artists he knew and through Ramos Martínez found him a place at the EPAL of Coyoacán (1990: 170, 173). Charlot remembered the early days of their friendship:

Leal lived more or less in the same part of Mexico City that my uncle did at the time, and it was easy to walk and meet together. And then we—he liked very much to speak French. He had, I think, written some little poems in French and would recite them to me, and so on and so forth. It wasn’t on the basis of painting, it was really on that basis of friendship. (Interview May 14, 1971)

Charlot and Leal worked closely together through most of 1922. Charlot shared Leal’s studio, and they used the same knife on their pioneering sets of woodcuts. Leal was the earliest and most willing EPAL member to move away from the dominant Impressionism towards the later tendencies that Charlot was revealing. Leal also enlisted Charlot in the group of young muralists, and with Rivera’s help, convinced Vasconcelos to accept a foreigner. Sadly, during their mural work at the Preparatoria, a dispute arose between them that took years to heal.

Among the artists to whom Leal introduced Charlot were those who formed the young group that I have described above (Chapter I, Section 3). The earliest members, those that were most active in reforming the system of art education, were listed by Leal:

The roll of those who brought about this change is as follows: Mateo Bolaños, Ramón Alva de la Canal, Francisco Díaz de León, Enrique A. Ugarte, Emilio García Cahero, Gabriel Fernández (not meaning Gabriel Fernandez Ledesma but the one we referred to as “the Bolshevik), and myself. (Leal “Writings Related to *MMR*, Passages Cut: “Gospel”)

These artists settled at the EPAL of Coyoacán, where they were joined by others, as reported by Leal:

The small colony of seven artists was swelled with new members: Fermín Revueltas, who had returned from the United States, Ramón Cano come from Vera Cruz, Leopoldo Méndez, and a few more. The last arrival was Jean Charlot, who came with his mother.

They were joined later by Federico Cantú and others and associated with an ever widening circle that came to be called *la Familia*.

Three contemporary lists of these young artists have been found:

Vera de Córdova, “Los Artistas Independientes: Una Escuela a Plein Air en los Imperios Luminosos de su Majestad el Sol,” 1920a: Ramón Alba [Alva de la Canal], Bolaños, Leal, García Cabrero, Díaz de León, G. Fernández “El Bolchevike,” Enrique Ugarte, Revueltas. That these artists are considered a distinct group is seen from their differentiation from four older Impressionists.

Maples Arce, “Los Pintores Jóvenes de México,” 1981 [April 1921]: in the author’s order, Bolaños, Méndez, Tamayo, Leal, Revueltas, Méndez, Tamayo, Díaz de León, Ugarte, and Alva de la Canal. This article was originally published in April 1921 (Flores 2013: 90, 318). Although Charlot had been in Mexico until May 6 before returning briefly to France, the poet and the artist had apparently not met. Similarly, Maples Arce did not yet know the work of Alva de la Canal (Flores 2013: 111). Maples Arce would include Charlot in his *Estridentista* manifesto of December 1921.

Charlot-Blanchard, “La Jeune Peinture Mexicaine,” September 16, 1922: Bolaños, Mme R. Cabrera,¹² Cahero, Cano, Díaz de León, Leal, Alva de la Canal, Castillo, Fernández, Revueltas, Ugarte, and Charlot.

A later list is provided by E. F. L. [Enrique Fernández Ledesma], “Dibujos de Jean Charlot,” 1924: Orozco, Leal, Alva de la Canal, Revueltas, Siqueiros, and Charlot.

The first two lists provide information on the younger generation at work when Rivera and then Charlot returned to Mexico. Several of those listed appear later to have ceased working as artists.

Charlot remembered “five or six people” at Coyoacán, and “some of them faded out when we came to murals” (Interview May 18, 1971). One such was Emilio García Cahero, who “did one mural and then really was not interested in murals.” Charlot’s main connection with Cahero was through printmaking: “Cahero, incidentally, is the man who introduced me to etching. And I dedicated my first etching to him in the first proof.”¹³

Charlot was closest to the three young artists who accepted the early mural commissions: “Revueltas, and Leal, of course, and Ramón Alva de la Canal. Those are about the only people who reached the wall, so to speak, in good standing” (Interview May 18, 1971). Leal is described by Maples Arce as a quiet, serene, and reasonable artist and, with Bolaños, the strongest of the group (1941: 40). Charlot discussed Alva’s work and quoted his memoirs in *MMR* (Index). Charlot particularly appreciated Revueltas, writing to Pach about his work on his first mural:

Revueltas seul plaque des couleurs, avec assez de force, ma foi. C’est de beaucoup, le meilleur des Beaux-Arts et surtout le plus sympathique (early 1923)

‘Only Revueltas is laying down colors, with a good deal of power, indeed. He is by far the best of the Bellas Artes group and especially the most sympathetic.’

Charlot later described Revueltas as a “born painter”: “Only time and the fading away of our generation will bring forward the importance of Revueltas’ *œuvre*, overshadowed to this day by his peculiar deeds.”¹⁴ He is referring to Revueltas’ extravagant behavior and the alcoholism that hampered his production. Charlot included an illustration of his in Charlot-Blanchard (September 16, 1922: 13). Xavier Guerrero would later play an important role in muralism, described in several writings by Charlot. Cantú also would become a muralist, and he and Charlot were reportedly close, but no documents have survived about their relationship. Charlot admired the Guadalajara murals of Carlos Orozco Romero (*MMR* Index).

Among the non-muralists, Charlot worked especially with the printmakers, as discussed below. He illustrated Díaz de León’s *Popocatepetl Vu d’Ozumba* in Charlot-Blanchard (September 16, 1922: 17). The sculptor Ignacio Asúnsolo (1890–1965), along with Leal, made the connection between Charlot and Rivera:

Asúnsolo the sculptor, who had married a French girl, spoke French—when they came to me, said, “Why don’t you go and see Rivera? He just is a little uneasy with his Spanish, coming back from Europe where he has been so long, and he would like to speak French.” (Interview August 7, 1971)

Asúnsolo was a riotous personality. Charlot recorded in his diary for July 1, 1922: “Assuzolo [*sic*] saoul. coup de pistolet” ‘Asúnsolo drunk. pistol shot.’ Years later in Hawai‘i, Charlot and Mérida:

se morían de risa al recordar las hazañas del pintor Nacho Asúnsolo, que solía divertirse disparando una inmensa pistola, sin importarse si se hallaba en la calle, en un café o en el taller de algún compañero. (Baciu 1982: 12 f.)
‘died laughing as they remembered the feats of the painter Nacho Asúnsolo, who used to divert himself by discharging an immense pistol no matter if he found himself in the street, in a café, or in the studio of some companion.’

Asúnsolo appointed himself the protector of the muralists, chasing off rioting students with pistol shots.¹⁵ He was solicitous of Charlot in particular, as Leal reported: “the sculptor Nacho Asúnsolo, with pistol in hand, attempted to force me to ask Charlot’s forgiveness for having offended him” (*MMR* 172 [Leal]). In February 1923, during a boisterous trip to Guadalajara for the installation as governor of Guadalupe Zuno, Siqueiros and Charlot decided to exploit Asúnsolo’s protectiveness, especially since he was cowing various assemblies with his pistol. Guadalupe Appendini reports Asúnsolo’s version of the event:

Charlot y Siqueiros se pelearon, pero como Charlot era bajito y delgado iba perdiendo y el pobre en su mal español gritaba:

“¡Socorro Asúnsolo, me mata Siqueiros!”¹⁶

‘Charlot and Siqueiros were fighting, but because Charlot was short and slender, he was losing, and the poor guy called out in his bad Spanish:

“Help, Asúnsolo, Siqueiros is killing me!”

Charlot remembered Asúnsolo bursting through the door waving his pistol. A few more rowdy stories are mentioned in Brenner-Charlot (1928: 66).

Several artists were prominent in 1921 and 1922, but were unable to continue. Ramón Cano's *Promenade* is illustrated in Charlot-Blanchard (September 16, 1922: 12), and the artist is described as "un indien de sang pur, peintre de village" 'a pure-blood Indian, a village painter':

Il vint un jour à la ville, porteur dans les fontes de sa selle d'un bagage de petites toiles naïves où des amoureux cavalcadent et s'enlacent dans des paysages dignes du douanier Rousseau.¹⁷

'He came to Mexico City one day, carrying in his saddle-bags a load of little naïve canvases in which lovers cavalcaded and intertwined in landscapes worthy of the Douanier Rousseau.'

Charlot wrote of him to Pach: "Cano vient d'achever un grand tableau (indien couché) qui accuse un vrai progrès" 'Cano has just finished a big painting (Indian lying down) that shows real progress' (n.d. early 1923?).

Mateo Bolaños' story is tragic. Charlot-Blanchard illustrated one of his works and called him a "puissant portraitiste" 'powerful portrait painter' (September 16, 1922: 13, 17). Maples Arce found him the strongest painter of the group along with Leal (1981: 39). With "una mayor intención moderna" 'a greater modern intention,' he is "el más actualista de todos" 'the most up-to-date of all,' the furthest from Impressionism and the closest to expressing his inner emotions. The very disunity rising from his uncertainty is a most modern quality. His dynamic emotivity suggests Futurism (40). His psychological subjectivity, his disquiet, the force of his unpacified talent give the viewer new emotions and visions. Maples Arce accords his work "una importancia casi absoluta" 'a quasi absolute importance.' Leal offered Bolaños a wall, but he "declined the offer because of a morbid sensitivity that had already predisposed him to the madness which was soon to destroy him."¹⁸

The only woman artist associated with the early group was Carmen Foncerrada (whom Charlot regularly misspells *Fonserrada*), who died young. In *MMR*, Charlot quotes her admiringly as a thinker and eloquent spokeswoman for the ideology of the young group.¹⁹ He also wrote about her to Anita Brenner, providing information for her writing on artists:

Carmen Fonserrada : Se ha retirado en el rancho de Changuitiro, Patzcuara, y sigue pintando cosas de la vida rural. Sus composiciones de paisaje con personajes son admirables ejemplos de equilibrio en la composición y de colorido sugiriendo la luz sin tratar de imitarla (A ver si te mando fotografía.) Hubiera sido gran ayuda al movimiento de pintura mural, si no hubiera sido por su delicadeza de salud. ("Excuse the paper")
'*Carmen Fonserrada*: has retired to the ranch of Changuitiro, Patzcuara, and continues to paint subjects of rural life. Her compositions of landscapes with personages are admirable examples of balance in composition and coloring suggesting light without attempting to imitate it (I hope to send you a photograph). She would have been a great help for the movement of mural painting, if it had not been for her delicate health.'

I have found no information on Enrique A. Ugarte, Castillo, or R. Cabrera.²⁰ The group would receive two major new members when Siqueiros and Amado de la Cueva (1891–1926) returned from Europe in September 1922.

In this early period, Orozco was characteristically stand-offish:

But Orozco roamed, you could say, around us. He comes to walls later on, and before he had walls of his own, he had a certain curiosity in seeing what was going on, and he wasn't very enthusiastic. I remember that I showed him my fresco—I think in the making at the time—on the staircase of the Preparatoria, and he said that was silly because nobody would stop on the staircase to look at the picture. Of course, you never knew with him. I think he was impressed at the same time. That is, he was being funny maybe just because he was impressed. That has always been the two layers in Orozco. When he has something that he likes very much or that impresses him very much, then he starts demolishing it in words, and people get sometimes a little confused about those things. But he was *not* at the time inclined to murals, we shall say it that way. He was not jealous of the murals because he didn't want especially to paint murals. He made his living at the same time like he had done before by doing cartoons for magazines... So I knew Orozco as a comrade, we should say, and as a cartoonist for perhaps two years before he went to the walls and started painting walls himself. (Interview May 18, 1971)

This two-year experience of Orozco as a cartoonist—a serious draftsman concerned about the final appearance of his work—formed Charlot's understanding of his career. That is, Orozco developed through his cartooning, not by rejecting it: "José Clemente Orozco (1882–1949) started his career as a political cartoonist and carried to the walls the same freedom and power with which he drew his biting cartoons."²¹ Charlot had respected cartooning since his French childhood and continued all his life to study artists like Daumier. In Mexico, he was greatly impressed by the cartooning tradition he found and accorded it a greater importance than did the artists, critics, and historians of the time. He felt he was honoring Orozco by understanding him as the latest great exponent of that tradition. In fact, Charlot himself produced quasi cartoons, like process prints in magazines that satirically contrasted classical Indian clothing with hideous European-type bourgeois fashions. He even produced a "cartoon" oil, CL 68 *Dowager and Newsboys* of November 1924. Charlot would continue to work as a newspaper cartoonist in the United States, and Orozco, always self-contradictory, retained cartoon styles and subjects throughout his mural career.

Charlot met older artists as well, like Dr. Atl:

And Atl was an entirely different generation. Atl was an older generation than Rivera and Orozco. Rivera and Orozco had been introduced to art by Atl. Atl by then was not painting very much. He was mostly in the mountains, in the volcanoes, and I went to see him at the Mercado de la Merced, where he lived. He had a sort of *azotea*, a little cubic place on top of the roof of that old building, and like anybody else was nice to me, and he gave me, I still have it, a charcoal drawing of the volcanoes. (Interview May 18, 1971)

Some acquaintances were harder to establish:

Goitia came a little later. He was very reserved. He never mixed up. He never even visited either the scaffolds of the muralists or the places where the group was. So it's only later on with Anita Brenner and Edward Weston, I think, that I made it a point to go and know Goitia. I thought he was, I still think he is, a wonderful painter. (Interview May 18, 1971)

At this early period, Charlot's immediate artistic circle was, therefore, that of the young group of artists:

Well, we were still very young, I mean twenty-two, twenty-three perhaps, and none of us had any money to speak of, so the relation was just young artists. There was nothing very much going on. We would just paint, and if we had enough money, we had a glass of beer, something like that. That's about all. Revueltas had a brother who was a very good musician. He was the most successful of the lot. And as far as I know, I didn't go into any theoretical discussions of art. I've never done it in my life unless it was as a professor speaking to students. So I don't know that there was very much going on. I would be invited to, let's say, Revueltas' house, and he would show me his paintings and so on. Cahero did the same thing... So it was just young artists getting together; nothing I think like what was going on in Paris where Picasso and Braque and all those people seemed to have been passing all their lives talking to each other. I can't believe it, because at the same time they were working very hard. Well, we were working hard, but there wasn't much talk going on... It's really, we could say, uninteresting because when you look at the works of art, you think there may have been some clash of aesthetics, but there were never—if there were, they were never translated into words. (Interview May 18, 1971)

There was a terrific concentration in those early days of mural painting on the things that we were doing, and of course, it was very hard physical work, done in extreme poverty, so to speak, and we had very little time for anything else. (Interview June 12, 1971)

As elsewhere, Charlot did not remember much of the conversations he mentions in his diary and records briefly in his notes "Mexique."²²

Charlot himself was writing on relevant topics. Diary notes reveal that Charlot was working with a stenographer in 1922, although the writings discussed survive only in manuscript. His "Mexico," which formulates his first impressions, must have been composed largely before February 22, 1922, when he gave a copy, on their second meeting, to Rivera, who then translated it into Spanish.²³ On art theory, Charlot added to his *Traité de Peinture*, which he had largely written in 1920 (1920–1922; bibliographical note).

Three articles discuss the nature of artwork and the relation of the artists to the public. "De la Critique et des Peintres" (October-December 1922), a dialogue between Charlot the painter and Mr. Public, describes the materialistic taste of the public that finds the new paintings ugly and their subjects repulsive.

The artist patiently explains the craft of painting and the long study it requires: “Tout bon ouvrier est honorable” ‘Every good worker is honorable.’ But why not paint pretty subjects like the *ballets russes*? Why these huge hands and feet? The painter responds: “Suivant l’artifice de mon art, pénétrant par l’idée aux choses abstraites je m’essaye à les suggérer au travers des formes physiques” ‘Following the artifice of my art, penetrating through the idea to abstract things, I try to suggest them through physical forms.’ Distortions of the physical express an idea about the object. Ugly feet reveal the model’s difficult life, which the artist feels: “ces œuvres sont le fruit de trances, souvent créées avec larmes. Dis-tu à une femme que son fils est laid si elle a accouché en grande souffrance” ‘those works are the fruit of trances, often created with tears. Do you tell a woman her son is ugly if she bore it in great suffering.’ Yes, there are bad artworks: “Il y a de mauvais peintres comme de mauvais prêtres” ‘there are bad painters like bad priests.’ The true painter is impelled to produce: “Toute pensée qui ne meut pas la main est vaine” ‘Any thought that does not move the hand is vain.’ The artist is poor materially, but rich in spirit. The materially rich do not create. Society needs reformation to help the poor. As Mr. Public charged earlier: “Et que vous reste-t-il : prêcher” ‘And what is left to you: preaching.’ He wants to commission the painter to create pictures according to public taste, but the painter refuses: “pour tout l’or qui est je ne puis rien contre le beau” ‘for all the gold there is, I may do nothing against beauty.’ Mr. Public works for a big newspaper and will attack the painter. As he rushes off, “A nouveau l’artiste est seul au centre de l’exposition” ‘Once again, the artist is alone in the middle of the exhibition.’

“De la Critique et des Peintres” reveals many of Charlot’s views about art and the artist, especially the duty to side with the suffering poor. That duty moves the artist to an esthetic that prizes expression over conventional ideas of beauty, most often embodied by the rich. Moreover, as the artist practices expression, he discovers a visual fascination in objects that are usually ignored, like the soles of the pilgrims’ bare feet depicted lovingly by Caravaggio. The study of such objects can result in an original school of art. Charlot was learning about such art in Mexico:

Mr. Charlot explained that Mexico is a country of artists who see the “beauty of the ugly.” (Holman 1948)

The motif of death can be seen in the whole of Mexican art...for the people were not interested in happiness, but in birth and death, both of which are hard things to bear. (1945 Appreciation of Mexican Art Is Discussed by Jean Charlot)

When I draw badly I always feel I have a good reason for it. I am not trying to copy nature. Nature offers us a little slice of time and it is the job of the artist to take his slice and make of it something timeless...I paint as I do...because it is my way of describing my experience. (“Charlot’s Paintings Done Years After He Observed Scenes” 1947)

Charlot can be seen working out such ideas in his 1922 drawings, woodcuts, and oils.

“Conseils du Peintre à un Client Possible” (October-December 1922) is an important statement of the practicality of artwork: “Il n’y a nul mystère dans l’art. C’est une chose la plus simple du monde” ‘There is no mystery in art. It is one of the simplest things in the world.’ A piece of furniture can be judged by its material, design, craftsmanship, and utility. All of its parts work together. A bad piece of furniture is easily

recognized: “Beauté des choses, fonction de leur utilité” ‘The beauty of things is a function of their utility.’ So also a good artwork is made “*de belle matière bien ordonnée*” ‘*of good material well ordered.*’ Each material demands a certain treatment and cannot be pushed beyond its nature. Ordering well is judged according to the artwork’s end or purpose. Just as a word is a sound but communicates an idea, a painting suggests physical objects but communicates an idea or a feeling. The subjects of art participate in a hierarchy of thought and feeling: from material desires—food and nude women—to scenes of a comfortable life, to history and great people—inspiring the viewer to higher commitments—and finally to religion, which “nourrit les cimes extrêmes de la contemplation humaine” ‘nourishes the greatest heights of human contemplation.’ This is the vast field that the painter works. Nowadays, some painters restrict themselves to flowers and fruits or even just to color. The painter should choose the middle way between pure copying and purely imaginary forms:

qui est de suggérer des objets extérieurs comme signe et symbole à leur tour d’états d’âmes et d’idées. La couleur signe de l’objet, l’objet symbole d’idée, tels sont les 3 facteurs dont nul ne saurait être négligé.

‘which is to suggest exterior objects as sign and symbol in the turn of states of the soul and of ideas. Color, sign of the object; object, symbol of the idea; these are the three factors of which none should be neglected.’

Charlot ends with practical advice on the technical aspects of art: “Si le sujet répond à ton désir, si le métier observe les règles que je donne, le tableau sera bon” ‘If the subject answers your desire, if the craft observes the rules I give, the picture will be good.’ Charlot did not publish “De la Critique et des Peintres” or “Conseils du Peintre à un Client Possible,” but both were used in the formulation of two Araujo articles, and the latter was edited by Claudel for his booklet on Charlot.²⁴ Charlot’s comparison of art making to the carpenter’s craft will be repeated in Araujo and echoed by other writers.

“Des Diverses Sortes de Mauvais Peintres” (December 1922) continues the previous article on art with a discussion of artists. Bad art should not be blamed on an awkward hand or an uneducated eye. Children and uncivilized and thus unschooled people produce good art. Bad art comes from bad artists, ultimately a moral problem. The desire for money and public fame produces bad art. The well-dressed artist betrays the worker’s clothes he uses for his work:

Cherchant à plaire il s’imposera un genre, répétant sans cesse les mêmes motifs avec des signatures énormes, comme on voit les grandes maisons faire leur publicité.

‘Seeking to please, he imposes on himself a genre, repeating endlessly the same motifs with enormous signatures, as one sees the big galleries doing their publicity.’

A celebrity with his image, he cannot change:

Il est enfermé à jamais dans ce cauchemar de sa jeunesse, prisonnier du mensonge primitif. Avec des préoccupations étrangères à son art, *il peint mal*, et c’est un intime supplice pour ce qui peut rester en lui d’artiste.

‘He is enclosed forever in this nightmare of his youth, prisoner of the primordial lie.

With preoccupations foreign to his art, *he paints badly*, and this is an intimate torture for what may survive in him of an artist.’

One can judge the artist by his work: flashy, vain, ingratiating, precious, inflated, conservative, and unoriginal. Contrast the true artist’s nobility, disinterestedness, and loyalty to his talent and mission. His is a life of poverty and social rejection, like a Christian thrown to the lions. The truth of his art is seen in its failure to be agreeable: “Elle heurte de front la torpeur de ton âme et la routine de tes idées” ‘It strikes from in front of you the torpor of your soul and the routine of your ideas.’ Bad artists are engendered by a bad public. The true artist wants to transport the public to “la vie unitive où Morale et Beauté sont la même” ‘the unitive life where Morality and Beauty are the same.’ Charlot reaches back here to the mystical Christianity he studied in France. But the public will reject the artist and continue as before:

Et tu riras, tu jetteras ce papier et à jamais tu vivras ta vie jusqu’à la mort entre tes enfants et tes photos de famille qui reflètent et perpétuent dans le temps et dans l’espace pour la plus grande satisfaction de tes entrailles et de tes tripes le masque même de ta vie vaine et le béat sourire de ton inlassable médiocrité.

‘And you will laugh. You will throw away this paper and go on living your life until you die among your children and family photographs that reflect and perpetuate in time and space for the greater satisfaction of your guts and tripe the very mask of your vain life and the smug smile of your unflagging mediocrity.’

Charlot did not publish this essay but adapted the ending for his article on the mutilation of the Preparatoria frescoes by students (Charlot July 1924; August 1924).

Charlot was writing in French, but intended some articles to be published in Spanish. Increasingly, fascinated by Mexican Spanish, he began to work in it himself, usually with help, and came to be regarded as a stylist (Chapter 1). Charlot had a French sensitivity to language, which he employed in all those he learned:

It is a common experience of students of languages how each language specializes in certain limited areas of interests or of feelings in which it reigns supreme. The man who expresses himself equally well in a number of languages will be tempted to use them each for what it can do best and, as he shifts thoughts, exchanges the one tongue for another as a laborer will pick a particular tool for each given job. When a single language is the only tool, as in our English-speaking universities, there is many an intellectual task at which it is bound to prove awkward. (1951 College Art Teaching)

Charlot was also beginning his long career of publicizing Mexican art with “La Jeune Peinture Mexicaine” (Charlot-Blanchard September 16, 1922).

In all likelihood, shortly after Leal met Charlot—that is, in late November or early December—he introduced him Ramos Martínez, the head of the EPAL at Coyoacán, the progressive school that was a product of the movement initiated by the young artists, including Leal himself.²⁵ Charlot was most graciously welcomed by Ramos Martínez, a strong Francophile:

He loved to use French terms in criticizing his students or speaking about art, and again that was a chance to use a little French with me and on me. And then, very nicely really, he invited me to go to Coyoacán to the open-air school, where I shared a studio of Leal. So both certainly were very nice hosts to what seemed to be a visitor at the time, only, of course, the visit lasted a long time.²⁶

Charlot was received as a guest rather than a student: “I was his guest for three months at the school of Coyoacán before leaving to do mural work.”²⁷ Leal makes this clear: “lo admitiera con todas las prerrogativas de un estudiante mexicano” “he admitted him with all the prerogatives of a Mexican student” (1990: 170). He could share Leal’s studio, use the art supplies and facilities, paint from the models, and so on: “I could get my paints for nothing, which was a wonderful thing” (Interview May 18, 1971). Charlot availed himself of the opportunity. His entries for 1922—his first surviving diary—record his staying at Coyoacán for long periods starting on January 2 (Volume 1, Chapter 8, Section 3.2).

There, Charlot and Leal started creating works that challenged the standard views and practices of the school:

And there were other people that thought that we were wrong because they were Impressionist painters, by then nearly full-fledged Impressionist painters, and it had been so hard for them to decide that color was the whole story that they couldn’t drop color and go into what seemed to them the drab constructions of Cubism. (Interview May 18, 1971)

Charlot and Leal used the Postimpressionist black and created prints in the low-class woodcut medium.²⁸ Their oils were not painted directly from the models but compositions assembled from earlier sketches. Their fellow students grumbled and left hostile notes on the walls of their studio. The move away from Impressionism towards Cubism was an important preparation for muralism, which would need a constructive style. Also, Impressionism was incapable of expressing the subjects that would become central to the Mexican muralists: the Revolution and reconstruction. In fact, as I have argued in Volume 1, one of the attractions for the young Mexican artists of Charlot’s *Chemin de Croix*—in which he had expressed his experience of World War I—was that it provided a visual language with which they could express the sufferings of their own war. Charlot adapted that language to Mexico in his Coyoacán woodcuts, discussed below.

Charlot was having an early impact on the young group. He was also becoming quickly known in wider circles. Charlot arrived in Veracruz on November 24, 1921. In late December 1921, Manuel Maples Arce included him in the Directorio de Vanguardia ‘Avant-Garde Directory’ of his manifesto along with—alone of the Mexican artists—Rivera, Siqueiros, Marius de Zayas, Revueltas, and Dr. Atl.²⁹ Through 1922, Charlot would meet the poets who joined Maples Arce in the nascent Estridentista movement—as well as poets who refused to—and in 1923, he would collaborate with several.

One of Charlot’s key experiences at Coyoacán was meeting Mexican Indians, who became the models of his paintings and woodcuts. The most important of these was Luciana or Luz Jiménez, who became a lifelong friend and, as a model and expert native speaker, would prove a major source and

inspiration for artists and linguists alike.³⁰ Charlot worked closely with Luz at Coyoacán and then was introduced by her to her village of Milpa Alta on May 28, 1922, :

The contact or the direct contact with Indians came later on, and much of it really was funneled through the one person of Luciana, or Luz, which started, of course, just as a pictorial thing, because she was *one* of the Indian models at the Academy, but later on, going to her village, meeting her mother especially, and her family, it became something more important and more human.³¹

As discussed in Chapter 3, living with Luz's family in Milpa Alta formed Charlot's understanding of Indians and provided visual subjects.

Charlot had, therefore, much experience of Mexico and art circles before he met Rivera. He was also producing important works: street sketches, oils, and woodcuts. His meeting with Rivera would, however, be important for his subsequent mural career. Charlot knew about Rivera before their meeting, especially his Cubist career in France. He also heard about Rivera from Carlos Orozco Romero on his first Atlantic crossing:

I think he is the one who spoke of Rivera first. Rivera was his brother-in-law or *was* going to be his brother-in-law. Anyhow, he mentioned Rivera, and I had a very faint knowledge of Rivera, I think, as connected with Cubism and with Ángel Zárraga, the one of the Mexicans I had been close to, not personally but to his work in Paris, for example, going to a show of his Cubist pictures. It was Ángel Zárraga. So that Rivera *was* somehow a part of that group of Cubists, but I didn't know him personally. And when I was in Mexico, of course, there was—Rivera wasn't there on my first trip, and I think came after my arrival on the second one. (Interview August 7, 1971)

Charlot's mistake about the date of Rivera's return to Mexico reveals that Charlot had no contact with Rivera during the early period of his second trip (also Interview May 14, 1971). Charlot did, however, learn something about Rivera's work, which he mentions with high praise at the end of his "Mexico" ([February] October 1922).

Charlot's meeting with Rivera was arranged by both Asúnsolo and Leal. They took to each other immediately through their French connection:

And passing through Fernando Leal...I got, well, that first job of helping Rivera on his encaustic mural in the Preparatoria and then very soon a wall of my own. Now I don't know the time element very well, but the whole thing happened very quickly. Asúnsolo, Ignacio Asúnsolo, the sculptor, spoke to me about Rivera and said I should meet him and enticed me, so to speak, in saying that Rivera liked to speak French and we could speak French together, which was true. And also both Rivera and I had the same more or less current jokes and loves and dislikes about art in Paris, so that I was the only person with whom he could really pretend he was still an artist in Paris. And we both enjoyed that very much. And then I *did* help him. I was one of the helpers on his encaustic, and soon

after I started my wall in the Preparatoria. (Interview May 14, 1971)

Rivera loved to come and speak French. It was a pleasure for him because he felt closer to all the things that he had left in Paris. (Interview June 12, 1971)

So I went and saw Rivera, who was busy with working out the mural in the Preparatoria, and we hit it very well because of course, we knew the same, we could say, studio talk of Paris, and we had so many names of people in common, that is, the name meant something for him and for me and didn't mean anything for the others. So we enjoyed talking together, in French, of course.³²

I think myself that Rivera, who had enjoyed, as I had enjoyed, our meeting, thought it would be nice to have me around, regardless of art, and was instrumental in having me go as his helper. There are other stories. Leal says that he's the one who started, I think, farming walls to the other people. Probably it's a complex thing in which quite a number of people were involved. Anyhow, I think very soon after, I found myself helping Rivera in the amphitheater of the Preparatoria.³³

Leal adds that Rivera had his studio at San Pedro y San Paulo and was working on his drawings for *Creation* (1990: 173). At their first meeting, Charlot gave Rivera a copy of his "Mexico" ([February] October 1922), which Rivera liked so much that he translated it into Spanish.

Leal had wanted to paint a mural on the same amphitheater wall and thought he had lost his chance when Rivera was commissioned to use it (Leal 1990: 172 f.). But Leal's visits to Rivera's studio inspired him again with the idea of creating murals, an inspiration that he also attributed to Charlot. Charlot disagreed strongly with this, citing his previous mural project in France:

Well, you can take which version you want. I would guess, myself, that Leal translates his own feelings when he speaks of that thing as an event, and I translate my own feelings when I say that it was a non-event. Of course, I had worked out on murals already so much. I had done in Paris, we have it here, the very large architectural blueprint, you could say, for that church, and it wasn't my fault that I hadn't put it on the wall. So it certainly was not a conversion, shall we say, to muralism, to go and see what Rivera was doing. I may have been a little desirous to get on the wall myself, on my own, and that happened very soon after. (Interview August 7, 1971)

And then a little later on, there was that arrangement by which I would go and help him on the Preparatoria wall that he was doing at the time in encaustic. So there was no bump or anything that would be an event; it was just a rather nice thing to know there was a fellow in Mexico who talked French and knew the same things I knew. (Interview August 7, 1971)

Leal wrote that Charlot had started his *St. Thomas* under the impact of their seeing Rivera's preparations for *Creation*. Charlot again saw the *St. Thomas* in the context of his French work:

Well, I don't know about the chronology. The *St. Thomas* and so on that you speak of is the last tie, really, with the Gilde Notre-Dame. I had done a much, of course, more

important thing, much bigger thing in that blueprint for the mural for the church that I wanted to decorate, and having no wall in Mexico, I took a large canvas as a sort of a next-best thing. But my tie with Paris, of course, was very obvious in that large mural—which is something that probably Leal could not know because we didn't speak very much of the things I had been doing in Paris. It ties with the *Way of the Cross* in woodcuts, which is also in a way a very monumental thing that could have been easily translated in murals. So, well, I would like to tie up with Leal's recollections, but I cannot speak, certainly, of a conversion to muralism. (Interview August 7, 1971)

When the opportunity for mural making arose, Charlot had prepared himself in France to be ready:

You need walls for murals, and it's only when Vasconcelos decided to put the walls at the disposition of the people that murals for a group, anyhow, became possible. All I can say is that I had trained myself already to be ready, shall we say, if the possibility of making murals would come, and it's very nice that it did come. (Interview August 7, 1971)

Rivera had returned to Mexico in July 1921, and in December Vasconcelos commissioned a mural “with a universal theme” for the Amphitheater wall in the Preparatoria (*AA* II: 135, 386). Rivera probably started preparatory work on *Creation* in early 1922, and by April 6, 1922, he was at the wall but had not yet started painting on it (*MMR* 139 f.). Charlot and Rivera met, therefore, when the latter was just beginning the process of his first mural.

Charlot's 1922 diary, even in its current degree of decoding, provides clues to their early collaboration. The first mention of Rivera is on February 19, probably their first meeting: “voir Ribera” ‘to see Rivera.’ Charlot sees him again on February 22: “vu Ribera” ‘saw Rivera.’ At their next meeting on March 4, Rivera asks Vasconcelos to engage Charlot as an assistant on *Creation*: “Ribera me demande pour travailler avec lui” ‘Rivera asks for me to work with him.’ Charlot adds a religious expression, which he uses on important occasions: “[Merci,] mon Dieu ?” ‘Thank you, God?’ He uses the expression again on March 29, when he receives his official appointment. On the first occasion, however, he closes the expression with a question mark, perhaps an indication of some uncertainty. After that, Charlot refers often to Rivera, but does not always make clear whether their meeting was social or work-related.³⁴

Assisting on a mural is physical, tedious work, as anyone can attest who has ground colors (*MMR* 140 ff.). Moreover, Rivera was a marathon worker and expected assistants to keep his hours.

il travaille de 8 h. du matin à 10h du soir sans manger, ce qui n'est pas drôle pour ses aides (dont moi) qui sont obligés d'en faire autant !

‘he works from eight in the morning to ten at night without eating, which isn't fun for his assistants (including me) who are obliged to do the same!’ (Charlot to Pach March 31, 1923)

Some indications of this are found in the 1922 diary:

June 14: Charlot seems to have returned to work with DR after dinner.

June 23: de 6h 1/2 à 2h AM à Prepar. j'étais Rivera. ouf! ‘from 6:30 to 2:00 AM at the

Preparatoria. I was with Rivera. ouf!

June 25: j'étais Rivera j[jusqu'à]. 8h 1/2 soir 'I was with Rivera until 8:30 PM'

June 26: travail Ribera j. 9h. 'work with Rivera until 9:00'

July 7: [Charlot does chores for Rivera in the morning. After dinner,] j'étais Ribera toute la nuit j. 7h 1/2 du matin 'I was with Rivera all night until 7:30 AM.'

July 31: j'étais Ribera sans diner j. 8h 1/2 soir 'I was with Rivera, without dinner, until 8:30 PM.'

Besides chores like grinding colors, Charlot recorded preparing a cartoon for pouncing and incising the head of Charity on the wall (Diary 1922: July 7, 16).

As discussed below, Charlot was continuing his own work while assisting Rivera (Interview August 7, 1971). He was creating the woodcut series at least through February 3 and probably into April. He finished the last 1922 oil, CL 6 *Old Woman, Santa Anita (La Gata)*, on June 12 (Diary June 12, 1922; also May 17, 18; June 8, 9). He mentions helping Rivera and working on the oil on the same days (Diary June 8, 9, 12). Later Charlot would be painting his first fresco, *The Massacre in the Main Temple*, while continuing to assist Rivera (e.g., Diary May 19–21; June 13, 26; August 5, 9, 10). Charlot was also writing essays (e.g., Diary May 26).

Another type of difficulty was the interpersonal friction that Rivera was temperamentally incapable of avoiding or even of not provoking. Charlot records some problems that cannot be described without more decoding of the diary entries (May 29, August 24). The two artists' first major rift is recorded in August. Charlot will demand an explanation from Diego (August 25). He writes a letter to Diego (August 26), but is sad on that day and the next. On August 28, he "mit à la poste lettre de rupture avec Diego" 'mails the letter of rupture with Diego.' Their rupture lasts until October 18: "mis Pach dans le train. se raccommode avec Diego à la gare" 'put Pach on the train. I reconcile with Diego at the station.' Charlot wrote Pach on November 5, 1922:

Or donc, dès que votre train fut parti, Diego et moi nous revînmes côte à côte.

J'alimentais la conversation en lui parlant presque et au moment de nous séparer il me tourna un petit compliment (« j'ai été très heureux de vous revoir ») qui, s'il n'était pas dicté par vous était par vous certainement inspiré.

Telle est l'histoire de notre raccommodement, fort simple comme vous voyez, ça été un grand plaisir que vous m'avez fait et un grand service que vous m'avez rendu.

'Also, once your train had left, Diego and I returned side by side. I kept the conversation going by talking fresco, and at the moment of our separation, he made me a little compliment —"I was very happy to see you again."—which, if not dictated, was certainly inspired by you.

Such is the story of our reconciliation, very simple, as you see. That was a great pleasure that you gave me and a great service that you rendered.'

Charlot was always happier to be in a positive relationship with Rivera, and they would continue working together in one way or another and even socialized despite their personal differences: "charmant soir chez

Diego” ‘charming evening with Diego’ (November 15, 1925). They had a lot to say to each other: “longtemps parlé avec D.” ‘talked a long time with Diego’ (Diary November 16, 1924). Charlot even designed a fountain for Rivera (Tabletalk early 1970s?). He traveled alone and with Diego to Chapingo.³⁵

Rivera’s personal conflicts with other artists increased over the next years and influenced the course of the Mexican Mural Renaissance. Since such conflicts were sporadic among the other artists, Rivera himself was obviously the cause of his difficult human relations. Rivera could be charming and inspiring, but he was frank about himself with Anita Brenner:

[Brenner] told him that he preferred to amuse himself with people instead of having them as friends and he said there was no such thing as friendship. He could hate a person and the next week be delighted with them. (Glusker 2010: 356 f.)

Diego says he loves all the world, but doesn’t give a damn for anybody. (Glusker 2010: 359)

Diego himself is admirable but never lovable. He says the first thing is to look out for one’s own interests and that there is no such thing as bad faith or good faith. (Glusker 2010: 359)

Primary among Rivera’s interests was being enabled to paint, and his worry was that, at thirty-four, he was starting his real career too late: “Says he has only at the most ten years left in which to paint and wants to paint what he knows and what he is.”³⁶ The phrase “what he knows and what he is” shows that Rivera himself was aware that returning to Mexico allowed him to realize himself artistically as he could not do as a Parisian Cubist. But despite all his conversations with Siqueiros in Paris, his new Mexican career presented him with challenges and unknowns. The fear that he might not have sufficient time or might be prevented from painting filled him with a sense of urgency. Money interested Rivera only insofar as it supported his painting. In fact, little money found its way to the muralists during most of the Renaissance, a mark of sincerity for Charlot: “Even Rivera and Orozco weren’t rich, though they were very famous” (Zalce July 27–28, 1971). Rivera was willing to commercialize some of his art to finance the more important work. Charlot remembered that Rivera had an arrangement with tour drivers to bring potential buyers to his studio. He would receive the tourists standing behind a table laid out with his more accessible work, like little peasant children.

Another factor in the early 1920s was Rivera’s wounded pride. He knew he was a great artist who had been relegated to the status of a second-rank Cubist. Indeed, my father felt that a continuing effort was being made to write him out of the movement.³⁷ In the eyes of many of his colleagues, Rivera had sought to challenge Picasso, had been defeated, and finally had left the Parisian art center for the Mexican periphery (e.g., Salmon 1920: 157 f.). Rivera had attacked Picasso publicly for his notorious borrowings from other painters: “By accusing Picasso of plagiarism, the little-known Rivera made a name for himself” (Richardson 1996: 414). Specifically, Rivera had charged correctly that Picasso had stolen his use of scumbling for foliage: “Rivera guarded this formula jealously: it was virtually his only original contribution to cubism” (Richardson 1996: 412; also 265, 370, 414). Rivera also accused Picasso incorrectly of stealing his use of negative space (Richardson 1996: 412). Artistic bragging rights—like scientific and technological—

were being based on invention as they most often are today (Cooper 1971: 103). Surveying the long history of art, Charlot wrote:

A dit un ami de chez moi : “Le nombre de ceux qui croient avoir découvert quelque chose en art est sensiblement égal à celui des imbéciles.”

‘A friend from my country said: “The number of those who think they have discovered something in art is closely equal to the number of imbeciles.”’ (December 1922)

Rivera was learning that, given the right spin, stealing or eclecticism was no block to the artist even in an age that prized originality. Picasso had escaped the charge of plagiarism because he was the number one artist and so enjoyed the benefit of the doubt: he could not be following others, others must be following him. Also, as the number one artist he was accorded *ex officio* the popular image of the inventive pioneer. Rivera understood this clearly:

“He sickens me, Pablo does,” Rivera supposedly told Marevna. “If he pinches something from me, it’ll always be Picasso, but as for me, they’ll always say I copy him.” (Richardson 1996: 370)

In Mexico, Rivera would fight to retain the position of number one Mexican artist. From that position, he could borrow from his colleagues—or rivals, as he saw them—and escape the charge of plagiarism by demoting them in the public eye to followers or to the second rank.³⁸ A School of Mexico would mirror the School of Paris.

Picasso provided useful lessons. From a visiting Spanish artist, he had become a *French* artist, and then *the* French artist, and finally *the modern* artist in the popular mind. For patronage, Picasso used the best art dealers. In Mexico, with its lack of galleries, Rivera courted Vasconcelos as the source of government commissions. He based his *Creation* on Montenegro’s *El Árbol de la Vida*, which he knew Vasconcelos admired. He crowned *Creation* with an abstract diagram, attractive to Vasconcelos’ philosophical tendencies. Playing to Vasconcelos’ Hispanism, Rivera proposed a “mural *hispanoamericanizante, hispanizante*” ‘Hispanoamericanizing, Hispanizing mural’ (Vasconcelos 1982 *Memorias* 2: 214). On Vasconcelos’ fall, Rivera successfully transferred his political talents to his successor, J. M. Puig Casauranc.³⁹ None of the other artists, especially the younger ones, could compete with Rivera’s political talents as a courtier. On the contrary, they were intent on having their own way despite Vasconcelos’ personal tastes.

In one of the largest and most successful publicity campaigns in the history of art, Picasso used the best advocates, like Jean Cocteau (e.g., Siqueiros 1978: 101 f.). In Mexico, Rivera would use Salvador Novo and Renato Enriquez Molina.⁴⁰ Internationally, Rivera would use writers like Bertram Wolfe, drawn to him by their shared Trotskyism.⁴¹ Rivera’s colleagues would coin the word *Dieguismo* for his “self-promoting behavior.”⁴² Ultimately, Diego could rely on his magnetic charm and compelling eloquence as well, of course, as his great work.

Anti-foreigner feeling could be used against Picasso, but was deflected by the example of El Greco, then enjoying a revival: the Greek artist had become *the* Spanish artist for the general public. In a 1921 review of a Picasso exhibition, Roger Bissière compared that artist explicitly to El Greco, and Charlot

himself could use El Greco for himself.⁴³ Thus when Rivera accuses Charlot of wanting to be the Mexican El Greco, his experience of Parisian art politics provides the explanatory background (Chapter 1).

Rivera used other means to attract attention in France and then in Mexico. He articulated mystifying theories and concocted a fourth-dimension machine (Richardson 1996: 431). In Mexico, he added to these the benefits of peyote and the Secret of the Mexihka (mixing nopal juice with the pigment water). In France, he indulged himself in extravagant behavior, fighting a duel in “l’affaire Rivera” (Richardson 1996: 431 f.). In Mexico, he would carry a pistol but restrict his extravagance to storytelling.

The different expectations of Rivera and the Mexico City artists at the time of his return can be understood in the context of his experience in France. Both Rivera and the local artists expected him to be lionized as a celebrity.⁴⁴ He was the subject of interviews, visited art institutions, and gave advice to students. But the Mexican template of forming groups around an older expert as leader, protector, teacher, and mentor seems also to have influenced expectations (Chapter 2, Section 3.1). Even a foreigner like Walter Pach depicted him in this role.⁴⁵ This was especially true because much of the relevant art was being produced in an educational context with its teacher-student relations. In accordance with such expectations, Vasconcelos asked Rivera to engage younger artists as muralists. When Rivera did not do so, he was revealing that he did not see himself in the mentor role. Moreover, he was not as regularly helpful as a teacher would be (*MMR* 175 f.). Leal was told by Mérida that “Diego had forbidden him to reveal the secrets of his technique.”⁴⁶ When Rivera called other artists his students, followers, or disciples, he was using the language of education and mentoring to demote them to a secondary position: *Dieguitos* ‘little Diegos.’ Only when challenged later for leadership by Siqueiros, did Rivera exert himself to assume that role. Rivera clearly was according priority to his own work, although he could accept other artists as assistants and help convince Vasconcelos that the foreigner Charlot—already at that time his assistant—should be given a wall to paint.

Charlot felt that Rivera had been surprised by the quality of the artists he encountered in Mexico and began to see them as rivals:

Rivera wanted a halo of younger people around him, but it didn’t work, so he tried to crush them. But he started by helping them: Mérida, de la Cueva, etc. He gave them a salary for helping, which was useful. Later this got in the way, because they were tagged as followers, but it was a nice idea to help them. The people who were chosen for Diego’s group would go on to do their own painting later.

But Rivera was really frightened by the younger men. They were his equals as artists, and some had more “brilliancy.” Rivera didn’t have that. He was a plodder and didn’t have pleasantness. Mérida was more brilliant. (Tabletalk early to mid-1970s)

In an unguarded moment, my father once expressed himself more strongly:

Diego was catty towards the younger artists. At the time, JC couldn’t understand why. Now he thinks it’s because he was shocked to find so many good artists in Mexico.

Diego was in his mid-30s; the others were younger “and could run rings around him.” (Tabletalk early 1970s)

Others recorded similar impressions, like Zalce:

Rivera made more trouble for people. Rivera was probably professionally jealous of Jean. Rivera worked against all. He said bad things about Siqueiros and Orozco. Rivera acted as if Jean was a threat.

Jean didn't speak against others. When he had something to say, he did it openly in books. Not Rivera, who made jokes about everybody. Jean made his criticisms in articles. Jean was considered a fair critic, not a member of a party.⁴⁷

On April 28, 1945, O'Higgins wrote Charlot that Rivera was the only artist who would not support his being commissioned for a mural (John Charlot 2008 carta inédita: 92).

Rivera's negative talk about other artists was infamous. As Tristan Marof said, “Nunca Diego se expresó bien de nadie. De Orozco decía que pintó mejor con la mano que le faltaba” ‘Diego never spoke well of anyone. Of Orozco he said that he painted better with his missing hand’ (Baciu 1974). Marof remembered Rivera deriding Siqueiros:

tiene el brazo derecho de pistola y es ágil para el gatillo. Cuando descansa, pinta atrocidades, siempre en gran tamaño para que se vean sus defectos. Tiene grandeza en el error y me imagino que ha equivocado su carrera, podía ser militar... (Baciu 1974)
‘he's a right hand with a pistol and can fan the hammer quick. When he relaxes, he paints atrocities, always on a big scale so their defects can be seen. He has a greatness in his error, and I imagine that he has mistaken his career; he could be a military man...’

Anita Brenner also recorded examples: “D[iego] is clever and rather cruelly efficacious. Calls Jean a ‘little angel face.’”⁴⁸ Brenner and Charlot attempted to protect other artists, especially the fragile Goitia: “Better to keep him out of Diego's range of vision, for Goitia is a big, a great master and Diego might—!—make trouble for him.”⁴⁹ Although Charlot wrote of Rivera's targets as a large group, others specified the main ones as Orozco, Goitia, and Charlot (Glusker 1998: 46). Charlot worked closely with Rivera, who was able to understand his achievements, as seen in the analytical information he gave Renato Molina Enriquez for his article attacking Charlot's *Massacre in the Main Temple*, “El ‘Fresco’ de Charlot en la Escuela Preparatoria” (1923; John Charlot 2001 First Fresco). The stylistically anomalous figure of *La Tempérance ou continence* in *Creation* may be based on Charlot's French liturgical works, a little joke at the expense of Charlot's sexual abstinence.⁵⁰

Rivera went so far as to plan the destruction of other artists' work, as Brenner wrote on April 10, 1926:

Carlos Mérida in this morning. Tells me Diego proposed to remove frescos Charlot and Amado from Secretaria.

Diego wants the whole thing to himself, of course, but wants the removal with publicity of approval, in order to establish a precedent and thereby safeguard his own stuff. He is a

magnificent *sin vergüenza* [good-for-nothing with no shame]. (Glusker 2010: 129; 1998: 46 f., 192)

Rivera did destroy murals by Charlot, Amado de la Cueva, Guerrero, and Leal (Schmeckebeier 1939: 159). On the other hand, Charlot credited Rivera with continuing the mural movement after the fall of Vasconcelos—so that it could be restarted later—including saving the finished murals from a threatened whitewashing:

At first Rivera was uneasy about junior rivals. Then he was uneasy about keeping jobs. He was afraid the government might drop all the artists, and he managed to keep the thing going. (Tabletalk Early 1970s?)

The breakup of the early period of the Renaissance was due to no great plot, just little survival crises that overcame people. This includes Rivera, who had no money. Someone sent him \$400 for a picture, and he painted a huge one. (Tabletalk Early 1970s?)

Rivera's aggression provoked a general hostility, which his admirers interpreted as jealousy.⁵¹ Charlot could criticize Rivera but defended him for his positive qualities, especially his productivity.⁵² Charlot remained an admirer of Rivera as a great artist and extraordinary human being (John Charlot 1997). In his "De la Critique et des Peintres" (October-December 1922), he is in all likelihood using a preparatory drawing for *Creation* as an example of good art:

P : Cette grosse tête au crayon rouge. Je voudrais savoir quel homme épouserait pareille femme.

M : C'est qu'elle symbolise la Sagesse qui n'accepte nul homme pour époux.

Mr. Public: This big head in red pencil. I'd like to know what man would marry such a woman.

Me [Painter]: It is that she symbolizes Wisdom, who accepts no man as spouse.

From the beginning, Charlot wrote articles defending and praising Rivera, including the long eulogy *Creation, XX Proses Suivant la Psychoplastie de D. M. Rivera A L'usage des Aveugles et des Gens Du Monde* 1923 (1923). When Charlot was given a retrospective in Mexico City in 1968, Rivera was at a low point of his reputation. My brother Martin, who was there, remembered people trying to provoke Charlot into speaking badly of Rivera, but he always defended him. To a radio interviewer, he said, "One day Mexico will be proud to have had a great artist like Diego Rivera."⁵³

Charlot was struck by Rivera's intelligence and remembered a number of his statements. For instance, Rivera stated that the Pompeii body molds were "in the Roman style"; Charlot thought this was a brilliant insight into the relation of art to life. Rivera thought rightly that the hominid remains known at the time were not direct antecedents of human beings but the "leavings" of a larger process, "evolutionary dead ends" as they are known today (Tabletalk early 1970s?). Charlot felt also that Rivera had a prophetic or sixth sense. An example of this was his cover for Guadalupe Marín's *La Única* (1938): the severed head of her husband Jorge Cuesta on a plate.⁵⁴ Charlot connected the image to the occasional Renaissance use of

decapitation as a symbol of castration, the reported method of Cuesta's first, unsuccessful suicide attempt. Charlot sensed a similar prophetic capacity in Orozco:

Orozco put a swastika in his 1924 fresco *Social and Political Junk Heap*. Nobody knew what it was. When asked, Orozco said, "Oh, it's something going on in Germany now." (Tabletalk June 24, 1971)

Charlot did not find such a sense in Siqueiros or, as far as I know, in other Mexican artists.

Beyond his admiration of Rivera and despite hurts, Charlot always retained a warm personal feeling for his colleague. I believe the same thing was true of Rivera when he was not feeling threatened. He usually alternated warmth with hostility and sometimes expressed his admiration. For instance, he sent Pablo O'Higgins to Charlot with the words:

"You ought to get in touch with Jean Charlot." Diego...one day when I was there with Diego, and he said, "Go down to see Jean. Jean is a very fine person and can tell you many things. And he's doing important work" (1974).

Rivera could write with admiration and sympathy about Charlot to Walter Pach:

Charlot a hecho últimamente buenos dibujos y algunas telas, de las que el me ha enseñado fotografías, muy bonitas (January 13, 1925)

'Lately Charlot has done good drawings and some very beautiful canvases of those of which he showed me photographs.'

Charlot se encuentra en una situación material muy mala y desgraciadamente nada he podido hacer yo...

Charlot va siempre haciendo progresos, una verdadera lastima si tiene que interrumpir el trabajo. (March 13, 1925)

'Charlot is in a very bad material situation and unfortunately I can do nothing...

Charlot continues always to make progress, a real shame if he had to interrupt his work.'

On March 13, 1926, Rivera asked Pach if he had the catalog of Charlot's exhibition. In the 1930s, Frank Sheed witnessed the meeting of Rivera and Charlot in New York City:

Charlot and I emerged from lunch one day and were walking back to my office when we almost ran into Rivera, one of the greatest of those Muralists. They hailed each other in a kind of ecstasy. I slipped away, my departure unnoticed. (n.d.)

In the early 1950s, Rivera sent Charlot a card with a signed diagram of his *A Popular History of Mexico*, Teatro de los Insurgentes, 1943, and wrote on the verso:

Je vous envoie des felicitations, Charlot

Diego

Aloha nui Loah!!

Diego

'I send you my congratulations, Charlot

Diego

Aloha nui loa! [Much love]

Diego⁵⁵

Rivera could also speak well of Charlot for the record. In a 1924 interview with Febronio Ortega, he described the youth of the day as having an admirable tendency to be near to the people:

tal es el caso de los estudiantes de Preparatoria que respetaron las pinturas de Cahero, de Revueltas, de Charlot, y sintieron lastimados sus ojos por lo del Dr. Atl. Esto indica que todavía no se han corrompido, aburguesado..." (Ortega 1924: 49)

'such is the case with the Preparatoria students who respect the paintings of Cahero, Revueltas, and Charlot, and feel their eyes hurt by those of Dr. Atl. This shows that they haven't been corrupted, turned bourgeois...'

Rivera wrote a long description of Charlot that is a curious mixture of ideas and emotions:

Jean Charlot, francés de nacionalidad y nacimiento es católico a machamartillo. dice el que su primer móvil en la vida es la Religión y en realidad fuera un nuevo san Luis Gonzague si hubiera nacido menos inteligente.

Sería el futuro General de los Jesuitas si el valor sereno que esconde un carita de ángel y guarda su cuerpecito de solido boxeador peso mosca, no hubiera hecho de él un oficial de artillería en la guerra mundial en la edad en que los demás niños juegan a los soldados y si su ascendencia israelita a causa de los reglamentos de Ignacio de Loyola no pusieran fuera del alcance de su mano los hábitos de La Orden

En su familia hubo judíos, rusos, franceses y también mexicanos.

Heinatos intelectual quizo explotar el material plástico inédito de México al que adoptó como patria artística. Pero él, que llegó a México cargado con un bagaje en que había mucho de Marcel Lenoir y más que lo emparentaba a André Lhote y Bissière aunque traía ja – escrito a los veinte años – un Tratado de La Pintura, se influencio inteligente y eficazmente de los pintores actualmente modernos mexicanos, del arte popular, de los maravillosos pintores anónimos, del arte antiguo pre-hispánico (nuestro clásico) y de todo lo mexicano que puede mirarse de fuera hacia adentro.

Si no hubiera estallado la eclosión magnífica de arte mexicano actual – en un viaje de convaleciente herido anterior a 1921. Charlot solo vio el espectáculo de un neo-impresionismo de segunda mano sin conección con el antiguo formidable – Jean hubiera sido el que en exposiciones y galerías de comerciantes en cuadros hubiera revelado México al "mundo de arte" en Paris.⁵⁶

'Jean Charlot, of French nationality and birth, is a firmly believing Catholic. He says that his prime motive in life is religion, and in reality he would have been a new Saint Louis Gonzaga if he had been born less intelligent.

He would be the future General of the Jesuits if his serene valor—that a little angel face hides and his little body of a solid fly-weight boxer guards—had not made him an artillery officer in the World War at an age when other boys play at soldiers and if his Israelite descent had not placed the habits of the Order outside his reach because of the rules of Ignatius Loyola.

In his family were Jews, Russians, French, and also Mexicans.

Heinatos An intellectual, he wanted to exploit the unknown plastic material of Mexico, which he adopted as his artistic fatherland. He arrived in Mexico loaded with a baggage that contained much of Marcel-Lenoir and more that related him to André Lhote and Bissière [Roger Bissière [1888-1964)], although he already carried with him a *Traité de Peinture* [1920–1922], written around twenty years of age. But he let himself be influenced intelligently and efficiently by the contemporary Mexican modern painters, by popular art, by those marvelous anonymous painters, by ancient Prehispanic art (our classics), and by all the Mexican that can be seen from the outside into the inside. If the magnificent eclosion of contemporary Mexican art had not broken out—in a journey of a convalescent wounded before 1921. Charlot saw only the spectacle of a second-hand Neo-Impressionism unconnected to its formidable predecessor—Jean would have the one who in exhibitions and commercial galleries, in paintings, would have revealed Mexico to the “world of art” in Paris.

But as it is, Charlot counts as “un elemento estimable” ‘an estimable element’ of the younger group of artists.

Their relationship started well in 1922. Charlot thanked God that Rivera asked for him as an assistant, and Rivera must have been happy to have an efficient and knowledgeable French-speaker to hand. The situation encouraged the idea that Rivera, whom Charlot considered to belong to an older generation, would assume the Mexican role of mentor, protector, and teacher. A great artist, Rivera would also be a great patron of the younger generation. Charlot had enjoyed such a positive relation with Maurice Denis in France, who was supportive, encouraging, and at times inspiring. Charlot expected Rivera to act as he would have himself had he been in the same position. As it was, from his lesser position, Charlot helped others as much as he could.

That Rivera felt threatened by the other artists and treated them as rivals was a shock for Charlot as it was for others. Charlot considered Rivera an artistic genius, who should thus have been above such negative sentiments. Charlot did have a tendency to idealize people, seeing the very best in them and appreciating their maximum potential for greatness. He expected them to live up to their greatness and was surprised when they did not. He ultimately concluded that Rivera must have suffered from an insecurity that rendered him fearful rather than confident. Similarly, Charlot saw Orozco as a great artist who could embody the Mexican link between the popular arts with his cartoons and high art. But Orozco feared that his cartoons would prevent people from recognizing him as a high artist and tried both to suppress his artistic past and to conform his new work to élite expectations. Charlot had a higher view of Rivera and Orozco than they had of themselves.

As the troubles started with Rivera, Charlot responded with a religious practice: “Diego : dernier essai de *confiance absolue* après et malgré tant d’autres avortés” ‘Diego: last try at *absolute confidence* after and despite so many aborted others’ (September 25, 1922). Such an effort is made in the face of serious doubts: the affected person will suppress them and continue to believe absolutely in the dubious other. An example would be a seminarian deciding to follow his confessor’s advice even when it appeared wrong. Such a practice was bound to fail with Rivera, and by September 1922—after the explicit break of August—Charlot had to group Rivera among the three worst ruptures in his life:

relations amitié : douloureuses excessivement depuis 14 : Saletés succession. régiment :
Toupillet etc... depuis : *Legendre* Leal *Diego*. **DACTYLOGRAPHIE**
les 3 suffiraient pour toute une vie (September 25, 1922)
‘*relations of friendship*: excessively painful since 1914: succession of Messes. the
regiment: Toupillet, etc.... since: *Legendre* Leal *Diego*. **SHORTHAND**
the three would be enough for a whole life.’

Charlot provided more detail in his “Son Etat Actuel”:

Il y eut aussi un gros homme en qui je me suis confié—et je lui ai donné la clef même de ma vie qui est l’Eglise. Plus tard il m’a accusé de cochonneries. Alors j’ai compris que la parole était sans valeur devant les hommes—pour eux le verbe est une musique souvent agréable,—mais n’exprimant nulle présence—Moi qui vous ai tout donné sur Votre Parole—moi prisonnier du texte—(car il y a vos anges derrière)—nul contact entre eux et moi—autant me taire. D’ailleurs si vous offrez jours et veilles—et le sang même de vos artères—qu’on vous réponde par un éclat de rire—cela est très désagréable et ne compte pas peu dans notre amertume.— (September 1922)

‘There was also a big man in whom I confided—and I gave him the very key of my life, which is the Church. Later, he accused me of obscenities. Then I understood that the word is without value among men—for them the verb is a music, often agreeable—but not expressing a presence—I who gave You everything based on your Word—I, prisoner of the text—(for your angels are behind it)—no contact between them and me—just as well stay silent. Besides, if you offer days and late nights—and the very blood from your arteries—that someone responds with a burst of laughter—that is very disagreeable and does not count for little in our bitterness.—’

On October 8, 1922, Charlot composed the poem *Soliloque*, “Après la rupture avec Diego” ‘After the rupture with Diego’ (1920–1924 Civil). He begins by describing his poverty and loneliness: “Longtemps j’avais marché seul et las” ‘For a long time I traveled alone and weary.’ He was happy to be with people but “J’étais très las vraiment” ‘I was really very tired’:

Puis quelques amis fourbes
démasqués, m’avaient laissé ce cœur en charpie
(sans mentionner ces trop jeunes vierges, harpies)
‘Then some two-faced friends,

unmasked, left my heart in shreds
(not to mention those too young virgins—harpies).’

The virgins would be the young women of good family who were being presented by their parents to Charlot as possible wives. He locked his door and vowed to remain alone. For months, he suffered from contact with others and preferred crying alone to being the butt of jokes:

Pourtant j’avais vraie soif de votre créature
Seigneur. A qui marche seul la fatigue est dure
‘Nevertheless, I had a real thirst for Your creature,
Lord. For one who walks alone, the fatigue is hard’

Thus Charlot’s joy at meeting Rivera.

Aussi, quand vous m’avez offert, à fin de marche,
ce compagnon, j’ai cru voir s’entr’ouvrir une arche
où mes désirs peureux passaient, enguirlandés
‘Thus, when you offered me at the end of the journey
this companion, I believed I saw an arch open itself
through which my fearful desires could pass, garlanded’

When on March 4, 1922, Rivera asked for Charlot to assist him on *Creation*, Charlot wrote in his diary “merci mon Dieu” ‘thank you God.’ The symbol of the arch as an entrance into another state was used by Charlot in his *ma douce âme d’enfant s’échappe à tire-d’aile* of April 1912, when he was fourteen years old:

Or le destin me pousse en avant et je marche,
obligé d’obéir,
et je vois devant moi s’agrandir la lourde arche
où l’homme passe pour mourir
‘So destiny pushes me forward and I walk,
obliged to obey,
and I see growing before me the heavy arch
through which man passes to die.’

Charlot thought that the new collaboration with Rivera would open a new, happier period of his life and work. He saw in Rivera the patron he had sought since the death of his father and used childhood and religious images to express his feelings:

Mon cœur, floche soudain comme l’arc débandé
s’est couché au giron du compagnon robuste.
J’oubliais hier, leurs faux serments, leurs ris injustes
pour celui-ci flambant comme un miracle neuf.
‘My heart, suddenly relaxed like an unbent bow,
rested on the lap of my robust companion.

I was forgetting yesterday their false vows, their unjust laughter
for this person brilliant like a new miracle.’

The ending returned Charlot to his painful loneliness:

Mon cœur, il l’a saisi, lancé comme l’étéuf,
il l’envoya rouler avec un rire énorme.
Seul, brisé, je goûte à nouveau la douleur, norme.
‘My heart he grabbed and tossed it like a ball
sending it rolling with an enormous laugh.
Alone, broken, I taste sorrow anew—the norm.’

As with Charlot’s other confessional poems, *Soliloque* resembles little the impression he was making on his friends. The poem is a venting of his inner emotions and thus an unbalanced picture of himself at the time. *Soliloque* does reveal how Charlot suffered from his relationship with Rivera, but not how he continued to work with him productively and study him as an artist.

Among the foreigners who arrived in the early stages of the Mexican Mural Renaissance, the most important was Walter Pach:

In July 1922, Walter Pach, painter and critic, opened in Mexico City his course on modern art, heroically given in Spanish at the Academy of San Carlos. While he was giving the course, Pach put on display in the library of the Academy a succinct and choice show of graphic works—Matisse, Picasso, Derain and Villon, hemmed in between their historical forerunners from Lorrain to Goya. For Mexicans this was a first opportunity to see at home “School of Paris” originals.⁵⁷

A number of the artists attended his lectures, including Charlot and Orozco, who found them useful (McCarthy 2011: 131).

Charlot recalled that Pach had at least initial doubts about the new Mexican work:

A visitor who was also a well-known art critic, with the forlorn hope of deflecting us toward saner ways, suggested that all Mexican muralists should subscribe to Parisian vanguard magazines!⁵⁸

But Pach quickly “fell in love with the beauty and strength of the Mexican people and their art” and started collecting Precolumbian artworks (McCarthy 2011: 132). Most important, he formed a close attachment to the artists: “The friendships Pach formed with Rivera, Orozco, and Charlot would prove vital for the advancement of modern Mexican art in the United States” (McCarthy 2011: 131). Charlot and Rivera certainly realized Pach’s importance for them in the unknown northern art world. Charlot advised Anita to consult with Pach on a United States publication of her *cuentos* ‘tales,’ later published as *The Boy Who Could Do Anything* (1952):

Estoy contento de que estas haciendo amistad con Pach. Tiene mucha influencia (a pesar de su modestia) y te puede ayudar. En mas, de hablar con el te enseñara mucho de arte. Es uno de los hombres que mas saben. (JC to AB February 2, 1925 “Excuse the paper”)

'I am happy that you are forming a friendship with Pach. He has much influence (despite his modesty) and can help you. Moreover, talking with him will teach you much about art. He is one of the people who knows most.'

Please send me the opinion of Pach about it. and the soonest possible, if I may continue, el titulo de los cuentos that you are sure to print. Because I am now in good dispositions to finish this, y quien sabe mas tarde. (March 29, 1925)

'Please send me the opinion of Pach about it. and the soonest possible, if I may continue, the title[s] of the tales that you are sure to print. Because I am now in good dispositions to finish this, and who knows later.'

"I thought Pach wanted to help us for the edition. His Huebsch casa [publishing house] is a good one I think." (May 17, 1925)

You seem to think that editors will print this gladly because it is a good work. I dont [sic] think so at all. It is good for you, and me, and Pach, but it [h]as a great defect. It is the first thing in its style and I am sure editors shall get afraid. Don't forget that Pach advice is prominent (because of his personality.) and if he proposed to present the drawings to his editor, it seems good to me. ("Business : *I know*"; also "Excuse the paper")

Charlot and Rivera continued to collaborate with Pach on exhibitions and to correspond: "the level of intimacy that developed between these individuals is clear from the tone of their letters" (McCarthy 2011: 133). Indeed, both Rivera and Charlot talked and wrote to Pach about his artwork in terms that were either over-enthusiastic or flattering.⁵⁹ Charlot later found Pach's work slight and his use of his own etching as a frontispiece for *The Masters of Modern Art* (1924) curious.⁶⁰ But he could still muster praise: "Pach as painter worked hard and well in Mexico, elated by the silver clarity of the plateau light."⁶¹ Charlot met frequently with Pach, and he and Rivera saw him off at the train station on his return to the United States⁶² Charlot's frank and affectionate letters to Pach reveal that he considered him at the time a close and sympathetic friend. In 1933, he signed a lithograph, *Lavandera* (most likely M178) to Pach: "En souvenir de bonne amitié" 'in memory of good friendship.'⁶³ Rivera and Charlot continued to work as Pach's contacts in Mexico.⁶⁴

In October 1922, Pach published his "Impresiones sobre el Arte Actual de México":

Before leaving Mexico on October 18, Pach witnessed the beginning of the work in the Preparatoria School. That same month, *México Moderno* published his "Impressions of the Contemporary Art of Mexico," the first estimate of the movement by an outsider. It stabilized the official career of Rivera and corrected the people's estimate of Orozco as a cartoonist, helping him in time to the mural field. (Writings Related to *MMR*: Appendix III)

The article positioned Rivera as the major figure followed by a group of unnamed, younger artists.⁶⁵ Charlot was grouped with these, perhaps the reason he tried in later letters to persuade Pach to take another look at his work. Charlot sent Pach photographs of his paintings and worried when he received no response (JC to AB

March 18, 29, 1925; “Received your letter where you speak of the sketches”). He feared Pach’s misunderstanding or incomprehension of his work:

I feel a little angry that you showed my sketches to Pach because he does not know my other things and cannot reconstituer [‘reconstitute] the definitive thing. (JC to AB “Received your letter where you speak of the sketches”)

Speaking of his series of small paintings, he wrote Pach:

Je n’ai aucun intérêt à garder cette cinquantaine de tableaux ici. Ils forment un groupe homogène ainsi qu’une série d’études et de dessins qui les ont précédés. Depuis, j’ai évolué tant que je suis actuellement à l’extrême opposé de ce style. ⁶⁶

‘I have no interest in keeping here this fifty-some pictures. They form a homogeneous group along with a series of studies and drawings that preceded them. Since then, I have evolved so much that I am at this time at the extreme opposite of this style.’

In Pach’s personal collection are found finished drawings based on Charlot’s earlier street sketches and also three large finished drawings that are connected to his new, larger work from September/October 1925: CL 113 *Landscape with bridge, Cuernavaca*; CL 114 *Luz seated, child in arms*; and CL 115 *Great Nude, Chalma I*. At some point, Pach bought or was given Charlot’s *Luz seated, blue sky*, which had been exhibited at the Art Center exhibition.⁶⁷

In Pach’s 1922 article, the only named artist besides Rivera is Orozco, about whom Pach is tentative. Indeed, Pach continued to depreciate Orozco in comparison with Rivera until he was converted by Charlot’s “José Clemente Orozco: Su Obra Monumental” of 1928.⁶⁸ Charlot wrote to Pach on November 5, 1922:

Votre article a paru dans Mexico moderno. J’espère qu’on vous en a envoyé un exemplaire. J’ai été heureux d’y retrouver un écho de vos cours dont je garde un si bon souvenir. Orozco va exposer ses aquarelles. Espérons que l’article attirera l’attention sur lui.

‘Your article has appeared in *México Moderno*. I hope they have sent you a copy of it. I was happy to find an echo of your course of which I keep such a good memory. Orozco is going to exhibit his watercolors. I hope the article will draw attention to him.’

Pach also started organizing an exhibition for the United States:

Before leaving, Pach invited Mexican painters to exhibit in a group at the Independents Show scheduled to open in February 1923 in New York... this was the first time that modern Mexicans showed together as a group outside their own country.⁶⁹

In 1925, Charlot sent a large number of paintings and drawings to Pach, who used them in an Exhibition of Art Work by Mexican School Children and Jean Charlot, Art Center of New York, April 15–May 1, 1926.⁷⁰

Charlot exhibited fifty-two small paintings and two of middle size along with drawings and received favorable notices and letters:

Charlot...gives one the feeling of a Parisian who has adopted a more primitive style without losing any of his own sophistication. There is no doubt about the Mexican character of his work; its typical and often humorous picturing of Mexican life, and its hot, pungent color, like the flavor of Mexican food, are unmistakable. But the viewpoint is more ironical, and the workmanship more skilful [*sic*]. (Clipping 31, *The Arts*, May 1926)

de la exposicion New York resulto : carta de un admirador que me dice cosas muy exageradas, realmente, pero me da gusto ver que mis cuadros llegan *adentro* de la gente.⁷¹

‘From the exhibition in New York resulted a letter from an admirer who told me great exaggerations, really, but it pleases me to see that my pictures penetrate into the insides of the people.’

But Pach’s low estimate of Charlot’s work is evident in his article on the 1926 exhibition in which Charlot is presented merely as “One of [Rivera’s] co-workers,” an interested student of Mexico, and, incorrectly, as a teacher of children; no word is said about his art (1926: 246). Charlot wrote Brenner about a favorable notice in *The New York Times*:

Me dio gusto porque Pach en el Art Center Bulletin habia hecho el milagro de presentar la exposicion...sin hablar de mi! Cosa de ser mi amigo, sabes.⁷²

‘It made me happy because Pach in the *Art Center Bulletin* performed the miracle of presenting the exhibition...without talking about me. Because he’s my friend, you know.’

For a time, Pach continued to support Charlot, for instance, selecting “4 petits tableaux” ‘four little paintings’ for the opening of the Opportunity Gallery in October 1927 (Charlot April 1931; Clippings 44). By the 1950s, Charlot felt Pach had dropped him.

In September 1922, Siqueiros and Amado de la Cueva returned from Europe. Charlot would work with the latter in the second court of the Ministry of Education and would admire his later work in Guadalajara. In Siqueiros, Charlot found one of his firmest friends in Mexico. Zalce named Siqueiros first when asked how Charlot related to the Mexican artists: “He was a good friend of all, but on different levels. With Siqueiros, he was very friendly; they were good comrades.”⁷³ Siqueiros, already famous for his “Tres Llamamientos” proclamation, was awaited as an avant-garde champion to be lionized. Charlot remembered his unassuming arrival:

descendit du train un garçon discret et correct. Il enseigna à ses désillusionnés amis un portefeuille bourré de photographies d’art *italien* et *d’antiques*, leur dit en souriant : *que le futurisme était bien démodé!!* et rentra chez lui sans plus s’occuper de soutenir une réputation jusque-là en si bon chemin.⁷⁴

‘a discreet and correct young man descended from the train. He showed to his disillusioned friends a portfolio chock full of *Italian* art and *classical objects*, told them

smiling *that Futurism had very much passed from mode!!* and returned home without bothering to support a reputation up till then on such a good path.’

Siqueiros was given the walls and ceilings of his choice and was immediately caught up in political and personal as well as esthetic problems.

Charlot and Siqueiros were unusually close. They were often in each other’s company and roomed together for a time in an *azotea* in the center of town. Charlot’s diary mentions their visiting archeological sites and villages, meeting socially or professionally, and going to the movies.⁷⁵ Charlot remembered their visits to the Museum of Ethnology or Archeology and to folk artists: “we were running around in places like San Pedro Tlaquepaque.”⁷⁶ On June 9, 1923 (Diary), Charlot and his mother moved in with Siqueiros in the Colonia Roma. In late night talk sessions, Siqueiros described inimitably for Charlot his experiences in the early Mexico City art scene and the Revolution. The two artist-writers used their discussions to write the important five-part Araujo series “El Movimiento Actual de la Pintura en Mexico,” , which I discuss in detail in Chapter 1.⁷⁷ When later Charlot lost his own walls to paint at the Ministry of Education, he moved back to the Preparatoria to help Siqueiros in the “escalera chica” (Diary August 16, 20, 1923). After the dispersal of the early muralists, Charlot and Siqueiros seem to have lost contact for a time, but saw each other when they were both in the United States.

Siqueiros had an outsized personality—bursting with ideas, creativity, and charisma—both in his work and his life, between which he was perpetually torn: “Para mí no hay belleza que pueda compararse a la acción. Ni la del arte, por el que he dado la vida” ‘For me there is no beauty that can compare with action. Not even the beauty of art for which I have given my life’ (Scherer 1996: 137). Charlot said, speaking of Oscar Wilde:

some people express themselves in art, others in life. Siqueiros was the only person JC knew who did it in both. He was always on... JC saw Siqueiros haranguing a shopful of barbers while he was getting a shave in a poor neighborhood.⁷⁸

Charlot found Siqueiros close in personality to Caravaggio, whom he compared to his favorite poet, Rimbaud (Tabletalk Early May 1978). Tristán Marof compared him to Benvenuto Cellini (1974). Anita Brenner wrote of “that streak of strange craziness there is about Siq. and everything connected with him” (Glusker 2010: 338, 341).

As a veteran of World War I, Charlot appreciated Siqueiros’ martial spirit, which he saw animating his art:

Aimant son pays et sa race, il met sa main d’artiste au service des reconstituteurs de l’ordre nouveau avec la même franchise que, pour la destruction de l’ordre ancien, il leur offrit son poing de soldat. (Charlot February 1924)
‘Loving his country and his race, he placed his artist’s hand at the service of the reconstructors of the new order with the same frankness with which he offered for the destruction of the old order his soldier’s fist.’

Charlot felt that he and Siqueiros had experienced the same trajectories in their careers. Both of them along with others of their age had experienced actual combat, which gave them certain mental perspectives, emotional attitudes, hierarchies of values, and practical habits. Charlot incorporated some of Siqueiros' war stories into his study of him in *MMR*, agreeing with Siqueiros that "things military helped in his formation as an artist."⁷⁹ Like many Revolutionary soldiers, Siqueiros remained intimidating. Charlot remembered: "Rivera was afraid of Siqueiros, because Siqueiros had been in the army and had high friends. Siqueiros could have 'reverted to his army ways'; that is, shot Rivera" (Tabletalk Undated, early to mid-1970s). Siqueiros referred to "el carácter increíblemente tímido de Rivera" "the incredibly timid character of Rivera" (1977: 478). But Siqueiros would later attempt to kill Trotsky in an armed attack. More positively, war service had given both Charlot and Siqueiros a greater interest in and appreciation of mathematics and science (e.g., Siqueiros 1977: 130). Charlot told me that Siqueiros' martial spirit also helped their relationship. By experience and personality, Siqueiros was immensely confident and self-assured, which meant their friendship was not complicated by the insecurities Charlot sensed in some of the other artists. Siqueiros' broad political purpose for painting also diminished his career worries at least at the time.

On his side, Siqueiros found in Charlot an intellectual companion and moral support. Dorothy Zohmah Charlot remembered how surprised she was at Siqueiros' relation with Charlot after watching many of their long talks together. Siqueiros would ask Charlot many questions and listen most attentively to his answers:

I could see how Siqueiros and all the other people he knew were the ones who asked his advise [*sic*] in private.

I mention Siqueiros by name as he was so Mexican macho it startled me to see him hanging on Jean's words. (Late 1979[?])

JC was one person Siqueiros could *rest* with, "no, rest on." DZC once saw them when Siqueiros was crying on JC's shoulders and JC was comforting him like a baby. She had never seen that side of Siqueiros.⁸⁰

On the other hand, Siqueiros, who liked to typologize people, found his friend puzzling: "El catolicón Jean Charlot, con su aire de seminarista cachondo" "The big Catholic Jean Charlot, with his air of a scoffing seminarian."⁸¹ *Seminarian* recalls Rivera's tag of Charlot's "little angel face." The adjective, *cachondo*, however, clashes. Dictionary glosses include *in heat*, *rutting*, *randy*, *sensual*, and *hilarious*. The adjective *cachondeo* seems more appropriate—I suspect a misprint—with the glosses *ragging*, *jeering*, *leg-pulling*, and *treating everything as a joke*. No gloss fits the type of a seminarian. Charlot's serious discussion was equally untypical for Siqueiros, who was surprised that Charlot could have progressive social views although he was a Roman Catholic. Charlot argued from the writings of Pope Leo XIII that violent revolution was acceptable for social justice, that the "human program" of Mexican reconstruction was compatible with Catholicism, that labor had the right to organize in unions, and that Catholicism had a more effective universal program than communism.⁸² On a more personal level—just as Orozco felt Charlot should have stood up more to Rivera—Siqueiros was angry when Charlot refused to defend himself against Renato Molina's attack on *The Massacre in the Main Temple* (Diary April 26, 1923).

Charlot considered Siqueiros the best story storyteller he had ever heard, a great stylist: “the best storyteller in the world.”⁸³ While they were rooming together, Siqueiros would tell Charlot vivid stories of the Mexican art world before the Revolution and of his own experiences as a soldier, stories Charlot later used in *MMR* and other writings (e.g., *MMR* 190–193, 195). They also discussed art theory and problems. Charlot recorded his saying: “toute figure esthétiquement satisfaisante présente répétée une même dimension entre ses points saillant[s], entière, moitié ou quart. (Siqueiros)” ‘every esthetically satisfying figure presents a same dimension repeated between its salient points, entire, half, or quarter (Siqueiros)’ (1922 Mexique). As seen above, their conversations are memorialized in the series of articles they wrote under the pseudonym Juan Hernández Araujo (July 11 August 2, 1923). Charlot recognized Siqueiros as an important articulator of the movement in his earlier “Tres Llamamientos.”

However important Siqueiros was as a witness and writer, Charlot considered him first and foremost a great artist. In fact, Charlot described him in his February 1924 “D. Alfaro Siqueiros” as a prototype of his own generation (Volume I, Chapter 8, Section 1.1). The older generation—that of Rivera—had fought the good fight for the new art and won. Thus placed in a different art-historical situation, the young generation faced the new challenge of free choice from the history of art: “la *liberté redoutable du choix*” ‘the *redoubtable liberty of choice*.’ For instance, the young artists in Mexico were free to adapt any previous achievements to their goal of compositional solidity expressing emotional meaning. But this necessity to choose was proving was a “Problème quasi-insoluble” ‘quasi-insoluble problem’ that challenged artists around the world. Charlot described how Siqueiros faced that challenge on his return to Mexico:

L’ingénieuse solution, bien malgré lui, il la trouva ainsi : Il fut saisi fortement, dès son retour, par le caractère *original* qui se dégage de l’archéologie et de l’ethnographie mexicaines, soit des musées et de la vie de tous les jours. Les notions acquises en Europe ne pouvaient servir absolument à rien parce qu’ici tout est différent. Et il eut la grande sagesse d’oublier... Il peignit peu et vécut beaucoup, mêlé étroitement à la vie commune des plus humbles de ses compagnons, non comme observateur, mais en frère... Il fit de la politique, et en toute sincérité d’âme examinant ce problème aigu du riche et du pauvre, se rangea du côté du pauvre, par amour.

‘The ingenious solution, really despite himself, he found in this way: from the moment of his return, he was seized strongly by the *original* character that emanates from Mexican archeology and ethnography, either in museums or in everyday life. The notions acquired in Europe were absolutely useless because here everything is different. And he had the great wisdom to forget...He painted little and lived much, mixed closely in the common life of his most humble companions, not as an observer, but as a brother...He engaged in politics, and in all sincerity of soul, examining this sharp problem of rich and poor, took the side of the poor, out of love.’

Charlot thus understands Siqueiros’ emphasis on experience and study as symptomatic of his social concerns, indeed his love for his fellow human beings, and of his conception of himself as a member of the community. Siqueiros needed this foundation before he could find his new subjects and style, which he, like all the other artists, had to seek with much pain and effort:

Cette voie large fut voie circulaire et le ramena à la peinture. Dans un pays où les 80% ne savent pas lire, la peinture conserve en effet l'utilité de *propageuse d'idées* qui la fit naître et durer au long des siècles. Il retrouva ainsi, chose que tous avaient oubliée, *l'utilité et finalité* de l'art, comprit qu'*une peinture, comme une phrase, était bonne si elle exprimait, concise et claire, une idée*. Parce qu'il avait des idées à exprimer, il se remit à peindre, sans aucune préoccupation accessoire... La beauté d'une peinture n'est autre chose que l'émotion qu'on en ressent. Or, cette peinture-ci émotionne. Elle dit clairement ce qu'il faut dire. Ses exemples et ses conclusions sont nés de la race et pour la race. Elle est donc belle, belle d'humilité voulue et de simplicité sérieuse; elle est fruit de cette saine discipline que s'imposa le peintre d'être *homme* plutôt qu'être *homme célèbre* et de méditer avant de discourir.⁸⁴

'This broad way was a circular way and led him back to painting. In a land where 80% do not know how to read, painting retains in effect the usefulness of a *propagator of ideas* that gave it birth and maintained it through the centuries. He found thus—something all had forgotten—the *usefulness and finality* of art, understood that *a painting, like a phrase, was good if it expressed, clear and concise, an idea*. Because he had ideas to express, he set himself again to paint, without any accessory preoccupation... The beauty of a painting is nothing else than the emotion that one feels from it. Well, his painting excites emotion. It says clearly what needs to be said. His examples and his conclusions are born of the race and for the race. It is, therefore, beautiful, beautiful with a willed humility and serious simplicity; it is the fruit of that healthy discipline that the painter imposed on himself to be a *man* rather than being a *celebrated man* and to meditate before discoursing.'

As Charlot depicts it, Siqueiros' struggle closely resembled his own. Siqueiros replaced his European base with his study of Prehispanic art: "il sut renaître dans l'acception du terme, abolir son passé" 'he knew how to be reborn in the sense of abolishing his past.' Siqueiros got to know his native land again by living among the poor, where he found subjects he could militate for politically and artistically. That is, he found his new reason to paint when he found his new viewers.

Charlot was praising Siqueiros when he still had produced very little: "L'œuvre, inachevée encore, est déjà en bonne voie" 'The work, still unfinished, is already progressing well' (Charlot February 1924). In 1927, discussing Rivera, Orozco, and Siqueiros with Brenner, he said that "Siq. was the successful 'dark horse'" (Glusker 2010: 489). But Siqueiros was making his admirers wait: "Siqueiros was different from Diego: a very irregular worker. He 'never finished' his work" (Tabletalk Undated, early to mid-1970s). In 1929, encouraged by a loan, Siqueiros said he "is going to paint a lot. Jean is extremely skeptical" (Glusker 2010: 703). Siqueiros was distracted by life, but he was also a slow worker, as my mother found to her surprise:

Siqueiros and Blanca Luz here, wanting to paint my portrait. Went day after day to their hotel room. Used tiny brush very slow, very different than Jean painting my portrait. (JCC, DZC Diary collection, Autobiographical Notes: "1932")

She was used to artists who worked more quickly. Charlot was most impressed when *Burial of a Worker* reached its final, if still unfinished stage, and by Siqueiros later murals, which Charlot praised as so adapted to wall and space that they really could not be photographed: they were the antithesis of easel paintings (so Siqueiros 1978: 115 f.). During the 1960s, Charlot kept Siqueiros' *Dead Child* hanging in his studio, a rare tribute.

On arriving in Mexico, Siqueiros sought a leadership position, initiating a life-long rivalry with Rivera, who until then had been ignoring any corporate character among the other artists. The site of their struggle became the Syndicate of Revolutionary Painters, Sculptors, and Engravers of Mexico, founded largely by Siqueiros between his return in September 1922 and the first documentary mention of it in December: "Rivera o Siqueiros propugnaban por obtener la dirección del grupo" 'Rivera or Siqueiros disputed to obtain the direction of the group.'⁸⁵ The Sindicato had precedents; indeed, Walter Pach had argued for the formation of "a Society of Independent Artists" like those in Paris and New York City (McCarthy 2011: 131). Vasconcelos considered unions unworthy of intellectuals: "A Diego, a Montenegro, a Orozco, nunca se les ocurrió crear sindicatos" 'It would never have occurred to Diego, Montenegro, or Orozco to found unions' (1982 *Memorias* 1: 262). Leal felt that the arguments in the new Sindicato aggravated those that had arisen as the artists began their mural work in late 1922.⁸⁶ He and Siqueiros felt that Rivera exploited such tensions and indeed the whole Sindicato for his own purposes (e.g., Siqueiros 1977: 116 ff., 214; 1996: 44, 119). Siqueiros credited the union not only with political leadership but with influence on the developing style and subject matter of the mural movement, for instance, for Orozco (Siqueiros 1978: 38–41). But to do this, he had to ignore the earlier contribution of the young muralists of the Preparatoria (Chapter 1). Charlot was skeptical at the beginning:

Diego a dû vous parler de la fondation d'un syndicat. Grand enthousiasme au début, mais quant il s'agit de travail tous f... le camp. On peut changer l'étiquette, la marchandise reste la même. (Charlot to Pach n.d., early 1923?)

'Diego must have spoken to you about the foundation of a syndicate. Great enthusiasm at the beginning, but when it came to work, everyone beat it out of there. You can change the label, but the merchandise remains the same.'

Indeed, the request of Charlot and Amado de la Cueva to Siqueiros as union official for help with Rivera ended in farce.⁸⁷ The great contribution of the Sindicato was its newsletter, *El Machete*, which spread the message of the mural movement through powerful woodcut illustrations, like murals themselves, original art for the masses: "the woodcut technique that helped spread to streets and villages the message of the murals."⁸⁸ Charlot wrote an unidentified article for *El Machete*; the article was never published, but the woodcut *Los Ricos en el Infierno* was created to illustrate it.⁸⁹ He probably also intended his article on Siqueiros (February 1924) with accompanying portrait for *El Machete*, but for an unknown reason, it remained unpublished.

As seen above, Rivera had started working on *Creation* but had not acceded to Vasconcelos' request to recruit other muralists. He had, however, hired Charlot as an assistant. Vasconcelos then turned to Leal, who had been recommended by Ramos Martínez. Leal broadcast invitations, but ultimately only four young artists accepted and created murals: Leal, Revueltas, Alva de la Canal, and Charlot, whom Leal had invited

first of all (Leal: 1990: 175). Much information is found in *MMR*, but materials cut before publication are also helpful:

It is prudent to check Leal's remembrances against a contemporary text. In *La Falange* of August 1923, Rivera punctiliously underscores the sequence. Before his arrival:

the walls of San Pedro y Pablo were beginning to be "potted." After that, the painting of the Auditorium of the Preparatoria School was begun, and after that Alva, Charlot, Cahero, Leal and Revueltas came to paint on the walls of this same school...

To supply the missing dates: San Pedro y Pablo was commissioned June 1920, Rivera's *Creation* reached the wall early in 1922, and the five young men were called in simultaneously about May 1922.

...

When Leal relayed Vasconcelos' call for muralists, I was already working for Rivera, on *Creation*.⁹⁰

The young artists were offered their choice of walls in the Preparatoria, a magnificent Colonial building used both as an institute for general education and a preparation for higher schools.⁹¹ The Preparatoria's anomalous character made it an item for Vasconcelos' educational reforms (1982 *Memorias* 1: 533, 565, 575), and its general or specialized mission and relation to the national university were points of dispute between Vasconcelos and the students, faculty, and the sometime director Vicente Lombardo Toledano. The students—of which there were 1800 in 1921—were political and organized, resistant to Vasconcelos' dictates and ready to strike at him and his projects. Vasconcelos' young artists were a sporadic target in 1922. Charlot was attacked by five students on July 22 and complained to Toledano, but his relations with others was good. The students would become a major problem in 1923.

Leal and Charlot paired off as did Revueltas and Alva de la Canal, each pair choosing facing walls, Leal's being *The Feast of the Lord of Chalma*.⁹² They agreed on themes, scale, and some compositional elements so as to achieve unity (e.g., Leal 1990: 175). For instance, Charlot's conquistadores charge down his wall, while Leal's worshippers generally direct their devotion upwards towards the crucifix; Leal originally designed an inscription in his lower left corner to correspond to Charlot's shield, but changed it to flowers (Flores 2012: 80). Their subjects were also chosen to relate to the facing wall: Alva's and Charlot's depicted the arrival of the Spaniards and Revueltas' and Leal's the resulting cultural-religion synthesis. As discussed above, Charlot had already started a large canvas, CL 8, 9 *Calvary with St. Thomas Aquinas*, that he intended as a mural exercise: "I took a large canvas as a sort of a next-best thing"⁹³ The subject he picked was also from his French period, and he considered it an extension of his mural plan, *Processional*, and his mural-styled *Chemin de Croix*. Charlot wrote to Pach shortly after that he was powerfully drawn to "la peinture religieuse et l'art Saint-Sulpice" 'religious painting and Saint-Sulpice art,' that is, French liturgical murals (Charlot to Pach May 11, 1922). The oil was not related to the Mexican subjects Charlot had been developing in drawings, woodcuts, and oils. It was Vasconcelos' commission that determined an

appropriately Mexican subject for Charlot's first mural along with a fitting style. The *Massacre* would finalize Charlot's abandonment of his French period to the point where he would nearly reject it altogether. Indeed, when in 1924, Charlot looked at a list of his works that contained the two *St. Thomas* paintings, he wrote "quelle horreur !" 'how horrible!' (quoted below).

As he began and was creating his first mural, Charlot was continuing to assist Rivera on *Creation*, aiding him during the day and working on the *Massacre* at night. Another difficulty arose in his relations with his colleagues. As the young artists approached their mural tasks, tensions arose that related both to the work and to each other. Charlot and Revueltas set to work on the wall without delay. Leal became involved in extensive research on Indian dances (e.g., *MMR* 168), and Alva de la Canal seems to have been oppressed by personal as well as technical problems. The young artists also found the desired coordination among their works difficult to achieve. For instance, Leal wrote:

As to the composition itself, Jean and I both decided to use masses arranged along the diagonals of the mural polygon. Charlot solved his problem with elegant airiness, and our dissensions began when he tried to impose his criterion and his taste on the solution of my composition. (*MMR* 168)

In this period arose also the lasting dispute about whether the four young artists had decided originally to paint in fresco or in encaustic.⁹⁴ For Charlot, the end result was primary and, impatient with the dissension, he took the side of the producers:

Leal n'a pas commencé (!) il se promène de groupe en groupe en parlant d'art et répète sans cesse « En peinture, le travail seul compte. Il faut travailler. » Alba n'a pas commencé, tan bien [*sic*]. Revueltas seul plaque des couleurs, avec assez de force, ma foi. C'est de beaucoup, le meilleur des Beaux-Arts et surtout le plus sympathique.⁹⁵
'Leal has not started (!) he walks from group to group talking about art and repeating unceasingly, "In painting, only the work counts. It is necessary to work." Alva has not started either. Only Revueltas is applying colors with a good deal of force in fact. He is by far the best of the Bellas Artes group and above all the most simpatico.'

When the young artists moved out of Coyoacán to the Preparatoria to begin their murals, they moved onto the turf that Rivera considered his. Leal warned of the danger early, but Charlot, despite his earlier problems with Rivera, again took his side, preferring production to what looked like internal politics:

Il y a d'ailleurs eu des frottements à ce sujet avec le groupe Beaux-Arts : Cahero, Leal, etc... Ils ont décidé que Diego voulait exercer une « dictature » ! que cela était intolérable car après tout chacun d'eux avait sa valeur propre et qu'on ne peut pas faire de hiérarchie dans le talent, etc... Vous voyez où peut mener un orgueil imbécile et un hidalguisme mal compris. Cela vient surtout de ce qu'ils ne travaillent pas et leurs plans de tranquillité sont dérangés par le travail des autres. Résultat : Ils ne profiteront pas de l'exemple de Diego, pas plus qu'ils n'ont profité de votre enseignement. Ils sont d'un tropical vraiment incorrigible. (Letter to Pach n.d. janvier 1923?)

‘There has been in fact some friction about this [the Independents exhibition] with the Bellas Artes group: Cahero, Leal, etc... They have decided that Diego wanted to exercise a “dictatorship”! that that was intolerable because, after all, each of them had his own value and because one cannot establish a hierarchy of talent, etc.... You can see where an imbecilic vanity and half-baked hidalguismo can lead. All of that comes of the fact that they are not working and their plans of taking their rest are disturbed by the work of others. Result: they do not profit by the example of Diego, no more than they profited from your teaching. They really are incorrigibly tropical.’

Charlot’s negative tone may be the result of the most damaging result of the politics around their murals: the temporary destruction of Leal’s friendship with Charlot:

I lost the treasured friendship of Charlot when an inopportune meddler assured me, something I should never have believed, that Charlot, who finished his work before the others, had made efforts to convince the Secretary to take away my contract to paint the wall facing his. I burst into a fit of rage, and Charlot, showing more fortitude than I, received my insults stoically.⁹⁶

Leal came to blame Rivera, “who was interested in splitting us apart, perhaps in order the better to destroy us” (*MMR* 172). The young artists were easy prey “debido tal vez a nuestra inexperiencia o al carácter un poco histórico de los artistas” ‘due perhaps to our inexperience and to the character a little hysterical of the artists’ (Leal 1990: 181). This is the family tradition as communicated to me by Fernando Leal’s son, Fernando Leal Audirac:

The incident you are referring to was due to the intrigues enabled by DR in order to divide his young competitors... Leal fell in the trap and reclaimed to Charlot about a supposed conspiracy machinated by Charlot to destroy the Dancers of Chalma and paint on that wall as well... Of course, everything was the result of gossipy and the group that was in fact plotting were those who took advantage of the quarrel between our fathers...

Years afterwards, Leal realised how silly he had been and naturally asked Charlot to apologise him for having doubted. Friendship recovered forever! Everything is referred in “El arte y los monstruos” and in “El derecho de la cultura”. (email of November 16, 2013)

Charlot himself did not know who the conspirator was but guessed it was Montenegro, an inveterate gossip:

It wasn’t Diego Rivera who made trouble between Leal and JC. It was Roberto Montenegro, who was close to Vasconcelos. Someone had asked JC about Leal’s mural, and JC had said it wasn’t his own wall. Montenegro mistook this remark as JC’s rejection of Leal’s mural.

Roberto Montenegro told people that JC had spoken badly about Leal to Vasconcelos. This is a surmise about Montenegro, but he seems the only possible one. (Tabletalk Undated, mid-1970s?)

The incident was so deeply felt at the time that Nacho Asúnsolo, always Charlot's self-appointed protector, threatened Leal with a pistol.⁹⁷

The break with Leal came as a surprise and a shock for Charlot as seen in his decodable diary entries. In the first part of 1922, a number of social meetings with Leal were recorded. The troubles started in mid-year :

May 22, 1922: Leal m'attrape à Prepa de son travail mural

June 5, 1922: matin : explosion avec Leal sur nos mésententes. February 1, 1923: inaugure ma fresque. avec beaucoup d'amis...Leal s'absente.

February 2, 1923: brouille totale avec Leal (see also June 26, 1922, and November 14, 1922)

May 22, 1922: Leal castigates me at the Preparatoria about his mural work

June 5, 1922: morning: explosion with Leal about our misunderstandings February 1, 1923: inaugurate my fresco. with lots of friends...Leal absents himself.

February 2, 1923: total estrangement with Leal

In his "Essai sur Mon Etat Actuel" (September 25, 1922), Charlot lists Leal along with Legendre and Rivera as the most "douloureuses excessivement" 'excessively painful' of all his postwar friendships (Leal's name is, however, the only one not underlined). Charlot's anger is palpable in his diary—in which he says Leal's name, 'Loyal,' does not fit him (May 28, 1922)—and in his letters to Pach. González Mello has argued that Charlot left Leal out of the Araujo series because of their break (1995: 34). If so, Charlot was not writing with his usual scholarly equanimity, although he was praying for Leal (June 11, 1922). Siqueiros, Charlot's co-author, also had a reason: he had fought with Leal over the Syndicate and considered Leal and Cahero "the shamed reaccionaries [*sic*] of our group" (I.1, Section 5.2). Whatever the reason, the omission of Leal was an injustice, and Leal felt that after he left the Syndicate, he suffered a "boycott by friends" (*MMR* 181 f.). In the *Massacre*, Charlot did portray Leal looking at his own fresco across the stairwell, just as Leal, in Indian guise, looks out of his own towards Charlot's. Charlot wobbled between negative and positive judgments of Leal's painting.⁹⁸

Charlot always described painting the *Massacre* as a peak experience:

I would say that I was supremely happy when I painted that first fresco of mine. (March 8, 1972).

Empecé ayudando a Diego Rivera en su encáustica de la Escuela Preparatoria: "La Creación". Al mismo tiempo empecé mi propio fresco en la escalera de la Escuela. Con el pincel en la mano me di cuenta de las enormes posibilidades de la pintura mural. Toda esa época fue de una significación muy profunda en mi desarrollo artístico. (September 14, 1945)

'I started off assisting Diego Rivera on his encaustic *Creation* in the Preparatory School. At the same time I started my own fresco in the stairwell of the School. With brush in hand I realized the enormous possibilities of mural painting. This whole period was deeply significant in my artistic development.'

Later Charlot described Juan Cordero's experience, I believe, as that of a soul mate:

Difícil en nuestra época, increíble por suya, esta admirable cúpula representa en la obra del artista una cumbre casi única de inspiración, cuando el joven, vencido en cuanto concierne al éxito mundano, comulgaba sólo en su alto andamiaje con un don que ningún dictador de este mundo, nada podía darle ni quitarle. (1945 Juan Cordero)

'Difficult in our time, incredible for his, this admirable cupola represents in the œuvre of the artist an almost unique pinnacle of inspiration, when the young man, defeated as far as worldly success is concerned, was communing alone on his lofty scaffold with a gift that no dictator of this world—nothing—could give him or take away.'

In old age, Charlot would say that what he remembered about this period was the work:

Indeed, it is difficult today to remember how living and throbbing was the kind of geometrical passion that filtered into our works via cubism. In 1922, the spoils of science held, for the artist, an esthetic appeal stronger than did the surges of emotion. While the mural of the Auditorium was in the making, the hands that plucked at chalked lines, or slackened a string to trace a catenary along its curve, or fitted to a preordained diameter the jaws of the large wooden compasses built to order for the job, these cautious hands experienced as much delight at their precise task as had, before that, the arms and wrists of the romantics swinging blatant autographic brushstrokes.

I remember how I painted this wall in full originality and full passion. (Writings Related to *The Mexican Mural Renaissance*, Chapter XXV Conclusion)

As I have described earlier (2001 First Fresco), Charlot was exploring the sensuous experience of working with fresco: facing the great wall, feeling the fresh mortar absorb the paint, watching the colors change as they dried. As he worked, he learned and modified his technique, perfecting his craft. Fresco demanded all his talents:

It is perhaps in fresco where the plan must be matured before execution, where lines must be traced and pounced, where colors must be put on "blind" with only a mental knowledge of what they will become, and where an objective architecture mocks all excesses of subjectivity, that the craftsman's tradition and technical knowledge imposes more forcefully its mark on aesthetics. (1941 Foreword)

Fresco painting is also a communal experience, and Charlot entered for the first time into a key relationship, that of painter and plasterer:

The first time that Escobar greeted me by the title of Maestro, it flattered my Paris-conditioned ego. But the fact that he expected to be addressed in return as Maestro taught me to respect his dominion of the mason's craft as he did my knowledge of art.⁹⁹

Charlot would find this relationship in the history of art and would treasure his own masons and assistants throughout his working life:

When the hour for the tea happened, Michelangelo was nowhere to be seen, and the princess sent her emissary everywhere to find the painter and eventually found him so engrossed in a conversation with his plasterer that he had forgotten the rendezvous with the princess.

Now, this is so typical of the attitude of the fresco painter...

For a fresco painter the most important man in the world, I would say, and the one he depends on... is the plasterer. I had a little experience in Mexico. I came there fresh from Paris, fresh from the School of Paris, and I was given a large wall. I was in my early twenties, and, as all young men, I felt I was going to do something magnificent, something incredible. I was going to be as good as Picasso. At the time that was as far as I could imagine. So I climbed on my scaffold. My plasterer had come in the morning. He was a nice Indian with his big straw hat, and he had taken off his hat very much in the Musketeer fashion that you see in *Cyrano*, and he said "Maestro", which was a nice way of addressing me. I felt I was a master. He said, "Maestro, what do you wish?" "Well," I said, "you put plaster here and I will paint it." And I painted all through the evening and through the night, and around midnight the plaster was dry, but I felt I had done up there in that little corner something as good as Picasso. So I went to bed and the next day I rushed to my rendezvous with my plasterer at six o'clock in the morning. He had slept all night long. He was very fresh and rosy, and he looked at my picture and I looked at my picture. I wasn't quite sure it was as good as I had thought it was the night before. And he said, "Oh, Maestro, you had a headache; yes, no." And I looked at it and said, "Maybe". So he said, "Well, what do you wish today?" I said, "You put another piece here". Well, the next piece he put on wasn't put on as carefully as the piece he had put on the day before. He had decided perhaps I wasn't really a master, perhaps I was a fake. And I had a much harder time painting on that bad plaster than I had painting on the good plaster. So this time I was being busy being as good as Picasso but I was also busy in kind of pleasing my plasterer the next morning. And little by little that became my most intense desire. My most intense need was, in fact, to please my plasterer the morning after. And eventually we had nice morning conversations and he called me "Maestro" again. So I felt good again. And my friends had the same experience, and this is the way probably, as it has been called, that the Mexican Mural Renaissance was born, thanks to our plasterers.¹⁰⁰

Charlot portrayed Escobar in the contemporary group in the right bottom corner of the *Massacre*. The figure does not appear in the preparatory drawings, so Charlot decided to include him towards the end of the production of the mural, doubtless because of his new appreciation of Escobar's contribution. The figures of Charlot and Escobar frame the group in three dimensions, with Charlot in the foreground and Escobar in the background. Escobar is the figure closest to the wall itself, forming a bridge, as it were, for the artists in front of him. Escobar is perhaps also depicted as the figure closest to the historical event.

Charlot's emotions at the completion of the fresco—dated February 1, 1923 (1920–1925 Ludwigshafen: “*Ses Œuvres de 1923*”)—were mixed. Anita Brenner later reports that when she was depressed at the end of a project, Charlot tried to console her by describing his feelings at the termination of the *Massacre*:

Says when he was finishing his big fresco he wept and wept with the final brushstrokes; and then he went and leaned on a railing and looked at it and wept some more and thought it was the rottenest thing he'd ever seen. (Glusker 2010: 708)

Charlot was less confessional to Pach:

Ma fresque est presque terminée. Après on lavera avec un jet d'incendie et retouches à la cire. C'est un mortier très chargé de ciment ; les élèves de la Préparatoire pourtant s'y écorche[ent] les ongles. Il y a des parties dont je suis content. En tous cas cela m'a beaucoup appris.¹⁰¹ (Letter to Pach May 11, 1922)

'My fresco is almost completed. Afterwards, it will be washed with a fire hose and [be given] encaustic retouches. It's a mortar with lots of cement; nonetheless, the students of the Preparatoria scrape their fingernails on it. There are parts with which I'm content. In any case, it taught me a lot.'

Ma fresque est finie et me satisfait. (Letter to Pach no date. January 1923?)

'My fresco is finished and satisfies me.'

I will discuss in the next chapter the reaction of others to the *Massacre*.

7.2.

ART

In his Ludwigshafen Notebook (1920–1925), Charlot made three lists of his artworks for 1922:

Ebauche d'une Liste de Ses Propres Œuvres de 1922

gouaches	(une cinquantaine)
gravures sur bois	(Ch de + 14)
	têtes 10 env
pointe sèche—	1
aquarelles	projet 1
diverses études.	
dessins	X

Ses Œuvres de 1922

Année 1922

pay sage s	1 rochers.	X
	2 les montagnes et magayes	X
	3 pedregal (falaise)	X[1]
	4 magaye <i>perdu</i>	
pers onn ages	5 femme à l'oiseau à finir	X
	6 Luciana n° 2	X
	7 Trinidad.	X
	8 vieille femme.	X
	9 Luciana au vase	X
natu re mor te	:10 fruits.	X

quelle horreur ! 1924

11 maquette pour grand tableau. X

12 Grand tableau (pas fini)

13 la fresque de la Preparatoria.

1 pointe sèche.

12 gravures sur bois environ : têtes

100 dessins (portraits nus etc...) (?)

3 aquarelles dont 2 projets.

19 grands dessins de têtes pour la fresque

Ses Œuvres de 1922

1922

dessins :

portraits.

Simone.

Guerrero

“

Bersin

Schultess

Lupe

Amero

Diego

“ au travail –

Luciana

11

nus :

au trait (dt. habillés)

25

modelés

3

projet fresque géométrique

1

aquarelles :

projet fresque

Luciana

2

Gravures :

1 pointe sèche

2 copies Greco

7 têtes

10

album :
fini couv. bleu.
dessin au trait album *dactylographie*

peinture :
fresque.

Sketch of a List of His Own Works of 1922

gouaches
 (around 50)
woodcuts
 (*Chemin de Croix* 14)

 heads around 10
drypoint
 1
watercolors
 project 1
 —diverse studies
drawings
 X

His Works of 1922

Year 1922

landscapes	1
rocks	2
mountains and magueys	

	3
pedregal (cliff)	
	4
maguey <i>lost</i>	
personages	5
woman with bird to be finished	
	6
Luciana number 2	
	7
Trinidad	
	8
old woman	
	9
Luciana with vase	
still life	
10 fruits.	

horrible ! 1924	
11 scale model for big painting	
12 big painting (not finished)	
13 the Preparatoria fresco	

1 drypoint	
12 woodcuts, approximately: heads	

100 drawings (portraits, nudes, etc.) (?)	
3 watercolors, of which two are projects	
19 big drawings of heads for the fresco	

His Works of 1922

1922

drawings:

portraits.

Simone.

Guerrero

“
Bersin
Schultess
Lupe
Amero
Diego
“ at work –
Luciana

11

nudes:

in outline (some clothed)

25

modeled

3

geometric fresco project

1

watercolors :

fresco project

Luciana

2

Prints:

1 drypoint

2 copies of El Greco

7 heads

10

sketchbook :

finished blue cover

sketchbook with drawings in outline *shorthand*

painting:

fresco.

1922 was clearly a productive year for Charlot, especially since he is listing only formal, finished drawings, not, say, street sketches. Indeed, he could not himself remember the exact number of his works in some genres. Many of those he lists are now inaccessible at least to me. I will discuss those I can below.

7.2.1. DRAWINGS

7.2.1.1.nudes

Probably in late 1921 and early 1922, Charlot produced a series of finished nudes done *au trait* ‘in outline,’ Series of Nudes in Rust-Red and Blue-Gray Line, of which thirteen are accessible. These were based on an earlier series of thirty-four pencil outline drawings of nudes found in Notebook A. I have studied these in Volume 1, Chapter 8, section 3.3.1, as a culmination of Charlot’s work on nudes in France. They are, therefore, an example of Charlot finalizing his French period at the same time that he was beginning his Mexican. He would continue this practice, for instance, in his Cubistic prints *Saint John, after El Greco* (M38) and *Saint Martin, after El Greco* (M39) of 1922 (Volume 1, Chapter 8, Section 8.3.1.1).

In this series of nudes, Charlot follows a practice he will maintain later: a large number of quick sketches provide choices for more finished, formal works to be produced later. The sketches were probably done at the Academy of San Carlos, where, I believe, Charlot had worked from the nude on his exploratory trip to Mexico.¹⁰² Nude models were not used at Coyoacán, because Ramos Martínez considered them artificial (e.g., Leal 1990: 172). Moreover, all the nudes in the series are from European models, as were those he recorded later in his diary.¹⁰³ Charlot would pioneer the Indian nude in his work with Luz starting on March 4, 1924 (Diary). This earlier series provides, therefore, a base-line for understanding Charlot’s innovative study of the Indian nude.

7.2.1.2. STREET SKETCHBOOKS

As seen in Volume 1, Charlot had done drawings in the streets of Paris and of Mexico City on his first trip. As well as marking his stylistic development, these sketches record his first impressions of non-touristic Mexico: “more than the museums and art galleries, the streets of Mexico are an index to its culture...” (“*Art: The Work of Jean Charlot*” 1949). His use of his sketches in his later work, discussed below, demonstrates that he was basing his development of subjects and themes on personal observation rather than on earlier art. Charlot characteristically satirized himself as a foil to Siqueiros, who refuses:

énergiquement d’être le monsieur qui, au moment pathétique, sort de sa poche carnet et crayon et “prend des notes” pour une “œuvre” future. (February 1924)
 ‘energetically to be that gentleman, who at the pathetic moment, pulls from his pocket notebook and pencil and “makes some notes” for a future “great work.”’

Charlot's earliest surviving street sketches or sketchbooks after his immigration survive as loose sheets "on a woodpulp paper of unusually poor quality, which has turned brown and brittle over the years" (M48). Variations in size and color—like the purple paper of *Disassembled Sketchbooks 1922–1923* number 68 and the sheet of Henri Charlot business stationery—reveal that the sheets were either single or were removed from different books. As they are now posted on the web site of the Jean Charlot Foundation, the drawings are grouped as follows:

—*Disassembled Sketchbooks 1922–1923* [DS]. A set of sheets used in most cases only on the recto were assembled and bound by Schneller in Hawai'i: 132 leaves with one sketch mounted on rice paper per leaf. I have numbered these and refer to them by the abbreviation DS and number.

—*Unbound Sketches 1922–1923* [US]. Twenty unbound leaves, often using both sides. I refer to these by US and number. Three sheets mounted on cardboard with an architectural border drawn by Charlot are given one number, US 16. These drawings are done in a thin ink line *au trait*. Charlot had mounted some of his drawings thus in France. Related sketches can be found on blank pages of Charlot's diaries. For instance, the 1923 diary has an early version of US 3 Recto: man from back. Charlot balanced the composition by spreading the figure's legs to correspond to his up spread arms.

The sketches appear to be from 1922 into middle or late 1923, when they are used for dated prints.¹⁰⁴ In 1923, Charlot used several sketches as bases for lithographs to be gathered into a portfolio with poems by "The Poet in Overalls," Carlos Gutiérrez Cruz, probably at one time to be published by the Estridentista press.¹⁰⁵ The lithographs are about the same size as the sketches, a respect for scale that was always important for Charlot. The prints resemble the bookmark-sized woodblocks he planned to create for World War I soldiers and used ultimately on the cover of the *Chemin de Croix* (Volume 1, Chapter 7, Section 5.3). Just as those bookmarks were to aid devotion, so these lithographs were intended to help in the development of subject types and style. Charlot maintained his interest in very small prints to the end of his life.

The only dated drawing is a *cargador* with the formal label "Jean Charlot 1923" (DS 48). This polished drawing appears to be a Mexican example of the type of book plate or ex libris that Charlot created for himself in France. It is also the end-product of a stylistic development that can be traced through other sketches, which must therefore antedate it. I conclude that Charlot created the drawing towards the end of 1922 as a 1923 ex libris.

The locations of some of the sketches are identified and probable dating can be checked against the diaries. Puebla is noted.¹⁰⁶ Nearby Cholula is also used as a label (DS 1, 115). Charlot's diary for June 16, 1922, has Puebla written in clear, and later the word *portales* is used, a conventional nickname for the plaza of Cholula. As discussed below, two sketches are related to the 1924 oil CL 31 *Gossip. Tlalpan*. In the diaries, Tlalpan is written in clear on November 30, 1922, and often in 1923.¹⁰⁷ The diary also has Guadalajara written in clear on February 16, 1923, and March 25, 1923. Guadalajara also identifies a sketch (DS 129). Teotihuacán is written in a diary entry for May 20, 1923, and locates sketches.¹⁰⁸ End pages of the 1923 diary contain sketches similar to those under discussion. In an interview, Charlot stated that some sketches had been done at a fiesta in Santa Anita from which a painting and a print were developed, as seen

below: “that was sketches from Santa Anita. I had gone to Santa Anita, I sketched, I have a number of small pictures of the time of the men in their dugout canoes, and for a certain feast the women put those poppies on their heads” (Interview May 18, 1971). This is probably the visit marked at April 7 in the 1922 diary.

Unfortunately, the bound drawings are not in any order, so sequences can only be reconstructed. The best evidence is provided by Charlot’s work on an image. For instance, several drawings resulted in Charlot’s woodcut *Vendedora* (M43). One side can have the subject crossed out while the other has a stylized working of the subject. Charlot apparently worked on a subject until he felt he had achieved the image he intended.

Compared to the drawings made on his first trip, the new sketches reveal an increase in quantity and purpose: Charlot is looking for sights to develop into images. All of the subjects are set in the street. Charlot will begin to do interiors only after being introduced to Milpa Alta by Luz on May 28, 1922, as recorded in his diary:

I just went into the street, and I have many of those little sketches, even a series of lithographs of people I had met in the street. Then, of course, when Luz presented me to her family in the village of Milpa Alta, that was direct, everyday Indian life, and there was no need—in fact I don’t think I ever had people pose again—with the exception of Luz. (Interview May 18, 1971)

I think perhaps after Luz as a model, the most important thing was what I would see—people in the street. I made many drawings of people in the street. Not directly from the people, but as soon as I saw something of interest, I would put it down, and many of my pictures are based on those glimpses of street scenes, again of having the Indian that was not watched, that worked with his own motions and ways. (August 7, 1971)

Charlot’s subjects are almost all Indians, those who have migrated to the capital and are trying to survive and maintain as much of their village life as possible. Later Charlot does sketch the urban poor, like workers and newsboys, and will use these subjects in other genres later (DS 5, US 11). But Charlot’s main focus is now on Indians and he is finding them where he can. He labels one street sketch “femme de la campagne” ‘country woman’ (DS 29). The people in the street are poor but not miserable in the sense that they have lost their dignity. Charlot always had the Christian idea of holy poverty, and lack of monetary or commercial success was an index for him of honesty and sincerity. Despite being exploited, the people Charlot sketches are working for their living and fulfilling their family duties like child care. Charlot’s point of view is often at ground level so that he is looking up at his subjects—people who were usually looked down on. Charlot will depict people whom others pass without seeing, making visible the invisible in society as well as nature.

None of the sketches appear to be reconstructions such as those he later did of pyramid builders at Chich’en Itza. They all record actual sightings such as can be made on the streets of Mexico City today. They no longer have the tentative quality of the sketches on his first trip. He is more familiar with and definite about the sights. From the simplest to the most developed, all the sketches are done already with an

assured style that is recognizably Charlot's in Mexico. For instance, forms are rendered geometrically: people become columns and Indians sitting on the ground are globular or cubic.¹⁰⁹ These forms can be combined expressively in geometric frameworks.¹¹⁰ The creation of such compositions was already characteristic of Charlot in France: he saw geometrically. Thus his evidently on-site, immediate sketches already contain synthesized figures organized in geometric compositions.¹¹¹ The geometric character of the street sketches makes them simple and clear with a potential monumentality necessary for murals. Anita Brenner's general remarks on Charlot's work in Mexico can already be applied to these early sketches:

Paradoxically Charlot, who stylizes to abstraction his subjects is a realist, in the sense that his subjects are the frequent and familiar things that one sees... These gestures and postures one does not turn the head to observe. They are all that one knows is the presence of a native... one discounts, to Charlot's gratification, the startling sum of studious analysis and amorous observation that his work represents.

Each figure is then a symbol for a thousand others. (*Idols* 309 f.; also 308)

Geometry characterized Charlot's style in France. In these early sketches can also be found probably the earliest examples of new elements. In the *cargadores*, the more stylized the figures are, the squatter the proportions. This represents Charlot's general shortening of bodily proportions from his French period, discussed above, and identifies the practice as a stylistic device. Also, Charlot emphasizes by enlargement the figures' expressive hands and feet, which he did not do in France. As seen below, this practice may have started from distortion due to point-of-view as in photographic distortion, described in Charlot's *Traité de Peinture* (1920–1922): a hand or foot will seem larger the nearer it is to the eye. However, Charlot uses exaggerated appendages even when they cannot be thus explained. His highly detailed depictions of hands and feet reveal that Charlot was drawn to them. Indeed, the point of view shows the artist's eye being literally pulled down towards the model's bare feet. Like the bare feet of pilgrims in European art, the Indians' gnarled, calloused hands and feet bespoke their life. Referring, I believe, to his oils as well as his drawings, Charlot explained his intention in "De la Critique et des Peintres" (October-December 1922), a dialogue between the painter (M: moi 'me') and (P: Monsieur Public 'Mr. Public):

P : Un exemple : Cette main trop grande que prétend-elle?

M : Cela provient de notre infirmité mentale. Les mains expriment l'âme et pour attirer l'attention sur elle quel autre moyen que les grandir. Et si tu as aimé tu sais que les yeux sont les plus grands dans ton amante... Nous de même procédons par l'intérieur et suivant le sens attaché à chaque chose.

P : Ça j'ai saisi. Mais ces pieds énormes et bleus.

M : Ce sont ceux d'une femme très humble. Elle a beaucoup marché et le pied gonfle. Du moins l'ai-je vu ainsi tant il était lourd de poussière et de résignation.

P : An example: this hand is too big. What is its intention?

M : That comes from our mental infirmity. The hands express the soul, and to draw attention to it, what other means are there than enlarging them. And if you have ever been in love, you know that the eyes are the biggest in your loved one... In the same way, we proceed by way of the interior and following the meaning attached to each thing.

P: I've got that. But these enormous, blue feet.

M: They are those of a very humble woman. She has walked a lot, and her foot is swelling. At least that's the way I saw it, so weighted down with dust and resignation.'

Finally, the street sketches reveal that Charlot's stylistic development was not uniform. As seen below, two genres—drawings and woodblock prints—were more advanced than his oils. He was also producing works in continuity with his French period.

The street sketches range along a spectrum from instant notations to carefully polished drawings suitable for presentation. As in France, Charlot could go over light preliminary lines with heavier final ones. He could also add shading and detail. Finally, he could produce the image in a single ink line, as he does in US 16, three mounted sketches, which he also provides with a drawn architectural border. Charlot valued the sketches in the entire range of finish as can be seen from the fact that he later used all types when turning them into prints and using them as illustrations.¹¹² Indeed, even the sketchiest display Charlot's flawless single line with its even pressure. Some sketches were later developed into larger, even more finished drawings. A selection of sketches was also developed over several stages to be used in oil paintings, as discussed below. Charlot marked with an X the sketches he considered worthy of further consideration, and some of those he used for lithographs bear marks of being prepared for transfer (M49–55).

The sketches cover the various areas that Charlot was studying: Precolumbian art and architecture,¹¹³ Colonial art and churches,¹¹⁴ folk art,¹¹⁵ landscapes and village-scapes, plants, and geometric exercises like the mathematics of a surface.¹¹⁶ Most numerous are his sketches of Indians on the street or working at their professions.

Charlot is intent on recording the sights accurately, as seen in his numerous color notes: "The color notes on some of the drawings were made on the spot" (M48). He had worked with the same detailed accuracy in his French drawings of military equipment. In a drawing of a woman with child from the front, he notes "souliers" 'sandals' so she won't be thought barefoot (DS 32). On two sketches of a woman wearing a very small hat, Charlot wrote: "La femme avec le chapeau de l'enfant" 'Woman with the hat of the baby' (US 14 recto). The woman will place the hat on the child when she brings him out of her *rebozo*. Charlot wanted to avoid the mistaken impression that the hat was the mother's. On a drawing of a worker, he notes "mouvement exacte" 'exact movement' so that the unusual action will not be thought stylization: a man holding a vertical pole with both hands against a wall, perhaps planing fresh plaster (DS 95). In a drawing done at Santa Anita titled "Qd le bateau vient de face" 'When the boat approaches from the front' (DS 51), Charlot records the placing of the man's feet standing on the narrow boat or barge to show how he balances. Charlot regularly draws in detail the *cargadores*' burdens and their bindings, as discussed below.

Charlot devotes many sketches and color notes to costumes, often oddities that he did not develop as subjects. The sketches illustrate his statement that he transferred his attention gradually from special or festive clothing to normal wear. In the sketches can be found unusual *charro* costumes and *sombreros*.¹¹⁷ In several drawings, he studies the relationship of the *sombrero* to the face and head. For instance in DS 7, he has two studies of a man's head with a hat, all reduced to their basic form: Charlot is finding ways to join the geometrically rounded hat and rounded *serape* to express the head and shoulders.¹¹⁸ He applies these studies

successfully to DS 37, man with big hat. Such studies were certainly used in the 1922 prints *Trinidad with Sombrero* and *Don Pancho with Hat* (M31, 36). Charlot is interested in a man's *tilma* or traditional Aztec outer garment; he draws him from the front and side to show how the folds—"plis de tilma"—fall (DS 96). Charlot depicts several odd male dandies (DS 42, 81). He does portraits or caricatures of several young women in modern Western clothing.¹¹⁹ He also draws several young women who combine traditional with modern clothing and hairdos.¹²⁰

The sketches contain many poses and subjects that Charlot did not develop or used rarely. For instance, DS 18, is an unusually modeled version of a *rebozo* and skirt, which Charlot did not use again. A charming subject is a street puppeteer with his portable stage box and stand (DS 68). Though Charlot was interested in puppetry and depicted related subjects, this one was not used again, as far as I know. In the same way, he used an atypical, thin, scraggly woman from DS 118 (woman with child on hip, water bucket, coming forward at a slight angle) only for his 1923 lithograph *Mujer y Niño (Frente)* (M50). Two drawings of African-Mexicans are also unusual (DS 80, 87). The former was used in the 1922 oil CL 29 *Child carrying petate (Petatero)*, but only this once, as far as I know. Black people were common in Mexico and subjects of a long tradition of *casta* painting. Charlot, however, was concentrating on Indians and started using African-American subjects more frequently only in the United States.

Charlot's most frequent subjects are women or women with children by whom he had been struck since he first sneaked out of his relatives' house to prowl the morning streets of Mexico City. He sometimes notes unusual sights: DS 75, a child riding a donkey, seated on its haunches behind a big roll; 57, a woman in profile walking towards viewer's left, her baby's head lolling back; 115, a woman walking with a big child in her *rebozo* on her back, head lolling back and playing with a skeleton stick doll. I am reminded of a sketch from life by Raphael of a perfect mother and child, except the child is bawling. As usual, Charlot's sketches display many subjects and compositions that he did not develop and variants of ones he did.¹²¹ For instance, in DS 27 (woman holding baby in *rebozo*, 3/4s from front), the mother is effaced before the clearly drawn head, shoulders, arms, and hands of the baby. Charlot will not use this exact image again, but several times will aggrandize the baby at the expense of the mother to express his theme that children suck the life out of their parents, discussed below.

Charlot's street sketches display a range of approach and finish. A few sketches seem tentative without a clear stylistic definition: e.g., DS 26, woman seen from side, somewhat bent back. Others appear simple but are perfectly achieved.¹²² Charlot marked with an X the sketches he thought he might use, mounted three, and made choices for his 1923 lithographs.¹²³ In reaching the images he sought, Charlot seems also to have used his work with the model Luz Jiménez; on an image of a profile is written "d'après celui de Luz" 'after that of Luz' (DS 69). As with his male subjects, Charlot's usual point of view is at foot level, so he is looking up at his subjects and their feet are disproportionately large as in a camera distortion that interested him in France. However, exceptions can be found of a point of view from above.¹²⁴ In general, Charlot is moving from the unusual to the day-to-day as from festive to ordinary clothing. In roughly the same way, he later developed the Guatemala women subjects *Guatemala Weaver*, *Water Carrier*, and *Pilgrim with Candles*.¹²⁵

In his 1926 poem *VI: Trop loin de vos rives douces*, Charlot writes of Indian women and children as his favorite subjects:

Ni l'indienne dure et douce
que je sus peindre en amant,
Ni l'enfant fraîche animant
maints panneaux de boîte à pouce¹²⁶

Neither the Indian woman, hard and sweet,
whom I knew how to paint with love,
Nor the fresh child animating
many a panel of a portable watercolor kit.

In fact, Indian women and children had continually inspired Mexican artists since the earliest surviving artworks, and like Charlot, many had unified them by enveloping them in a *rebozo* that is given a geometric form.¹²⁷ On DS 53, Charlot writes: “Le rebozo bleu. l'enfant invisible” ‘The *rebozo* blue. The child invisible.’ Charlot continued using this Mexican subject all his life and related it to Prehistoric European fertility statuettes, in which pregnancy and child are integrated into the female figure. He told me he was basing his 1959 ceramic sculpture *Madonna and Child* consciously on such figures.

A very different theme is that of the child who dominates his mother. Charlot found infants little despots, who took for granted their own safety and the service their elders provided them. He developed a subject of such a child, one version of which is *The Yellow Robe* from *Picture Book* (1933; M135; also CL 139, 287, 333, 377, 653), for which he wrote a couplet in French with an English translation:

Ce vampire potelé
Suça son sang avec son lait.

She bore him, born him, fattened him.
No wonder he is round, she trim!

I asked Charlot about the subject for which I used the name Paul Claudel assigned to the child:

JC:

Mr. Boniface is more or less the same thing. It's simply the relation of the child and the mother, and the child so drains the mother of her life strength. That was the subject of that thing, and he is, however, the child of his mother, even though he kills her, so to speak.

JPC:

It interested me what you said about this Boniface theme because it is a little like your interpretation of Mary Cassatt's mothers and children. Did you know Mary Cassatt at all before you developed your own theme, or is that completely independent?

JC:

No, but it's a theme that you find, of course, often. I think I met it for the first time in sonnets by one of the fashionable poets of the time. God knows who he was. He wasn't terribly good, but he had invented in his sonnet that lamentation, looking at the children in their cradles and saying that...the last verse, which I don't remember as verse, nevertheless said that the children in their cradles pushed the grownups into their tomb, which was, of course, a very dramatic thing, and maybe that image has remained for me through life. It's quite possible. (Interview October 1, 1970)

Another unpretty child is *Pancracio* about whom Charlot said:

Pancracio isn't exactly an imaginary fellow, for I have known many young Mexicans who looked like that. But it is not a portrait either--unless it is of Diego Rivera as a child!¹²⁸

Charlot's children and sometimes their mothers puzzled at least one contemporary critic:

parece extraño que el niño tenga un carácter tan serio y la madre aparezca a la vez dulce y austera (Clippings 47: *El Universal*, February 25, 1928)

'it seems strange that the child has such a serious character and the mother appears sweet and austere at the same time.'

Charlot made a large number of sketches of men as well, some of which have already been discussed above. The color notations on the sheets identify many sketches as on-site productions.¹²⁹ Charlot seems to have been drawn by the men's clothing, which as seen above, could be used to identify their rural or urban origins and type of work. Charlot's stylization simplifies the figures towards geometric shapes, and when he achieves his intended image, the result is definitive.¹³⁰ Some interesting compositions were not developed later.¹³¹

Among the sketches of men, Charlot developed the special subject of the *cargador* 'burden-bearer,' even today a common sight on the streets of Mexico of the lowest level of worker, like the hod-carrier of the United States. *Cargadores* are found in Indian art and commonly in illustrations of Mexican life, several of which Charlot remembered.¹³² Charlot was acquainted with the long French tradition of depicting workers, like the burden-bearer on a wall of Notre Dame Cathedral (Volume 1, Chapter 3, Section 3.4.8). In the seventeenth century, artists like Louis le Nain (1593–1648) and Antoine Rivalz (1667–1735; *L'Apothicaire des Cordeliers de Toulouse*), depicted peasants and workers as a counter to the emphasis on the rich and powerful. In the nineteenth century, Alexandre-Gabriel Decamps (1803–1860; *The Knife Sharpener*) and the Courbet continued this tradition. Charlot noted that "Renoir preferred to paint people who were workers (cook etc)" (Ca. 1940s Lecture Notes on Composition).

Charlot produced his first burden bearer as a child (Volume 1, Chapter 3, Section 3.4.3), and his Mexican *cargadores* appear in his early street sketches, some of which became the basis for oils.¹³³ He was naturally drawn to the *cargador* as a principal representative of *los de abajo* and as a worker on the historical cusp between village native crafts and urban industrial labor. Charlot continued this interest when he

encountered the up-to-date, high-tech U.S. workers raising immense steel skyscraper frameworks and digging deep into the ground to build their infrastructure. A series of four oils reveals how stimulated he was by this experience.¹³⁴ Charlot related U.S. construction workers to the Maya temple-builders he had studied and observed at Chich'en Itza:

Well, I was really trying to hang on the things I had known before, and the construction workers for me were the parallel in New York of the men in Yucatán that we had who had helped first take away the forest and so on the ruins of the temples and then helped us put the temples together. My first construction workers are the Mayan workers, who are carrying those stones and carvings and so on, and putting them on top of the Mayan temple. And there was no scaffold or very small scaffolds, but their relation there was to the korbelt stone stairs and the different platforms of the temple, but nevertheless they rose up into the air on a vertical and a diagonal and so on, working. And of course, in New York with the scaffolds—at the time they were thinking of the Elysées, I think, in the Second and Sixth Avenue, something like that—I found something similar, of course, with different race and different clothing to the pictures I had already made, and the images I had stored in my mind of the Mayan workers at work on the Mayan temples. So it's not the novelty of the subject that interested me, but really the memory of things that I had seen before. (Interview October 1, 1970)

Besides its literal meaning, the burden bearer had a traditional Christian resonance for Charlot. The followers of Jesus must take up their cross and follow him (Matthew 16:24). One's individual cross or burden is one's connection to Jesus's own salvific self-sacrifice. Charlot had just finished his 1918–1920 Way of the Cross before his first trip to Mexico (M11–25). He would wait until 1934 to start his next one (M235–238). I believe that the *cargador* subject satisfied Charlot's needs at the time, and he would continue to use it along with the Way of the Cross throughout his life. .

Charlot pays particular attention to the burdens the men bear, anxious to record their varying shapes and lashings accurately, which he regarded as important.¹³⁵ In accordance with their non-specialized status, *cargadores* could be charged with a wide variety of burdens. Charlot records a stone block, a square box, a large cauldron, a child's coffin, light cages, a foodstuff tray, a squared bundle of rugs (?), and various shapes and sizes of soft bags. Charlot ultimately seems to have rejected burdens with too obvious connotations, like the coffin. He also rejected a burden that seemed too light for the theme: a foodstuff tray.¹³⁶ Charlot thus avoided the incongruity of Rivera's *cargador* collapsing under a large basket of lilies, an image designed to appeal to socially conscious flower-lovers. Charlot seems to have explored a difference between carrying burdens with a strap and with one's own arms and hands, a tendency that culminates in “Jean Charlot 1923,” discussed below.¹³⁷

Once Charlot has put down on paper an accurate depiction of his subject, he starts stylizing it. Interestingly, a more realistic drawing—with more normal bodily proportions—is crossed out.¹³⁸ Charlot prefers versions with extremely large expressive hands and feet and a supporting de-emphasis of torso, head, and face.¹³⁹ He also bows the legs to make them reflect the holding arms (DS 84). He wants to compose the

figure tightly within the rectangle of the paper. For instance, a *cargador* tips forward along the diagonal (93). The most thorough attachment of the figure to the rectangle is achieved by splaying the four limbs along their nearest diagonals.¹⁴⁰ Charlot marked the completion of the image-making process by titling one “Jean Charlot 1923,” probably intending it for use as an ex libris (DS 48). The stylization is the most extreme of all the versions of the subject: the *cargador*’s torso disappears behind a small round *carga* ‘burden’ from which his limbs seem to explode outwards along the diagonals. In fact, the diagonals were drawn in lightly to start the composition, meeting in the center of the backpack. Charlot’s first oil of the subject, CL 27 *Burden-bearer, seen from back*, of 1924 resembles this sketch, but is less stylistically extreme as befits the different medium. Charlot is pushing his stylization in order to create an ever more powerful image. He is also providing monumentality by using foot level as the point of view: the viewer looks up at the *cargador*, who looms with all his strength. The Mexican Revolution taught that such people were to be feared and respected.

Charlot’s street sketches were used as sources for his other artworks, and when several are found on a subject, the process of developing an image can be traced. Three preparatory sketches for Charlot’s 1923 woodcut *Vendedora [Market Woman]* (M43) have been kept. The earliest, I would argue, is DS 17. Charlot seems to have been struck by the subject’s slim figure and unusual clothing. This sketch shows most clearly that she is working at the marketplace, sitting on her haunches before her wares. Charlot will suppress those details in the next drawing and in the print, perhaps to make them less anecdotal. This sketch is already very stylized—especially the enlarged and elongated hands—but the angle of the subject’s head is less extreme. The next sketch is DS 8. The odd clothing has been accentuated with lines on the dress and hat, which have been suppressed in the print. The skin is darkened, and the head is cocked back and to the side at an anatomically impossible angle. On the verso, largely obscured by the rice paper on which the leaf has been mounted, a sketch has been crossed out in which the *vendedora* has been placed next to a standing figure. Either Charlot was going to expand the subject or this verso sketch belongs to those preparing for the 1922 oil CL 31 *Gossip. Tlalpam*, discussed below. Charlot’s use of street sketches for prints has been discussed above, and I will discuss the sketched portraits below in relation to M27–37.

A number of street sketches provided the basis for oils. One sketch is related to the 1924 oil CL 31 *Gossip. Tlalpam*, a market scene.¹⁴¹ At the time, Tlalpam was a village near Mexico City, and Charlot wrote the name in clear in his diary entries, once on November 30, 1922, and often in 1923, as seen above. The sketch is a complex composition, very carefully done.

Two sketches are related to Charlot’s 1924 oil CL 34 *Beggar with Violin*. DS 106 (man sitting on ground, playing violin, with dog) seems to be the first because of its informality, a quick sketch made directly from the subject. Charlot saw further possibilities in the subject—he marks the sketch with an X in the top right corner—which he developed in 50 (man sitting on ground with violin and decorated wall behind). He fits the figure into a complex geometric background and provides numerous color notes, preparing for the use of the sketch in a color work, at this period, an oil.

Three sketches resulted in Charlot’s 1924 oil *Delousing, in doorway* (CL35). The earliest seems to be DS 117, with its bare outlines and color notes on the garments. An architectural background is provided,

and a single horizontal line at the kneeling woman's knee establishes the floor. The second, I argue, is DS 116, which depicts the figures alone, omitting the background. Charlot seems to be adjusting the two figures and clarifying that the higher, older one is delousing the lower, younger one. The latest sketch would then be DS 107, which is composed and drawn with much finish. The various tones with the black pencil and light paper are used coloristically, the white hair of the older woman contrasting with the dark hair of the younger. The architecture provides a flat background against which the rounded human figures create a middle space. Finally, the street in front of them provides another flat space. Delousing is an odd subject, especially for gringos, but Indians and Pacific Islanders know the experience is sensuous and comforting, especially as described by Charlot's favorite poet, Rimbaud, in *Les Chercheuses de Poux*.¹⁴² Charlot would create a number of images of such hair grooming.

Charlot's sketches of landscapes, landscape features, and plants—e.g., DS 54 with color notes—are on-site records of elements to be used later in formal compositions according to his French practice. Charlot described the process while discussing his *Sunny Sous-Bois*:

I was beginning to make a difference, shall we say, between representing a corner of nature, even if the corner was full of memories, and making a picture. This is already organized certainly. You can feel that it is nature filtered in a kind of a composition which I would say is French, in the sense that there is something rational about it, underlying the pretty colors.¹⁴³

For instance, US 5 is one of a set that includes a high mesa with gullied sides, discussed below. On the recto, a cactus is added, but it seems out of proportion with the land feature. Charlot has thus made two separate drawings on the recto of elements he intends later to combine in a composition. On the verso, mesa and cactus are now proportionally related, but an Indian man sitting on the earth is out of proportion and drawn in a heavier line. Charlot is considering another element for the composition. Charlot's 1924 oils—CL 36 *Landscape: Dawn, gray and yellow* and CL 49 *Landscape with magueyes [sic]*—are, I would argue, products of this process.¹⁴⁴ Indeed, in the sketches can be found the first instances of images that Charlot will continue to use. For instance, DS 111, contrasts the geometric volumes of a small plaza—cylindrical pedestal, cubic houses, rectangular doors and windows—with the naturally flowing ridgeline of the mountains in the background. Charlot used this contrast for instance in his 1925 oil CL 92 *Arches and Mountain, Cuernavaca* and in his 1933 lithograph *Arches* (M142).

Charlot could use a street sketch for another subject. DS 40 depicts a walking man in profile carrying bundles with a head strap. Charlot used this image in his 1924 oil CL 28 *Peasant with Sugar Cane* but then changed the bundles to a leopard for his Yucatán subject *Leopard Hunter*.¹⁴⁵ Charlot made three sketches of an old woman with an extremely bent back leaning on a cane. The first one seems to be DS 103, with its single lines and enormous hands on the walking stick. Charlot was clearly struck by this dramatic figure.¹⁴⁶ DS 101 is worked further with the lines doubled and soft shading, clearly a “finished” drawing. As far as I know, Charlot used this figure only in combination with that of a child in prints and oils called variously *Old and Young* or *Dance at Dawn*. The final image was inspired by two such figures Charlot saw

dancing outside a village while he was approaching it at dawn, but he clearly recalled these sketches when creating the new works.

Charlot continued to use either the sketches or the sights they recorded. DS 120, portrays a woman with a large bundle of laundry on her head. Charlot liked the sketch so much he used it in a 1923 lithograph *Lavandera* (M49). Twelve years later, he returned to the figure in his 1935 oil CL 398 *Laundress, bundle on head* and in 1937 he produced two other oils of the same subject: CL 476 *Playing House (Small girl, bundle of wash on head)* and CL 477 *Head with wash bundle*. Clearly, the sights Charlot recorded in his street sketches continued to inspire him.

Charlot used his street sketches for his murals as well. One sketch is the basis for the central standing figure in Charlot's 1923 fresco *Lavanderas*: the woman uses her *rebozo* to help hold a bundle of laundry on her head (DS 124). In the mural, Charlot has thickened the torso to make her more monumental. The mural's point of view from down up is determined by the position of the actual viewer. In the *Disassembled Sketchbooks 1922–1923* version, the point of view is at the bust line, looking down at the feet and slightly up at the head. The three woman washing clothes in the mural may be based on the sketch DS 20. No sketch survives of the little girl in the mural, but she fits stylistically into the process I am describing.

Charlot's 1923 fresco *Cargadores* is based on all his previous work on the subject. Specific details have been taken from the sketches. The round bundle tied with ropes in the bottom right corner can also be found in the DS 93, *cargador with roped handle*, from $\frac{3}{4}$ front. DS 74 (*cargador with three cages*) is the basis for the two lowest *cargadores* in the background of the mural and the one at the turning point of the path. Head straps in the background are based on observations that prompted sketches like DS 40.

An anomalous use of an image can be found in several drawings of a landscape with a high mesa with gullied sides.¹⁴⁷ Charlot was apparently drawn to this feature as a possible landscape subject, joining it with vegetation and a human figure. Charlot's approach to landscape painting at this time is expressed by his description of the process by which he was inspired by a cut made in a hillside to construct a road:

I would like to tell you the way I started painting this picture and the emotion I got out of the landscape, which was geometric. There was originally a round mound, really a semispherical mound, shown from the side in *Figure XVIII A*. This natural shape had been modified by engineering to construct a bridge, *B*. Of course in Mexico there is much less of the work of man in landscape, and so that relation of man-made lines to natural lines interested me. To construct the bridge, a slice of the mound had been cut out, *C*, just as you would cut out a piece of cheese. That slice of the mound then slid as debris down to a position below the bridge. So this subject matter contained something that was purely geometric in content: a slice is taken out of a large semispherical volume, and that quarter or less of the original slides down and is represented in another position in front of the mound. In the spherical tree, *D*, I represented that volume whole, as it was before, so that the final state can be clearly seen as the result of an operation: the slice was cut off from the major portion above it. There is in there a little bit of mechanics, and I thought it was a rather unusual example, being a landscape.¹⁴⁸

Charlot used the sketchbook landscape for the background of his 1925 oil *Great Nude, Chalma I*.¹⁴⁹ But his main use of the feature was in his 1923 fresco *Cargadores* as the man-made structure on the heights towards which the burden bearers are carrying their loads. In the corresponding panel, *Lavanderas*, Charlot included a side of the same mesa as a natural formation.

Charlot certainly produced many more sketches than have survived. But a sufficient basis remains to identify the sorts of sights that interested him and to demonstrate that the starting point of his development of themes was his own experience of living in Mexico. These are sketches from life, Mexican life.

7.2.1.2.1. SKETCHING DANCERS

Dance was not a subject for Charlot in France. He would not have been attracted to elitist forms, and popular ones were less practiced than in Mexico. For instance, Charlot depicted French parish processions, but dances were not part of French parish life.¹⁵⁰ Devotional dance was thus a significant new experience for Charlot, which influenced his development of “a religion of a parishioner.” He would maintain his interest as he encountered traditional dance in the United States and Hawai‘i.

Mexican folk dance had long been considered a basic component of Mexican culture. Charlot discussed Juan Cordero’s “education” in Mexicanism:

Juan se acercaba al arte popular, el de los santos, el de las danzas y el de la poesía de los corridos y alabanzas, aunque en su pintura nunca pintara estos motivos. (1945 Juan Cordero)

‘Juan drew near to popular art, the art of the saints’ statues, the dances, the poetry of the popular ballads and praises, although in his painting he never used these motifs.’

However, folk dance was burdened in the early 1920s by its picturesque treatment by the Nacionalistas. Indeed, dance was considered by many the nadir of *costumbrismo*:

Tórtola Valencia y Ana Pavlova fueron los espíritus precursores del “MEXICANISMO”; en efecto, con la ayuda de Jorge Enciso y de Best Maugard, presentaron al público espectáculos coreográficos de INDUMENTARIA TÍPICA MEXICANA, que dieron nacimiento a obras pictóricas innumerables, en las que nuestras costumbres regionales eran representadas según las estilizaciones de los BALLETS creados por dichas danzarinas. El origen extranjero del nacimiento del MEXICANISMO, como orientación pictórica colectiva, es la razón principal de su aspecto TURÍSTICO. (Araujo August 2, 1923)

‘Tórtola Valencia and Anna Pavlova were the precursor spirits of “MEXICANISM”; in effect, with the aid of Jorge Enciso and Best Maugard, they presented to the public choreographic spectacles of TYPICAL MEXICAN CLOTHING, which gave birth to innumerable visual works in which our regional customs were represented according to the stylizations of the BALLETS created by said dancers. The foreign origin of the birth

of MEXICANISM, as collective pictorial orientation, is the principal reason for its TOURISTIC aspect.’

Traditional dance required revitalization as a subject, which included purging it of its picturesque qualities and uncovering its religious, historical, and dramatic ones. Charlot’s depiction of Mexican dance must be understood in this context. Indeed, he later made dance the criterion of the choice presented by his *Massacre in the Main Temple* between the search for “*du Beau et du bien*” ‘*Beauty and the good*’ and “*de l’argent et du jouir*” ‘*money and pleasure*’: “Alvarado, to have massacred the participants of the Flower Dance in the Great Temple, must have been a soldier impervious to artistry, or the incensed addict of racy and photographic art” (Charlot April 1923; *AA* II: 113). Charlot’s use of Indian dance in the *Massacre* and in his destroyed 1923 fresco *Danza de los Listones* ‘Dance of the Ribbons’ demonstrates the importance of the subject for him, a fit subject for monumental art. When interviewed on the Feast of Tepozteco at Tepoztlán and the dance of the *malinches*, he stated: “Well, those two things have had a certain influence, if you want, on my life” (Interview September 28, 1970).

In all likelihood, Charlot would have read about Mexican dances in the works of the French *Mexicanistes*. Charnay did not like them, finding them monotonous (1885: 270, 357). However, Génin was much more appreciative in his article “Notes sur les Danses, la Musique et les Chants des Mexicains Anciens et Modernes.”¹⁵¹ Génin has the characteristic sympathy with Indians of the true *Mexicaniste*, defending them by comparing their alleged barbarities to those found in European history (1912: 308). Unlike Charlot, Génin does not analyze the special esthetic and devices of Indian dance. But he appreciates the beauties he finds in Indian dances and music (309, 316), although his standards seem European (316 f.), and he places Indian dances beneath the best European ballet (309). Génin also has the *Mexicaniste* preference of ancient Mexican cultures to the modern ones (301, 306, 316). Positively, Génin’s descriptions and categorizations are careful, and the following emphases are found in Charlot as well. Indian music and dance provide a true continuity with the past (313, 315 f.). Génin emphasizes Indian musical instruments and orchestras, which Charlot used as a subject (Génin 1908–1910: 120, 252; 1912: 310–313). Much has been lost over the years, but some villages are reviving their traditional music and dance and creating new works in the old style (1912: 315 f.). Génin emphasizes the religious and allegorical character of much Indian music and dance, which was recognized and used positively by the Christian missionaries.¹⁵² Indian dramatic dances also preserve and express the natives’ view of their own history.¹⁵³ As opposed to European dance, Indian was non-sexual (310, 317), although some modern dances have adopted the Western practice (320 ff.). Altogether Indian music and dance merit further study (322).

Charlot’s basic text on Indian dances is “Sur la Danse” (April 1925); the later Spanish- and English-language uses of this article are listed in the bibliographical note. Charlot starts by describing his article as an introduction and hoping that more detailed scholarly work will be done. This was his attitude towards his *Mexican Mural Renaissance* as well. Indian sculpture and architecture show that the less durable arts must have been beautiful as well. Despite long pressure from a powerful foreign country—“plusieurs siècles de persécutions et d’interdictions” ‘several centuries of persecutions and interdictions’—expressions of classical Indian art can still be found, “sinon intact, tout au moins très reconnaissables, sous leur masque occidental, d’admirables preuves du génie indien” ‘if not intact, at least very recognizable under their occidental mask,

admirable proofs of Indian genius.’ Charlot would find the same situation with classical Hawaiian arts. The emphasis of Western dance and theater lies on courtship and sexual relations: “Le ‘Prends cette rose—Non—Si—Non’ qui forme sous divers déguisements le thème de nos ballets” ‘The “Take this rose—No—Yes—No” that forms under divers disguises the theme of our ballets.’ In contrast, the Indian genres display “ce goût du beau qui réside dans la proportion et qui donne à leur meilleures œuvres cette allure de *passion mathématique*” ‘this taste in beauty that resides in proportion and that gives to their best works that allure of *mathematical passion*.’ Indian dance has both the simultaneity and stability of painting and the successiveness of literature:

La danse indienne a réalisé ces deux conditions ainsi : des éléments stables, qui ne changeront pas au cours de la danse, forment comme un décor aux mouvements qui vont se dérouler.

‘Indian dance realizes these two conditions thus: the stable elements that do not change through the course of the dance form a set for the movements that will unroll.’

The stable elements are the rigid costumes, the masks, and often the positions of the dancers in relation to each other. The successive elements are the dancers’ movements. The relationship of stable and successive elements creates the special beauty of the dance, which communicates its particular idea: “toutes ces parties sont parfaitement soumises au but qui est l’expression de l’idée” ‘all these parts are perfectly submitted to the goal, which is the expression of the idea.’ These are the terms in which Charlot describes the finality of painting itself.

Charlot was struck by the intense stylization of Indian dance:

ils n’ont pas perdu ce sens, quasi-oublié chez nous, du hiératisme spontané, cet instinct qui leur fait transposer sans effort toute émotion sur le plan artistique en la stylisant, en la dépouillant de son accidentel et en la réduisant à une série de proportions plastiques qui en seront la représentation essentielle.

‘they have not lost this sense, almost forgotten by us, of spontaneous hieraticism, that instinct that makes them transpose effortlessly all emotion to the artistic plane in stylizing it, in stripping it of its accidental qualities and reducing it to a series of plastic proportions that are its essential representation.’

Western dance—“trop empoisonnées par l’*esprit parisien*” ‘too poisoned by the *Parisian spirit*’—delights in constant gesturing and virtuosity devoted to frivolous themes. Indian dances—“dances *mono-gestes*” ‘mono-gestural dances’—select a single gesture to express the dance’s point and subject all other gestures and movements to it. In a Yaqui hunting dance, “le danseur-chasseur par le seul racler de deux bâtons l’un contre l’autre suggère toute la cruauté de l’homme, du conquérant qui va tuer” ‘just by the scraping of two sticks against each other, the hunter-dancer suggests all the cruelty of man, the conqueror who is going to kill.’ A trembling, swaying walk “à lui seul fournit la meilleure définition de la médiocrité de l’individu de race blanche, qui parle trop, s’agite trop, se croit trop, le tout sans but” ‘all by itself furnishes the best definition of the mediocrity of the individual of the white race who talks too much, is too agitated, thinks too much of

himself, the whole without purpose.’ Charlot is probably thinking of Pascal’s dictum that all our troubles arise from our inability to sit for any length of time in a room alone.

Charlot was deeply impressed by a dance that depicted a dying warrior, a remnant of precontact dances now depicting the battles between Christians and Muslims, a hidden reference to the battles between Spaniards and Indians during the Conquest:

le chef des Maures (dans la danse des Santiagos de Milpa Alta) après le combat qu’il soutient seul contre six chrétiens, titube, percé de coups, et va mourir. Alors, le danseur, jugeant insuffisante toute mimique du visage (où se complairait un acteur blanc) pour reproduire son agonie, qui est celle de sa race, se voile la figure de son mouchoir, et c’est le seul balancement du corps (pas en avant, pas en arrière) d’abord large puis de plus en plus réduit et hésitant jusqu’à la chute finale, qui nous tiendra au courant, et avec quelle intensité, de cette tragédie raciale.

‘the chief of the Moors (in the dance of the Santiagos of Milpa Alta), after the combat that he wages alone against six Christians, staggers, pierced with blows, and is going to die. At this point, the dancer, judging insufficient all facial mimic (in which a white actor would indulge) to reproduce his agony, which is that of his race, veils his face with his handkerchief, and it is the wavering alone of his body (a step forward, a step back), wide at first and then little by little reduced and hesitant until the final fall, which keeps us informed, and with what intensity, of this racial tragedy.’

Charlot made the religious connection more explicit in a later writing:

The one in which the men are wearing huge ox horns on their heads is called *The Dance of the Arabs*. This is a dramatization of the story of the crusades and also a sublimation into Christian symbols of an original dance of these Indians, the Ocuitecas, to their god Ostoc Tehotl [*sic*: Oztoteotl], ruler of the caverns. It has a particularly dramatic climax. The chief of the Arabs, after having fought alone against six Christians, reeling and bleeding, enters in agony. Here, thinking all facial expression too weak to reproduce this agony which is symbolic of his race, he veils his face with a cloth, and it is only the balance of his body, first wide, then gradually reduced and hesitant until the final fall, which tells of the racial tragedy.¹⁵⁴

Charlot used this experience in his depictions of *malinches*, a dance of a battle between the Indians’ wives and the Spaniards’ mistresses:

The most dramatic part is the little girl, just because she was tired, maybe, or was hit with the wooden sword, and is not really wounded, but is lying down there... There was, of course, true drama in what we could call the sunset of the original pre-Spanish races, and I would put a bit of that which I feel very strongly—of great tragedy—in that little girl in the lower left corner. (Charlot 1960 *Village Fiesta*: 5)

The tragic intensity of the dance was produced largely by its non-overt means of expression, which Charlot appreciated also in Greek drama:

Une telle discrétion, une telle pudeur dans la représentation des émotions fortes fut la marque de toutes les vraies civilisations : et pour avoir voilé la figure d'un personnage qui devait représenter une grande douleur un peintre fameux de l'antiquité grecque fut félicité "parce qu'on ne peut, disait-on, représenter ouvertement de telles situations sans indécence." (Charlot April 1925)

'Such discretion, such modesty in the representation of strong emotions was the mark of all true civilizations. A famous painter of Greek Antiquity was congratulated for having veiled the face of a person who had to represent great suffering, "because one cannot, it is said, represent openly such situations without indecency.'"

Charlot sees how Indian dance, just like Greek drama, joins different arts, history, and religion. After watching dances at Chalma, he wrote in his diary: "Magnifique, like the mystery plays of the Middle Ages" (M 68). He would express this experience in his own artwork:

The pictures in this show are mainly of folk festivals and biblical subjects, though it is hard to find a clean cleft between them. We sing our religion, the Indian dances his. (March 1945: 2)

As opposed to the artificial courtliness of some European dances in which children mimic adult behavior, Indian dances use stylized natural gestures. As a result, they can express the special world of children:

C'est pourquoi de telles danses peuvent utiliser une des sources de beauté la plus impressionnante mais aussi la plus délicate, l'innocence de l'enfant. Les danses d'enfant (*quadrillas, pastoras*) gardent de l'enfance toutes les qualités et la plus inaccessible de toute, *la pureté*, comme élevées, transfigurées, sur un plan supérieur d'art sans pourtant rien perdre de leur fraîcheur et, si nous en cherchons le pourquoi, c'est que ces enfants traduisent leurs sentiments par les gestes de leur âge qui commencent et finissent dans une certaine indécision, peu accentués et par cela même bien propres à matérialiser ces petites âmes qui n'ont eu que peu de contact avec l'extérieur.

L'indien connaît l'ordre naturel, en respecte la beauté, et sait l'utiliser sans la mutiler.

(Charlot April 1925)

'This is why such dances can utilize one of the most impressive but also the most delicate sources of beauty: the innocence of the child. Children's dances (*quadrillas, pastoras*) retain of childhood all its qualities including the most inaccessible of all—purity—as elevated, transfigured on a superior plane of art without, however, losing anything of their freshness. And if we look for the reason, it is that these children translate their sentiments by the gestures of their age which begin and end in a certain indecision, little emphasized and by that itself well able to materialize these little souls that have had but little contact with the outside world.

‘the Indian knows the natural order, respects its beauty, and knows how to utilize it without mutilating it.’

Charlot’s œuvre contains many works in which he does the same thing, a focus that reveals his special relation to childhood and children. As an artist, he was always able to connect himself to his own feelings as a child and to the freshness with which the child sees the world. As a survivor of World War I, he treasured the kindness, tenderness, and sweetness he had so missed during his life in the trenches. Similarly, the Vietnamese I met were especially appreciative of tenderness and anxious to express it in their war films (John Charlot 1991: 47 f.). An expression they used commonly in thanking was, “You’re very kind.”

Charlot now discusses more particular devices of Indian dance: costume and dance in which “l’intérêt réside dans la proportion” ‘the interest lies in proportion’:

Le costume et le masque ont un but général qui est de séparer le danseur du spectateur, de le placer dans une atmosphère spéciale, représentative de l’émotion qu’il doit suggérer, et d’un mode assez fort pour y entraîner à son tour le spectateur subjugué. D’un tel résultat nous avons tous jugé par expérience. Bien peu sont ceux qui n’ont pas été hypnotisés par ce puissant ensemble de formes, couleurs, musique et mouvement.

‘Costume and mask have the general goal of separating the dancer from the spectator, of placing him in a special atmosphere representative of the emotion he needs to suggest—and to do this in a sufficiently strong way to carry along the subjugated spectator in his turn. We have judged such a result from experience. Very few have not been hypnotized by this powerful ensemble of forms, colors, music, and movement.’¹⁵⁵

Charlot was struck by the large, big-horned mask of the Dance of the Arabs—sometimes called the Moros—at Chalma, of which he made several sketches.¹⁵⁶ In the same way, Charlot was impressed by Noh and Kabuki in Hawai‘i and was influenced by Western Epic Theatre in his own plays. In such theatres, the dancer’s bodily appearance is partly suppressed and replaced “par une sorte de symbole animé” ‘by a sort of animated symbol.’ Such a practice is difficult for most Westerners to understand, but “Maintenant que nous revenons aux sources pures de l’Art, l’intérêt va croissant pour ces manifestations de Beauté” ‘Now that we are returning to the pure sources of Art, interest in these manifestations of Beauty is steadily increasing.’ Charlot made the same point about Indian plastic arts:

Modernism has reopened for us abstract sources of beauty, cleansed our aesthetic sense of a too pervading sexual content, made us prefer to dramatic mimicry gesture as conjurer of geometry. We own anew the keys to the aesthetic of Indian dances. (AA II: 113)

Charlot will apply all his modern stylization to communicate the power of the stylization of Indian dance.

Besides the two sketches of dancers mentioned above, DS 67 and 88, a set of sketches of dancers was leather-bound in Hawai‘i under the title *Sketches from Life*.¹⁵⁷ These were done later in Yucatán on larger paper than the street sketches, and at least most appear to be done from life. In the street, Charlot needed to pull out a small sketchbook from his pocket and hold it in his left hand while he drew with his right, probably standing and trying to remain unobtrusive. The larger sheets of *Sketches from Life* probably

anticipate his sitting in an audience with his sketchbook on his lap or knee. These sketches are a more exact reporting of a sight and less a stylization. Charlot is using a pencil and colored washes, the *boîte à pouce* or portable watercolor kit to which he refers in the poem above. The coloring is extensive and supplemented by many written notes. Charlot is intent on making an accurate record before beginning stylization, as seen in his story of George Vaillant and the *malinche* dancers, above:

I think that all the sketches in the book were done from nature while really the dance was proceeding. Then the watercolor swatches were put on afterwards in the evening when I returned home, because they were really done from nature. (Interview September 28, 1970)

In the following years, Charlot would produce a large number of formal, finished drawings.

Mexico is rich in the number and variety of its dances (Montes de Oca 1926), many of which Charlot witnessed and studied. From these, he selected several to develop as subjects, as seen below. He followed this same process in Arizona, selecting the Snake Dance among the many Hopi options. Similarly, in Hawai‘i, he chose sacred dances, which end with the dancers’ arms skyward. His description of watching a great hula dancer, Aunt Jennie Wilson, reveals his own response to dance:

Who has not heard Aunt Jenny chanting the opening prayer to the goddess of the dance, Laka, has missed a religious experience. Her voice was quasi-inaudible, that is for us mortals, and yet one felt that it carried effortlessly to the highest heavens.

The dance followed. It was perforce a seated hula with an almost cubistic quality to its motions, wracked as were the dancer’s joints with illness. Spellbound I forgot to sketch, and yet it is truly Aunt Jenny who “posed” for the dozen or so dancers seen in the finished fresco.

She closed the dance with arms frozen for a while in an upwards gesture. I hazarded a remark: do not dancers, as a rule, end the hula with arms stretched horizontally towards the onlookers. Coming out of what had been close to a trance, Aunt Jenny, suddenly looking infinitely older than her ninety years, explained that having dedicated this particular to the dead, the correct closing gesture was upwards.¹⁵⁸

Charlot also depicted the no longer practiced *hula ki’i* ‘image hula’ in an attempt to revive a forgotten aspect of the culture. As in Mexico, he was drawn to the dramatic character of the genre with its dialogue between hand-held images. In Mexico, the United States, and the Pacific, Charlot was drawn to the religious and dramatic character of dance.

In his article, Charlot notes a number of dances that he studied but did not depict later: the dance of the Magi, Michoacán; the dance of the Gachupines, Chalma; the dance of the Santiagos, Milpa Alta [also Chalma]; and the dance of the Yaqui hunters.¹⁵⁹ In his diary in January 1925, he noted at Chalma “Los Pastores (Dance of the Shepherds). Los Santiagos (Dance of the Knights)” (M68). He did depict a number of different dances, but over the years, winnowed them down until only the *malinches* remained as a subject.

Charlot was impressed by the history of the Feast of Tepozteco at Tepoztlán, a village near Mexico City: “the only purely Aztec carnival in Mexico that is still celebrated as Aztec” (Charlot September 1930: 49). He was also struck by its dramatic character: he depicts a man with a rattle, chanting on a raised platform:

The one showing a man ringing a bell and prancing under a canopy is a scene from the only Aztec festival still celebrated as Aztec. It is to Tepozteco, who was King of Topeztlán [*sic*: Tepoztlán] in the fifteenth century, and the instrument held in the dancer’s hand is called a Teponastle [Spanish; Aztec: *teponaztli*], and itself belonged to the king. (September 1930: 49)

The man on the high scaffold I saw in Tepoztlán, and the dance or the play, whatever you want to call it, includes a very elaborate speech given in Náhuatl, in Aztec. I think it is the last thing in which the Indians come into their own as far as the language is concerned. And when it is given at night and with the candles lighted and the fellow in the guise of a king speaking in his own language, there is something there that is certainly magnificent as a remembrance of things past. And I was, I am still in a way, a student of the Náhuatl language, and so I was very impressed, and I summed up everything I learned from the Indian language itself in that particular scene.¹⁶⁰

A loose sketch, which shows a dancer or chanter in a tower set within an arena with several horses, may be of this dance. Charlot used this subject for oil paintings: CL 505 *El Tepozteco, en buste*, 1937; CL 710 *Dance of the Tepozteco*, 1943. At the former entry, Charlot noted: “After watercolor notes taken in Tepoztlán.”

Drama and language also drew Charlot to the subject of another “pre-Hispanic survival,” the dance of the *Voladores*.¹⁶¹ Instead of focusing on the spectacular “flying” of the dancers as they twirl down from the pole top tethered by their feet, Charlot selects the moment the dancer performs a classical chant atop the pole before diving off. Charlot told me he was interested in those moments when Náhuatl literature was still practiced in its traditional setting. Charlot would depict Indian theater proper and even write two Náhuatl puppet plays himself, but the subject does not yet appear in these early sketches.

Charlot also noted that CL 506 *Danzante, Guadalupe* was “A pair with 505.” He does not mean, I would argue, that they share the same dance as subject. Charlot mentions a “Festival near Mexico City in honor of Our Lady of Guadeloupe [*sic*: Guadalupe]. Celebrated in Aztec times for the Goddess Timonantzen [*sic*: Tonantzin]” (September 1930: 48). An accompanying oil sketch illustration shows a dancer with a devil mask with a huge face and smaller horns than those of the Dance of the Arabs at Chalma. This traditionally costumed dancer is accompanied by a man in black modern clothing, probably that of a dandy, playing a mandolin. This figure appears also in a loose sketch.

Charlot was particularly interested in Indian children’s dances, as seen above, in which he saw a special genius. He illustrated his article on Indian dances with an oil sketch of a “Chorus of girls welcome [*sic*] the Christ Child in The Mystery of the Nativity” (September 1930: 48). The modern character of the

dance is expressed in the European clothing of the girls. I do not know whether Charlot returned to that subject, but he did treat the Chalma dance of the *Pastoras* 'Shepherdesses' several times:

The dance of the young girls is part of the annual pilgrimage to Chalma. In pre-Hispanic times, there was a shrine there of the Indian God of the Caves. The Spaniards could not stop people from making the pilgrimage, so they build a church on top of the cave.

(M68)

Charlot first saw the dance in the evening of January 5, 1925, and called it *Pastorellas* 'Little Shepherdesses' in his diary.¹⁶² He began using the subject that same year in a print and in oils.¹⁶³ In these first works on the subject, Charlot had already arrived at the composition he would continue to use (e.g., M143, *Pastoras*, 1933), which reveals how compatible he found the subject.

The subject that became Charlot's favorite and ultimately his only one of Indian dance was a version of the children's dance of the *Malinches*, a combat between the wives of the Indian warriors and the Indian mistresses of the Spanish soldiers (Chapters 6 and 9). This dance is a representation of the Conquest rather than of actual history (Montes de Oca 1926: 13) and is untainted by later uses of the term *malinchismo* for cultural traitor (Zantwijk 1960: 73). I have described above Charlot's sketches from life of the dance, the influence of Stefan Lochner, and how George Vaillant's mimicry of the dancers triggered Charlot's image. The little girl dances forth bursting with joyful energy, agitating her rattle and waving her sword, as seen in the first oil and lithograph.¹⁶⁴ Interestingly, Charlot uses the same X composition found in his achieved *cargador* images and perhaps traceable to the composition of his gouache *Bullet*, painted after August 1921. But the point of the composition is greatly different in every case. Charlot also depicted the dance more as a moment in human life than a religious allegory (Saldaña 1966). Charlot commented in detail on the subject:

And as to the *malinches*, which is, of course, a very different theme, it has a sort of a double meaning, so to speak, *double-entendre*, if you want, and one of them is that the Indian is not especially sad, romantic; there are some truly gay and truly happy things in him, and those happy things are exteriorized only when he is very young.¹⁶⁵ It's only in the young girls, especially, that you find that angle. Later on, people can be bubbling with *joie de vivre*, but it doesn't show very much outwardly, not even when, let's say, they are young people courting. So to show that particular happiness of the Indian, I had to use the only moment when it is exteriorized, and that is in those little girls. They are happy because they are dressed up very specially for that particular dance, and they are given a lot of permit to act and express themselves. But that is somehow the mood of gaiety. But under the mood of gaiety there is something else which counts a lot for the people who witness that dance, and that is the great theme of the Conquest. Now the Conquest is the way that we describe that event of the Spaniards in Mexico. I don't think the Indian has ever thought of it, and I would say very rightly, as a conquest, but as a meeting of two very different types of people who in some way clashed, but in some way merged. And the theme of the dance itself represents the Spanish women that eventually came with some of the Spaniards and the—no, actually that is not so. We should erase

that part because it's all Indian women, but Indian women who sided with the Spaniards and became the mistresses of the Conquistadors and found themselves fighting the women who had sided with the Indian chiefs, who were fighting with their men. So we have Indian women *pro*, Indian women *con*, and the fight between them represents that idea of the Conquest, which is not that anybody is the upper-dog or anybody the underdog, but there is a kind of a tremendous whirlwind of different cultures, somehow in the end, in the dance also, adjusting more or less after a period of turmoil. I think that the Indians truly enjoyed the turmoil, and that life would be duller if it hadn't been for the so-called Conquest. So there is in there a gaiety, which is obvious in the dance, which is a very nice dance, and there is under it a very important quota of history that is being reenacted a little bit like, we could say, mystery plays: speaking of things in the past but still part of the present.

JPC:

You weren't at all interested in the double-entendre of the fact that these tiny little girls were playing mistresses pro and con?

JC:

Well, no. My question isn't at all of either virtue or vice or domesticity. I thought it was rather nice, and if we look at the mistress of Cortés, for example, the Malinche, which is the main woman in the dance, after which all those little *malinches* are called, she had a very nice life when Cortés got a little tired of her, she got a little tired of him, or Cortés became so important as the Conquistador who was the head of the new government, and she had to disappear, he did marry her to a very high Spanish aristocrat, and she went, I think, back to Spain and lived there happily ever after. So there is no tragedy in that question, and I think the wives should take somehow the side of their husbands. I didn't think at all of anything unusual from that point of view.

Charlot later used as a subject a Yucatecan dance that was a *mestiza* version of Spanish flirtatiousness, the *jarana*, in which men would put their hats on an appreciated woman dancer until she was wearing several: "admirers lent their hats to the ladies of their choice for the dance. Beautiful girls wore many hats."¹⁶⁶ Charlot's own poetic caption emphasized the sexual character of this dance:

Sous ses entrechats vainqueurs
La terre tremble—et les cœurs !
"At the impact of her entrechats
All surrender, from serf to pasha!"

Génin describes the same or a similar dance called the *zapateo* and calls it "une danse vraiment nationale" 'a truly national dance' (Génin 1912: 321; 1908–1910: 129). This new subject indicates that Charlot was more interested in syncretic dances at that stage of his career.

Charlot's work on folk dances shows how inspired he was by this field of Mexican culture and how he tried to understand the special language of the dances with its peculiar power of communication.

7.2.1.3. portrait drawings

Charlot produced a large number of portraits of his fellow artists, poets, friends, and members of the *familia*. His strong interest in portraiture dates from his early childhood, and he practiced the genre in its full range—as seen, for instance, in his work with Luz: thematically, from recording and analyzing an individual, to seeing that model as a representative or symbol; stylistically, from close realism to abstraction.¹⁶⁷ Brenner felt that portraiture was a special strength of Charlot's work: "It's portraits he does best, & of those, women, undoubtedly due, he says, to the emotional quality connected" (Glusker 2010: 38). Charlot's portraits always penetrated below the surface. For instance, Brenner reported his view of a famous beauty:

Says she [is] "all dry" and very ugly. But he insists on looking inside. Says, however, that he cannot help it. No wonder he gets ill-humored. (Glusker 2010: 249)

In Mexico, I believe, Charlot had an added incentive. He was recording the same exceptional cultural period in his portraits as he was in his writing. The portraits can, therefore, be used to supplement Charlot's written descriptions. Charlot also used such portraits on a monumental scale in his *Massacre*.

Dated April 1922, a profile of Rivera looking up appraisingly, probably at a section of wall, is articulated with Cubistic facets, both structuring his fleshy features and suggesting his geometric cast of mind. In an often reproduced 1922 drawing, "Diego a la Preparatoria" 'Diego at the Preparatoria,' the artist's slippered foot stands high on the scaffold while he entwines his right arm and leg into the crossbars, forgetful of his bulk, engrossed in his task. Palette and brushes reveal that he is an artist, but everything else argues against the conventional easel. Murals breed a different kind of artist, climbing the same ladders and covered with the same dust as the other workers on the site. I myself have assisted on frescoes where we had to twist our bodies into odd angles to reach the wall with our brushes. We didn't feel fancy after a day's work. Charlot draws Diego as the representative of everything that is characteristic—physically and mentally—about the mural movement.

A much reproduced drawing of Orozco is dated August 1927 and annotated "Orozco travaillant a la Preparatoria" 'Orozco working at the Preparatoria.' Under a worker's protective overall suit, Orozco wears a formal shirt and bow tie. He rests his handless left arm on his lap and peers calmly through his flimsy glasses at the tiny point at which his brush meets the wall. Only his writhing locks reveal his fulminating creativity. Viewers of the drawing have been surprised that Orozco did not look as Romantic painting as his paintings. Orozco's son Clemente Orozco V. told me a story that corroborated Charlot's view (June 9, 2004). While working on the 1936 mural *El pueblo y los líderes* 'The people and the leaders' at the Paraninfo or assembly room of the University of Guadalajara, Orozco had to redo a large section because he had followed bad technical advice. Clemente emphasized that Orozco repainted the section exactly as it was, "stroke for stroke."

A portrait of Xavier Guerrero, dated April 8, 1922, emphasizes his fleshy, full-blooded Indian features and an inner calm. In a profile dated June 1922, Asúnsolo is dressy and elegant, only the tightness of

his mouth betraying his flarable temper. An undated profile of Lupe Marín captures her famously fiery temperament, very much as did Edward Weston (1961 illustration 11). Charlot's portraits of Tina Modotti deemphasize her sex appeal, portraying her as young and tender, with an almost babyish mouth. Nahui Olín appears startled and confused; only a full-length nude of her reveals the erotic attraction she had for Charlot. Charlot seems to have been most fascinated by Pintao, producing numerous drawn and painted portraits. He emphasizes his *hidalguismo*, his old-fashioned Spanish nobility.

Charlot will continue to produce portraits as new people arrived on the scene, like Edward Weston in August 1923 and Sergei Eisenstein in a 1932 oil (CL 285). An indication that the portraits were appreciated is that the poets Manuel Maples Arce and List Arzubide asked Charlot for portrait prints that could illustrate their books (M47, 58). List Arzubide himself and his sons told me how thrilled he was by Charlot's portraits of him.

The most famous portraits of the muralists are Edward Weston's photographs (*MMR* illustrations 25a, 43). Rivera based a mural self-portrait directly on one, and Orozco was influenced for his easel self-portraits on another.¹⁶⁸ Weston's numerous portraits of Charlot depict him as a young dreamer, frail but graceful, a self-image Charlot never adopted.

7.2.2. PAINTING

Discussing his CL 6 *Old Woman, Santa Anita (La Gata)*, Charlot noted "My first tries at representing Indians, the Indians of the plateau of Mexico, were all mixed up with my own tries at style with mostly Cubism" (March 8, 1972). He was making sketches, but moving into the more formal genre of oils required a further development of style and the solution of numerous problems. These were in fact his first large oils; the few he did in France were small oil studies. A little earlier, Charlot had started on his first big oil, *Calvary with St. Thomas Aquinas* or *La Théologie Régulatrice des Arts*, which would have continued the style of his liturgical art in France (Volume I, Chapter 8, Section 3.3.2). But he was no longer in the mood: "I got more of a kick, shall we say, about those ugly heads than what I had started" (Interview August 7, 1971). Charlot saw the decision to destroy *La Théologie Régulatrice des Arts* and start a stylistically and thematically different series of oils as a turning point:

I had in me in France, already, two things that really didn't work very well together.. One of them was, let's call it again the Nabi-Catholic strain and the other one was the Cubist strain. We have some very early Cubist pictures of mine. They had remained dormant, I would say, while I was trying to do those Catholic things. There is a certain, of course, compositional order in the *Way of the Cross*, to take it, the one in woodcuts, to take it as an example, but I would say Cubism is very low there. It's just not much of it; it's just a minimum to make a composition, and the rest—the elongated figures and the spirituality or spiritualism, if you want, are still what I call Gilde Notre-Dame. But I had made much stronger things in small gouaches and so on in the Cubist manner, and so in Mexico, the Nabi-Gilde Notre-Dame strain faded out because the climate, if you want, was improper for it, and the early Cubist strain came back with a revenge, so to speak, in those big

Indian heads. Of course, Prehispanic and Cubism go together very well, and what there is of Prehispanic in Indian modes urged me, so to speak, to use my Cubist means.
(Interview August 7, 1971)

Charlot's 1922 paintings are recorded in three lists: Charlot's Checklist of Paintings (CL) and the short and long lists from the Ludwigshafen Notebook (1920/1925). Many works are lost or at least unlocated, like some fifty gouaches and at least three watercolors. The three oil landscapes, Charlot's first oils in Mexico, have also been lost. I will concentrate on the surviving oils, using the Checklist as the basis and identifying its entries with those of the Ludwigshafen Notebook. Dates are based on my discussion below.

CL 2 Luz with Parrot.

Ludwigshafen Notebook, second list: "femme à l'oiseau à finir" 'woman with bird to finish.'

Both the CL and the Ludwigshafen Notebook place this oil first in the series of *personnages*. It may be identified with the January 9 diary entry: "mon tableau" 'my painting.'

CL 3 Woman with jug (Familia Chincuate).

Ludwigshafen Notebook, second list: "Luciana au vase" 'Luciana with vase.'

Dated on canvas: 22.

The Checklist places this oil second on the list whereas the Ludwigshafen Notebook places it last among the *personnages*, the biggest discrepancy between the lists, discussed below. I have not been able to identify the Chincuate family.

CL 4 Indian Woman with Orange.

Ludwigshafen Notebook, second list: "Luciana n° 2" 'Luciana number 2.'

Dated on canvas: 1922.

This oil can be dated by the diary entry for March 25: "terminé ma petite femme" 'finished my little woman.'

CL 5 Man with Cigarette (Trinidad).

Ludwigshafen Notebook, second list: Trinidad.

CL 6 Old Woman, Santa Anita. (La Gata).

Ludwigshafen Notebook, second list: "vieille femme" 'old woman.'

This oil is mentioned in four diary entries, of which the last provides the finish date of June 12. "6.22" is written after the signature on the painting.

CL 7 Still-Life with Fruits.

Ludwigshafen Notebook, second list: "nature morte : fruits" 'still life: fruits.'

This oil can be dated by the diary entry for March 22: "terminé nature morte" 'finished

still life.’

CL 8 *Calvary with St. Thomas Aquinas*. small
Also called *La Théologie Régulatrice des Arts*.

CL 9 *Calvary with St. Thomas Aquinas*. big
Also called *La Théologie Régulatrice des Arts*.

Unlike his later practice in his Checklist, Charlot grouped his oils numbers 2–9 only under the year without recording the month. In the diary also, Charlot was not as regular as he later became in recording start and finish dates. The following 1922 diary entries have been decoded. On January 2 at Coyoacán, Charlot noted “paysage” ‘landscape.’ This is the first landscape of the three entered in the second Ludwigshafen list. On January 4, Charlot wrote “commence autre paysage” ‘start another landscape,’ the second. On January 9 also at Coyoacán, Charlot writes “mon tableau” ‘my painting.’ This was not a landscape, because the third and final landscape is noted on January 14: “paysage magueyes” ‘landscape with magueys’; this is “les montagnes et magays” ‘mountains and magueys’ in the second Ludwigshafen list. On January 16, Charlot notes “commence nouvelle peinture” ‘start new painting.’

On March 22, Charlot records “terminé nature morte” ‘finished still life.’ The only still life is CL 7, which is the third to the last entry in the chronological list. After CL 7, CL 8 and 9, *La Théologie Régulatrice des Arts*, are responses to the meeting with Rivera, according to Leal. Leal wrote that he and Charlot met Rivera while he was working in his studio at San Pedro y Paulo, making preparatory sketches for *Creation* (*MMR* 165 f.; 1990: 173). They met several times after that, and Leal and Charlot were inspired to produce bigger artworks than small EPAL landscapes: Leal’s *Campamiento* and Charlot’s *La Théologie Régulatrice des Arts*, which he ultimately destroyed. Charlot’s corresponding diary entries are:

February 19: “voir Ribera” ‘see Rivera.’

February 22: “vu Ribera” ‘saw Rivera.’

The above suggests that late February 1922 marked the end of this series of oils. and that Charlot was recruited as an assistant by Rivera on March 4, 1922—“Ribera me demande pour travailler avec lui” ‘Rivera asks for me to work with him’—and devoted himself entirely to assisting Rivera and ultimately creating his own *Massacre*. However, several later diary entries correct this view:

March 25: “terminé ma petite femme” ‘finished my little woman.’

May 17: “commencé portrait vieille femme à huile” ‘started portrait of old woman in oil’

May 18: “travaille vieille femme” ‘work on old woman.’

June 8: “peindre vieille femme” ‘paint old woman.’

June 9: “continué vieille femme” ‘continued old woman.’

June 12: “terminé vieille femme” ‘finished old woman.’

While working with Peter Morse, Charlot went through his diaries for all entries related to his prints. That he did not extract the above demonstrates that they do not refer to prints but, in all likelihood, to the oils. The

“vieille femme” can only be number 6—*Old Woman, Santa Anita (La Gata)*—which is so named in the Ludwigshafen list. Also, number 6 is the only painting of the series to be dated on the canvas with the month: “6.22.” The “petite femme” could not be number 2, because in a list made at the end of 1922, “femme à l’oiseau” ‘woman with bird’ is tagged “à finir” ‘to finish.’ CL 4 is thus the likeliest reference for “petite femme.” My conclusion is that Charlot continued to work on these oils—which he had probably planned or even started—after the meeting with Rivera. The start date of the series, including the lost landscapes, would thus be January 2 and the finish date June 12, 1922. External evidence is that number 4 was illustrated in September 1922, and numbers 3, 4, 5, and 6 were either exhibited or illustrated or both in November. I will discuss in the narrative the significance of this dating for Charlot’s biographical relationship with Rivera.

The only other dating problem is the placement of CL 3 in the series. In the Checklist itself, number 3 is placed immediately after number 2, but in the second Ludwigshafen list, it is placed at the very end, that is, after June 12, 1922. Several points argue for the Checklist placement. Luz is wearing the Milpa Alta *fiesta* clothing in both 2 and 3. Number 3 is closely related to Leal’s *La Rebeca de Taxco*, for which Luz posed (*Luz Jiménez símbolo* 2000: 63). That is, both Charlot’s 2 and 3 are in Charlot’s early EPAL mode of using costumes and models, a mode he would outgrow work by work. All these paintings were done in Leal’s studio, but once Charlot started working with Rivera, he spent less time in Coyoacán, as recorded in his diaries. Indeed, after *vielle femme*, Charlot’s work entries in the diary are about assisting Rivera and then working on his own mural. I conclude that the Checklist placing of number 3 is correct.¹⁶⁹

On the available evidence, I offer the following as a strict chronological list:

CL 2 *Luz with Parrot*.

Started probably in early January 1922.

CL 3 *Woman with jug (Familia Chincuate)*.

CL 7 *Still-Life with Fruits*.

Finished March 22, 1922.

CL 4 *Indian Woman with Orange*.

Finished probably March 25, 1922.

CL 5 *Man with Cigarette (Trinidad)*.

CL 6 *Old Woman, Santa Anita. (La Gata)*.

Finished June 12, 1922.

In the Checklist, Charlot later wrote over the 1922 oils “Painted in Leal’s studio. Coyoacan.” Some of the paintings fit into the EPAL context in using the school’s models: numbers 2, 3, 4 are Luz, and number 5 is Trinidad. Charlot remembered: “They were the regular models who were at the Coyoacán open-air school, ready to pose for the students, and they were for free” (Interview May 18, 1971).

In numbers 2 and 5, Luz and Trinidad are dressed in the *fiesta* clothes normally used for posing in the school:

both the women and the men dressed up in a way that you could say was Mexican Indian ways of dressing. That is, it wasn't too wrong, but it was also something that had been chosen by the artists themselves to get a colorful result, and that wasn't then the Indian taste proper, certainly not the Indian taste of everyday. (Interview May 18, 1971).

Charlot later emphasized that as he learned to know Mexico better, he gradually abandoned the *fiesta* costumes favored at EPAL for ordinary wear:

I wouldn't say that I was against picturesqueness, but I would accept only what picturesqueness was part of the makeup of the everyday life of the people, and I've never been awfully fond of the unusualness of *fiesta* days, that is, when all the tourists go in to see the Indians dancing and singing and whatnot. That's not false, if you want, but it's unusual, like the Kermess of Flanders, which is not typical certainly of the everyday life of the Flemish peasant. So I used things that I considered only deeply engrained. Some of them, for example, are the kitchen chores. (September 28, 1970)

I may have, in the early days, been somewhat at a sort of unease in discovering things. I think you can see that in some of my early Indian lithographs, perhaps, or even early Indian frescoes, and then later on I had been more at ease with those same things, simply by having lived with them longer. And of course, the ideal would be to feel so much at ease that I couldn't analyze anymore what is me and what is what you could call the Indian heritage. (Interview August 7, 1971)

Charlot's unease with EPAL's *fiesta* emphasis surfaces in this early series of paintings. The latest, number 6, goes outside the school to find a model: an old woman, a *pulque* alcoholic, depicted in a *pulquería*. Ironically, she is wearing the rose crown of the Santa Anita festival.

The paintings contrast with the EPAL context mainly by their stylistic difference from the school's dominant Impressionism. Charlot discussed the style of these oils in our interviews:

JPC:

We were talking the last time about your early woodcuts and your early paintings, and I wanted to ask more about that. All of them seem to be filled with a great deal of analysis rather than synthesis, in your terms. Could you tell me about that?

JC:

Well, that, of course, is very much what happened to my generation. We were sort of born within Cubism and not the Cubism later on that was more decorative and colorful, but the Analytical Cubism of the beginnings. And I mentioned that series of drawings which are nearly the only thing I did on my first trip to Mexico. They were all analytical, done after those *Métamorphoses of Ovide* with the Boucher engravings. Now, on the

second trip, the paintings that were done at the same time than the woodcuts were of different styles. (Interview May 18, 1971)

CL 8 and 9 *La Théologie Régulatrice des Arts*, were part of Charlot's "hangover" from his French period. The other oils and the woodblocks of the time represented his new, Mexican stylistic direction. In numbers 4, 5, and 6, Charlot focuses closely on the faces of the models, as opposed to the middle-distance placement of most EPAL models:

And at the same time, there was that series of big heads that you know... which are faceted and were my own version, in a way, of Analytical Cubism, without obvious distortions, because I had perhaps more interest in the subject matter, which is all Indian heads in that series, and I wanted the model, so to speak, to be part of the picture, more than the model is in the portraits of Picasso and Braque from around 1910, 1911, and a little later of Analytical Cubism. (Interview May 18, 1971)

Charlot is referring to paintings by Cubists and sculptors like Elie Nadelman in which a large central figure was intensely analyzed by faceting. One of Charlot's few aquarelles at this time is his 1922 *Luz*, in which the faceting is exquisitely coordinated with the outdoor light.¹⁷⁰ This contrasted with the smooth surfaces with which skin was usually depicted at EPAL. Charlot was initiating a new period of analysis in order to create a less conventional style than the one currently being used.

The difference of Charlot's work from his Cubist references is that the model is not a mere occasion for style: "ces visages insignifiants ou laids qu'il faut aimer pour les comprendre. Plus tu regardes, plus tu aimes" 'those faces, insignificant or ugly, that one must love in order to understand them. The more you look, the more you love' (December 1922 *Diverses Sortes*). I have discussed already the importance for Charlot of loving his subjects. As he would say later, one must love Hawaiians to understand them.

As discussed several times earlier, Charlot is typically French in wanting to "save the subject":

Those big heads—I mean, I come back to those things as being the most obvious style or early style in Mexico—were really quite French in the cubing of the faces. I don't know that I had in mind at the time some of the early sculptures of Picasso, the head that is all faceted, but it's very similar to that anyhow. As I said, the only difference which makes it not wholly French but already Mexican is a respect for my subject matter. (Interview May 18, 1971)

In the oils and woodcuts, Charlot is trying to understand Mexicans by looking them in the face. He is using analysis to understand the model as a human being, as a *personnage*. As seen above, Brenner considered Charlot's portraits particularly strong because they penetrated below the surface. Charlot's emotional response to a sitter could turn a portrait into caricature. Weston reported that Charlot "showed me a caricature of Mrs. X— of C—, painted with all the derision he felt after tea with a female art patron" (1931: 6). Charlot did not consider the series of oils and woodcuts caricatures:

I remember a reportage, for example, on the Café de Nadie in which it says that the walls show some Estridentist cartoons by Charlot. Well, the Estridentist cartoons are some,

what I considered very good and very serious woodcuts of Mexican types. (Interview June 12, 1971)

Charlot was also discovering the expressive power of Mexican bodies, especially faces and hands.¹⁷¹

Focus on faces is found already in Charlot's street sketches: he seems struck by strong or unusual faces and bold gestures, which he often portrays in scrupulous detail.¹⁷² As in the oils, Charlot seems to fasten on a feature and exaggerate it in order to grasp it clearly and to develop a strong mental image of the whole. The color notes on the sketches indicates that they were not done with black-and-white prints directly in mind but as general material to be drawn on as needed. The sketches were used both for the oils and the woodblocks as seen below. One sketch of a strong face was prepared for transfer to the lithographic stone (US 17; M55).

Charlot's depictions of Mexican Indians in 1921 and 1922 already express some of his life-long views. Indians are poor and live a hard life, but they are not always miserable. As a Christian, Charlot believed in holy poverty as a sign of sincerity and honesty—one was not a selfish exploiter of one's fellow human beings. Indians do an honest day's labor and devote their free time to the rich cultural folk heritage of their community, creating great art largely separate from the monetary system. Therefore, our basic attitude towards Mexican Indians should be one of respect for their human dignity and admiration for their cultural achievements. Anything we do with them or for them must be based on that foundation. Posada and the artists of the *ex-votos* always portrayed Indians in clean native clothes—and the villains usually in fancy foreign outfits. Later artists should be careful not to insult their subjects by portraying them merely as squalid, helpless, pitiable victims for eleemosynars. In the 1940s, I experienced this situation as a child in Mexico City. A large group of us were walking on an avenue, being pestered by an old beggar woman. Finally, someone from our group—I did not see who—threw a coin at her. Hearing it clink on the pavement, I turned to look at the woman. She looked shocked, then hurt. She drew herself up, turned around, and walked away, her hand still stretched out as if begging. I asked someone why she did not take the coin and was told, "Not even a beggar wants a coin thrown at her."

Charlot's Indians do not evoke pity but fear. He invests them with the dignity of threat. Their faces show their suffering but also the strength that enables them to survive, a strength they can turn on others. Apparently peaceful, they simmer with possible revolution:

the tourist says, "Aha! Those Mexicans are doing nothing whatsoever." What they are doing is thinking, is taking stock of the fact that they are living, that they are human, and there are many problems to be thrashed out—when you see a Mexican sitting down and doing nothing.¹⁷³

Vera de Córdova, an early viewer of Charlot's prints of Trinidad, was struck by this point:

Y, los que conocemos a Trinidad el jardinero de la Escuela de Coyoacán, los que le vemos siempre con su paso cansado y su faz pasiva, admiramos en el grabado de Charlot, ese acierto con que fue "pescado" nuestro buen amigo "Trinidad el jardinero."

'And those of us who know Trinidad, the gardener of the School of Coyoacán, those of us

who always see him with his tired step and passive face, admire in Charlot's engraving the success with which our good friend, "Trinidad the gardener," has been "caught." (June 1, 1922)

Leal made a similar print of Trinidad, *Trinidad está diabólico* 'Trinidad is diabolical,' which I have not seen but which is described by Vera de Córdova, perhaps with Charlot's help:

En "Trinidad está diabólico" hay realmente un gesto de mefistofelismo indio, que no necesita del agudo e intencionado bigotillo para expresar una mala idea que ha cruzado por su frente.

'In *Trinidad is diabolical*, there is really a grimace of Indian mephistophelism that does not need a little sharp and pointed moustache to express an evil idea that has passed over his brow.'

Often, however, Leal invests the EPAL models with the sweetness that was normal at the time for artists sympathetic to the Indians. This can be seen by contrasting Charlot's treatment of Trinidad (M28, 30) and especially of *Don Pancho* (M29) with Leal's in *Campamiento*. Discussing Charlot's oil *Old Woman, Santa Anita*. (*La Gata*) and woodblock of the same subject, Tatiana Flores writes:

neither the print nor the painting attempts to be pretty or quaint... Charlot's woodcut and painted portrait heads of 1922 show him using the figure of the Indian as a vehicle for modernist experimentation while simultaneously problematizing the picturesque depiction of Indians by the Coyoacán artists (with the exception of Leal). (2013: 173)

Depicting Indians—whatever they are doing—reminds the unmindful of their presence and potential. López y Fuentes reported former Zapatistas keeping their rifles clean in anticipation of their leader's return (1979). Charlot saw this lesson in French art history:

As I like always to go back to what we like to call the Old Masters, those that are recognized as great masters, I chose a Louis Le Nain, French, seventeenth century, which has exactly the same feeling, exactly the same quality as the Rivera or the O'Higgins. *A Meal of Peasants*. That was done in the first half of the seventeenth century. When we read in the history books of the seventeenth century, we are always presented with Louis XIV, the Sun King, in his wig, and we forget the people. It's not a revolutionary statement. The people, like the Mexican people, are doing nothing. In fact, they are rather happy. They have their beans, they have their bread. The little fellow in the center is playing a recorder; that is, he's doing art of his own. And there's a wonderful respect on the part of the painter in representing those people. That is, he is a man of the people, representing some of his own. However, those things are very explosive, and Louis XIV knew that, and he did not allow any pictures by Louis Le Nain around himself. He got in a rage when he would meet some pictures of Le Nain, and he would have them immediately taken away. (Charlot June 9, 1965)

As a veteran, Charlot appreciated the odd quiet that preceded unexpected violence and the lack of theatrics in the event, as depicted in Honoré Daumier's *The Street*:

it is perhaps one of the most democratic pictures in the sense that Lincoln used the word: of the people. It is *for* the people, it is *by* the people, because Daumier was a man of the people. *The Street*. There are no heroes, there are no villains, there are just people. But those people *can* be explosive, and in France, in the nineteenth century, they *were*. We know that revolution succeeded revolution. So we have here a picture that he did of the revolution of 1848. I don't think it is a picture that is used very much in history books because it is not impressive enough. There are always fake presentations that are more heroic. But the man in the center has had an idea. He said, "As long as we don't like the regime of King Louis-Philippe (who was the man who was the King of France at the time), why not go to the palace and tell him we don't like him?" Well, it was a very good idea. The people gather around him. They go to the palace. Louis-Philippe, who knew what was coming, went out through a back door, and crossed the channel, and went to England. And for a while, at least, the French had a republic. (Charlot June 9, 1965)

Charlot normally described his art in religious rather than political terms. He believed we should tiptoe carefully through the universe itself as well as around potential revolutionaries. But he saw the Mexican Revolution as a defining characteristic of Mexicans themselves. In the 1970s, he said with anger to an American Roman Catholic missionary who described the Mexicans as crushed and despairing: "Well, they *did* make a Revolution, you know." I gained some insight into the distinctiveness of Charlot's portrayals of Mexican Indians while giving a lecture on his early work. I talked about my father's sympathy for Indians, how he lived in their villages, learned their languages, portrayed their everyday lives, and so on. I then projected a slide of the woodblock *Trinidad (3/4)* (M30), and the audience exploded in a shocked guffaw. After my words, they expected a sweet and ingratiating picture, the usual way of expressing positive feelings towards downtrodden people. Charlot's blunt, in-your-face demand for recognition must have been even more shocking in 1922.

Charlot, intent on understanding and depicting Mexicans, characteristically used their own art as a basis:

I think all those things hang together with a French know-how of faceting Cubism, but a transformation of what was with the French an aesthetic statement to relate the live models with the Prehispanic sculptures I knew. (Interview May 18, 1971)

Well, my own knowledge of Mexican Indians and specifically Aztecs, because my models there were Aztecs, was academic, not in the sense that the Frenchman would speak of it, but academic in the sense that I was already very well aware of the Prehispanic forms of art, both in the manuscripts and in the sculptures, terra cottas and so on: that is, the Indian's own way of looking at himself. And there is a definite sculptural quality, faceting in hard material, we could say, in those early portraits.

And I think there is in there a lot of obvious dignity that I had learned from the Prehispanic collections. I always come back to my Uncle Eugène Goupil, because I knew those things very well. So it's a mixture of my knowledge of antiquities and, so to speak, the first contacts with live Indians in their habitat. (Interview May 18, 1971)

there is a strong scaffolding of French know-how that we can call early Cubism, which also later on is much less obvious. On the other hand, this very same feature which I call French can also be construed as being from my knowledge of Mexican things because it's obvious that looking at those people, I didn't think of them as flesh but as hard matter, hard obsidian and so on. That is, a faceting that the French had used without any sense of weight or texture, I would say, in early Cubism, with me became a way of changing the flesh into hard stone. And I think that already is Mexican. (Interview May 18, 1971)

This view was important for Charlot's style in the *Massacre*: "Rabid in its pro-Indian subject matter, my own 1922 fresco contains creative passages that parallel the forms and moods of diorite masks."¹⁷⁴ In Chich'en Itza, he will find artists with the same sensibilities: "Heads especially are strongly individualistic and are portrayed with a sincerity which makes beautiful in features even the ugliest" (1927 Report: 248).

Charlot saw his Cubist background being increasingly absorbed as he worked in Mexico. He also saw an increase in his familiarity with Mexican life:

Now, that is a first impression that, so to speak, I couldn't recapture, because when I made friends and was invited in Indian homes and so on, something else emerged which was, perhaps as I suggested, less academic and more simply human. That is, the things that we had in common rather than the things that seemed foreign to myself in the first contact.

There was, perhaps, a certain uncertainty about the new accessories, paraphernalia. For example, the serape that the man with the cigarette has on is not something that I would choose later on because it's something which is a little bit touristic by the standards acquired when I knew more about serapes. Actually, the large hat of the man, the sombrero, also is something that later on I used less and less as I looked at Indians in their daily life, in their home and so on. So there is a certain uncertainty or surprise about the subject matter that disappears later on. (Interview May 18, 1971)

Before discussing the individual paintings of this early series, a modern problem must be mentioned: cleaning, conservation, and other procedures have often changed artworks to the point of destruction. For instance, *Luz with Parrot* was originally lit with the golden glow of the morning "magic hour" beloved of photographers. A cleaning turned the painting blue. *Luz with Parrot* can no longer be studied without recourse to color photographs, which is true of other Charlot artworks as well, which the artist deeply regretted. On July 5, 1976, he wrote Kenneth Kingrey

To come back to worldly matters, how is it possible that you came to feel I had a responsibility in the drama of the total destruction of one of the *Burden Bearers*. I feel as

keenly as you do the deed for, as a pair, these pictures were irreplaceable as a sample of my work of the mid-thirties.

I cannot understand how either you or your chosen “restorer” did not get in touch with me before the doing, at least to ask what I knew of the physical composition of the picture. As a fact, it had been carefully protected with a mat varnish brushed on by myself, not long before you owned it. The mat varnish was preferable so as not to coarsen the delicate value relations. As a rule, American curators aim for maximum effect and in so doing have spoiled more than one museum masterpiece. Locally, the still life of Ozenfant of the 1920s came back from the restorer quite unrecognizable.

Ozenfant would have suffered had he seen it in this state, for he was, as I am, respectful of one’s own work.

This I would not have expected to happen to pictures in your hands, as you would not, I am sure, think of varnishing a piece of bizen pottery. Like Oriental art, Occidental art has its subtleties.

More attention must be given to this problem for art-historical research. Charlot said that cleaning often removed the upper layers of paint, revealing the under layers. This was interesting for the student of art, but a tragedy for art history. In the case of *Luz with Parrot*, over cleaning revealed Charlot’s method. The blue under paint was more Cubist-analytical. Charlot then added a top coat that evened the skin but let the Cubist analysis come through in the glazing. In the later paintings in this series, Charlot did not finish with a smooth coat, but made the cubist-analytical part the final layer. Finally, Charlot’s compositions are extremely complex in this series, and my discussions will not be exhaustive.¹⁷⁵

Charlot’s first formal painting in Mexico is CL 2 *Luz with Parrot*. Charlot followed his usual practice of composing from previous studies. He also noted that he was following the EPAL practice of depicting the models in their *fiesta* clothing: “based on the studies I made of Luz dressed up in her costume of Milpa Alta, perhaps more picturesque than I used to paint her later on, but it’s a first step” (Interview May 14, 1971). Charlot appreciated the beauty of her traditional dress, which he remembered from the nineteenth-century figurines he knew as a child :

some of those women were dressed up actually in the same hand-woven and hand-dyed costumes of the region of Milpa Alta where Luciana, Luz, who had been my model for all the Indian women that I painted, came from. And Luz herself was dressed up in that beautiful skirt, which is wrapped up in a rather elaborate way with folds, that is a very dark blue, indigo blue, with black lines at the bottom and at the top creamy white, and all the folds are gathered together into a hand-woven and embroidered belt, which is a rather stiff belt of white and purple red. Now those colors before I saw them on her, before I saw them on her mother, and so on, when I visited the village, I had seen already in those miniature wax figures. (Interview September 28, 1970)

Luz’s figure is framed in two ways. First, the tiled wall behind her is parallel to the picture plane. Second, a diagonal starts at the top left corner, behind her shoulder, with a wooden bird cage and ends with the tabletop

and crockery at the bottom right corner. This collection of folk objects presents Luz as the realization of the figures Charlot knew from his family vitrine. In her left hand, she holds a piece of folk art, a paper parrot. With her right hand, closer to the viewer and the picture plane, she reaches for a flower growing from the earth, whose brilliant white and red intensify the colors of the parrot. As a child, Charlot had been struck on first seeing plants growing from the earth rather than being placed cut in vases. During the War, he had drawn with great tenderness the little wild flowers surviving on the battlefield. A falling figure seems to protect a sprig of delicate flowers at the bottom of the *Massacre*. Luz's gesture forcibly reminds us of the land that has formed Mexican culture as it did its flowers and the banana leaves of the background with its little patch of sky. Charlot is no longer looking at Mexican art through the windows of a vitrine in Paris. He is now able to experience it as one with its natural context.

A diagonal can be drawn from the hand and flower across the top of the parrot's head, but its ends touch down to the right of the left bottom corner and below the top right corner. The effect produced is of an originally corner-to-corner diagonal that has been pushed forward by the strong top-left-to-bottom-right diagonal described above. This push both centers Luz and gives her movement—as if she is leaning forward towards the flower—avoiding the usual stasis of a sitting model.

As stated above, Charlot started his painting with a Cubist analysis, for instance, of Luz's head. But the next layer described the special atmosphere of the Mexican plateau, a sense of light and air lost in the over cleaning. That air bathes all in an overall ambience yet caresses details, which could thus be used in abundance on the façades of Mexican temples and churches. Charlot came closest here to EPAL Impressionism—although the figure is bulkier and the composition more complicated—and the study of Mexican atmospherics can be recognized as part of his search to understand his new environment. As seen above (Volume 1, Chapter 8, Section 2), his first painting in Mexico, the watercolor *Puerto Mexico* of January 1921, was primarily an exploration of the thick humidity of the coast. Charlot could contrast his impressions of Mexico with those of Europe, which he had expressed in the Impressionist paintings of his youth. Just as in France, Charlot's Impressionistic studies would be absorbed ultimately into his constructivist ones.

The second painting in the series, as I have argued, is CL 3 *Woman with jug (Familia Chincuate)*. The model is again Luz, and she is wearing the same skirt at least as in *Luz with Parrot*. Jesús Villanueva Hernández, grandson and biographer of Luz, kindly called my attention to the similarities of this painting to Leal's *La Rebeca de Taxco*.¹⁷⁶ I believe Charlot's work is a response to Leal's. That is, Leal's is typically EPAL in having little analysis and formal construction, and Charlot, I believe, was prompted to produce an example of its opposite. Adriana Zavala writes:

En ella el pintor concilia dos elementos aparentemente antitéticos, transformándolos mediante la complementariedad y el equilibrio: pinta un tema costumbrista en un estilo moderno y abstracto. (2005)

'In this work, the painter reconciled two apparently antithetical elements, transforming them by means of complementarity and equilibrium: he painted a *costumbrista* theme in a modern and abstract style.'

In any case *Luz with Parrot* and *Woman with jug* represent the ends of Charlot's own stylistic spectrum in this series, respectively, the least and the most stylized.

Woman with jug differs aggressively from contemporary EPAL works in its lack of conventional realism and perspective. Its coloring with its Post-Impressionist black—animated by lighter, jewel-like spots and ribbons—is a specific challenge to EPAL taste. Its constructive intentions are proclaimed by its focusing, not on observed impressions of natural light, but on geometric forms: the sphere (the jug), the cone (the mountain), and the cube (the houses). The viewer is challenged to follow the use of those basic geometric forms in the development of the image.

Finally, Charlot describes a pathway with a long, looping, graphic line that contrasts with his painterly use of mass and bulk to define his composition. As seen in Volume 1, compositional lines can be provided by explicit lines such as used in drawings or by lines embedded in the mass of a figure. The former create a two-dimensional design on the pictorial surface whereas the latter are derived from the three-dimensional organization of the figures. Charlot usually coordinates these two devices and wants the viewer to be aware of his use of both. Here and in the other oils of this series, Charlot is privileging mass, but he carefully includes a thin compositional line to remind the viewer of the opposite extreme of the expressive spectrum.

The most obvious difference between Charlot's and Leal's paintings is the body of Luz. In Leal's earliest depictions of Luz, she is slim and graceful (e.g., *Luz Jiménez símbolo* 2000: 54). Charlot had already added weight to her figure in *Luz with Parrot*, and his Luz—based more on observation, I believe—resembles the surviving photographs better than Leal's earliest works. But in *Woman with jug*, Charlot has bulked Luz's figure out to cover about half the painting's surface. With this heft, Leal's sylphlike bend at her waist has been transformed into the aggressive thrust of a shot-putter about to launch the jug at her shoulder. Charlot has already started both to strengthen the Indian body and to make it threatening. His Indians will proclaim the opposite of Saturnino Herrán's limp ingratiation.

In accordance with this mental perspective, Charlot has changed Leal's up-to-down point of view into a multiple one. As in his street sketches, Luz's right foot is seen head-on; that is, the viewer's eyes are at ground level and look up at the rest of the body. As I argued about the street sketches, this change of point of view directs the viewer to acknowledge and respect the importance of the subject who is usually looked down on. However, Luz's left foot is seen from above—somewhat disguised by the fact that it is stepped back—and thus starts a line that curves up and towards the viewer. This line reaches a second point of view at Luz's belt, so the viewer is looking down at the bottom part of her body and up at the top part. Finally, the top part of Luz's body has elements that are seen head-on, and these are set against others that are based on the two previous points of view. For instance, the jug is seen from a level point of view or slightly from above, whereas the right hand holding it is seen from below. In his depiction of the back of the left hand, Charlot even adds a hint of up-to-down perspective.

Charlot uses the background to support these different points of view. A house sunken below the ridge line of the hill on which Luz's right foot is placed reassures the viewer that he is looking head-on at the foot; he can experience looking down at the house and realize the difference in his experience of looking at

the foot. The up-to-down point of view on the left foot is reinforced by the same point of view on the figures just above it. Luz's belt is connected to a green landscape line in the background on which two horsemen are depicted from a level point of view to her right and to her left; the level point of view at Luz's belt is thus emphasized. At the same level to the right, a *cargador* is depicted with the point of view level with his waist: his hips and legs are seen from up down and his torso from down up. The higher figures and architecture can be interpreted according to the multiple points of view noted for Luz's upper body. These multiple points of view are being used to add richness to the compositional formality Charlot expected in oils.

Classically trained, Charlot found the basis of style in the human body. Nude modeling was forbidden at EPAL, and Luz would start modeling nude for Charlot only in late 1922. Charlot does, however, portray Luz's torso underneath her shirt, and to do this, he goes back to his nude studies done in France in which the two breasts and the belly were abstracted into three identical geometric circles or domes, with the navel corresponding to the nipples (Volume 1, chapter 8, section 1.3.2). Charlot expands this abstraction to Luz's jug on which a circular highlight echoes the nipples and navel. Until the end of his life, Charlot made visible the similarities of form between human beings and their tools.

First seen in the street sketches, Charlot's new focus on the expressive qualities of hands and feet is found more in Luz's feet than in her hands. Her feet are very near the enlarged ones in the sketches, but her hands are in proportion with the rest of the upper body.

Another difference of *Woman with jug* from normal EPAL works is that their backgrounds are sometimes incidental to the point of blandness.¹⁷⁷ Charlot strengthens the role of the background in the total effect of the painting, for instance, in supporting the multiple points of view, as seen above.

An innovative device is the placement of the background at an unusual distance from the foreground figure. Developed in *Woman with jug*, Charlot will use the same device in his 1923 murals *Cargadores* and *Lavanderas* (also Zavala 2005). The device enables him to populate the background with more figures because they are smaller in scale, increasing the subject matter and thus the interest. In *Woman with jug*, Charlot inserts figures from his street sketches and copies of folk statuettes of *charros*. For the overall design, he is creating a version of the landscapes with tiny figures found in folk painting like ex-votos and *pulquería* murals. He will later depend closely on such an ex-voto for the planned cover of Anita Brenner's 1929 *Idols Behind Altars*.¹⁷⁸ The perspectival distortion of the bottom left house is like a use of such distortions in folk painting that he studied and reproduced in his ca. 1926 *Jinete* (Glusker 2010: 510 f.), an indication of his view that folk art and modernism sometimes coincided in their technical means: naïve effects resembled avant-garde devices. Folk art was thus more than a naïve participant in the dialogue with contemporary fine artists.

Finally, in something like a photographic distortion, the distance from the foreground figure made the background appear less three-dimensional than the rounded main figure, evoking traditional background curtains or screens. Zavala relates this device to the "planist" Cubism Charlot practiced in France:

La masividad geométrica de la figura central se contraponen a la interpretación plana de las figuras secundarias.

‘The geometric massiveness of the central figure contrasts with the planar interpretation of the secondary figures’ (2005).

However, Charlot’s backgrounds are never flat. In *Woman with jug*, the background bends back, concave, into the space of the picture in counterpoint to the foreground figure’s bulging forward, convex, from her left foot towards the viewer.

Charlot carefully related the background to the dominant central figure. Besides the connections to the central figure described above, the black volcanic cone frames the figure’s head,¹⁷⁹ and the rounded green hills on the right provide counterpoint to the shoulders. Numerous background lines connect to the figure: the black horizon line on the left touches the meeting of the right hand with the jug, the borders of the green field with the *charros* touches the figure’s purple belt, the bottom left line of the land touches the hem of the figure’s skirt, and a shadow peaks at the juncture of the left foot with the skirt. Most important, the purple road on the right top half echoes the reversed S-curve of the figure’s pelvic thrust and counterpoised upper body.

The background—full of subject matter and thus interesting on its own—had also to be unified in itself and avoid being divided in two by the massive central figure. A clear solution is the creation of horizontal lines that connect behind the figure: the pink house at lower left to the pink road emerging behind the figure’s left thigh; the green field with a *charro* on each side of the figure; the lasso thrown by the right *charro* to catch the bull on the other side; and the green-to-black hill crest line that descends behind the figure’s left shoulder, follows invisibly the neckline of her blouse, and emerges behind her right hand holding the jug. This “shoulder” line of the hills is topped by the volcanic cone that frames and echoes the figure’s head.

These horizontal elements are connected by an upward winding, vertical line that leads from the pink house at lower left—perhaps related to the similarly placed houses in Leal’s *La Rebeca de Taxco*—to the pink house at the upper right.¹⁸⁰ A pink road from the house emerges from the figure’s left thigh and, beginning to turn purple, descends towards the edge of the painting and then out of it. This is a traditional method of adding space to a picture: the viewer mentally adds the undepicted path. A little above its exit point, the path reemerges largely purple and winds its way up the hill towards the pink house. More space in depth is implied than is realized in the two-dimensional result: the road dips out of sight just after it emerges into view as it does above before the door of the top pink house. The flat impression is created by manipulating the scale of the figures on the road: the man behind the burro up the road is about the scale of the two women at the beginning of the climb; the *cargador*, who is further back in depth, is actually bigger in scale than the women. Moreover, the bright pink of the two buildings helps flatten the total background. Charlot is balancing the background’s two- and three-dimensionality for the total effect of the painting: it needs both but in the proper proportion.

Zavala describes the impression made by the painting:

La mujer monumentalizada camina hacia el espectador pero está delante de una hilera de figuras pequeñas y rítmicas que ascienden en la distancia por un sendero serpentino que

sube la montaña. (2005)

‘The monumentalized woman walks towards the viewer but stands in front of a line of small and rhythmic figures who climb in the distance along a serpentine path that ascends the mountain.’

Still in the dark of the morning, the villagers awake and turn to their daily tasks or set out for their work.¹⁸¹ Thus all of the background figures are leaving the village. The impression is of hard but normal life, with perhaps a touch of criticism in the gamboling *charros*. However, the motif of people ascending a steep, turning path can be used to express the exploitation of labor as Charlot does in his fresco *Cargadores*.

The third painting is CL 7 *Still-Life with Fruits*. The arrangement was made as a painting model at the Coyoacán EPAL and appears also at the bottom left corner of Leal’s *Campamento de Zapatistas* of 1921. Charlot remembered that the young artists ate the fruit after painting it. Siqueiros remembered that earlier at San Carlos the poorer students ate the fruit that the richer ones bought for still lifes (1977: 84).

Charlot’s still life has the traditional elements: fruit, plate, and tablecloth or napkin. But apart from oranges and apples, the fruits are tropical Mexican: two kinds of bananas, a pineapple, and a papaya. The deep rich colors suggest their luscious flavors. The composition is unusual. Conventionally in still lifes, the fruit is bunched and placed at the bottom of the picture, and the number of objects diminishes towards the top. This arrangement produces a sense of stability: the objects are placed firmly on the table. Charlot does the opposite: the different fruits are placed at the top and seem to be tumbling down. The round fruit seems to have rolled down from a higher position. Bananas and papaya point downwards. The pineapple and the globular fruit above them seem ready to start rolling in their turn. On the right, a fruit seems to have been held back by the cloth but has broken out and rolled down before coming to rest. This general forward and downward movement of the fruit is exaggerated by the plate at the left bottom of the painting, which is tipped up from the back towards the picture plane, unrealistically when compared with the tabletop: the plate seems to be tipping up and forward and sliding out of the picture through the corner. The still life is thus unusually dynamic, resembling the Conquistadors downward charge in the *Massacre*. Charlot stated in his Disney lectures: “A number of paintings by Cézanne seem a little tipsy. You have a sense that the objects are going to fall one way or another” (Lecture 3). Charlot never spoke to me of the idea he intended to convey by this composition. It could be likened to fruit flowing from a cornucopia. But the effect on the viewer is more unstable, even violent. The world is topsy-turvy. Maybe the table has been tilted so the good things of life will roll down from the rich to the poor.

The fourth painting is CL 4 *Indian Woman with Orange*, finished three days later, an indication of the speed with which Charlot was producing. The model is Luz again, but Charlot is not producing a portrait. The painting is done at the Coyoacán school, but the model is not dressed in traditional *fiesta* clothes but in a modern, formal dress, not a work dress: “That’s a woman with an orange and she was dressed that way, I suppose. All those things are done from the model” (Interview May 18, 1971). The model apparently presented herself in that dress, but for Charlot, it represented a step away from the EPAL practice.

Immediately striking is the model’s skewed facial features. Charlot will use the same device in CL 6 *Old Woman, Santa Anita. (La Gata)*, which he describes in his diary as “à lunelle” ‘lunule-faced.’ Such

features characterize an ancient genre of masks found in Native American and even Asian art, but Charlot never mentioned this as a basis. A proximate source is a drawing Charlot made on October 8, 1921, in France before his final immigration to Mexico, arriving November 24 of that year: “femme gueule de travers” ‘woman with twisted mouth.’ I discussed this drawing in Volume 1, Chapter 8, Section 1.3.2:

Charlot has characterized the drawing by the twist of the model’s mouth, a feature he had used earlier in *Michel* of February 11, 1920, and will use again in his woodcut *Head of a Woman* of 1922. His purpose was to create a design that would unify into one line the nose, mouth, and chin. Charlot has analyzed the model’s face extensively, using two different devices...The head is perfectly recognizable, but closer inspection reveals the unnaturalistic sophistication of the analysis, for instance, the lines extending straight from the nose to the cheek...Despite the sometimes microscopic delicacy of the drawing, the head impresses with its three-dimensional bulk. This paradoxical combination of intense analysis and communication of volume points forward to the large paintings and strong woodcuts of heads that Charlot will create when he first settles in Mexico. Finally, although the subject is a model, Charlot conveys a strong sense of her personality, making another unusual combination of artistic exploration and psychological penetration.

Charlot’s interest in the design is clear from his copy of the face in the print mentioned above (M37). The extremely stylized face is clearly not a caricature, but can be described in the same words Charlot applied to a Maya artist, as seen above: “strongly individualistic and are portrayed with a sincerity which makes beautiful in features even the ugliest” (1927 Report: 248). It is possible that the French model suffered from a facial constriction due to some cause that Charlot found relevant and thus expressive for the Indian model. The head certainly bespeaks life’s blows and human endurance, the lesson of the woman’s hands as well.

In contrast to the other works mentioned above, *Indian Woman with Orange* uses the facial twist for the overall composition of the work: the woman’s face twists towards the viewer’s left while her hands twist the orange towards the viewer’s right. This direction is articulated by the left and right strands of the woman’s necklace. The left strand descends from the woman’s neck, passes behind the fingers of her hand above the orange, continues from the fingers towards the viewer’s right—indicating by entropy the direction of its motion—and loops back to touch the place where the thumb of the lower hand touches the orange, communicating its directional energy. The right strand takes its motion from the twist of the woman’s face on the viewer’s left, which is passed down a line on the front of the neck and the muscle on the back of the neck to the strand. The strand then loops downward to the middle of the thumb of the lower hand, adding its directional energy to that of the left strand. On its way, the strand turns its attached coins in a rolling motion that echoes that of the orange. The foreground and the middle ground of the painting are thus connected, and the woman’s facial oddity provides the clue to a new way of seeing.

Indian Woman with Orange can be compared with *Woman with jug*. With its dark tones and prominent black in the hair, rocks, and background mountain, the coloring differs aggressively from that used normally at EPAL. The woman holds an orange that announces the color that Charlot wants the viewer to

hold in mind. That orange will provide the undertone of the face and neck of the model. Charlot is studying Indian skin tone as the key to a truly Mexican color scheme. That orange will be coordinated with green—seen comparatively pure behind the right side of the head—which Charlot described in his writings as a basic skin color: the *Indio verde* ‘green Indian.’ The bloodshot eyes and pink-purple lips indicate the color of the flesh beneath the skin. Face and hands will be a color analysis as well as an Analytical Cubist constructive one. Charlot makes this clear by framing head and neck in the tonal opposites of the white of the neck ruff and the black of the figure’s hair.

Geometric forms again state a constructivist esthetic: round orange, flat oval necklace medallions and wooden cross, and geometrized rocks, echoed in the faceting of the model’s dress. The string of the figure’s necklace provides the graphic line that fills the same function as the lasso in *Woman with jug*, as described above. As in his street sketches, Charlot goes beyond his French analyses in *Indian Woman with Orange* by using enlarged and detailed hands to communicate the hard life of the figure.

Again, Charlot invests the background with great importance. As in *Woman with jug*, Charlot uses a distant flattened landscape based on folk painting and peopled with two *charros* based on folk sculpture. The space between the main figure and that background is made explicit by being filled with a natural rock wall, which stretches from one side to the other of the painting just as the figure of the woman does. Woman and wall form the foreground and medium ground flats of the space as in a traditional landscape.

Charlot again uses a pink-purple road to unify that section of the background and relate it to the central figure. At its most distant point, the road emerges behind the woman’s left ear and passes behind her head—framed above by the model’s blood-shot eyes and below by her lips—and emerges behind some vegetation behind her right ear. The road then curves towards the model and disappears under a rock. Its line is, however, picked up by a flat strip of rock that connects to the white neck ruff of the dress. The ruff continues around the figure’s neck towards her back, where it disappears into a network of lines that can lead back to the first emergence of the road. The most serpentine line of *Indian Woman with Orange* is not the road but in the face.

Charlot also creates a corridor of space starting with the left hand in the most foreground position in the right bottom corner of the canvas. The rear of this corridor is indicated by the inside width of the rock wall at the right edge. The corridor fans out towards the background until it is closed by the distant mountain. This corridor both joins the extreme foreground and background and emphasizes the figure’s three-dimensional head by placing it where it is most obviously surrounded by space. This contrasts with *Woman with jug*, in which the woman’s head was framed by the background mountain.

As in *Woman with jug*, Charlot coordinates three- and two-dimensional elements in order to preserve the flatness of his canvas. I will discuss here his use of color to do so. The foreground hands are in shadow, which presses them against the central space of the torso and relates them to the dark of the extreme background. The pink of the foreground Guadalupe medallion is connected to that of the background road. The sunniest space is that of the head and shoulders, but Charlot emphasizes the deep black of the model’s hair and connects it to the same black in the rocks and distant mountain. The light throughout is local, without a single, identifiable source; this is the opposite of an Impressionist concentration on light.

The fifth painting is *CL 5 Man with Cigarette (Trinidad)*.¹⁸² Trinidad was a gardener at the school and appears in paintings and prints by Charlot and Leal. The connection between this series of oils and the early woodcuts is seen in Charlot's use of Trinidad as a model in three of those prints: M28, *Trinidad (profile)*; 30, *Trinidad (3/4)*; and 31, *Trinidad with Sombrero*. M36, *Don Pancho with Hat*, reveals the connection with Charlot's street sketches of men with unusual *sombreros*, for instance, DS 72. Charlot painted Trinidad as he posed in *fiesta* clothing and smoking:

I suppose he was smoking at the time, poor guy. He had to stay still with all those boys doing Impressionist oil paintings from him, and I suppose they had given him permission to smoke. (Interview May 18, 1971)

This painting is closer to EPAL practice on these points than *Indian Woman with Orange*.

This closeness can be seen also in the identifiable source of the light as opposed to the local lighting of *Indian Woman with Orange*. Trinidad is looking towards the sun rising up from the horizon and casting its light up towards his face. This is the same golden morning light of *Luz with Parrot*. Charlot is drawing on direct observation of light as in Impressionist work, the practice at EPAL. Another Impressionist touch is the blue reflections of the water on the model's chin, upper lip, and bridge of the nose and on the underside of the front part of the *sombrero*. As in *Indian Woman with Orange*, the head is in a lighted middle ground, but it is surrounded not by space but by the light illuminating the face and the *sombrero* above in contrast to the dark neck scarf below. The light strikes the brim and the back of the *sombrero's* interior behind the model's dark face and is at its brightest behind the back of his neck. The light forms a counterpoint to the face, going in where the nose pushes out. Just as space surrounded and thus emphasized the head of *Indian Woman with Orange*, so light and the space it articulates perform the same function for that of Trinidad.

One reason for this difference may be the darker skin tone of Trinidad, for which black seems to be the key rather than orange. The red shirt and blue kerchief seem to make visible the color parameters of the skin tones analyzed in the face, neck, and hand. Charlot is exploring the different skin colors and tying them to color schemes found in folk arts.

The analysis of the head is especially close to Cubist prototypes but instructively different. Cubist analysis tended to weaken the bulk of the figure—imposing a mental grid in which the facets floated evanescent before the supposed object. Charlot is able to analyze and still preserve mass by respecting scrupulously his model. His facets are based on his close observation of the actual head. His facets make visible subtle physical surface variations by making them stronger with form and color. They are based on real physical details, not on an imposed theory. Charlot is being French in “saving the subject.” He is truly interested in Trinidad himself and what he can understand of his model through accurate and sympathetic attention. Hand and face are intensely analyzed to express the person and life situation of the model. Charlot is also creating a style through the close observation of nature.

Charlot is interested also in relating the human body to the cultural and physical environment. An indication of this project is that the amount of space occupied by the figure has been increased to cover most of the canvas, forming a sort of middle ground like the rock wall of *Indian Woman with Orange* (the wisp of

smoke from the cigarette recalls the woman's necklace string). Also, the figure's clothes have been foregrounded more than in the earlier oils. The landscape background is reduced to a small wedge, which as earlier is seen at a great distance. Anomalously, Charlot provided a plateau Indian with a coastal background:

No, that is an addition from the stay in Puerto Mexico. That is, the little landscape is really closer to Tehuantepec than it is, of course, to Coyoacán. Probably something I had in my eye from my stay in Puerto Mexico. It's definitely tropical. (Interview May 18, 1971)

Charlot's faceting of the face uses predominantly rounded and wedge shapes. As if this facial analysis were a distillation of all reality, Charlot will project those shapes onto the model's clothes and onto the environment. For instance, the wedge of skin above the ear is echoed by the wedge of the back of the kerchief. This second wedge is itself a continuation of the wedge of landscape before the model's throat. Rounded and wedge shapes provide the design elements of the *serape's* decoration. Rounded elements are frequent, such as the edge of the *serape*, the cuff at the right wrist, and the *sombrero*. Moreover, these round elements—when near to each other—form a variation of a wedge shape, even though the two sides do not touch. A wedge is a prominent decoration in the lower *serape*, wedges are used to articulate the light under the *sombrero*, and the whole background landscape is treated as a wedge, including the water.

As in the earlier oils, Charlot uses color to preserve the canvas's impression of flatness. One of the darkest sections is in the bottom foreground, and the lightest is in the distant background: the white of the houses in the village are the lightest tone in the painting. The colors on the foreground *serape* relate to ones in the background: the red-orange with the vegetation behind the background houses. The foreground blue on the *serape* relates to a patch of blue water in the middle ground above the figure's elbow and finally to another such patch before the village. The blue of the kerchief relates to that of the distant mountain. In a kind of technical joke, the burning end of the cigarette at the most foreground point of the painting—which would be expected to be also one of its brightest—is deliberately dulled down. Other devices to produce flatness are the thick, stiff cloth of the *serape* in the foreground as opposed to the thinner material of the shirt in the middle ground, which is articulated like the rocks in *Indian Woman with Orange* and may reveal the pectoral muscles like the breasts of *Woman with jug*. The design on the *serape* also emphasizes flatness. A sophisticated device is the avoidance of correct articulation of the right hand and forearm with the invisible elbow outside the bottom right corner of the image: as depicted, the forearm could not connect with the elbow and allow for the angle of the upper arm. Charlot, however, wants to upper arm to appear parallel to the picture plane in order to increase the impression of flatness.

The sixth and last painting in the series, CL 6 *Old Woman, Santa Anita. (La Gata)*, is the furthest removed from the EPAL esthetic. Charlot is no longer using the school's models but his sketches from life of a festival at Santa Anita, which he visited by at least April 7, according to the 1922 diary:

that is a little different because that was sketches from Santa Anita. I had gone to Santa Anita, I sketched, I have a number of small pictures of the time of the men in their dugout canoes, and for a certain feast the women put those poppies on their heads. (Interview May 18, 1971)

The occasion is indeed a *fiesta*:

Santa Anita is a town near Xochimilco, where there is a festival. The women who take part are crowned with poppies; then you go on barges through the canals. (M35)

Now those same flat boats, the *chinampas*, and the women selling their goods, you can find now in a place like Santa Anita, for example, and it's very picturesque, and they have crowns of flowers on their heads, of poppies usually, on the day of Santa Anita, and so on, but it becomes a thing of a *fiesta*, that is, a thing that is not everyday stuff but slightly artificial even for the Indians, even discounting the many tourists who go to see the Indians on the *fiesta* day. A day of *fiesta* is an unusualness, and that's why it is like that. (September 28, 1970)

However, Charlot is avoiding all *fiesta* prettiness. The print, *Woman with a Crown of Flowers* (M35), is one of his most formidable woodcut faces. The alternative title, *La Gata de Santa Anita*—"Gata" implies a servant girl"—leads one to expect an exploitable beauty. But only a fearless suitor could approach the young woman who stares at him undaunted. Similarly, Charlot transformed Leal's sylphlike Luz to the muscular mass of *Woman with jug*.

Old Woman, Santa Anita reveals a poppy-crowned beauty after years of alcoholic degeneration:

The other one is just an old woman in front of a glass of *pulque*. I remember the glass is blue and the *pulque* is *curado*, that is, mixed up probably with something that makes it pink. (Interview May 18, 1971)

This is one of those rather rare early portraits that I did at the time. It's an old woman drinking something that is delicious because it is *pulque*, but it is *pulque curado de fresa*, with strawberries in it. Very, very good. She has a lei of poppies on her head, because I saw her in Santa Anita at a certain feast where the girls wear poppies on their heads. (March 8, 1972)

The model seems to fit better Charnay's description of old Indian alcoholic women: "l'œil atone, titubant, ivres mortes de leur affreux pulque" "the eye dull, staggering, dead drunk with their horrible *pulque*."¹⁸³ But Charlot is seeing Mexican Indians not as weak and pitiable but strong and formidable, however much they have suffered.

Indeed, the woodblock *Vieja [Old woman]* (M33) shows the figure in even worse shape: her right eye is shut and probably blind. I believe this print is based on a life sketch made at the time—Charlot describes the oil as a portrait—and provides an early stage of the image. The woman wears no crown of poppies, and her straight, black, pulled-back hair emphasizes the three-dimensional rectangle of her head as does the parting to form black, horizontal lines on her forehead. Charlot has used these lines in the simplified image of the print in his 1936 *Catalogue of Prints* (Morse 1976: 195). That shape is also emphasized by the similar ones of both ears. The face is analyzed in the bold, black cuts of the woodblock series. This dark head is surrounded by a white reserve of paper. The image has all the strength of the other prints in this series.

For the larger oil, Charlot felt the need for a more elaborate composition that would integrate diverse observations and preparatory sketches. He adds to the print's three-dimensional rectangle of the head a number of contrasting circular, dome, and tubular forms to create an interplay: the poppy crown, the head of hair, the braids falling over the chest, and the glass of *pulque*. These round elements frame the rectangular head. They are also tonally keyed to the woman's gray hair and—placed from middle ground to foreground, with a bit of the woman's white blouse showing behind her hand—serve to unite the image in depth. Charlot has violated his usual practice by placing the highlight—the *pulque* glass—in the extreme foreground, perhaps to express its obsession for the drinker. In the interview quoted above, Charlot makes a point of the glass being blue and the *pulque* pink. These colors are light in the glass but connect clearly to the blue of the woman's dress and the red of her poppy crown. Charlot is again using color and tone to unify the different planes of his picture.

Old Woman, Santa Anita is the only oil in this series to be set indoors, again contravening EPAL practice. The *pulque* drinker is set naturally in a *pulquería*. The dark interior necessitates the change of her hair color to gray from the print's black. The architecture occasions the expressive distortions Charlot had already practiced in France. In his writings, he emphasizes that such distortions require a reminder within the image of a realistic depiction. In *Old Woman, Santa Anita*, the base of the *pulque* glass is set horizontally, but the tube of the glass slants tipsily upwards. The other section in true vertical and horizontal—and parallel to the picture plane—is the wooden furniture over the woman's right shoulder. Once these small reminders have been provided, the distortions of the image can be recognized. For instance, the line of the tabletop, which the viewer would expect to be straight, flexes and changes angle under the woman's hand.

The space is composed with a series of fanning lines: top right above the doorway, another below the doorway, and a third with the slant of the *pulque* glass in the bottom right corner. But the space is not unified: the fan lines from the top of the doorway increase unrealistically in width towards the left, and the leftmost fan line appears at a non-realistic angle from behind the woman's head. That is, the left background space does not fit the right. The left is almost parallel to the picture plane whereas the right moves sharply into deep space. Charlot is again creating an interplay of two- and three-dimensions.

The organization of the fan lines has formal ramifications. For instance, the right side of the painting zigzags down from top to bottom:

left to right: fan line above door

same direction but less tilted: vertical doorway

right to left: left line of light coming from doorway

left to right: woman's left shoulder; also, her braid connects to *pulque* glass

The woman's left shoulder extends beyond the right edge of the painting, a device for creating the illusion of additional space. This device is supported by the band of light on the right side of the doorway that exits at the right edge and can be connected to the shoulder further forward. Once the viewer is convinced of the presence of the woman's shoulder and arm in the space beyond the right edge, they can be connected to the tabletop, which forms a right to left line that continues the zigzag from the top of the canvas. A final left to right turn at the table's corner completes the zigzag line.

The right background is thus filled with compositional elements whereas the left background is comparatively quiet, even empty. The effect of this is to emphasize the *pulque* glass. Like the alcoholic, we are not distracted. Even the *charro* arriving at the *pulquería* door seems intent on the *pulque* glass. Door and glass share the same tilt.

As in the earlier oils, Charlot analyzes the woman's face intensely. Indeed, the original surely had more faceting and thus more history than the other models. As in *Man with Cigarette (Trinidad)* and *Indian Woman with Orange*, the head is placed in an emphasized middle space. As in the latter, the head is bathed in a light of indeterminate source, though darker. The old woman's face, though impassive, is not inert. Her right eye, the blind one in the print, looks at the glass of *pulque* that her fingers approach. The left eye looks into dreamy space. The nose twists towards the right and the chin towards the left, echoing the oval shape of the braids. The eyebrows and the lines from the side of the nose to the mouth meet at the bridge of the nose, forming an X shape. The massive jaw completes the rough three-dimensional rectangle of the head, echoed in the thick square of the lower lip. The curve of the loose jowl starts a serpentine line that moves around the right side of the jaw up to the bridge of the nose and through the left eyebrow to connect, after a break at the hair, to the right section of the crown, whence it curves back behind the head. A less defined line curves up the other side of the head. The whole face is analyzed in straight lines and rounded facets, which share the tipsy distortion of the environment, the slanting left line of light from the doorway being continued by a line in the woman's chin. The effect is of some awesome power pushing through any debilitation.

In *Old Woman, Santa Anita*, the landscape has been reduced to some green vegetation seen through the *pulquería* door. Much of the view through the doorway is blocked by the figure of a drunken *charro*, steadying himself on the doorway as he enters. Again, the human figures are progressively crowding out the landscape in the series. Moreover, in the *charro*, Charlot increases an element of story-telling—hitherto incidental, if even present, in the distant landscape backgrounds—which will become increasingly prominent especially in his murals (Flores 2013: 173). Placing the poppy crown on the old woman's head also suggests the story of her life as does her very relation to the glass of *pulque*.

The above series of oils is a unique achievement and should not be studied merely as a stage in Charlot's stylistic development. As he stated of the contemporaneous woodblocks: "They were not attempts, sir; they were realizations. But they are parallel with some oil paintings that I was doing at the time. You certainly know the big heads" (Interview May 14, 1971). Charlot did move from this analytical style to a more synthetic one, as was his practice (John Charlot 1976), but the directions of his Mexican work are already evident. In contrast to his most recent French work, he is depicting his human figures with greater mass and bulk and increasing the emphasis on human figures over landscape. In comparison with Charlot's French depictions of flowers, the poppies in the crown of *Old Woman, Santa Anita*, are given a greater solidity, even monumentality. On the other hand, along with Leal, he is introducing a narrative element—important to him already in France—into the concerns of his EPAL colleagues.

Charlot's regard for these paintings is shown in his using them to represent his work. He sent a photograph of *Woman with an Orange* to France for publication in an article.¹⁸⁴ *Still-Life with Fruits* was

included in the Café de Nadie show of April 12, 1924 (Rashkin 2009: 98101). Charlot exhibited *Man with Cigarette (Trinidad)* several times:

I think the first things that I showed were in a show that Dr. Atl put up, 1922, I think. And there I showed some of those big heads, *The Man with the Cigarette*, and so on, that I had just done in Coyoacán. That was my first show of things in Mexico. Then the cigarette man went to New York, I think in '23, with a group of Mexicans that Walter Pach had asked them to show at the Independents, and I sent that *Man with the Cigarette*. And then much later on, when I was living in New York—it must have been '34, '35, or so—there was an anniversary of the Independents, and they asked each of the artists that had shown in those very early days to send one of their contemporary pictures and one of the pictures they had shown. So that the *Man of the Cigarette* was shown again together with one of my pictures of the thirties in New York at the time. But as far as Mexico goes, I think those big heads were about the only thing that I showed in Mexico in the early twenties.¹⁸⁵

When Charlot finished *Old Woman, Santa Anita* on June 12, 1922, he put away his oil paints until January 1924. For the rest of 1922 and all of 1923, his consuming occupation would be mural painting, as he wrote Pach:

Diego va vous envoyer les Tableaux pour l'exposition à laquelle vous avez eu la gentillesse de nous inviter. Vous n'y aurez pas de grande surprise car occupés que nous sommes tous à des murs, nous travaillons peu au chevalet. (no date. early 1923?)
'Diego will send the paintings for the exhibition to which you had the kindness to invite us. You won't find any great surprises because, occupied as we all are at the walls, we are working little at easel painting.'

This long hiatus explains the difference in Charlot's style when he resumed oil painting: he had moved from his analytic to his synthetic period.

7.2.3. PRINTS

The importance of Charlot's Mexican work in printmaking is universally recognized, especially in woodcuts, his main medium in France.¹⁸⁶ Working with a simple knife on cigar box lids, he—and his colleague Marguerite Huré—had developed a rough and heavy style that was a precursor of his Mexican prints. His 1918–1920 *Chemin de Croix* is a culmination of his French period.¹⁸⁷ On his first trip to Mexico, Charlot left a copy of the portfolio with Don Lino Picaseño y Cuevas at the San Carlos library. Picaseño showed the portfolio to a number of young Mexican artists while Charlot was back in France preparing for the definitive move to Mexico (Volume 1, Chapter 8, Sections 2, 3.2). Charlot relates:

Well, the woodblock series was in the library of the San Carlos Academy in town, and that young group had all of them seen it, and that impressed them very much. And so one of the first things that we did when we were with Leal in Coyoacán at the studio was to

get some pieces of wood and start cutting them. And Leal himself *has* explained that rather nicely in a thing which I think I have here that he wrote in which there was a sort of a scandal among the students, who were still really feeding on Impressionism because—well, it doesn't say it in those terms, but obviously the woodcuts are more connected with what we could call Expressionism than Impressionism. That was an entirely new thing for the students of the open-air schools, who were working with the idea of blue shadows and golden sunlight and so on. So there was there a sort of a minute revolution which was actually a very good preface to what happened next. All those things happened immediately, the one after the other, and that was, of course, Rivera coming back as an ex-Cubist already but who liked to talk to people about Cubism.¹⁸⁸

The young Mexican artists recognized that Charlot was suffering from the experience of World War I just as they were from the Revolution. Most important, the *Chemin de Croix* revealed that he had found a means to express that suffering. Woodblock printing would have been one of the first subjects they raised when they met Charlot and invited him to the newly founded EPAL school at Coyoacán. Díaz de León recalled that Leal was the first to want to do woodblock printing, and cedar blocks were obtained for him and Charlot. When Díaz de León saw their work, he started creating prints himself (Reed 1960: 28). The memory of the *Chemin de Croix* continued in Mexico. When I met a Mexican museum official in 1992, he took my hand and said, “Your father did the Via Crucis!”

In more than technique, Charlot's Mexican woodcuts were a continuation of those he had done in France. Charlot had preferred woodcuts for their cheapness and simplicity, which accorded with the Gilde Notre-Dame ideal of providing liturgical art for the people as opposed to luxury art for the rich: “por su aporte práctico, por su éxito en contactar y en enriquecer al más grande número de vidas humanas” ‘for its practical contribution, for its success in touching and enriching the greatest number of human lives’ (Charlot 1946 Galecio). He continued to develop this theme in Mexico with an explicit emphasis on the moral issues:

El amor de los humildes por esta técnica le trajo consigo el desprecio de los ricos, lo que dio por resultado muy feliz que los que tallaban madera, artesanos sin ambición, pudieran hacer obras sanas, puesto que eran para gentes sencillas y de buena voluntad. Motivo primordial del florecimiento de la Escuela Popular Mexicana de Grabado (múltiples escenas locales expresadas en un lenguaje “puramente plástico”). Al mismo tiempo las gentes “cultivadas” fomentaban y pagaban las más horribles imitaciones del arte burgués europeo. (July 23, 1925)

‘The love of the humble for this technique brought on the disdain of the rich, which had the very happy result that those who were carving wood, artisans without ambition, were able to create healthy works, given that they were for sensible people of good will. Principal cause of the flourishing of the Popular School of Mexican Prints (multiple local scenes expressed in a “purely plastic” language). At the same time, the “cultivated” people promoted and paid for the most horrible imitations of European bourgeois art.’

Charlot appreciated woodblocks also for the rough style they imposed, which was attracting progressive artists in Europe:

Cette rusticité des moyens a réduit la gravure sur bois, dans les périodes dites “de plein épanouissement” à un rôle secondaire, se confinant aux productions d’art populaire, tandis que les techniques plus subtiles étaient préférées par le public “bien” et seules admises au portefeuille des amateurs. Il y a une dizaine d’années environ qu’une réaction s’est produite en faveur du bois. (1924 Prologue)

‘In periods of so-called “full flowering,” this rusticity of means has reduced woodcuts to a secondary role, confined to productions of popular art, whereas the more subtle techniques were preferred by the respectable public and were the only ones admitted into the portfolios of art lovers. About ten years ago, a reaction started in favor of woodblock.

Through his contact with Maurice Denis and the Nabis, Charlot was aware of the modern interest in woodcut inspired by Gauguin and stimulated by World War I. This interest was connected by many modern artists—like Bonnard, Gromaire, Jarry, Guy Arnoux, Robert Bonfils, Wyndham Lewis, and Miró—with a desire to appreciate the popular arts and reach a wider audience.¹⁸⁹ Charlot’s own sources were generally popular and Medieval, and his purpose was liturgical. But he was aware of the wider interest in woodcuts in modern European art.

Painting was the established genre at EPAL, so Charlot in his oils was reacting to the other works being created around him as well as following his own line of development. Woodblock printmaking, however, was introduced by Charlot himself, so the only EPAL connection of his series M27–37 is his use of the school’s models and his collaboration with Leal.

Charlot started at Coyoacán by learning drypoint from Emilio Cahero, and his *After METAMORPHOSES d’OVIDE* with its near microscopic lines could not contrast more strongly with the woodblock series.¹⁹⁰ Charlot demonstrated his capacity for ultra-fine execution at the moment he opted for boldness and monumentality, moving from the most refined to the primitive. The drypoint also marks the end of Charlot’s study of Boucher and other Rococo masters and the initiation of his Mexican print period.

Just as the finesse of *After METAMORPHOSES d’OVIDE* reflected drypoint technique, so the roughness of the woodblocks resulted from their manufacture:

We had bought our blocks of the same size and the same sort of wood together, and I think we shared together the same knife, and that knife wasn’t very sharp, and the wood was a little hard, and there was no choice but to do the things in the primitive style that we adopted because there was no way of doing it finer. (Interview May 14, 1971)

it may very well have been my first conscious realization of what people have been harping on, what they call the primitiveness of my style. Nobody’s a prophet. I mean, I didn’t know what would happen in the future, but as you say, those woodcuts done in Mexico are certainly more primitive than the woodcuts I had done in France. And in a way, of course, in France I lived in what you could call very sophisticated circles. And

our little Gilde Notre-Dame was based, as I said, on models that perhaps were more Maurice Denis than Rouault and so on, and the Nabis had something to do with it. Maurice Denis has been a Nabi. And of course, in Mexico I had to let go of those things because they would have been dissonant. So those woodcuts may be really a first, I wouldn't say simplification, but a first attempt at being in harmony with the new sights and the new ethnical ideals, call it what you want, and also a certain roughness that, of course, had come with the Revolution. The Revolution was still all around us then. (Interview May 14, 1971)

Indeed the cutting of the woodblock series is much stronger and thicker than that of the *Chemin de Croix*, creating a much rougher impression, especially with *After METAMORPHOSES d'OVIDE* as its immediate predecessor. In fact, the first print in the series, *Vieja (3/4)*, contains some cuts that are thinner—especially on the nose and under the eyebrows—than those in the later prints. That is, Charlot discarded even that level of fineness as he progressively thickened his lines through the series. Those thicker cuts and hatchings articulate the shape, but are themselves so bold that their own abstract forms attract attention—like the ear of Don Pancho (M19)—forcing the viewer to consider them on their own almost as an alternative image. This effect and others as well are clearer in the originals than in the reduced reproductions; at normal viewing distance, the originals occupy much more of the field of vision. The viewer is inescapably reminded of confronting a made image, and the very making—the muscular cutting into the hard wood with a dull knife—is an integral part of the meaning and emotion communicated. Finally, as seen in the Morse entries, Charlot printed these woodcuts either in black or with a variety of coloring, a practice he had started in France.

The Morse sequence, numbers 27 to 36, is based on that in Charlot's 1936 *Catalogue of Prints by Jean Charlot* (Morse 1976: 194 f.); it is probably more reliable than the sequence of oils in Charlot's Checklist, and I will follow it here. Charlot omitted M37, *Head of Woman*, from the 1936 catalogue, but I include it tentatively in my discussion as the last, perhaps loose member of the series. Some of the tendencies described above can be found in this print series: Charlot is moving away from EPAL models to ones he finds in the street (M33, 35). With the exception of M36, *Don Pancho with Hat*, he does not use *fiesta* clothing—in fact, his close focus on the face crowds out any clothes almost to the point of omission. M35, *Woman with Crown of Flowers*, I have argued, is a play on the *fiesta* genre rather than a straight depiction.

The first print in the sequence, *Vieja (3/4)* is dated January 1922. A single 1922 diary entry for February 3 mentions the continuing print work, but no titles are provided (M27). On June 1, 1922, Vera de Córdova published “Notas Artísticas: El Grabado de Madera in México” in *El Universal Ilustrado*, using M28 (*Trinidad [profile]*) and 35 (*Woman with Crown of Flowers*) as illustrations. Since only M36 and 37 are placed later in the series, Vera de Córdova was shown the series at least nearly complete. On June 12, Charlot terminated the oil series he was creating parallel with the woodblock one. Late 1921 to mid-June 1922 are, I conclude, the best start-stop dates for this woodblock series of Indian heads. An internal date is provided by the diary entry for April 7: Charlot visited the festival at Santa Anita at which he made sketches that were later used in prints and an oil (M33, 35; CL 6). However, unlike the oils, which were temporarily set aside for mural work, Charlot continued his print work along with his other activities.

Vieja (3/4) [*Old Woman* (3/4)] (M27) is the first of the series and the most touching. The woman is a type familiar to anyone who has lived in Mexico: quiet, unassertive, standing unobtrusively at the back of a group or a market stall. She is an example of Brenner's remark: "Each figure is then a symbol for a thousand others" (*Idols* 310). Charlot pulls this individual figure from obscurity to study her in depth. He portrays her as prematurely old, battered by life but uncomplaining, enduring and surviving all patiently with an inner strength and dignity. Her face, befitting her character, is unexpressive. The story of her life is provided by the background, used as a means of expression as in the *Chemin*. From the top edge, vertical lines press her down and are continued in the lines of her upper cheek and jaw. From the top corners, slanted lines push down and into the image, flattening the top of her head into two straight lines of a pyramid. Another set of lines from the left edge flattens the back of her head. From the right edge, sharply pointed lines seem to attack the face and form corresponding lines on her cheek and chin. Curved lines at the back of the neck are continued in the folds of the neck. The woman's head and face have been formed by outside forces. Her life is engraved on her like bruises and scar tissue. The cuts into the wood are the slashes of her experience. The unusual overall coloring of the print emphasizes the connection between the head and the background, although some copies were made in two colors. But the woman is not a pure victim. With her cheekbone, lower jaw, and left shoulder, she pushes quietly back against the forces that assail her, and the horizontal of her right shoulder reveals that she is standing steady in her place. In the context of her life, the woman is recognized as heroic. She has completed her own Way of the Cross.

In *Trinidad (profile)* (M28), Charlot continued his expressive use of the background and used even bigger and bolder cuts. Vera de Córdova described the model, the gardener of the Coyoacán EPAL, with "su paso cansado y su faz pasiva" 'his tired step and passive face' and admired the way Charlot had "caught" his likeness (June 1, 1922). Charlot studied Trinidad also in his oil *Man with Cigarette (Trinidad)*, discussed above, and knew his face well. Trinidad's expression is neither hostile nor aggressive, but characteristically passive. For Charlot, however, Trinidad is a potential Indian revolutionary—so often described as impenetrably tranquil before rising ferocious and armed—or the captured warrior going impassively to his execution. Charlot expresses this view through his cutting and composition. Throughout the print, cuts are shaped into aggressive points like daggers. Trinidad's head is a welter of strong, mostly opposing lines, bespeaking a simmering, inner turmoil. As in *Vieja*, slanted lines from the right edge attack Trinidad's face, but his resistance is even stronger. His nose and lips press forward, bending outward the vertical lines before him. His shoulder at the bottom left corner is like a rolling wheel propelling him forward so that his muscular neck thrusts on a thick diagonal against the background lines he is pushing. His forward movement creates a vacuum at the back of his head, which itself then serves as the left edge of the image. Trinidad is moving forward of his own volition, as seen also in the forward thrusting lines above his eyebrows and the thick black top of his head. Again, Charlot communicates his impression not through the facial expression but through the composition and the almost violent cutting. If the viewer knows Trinidad's context and history, he will not be fooled by his passive expression.

The model for *Don Pancho* (M29) appears also in Leal's *Campamiento*, but Charlot saw him as menacing. Eyes narrowed and mouth set, the face scowls and smolders. Dagger-shaped strokes—thicker even than those of *Trinidad (profile)*—project hostility. The head is not contained in the rectangle of the print

like *Vieja* and *Trinidad (profile)*, but pushes forward until the top and back of the head and the bottom of the beard are out of frame. The head thus crowds out all but a sliver of background, whose soft, rounded downward lines have no external or internal affect on the subject. The head is coming forward in three-quarters from the right back towards the front left. Since the bottom of the beard descends below the bottom edge, the nose—cut like an arrow—and the jaw must be jutting beyond the picture plane and invading the viewer's space. Charlot characteristically restores the picture plane as an alternative by having Don Pancho's ear almost touch the right edge of the frame. The viewer knows that the ear must be further back than the beard, so if both are touching their edges, either the frame or the space is being twisted to accommodate both the two- and the three-dimensional requirements of the print. *Don Pancho* is printed in two colors, with the black areas formed as compelling shapes in themselves.

M30 *Trinidad (3/4)* is the culmination of the stylistic progression of the earlier woodcuts. The cuts are wider and organized in clear groups that articulate the Cubist analysis of the head into planes. As stated above, the resulting sections are so striking that they draw attention to themselves as abstract shapes, detaching themselves somewhat from the head they articulate. The viewer has to read the subject through the means of expression by making a conscious effort to connect those means to the subject. In that process, the cuts can be understood both as arising from the subject and as imposed on him. Just as the woodcut is a made image—cuts on wood—so the subject himself has been formed by the external forces inflicted on him through his life. His roughhewn visage contrasts with the smooth new shirt he is wearing. Charlot invests the image with a personal meaning by using a background based on his second station of his *Chemin de Croix: La Croix Reçue [The cross received]* (M13). He elongates Trinidad's head so it can occupy the space corresponding to that of Jesus accepting his cross. As in *Don Pancho* above, Charlot has Trinidad's chest, shoulders, and wisp of hair from the back of his head touch the edges, projecting the face into the viewer's space (and twisting the frame and space vertically). An unusually realistic ear helps the viewer ground his effort.

As discussed above, the lost *Trinidad with Sombrero* (M31) draws in all likelihood from Charlot's street sketches of men with *sombreros*. Similarly, the lost *Don Pancho with Hat* (M36) is clearly related to sketches of men wearing unusual hats, hatbands, or clothing. In the poor reproduction, *Don Pancho with Hat* appears the least stylized print of this series.

In view of its blank background, *Young Woman* (M32) may have been abandoned unfinished. Perhaps Charlot felt it was too realistic or that the model was too young for his purposes. The head is solidly three-dimensional, and the expression is intense. The coloring alternates beautifully black and reddish brown, and the black eyes in the brown face are striking.

I have discussed *Vieja [Old Woman]* (M33) above in connection with the oil, CL 6 *Old Woman, Santa Anita. (La Gata)*. I add here only that Charlot has returned to the bolder style of the series after his work on *Young Woman* (M32). Also Charlot uses for the first time a model not employed by the Coyoacán EPAL, but one he had seen at the festival of Santa Anita. He is extending the range of his woodcuts in the direction of his street sketches, a process he continues at least with *Woman with a Crown of Flowers* (M35).

Man with Mustache (M34) lacks the aggressive menace of the earlier woodcuts. The subject sits behind the picture plane and observes, but does not threaten to come towards the viewer. The cutting and hatching are stronger than *Young Woman* (M32) but thinner than *Trinidad (3/4)* (M30). All means of expression are attached indissolubly to the subject. The ear is the most realistic of the series. Despite an inevitable woodcut boldness, the general effect is more elegant than the other prints of the series. This impression is enhanced by the attractive color: black on three levels—hair, moustache, and shirt—and reddish brown lightly on the background and more solidly on the skin.

The difference of *Man with Mustache* from the earlier prints suggests that Charlot was exhausting the initial impulse that reached its climax in *Trinidad (3/4)*. *Young Woman* (M32) may have been abandoned. *Vieja [Old woman]* (M33) may have been close to the earlier works, but the poorness of the only surviving illustration of it hampers judgment. After *Man with Mustache*, *Woman with a Crown of Flowers* (M35) is menacing but uses very thin cuts, a different means of expression. In its poor reproduction, *Don Pancho with Hat* (M36) seems at least as realistic as *Young Woman*. Finally, although it does resemble the earlier woodcuts, *Head of a Woman* (M37) was not included by Charlot in his 1936 *Catalogue of Prints* (Morse 1976: 195). After that work, Charlot's printmaking moves in other directions.

As stated above, *Woman with a Crown of Flowers* (M35) is a frightening image. A young, flower-crowned woman rears her head up on her slender, curving neck, tilts her forehead towards the viewer, and fixes him with her enormous, serpentine eyes. As dangerous as a cobra, she is ready to strike blows, rather than receive them. Charlot spoke blandly of the subject in M35, but the reporter Vera de Córdova reacted violently to the image:

En “La gata de Santa Anita,” vemos una coquetería trágica; esa fealdad repulsiva, esa ausencia completa de belleza espiritual, de carácter étnico, y de interés plástico; esa gata que no es como las otras gatas—que aun conservan la frescura de su juventud—se enoja y quiere adornar el desastre de su fealdad con una guirnalda de amapolas...¿no os parece delicioso?

‘In *La Gata de Santa Anita* we see a tragic coquetry, a repulsive ugliness, a complete absence of spiritual beauty, of ethnic character and plastic interest. This *gata*, who is not like the other *gatas*—who still conserve the freshness of their youth—decorates herself and wants to adorn the disaster of her ugliness with a garland of poppies...doesn't it appear delicious to you?’ (1922)

That Vera de Córdova accepted an inscribed copy of just this print from Charlot suggests that he might have seen the subject more as Charlot portrayed her: an insidious attraction. She represents thus a different theme from most of the earlier woodcuts, and the cutting of the wood is so fine as to argue for this work being placed outside of the series.

I discussed above M37 *Head of a Woman* in relation to CL 4 *Indian Woman with Orange*, from which it was copied. This is the only print Charlot based on one of his previous works, which may be a result of his lagging interest. Although *Head of a Woman* resembles the best prints in the series, it lacks their intensity, and Charlot seems to have forgotten it.

Perhaps even more than the street sketches and the oils, this series of woodcuts enabled Charlot to see graphically the distance he had travelled so rapidly from his French artwork. He could compare the new prints to his *Chemin de Croix*: the subjects and themes were “in harmony with the new sights and the new ethnical ideals,” and the style had “a certain roughness that, of course, had come with the Revolution” (Interview May 14, 1971). The gracefulness of the *Chemin* had been replaced by a crude power expressive of his models and the still violent situation: “The Revolution was still all around us then.” Charlot’s emotional commitment to his new work is revealed by his life-long depreciation of the *Chemin* along with much of his French work. He no longer saw spirituality embodied in elegant, white, attenuated European forms, but in the squat, muscular, heroic survivors of their own Way of the Cross.

Charlot’s woodcuts were different not only from his French work, but from that being done around him, with the exception of Leal’s (e.g., Montgomery 2010: 55 f.). As seen above, Charlot’s work was often puzzling to his contemporaries. Incomprehension intensified to hostility in the case of the woodcuts. Leal reported that a negative reaction started when Charlot began to use “el anatematizado negro” ‘the anathematized black’: “El colmo fue cuando nos pusimos a grabar en madera...” ‘the culmination was when we set ourselves to engrave in wood’ (1990: 173 f.). Charlot had learned the technique in France and used it “con gran habilidad” ‘with great ability.’ Their colleagues taunted them for doing woodcuts “que era tanto como poner el arte, que es cosa elevada, a la altura de las ediciones de ‘corridos’ de Vanegas Arroyo” ‘which was equivalent to placing art, which is an elevated thing, at the level of the editions of the “corridos” of Vanegas Arroyo,’ the publisher of Posada. But Virginia Stewart exaggerates when she writes that Leal and Charlot aroused “such violent opposition that they left the school” (1951: 48 f.).

Charlot made an effort to explain the new works to the public through a June 1, 1922, article by Raphael Vera de Córdova (compare Flores 2013: 173, 175). Like Claude Blanchard’s 1922 “La Jeune Peinture Mexicaine,” most of the material is from Charlot himself. The amount of knowledge of the latest European art and literature could only be ascribed to someone with Charlot’s background, and Vera de Córdova’s earlier article ended art history with Impressionism (1920b). Vera de Córdova misspells names that Charlot would have spoken to him under the misapprehension that the reporter knew the references: *Dufey* for *Dufy* and *Gaugan* for *Gauguin* (twice). Technical terms are used that Charlot probably spelled out carefully: *champlevé* and *pochoir*. He is using the French word for stencil, *pochoir*, rather than the Spanish *plantilla* or *estarcido*. As with the Blanchard article, Charlot’s thoughts must be distinguished from those of the signed author. For instance, in both, Charlot discussed other artists’ work but left his own to the reporter. Also, an uncharacteristic element of Parisian snobbery is probably an admixture of the author, who expressed himself thus in an earlier article (1920b).

Charlot starts characteristically by discussing the medium: woodblock printing, which had ceased being practiced in Mexico. As in the Araujo articles, Charlot justifies the new work being done in Mexico by its connections to the most up-to-date art in Europe. Woodblocks are respectable because they are being revived in Paris, the center of the art world (and the object of Mexican Francophilia). Inspired by Medieval woodcuts (Charlot draws here on his own sources), the medium is now used: “para ilustrar los libros modernos, los libros más exclusivos, originales y exquisitos de los grandes autores contemporáneos” ‘to illustrate modern books, the most exclusive, original, and exquisite books of the great contemporary authors.’

Woodcuts have evolved since their use by popular artists like those of the Images d'Epinal.¹⁹¹ After the work of Dufy and Gauguin, woodcuts—"este procedimiento de fuerza y de belleza" 'this procedure of power and beauty'—impose themselves "como símbolo de distinción artística en las ilustraciones de los libros, en las pinacotecas, y en los museos" 'as symbol of artistic distinction in books, art galleries, and museums.' Indeed, Charlot himself was an example of a modern, European creator of woodblocks: "Perhaps its validation by a European modernist helped it become a viable avant-garde medium" (Flores 2013: 168).

Today in Coyoacán, the article continues, Fernando Leal and Jean Charlot are producing the first Mexican woodcuts "dentro del más sabio y exquisito espíritu de la estética moderna" 'in the most knowledgeable and exquisite spirit of the modern esthetic.' The *champlevé* technique they use is:

el procedimiento más antiguo del grabado con el espíritu artístico y moderno más revolucionario, más exquisito, dentro del radicalismo de las últimas orientaciones 'the most ancient procedure of engraving with the most revolutionary artistic and modern spirit, the most exquisite within the radicalism of the latest orientations.'

Academicians will object to "estos grabados incendiarios" 'these incendiary engravings' as will those so bogged down in the past and alienated from the current art that they cannot see and rejoice in:

esas manifestaciones [*sic*] 'sui-generis' del grabado en madera, que tienen el notable prestigio del antiguo procedimiento adunado [*sic: anudado?*] con la más fuerte y vivificante visión de nuestros tiempos. 'these sui generis manifestations of woodcuts that possess the notable prestige of the ancient procedure tied to the most powerful and vivifying vision of our times.'

In this passage can be heard Charlot's conviction of the unique quality of the work being initiated in Mexico: "ces belles choses *uniques au monde dans la période actuelle d'art*" 'these beautiful things, *unique in the world in the current period of art*' (Charlot July 1924).

The following passage with its individualistic, art-for-art ideology belongs certainly to Vera de Córdova. He argues that within movements and schools individual artists differentiate themselves over time. Thus it is that Charlot and Leal are distinguishing themselves although their work is now hard to tell apart. The reporter proceeds to examine their work and may have profited from Charlot's comments on Leal's. I believe that Charlot did not comment on his own work because the author's points do not coincide with Charlot's own. I have quoted them above as those of an early viewer of Charlot's work.

Vera de Córdova ends his article with a description of the artists' plans and an interesting allusion to Vanegas Arroyo, the publisher of José Guadalupe Posada:

Leal el mexicano, y Charlot el francés, preparan la edición de un álbum de grabados en madera iluminados a colores por el procedimiento de "Pochoir" y con cien tipos nacionales. Sin embargo, de este seguro éxito editorial, ya recordamos que en nuestra niñez habíamos visto algo parecido en los cuentos de a centavo que editaba el señor Vanegas Arroyo.

‘The Mexican Leal and the Frenchman Charlot are preparing the edition of an album of woodcuts illuminated with colors by the “Pochoir” [stencil] procedure and with one hundred national types. However, about this sure publishing success, we remember having seen in our childhood something similar in the penny-sheet tales published by Mr. Vanegas Arroyo.’

In later interviews, Charlot always related this woodcut series of his to Posada’s work. He also spoke of the subjects as *types* as well as portraits: “very good and very serious woodcuts of Mexican types” (Interview June 12, 1971). Charlot’s intention in all of this work was to get to know Mexico and Mexicans, and he recorded his discoveries in some of the first and most powerful examples of the modern Mexican style.

Charlot has been recognized as a leader in the revival of printmaking in Mexico.¹⁹² Indeed, he is generally described as a teacher of print techniques. Díaz de León writes:

Vino a compartir nuestra vida de trabajo un joven pintor francés, Jean Charlot, un poco antes del regreso de Diego Rivera al país. Charlot dio a conocer a Leal y a Díaz de León la técnica del grabado en madera que volvía a incorporarse de nuevo al libro europeo de la posguerra. Fue partícipe del entusiasmo de Ramos Martínez, y también del nuestro, por la pintura jugosa de los recién iniciados...¹⁹³

‘A young French painter, Jean Charlot, came to share our life of work a little before the return of Diego Rivera to the country. Charlot taught Leal and Díaz de León the technique of woodblock printing that had returned to incorporate itself anew in the European book of the post-war period. He participated in the enthusiasm of Ramos Martínez and also our own for the juicy painting of the recently initiated...’

Charlot’s preference for woodblock prints was influential: “Under the influence of Charlot, the 1920s were characterized by the hegemony of the woodcut and, to a lesser extent, the linocut” (Green 1992: 66). Woodblock printing became a favorite medium for later artists and book publishers—notably the illustrators of *El Machete* and the Estridentistas—and was taught in the schools.¹⁹⁴ Charlot himself felt that the print movement was important and that the woodblocks had helped people appreciate Posada:

Well, I mean, there are more than the murals that—everybody became important one way or another. Very close and as part of the Coyoacán movement, there was, for example, Díaz de León, who did a wonderful job perhaps as a historian, or perhaps rather as a historian, but also as a graphic artist and wrote books about the history of the graphic arts in Mexico. And I don’t think that at the time he especially appreciated those woodcuts, but you never know. I mean, those things are regurgitated and may have helped. Certainly the woodcuts were a nice preface to the acceptance of the folk art: Guadalupe Posada and so on. That—there would have been no bridge between Impressionism and Guadalupe Posada. There was a bridge between what I have called Expressionism, roughly speaking, and Guadalupe Posada.¹⁹⁵

Finally, printmaking was allied with mural painting in seeking to communicate its messages to the widest possible audience through the teamwork of artists and craftsmen, designers and printers. Charlot accordingly rejected the emphases of print snobbery on states, editions, signatures, and so on.¹⁹⁶ Some of Charlot's early prints belonged to the street as much as his sketches.

7.2.4. THE MURAL: *THE MASSACRE IN THE MAIN TEMPLE*

I refer the reader to my earlier study, "Jean Charlot's First Fresco: *The Massacre in the Main Temple*," as well as to Jean Charlot's own writings and statements on the mural.¹⁹⁷ Some of Charlot's preparatory work for the mural survives and can be used to analyze the finished work (John Charlot 2001 First Fresco: note 7). I will summarize some of my article's conclusions without repeating its arguments, confining this section to new materials.

A major contribution of the *Massacre* was its first successful use of fresco, which would become the medium of choice for the Mexican muralists.¹⁹⁸ Charlot had studied frescoes in France, read on its technique, and intended to paint his unrealized *Processional* in that medium.¹⁹⁹ In Mexico, the muralists discussed the use of fresco and experimented with the medium.²⁰⁰ But Charlot, with his extraordinary technical ability, surprised them by producing in thirty-seven workdays a fully realized fresco mural, in fact, the first completed mural of the second phase of the Renaissance. Various criticisms of his technique were made, such as his use of cement, but they have proved groundless over time.²⁰¹ Much criticism was made also of his claim, stated in a cartouche in the mural, to have completed the first fresco mural in Mexico since Colonial times, but again this claim has not been disproved.²⁰²

Charlot shared his experience of fresco with his fellow artists, for instance, Emilio Amero: "Yo aprendí la técnica del fresco de Charlot por primera vez y después de Alva de la Canal y Revueltas" 'I learned the technique of fresco first from Charlot and then from Alva de la Canal and Revueltas.'²⁰³ Along with his mason, Luis Escobar, he assisted Rivera in his first frescoes and instructed other artists as well, for whom he wrote his "Aide-Mémoire Technique."²⁰⁴ Charlot's preparatory drawings like the "Scaled Composition" color guide and the "Numbered Giornale, Entire Plan for Preparatoria Mural"—a drawing showing the daily sections to be plastered and painted—would also have been instructive. On the occasion of Charlot's 1968 retrospective in Mexico City, Siqueiros is reported to have stated in a speech (not a direct quotation):

que él [Charlot] fue quien enseñó a los pintores de la escuela mexicana la técnica del fresco, ya que conocía sus últimos avances, cuando radicó entre nosotros de 1921 a 1928. 'that he [Charlot] was the one who taught to the painters of the Mexican School the technique of fresco, of which he already knew the latest improvements when he settled among us from 1921 to 1928.'²⁰⁵

Later Charlot and others brought fresco to the United States (Bonzom 2010: 70).

Besides the basic fresco technique, Charlot pioneered means to accomplish other tasks of muralism, for instance, tracing:

A geometric diagram to a scale of 1/10th that could be enlarged to wall size with ruler and compass, it bypassed the routine task of squaring. (*MMR* 182)

This is what I put on the wall...This is the *sinopia*, that is, the drawing that I made actually on the wall for that particular picture. Being young, I was trying to do things the most difficult way, and instead of squaring—horizontals, verticals—instead of that, I used only to use the ruler and compass and just changed of course the length of the line and the ray of the compass. So it's all done with my old Cubist know-how, with circles and straight lines. Then it was clothed, if you want, with the subject matter. (March 8, 1972)

Charlot's "Geometric Diagram" survives and attests to the extraordinary complication of the composition. A corresponding color diagram plans how the colors of the mural will reinforce the communication of the geometry.

To transfer his composition to the wall, Rivera was using "the jaws of the large wooden compasses built to order for the job" (Writings Related to *MMR*: Chapter XXV Conclusion). Charlot used snapping: a cord is rubbed in powdered pigment or charcoal and stretched tightly between the two points that delimit the desired straight line; when the cord is snapped, the line is printed on the wall. Strings could be used for curved lines as well: "the hands that plucked at chalked lines, or slackened a string to trace a catenary along its curve":

Más tarde, con más experiencia, Rivera se dio cuenta de que, para trazar círculos y arcos de cualquier tamaño, no necesita uno más que ¡un cordón y un lápiz!²⁰⁶
'Later, with more experience, Rivera realized that to circles and arcs of any size, one needed no more than a cord and a pencil!'

In *The Massacre*, Charlot did not produce a tentative experiment that needed to be completed by others. He finished his own fresco with a durable result and then helped Rivera on his first frescoes in the Ministry of Education. Most important, Charlot's mason on *The Massacre*, Luis Escobar, was transferred to work with Rivera, bringing all he had learned from Charlot's first fresco.

The next stage in the evolution of the fresco technique related to the start of Rivera's murals in the Ministry of Education early in 1923. Because Luis Escobar was now his mason and I was Diego's helper, the first two panels were executed with the same procedures that I had used in my Preparatoria fresco. (Writings Related to *MMR*: Appendix I)

Whatever technical refinements Guerrero later contributed to the medium, he started by helping Rivera with odd experiments that resulted in "The Secret of the Mexica," the addition of nopal juice to the pigment. This destructive mixing of biological with mineral was later abandoned.²⁰⁷

Carlos Mérida may have had such technical achievements in mind when he told me that Charlot was the only artist at the time who knew how to put a mural on a wall. Mérida records the respect Charlot's colleagues had for him as a technician:

Juan fue desde luego un maestro en su capacidad técnica como lo ha sido siempre. Su influencia sobre los otros consistía no en imponerse, por una u otra razones, sino en manifestarse dentro de su capacidad técnica, cultural, que él trajo a América de Francia sin que ello implicase que él hiciera una especie de exhibición de toda esa labor que él logró traer de Europa.

Las influencias ya lo dije, que Juan haya recibido de los otros, no eran propiamente influencias nuestras sino influencias del medio. Sus experimentos sobre fresco fueron importantísimos porque fue él, con Montenegro, el primero que se interesó por ese tipo de pintura. Guerrero, uno de los ayudantes de Diego, no fue sino una especie de maestro que quiso adaptar al fresco buono europeo un tipo de pintura más mejicana, dentro del propio fresco, y que pretendía realizarse con aguamiel de el maguey. Desde luego que este asunto no resultó muy satisfactorio porque las pinturas tratadas de esta manera todas se fueron quebrando poco a poco hasta destruirse. (Mérida January 29, 1971)

‘Juan was certainly a master in his technical capacity as he had always been. His influence on the others consisted not in imposing himself for one or other reason, but in manifesting himself in his technical, cultural capacity, which he brought to America from France without implying that he made a sort of spectacle of all that work that he succeeded in bringing from Europe.

The influences, I say, that Juan had received from others were not properly our influences, rather influences of the medium. His experiments in fresco were most important because it was he, along with Montenegro, who was the first interested in this type of painting. Guerrero, one of Diego’s assistants, was only a type of master who wanted to adapt to the European fresco buono a more Mexican type of painting, within regular fresco, and who pretended to realize it with the agave juice of the maguey. Of course, this matter did not have a very satisfactory result because all the paintings treated in this manner broke up little by little until they were destroyed.’

Other muralists would vary Charlot’s fresco technique. For instance, as he progressed down the wall of the *Massacre*, Charlot found that if he used less pigment, the result would be more transparent and the wall itself would add more to the total effect: “The light washes and reserves of white mortar” (AA II: 389). He lectured in 1960 about his Syracuse fresco *Village Fiesta*:

in the most beautiful parts of the wall the color is transparent. These are the parts that have not been touched by the brush, namely the whites [7] of the lime mortar. If you come back in six months or in two years, I think that you’ll see that the color is even more transparent, finer in quality, and that the whites are whiter, that the contrasts and the volumes are more beautiful. A fresco takes a long way in mellowing, and when it is a fresh fresco, like this one just finished, it should be a little toned down so as to become stronger as it matures. (1960: 6)

He emphasized planning and a light touch when advising student Mary Struve on her first fresco:

I think you are right to do the fresco. This is the way I learned to paint fresco. If the college is coed I think there should be one boy and one girl. The horrible empty corner can be filled in by portraying the beams that you say are in the lab. That is the picture represents the room in which it is.

I suggest a very exact line drawing of your cartoon, including not only outlines, but areas of light and dark, outlines of changes of colors, etc. So you will not have to solve those problems while you solve the problem of painting.

Use a palette of earth colors ie. raw sienna, burnt sienna, terra rosa, terre vert, yellow ochre. And blend a neutral with a soupcon of terra rosa neutralizing terre vert.

On the wet, work *too* lightly, nearly invisibly. When it dries the contrasts will increase much.

Sketch of suggested daily areas. (November 13, 1944)

Rivera felt Charlot's light style was too much like watercolor and preferred an overall use of pigment. Orozco innovated by emphasizing his highlights in lime. Charlot also preferred a rough final coat, whereas other muralists like Rivera preferred a maximum smoothness.²⁰⁸ Charlot also switched from pouncing to mark the key lines—a traditional technique with which he started his fresco—to incising a line with a nail.

Charlot himself later abandoned several techniques used in *Massacre*. At the San Andrés convent at Epasoyuca, Hidalgo, Charlot had admired the mural or murals:

j'étais voir fresque à Epasoyuca peinture à la détrempe en noir et blanc. bleu et rouge à la cire (Diary May 21, 1922)

“go see fresco in Epasoyuca (painting in distemper in black and white, blue and red in encaustic.)”

“Painted in in distemper in black and white, with blue and red added in encaustic.” Right or wrong in my quick estimate of the Epazoyucan medium, my admiration for that work suggested the use of a mixed technique for my own, a true fresco in earth colors, with pure vermilion accents added in encaustic. (*MMR* 182)

Charlot would never again use this “mixed technique,” which was probably due to his general desire to incorporate local qualities into his work (e.g., *MMR* 184). Charlot also abandoned the use of different textures and modeling on the mortar surface as well as imbedding objects in it: the “brass upholstery accessories” used for Aztec jewels (*MMR* 185).

I have discussed in my “Jean Charlot's First Fresco” (2001) Charlot's stylistic development towards the *Massacre*: representation structured by geometric composition informed by Cubism. Charlot's own “The Composition of *The Massacre in the Main Temple*” is the authoritative description (John Charlot 1991; 2001 First Fresco: Appendix IV). Geometry is the basic expressive means of the mural. The composition started with the shape of the wall, deliberately chosen as a contrast to easel painting:

I chose it for its diagonal thrust at variance with the routine rectangular shape of an easel picture. (*MMR* 181)

This is in the Escuela Preparatoria in Mexico City. It's part of a great staircase, and, as you see, it is not a rectangle. It is one of those special spaces that exist only, or reasonably exist only, for a muralist. (March 8, 1972)

There is a science of painting connected with expression and proportion which is essential to the mural painter. (February 4, 1952)

Charlot analyzed the surface to be painted into two rectangles. The one on the left was upright with true horizontals and verticals; the one on the right was tipped upwards, with a higher right side. The true horizontal and vertical lines of the left rectangle suggested tranquility and dignity; the diagonals of the right, movement and instability. The left represented the Indian; the right, the European. Moreover, the tipping of the right rectangle caused its top left corner to invade the top right space of the Indian rectangle. The geometry thus suggested the clash of the two rectangles or two cultures during which the European was invading the Indian.

Charlot then expanded his view to the context of the stairwell. The left rectangle was set on the landing from which stairs ascended and descended. Charlot faced a complicated problem of differing points of view, which he discusses at length (John Charlot 2001 *First Fresco: Appendix IV*). He also connected the mural to the two stairs by means of the lances, one of which corresponded to the upper stair and another to the lower:

Because there were two diagonals, one going down and the other, of course, inclined the other way, I had to work out parallels to those diagonals, at the same time relationships of verticals and horizontals, and so on, all kind of things. (March 8, 1972)

The lances are the most obvious means of composition in the mural and have been correctly compared to those in Paolo Uccello's *Battle of San Romano*.²⁰⁹ But other works also provided inspiration like Poussin's *The Battle of Joshua against the Amorites* (1624–1626). In all likelihood, Charlot knew Paul-Joseph Blanc's 1881 *La Bataille de Tolbiac* 'The Battle of Tolbiac' at the Panthéon, which was explicitly based on Uccello (Macé de Lépinay 1997: 18). Lances were also used by many modern artists of World War I.²¹⁰ Later, Charlot would find a parallel in a twelfth-century mural in the Temple of the Tigers at Chich'en Itza where:

The artist has played a masterly game of geometry, using as units the circle which is the shield and the straight line which is the spear... All those diagonals surging upwards from the outside towards the center bring a compositional order the more admirable for using as its means the very excess of action depicted. (*AA II*: 52)

Charlot certainly learned from his experience of assisting Rivera on *Creation*, but he also seems to have felt that at least one aspect of that mural needed correction. In the arch of *Creation*, solid figures are planted on the ground at the sides, and as the viewer's gaze rises, the contents attenuate until the apex—the narrowest space—is occupied only by a geometric diagram, a visual weakness rather than a climax. As a result, the two content-heavy sides of the arch are insufficiently bound together at the top. Rivera seems to

have realized this when he designed the androgyne figure in the alcove. Its arms and the straight diagonals of the “tops” of the “background” sections echo the radiating lines of the diagram. The androgyne gives the diagram a body, which is more expressive and affective than a non-representational geometric form. Rivera would henceforth represent the transcendental principles of his murals in magnificent human figures.

The narrowest space of the *Massacre* is its right edge, and a compositional solution had to be found if it were not to become a weak area of the mural. Since at least cave paintings, such narrow, awkward spaces have been frequent challenges in the history of art. Charlot derided the solution used in the outer angles of the pediment of the Parthenon: a horse’s head sticking its nose as far as possible into the narrowing space. Charlot’s solution was to use a subject he had drawn since childhood: horsemen attacking on a descending diagonal. Charlot compresses the narrowest side of the mural into the densest, most dynamic visual and narrative section (augmented by the contemporary portraits). The heavy coloring at the top—dark and saturated—falls with all its weight on the lighter, more thinly painted colors at the bottom.

The greatest difference between *Creation* and the *Massacre* was that between Rivera’s static Classicism and Charlot’s dynamic. *Creation* was populated by Neo-Classical figures in Beaux-Arts cheesecloth posing as the kind of symbols that were being revived in European paintings of the time. The *Massacre* was filled with an energy that has made people think beyond Classicism to Futurism and the close-up, crowded battle scenes of German art. Charlot described the style: “It showed affinity with the dynamic brand of cubism—of the cog and piston type—that I had practiced in France.”²¹¹ The difference was recognized immediately. Renato Molina Enriquez, acting as Rivera’s mouthpiece, contrasted the stability of *Creation* to the instability of the *Massacre* in April 1923:

esta pintura, vista de lejos, produce la más penosa sensación de inestabilidad, con sus pesados oscuros colocados en lo alto, que materialmente parecen derrumbarse sobre las partes bajas, efecto muy desagradable, posiblemente buscado de intento por el pinto, en el deseo de dar a la alegoría un dinamismo más acentuado, ya que son los conquistadores los que se caen sobre los indios...

‘This picture produces a most painful sensation of instability. The heavy darks at the top seem to tumble materially over the lower half; a most disagreeable effect, possibly intentionally sought by the painter in the desire to give to the allegory a more accented dynamism, since the Conquistadors are the ones who fall on the Indians...’ (1923; partially translated by Charlot)

In contrast, Rivera follows the “principios inmutables” ‘immutable principles’ of mural decoration:

así en la gran decoración mural que es “un complemento” de la arquitectura, es fundamental que como ella tenga estabilidad, resultante también de un equilibrio de masas y de fuerzas...hay que hacer constar por otra parte, que la modernidad de una obra, no está reñida con esos elementales principios, y tenemos allí la decoración de Diego Rivera, en que la más libre concepción y ejecución se aúnan con la estabilidad más absoluta.

‘Being “a complement” of an architecture, great mural decoration should possess a

similar basic stability, resulting also from the equilibrium of the masses and forces...To prove that the modernism of the work need not be jeopardized by such a rule, we have here the decoration of Diego Rivera, where the greatest freedom of conception and execution is welded to absolute stability.’ (partially translated by Charlot)

In March of the same year, Ortega wrote in his “La obra admirable de Diego Rivera”:

Un sentir profundo y un hondo desinterés han inspirado su obra [*Creation*], que es tranquila y serena, fuerte y alta. Pongámosle un contraste, nunca una comparación: el fresco de Charlot en la parte superior de la misma escuela. Este último nos deja conturbados, atemorizados, porque es de una violencia inusitada.²¹²

‘A profound feeling and deep disinterestedness have inspired [Rivera’s] work, which is tranquil and serene, strong and elevated. Let us place a contrast to it, never a comparison: the fresco of Charlot in the higher part of the same school. This last leaves us disturbed, frightened, because of its unusual violence.’

The instability was the effect Charlot was seeking as he explained in his “Réponse à Molina” and one he would use in his later *Cargadores*:

C’est un équilibre absolument instable fournissant l’idée mouvement. L’accumulation des noirs en haut ajoute à l’idée d’instabilité celle d’écrasement des deux masses “combattantes,” l’une est pénétrée par l’autre, très supérieure en volume, en vitesse et en force. (April 1923)

‘It is an absolutely unstable equilibrium furnishing the idea of movement. The accumulation of blacks at the top adds to the idea of instability that of the crushing of the two “combating” masses, the one is penetrated by the other, much superior in volume, speed, and force.’

The inspiration was certainly Charlot’s experience in World War I, as expressed in 1916 by Louis Mairat, a soldier who died the next year: “What we hoped was only a passing state of affairs...has become stability, stable in its very instability” (Greenhalgh 2014: 401).

The difference between the murals has continued to be recognized, for instance, by Octavio Paz: “a masterwork thanks to its dynamic composition and its rhythm” (1993: 133). Charlot’s dynamic version of Classicism pioneered an option that many of the muralists would choose, an influence fortified by the fact that the *Massacre* was the first mural completed of the new group. Claude Fell saw that some artists abandoned Italian serenity and “evoluciona hacia un expresionismo cada vez más violento” ‘and evolved towards an increasingly violent expressionism’ (1989: 424). But he did not recognize that this began with the *Massacre*, the earliest completed mural of the new group, and that that mural was the most violent of the movement.

The composition of the *Massacre* was more complicated than that of the other murals of the time. It is probably one of the most complicated in the history of art.²¹³ Besides Roberto Montenegro, Charlot was the only artist who had previously planned a mural, the unrealized *Processional*, which must have helped him

with his new project. But the composition of that earlier mural was much simpler than that of the *Massacre*. Between the two, as seen above, Charlot was studying Baroque and Rococo composition and had painted *L'Amitié*, which is stylistically much closer to the *Massacre*. Charlot could absorb his geometry more into his representation, as in *Lavanderas* in the Ministry of Education, but he could always make it more obvious, as in the *Life of St. Bridget* (1939). That is, Charlot always used geometric composition, but he could make it more or less overt depending on the context. I would guess that the context of the Preparatoria school invited his cerebral appeal to the students.

Charlot developed beyond some of the expressive devices he used in *Massacre*. He came to regret basing his Indian costumes on unhistorical eighteenth-century artworks in order to make the mural more appropriate to its Colonial building. In fact, his criticisms of such works could be applied to the *Massacre*:

La faune et la flore du pays semblaient inconnues et les types aztèques servaient de prétexte à des mascarades aussi peu historiques qu'emplumées.²¹⁴

'The fauna and flora of the land seemed unknown and the Aztec types served as a pretext for masquerades as little historical as they were feathery.'

Charlot was determined to connect his mural esthetically to the Indian past. For this, he was prepared: "De todos los pintores de San Ildefonso Charlot era quien mejor conocía las formas pictóricas y gráficas indígenas para representar cuerpos" 'Of all the painters of San Ildefonso, Charlot was the one who knew better the indigenous pictorial and graphic forms to represent bodies' (Lilia Roura Fuentes 2012: 241). In France, he had related the Cubist use of ideograms to Aztec hieroglyphs—which he had studied since childhood—and used them as an expressive means in several works (John Charlot 2001 First Fresco: Appendix I). In the *Massacre*, he applied an ideogram he had created in France for a World War I gouache to the dance shield in the center of the Indian rectangle, the target of the lances.

Charlot also used private symbols, most of which had sources in his war experience. For instance, as a young child, he had been fascinated by flowers growing out of the ground rather than being stuck cut in pots. During the War, he made sketches of wild flowers with the thought that he might die before he saw them again. In his 1918 lithograph *Saint Barbara* (M8), tiny flowers grow right in the path of the Juggernaut cannon wheel. In the *Massacre*, a falling blonde youth dies trying to shield a spray of flowers from the charge of the armored knights. Lilia Roura Fuentes has added the Aztec use and symbolism of flowers to the analysis of the mural (2012: 236 ff.).

The blondeness of the youth, and other elements, indicated that the *Massacre*—unlike Alva de la Canal's *The Planting of the Cross in the New World* (1922–1923)—was not to be understood as a purely historical representation, but symbolically. The mural extended its significance to Charlot's own war and to all atrocities, past and future. Thus Charlot can point the mural out to a young blonde boy in a group of artists in the bottom right corner. (The boy replaced an adult man in the preparatory drawings, perhaps another colleague.) The boy's youth indicates that he can carry its message beyond the years allotted to the artist, and his blondeness, that he can carry it beyond the borders of Mexico. Charlot regularly used children in his murals, as well as his other works, to include posterity in their messages. In *Visual Arts, Drama, Music* (1942), a child imitates in play the artists around him. In *Cortez Lands in Mexico* (1944), a young Indian boy

and girl (my sister Ann and me) study a bug instead of the portentous event. In *Cotton Gin* (1942), a pair of African-American college students represents the fruits of their fathers' labor. In *Early Contacts of Hawai'i with the Outer World* (1951–1952), a blonde missionary boy (my brother Peter) plays with a Hawaiian girl. In *Nativity at the Ranch* (1953), a young boy represents the next generation of cowboys. The Aztec girl observing her elders working in *Lavanderas* (1923) is very close to the Hawaiian girl helping hers in *The Relation of Man and Nature in Old Hawai'i* (1974). More examples could be given.²¹⁵

In the *Massacre*, Charlot joined history, *costumbres*, and symbolism. Although the mural as a whole was appreciated, the combination of elements confused many, and Charlot went on to develop a different sort of symbolism described above.²¹⁶ Later he would use his developed subjects like ideograms in larger combinations, as in *Cortez Lands in Mexico*.

Just as Charlot related ideograms to hieroglyphs, so he used Classical and Indian masks to express cultural similarity and to indicate a common humanity underneath cultural differences. Rivera had used a Greek theatrical mask to designate Tragedy in *Creation*, and Charlot had emphasized the mask in his section *La Tragédie* of his *XX Proses Suivant la Psychoplastie de D. M. Rivera* of 1923.²¹⁷ Charlot found similar works for his own mural in Mexican Indian art: "Rabid in its pro-Indian subject matter, my own 1922 fresco contains creative passages that parallel the forms and moods of diorite masks."²¹⁸ Charlot would continue to emphasize the similarities in his archeological work: "Curved fangs protrude from the yellow lips, shaped like the mouth of a Greek theater mask" (Morris, Charlot, and Morris 1931: 238). In the *Massacre*, Charlot painted faces based both on masks that were more Greek and masks that were more Indian. A striped spear marks the Golden Section of the right rectangle and is tipped into a diagonal along with it. The face at the middle right of the spear and the one at the bottom left are based on Indian masks. The face above the blue robe of the fallen blonde figure and that of the man sunk into the bottom left corner are based on Greek. Charlot's interest in masks at the time is evident in the number of images he created of masked dancers, and he continued to produce related images through his life.

Charlot elucidated his subject and theme in his "Réponse à Molina" (John Charlot 2001 First Fresco: Appendix II). Starting from an atrocity of the Conquest, Charlot uses symbolism to expand his message in time and space to the perennial clash of ideals represented by different cultures:

Une telle "bataille" de races, considérée en soi, serait anecdotique. Elle tire sa valeur de ce qu'elle n'est qu'une illustration de ce conflit plus général qui existe entre la recherche du *Beau et du bien* d'un côté, et celle de *l'argent et du jouir* de l'autre.

'Such a "clash" between races could be anecdotal, but has general validity as the symbol of a conflict of more general character: between the search for the *Beautiful and Good* and that for *Money and Pleasure*.'²¹⁹

The subject is not terribly happy. It's the massacre of the Indians by the Spaniards in the main temple in Mexico City, while they were busy dancing in honor of the god of

flowers. Maybe you have seen the play *Indians*, which in a small way suggests something similar. (March 8, 1972)

The same broadening of context is found in the nineteenth-century debate about Indian barbarism and Spanish civilization: the atrocity was used by the French *Mexicanistes* to defend Aztec culture and condemn the Conquest as ultimately damaging for the natives (e.g., Charnay 1885: 26 f., 36, 236, 238). Charlot's choice of subject is based on the participation of several generations of his family in Mexicanist endeavors. Charlot saw the massacre as the beginning of systematic efforts to suppress native dancing along with other aspects of the culture:

La danse du Templo Mayor que "troubla" Alvarado est un symbole du cas qu'en firent les Espagnols. (April 1925)

'The dance of the Main Temple, which Alvarado "troubled," is a symbol of the value the Spaniards set on [Indian dance].'

Charlot could apply the contrast of cultures depicted in the mural to the battle between different Mexican nations:

the Mayans were over-fond of astronomy, mathematics, and religion. They were not interested as much in weapons. Their most efficient one was the Atl-Atl, a kind of javelin thrower, propelled by hand. Towards the end of their history, the Aztecs, who were a soldiery folk, attacked the Mayans with a powerful weapon that they lacked, the bow and arrow. And all the Mayan philosophy could not stop their mechanized thrust.²²⁰

Many of the Mexican revolutionaries considered their struggle a continuation of that against the Conquest, part of one long struggle of the natives against various invaders. The machine-like armor of the Conquistadors brought clearly to mind the long-time threat of the industrialized United States (e.g., Charnay 1885: 16 f., 31, 241). More generally, the mural was an example of the shared effort of the movement to depict ignored or excluded parts of the population and reveal their vitality and dignity in their conflicts with those in power (compare Fell 1989: 424 f.).

This broadening of the message was for Charlot a characteristic of art. Time brings unforeseen contexts, and future viewers bring their new needs and interests. The relevance and significance of an artwork can never be exhaustively defined but only progressively realized:

But perhaps within the lifetime of the artist, within his slice of time, so to speak, his attitude is that of a man who is not preoccupied directly with the problems of the society he lives in, because what he does he knows that it will be projected out of time into the future to become a living value in that future when he himself will not be there. (Charlot February 4, 1952: 19)

Charlot's example of Velazquez applies to the efforts of the Mexican muralists to create a national image:

But we realize that Velazquez put in his pictures some of the spirit of Spain at the moment when the Spanish nationality was in formation, and that single-handed, as a

single man, he helped realize what we call now the Spanish spirit which has become the strength of the Spanish nation.

...If we look at him over the range of centuries, we realize that he did more to build up the society of Spain and the feeling of the nation in Spain than all the armies of the King of Spain put together. So we must go a little slowly when we criticize artists and remember that what they are doing is not too much for our time. It comes out of our time and will become functional perhaps a hundred years to two hundred years from now.

(Charlot February 4, 1952: 22)

The interpretation of the *Massacre* has been hindered by the long and widespread use of the incorrect title, some variation of *The Fall of Tenochtitlán*.²²¹ The mural would thereby refer to a hard-fought battle rather than to the massacre of unarmed dancers.²²² The consequences of this mistake can be seen in the recent work of Leonard Folgarait (1998). He states that “The title is *The Conquest of Tenochtitlán*,” but in an endnote he writes: “Tenochtitlán was the name of Mexico City in Aztec times. Charlot calls his own painting *Massacre in the Main Temple*.”²²³ Folgarait interprets the mural according to his own choice of title rather than the artist’s:

The subject of the Conquest is quite simply depicted: an avalanche of armored Spanish soldiers bears down from the right, burying the points of long red lances into helpless and unresisting Aztec soldiers, priests, and members of a small entourage. The monstrous war efficiency and technology of Spain extinguish a colorful, pathetic, helpless culture. (1998: 47)

As seen in the above quotations about Aztec weapons, Charlot was aware of the Indian capacity for aggression and resistance. As opposed to, say, José Vasconcelos, Charlot had a personal and professional knowledge of Indian culture and did not share the romantic idealizations of amateurs (compare, e.g., Coleby 1999: 35).

Charlot’s *Massacre* is charged with an intensity carried through from the earliest preparatory drawings. A resulting achievement is the breadth of intellectual and emotional response it evokes. This is due to Charlot’s own empathetic religion, his Christianity that reaches out to all: in the *Massacre*, he is siding with the Aztecs in their temple ceremony against his Spanish coreligionaries. The *Massacre* is more a liturgical painting than an historical one. In small letters Charlot painted on the wall “v.i.o.D.G.” or “ut in omnis Deo Gloria” ‘that in all things glory be given to God.’ On November 5, 1922, while working on the *Massacre*, Charlot wrote Walter Pach: “Je me sens porté vers la peinture religieuse et l’art Saint-Sulpice avec une grande force” ‘I feel myself drawn with a powerful force to religious painting and the art of Saint Sulpice’ that is, church murals. In the 1920s, the person who saw most clearly the religious character of the *Massacre* was the German-Jewish Marxist Alfons Goldschmidt, who connected it to Charlot’s *Chemin de Croix*:

Charlot, ein junger, französischer Katholik, begann in Paris mit einer Passion Christi und suchte später in Mexiko die Indio-Passion zu schildern. Er ist so zu sagen der Maler-Evangelist des Indio, ohne daß er die Leidensgeschichte des braunen Menschen darstellt. Er streitet nicht, er wirbt um Mitleiden für die gütigen Passivität des mexikanischen

Grundmenschen. Nicht das Thema, die Empfindung ist religiös geblieben, auch wo Charlot das Heroische und Grauenhafte des indianischen Verzweiflungskampfes malt, beispielsweise in den grandiosen Treppenfresken der Präparatoria in Mexiko-Stadt. Auf diesen einzigartigen Schlachtengemälden sterben Indios wie ergebungsvolle braune Gallier. Angriff, Widerstand und Verscheiden, alles ist mild verklärt. (Goldschmidt 1927: 1)

‘Charlot, a young, French Catholic, began in Paris with a Passion of Christ and sought later in Mexico to portray the Indian Passion. He is, so to speak, the Gospel-Writer–Painter of the Indian, without depicting the historical sufferings, the Passion-Story, of the brown people. He does not fight, he seeks to win sympathy for the kind-hearted passivity of the Mexican natives. Not the subject, the sensibility has remained religious, even where Charlot paints the heroic and gruesome in the Indians’ final, desperate struggle, for example, in the grandiose stairwell frescoes of the Preparatoria in Mexico City. In these singular battle paintings, the Indians die like resigned brown Gauls. Attack, resistance, and death are all made blissfully luminous.’²²⁴

Apart from the article by Molina, the reception of *The Massacre* was generally positive. Mérida stated:

Su primer fresco, *La Masacre en el Templo*, detuvo la influencia necesaria de ser el primer trabajo que se hizo sobre fresco, en el cual hay también parte de añadidos metálicos y de trabajos que están fuera del “fresco buono”, que se llama. La opinión de esta pintura... fue muy comentada y ejerció influencia definida sobre los demás compañeros que trabajaron con él en la Preparatoria y que fueron Leal y que fue Alva de la Canal y que fue Cahero y algunos otros, que estaban trabajando dentro de otras facetas pero que de todas maneras no tenían, ni nunca tuvieron una capacidad y una maestría que ha durado tanto hasta ahorita como la tuvo Jean Charlot en el momento y como la sigue teniendo dentro de su rama.²²⁵

‘His first fresco, *The Massacre in the Temple*, had the necessary influence of being the first work that was done in fresco, in which there are also parts with metallic additions and workings that are outside of *fresco buono*, as it is called. The opinion about this painting... it was much commented on and exercised a definite influence on the other companions who worked with him in the Preparatoria and who were Leal, Alva de la Canal, Cahero, and some others who were working on other facets but in no way had, nor ever had, a capacity and mastery that has lasted so long until now as Jean Charlot had and as he continues to have in his branch.’

Maples Arce wrote much later:

espléndida arquitectura que ennoblecíó con una pintura de la conquista, en que combaten guerreros aborígenes contra acorazados conquistadores, una obra impresionante por su movimiento, su fuerza y su significación estética y moral. (1982)

‘splendid architecture that ennobled the Conquest with a painting in which the aboriginal warriors fought against armored Conquistadors, a work impressive for its movement, its power, and its esthetic and moral significance.’

Charlot’s *Massacre* had an indisputable influence on the mural movement, both general and particular, conscious and unconscious (compare e.g., Rosales 1999a). General influences would include the use of fresco and a dynamic Classicism. In particular, Rivera quoted the red lances in his 1929–1930 *Historia de México, desde la época prehispánica al futuro* ‘History of Mexico from the Prehispanic period to the future’ in the Palacio Nacional. Charlot’s unhistorical depiction of armored, mounted Conquistadors as steel machines was widely shared and expanded:

conquistadores transformados en robots criminales.²²⁶

‘Conquistadores transformed into criminal robots.

a triumph of more sophisticated hardware—lances, horses, arms or armor—rather than the introduction of a higher culture or a take-over motivated by the will of God. Later, this point of view was adopted by Rivera and others and became accepted as the way to portray the Conquest. (Hiteshew 1970: 12)

For instance, in his Alhóndiga de Granaditas frescoes (1955–1967), José Chavez Morado depicts Cortes in armor although historically the Spaniards wore cloth protection in Mexico. In his frescoes in the Hospicio Cabañas (1937–1930), Orozco follows the *Massacre* even in the detail of omitting the eye-slits from the Spanish helmets.

Unconscious influences are harder to establish. In my opinion, the three faces in Orozco’s *Dive Bomber and Tank* (1940) may owe something to Charlot’s use of masks; the face looking up in *Dive Bomber and Tank* bears a resemblance to that of the Indian in the lower left corner of the *Massacre*. More generally, Charlot’s procedure was unusual. He absorbed the Greek or Indian mask into the context as a real face. The viewer does not register the features as a mask being worn. But visually, the face is still sufficiently close to the relevant mask that the viewer recognizes it as a reference or even a double image. Orozco establishes that middle point between artifact and reality but from the opposite direction: the artifact is basic and reminds the reader of a face. Such original thinking argues against conscious influence.

7.3.

CONCLUSION

Since November 24, 1921, when Charlot arrived back in Mexico to stay, he had been enormously productive. He had established woodcuts as a major genre and helped establish the use of fresco. He had helped the young artists move from Impressionism to a more constructive, Expressionist style that was appropriate to murals. He provided a model of dynamic Classicism to contrast with Rivera’s static style. With the other young artists, he developed themes and subjects that would become standard for the Mexican

Mural Renaissance. He was already writing articles to explain and publicize the movement and gathering materials for his later, more extensive work.

Charlot felt that this early period and the contribution of the group of younger artists was absorbed into the narrative of Diego Rivera and forgotten. Charlot was scrupulous about giving Rivera credit whenever he thought it was deserved. But he regretted that others of his colleagues were neglected and felt sometimes discouraged:

JPC:

I don't have that little text, by the way. I'd like to get it from you. Were these early paintings and woodcuts you did in Mexico, did they reach the public at all and was there any reaction to them?

JC:

Well, they were reproduced, as you know, in some magazines, the *Universal Ilustrado*, which was a weekly, and certainly lots of people read the *Universal Ilustrado*. They were shown, I think, also. A little later on, the *Estridentistas*, the modern poets, showed them in something they called *The Café de Nadie*, that is "Nobody's Café," where they met and discussed, I suppose, literary problems. I'm quite sure it didn't make much of a stir. That is, it wasn't a turning point for anybody. (Jean Charlot, May 18, 1971)

Much of Charlot's writing is intended to redress the balance of the received historiography. When Carlos Mérida read the *MMR* section on his own work, he wrote Charlot on December 2, 1943:

Gracias muchas, eres muy generoso, al tratar mi intervención en la aventura de la pintura mexicana. Algo tuvimos que ver en ello y alguna vez habría de hacérsenos justicia. 'Many thanks—you are very generous in the way you treat my intervention in the adventure of Mexican painting. We had something to do with it, and sometime justice must be done us.'

More important, however, than Charlot's influence is the quality of his work. In all the genres discussed above, Charlot created powerful images that moved far beyond the previous conventions and are arguably unparalleled in later work. Charlot's images retain their power today, which proves his statement: "They were not attempts, sir; they were realizations" (Interview May 14, 1971).

¹ In Charlot's letters to Pach are found also the following addresses: 129 Nuevo Mexico (late 1922–early 1923); Calle Uruguay 102 (September 12, 1928); 43 Colon (undated).

² JC to AB "Excuse the paper." I have not identified "Mexam," but Charlot notes it in diary entries connected to project proposals, Vanegas Arroyo, and drawings (October 22, 1924; 1925: January 13, 14, May 13, 18). I believe it can be identified with the Instituto de Cultura Estética, for which Charlot produced drawings of Mexican folk dances, discussed in Chapter 8.

³ Charlot October-December 1922 Conseils. Charlot was once looking fixedly at a large painting of his. When I asked why, he said that he had scraped off an older painting to have a canvas for a new one. He now felt that the older one was better and was trying to remember it. At the time, he must have been so poor that he could not afford a big canvas, but wanted so much to paint that he resorted to a drastic expedient.

⁴ Charlot 1928 Posada Grabador. Compare Siqueiros 1996: 494. This may have been a topic the two artists discussed together.

⁵ I thank Lew Andrews for the best dates of the photographs.

⁶ JC to AB May 3, 1925. Also “Can you send me the best choice.” However poor the Charlots were, Indians were even poorer!

⁷ Weston 1931: 6; 1961: 43, 84, 144, 202. Also Albers 1999: 128, 153.

⁸ Weston 1961: 102. Pablo O’Higgins remembered:

That was in 1924, August of ‘24, when I arrived.

Jean, when I first met Jean, he was living with his mother in a little house near the... in center of the city, no?

But going back to Jean. When I was with Jean, we had dinner together, and we would... a very fine person, his mother, and Jean. (March 21, 1974)

⁹ Interview August 7, 1971. On the following, Volume 1, Chapter 8, Section 3.2.

¹⁰ Chapter 3. E.g., Stewart 1951: 49 f., 78. Emilio Amero web site: emilioamero.com/chrono.html. Zuñiga 2008.

¹¹ Leal 1990: 170. Charlot remembered that Leal was “the fellow that I was a friend with the earliest of the group” (Interview May 14, 1971). Vidal de Alba 1990.

¹² Blanchard mistakes *Rosario* for a woman’s name. Rosario Cabrera (1901–1975) studied at the EPAL of Chimalistac and in Paris as a government grantee, and was appointed director at Coyoacán in 1928 and at Cholula in 1929. Oles and Ramirez 2005: 126, 152 [Velázquez].

¹³ Interview May 18, 1971. M26. Volume 1, Chapter 8, Section 3.3. *MMR* index; 157 ff., a vivid description of Cahero by Leal.

¹⁴ *MMR* 159, 161; Index. Chapter 4. Siqueiros agreed with Charlot’s assessment (1977: 202 f., 211, 476). Maples Arce 1981: 40, describes Revueltas as an Impressionist.

¹⁵ *MMR* 155. Appendini 1972: 3. On Asúnsolo, see Vasconcelos 1982 *Memorias* 2: 43 ff., 244.

¹⁶ Appendini 1972: 3. *MMR* 305 ff.

¹⁷ Charlot-Blanchard September 16, 1922: 17. Rivera made the same judgment (*MMR* 165 [Leal]).

¹⁸ *MMR* 167. Leal 1990: 81.

- ¹⁹ *MMR* 74 f., 133. Diary December 31, 1927, Charlot gathering pictures by Foncerrada, probably for an exhibition. Brenner-Charlot 64. She is listed with the young artists by Rivera n.d. Glusker 2010: 96 f., 104, 273; index.
- ²⁰ Brenner mentions a Salvador Ugarte, whom she describes as a more interesting singer than painter (Glusker 2010: 156, 163, 173).
- ²¹ Charlot 1965 Articles for *EJB*: “Mexican Painting”; 1960 Mexican Renaissance: 17 ff.; *AA* II 253. The title of Charlot’s review of Alma Reed’s *Orozco* is “Orozco at Close Range: From Cartoonist To Master” (July 22, 1956). Compare Pach 1923: 136, “the fiercely expressive illustrations of Señor Orozco, and was doubtless part of the secret of the power he wielded in his years as a political cartoonist.” Fauchereau 2013: 85 ff.
- ²² Charlot 1918–1923. Diary 1922: June 19, December 6, 1 December 24, 1922. Charlot [1922] Mexique.
- ²³ Charlot October 1922. The date seems to be for its intended publication: “pour ‘Vida Mexicana’” ‘for *Vida Mexicana*.’” Charlot [before February 1922] Mexico de los Humildes, traducción de Diego Rivera. See the bibliographical notes in *TF* and *Escritos*.
- ²⁴ Araujo 1923: July 11, 26. Claudel 1931: 7–10. See my discussion in Chapter 1.
- ²⁵ Leal 1990: 170. Tibol 1987: 4.
- ²⁶ Interview May 14, 1971. Leal remembered: “He punctuated his endless disquisitions with elegant gestures and French expressions, but the overflowing youthful enthusiasm was catching” (*San Carlos* 161).
- ²⁷ *MMR* 51; 181, Ramos Martínez “received me most courteously and allowed me to paint at the open-air school of Coyoacán.”
- ²⁸ Leal 1990: 173 f. Azuela 1986: 231 (Debroise). Compare Mello 2002b: 65, and Lilia Roura Fuentes 2012: 294, on Orozco. As a cartoonist, Orozco used black, not color.
- ²⁹ Flores 2013: 310. Fauchereau 2013: 67, speculates that Charlot and Rivera helped Maples Arce with the list of progressive artists. Reyes Palma 1991: 49, these names were not signatures, just references.
- ³⁰ John Charlot 2007. Interview May 18, 1971:

I just went into the street, and I have many of those little sketches, even a series of lithographs of people I had met in the street. Then, of course, when Luz presented me to her family in the village of Milpa Alta, that was direct, everyday Indian life, and there was no need—in fact I don’t think I ever had people pose again—with the exception of Luz, that would pose from time to time for something like *The Fold of the Rebozo* and so on. So there is, as you say, something that is from a school, so to speak, in the first things I did in Leal’s studio in the school of Coyoacán.

Luz Jiménez, símbolo de un pueblo milenario 1897–1965 2000.

- ³¹ Interview May 14, 1971. Chapter 3, Section 4. The date is given in Charlot’s diary.
- ³² Interview August 7, 1971. Mijangos 2000: 193, Tamayo also felt that Rivera was the first person with whom he could really discuss art.

³³ Interview August 7, 1971. Also Leal 1990: 173.

³⁴ Diary 1922. Work: April 5–8, 17–18, 19 (“vu mur pour décoration” ‘saw wall for mural’), 20–22, 24–26; May 1, 3, 6, 7, 26 (“moulu couleurs pour Ribera” ‘ground colors for Rivera’), 27 (“moulu couleurs pour Ribera” ‘ground colors for Rivera’), 30 (same), 31 (same); June 3 (same), 8–10, 12–14, 23, 25, 26, 29; July 7, 11, 13, 16, 28, 31; August 5, 9, 16; November 16, 17. Social: May 22, 28 (trip to Milpa Alta); July 4 (“soir dîné chez Diego avec Assunsolo [*sic*]” ‘evening dined at Diego’s with Asúnsolo’); December 6, 31. Unclear: May 5, June 6, August 3.

Leal writes that he as well as Charlot was asked to assist Rivera (1990: 175). Siqueiros 1977: 180, mentions Leal being on the *Creation* team (along with Revueltas, Alva de la Canal, and Cahero, with Maximo Pacheco and Manzana as assistants), and that is the recollection of Leal’s family (Flores personal communication August 26, 2013). But only Escobar, Guerrero, Mérida, Charlot and Amado de la Cueva are listed as assistants in the invitation to the unveiling (*MMR* 147; Wolfe 1939: 156). Rivera 1924 Guild Spirit: 175, lists Alva, Charlot, Cahero, Leal, and Revueltas as the young artists who worked earliest on *Creation*; Siqueiros and de la Cueva came later; and Rivera implies that Guerrero, Mérida, and Amero came later still! From my own experience of working on my father’s murals, I know that people can volunteer for a day or more without being considered official assistants. In the early 1920s, the muralists were often helping each other without being credited.

³⁵ Diary 1924: May 10, August 2 (“7 h ½ parti pour Chapingo avec Diego” ‘7:30 AM left for Chapingo with Diego’), September 27?.

³⁶ Glusker 2010: 129, entry of April 10, 1926. Glusker 1998: 46 f.

³⁷ Siqueiros 1977: 161, Rivera was a respected Cubist but not of the first rank. Charlot had a higher estimation of Rivera as a Cubist:

People are unjust to his Cubist period. They tried to push him out of that chapter of art history as soon as he left. But in later works on Cubism, he’s beginning to get more of his fair share. (Tabletalk Mid-1970s?)

³⁸ This view has been accepted by many, e.g., Covarrubias 1940: 139. Charlot wrote against this view in *MMR* and elsewhere, e.g., March 8, 1972. See also Writings on *MMR*; Passages Cut: “‘Creation’ was officially completed by March 1923. Its execution encompasses the period when, in the same building, murals by five young painters were begun, and some of them were completed.”

³⁹ *MMR* 300 ff. *Idols* 284, Rivera paints Vasconcelos after his fall in a negative context, “surely ingratitude!” Compare Siqueiros’ accusations in Prignitz 1992: 28.

⁴⁰ Tabletalk early 1970s. John Charlot 2001 First Fresco. Glusker 2010: 252, “Gran Don Diego, given his care for publicity.”

⁴¹ Tabletalk early 1970s. Frances Flynn Paine promoted Rivera’s views in New York (Paine 1932: 29). *Idols* 286, the importance of foreign recognition for Rivera.

⁴² Glusker 2010: 583; also 252; 1998: 50 f., Orozco later felt forced to use Rivera's publicity techniques in New York City; 192, Brenner felt Rivera deliberately provoked a public controversy around his Rockefeller Center mural, a stunt that went wrong. *Idols* 286.

⁴³ Bissière 1921: 209 f. Charlot 1925 Letter.

⁴⁴ Compare Orozco's description of Ángel Zárraga in his letter to Charlot of April 18, 1943:

acaba de llegar de Europa, de París, Ángel Zárraga, que asegura que el único bueno es él y además de ser el mejor es el único pintor religioso en existencia pues todos los demás somos unos diablos. Ya pintó al fresco el "Bar" (cantina) del club de banqueros (10 pesos una cerveza) y ahora pinta la catedral de Monterrey mejor que Fra Angélico y Piero de la Francesca.

'Ángel Zárraga just arrived from Europe, from Paris, which insures that the only good one is he, and besides being the best, is the unique religious painter in existence since all the rest of us are some devils. He already painted the "Bar" (canteen) of the bankers' club (10 pesos for a beer) and is now painting the cathedral of Monterrey better than Fra Angelico and Piero de la Francesca.'

⁴⁵ Pach 1922: 135. See also Pach 1926: 246, "Diego Rivera, the chief figure in Mexican painting today."

⁴⁶ Quoted in *MMR* 168. Similarly, Rivera was supposed to send news about the art scene to Siqueiros in Europe but failed to do so (Siqueiros 1977: 171 f.).

⁴⁷ Zalce July 27–28, 1971. Glusker 1998: 44, "Diego Rivera went after anyone with talent who might steal a bit of his limelight. He was intensely jealous and protective about walls for murals"; 190, "his intense competitiveness with other artists"; 2010: 152, "his fear of Orozco (& Goitia)."

⁴⁸ Glusker 2010: 290; also 67, 307, 533. Rivera once told Charlot he was "a *great sculptor*" (Tabletalk early 1970s?).

⁴⁹ Glusker 2010: 18; also 250; 1998: 46, 215, "Although Anita was friendly with Diego Rivera, she rescued artists when he went after them." Weston reports that Rivera tried unsuccessfully to get Pintao a commission (Weston 1961: 44); Weston also was impressed by Pintao (1941: 44, 49, 89 f.).

⁵⁰ I thank Sylvia Orozco for this thought.

⁵¹ Glusker 1998: 295, 297, 552. Le Clézio 1993: 95 f., "Même les peintres qui étaient à ses côtés dès le début, Orozco, Siqueiros, Jean Charlot, à présent le critiquent, lui reprochent ses succès, tournent en dérision son parti pris indigéniste" 'Even the painters who were at his side since the beginning—Orozco, Siqueiros, Jean Charlot—now criticize him, reproach his success, and deride his indigenist commitment.' No reference is provided. López Orozco 2012: 101 f., Charlot had "una honda molestia hacia Rivera" 'a deep annoyance with Rivera' for the destruction of his mural.

⁵² E.g., Charlot to Pach n.d. early 1923?. Compare Weston 1961 : 104.

- ⁵³ Personal communication. Mijangos 2000: 203, Tamayo felt he himself was the only one who defended Rivera.
- ⁵⁴ Cuesta 1903–1942. Tabletalk early 1970s?. Irwin 2003: 152–160.
- ⁵⁵ Photographs of the card are in the JCC. The original was kept by the person who was to give it to Charlot.
- ⁵⁶ Rivera, n.d. (mid-1920s). I have edited lightly but kept some of Rivera’s original spelling. I have not been able to find a translation for *heinatos*. Lilia Roura Fuentes 2012: 228 f., ascribes a laudatory quotation to Rivera, but it is by Wolfe (1963: 158).
- ⁵⁷ Writings Related to *MMR*: Appendix III; *MMR* Index. Delpar 1992: 140. Anreus 2001: 24. McCarthy 2011: 131.
- ⁵⁸ Charlot 1966 Foreword: x. Tabletalk June 19, 1971, identifies the critic as Pach. Charlot reported the event to Brenner:

Recibi carta tontita de Pach. No le gustaron mis cuadros (tu paisaje y el baile de niñas.)
 Me a consejo ver revistas parisienses para enterarme de la evolucion actual del arte europeo. (JC to AB “Yo se muy bien que no puedes escribir mucho”)
 ‘I received a silly letter from Pach. He does not like my pictures (your landscape and the dance of the little girls). He counsels me to see Parisian journals to find out about the contemporary evolution of European art.’

Charlot is taking Pach’s criticism of himself as directed at the mural movement as a whole.

- ⁵⁹ Charlot to Pach March 31, 1923; n.d. mid-1920s; October 27, 1925. McCarthy 2011: 132.
- ⁶⁰ Pach 1924. JC to AB March 12, 1925: “Mandame el libro de Pach ‘Masters of modern art.’ Te lo pagaré cuando rico” ‘Send me Pach’s book *Masters of Modern Art*. I’ll pay you for it when I’m rich.’
- ⁶¹ Writings Related to *MMR*: Appendix III. JC to AB March 12, 1925.
- ⁶² Diary 1922: July 25, 30; August 2, 3, 4, 10, 24, 25, 29; September 5, 16, 21, 25, 26; October 5, 17, 18.
- ⁶³ Web site, Swann Auction Galleries, October 1, 2014.
- ⁶⁴ Rivera to Pach December 7, 1922. Charlot to Pach n.d. early 1923?; October 27, 1925. McCarthy 2011: 131 ff.
- ⁶⁵ Pach 1922: 134 f.; similarly, 1923: 136, “I should like to speak more at length of the work of Señor Charlot, Señor Alfaro, Señor Cano and Señor Amero, but I must hasten on to the work of Señor Rivera.” Pach continued to consider Rivera the most important of the Mexican artists (Pach 1924: 95, 99 f.).
- ⁶⁶ Charlot to Pach October 27, 1925; also n.d. mid-1920s. By late 1925, Charlot was becoming conscious of differences of opinion with Pach. In his diary of August 3, 1925, he reacts negatively to an unidentified writing: “reçu Revue affreuse par W. Pach. idiot” ‘received terrible Revue by W. Pach. idiot.’
- ⁶⁷ CL 65. I thank Bronwen Solyom and Laurette McCarthy for their information on the above. Glusker 2010: 550, Pach did like Charlot’s watercolors.

⁶⁸ McCarthy 2011: 134 f. Charlot June 1928. JC to AB “Con el nº de Julio de The Arts”: “Recibiste el Forma? porque Clemente no recibió el suyo. También mande uno a Pach” ‘Did you receive the *Forma*? because Clemente didn’t receive his. I also sent one to Pach.’ Pach wrote Orozco:

Le escribo más especialmente para decirle el gran gusto que me han causado sus pinturas y dibujos ilustrados en *Forma* que el buen amigo Charlot acaba de enviarme. Su artículo está admirable; le felicito de tener un crítico de tal entendimiento. Son raros. (Orozco V. 1983: 196 f.)

‘I am writing you more especially to tell you of the great pleasure caused by your paintings and drawings illustrated in *Forma* which our good friend Charlot has just sent me. His article is admirable; I congratulate you on having such an understanding critic. They are rare.’

See my discussion in Chapter 1.

⁶⁹ Writings Related to *MMR*: Appendix III. Marlor 1984: 16, “Then, in 1923, the first showing in the United States of paintings by contemporary Mexican artists occurred. Works of fourteen prominent artists along with drawings by Mexican children were represented”; 64, the exhibition was held at the Waldorf Astoria from February 24 to March 18, 1923.

⁷⁰ Charlot April 1931. Charlot to Pach October 27, 1925. JC to AB March 19, 29, 1925. Pach 1926. McCarthy 2011: 134.

⁷¹ JC to AB “Aquí lluevo todo el tiempo.” Charlot April 1931.

⁷² JC to AB “Aquí lluevo todo el tiempo.” “Spring Days” 1926. I thank Tatiana Flores for help with the translation. Brenner considered Pach as bad a backstabber as Rivera (Glusker 2010: 533).

⁷³ Zalce July 27–28, 1971. Doly Labadie wrote to Charlot on January 4, 1974: “Ton ami Siqueiros est très malade” ‘Your friend Siqueiros is very sick.’ I will discuss later Siqueiros’ friendship with Dorothy Day, later wife of Charlot.

⁷⁴ Charlot February 1924. Diary February 1924: 17, 18; January 27, 1925.

⁷⁵ Visiting archeological sites: April 4, 1923. Visiting folk artist villages: 1923: July 26, August 22, September 4 (with Nahui Olin and Revueltas). Socializing or work: December 21, 1922 (a Posada); 1923: July 27, August 20, September 7, December 8 (with Rivera), 12; 1924: May 12, 31, June 6 (with Rivera and Revueltas); February 17, 1925. Cinema: July 14, 1923; January 19, 1924.

⁷⁶ Interview August 7, 1971. Also Interviews 1971: May 18, June 12.

⁷⁷ Araujo July 11 August 2, 1923. See my discussion in Chapter 1. Zohmah Charlot wrote, “With Siqueiros he collaborated on articles and a cartoon strip” (ca. 1980a). I have found nothing on the cartoon strip.

⁷⁸ Tabletalk December 5, 1975. See also Diary May 26, 1923.

⁷⁹ *MMR* 195; 194 ff. For such stories, see, e.g., Siqueiros 1977: 96 f., 102.

⁸⁰ Tabletalk December 5, 1975. On the following Siqueiros section, see Chapter 1.

- ⁸¹ Siqueiros 1977: 204. Scherer 1996: 80, omits *cachondo*.
- ⁸² Chapter 2, Section 5.2. Siqueiros 1977: 211. Siqueiros' own father drew similar ideas on labor from Leo XIII (Scherer 1996: 36).
- ⁸³ Personal communication. Tabletalk December 5, 1975. Others agreed (e.g., Glusker 2010: 42, 69, 512; Siqueiros 1977: 7 [Angélica Arenal de Orozco]).
- ⁸⁴ Charlot February 1924. Siqueiros 1996: 200 f., describes progressing from an artist-bohemian to an artist-citizen towards an “artista-hombre.” Also, e.g., Guadarrama Peña n.d.: 1.
- ⁸⁵ Amero 1947. Leal 1990: 93, 180. Siqueiros 1977: 213–216. *MMR* 241–251. Charlot's 1922 diary mentions several times his work on a *comité* ‘committee,’ some of which might be for the Sindicato, while others would be for his Catholic group, the A.J.C.F. Diary 1923: September 12 (“Syndicat. à propos élection president” ‘Syndicat about the election of the president’), 13, November 4 (“travaille comité : Crespo, Asunzolo Lupe Gabron etc Diego s’abstient. SR vient pour lui” ‘committee work: Crespo, Asúnsolo, Lupe Gabron, etc. Diego abstains. SR comes for him’),

In general, see *MMR* 241251.

- ⁸⁶ Leal 1990: 180 f.. Siqueiros 1996: 340 ff.
- ⁸⁷ *MMR* 274 ff. Siqueiros 1977: 475 ff.
- ⁸⁸ Charlot 1976 Draft of a Blurb. *MMR* 245. Siqueiros 1977: 118, 192 f.; 1978: 38. Rashkin 2009: 67 ff. Fauchereau 2013: 114, *El Machete* complemented mural work.
- ⁸⁹ M56. Diary June 29, 1924 (“commencé caric. sur bois” ‘started caricature. on wood’).
- ⁹⁰ Writings Related to *MMR*, Passages Cut. Other cut passages supplement *MMR* 181 ff.:

“*May 19*. See Toledano apropos decoration.”

“*July 15*. Try head on wall.” I tacked *in situ* a full-scale pencil drawing of a warrior's head to check perspective and optical deformations.”

“*August 10*. Draw Diego for wall.” A sketch from nature used for his portrait in the group at the lower right.

“*September 8 and 9*. Draw horses.” For the Conquistadores.

MMR 150–162.

- ⁹¹ Fell 1989: 311–322, 340. Krauze 1999: 192, 197.
- ⁹² Flores 2012: 113–116. Lilia Roura Fuentes 2012: 209–219.
- ⁹³ Charlot Interview August 7, 1971. Volume 1, Chapter 8, Section 3.3.2.

⁹⁴ Relevant texts by Charlot, Leal, and Alva de la Canal are in *MMR*. Also Leal 1990: 176181. Charlot summarized the dispute to me in conversation:

Fermín Revueltas and his partner [Alva de la Canal], Leal and JC, all were going to do their murals in fresco. Two did. Revueltas and Leal were frightened of the new medium and did theirs in encaustic. This spoiled the understanding. Both subject matter and style were pretty wobbly. Leal later reversed the story. (Tabletalk Undated, mid-1970s?: ‘Pact’ with Leal)

⁹⁵ Charlot Letter to Pach n.d. janvier 1923? See also May 11, 1922, “Leal s’est coupé la barbe et Revueltas a commencé à peindre !” ‘Leal has cut his beard and Revueltas has started to paint!’

⁹⁶ *MMR* 172. Leal 1990: 180. Edwards 1966: 177. Another accusation reported from the time was that Charlot had switched from encaustic to fresco because it was a quicker medium and he would be able to receive more commissions. Leal felt that similar problems arose between Revueltas and Alva de la Canal (1990: 180).

⁹⁷ *MMR* 172. Leal 1990: 181.

⁹⁸ Negative: Charlot to Brenner “Los cambios libro V. Arroyo”:

Chap XVI : Xavier es muy pobre pintor.

XVII: Leal id. pero puedes incluir woodcut (dansante [*sic*] con luna en la cabeza).

‘Chapter XVI: Xavier is a very poor painter.

XVII: Leal idem. but you can include woodcut (female dancer with moon on the head).

Positive: Charlot to Brenner “Mi direccion hasta que me vaya (?)”: [an exhibition] “Era muy feo, menos Revueltas y un cuadro de Leal” ‘Was very ugly except Revueltas and a painting of Leal.’ Diary August 1, 1928, “bonne toile de Leal” ‘good canvas by Leal.’

⁹⁹ “Writings Related to *MMR*, Passages Cut.” *MMR* 184 f.

¹⁰⁰ Charlot February 4, 1952: 13 ff. I have capitalized School [of Paris] and Mural Renaissance.

¹⁰¹ Letter to Pach May 11, 1922. Diary for December 2: “retouche fresque” ‘retouch fresco.’

¹⁰² Volume 1, Chapter 8, Section 2.1. A crossed-out Caucasian nude can be found on the verso of a sheet of watercolor sketches of costumes.

¹⁰³ Diary April 26, 1922; 1923: May 20, November 16 (with Orozco), 19, 20 (with Asúnsolo), 26, 29, December 3, 4, 5, 6, 12; 1924: March 13 (Tina Modotti), August 16 and later (Anita Brenner); possibly 1924: February 9, 10, May 28.

104 **Morse number**

- 43. See discussion below.
- 44. DS 123
- 45. US 6

M41, 42, appear to be from street sketches as well.

DS 108 is labeled “Mexico,” which suggests that it was done on the first trip, when such labeling had a purpose. The drawing is very crude. However, number 1, the same subject, is labeled “Cholula,” which would date the subject to 1922. In the case of M55, the street sketch survives but not the lithograph.

¹⁰⁵ Morse 1976: 30–33, numbers 45–55, calls the lithographs made from these sketches “Vignettes for an attempted portfolio.” Also Interview June 12, 1971.

Morse number **Disassembled Sketchbooks 1922–1923**

- 48. 112
- 49. 120
- 50. 118
- 51. 92
- 52. 127
- 53. 119
- 54. 89
- 55. Lithograph unlocated US 17

M55 was based on a sketch in the JCC illustrated by Morse, but the lithograph is as yet unlocated. Flores 2012: 143.

¹⁰⁶ DS 60, 91, the courtyard of the hotel. DS 90 may be of an unusually large plant in the hotel garden, similar to ones photographed for publicity.

¹⁰⁷ Diary entries of 1923: May 13, June 23, August 22, September 4, 26, 28, November 11, 21.

¹⁰⁸ DS 30, 113. Other place names are Orizaba (DS 49) and possibly Colima in diary April 4, 1923.

¹⁰⁹ DS 11, man, 3/4 from front, arms and hands in *serape*; 23, woman with rebozo seen from back; 76, man with complicated *serape*; 128, man, big hat, *serape* crossed in front. Globular: DS 12, woman in rebozo, face; 109, man sitting on ground, knees up, covered in a *serape*; 131, man sitting on ground, from side; compare 79, man with rounded *serape* and 122, man with cauldron on back. Cubic: DS 39, man sitting with his knees under his chin; 78, man sitting on ground with knees up, from front.

¹¹⁰ DS 29, woman with child on back, seen from the back (combined bulks of the figures are treated globularly with their hats pointing in different directions). US 13 recto, profile, full body, woman carrying baby on back.

¹¹¹ E.g., DS 5, man or boy in worker's clothes; 13, woman from back; 102, woman with two hats on head, baby in rebozo on back, seen from side (the diagonal is used to express the woman's movement while carrying a burden).

I do not discuss all stylistic features of the sketches, omitting, for instance, Charlot's device of turning the feet differently from the torso. Also, except for his sitting figures, Charlot often places the feet so that the figure is not planted on the ground but in motion, e.g., DS 119, woman holding child in rebozo, from side, one foot in front of other. Note the twist in the figure produced from the point of view on the feet.

¹¹² Prints: M41–45, 48–55. Illustrations: Charlot March 1926; *New Masses* (from M48, 49, 52), Clippings 38.

¹¹³ DS 25, two studies of head with half-mask on jaw; 30, profile of pyramid with angles of walls studied; "profil de S. Juan Teotihuacan" 'profile of S. Juan Teotihuacán,' using the bad excavation-restoration; 113, "frise à Teotihuacan" 'frieze at Teotihuacán'; 125, architectural decoration. US 4, meander-like Aztec decorations; US 9 recto, Aztec art motifs; verso: head with Aztec half-mask.

¹¹⁴ DS 24, Mexican Indian Christian art in church; 28, church interior.

¹¹⁵ DS 104, tall jar with horizontal stripes, with color notes; 110, possible copy of a *pulquería* city-scape.

¹¹⁶ E.g., US 13 verso, 14 verso, 15 verso.

¹¹⁷ DS 16, 71, 72, 82, 105.

¹¹⁸ See also DS 14, odd hat with head.

¹¹⁹ US 10 recto, caricature of "serveuse de café" 'café waitress'; verso: another modern young flapper, crossed out. US 16, middle drawing.

¹²⁰ DS 10, 13, 33. Mérida also depicted modern or semi modern young women in his personal style (e.g., Glusker 2010: 232). US 8 recto, a woman with an unusual hairdo may be Isabel Villaseñor as photographed by Manuel Álvarez Bravo.

¹²¹ E.g., DS 31, woman from front; 41, woman walking in rebozo; 55, woman in rebozo; 63, woman sitting with baby in lap, big hat. Charlot showed his interest in the subject of M54, *Mujer Reclinada [Reclining woman]*, by doing two preparatory sketches: DS 62, woman in rebozo lying on side; 89, woman lying on side, covering face with rebozo. But he did not use that interesting subject later. The same can be said of M52, *Mujer Sentada [Woman Seated]*, for which DS 127, woman sitting, lower face covered with rebozo, survives. Compare DS 61, woman sitting, covering jaw with rebozo (with cross in top right corner); 121, woman sitting on block, left hand at side of head, and CL 53 *Luz with Bobette*.

¹²² DS 19, 34, 36, 52, 56, 58, 60, 86. US 10, very synthesized woman sitting, locking hands between herself and viewer.

- ¹²³ US 16, woman sitting, covering lower face with *rebozo*, woman holding basket up by shoulder. M49, 50, 52–54.
- ¹²⁴ DS 20, three women washing clothes at basin; 32, woman with baby, from front and from above.
- ¹²⁵ E.g., M674, 676. For a related image, see Sahagún 1979 Volume 3, 26 recto, 39 recto, 131 verso. Guatemalan women carrying water on their head had already inspired many artworks by Charlot's early acquaintance Henrietta Shore, but he did not develop his own themes until he visited that country himself.
- ¹²⁶ Charlot 1926–1928. I thank Professor Marie-José Fassiotto for her help with *boîte à pouce*.
- ¹²⁷ E.g., Winning 1968: 76. Sahagún 1979 Volume 3: 102, 123. Génin 19081910: 114, 117. E.g., DS 23, woman with *rebozo* seen from back; 85, woman $\frac{3}{4}$ from back. US 14, woman carrying child in *rebozo* seen from front.
- ¹²⁸ Print of 1935. M262. See also M245, 369.
- ¹²⁹ DS 44, man, full body, profile; “pantalon bleue large” ‘wide blue trousers’; the face is hidden and the clothes simplified, but the finished drawing is much more than a clothes record; 64, man with big hat, standing, facing viewer; “La chemise rose...” ‘rose shirt’; 97, man with big hat and sash, holding broom; “chemise rose”; as with his French studio models, Charlot communicates the subject's personality as well as the obvious point of the drawing; 126, man with big hat from side; color note on cloak; 128, man, big hat, *serape* crossed in front; 129, “Guadalajara”; 130, man in regular peasant clothes, standing, from front.
- ¹³⁰ For M48 *El Ciego*: DS 112, man with big hat, shoulder sack, walking stick. For M51: DS 92, man in hat and *rebozo*. DS 2, standing man from front; 123, man standing looking to the viewer's left; the light lines of the preliminary drawing have been worked over with heavy lines.
- ¹³¹ DS 38, two men sitting in doorway; 79, man with round *serape*?, pants rolled up above knees.
- ¹³² Sahagún 1979 Volume 3: 57 recto, 262 verso. Charnay 1885: 12, 23, 31, 33, 35. Génin 19081910: 104, 113, 115, 116, 125, 207. Volume 1, Chapter 3, Section 3.4.8.
- ¹³³ Flores has discussed the stylistic and thematic importance of such works: CL 27 *Cargador, Burden-bearer, seen from back*, January 1924, oil on canvas, 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ " X 8", based on DS-048; CL 33 *Burden bearer, front view*, January 1924, 14" X 12", comparable to DS 070 (2013: 182 ff.).
- ¹³⁴ CL 509 *Sixth Avenue, New York*, 1937; CL 510 *Sixth Avenue, New York*, 1937; CL 621 *Snow Removal, New York*, 1939; CL 622 *Excavations, New York*, 1939.
- ¹³⁵ DS 66, 74, basket backpacks, drawn carefully to record their construction; 93, *cargador* with roped bundle. US 2, head with detailed study of backpack; 6, recto and verso: 7 verso, a *moulin à maïs* ‘maize mill’ and two *ollas* ‘pots’ tied for transportation. As in his French drawings of military equipment, Charlot wants to get the *moulin* right.
- ¹³⁶ DS 77 and 83. Compare US 4, profile, man holding plateau of bananas on head.
- ¹³⁷ DS 48. For arms and hands, see 35, 43, 66, 83, 84.
- ¹³⁸ US 6, verso. DS 43. *cargador from back*, $\frac{3}{4}$, is not crossed out, but the proportions are closer to sketches that are; this sketch is between the crossed out and the final versions.

- ¹³⁹ DS 84, cargador with child's coffin, seen from back; 93, cargador with roped bundle, from $\frac{3}{4}$ front. US 5 recto, *Cargador*.
- ¹⁴⁰ E.g., US 3 recto, "splayed" man from back, big hat, not carrying anything.
- ¹⁴¹ DS 65, two women, the one on right sitting behind her items for sale.
- ¹⁴² Lew Andrews notes that "the flea hunt was a theme that crops up a lot in seventeenth-century Dutch painting and in poetry too, I believe (John Donne)."
- ¹⁴³ Charlot March 8, 1972. CL Brittany c, ca. 1915. Volume 1, Chapter 5, Section 5.1
- ¹⁴⁴ CL 36 appears in the sketch to be *cargadores* or farmers emerging from a small pueblo by a mountain perhaps going to work at sunrise.
- ¹⁴⁵ E.g., CL 150 *Leopard Hunter*, 1928; also 334, 1933, 378, 1934. M80, 136, 378.
- ¹⁴⁶ I saw exactly such a woman while walking as a child with my father in Mexico City. I asked him what had happened to the poor woman, and he made the distressing answer that people's bodies change as they grow older.
- ¹⁴⁷ US 5 recto and verso; 7. Probably DS 21.
- ¹⁴⁸ Disney Lectures VII. CL 113 *Landscape with bridge, Cuernavaca. I*, 1925. CL 178 *Great Landscape, Cuernavaca*, 1930.
- ¹⁴⁹ CL 115. US 7 recto, 8 verso.
- ¹⁵⁰ As a child, I was surprised to see a film on dancing in a Spanish church. My father was amused that I was so surprised and explained that American churches did not use dancing but other Roman Catholic countries did, including Mexico.
- ¹⁵¹ Génin 1912. Montes de Oca 1926: 29, uses Génin's article: "el docto etnógrafo y exquisito poeta don August Genin...importante monografía" 'the learned ethnographer and exquisite poet, Auguste Génin...[and his] important monograph.'
- ¹⁵² Génin 1912: 304–308, 313 ff., 317 ff. Also Montes de Oca 1926: 45. López y Fuentes 1949: 30 f. Zantwijk 1960: 56 f.
- ¹⁵³ See also, e.g., Montes de Oca 1926: 13. Génin 1908–1910: 121 f.
- ¹⁵⁴ Charlot September 1930: 49. Compare Montes de Oca 1926: 13. I thank Jesús Villanueva Hernández for the corrections of the Aztec in this article.

¹⁵⁵ Charlot April 1925. Charlot was interested in different kinds of masks:

J'ai, pour ma part, assisté à une danse comique à Puebla dont l'élément principal était le choix des masques caractérisant très clairement plusieurs nationalités étrangères (Allemand, Espagnol, Italien, Américain) et dont les teints roses et blancs offraient au public un spectacle des plus "pittoresques." (April 1925)

'For myself, I have attended a comic dance at Puebla of which the principal element was the choice of masks characterizing very clearly several foreign nationalities (German, Spanish, Italian, American) and whose pink and white tints offered the public a spectacle from amongst the most "picturesque.'"

Compare Génin 1912: 308.

¹⁵⁶ DS 67, dancer with big mask from front; 88, dancer with big-horned mask; loose drawing, not inventoried; Diary 1923, blank paper facing January 7.

¹⁵⁷ Several similar sheets in the JCC were left unbound.

¹⁵⁸ Charlot 1976 *Two Hawaiian Plays*: 7. This was Mexican Indian practice as well (Génin 1912: 305).

¹⁵⁹ Charlot April 1925. M68.

¹⁶⁰ Interview September 28, 1970. I had actually asked Charlot about the dancer chanting from the top of a *pole*—that is, the *volador* dance—but Charlot misheard *platform* or the Feast of Tepozteco.

¹⁶¹ M522. Génin 1912: 309.

¹⁶² M68. In his article, Charlot mentions *quadrillas* and *pastoras* (April 1925).

¹⁶³ M68 *Dance, Chalma*. CL 85 *Dance of the Pastoras, Chalma, I*; CL 86 *Dance of the Pastoras, II, Chalma*.

¹⁶⁴ CL129 *Malinche, pink sword*, 1926. M116 *Malinche*, 1933, prospectus for *Picture Book* (1933). Génin 1912: 305 f., discusses the use of rattles in Indian dances.

¹⁶⁵ A number of other observers, both Mexican and foreign, describe Indians as sad. E.g., Génin 1912: 316. Montes de Oca 1926: 15, 17. Zantwijk 1960: 44, describes the of Milpa Alta as "muy serios o hasta sombríos" 'very serious or almost somber.'

¹⁶⁶ M146. Charlot guessed there was "an early oil of that, about 1926," but the first oil on his Checklist is number 149b, *Mestiza dancing (Jarana)*, 1928. The first prints are M97 *Jarana*, 1930, and 103 *Jarana (Couple)*, 1930.

¹⁶⁷ Jensen 1990 Portraits. John Charlot 2007.

¹⁶⁸ Rivera: Writings related to MMR: Passages Cut: Appendix III; *MMR* illustrations 47a, 47b; Weston 1961 illustration 22. Orozco: e.g., Weston 1932: illustration 15; Cervantes and MacKenzie 2010: 10, 27.

¹⁶⁹ Some discrepancies of dating may be due to using as a finish date either the day when the painting was substantially finished or the day when the final touches were applied. CL 2 was still to be finished when the list was made.

¹⁷⁰ *Luz*, 1922, aquarelle, 9" wide × 9" high, 23 cm × 23 cm.

- ¹⁷¹ Compare Díaz de León's 1922 *Indian Women on Market Day* (Flores 2013: 270 f.).
- ¹⁷² DS 45, strong face, portrait; 46, atypical head of bearded male, portrait; 49, portrait head; 97, man with big hat and sash, holding broom, bold stance of man; 98, man with big hat, looking back, tilting hat, bold gesture; 100, woman's head with bold features, almost caricature; 132, man with moustache, a true portrait, distinctive features. US 2 recto, *cargador* with strong dark face; verso: scratched out picture of mustached man; 17, strong face of woman. Blank end papers of 1923 diary: three caricatures of faces or heads and one caricature of a standing figure.
- ¹⁷³ Charlot June 9, 1965. Compare Wechsler 2012: 81 [Elena Landazuri].
- ¹⁷⁴ Writings Related to *MMR*; Passages Cut. The comparison can be found elsewhere (e.g., López y Fuentes 1949: 25, 90, 95).
- ¹⁷⁵ See the pioneering discussion of Flores 2013: 65 ff., 173 f.
- ¹⁷⁶ Illustrated in *Luz Jiménez símbolo* 2000: 63. Villanueva corrected the label: "*La Rebeca de Taxco*. Fernando Leal. Obra no localizada, Fotografía en Col. Fam Villanueva Hernández."
- ¹⁷⁷ An exception is Carmen Foncerrada's *Peasant Boy*, which uses some of devices discussed below; unfortunately, the lack of a date for *Peasant Boy* hinders the comparison of the two works (Glusker 2010: 96).
- ¹⁷⁸ Glusker 2010: 212; for more examples, see also 218, 220, 775.
- ¹⁷⁹ This connection of head to background mountain is found in both folk and EPAL painting (Glusker 2010: 96, 359).
- ¹⁸⁰ Compare the similar ascending, winding road in a ca. 1926 EPAL painting (Glusker 2010: 510).
- ¹⁸¹ Charlot's February 1924 oil—CL 36 *Landscape: Dawn, gray and yellow*—also depicts this normal sight.
- ¹⁸² Baciú 1966: 79 f., felt that this was a most important work in the development of a new Mexican esthetic.
- ¹⁸³ Charnay 1885: 36. Compare Leandro Izaguirre's *El Catador*, illustrated in *1910: El Arte en un Año Decisivo* 1991: 101.
- ¹⁸⁴ Charlot-Blanchard September 16, 1922: 13. Interview May 18, 1971.
- ¹⁸⁵ Interview June 12, 1971. Marló 1984: 175, at the 1923 Independents exhibition in New York City, Charlot showed *Village Girl*, *A Man*, and *A Woman*, all of which would be from this 1922 series of oils.
- ¹⁸⁶ M1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10. Volume 1, Chapter 5, Sections 1, 4.
- ¹⁸⁷ M11–25. Volume 1, Chapter 7, Section 5.3.

¹⁸⁸ Interview May 14, 1971. For a comprehensive treatment of Charlot's role in Mexican printmaking, see Rosales 1999b. Also F. L. 1924: "Vino a México trayendo una colección de grabados en madera que tuvieron un gran éxito entre los círculos de arte" 'He came to Mexico carrying a collection of wood engravings that had a great success in art circles.' Juarez 1967: 22, on seeing the *Chemin de Croix*, Leal was "the first to be inspired by Charlot," then his students Díaz de León and Ledesma. Westheim 1967: 250, "Estas estampas [*Chemin de Croix*] fueron estímulo y orientación para un buen número de artistas mexicanos que se pusieron a experimentar en la plancha de madera: Fernando Leal, Díaz de León, Gabriel Fernández Ledesma, Carlos Orozco Romero" 'These prints were a stimulus and orientation for a good number of Mexican artists who set themselves to experimenting in wood block: Fernando Leal, Díaz de León, Gabriel Fernández Ledesma, Carlos Orozco Romero.' Vidal de Alba 1990: "logró a partir de 1922 por medio de su álbum de xilografías "Viacrucis", entusiasmar a varios estudiantes de la Escuela al Aire Libre" 'starting in 1922 he succeeded by means of his woodblock album *Via Crucis* to enthuse various students of the Escuela al Aire Libre'; "al mostrar estas obras a los alumnos de la EPAL de Coyoacán inmediatamente los interesó en esta especialidad gráfica, iniciándose así en poco tiempo el movimiento de grabado mexicano" 'immediately on showing these works to the scholars of the Coyoacán EPAL, he interested them in this graphic specialty, thus initiating in little time the Mexican print movement.' Green 1992: 66, "The interest generated by Charlot's woodcuts [the *Chemin de Croix*] among his fellow artists at Coyoacan (where he had been invited to paint by Ramos Martínez) and their subsequent experimentation in the medium are generally recognized as the cornerstone of the renaissance of printmaking in Mexico in the twentieth century": "The arrival of Charlot from France with his exquisite woodcuts [the *Chemin de Croix*] and the appointment of Vasconcelos as the new Secretary of Public Education (1921) were the catalysts which would catapult Mexican muralism and Mexican graphics to world attention." Compare Prignitz 1992: 220, it is not clear whether the copies of French Expressionists she mentions are the *Chemin de Croix*; 228.

¹⁸⁹ Adhémar 1971: 21, 27, 29 f., 30, 32, 87, 90, 92, 106, 109, 185.

¹⁹⁰ M26. Interview May 18, 1971. Volume 1, Chapter 8, Section 3.3.

¹⁹¹ The Images d'Epinal were beloved by Charlot, who brought his collection to Mexico (now in the JCC). Lynda Klich argues that they would have been introduced to a Mexican audience by Charlot. On this whole discussion, compare Montgomery 2010: 53–59; 58, as in Brittany, Charlot was seeking "Primitivist qualities and modernist forms in the bodies and dress of the Mexican lower classes."

¹⁹² For an overview, see Rosales 1999b; Flores 2013: 167–175. Also, e.g., Covarrubias 1940: 192. Stewart 1951: 49 f., Leal, Charlot, and Amero revived printmaking in Mexico. Reed 1960: 28. Small 1975: 93. Tibol 1987: 4, in 1922, Charlot "had started the practice of xylography in the Escuela al Aire Libre de Coyoacán (Outdoor School of Coyoacan [*sic*]). He is to be credited with establishing in Mexico the foundation for the production of a new kind of graphic art." Vidal de Alba 1990: "contribuyó en gran medida en el resurgimiento de la estampa en nuestro país" 'contributed in large part to the resurgence of prints in our country.' Reyes Palma 1991: 43; 1994: 11, "Apenas a mediados de 1922, Jean Charlot realizó las primeras gráficas; un año después, lo harían Méndez, Diego Rivera, Fermín Revueltas y Ramón Alva de la Canal" 'As early as mid-1922, Jean Charlot produced the first graphics; a year later, Méndez, Diego Rivera, Fermín Revueltas, and Ramón Alva de la Canal would do it.' Rashkin 2009: 39. Argüello Grunstein 2010: 60.

¹⁹³ Díaz de León 1965: 8; he confuses Charlot's first and second trips to Mexico. See also Hopkins 1967:11, Charlot "gave a new impetus to printmaking. The young Frenchman was skilled in many techniques and was able to impart them quickly and easily to his Mexican students." Tibol 1987: 4, Díaz de León "had been trained at the side of Jean Charlot." Westheim 1967: 251. Prignitz 1992: 19, 287, Charlot taught or worked with Díaz de León, Ledesma, Leal, Alva, and Emilio Amero. Williams and Williams 1990: 2, "Charlot had made woodcuts in Paris, and by 1922, was teaching printmaking—both woodcuts and lithographs—in Mexico City. Among his students were a number of the artists who became important in the graphics revival." Reyes Palma 1994: 13, Alva de la Canal "había recibido en la escuela de Coyoacán las orientaciones de Jean Charlot, introductor en México de la estampación con espíritu vanguardista" 'had received in the Coyoacán school the guidance of Jean Charlot, who introduced to Mexico prints with a vanguard spirit.'

¹⁹⁴ Reed 1960: 28 f. Montgomery 2010: 65–68. Acevedo 1986: 206, notes the influence of the woodblocks published in *El Machete*. For Siqueiros on the *El Machete* illustrations, see Chapter 4, Section 2.4.3. Cork 1994: 51, the Soviet government commissioned artists to create folk prints for propaganda.

¹⁹⁵ Interview May 14, 1971. In 1931, Charlot inscribed the lithograph *Dance at Dawn* (M111) to Díaz de León with the words: "Para Diaz de Leon que tanto ha hecho para el grabado mexicano! Su amigo Jean Charlot Mex. 31" 'For Díaz de León who has done so much for Mexican printmaking! His friend Jean Charlot Mexico 1931.'

¹⁹⁶ Charlot told me that when he visited William Ivins Jr. at the Metropolitan Museum in New York City, he was shown several large series of engravings of ducks: the engravers had preserved copies of every little change made and expected Ivins to purchase and preserve them.

¹⁹⁷ John Charlot 1991, 2001 First Fresco, with appended texts by Jean Charlot. *MMR* 154, 181–188; "Writings Related to *MMR*, Passages Cut": 294–304. Although Charlot's writings are posted elsewhere on the web site as well, I refer in this section to the appendices of my article because they include English translations. Since writing my article on the *Massacre*, I have changed my view of Charlot's relation to the *rappel à l'ordre*; see Volume I, Chapter 8, for my current position. See also Antonio Rodríguez 1968. Rosales 1994, 1999a, 2005. Flores 2012: 116–119; 2013: 81–86, 88. Lilia Roura Fuentes 2012: 223–248.

¹⁹⁸ E.g., *MMR* 156 f. Leal 1990: 88–102, 113, 176–181. Paz 1993: 133.

¹⁹⁹ Charlot had read Baudouin (1914) in France and then borrowed from Rivera the copy he had brought to Mexico (*MMR* 130 f., 181). Bonzom 2010: 46 ff., 153 f. The historical mistake that Charlot attended the School of Fontainebleau may start from Siqueiros 1977: 187. Charlot later wrote, "I never went to the Fontainebleau school" (Writings related to *MMR*: Passages Cut). Siqueiros may have confused the Fontainebleau art school with the Fontainebleau artillery school, which Charlot attended in World War I (Greenhalgh 2014: 391).

²⁰⁰ In Charlot's Diary for 1922: March 1, 2, 3, the word *fresque* 'fresco' is written upside down and crossed out. On April 5, he wrote "fresque à Polignac." These entries may refer to the muralists' early studies and experiments.

²⁰¹ Rivera started the story that Charlot's use of cement contributed to the fading of the colors, a story accepted by some historians, e.g., Schmeckebeier 1939: 40 f. Fernandez 1964: 157. Charlot listed other mistakes in a note, "Schmeckebeier errors":

“accept ~~true~~ 1st fresco but ‘cement hurry’

Alva 1st true fresco. His mason goes to help D.R.

cf: DR 1923 on “el p ‘frances’”

“aussi : after O ‘Maternity’ Siq. Mont. Charlot and R. began ptg in true fresco (p 45)”

Charlot felt the colors had not faded, but he had exploited more the transparency of the mortar as he moved down the fresco. Dávila Jiménez 2010: 88, agrees that the colors have not changed. Moreover, Baudouin recommended cement, Rivera later used it, and Orozco planned to (Tabletalk early 1970s); Glusker 2010: 163; Minguell 2014: 169 f. Leal 1990: 91, errs in saying Charlot used cement “en vez de cal” ‘in place of lime’; Charlot mixed some cement with the lime.

²⁰² See my discussion in Chapter 1. Charlot himself was interested in the history of Colonial frescoes, noting 1810 as the date of one by Tres Guerras in Celaya (*AA* II 162). I provide some references in the dispute.

Charlot completed first fresco mural: Amero 1947: “Charlot había terminado el primer fresco en la Escuela Preparatoria” ‘Charlot had finished the first fresco in the Escuela Preparatoria.’ Edwards 1966: 173, 175 f. Bonzom 2010: 49. Compare *Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art* 1940: 9. Charlot completed the first fresco, but Alva de la Canal was the first to start one: e.g., Myers 1956: 28. Folch 1981: 35 ff. Leal 1990: 91. Pérez Escamilla 2003: 20, records a story about Rivera in an argument about who created the first mural, saying: “No me importa quién fue, sólo quiero dejar establecido quién pintó Chapingo” ‘It’s not important to me who it was. The only thing I want to see established is who painted Chapingo.’ See also González Mello 1995: 86; Minguell 2010; 2014: 2225, 37, 79 ff.

²⁰³ Amero 1947. Zuñiga 2008: 20 f. Also Alva de la Canal (Folch 1981: 37). Study of fresco continued; Charlot enters in his Diary for December 11, 1927, “matin : colloque fresque” ‘fresco colloquium.’

²⁰⁴ John Charlot 2001 First Fresco: Appendix III. Tibol 1996: 160, Orozco also wrote a technical memoir on fresco to help his colleagues.

²⁰⁵ “Noticiero Olímpico” 1968. Siqueiros’ statements on the subject vary; e.g., 1977: 186-189. See also Edwards 1966: 179. Leal 1990: 93.

²⁰⁶ Charlot 1972 Xavier Guerrero. Siqueiros 1977: 184, used snapping but could not remember who did it first; 185, he found he could not use it when he worked on walls that were not flat.

²⁰⁷ Writings Related to *MMR*: Appendix I; *MMR* 156 f., 160, 257–260; January 1947; *AA* II 334–346; 1972. Edwards 1966: 187. Zuñiga 2008: 20 f., Rivera tried several experiments with Guerrero. Dávila Jiménez 2010: 8488. *Nopal*: Myers 1956: 37; Edwards 1966: 187; Dávila Jiménez 2010: 88.

²⁰⁸ On the fresco techniques of Rivera and Orozco, see, e.g., Suarez 1993: 50–54; González Mello 1995: 42 f. Siqueiros 1997: 188, found a traditional recipe for the mortar and theorized that encaustic was female and fresco, male.

²⁰⁹ Ca. 1435–1455. Charlot wrote later:

I can also understand the disdainfully curved lip of the informed passerby who gave it one look and muttered, “Uccello,” as Lawrence had flung “Gauguin” at the Revueltas wall in an attempt to crush its good physical matter with a *mot*. Why Uccello ever played with lances a game of alternating stripes and crisscross patterns, would be clarified only if we could reconstruct the architecture for which the artist’s metal-hard fancy ideated it. In my case, lances were chosen not because of any medieval yearning, but for the mason’s sake: their straight outline providing an easy cutting edge, and one of minimum length, against which to abut the next day’s mortar patch. (Writings Related to *The Mexican Mural Renaissance*: Conclusion)

²¹⁰ E.g., Umberto Boccioni, *Charge of the Lancers*, 1915. Gino Severini, *Les Lanciers italiens au gallop/ Italian Lancers at a gallop*, 1915. See Cork 1994: 9, 34, 51, 218 f., 225, 308. Charlot never mentioned in this context the mounted lancer by José Guadalupe Posada, *Esta es de Don Quijote la Primera, la Sin Par, la Gigante Calavera*, and there is no evidence that he had the work in mind while creating the *Massacre*. For Cubist war paintings with a walking, marching effect, see, e.g., Jacques Villon’s 1913 *Soldats en marche* and Christopher R. W. Nevinson’s *Retour dans les tranchées*.

²¹¹ *MMR* 181. Schmeckebeier 1939: 51, “The structural discipline of the Cubist school and the early Italian formalists appears in the dynamic composition of Charlot’s *Preparatoria mural*.”

²¹² Ortega March 15, 1923: 32. I thank Lynda Klich for this article.

²¹³ Compare Debroise 1984: 52 f. Schmeckebeier 1939: 38 ff.

²¹⁴ Charlot-Blanchard September 16, 1922: 17. Charlot does not seem to have used later works like Félix Parra’s *Escenas de la Conquista* ‘Scenes of the Conquest,’ 1877, with its Spaniards in armor.

²¹⁵ Folgarait 1998: 48, is clearly puzzled:

The deliberate choice of a blond child, at a school where such coloration would be in the vast minority, seems a provocation at most and lack of attention at best. Or is the European child being taught a lesson in guilt (or in pride?) in the face of the massacre? The Vasconcelos answer would be that such violence was necessary to bring Christianity to Mexico, and that the blond child represents the Europeanized future of Latin America.

The suggestion that Charlot could teach pride in the massacre and look forward to “the Europeanized future of Latin America” contradicts everything he believed in and worked for all his life.

²¹⁶ Chapter 4, Section 2.4.2. On the esthetic effect of the *Massacre*, compare the description of other work by Ramírez 1991: 34, “la presentación simultánea de épocas y estilos muy separados entre sí, para provocar anacronismos y transculturaciones sorprendentes” ‘the simultaneous presentation of widely separated periods and styles in order to provoke anachronisms and surprising transculturations.’

²¹⁷ A mask is mentioned also in the section *La Force*. On masks in the movement, see Flores 2013: 105 f., 194.

²¹⁸ Writings Related to *MMR*; Passages Cut. Also Charlot Winter 1946: 12.

²¹⁹ John Charlot 2001 First Fresco: Appendix II. *Idols* 329.

²²⁰ Charlot July 25, 1942. Also Charlot Winter 1946: 6, the Aztecs' "mechanized warfare with the bow and arrow."

²²¹ E.g., *Idols* 309! Schmeckeber 1939: 39. Other titles have been used as well; Toor 1940: 53, "The Murder of Indians at the Cholula Temple (fresco), by Jean Charlot."

²²² Compare Charlot's other depiction of the massacre in Martinez Del Rio 1935: Spanish: "A Great Festival."

²²³ Folgarait 1998: 47, 216 note 63. Folgarait dates Charlot's death in 1980 rather than 1979 (1998: 46). He also does not know that the bearded figure with Charlot and Rivera is Leal, looking at his own mural across the stairway. Folgarait describes him as "another contemporary, a bearded man"; "All but the bearded man, who stares out of the space of the painting" (1998: 48). All of this information was available long before 1998.

²²⁴ I thank Manfred Henningsen for help with this translation. Goldschmidt bought Charlot's painting of a folk shrine, CL 61 *Hill with three Crosses* for \$50 (Mexican), considered other paintings, and collected drawings (CL; Diary 1924: June 30, October 28, November 2, 17, 25; August 5, 1925). Charlot drew his portrait (Diary 1924: November 17, 18).

²²⁵ Mérida January 29, 1971; also 1937b: 3, "Charlot's is a formal painting, but not without plastic qualities."

²²⁶ Fell 1989: 424. On the unhistorical depiction of horses and armor, see Lilia Roura Fuentes 2012: 238–242.